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**Free Higher Education in South Africa: University of Zululand and University of
KwaZulu-Natal, comparison with implications on University produce.**

BY

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Public Administration (MPA), in the Faculty of Commerce, Administration &
Law at the University of Zululand (UNIZULU).**

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Declaration

I, Freedom Nkululeko Gwala, declare that this dissertation is my original work except where references have been made. It is being submitted for the fulfillment of the degree of masters of Public Administration at the University of Zululand. The dissertation has not been submitted to any degree in any University. I declare that necessary authorization has been obtained to carry out the research.

.....

Freedom Nkululeko Gwala

.....

Date

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my late Grandparents, Rota Esther Gwala and Violet Ngcobo, my aunts, Rita Ngcobo and Thabisile Khanyile, my cousins Yvonne Mabongi Ngcobo, Nhlaka Ngcobo, Malcom Gwala and my sisters Stheni Mbhotho and late Phindile Xolo. I would like to thank you all for your continuous love and support when times were tough and for motivating me to achieve my dreams.

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Abstract

The study focused on the perceptions of academic staff members and students on free higher education at the University of Zululand and the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The main aim was to determine the sustainability, challenges and benefits of this policy and possibly come with solutions or alternatives if the policy does not succeed.

The project reviewed studies on access to higher education, challenges faced by Higher Education (HE) and possible benefits of this policy in South Africa. It further reviewed government policies on HE. The researcher collected data by using questionnaires and interview. A total of twenty-eight (28) questionnaires were administered at the two universities and one unstructured interview was conducted for one of the officials at the department of basic education. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to analyze the data. The study revealed that most of the respondents are not satisfied with the implementation of this policy. The findings also revealed that little or no consultation and poor planning from government administrative has caused conflict of interest between the relevant stakeholders, which are the taxpayers, students and the academic staff members. Hence, the study suggests that government should do proper planning before implementing policies to avoid fruitless expenditure from scarce resources held. Government should also review and restructure some higher education policies, especially education transformation policies.

Keywords: Academic staff member, Student, Perception, Higher Education, Free-Higher Education.

List of Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CHE	Council for Higher Education
CPUT	Cape Peninsular University of Technology
DASO	Democratic Alliance Student Organization
DoE	Department of Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DUT	Durban University of Technology
FCS	Full Cost of Study
MoE	Ministry of Education
MTEF	Mid Term Expenditure Framework
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
NDP	National Development Plan
NPHE	National Plan for Higher Education
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation And Development
PTEEP	Placement Test in English for Educational

Purposes

SAFETSA	South African Further Education and Training Student Association
SASCO	South African Student Congress
SAUS	South Africa Union of Students
TEFSA	Tertiary Education Fund for South Africa
TUT	Tshwane University of Technology
UFS	University of Free State
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UL	University of Limpopo
UMP	University of Mpumalanga
UNIZULU	University of Zululand
UV	University of Venda
UWC	University of Western Cape
Wits	University of Witwatersrand
YCLSA	Young Communist League Student Association

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction and Background

The White Paper on Education and Transforming (1997) laid the foundation for the new education and training system in South Africa. This reassured citizens of the government commitment to opening up learning and removing barriers to education for those who had been previously disadvantaged in the past. In contrast to this framework, South Africa is facing a moot issue regarding the funding of public higher education, as the public funding has been declining while tuition fees are rising (Wangenge-Ouma and Cloete, 2008). This has triggered many student protests demanding free higher education. According to Cele and Goodman (2016), free higher education includes tertiary education such as undergraduate university education, diplomas and certificate programs which are paid for by someone/some entities through some means, which includes Tuition fees, Travel allowance, Books, Accommodation and Sustenance money.

Another motivation that triggered the demand for free higher education was the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, where students and student leaders argued that it stipulates that:

Everyone has the right (a) to basic education, including adult basic education, and (b) to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

The National Development Planning released in 2012 acknowledges the significance of public investment in education while recognizing that the benefits of education are both to the individual and society. Historically, South Africa has not invested enough in higher education with less than 1% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is way below international targets, while many comparable countries like China are spending approximately 2% to 3% of their GDP (Cloete, 2016).

According to Treasury officials, the latest injection of funding is now over 1%, although it is bail-out money, no new targets for investment in higher education have been set. Although the symptoms that trigger bigger problems for students to access higher education is the decline of higher learning budgets The history and current socio-economic reality of South Africa can be re-addressed through the accessible higher education and training for all. More than 70% of South African households earn below taxable income and a large number of the working class earn below the minimum wage to finance their children for higher education.

Muller (2018) states that the government has been decreasing its overall investment in the universities, which seldom forced management of such institutions to increase the fees. This has led to numerous fictions and the emergence of the "Fees Must Fall" movement of 2015. Cloete (2016) agrees that severe pressure has been placed on the South African government by several unprecedented posts- 1994 movements demanding free university education for an example, the submissions and presentations made to the Commission of Higher Education in 2016 by the South African Union of Students (SAUS) clarified the demand for free education. It posited that free education will be a solution to issues of social justice and transformation which it considers as a spirit of the Freedom Charter of 1995 (SAUS, 2016).

With relatively little consultation or planning, the former President of the Republic of South Africa (Jacob Zuma) in December 2017 announced that in 2018 there would be free higher education, which is going to be provided to all new first-year students from families that earn less than R350,000 per annum (Areff and Spies, 2017). The South African students who enrolled in universities have increased from 59% in the year 2000 to 71% in 2015 (Higher Education Data Analyzer Portal, 2017). The percentages have derailed from 49% in the year 2000 to 39% in 2015 (Africa Check, 2016).

Therefore, this research project seeks to analyze the perceptions of academic staff members as well as students on the feasibility of free higher education, using the University of Zululand and the University of KwaZulu Natal and the implications on University produce.

1.2 Problem Statement:

Funding for tertiary education can be limited to a certain number of students in most countries. This is done through a planning process as a means for controlling a budget deficit in the department of higher education (Salmi and Hauptman, 2006). In recent years, the numbers of countries that are struggling to innovate solutions to the ever-growing challenges they face in financing tertiary education as a result of the demand for education which is beyond the secondary level has continued to grow.

According to Badat (2016), National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) which is largely funded by the State to grant financial support to tertiary students who are eligible for admission to universities are currently facing financial crisis to support the ever-growing new and returning students. Cloete (2004) states that about 100 000 students per year, most of whom are black students do not re-register as a result of financial exclusion in the institutions that they were enrolled from. The low levels of public funding for Tertiary education are translating into higher fees, which have automatically shut out the poor and is fast reducing the ability of universities to contribute to social and economic development (Letseka and Maile, 2008). They further pointed out that "Higher Education Institutions have produced an insufficient number of graduates, especially black graduates". This has caused high levels of disadvantaged students who rely on the Universities' fees, which are too high for getting working-class children to be enrolled for higher education.

The Department of Education (2005) revealed that out of about 120,000 students who were enrolled in higher education in year 2000, 36,000 (30%) dropped out in their first year of study, a further 24,000 (20%) dropped out in their second and third years, which cost a National Treasury R4, 5 billion in grants and subsidies to higher education institutions without the return on investments. This clearly shows that sometimes the government loses a large amount of money while trying to invest in higher education. Muller (2018) argues that free tertiary education should be debated first as most of the public are not clear about it meant. These misconceptions are between the implications

of free higher education proposals for poverty and inequality eradication/reduction to the feasibility of funding such proposals.

1.3 Aims and Objectives:

1. To determine the possible administrative procedures of the policy programme that would sustain it.
2. To determine the challenges that may emerge and be incurred by students and Academic staff members if the policy is appropriately implemented.
3. To determine the benefits that may be incurred by the students and academic staff members if the policy of free higher education is successfully implemented.
4. To make policy recommendations on the alternative policies, which can be adopted to compensate free-higher education, while maximizing the completion degree rates?

1.4 Key Research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of possible administrative procedures of the policy programme on free higher education that would ensure its sustainability?
2. What are the perceptions on challenges that the students and academic staff members may face, should government fail/ succeed to appropriately implement the policy?
3. What are the perceptions of the benefits that the students and academic staff members incur should the proposed policy on free-higher education be successfully implemented?
4. Based on the findings, what policy recommendations, that can make free higher education have an impact on maximizing the completion of degree rates and reduce drop-out rates?

1.5 Conceptual Clarifications

Free-higher education: It a free full cost of study which includes undergraduate degrees, diplomas and certificates that have been paid for by someone/some entity through some means, which includes fully paid tuition fees, accommodation, travel allowance, food and sustenance money. (Cele & Goodman, 2016).

Higher education: Is a component of the further education and training qualification band, which includes degrees, diplomas and certificates for an example, The Universities, Universities of Technologies and Colleges (DHET, 2012).

Academic staff member: Includes staff personnel who hold an academic rank such as Professor, Dean, Instructor, Lecturer (OECD, 2002).

Student: any individual participating in educational services (OECD, 2002).

Perception: The opinion and belief held by many people based on how they view things (Cambridge English dictionary, 1995).

Sustain means that learning experience has the elements of duration and continuity (OECD, 2002).

1.6 Intended contribution to the body of knowledge:

South African public higher education system has witnessed different forms of transformation following the adoption of inclusive governance in 1994. The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), aimed at assisting the students as well as their parents in tertiary fees has been seen failing to accommodate all the deserving students and the ever-growing demand for higher education. This has led to the development of many student movements and protests demanding free higher education. Furthermore, past recent years has shown the increase in student drop-outs which had a huge financial impact on government revenues to continue funding students in higher education. This has resulted in a large number of students to be financially excluded as a result of the outstanding debts and improper implementation of government policies on higher education. The study aimed at determining the possible administrative procedures that

can benefit and prevent the challenges to allow the most deserving students to be given the first year free education which would ensure sustainability. It also gives possible recommendations of maximizing the degree completion rates and reducing non-completion in record time and drop-out rates in public universities in South Africa.

1.7 Research Methodology and Research design:

The research methodology is a decisive approach to be undertaken by a researcher on whether it should be qualitative or quantitative approach (Kothari, 2004). It is the description of specific methods and instruments which are going to be undertaken by a researcher in data collection and administration procedure of the instruments. Research design serves as a plan for conducting a research project, although not all qualitative research commences with research design and they do not always serve as a plan but serve as dealing with the past event feature of the study (Yin, 2011). For this study, the qualitative approach was employed, however, integrated quantitative method when analyzing graphs and percentages and unstructured interviews.

Kumar (2014) defines qualitative approach as a method that uses flexible and unstructured ways to explore the enquiry and focuses on the description, narration of the feelings, experiences and perceptions. The study employed primary and secondary data, where content and textual analysis was used. Newspaper articles, journals, government gazettes, internet, interviews and questionnaires were employed to gather relevant data for the proposed study. In the questionnaires, open-ended questions were used on students, academic staff members and the interviews were unstructured interviews on the department of education officials, whereby a researcher had every flexibility in terms of questions that he asked his respondents.

institutions	Number of selected students	Number of selected academic staff members	Total sample size
University of Zululand	8 Students	2 Academic staff members	10

University of KwaZulu-Natal	15 Students	3 Academic staff members	18
Basic education officials			1 Official
Total			29 Respondents

1.8 Chapter Outlet:

Chapter One:

The introduction and the background with the research questions and objectives are replicated in this chapter, followed by the contribution of the study to the body of knowledge.

Chapter two:

Relevant pieces of literature, books, journals, trusted internet sources were consulted to enrich the study and theoretical framework and policies on funding higher education.

Chapter three:

Research design and methodology that covered how the research was conducted and research techniques methods adopted in collecting the relevant data and information from the participants are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter four:

The data collected are analyzed and interpreted in this chapter.

Chapter five:

The summary, findings, conclusion and the recommendations to the study are presented in this chapter.

1.15 Summary

The study sought to investigate the feasibility of free higher education in the South African higher education system. It does so by comparing and making deep analysis on the perception of academic staff members, students and higher education officials on free higher education. It envisaged to create a synergy and prevent the pervasive crisis that may erupt from such proposed policies and come up with possible solutions to ensure the sustainability of free higher education. Although studies like this are limited, it is imperative to state that this project does not enjoy privileges of consulting much-published studies, as it is still something new which is currently being debated and there has been little consultation on how it is going to work.

The following chapter seeks to review the relevant kinds of literature that have been written by different authors relating to the topic of the study. It further explains different theories and analyzes government policies on higher education that can be of assistance in the study.

Chapter two

Theoretical Framework: Reviews of Literature

2.1 Introduction

The gathering of the previous research publications, books and other documents related to the defined study is called a literature review (Rajasekar, Philominathan and Chinnathambi, 2006). It is imperative for a researcher to know the current status of the defined problem if it has been solved or not and what are the gaps that must be filled with new knowledge or findings.

Wangenge-Ouma and Cloete (2008) posit that the problem of declining of public higher education funding and the rapid rise of tuition fees are challenges facing the nation. Southall (2016) agrees that it has been widely accepted that South African higher education is facing a huge problem as a result of extreme underfunding and a high rates of student drop-outs and long completion of degrees. For years the students have argued that higher education should be free, pointing out at the Freedom Charter of the African National Congress (ANC) promised them free higher education (Dunga and Mncayi, 2016). This chapter presents relevant studies that have been conducted on the funding and financing of higher education which have led to movements of "Fees Must Fall" and the proposed policy of the "Free-Higher Education". The literature is reviewed as follows: Funding and higher education Access, the Trends in financing and funding of higher education, Government policies on higher education and Theoretical framework.

2.1.1 Funding and Higher education Access:

The collapse of the apartheid government in 1994 opened up the doors for thousands of previously marginalized students to enroll in the historically white-dominated University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN). The study conducted by Murray (2014) reveals that UKZN constitutes about 51% of black students, 40% being Indians and the rest which is 9% are Whites, Coloureds and Foreign Nationals. Times Higher Education (2017) statistics

revealed that UKZN is ranked at number four in the South African higher education system.

The main issues on the political agenda by both Apartheid and Newly Democratic governments have been the "Access to higher education" (Bunting and Cloete 2008: 1). The predominant apartheid government had been consistent with its policy of "separate development", especially when it comes to the nonwhites' population. Wangenge- Ouma (2010) states that the previous government did not consider the higher education funding mechanisms to redress the equity and access for non- whites South Africans. Soon after the collapse of the apartheid in 1994, the new democratic government implemented the Transformation policies to address the inequalities related to higher education funding framework (Johnstone and Marcucci, 2010).

The Tertiary Education Fund for South Africa (TEFSA) which commenced in 1991 was replaced with the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) in 1999. NSFAS became the main cost-sharing model to grant the students who academically qualified to access Higher Education (Mourton et al, 2013). About 87% of the population of previously Black disadvantaged students was the biggest beneficiaries followed by 4.2% of the Colored students (NSFAS, 2016). The large proportion of financial funding has been dispensed by NSFAS, while little financial aid came from the private sector and external donors (CHE, 2004). This reveals that the previously marginalized students rely more on government funding than any other race in South African higher education.

Wangenge-Ouma (2012) emphasized that the commencement of NSFAS expanded the access to higher education and the enrolments increased rapidly from 1995 to 2005, especially from the marginalized communities. Wangenge-Ouma (2012) agree with Bunting and Cloete (2008:1) when they explained that the period between 1995 to 2000 had a policy thrust which was accepted as "the more is better". However, later the Department of Education concluded that "more was not affordable" due to financial constraints, hence, the new policy thrust was envisaged to be "not more, but more equity". They further concluded that the period between 2000 and 2004 was seen as a rapid

enrolment growth compare to the previous years which they agreed "more is not better", due to the increased enrolments which could not be funded and had poor output results.

The relationship between access, equity and success is still a tension that runs through South Africa's policy discourse in higher education. Sequel to KPMG (2016), tuition fees for an undergraduate in South Africa range between R30, 000 to R60, 000 for an individual student per year. The average household income after tax is R145, 000 per annum (KPMG, 2016). This means that a student would require between 20% to 40% of their family income and 80% if accommodation, books and subsistence are included. Access to higher education is still difficult for most students, especially those who come from a poor socio-economic background in South Africa.

The study conducted by HESA (2014) reveals that between the year 2013 and 2014 of the academic calendar, 986,559 was the total number of students registered in higher education institutions, while only 226,909 were funded by NSFAS. According to NSFAS (2016), the beneficiaries were 25% in 2014 and about 18, 7% who had applied in this scheme were unsuccessful in granting funding, and even for those who were funded, it was not enough to cover the full costs of their studies. The NSFAS (2015) study also shows that between 2014/2015 academic years, out of 414,802 students supported by the scheme, only 186,150 students were able to re-register at various universities, while the rest of them (228,642) registered at (TVET) Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges. This shows that NSFAS has been unable to sustain its funding due to the growing number of enrollments. This has led to other students being financially excluded in the system.

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) is currently under pressure because of insufficient financial resources, as a result of a growing number of students who cannot afford the rising costs of tertiary education, yet do not qualify for aid or preferential loans (Bhorat & Pillay, 2017). Phungo (2015:2) agrees based on the finding of his research that the higher education in South Africa can only be afforded by 5% of the households, as most of the black students who come from lower-income families cannot cope with university fees, which means they are to rely on financial aid grants.

The results clearly show that funding determines access into higher education in South Africa and financial austerities can be argued as the main contributing factor hindering equitable and needed access to higher education which also results into preventing South Africa to respond to the socio-economic problems it faces.

Financing and access are the most key components of successful higher education transformation. For instance, while the proportion of government funding slides down from 49% to 30% in 2013 and the shortfall of student fees rising by 42% from 2010 to 2014 (Pandor, 2005 Cloete, 2016). This is because of the increasing demand for the government to provide affordable primary and secondary education even before the transition period of democracy (Van der Berg, 2014). Nzimande (2015) noted the living expenses and high participation rates of students that are beyond the financial resources held by NSFAS. The study conducted by Academic (2016) reveals that NSFAS is the reason why students want free education. This is because, once the previously disadvantaged students are financially excluded, they turn to want free education because of their increasing debts and they will be prevented from registering the following year.

Letseka and Maile, (2008) point that the low levels of public funding for Tertiary education are translating into higher fees which have automatically shut out the poor, thereby reducing the ability of universities to contribute to social and economic development. Wangenge-Ouma and Cloete, (2008) concur that due to the declining government funding, the Higher Education Institutions have been forced to increase the tuition fees for their continued survival. The transition policies on education have resulted in the cost of higher education to be more expensive in recent years (Johnston, 2004). This has been done through the expropriation of HE by the new policies that were meant to redress the past, by increasing access to previously disadvantaged students which left the institutions indebted and having scarce resources. If tuition fees are already making unsustainable resource demands to the government, what about free higher education? Calitz and Fourie, (2016) note that South African tuition fees have become extremely expensive compared to what was obtainable decades ago. Wangenge-Ouma (2007) posits that the tuition fees have become the fastest-growing source of income of non-government

revenue for public universities in South Africa. Although tuition fees have rapidly increased during the past years, the analysis by Le Roux and Breier (2007) reveals that they have not compensated the losses incurred in State appropriations to the Public Universities. This has shown that there has not been an effective economic relationship between the higher education institutions and the government regarding an increment of tuition fees and the decline of public funding to higher education which has resulted to universities increasing the tuition fees for their survival, which has exacerbated to students demanding free higher education.

The study conducted by Polity (2018) on free higher education reveals that the currently estimated government expenditure on free higher education is R12 billion and R15 billion. It further suggests that funding is likely to expand to the second-year students the following year and the third-year students by the year 2020; this may lead to an annual cost of R40 billion or more. There has not been a clear indication of how the government intends to implement the policy as it may also benefit the second and third-year students.

Although it has been seen that the government has increased the access to higher education for black students, financial assistance remains the key variable to redressing the plight for the poor students including qualifying and deserving students (Dunga and Mncayi, 2016). Each year almost 100,000 mostly black students are financially excluded in higher education, as a result, they do not re-register the following year (Cloete, 2004). Badat (2015) states that most of the low-income household students and rural less privileged students with talent and more potential are having a tough time to access university education. At the same time, thousands of post-graduate students, much needed in South Africa are without adequate financial support. The major concerns are not only that the black students will be accepted or not in higher learning institutions, but to ascertain whether they will be able to cope academically and that the financial security will be enough to enable them to complete their studies.

The National Development Planning released in 2012 acknowledges the significance of public investment in education while recognizing that the benefits of education are both to the individual and society. Historically, South Africa has not invested enough in higher

education with less than 1% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is way below international targets, while many comparable countries are spending close to 2% of GDP and some like 3% as is the case in China (Cloete, 2016). This concurs with the study conducted by National Treasury (2016) that government spending on higher education institutions is approximately 0,8 % of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is also low according to the international standards. Although the Treasury officials had claimed that they have fueled latest injection of funding which is now over 1%, it is just bail-out money, no new targets for investment in higher education have been set so far.

The symptoms that trigger bigger problems for students to access higher education are the decline of higher learning budgets. Johnstone (2007) believes that to bring relief to taxpayers, higher education institutions should adopt cost-sharing, which may be significant revenues for their continual survival so that government revenues could be shifted to the most competing public priorities.

Parker (2015) agrees that higher education access has not been declared by the constitution to be the fundamental right, but it can be seen as the right to be earned by individuals. It has been further explained that government has posited that higher education in both public and private good and it should be incurred by both students and the state. Calitz and Fourie (2016) argue that even in most developed countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany there is discontent with higher tuition fees although they are still using cost-sharing models. Most economists have agreed to the policy of cost-sharing/ grants/ loans to students as a better means of accessibility which is more reasonable and fair than free education which relies heavily on taxation to sustain it.

Barakat (2015) proposes that cost-sharing be separated from marketization, and developed into a continuous redistribution, whereby it is assumed that life expectancies of graduates are greater than that of non-graduates. This is envisaged to generate public savings from the repayments of cost-sharing taken from graduates after entering the labour market over a long period. Most of the studies conducted such as #Hashtag: An analysis of the # FeesMustFall movement at South African Universities on financing and

funding of higher education reveal that most historically black Universities' students such as Unizulu are satisfied with NSFAS and they even think that they already have free higher education, while most of the previously white Universities like University of KwaZulu Natal still feel that this grant does not meet their requirements for study fees and lifestyle

The issue of present financing, funding higher education in the previous discussions can be noted as the main factors for the demand for free higher education in South Africa. It can be seen in the presented literature that government has not consulted citizens and its relevant stakeholders in higher education financing, for all to develop a new policy that would be based on participation with a unified public interest to reach a concise agreement and involve a synergy.

The following issues ventures into the trends in financing and funding of higher education in South Africa.

2.2 Challenges in Higher education financing and funding

2.2.1 The non-completion of graduate rates and long period of degree completion.

It is a privilege for a student to be enrolled in higher –learning studies that can be taken as one of the most celebrated victories in life towards absolute freedom, with greater financial responsibilities and effective time management (Barkwell, 2008). Therefore, it is imperative to note the challenges in financing and finding higher education. It is also noteworthy that increase in dropout rate non-completion of degrees in record time have become a trend in public universities, especially from black students; this has personal, institutional and social repercussions.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2008) reveal that in the year 2008, only 15-18 percent of all matriculates from all races passed with grades that qualified them for university entrance. The Ministry of Education (MoE) (2001) acknowledged that the higher education system was under pressure to increase enrollments to ensure equity and access. The higher education institutions were forced to enroll underprepared students whose success rate were too low (OECD, 2008).

Meanwhile, Black students' completion rates are far too low and make less than half of the completion rates of the white students (CHE, 2013). The problem has been the expansion of black African students' enrollments without assessing their potential of succeeding at the universities.

The study conducted by the Department of Education (DoE, 2001) revealed that there are 25% of students who fail to complete their studies and four years later, it revealed that out of about 120,000 students who were enrolled in higher education in 2000, 36,000 (30%) dropped out in their first year of study DoE (2005). A further 24,000 (20%) dropped out in their second year and third years respectively. The study conducted by Cliff (2014) agrees with this as it states that most first-time students entering higher-learning institutions are unprepared and they lack reading abilities which results into The major concerns are not only that the black students will be accepted or not in higher learning institutions, but to ascertain whether they will be able to cope academically and that the financial security will be enough to enable them to complete their studies. Their inability to perform well academically. This has resulted on government wasting an estimated R1.6 billion annually on higher education funding without any sustainment of producing the graduates that are needed to stimulate economic growth in the country.

According to the Council on Higher Education (CHE) (2013), social equity and redress to increase access for previously marginalized students in Higher education institutions has not concomitantly improve success and graduation rates, rather, it has contradicted with the transformation policy at a huge financial costs. Lockhart (2004) opines the major concerns are not only that the black students will be accepted or not in higher learning institutions, but to ascertain whether they will be able to cope academically and that the financial security will be enough to enable them to complete their studies. That the high non-completion rates and long period of completion degrees can hinder access to education for potential students and cause institutional instability. This is because of wasted financial resources which would have benefited other needy students. It gives bad reputation to institutions. The Cohort studies undertaken by Council on Higher Education (CHE 2015:15) reveal that in the three-year degree taken by new students in higher education, less than half complete their studies and the other half that do complete

take up to six years to graduate. The major concerns are not only that the black students will be accepted or not in higher learning institutions, but to ascertain whether they will be able to cope academically and that the financial security will be enough to enable them to complete their studies. It is further explained that, although the budget is made for returning students after drop-out and for the students who take more than five years to graduate, 55% of them never graduate.

Letseka and Maile (2008) estimate that about 70% of university drop-outs are as a result of financial discontents. Gross, Berry and Reynolds (2015) agree as they posit that financial aid and completion rates are of huge significance in the effective management of academic success in higher education. It is not surprising that financial assistance plays a vital role in the degree completion rates and drop-outs. The questions still resolve on the following factors: Can social equity and redress with adequate public funding and academic development initiatives support the under-preparedness of students and bring positive implications for quality, increase the production of high quality graduates with competences and skills that will help economic growth in South Africa?

Pillay (2015) argued that South Africa's economic situation can be identified by the concomitant inefficiencies in higher education sector, which are external inefficiencies, whereby there is low graduate outcomes to provide for the need of the economy and internal inefficiencies, resulting on high drop-outs and repetition rates and long completion rates as well as under-productive administration. Bunting (2004) points on the inadequate access system which are being applied at the historically white universities, which does not accommodate students from poor and low social background. At the same time, it is explained that access and participation system from previously black universities has not improved to meet those of counter historically white universities, despite the policies brought by the democratic government on transformation to redress issues of race, class and success.

CHE (2016) reveals that the under preparedness of students entering universities is still a pervasive problem. It is further explained that the high failure rates are often the results of the rapid growth of enrollments in higher education of underprepared students, lack of proper career guidance and quality teaching methods, especially in the previously

marginalized schools which result into drop-outs. Cloete (2016) states that the education systems have difficulties to cope with the rising demands of the students who are at secondary level. To buttress this further, it is explained that it commences from the school system and runs to undergraduate system, where university graduate rates is very poor, at a 30% in three years, 56% in five years and in colleges at below 50%. This clearly shows that, it is not only the under preparedness of students that results into high dropouts and long completion of degrees, but also the schooling system at lower levels.

The concerns about higher education throughput rates and graduation rate which were less than 22% for the three-year degree, were noticed by the National Plan for Education (DoE, 2005). The National Plan for Higher Education (DHET, 2010) identified key areas that needed attention to maximize student chances of success as: (1) “the importance of, and challenges around, understanding students’ first year academic and social experience”. (2) “The influence of first year experience on drop-out rates and throughput rates”. (3) “The importance of providing first year students support for academic success”.

Coughlan (2002) explains the importance of considering the potential candidate that it should not only be based on their matric performance, but there should be good access tests for a student to be admitted into tertiary education. The Placement Test in English for Educational Purposes (PTEEP) is an example of the access test, which is expected to help identify those students whose school-leaving results would not indicate their potential to succeed in higher education (Yeld, Cliff and Hanslo, 2003). Most of the students who have been admitted on the basis of (PTEEP) tests have a sustainability education retention and graduation rate, compared to those who were accepted on the strength of their school results. However, Ramaoupi (2014) strongly disagrees with this notion of Coughlan as he notes that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 in chapter 2 (Bill of Rights) section 29, states that:

‘Everyone has the right to receive education in any official languages of their choice in public institutions. In order to ensure the effective access to, and implementations of this right, the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single medium institutions, taking into account: Equity, Practicability and the need to redress the results of post racially discriminatory laws and practices”.

This has been another problem in public university systems where new students are accepted based on their matric results without testing them before entering HE as to see their capability to complete their degrees within the designated time. Although there have been transformation policies on the usage of preferred languages in tertiary institutions, most students who come from public and rural schools where they were thought with their mother tongue instead of English, still find it difficult to access and participate with success in university.

Badat (2015) states that both universities and students under preparedness contribute to few students who graduate on a minimum designated time for academic programme, where 50% of university students and university of technology dropout and never graduate. The study by Letseka and Maile (2008) also indicates that South African universities are ranked the lowest in graduation rates across the world, which is because of poor financing and overwhelming gap between the secondary level and higher education. This has exacerbated student indebtedness and wasted the scarce resources.

Cloete (2016) agrees that the only time South Africa higher education performed at its best, was when 35% graduated in five years and the 55% never graduated. The new Grade 12 curriculum adopted by the university entry level to HE has been untested for feasibility, which does not ensure how well the new curriculum prepares students for HE. This clearly shows that the schooling system at lower levels is not making enough effort to prepare students who are entering tertiary education.

The previous researches provide evidence that the democratization of HE has only been successful in guarantying rapid enrolments of previously disadvantaged students who passed through poor schooling system and struggle to obtain financial resources and academic skills to succeed at tertiary level.

2.2.2 Trends in Higher education finance and funding

Although NSFAS budget has been raised from R3.2 billion in 2009 to R9.5 billion in 2015, the scheme has been unable to meet its demands due to the rapid enrolments into Higher Education (HE), which has resulted to financial exclusion of many deserving and needy students. The 2013 Ministerial committee for the review of the funding of universities

posited against free higher education in South Africa, as it noted the public and private benefits derived from higher education to the individual, and concluded on the continuing of tuition payment by the parents and students to compensate the private benefit obtained from it (DHET,2013).

The 2010 NSFAS review report estimated the average full cost of study (FCS) per student to be R43 358 (DHET, 2010). It emphasized that all universities should be allocated this amount per student and that those whose FCS (which includes other expenses such as food and transport) were considered beyond the average and should be prohibited from charging students for "the shortfall between the average and the FCS" (DHET, 2013:390-1). The reality of underfunding for NSFAS students from the historically disadvantaged institutions was the hardest hit as they have between 42% and 59% of all their undergraduate contact students being NSFAS recipients (DHET, 2013).

Swartz, Ivancheva, Czerniewicz and Morris (2018) point on the declining state financial resources, first stream (government subsidy), second stream (tuition fees) to the HE had a huge backlog on historically black universities, as the research-intensive portfolio has been a way to generate third-stream income to supplement the institution's income from student fees and government subsidies. They further said that some universities had started exploring online education as a means to grow third-stream income. It has not been clear if the announced free higher education will finance the post-graduates to enhance researches to develop the third-stream income.

Cloete (2016) notes that the government funding of the universities has decreased rapidly compared to inflation rates from 49% to 40% between the year 2000 and 2014. Which is furthered exacerbated by the student fees being raised by 42% from 2010 and 2014, that has placed (HE) system under severe difficulties, for example, high staff to student ratios, unsustainable funding base and poor NSFAS loan recovery? Hall (2015) avers that more than 70% of NSFAS beneficiaries did not complete their studies and there is no clear indication of the current figure of graduation rates, while the scheme has blown billions of rand without monitoring outcomes.

The most arguments that South African scholars are currently debating on the proposed policy of free higher education, is whether "It is going to benefit the rich or the previously socio-economic disadvantaged"? Cloete (2015) posited on the feasibility of free higher education in a developing country like South Africa, as it may give advantages to the rich and the middle-income households who can afford to pay for it. Barr (2004) agrees that the information on low or no tuition fees in providing greater access to higher education was distorted because the overwhelming subsidy in public universities accrues to students from middle and high-income families. The study conducted by Cloete in 2015 on "The Flawed ideology of free-higher education" concurs with the work of Barr, that the idea of free higher education privileges the rich and posits that it is exceptionally wrong and should be reviewed.

Kossey and Ishengoma's article in 2017 on "Issues and challenges of student financing systems in Africa" stipulates that there have not been enough government financial resources by many African countries that have invested in student loans schemes, to meet their statutory obligations of granting assistance to needy students. The sole scheme that was designated to assist students in South Africa is NSFAS and it relies heavily on the limited budget that cannot cover the operational costs nor absorb the rising cost of (HE) and the ever-growing demand of student enrollment.

Given the high enrollment percentages by students and lower success rate, South Africa could be facing revenue problems to finance higher education and unsustainable access to tertiary education. Shay (2017) argues that the decreasing GDP in South Africa's economy points that there would not be additional state funding for HE. To buttress this statement further, it is noted that the Fees Commission revealed that R1billion can only be financed per annum between 2017 to 2020 to support transformational imperatives in the university systems.

Kirst (2007) strongly argues that students from poor socio-economic background do not easily gain access into HE compared to those of middle and high-income households. Even when they do enrol; they find it difficult to participate on an acceptable level, as they are ill-prepared due to poor high school education (Uleanya & Yu, 2019). This shows that

government policies have not been effective in ensuring sustainability on the newly proposed free higher education between the students from a less privileged background and those of good socio-economic background.

DHET (1997, 13) explains the efficiency in the institutions as one which should function to the best without unnecessary waste and performs within the boundaries of sustainability. The higher education sector exists in economic reality, characterized by the problem of scarce resources and South African undergraduate system comes at a higher cost, mainly as a result of government underfunding and inefficiencies at the undergraduate level. According to the statistics from the Council for Higher Education (CHE) (2013), the undergraduate system has been absorbing large numbers of students whom they knew that they have 30% chance of completing in 5 years (CHE, 2013). By far, South Africa has produced the lowest possible output with high possible costs incurred. DHET and CHE (2015) cohort agreed and revealed on their statistics that out of 1 million children who enter grade 1, only 100,000 will enter university and 53,000 will graduate after 6 years.

Cloete, Sherppard and Schalkwyk (2016) pointed out the problem of inefficiencies in HE system in Africa as (1) the massification on education systems which have inefficiencies as capacity could not cope with the demand, where it starts from the schooling system and runs to the undergraduate system. (2) From the year 2006 to 2013 there was 1.7% growth of new entrants, at the same time annual growth of the returning undergraduates increased to 4%. This reflects that many students stay long in the undergraduate system. (3) Some too many students are economically disadvantaged in the university system. The current university undergraduate system is inefficient and unsustainable and needs to be restructured.

Cloete (2016) noted that fewer students repaid their loans in South Africa, though they were in the working environment. The ministerial committee revealed that almost 70% of NSFAS students are no longer in the higher education programs and 72% might have dropped out and the ones who had graduated and have been absorbed into the labour market were not known in 2015. The DoE (2015) revealed that NSFAS has hardly

recovered the interests, whereby recovery rates dropped in 2011 from R600 million to R200 million in 2014. Although cost-sharing models have been introduced to relieve the government from subsidizing higher education, there are still challenges in the administrative procedures to collect the money from those students who benefited, so the scheme would be sustained for future generations.

Steyn and de Villiers (2006) pointed out that student debt is a major funding problem in South Africa's public universities and a barrier to attaining financial freedom. They revealed that, out of six Historically Disadvantaged Universities (HDUs), student debt has risen rapidly from R148 million in 2001 to almost R463 million in 2003 and at Historically Advantaged Universities (HAUs), student debt increased from R35 million in 2001 to about R58, 5 million in 2003. Although there have been credit policies developed by higher education institutions to manage debts, many students' debts have been written off as bad debt. Cloete (2016) agreed with Steyn and de Villiers as he stated that the white paper on transformation of 1997 enabled the previously marginalized students to enter the higher education system without checking the estimates of the future outcomes, as most of the fewer privileged students who entered universities are unable to finish their studies, and they are revolved back to poverty leaving huge student debts and no qualification to secure formal employment. Instead of higher education to provide an empowering mechanism, it disempowers poor students and puts them deeper into debts.

The NSFAS Ministerial Review Committee report of 2009 and NSFAS 2014/2015 annual report observed the downfall overall performance which was instigated by the number of factors, such as underfunding from government, corruption in the allocation of Loans/Bursaries leading to undeserving students obtaining the bursaries and the lack of qualified and skilled staff due to cadre deployment. The government entity such as NSFAS has been failing to administer the policy programs for granting loans and bursaries which have led to students demanding free higher education.

2.2.3 The quest for free- higher education challenges and benefits.

The rapid rise of tuition fees has resulted in the cost of HE to be extremely expensive (Govender, 2016). This has forced many tertiary institutions to increase their tuition fees as the only way for their continual survival. The main source of financial assistance which came from the state has decline way below the international standards (National Treasury, 2016). Phungo (2015) opines that less than 5% of the households in South Africa can barely afford to pay for tertiary education without any assistance. Talik (2004) observed that HE systems moved from being a public good to a tuition market- based model. For example, in countries where tertiary education was free, fees were introduced and where they already existed like in South Africa they were increased.

The countrywide student protests rose in the year 2015 as the grievances demanding accessibility, affordability and state funding for HE (Nana, 2017). The main position of the protest was written on the placards "Our parents were sold dreams in 1994. We are just here for the Refund" (Badat, 2015). The FeesMustFall movement was the beginning of the need for free education in most universities across the country where students argued that education should not be treated as a commodity, but as a right that citizens are entitled to enjoy, as the Freedom Charter promised them (Langa, Ndlela, Edwin and Vilakazi, 2017). The students claimed that freedom charter stipulates that:

"Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children;

Higher education and technical training shall be opened to all by means

Of state allowances and scholarships awarded based on merit".

(Freedom Charter, 1995).

Although the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 argued that "free", "compulsory" referred to only basic education. Higher education and Technical Training must be opened to all-which would be made through state financial support.

Another motivation that triggered the demand for free higher education was the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, where the student and student leaders argued that it stipulated that:

Everyone has the right (a) to basic education, including adult basic education, and (b) to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make to be progressively available and accessible (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). This confirms that there are still conflicts and misunderstanding on who should acquire this proposed policy on free higher education.

Fine (2012) indicates that the adoption of neoliberal policies resulting in large scale privatization and the implementation of user fees for health and education as conditions set by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in exchange for loans in African countries is the result that higher education has become expensive. Johnston (2004) pointed on the government policies that were implemented which led to higher education to be more expensive. What made it worse in South Africa is the money that was left in the National Treasury which was too small compared to the expansion in HE participation that has been rapid. The Sub-Saharan region has the fastest-growing student enrolments than any other region in Africa (Oketch, 2016). Government policy planners have not been able to foresee the outcomes of improper implementing of higher education policies and develop the alternatives.

Wangenge-ouma (2012) argues that the dissatisfactions with tuition fees and the decline of government funding to higher education showed by largely fewer privilege students and the higher education participation inequalities. The proposed policy of free higher education could be a potential strategy to compensate for the increasing dissatisfaction of service delivery.

The most disturbing question from the proposed policy has been, "Free higher education for all or free higher education for the poor?" Cloete (2015:2) notes d that it is important to differentiate these two concepts as they have a different meaning. Motala (2018) justifies these concepts as (1) free higher education as all fees and related full costs of study, which includes housing, food, books and transport are to be paid for and free higher

education for the poor as a model that will differentiate students into groups based on their parental income.

Dunga and Mncayi (2016:170) state that free education for all in developing countries is not possible, as it would compromise the quality of education and strain the scarce resources that are already unavailable. For example, the rapid enrollment that has been witnessed for the past decades indicates that NSFAS is facing financial difficulties to grant all the deserving students the grants. More qualified lectures are moving away from public universities to private universities as government funding has been declining, which leaves the public institution with less qualified academics and less quality education.

Previous research's from Africa and Latin America argued that free education for all benefits the rich more than the less privileged because students from high-income households are in a better position to compete for access to public universities, while the brilliant students from poor backgrounds are forced to private fee-paying institutions or low-quality public universities (Motala, 2018). Badat (2015) argued that implementing free higher education without increasing public funding would create an unstable environment, where more wealthy would have sent their children to private universities or overseas institutions. The higher education system has been influenced by superpowers and affects South Africa as a state and its economy. For example, currently, South Africans are living in trepidation of a potential downgrade by rating agencies such as Moody's Investors Service, Standard and Poor's and Fitch. The adoption of neoliberal politics in South African has resulted in public universities becoming state-aided universities rather state-funded universities.

A statement by the North-West University (2016) concurs with Badat that free education for all generates inequalities and it is not affordable in poor political economies such as South Africa, where they are rapid enrollments that requires extensive financial resources to sustain the quality of education. This would create even greater inequalities and division of class. The students who will study overseas and in private institutions would have a better quality of education and better work opportunities than those who study in local public universities.

Wangenge-Ouma and Cloete (2008) implied that even though the wealthy could afford the full cost of studies, they would benefit from free higher education. Cloete, Sheppard and van Schalkwyk (2016) agreed as they posited on free higher education as it regenerates inequalities whereby the already-privileged like (political and business elites) would benefit more than less privileged, as they have social, cultural and economic means to access, participate and succeed in tertiary systems. HESA (2008) noted that through progressive taxation, less privileged will be made to pay for the education of the rich. It has never been mentioned whether who would or not pay for the proposed free higher education.

McCowan (2012) argued that a universal right to higher education should be based on access and equity. Barr (2004) disagreed with the notion of McCowan but suggested that a brighter and potential person should not be denied access to higher education because of his/her historically disadvantage background, so equity objective should not be the foundation to (HE). It is further explained that most developing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, primary and secondary education have already disadvantaged the majority due to poor teaching systems that prevent them from access and success in the universities.

The South African Union of Students (SAUS) called for education to be free and posited on that it shouldn't come at a cost of quality. SAUS's, Fisiha Hassan was quoted saying: 'The students are not to be the ones who must bear the burden of paying, but the State, Universities, Private sector should make contributions". The president of the Union's stated that this could be done through government wage bill cut, where salaries of Vice-Chancellors, government ministers and mayors be cut to fund free education and also Nationalization of Mines and Banks (EWN Reporter) (Eye Witness News Reporter, 2016). No clear indication of how the model is going to be funded to sustain for future generations.

Cloete (2016) stated that there has been some conflict of interest between the students and the vice-chancellors whom both had used countries like Norway and Germany as an example of free higher education. The students argued for free tuition; the vice-chancellors disagreed because South Africa cannot afford it. Badat (2015) argued that

(HE) has both public and private benefits and students should financially contribute to attaining it. It was positive since it produces doctors, nurses, teachers and lawyers that are needed by the society at the same time the graduate also enjoys private benefits, such as living the good life, high income and luxury lifestyle.

The cost of free higher education for about a million students and 700,000 students from TVET colleges would amount to about R80 billion per annum (Global Education Monitoring Report,2017). Van der Berg (2016) however noted that this would remain inefficient to deal with the ever-rising demand of HE. The inadequate financial resources government has coupled with aiding the inefficiencies in the basic education system would mean that HE would remain largely to the elites and with potential students from a poor background ranging from 1 to 10 in terms of their family income.

The continuing of inequalities in race and class demographic makeup of universities, between 2009 to 2014, shows that black participation in HE grew from 13 to 15%, at the same time white students decreased from 58 to 54%, however, whites are still maintaining higher success rates and being the ones having potential to graduate in a record time compared to the black students (CHE, 2014, pp.5). The inequality in class and race remains the problem to sustain the proposed free education, hence, the government still has to plan and develop a policy to bridge the gaps.

Cloete (2016) argues that free higher education for the poor should be implemented. He further posits that loans must not be given to the students as they keep them at disadvantaged positions when paying back. He also suggested that economically disadvantaged students should be carefully selected and admitted, fully supported not only financially and academically, but also socially. The recent study commissioned by the Minister of higher education found that fee-free university education for the poor in South Africa is feasible, but would require substantial additional funding, White paper for post-school education and Training (DHET, 2013). It is further stated that free education for the poor is possible and should be done progressively as soon as resources are available.

The submissions and presentations brought by various higher education institutions across South Africa to the Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education and Training in the year 2016 indicated the following statements:

According to an independent, non-profit, educational institution, implementing free higher education would be an unfair solution to free education if it only applied to public institutions (Centre for Creative Education, 2016). It justified this from the constitution right to private education and indicated that free public education and cost-based expenses for private education would be seen as unfair competition. The University of KwaZulu Natal student representative council (SRC) presented concerns to the commission of inquiry of higher education and training. They highlighted the problems of disadvantaged students without NSFAS funding and emphasized the need for free, compulsory, quality education (UKZN SRC, 2016). They argued that the current system used by the scheme was not assisting anyone instead it excludes the poor and does not even fund the half of the students based on their disadvantaged background, but only maintain its shortages of financial resources.

The University of Zululand (UZ) argued that upfront payment fees are the central problem of student access to HE (UZ presentation and submission, 2016). The university argued that since tertiary education has public benefits, public-private-partnership and social investment bonds should be funded to meet the tertiary institution's needs. It also maintains that students should pay for their education once they earn a high income. This would be made through income-contingent taxes to ensure future generations have access to HE.

University of Western Cape (UWC) students on their submission to the commission stated that free higher education should be freed from exclusion based on being poor, high drop-out rates, lack of student support and mismanagement of NSFAS and other funding (UWC students,2016). They continued criticizing the policy of free higher education for the poor, as they mentioned that there is no clear definition of the context of the word poor. There is still a huge misunderstanding on whether the proposed policy would apply to the disadvantaged students or everyone.

The Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) advanced their submission with the historical context of universities and argued that inequality remains a problem not only in students, also the institutions (CPUT, 2016). It stated that funding should be made according to the needs of the universities and students to bridge the gap of inequalities at both levels. It further opted for free education but noted the risks associated with it, making an example of Nigeria, which uses a fee-free system but still struggles from underfunding and lack of competitive infrastructure. This is because of the psychological impact on society on not paying for a service which devalues the service provided and loses sustainability of that service. The historically whites' universities are still the best choice for many students rather than the counterpart black universities, because of the better support (academically and financially), and better student life and employment opportunities.

Tswane University of Technology (TUT) did not support free education for all, as it maintained that it is unaffordable. It further argues that universities should not expand to meet the enrolment targets set in 2013 by the White paper on PSET education unless the necessary funding is available (TUT,2016). It suggested that students who can afford fees should continue to pay upfront and those who cannot, should be made to pay later after they have completed their studies, through community service or tax (administered by SARS) on their earnings when they are in the labour market. Surmise to state that proper planning of government policies on higher education should have been done to avoid the conflict between expansion and available financial resources.

University of Mpumalanga (UMP) posited that high quality of HE is expensive and claimed that since the private and public benefits are within tertiary education, there should be the continuation of a cost-sharing model, where students, private sector and donors will share the cost (UMP,2016). The UMP supported a loan or bursary system, loans would be paid through tax system over a long period of years, with no interest charged and an increase in government subsidy in the light of public benefits.

The University of Witwatersrand (Wits) revealed on its survey from the respondents that they did not support the free-for-all system, where people who can afford to pay would be

also funded (Wits, 2016). It further proposed a means-testing based on the family income of the student, households who cannot afford the full cost of studies will be assisted by loans or bursaries, but those who can afford should pay and SARS would determine family income through the means test, while others pay through a payback or work-back model.

According to South African Further Education and Training Student Association (SAFETSA) which is a student body for the TVET sector, it was indicated that TVET colleges represent the most disadvantaged segment of the population, and the strong support the free higher education for the poor (SAFETSA,2016). They pointed on the inadequate funding by NSFAS as the results for drop-outs and student protests. They further posited that education is not a place for making money but a context of building a country. They concluded with the recommendations that undergraduate and college degrees are free to those who cannot afford to pay because loans carry a burden to a student to start a life with debt.

South African Student Congress (SASCO, 2016) identified the benefits of free higher education as the means for social development, personal empowerment and advancement of well-being and economic development of the nation. It argued that fees are marketization of HE which turn students into consumers and force universities into the competition. SASCO further pleaded that fees should be completely removed from education and suggested the implementation of free higher education to be introduced from the poor and the missing middle and later for all. It concluded by identifying the possible sources of funding as the unclaimed pension fund money, wealth tax, education tax fund where all employed people could contribute R20 and an increase in business investment.

The Democratic Alliance Student Organization (DASO, 2016) agreed with SASCO that HE is the fundamental basis for economic empowerment, but positioned on fees to be available and affordable to ensure access for socio-economic disadvantaged students and missing middle. It argues that free higher education is possible; if the government can scrap corruption and reprioritize the existing budget.

The Young Communist League Student Association (YCLSA) argued that there should be a distinction between fee-free and free higher education (YCLSA, 2016). They explained free education as one which addresses the question of quality and inequality, the content of education, transformation and fees, while fee-free education is only restricted on fees while neglecting other important issues. They opted for free quality, compulsory transformed education rather than fee-free education.

The University of Limpopo (UL) pointed at the decline of government subsidies which resulted in high tuition fees and insufficient NSFAS funding, student growing debt, public and private benefits (UL, 2016). It explained the unaffordability of fee-free education as the HE system is underfunded by R90 billion. UL suggested that state, civil society and businesses should expand contribution and NSFAS recoveries should grow.

The University of Venda (UV) stated that rising costs facing universities and increasing student debt was the barrier to access and passage of student drop-outs. The UV opted for the increase of 8% as necessary for institution survival and further stated that NSFAS should not be student-centred, but universities should allocate funds according to their student needs, while SARS assist with the collections and household data.

Durban University of Technology (DUT) commented by accepting the notion of fee-free education but noted the private benefits and limited resources (DUT, 2016). They concluded on not giving support for total fee-free education for all undergraduate university students but preferred a systematic based fee-free undergraduate higher education for the poor based on family income which might be extended to the missing middle (students coming from middle-income households) (DUT,2016). DUT agreed on the provision of the full cost of study and recovery system through a form of additional tax once a student graduates and starts earning income.

The University of Free State (UFS) identified the historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs) as the ones with serious underfunding, as they have poor infrastructure and equipment for teaching and learning, research, staff, student accommodation and transport (UFS, 2016). It argued that the post-apartheid funding formula should be restructured because the majority of the students attending HDIs and the lack of NSFAS

to keep the rising demand of poor students leading them to huge debts. They further stated that fees should be the component of HE, but poor students should be given access without having to pay upfront, but later payback after completing their studies.

In brief, different submissions and presentations by scholars have highlighted the benefits and challenges that may be encountered by the government, but there is still no indication how the government may overcome them if the policy is improperly implemented. The planning on government policies has created conflict on sustaining the proposed free education. This has been shown by the problem of financial resources and their inability to accommodate the increasing number of previously disadvantaged student's high rate of drop-out and non-completion of degrees in record time. Although the intention of the proposed policy of free higher education is good, since there is huge gap of inequalities within the South African society as a result of previous apartheid policies that prevented certain races from access, quality and success in higher education, there has not been a clear indication of how the government is going to administer the policy programme to ensure its sustainability.

2.4 Government policies on higher education

Before 1994, there have been several initiatives of transformation that intended to give effect to the institutional change in South Africa. These have included the definition of the purposes and goals of higher education, extensive policy research, policy formulation, adoption, implementation, funding, academic structure and programs, quality assurance, restructuring as well as reconfiguration of the higher education institutional landscape of institutions.

South Africa's Constitution is regarded as the most progressive constitution in the world, with an outstanding Bill of Rights which binds the state to fulfil the values of human dignity, achievements of equity, the advancement of non-sexism and non-racialism and human rights. One of the rights stipulated by the constitution is the right to education.

According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) "*everyone has the right (a) to a basic education, including adult basic education, (b) to further education,*

which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible" (RSA, constitution, 1996). This means that basic education is a fundamental right, while further education (Higher education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training) must be made progressively available and accessible.

According to the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) (1996), it is stated that transformation needs are to be responded to by issuing a progressive framework and identifying fundamental principles that would guide the process of transformation in HE. It further states that these are the few recommendations needed for funding transformation in the system:

(1) expansion of student enrollment and broadened access to reach a wider distribution of social groups and classes, (2) strategic public funding framework taking to account the numbers of students in different fields and levels of study, and addressing the special needs of institutions, such as equity, redress and research infrastructure, (3) increase cooperation and partnership in structures of governance, both at the system and institutional levels. The formation of the NCHE resulted in immersing the significant changes in higher education institutions with the formulation of various policy developments and papers that came thereafter.

The 5th chapter of the higher education Act (No.101 of 1997) makes the provision for funding of higher education. It outlines the following government intentions with regards to higher education:

- The redress of past discrimination.
- Ensuring representativeness and equal access.
- Providing optimal opportunities for learning and creation of knowledge.
- Promoting the values that underpin an open and democratic society based on dignity, equity, freedom, respect for academic freedom, the pursuit of excellence, promotion of the potential of every student, and appreciation for diversity.

The 5th chapter of this Act specifically addresses the funding of higher education, as it stipulates, "The minister must, after consulting the council of higher education and with concurrence with the minister of finance, determine the policy on the funding of public higher education which must include appropriate measures for redress of past inequalities, and publish such policy by notice in the Gazette".

Regarding the process to redress the past discrimination, the proposed policy on free higher education has good intentions, especially for the majority of previously marginalized black people who are still socio-economically affected by the injustices of the apartheid regime to attend tertiary institutions. Funding was the most important tool used by the previous government to suppress other races (Wangenge-Ouma, 2010). The policy may further develop the country economically and socially, but the challenge has been how it is going to be administered and monitored to ensure its sustainability.

Ensuring representativeness and equal access can be seen as a solution to the dearth of higher education. The year 1996 till today has been characterized by the high enrollment of previously marginalized and disadvantaged community but also influenced by inefficiencies due to improper planning of policies, this has been witnessed by unsuccessful government policies in education and NSFAS not coping with the growing demand of the new student. The problem started from the poorly run secondary schooling / high school system which ran up to the universities that prevent most of the black students to obtain good results that would enable them to gain access to higher education and participate and succeed in a designated time to graduate. The government policies have not been effective in ensuring the high non-completion rates, low throughput and the long completion rates. DHET (2015) indicated that direct cost to students should be proportionate to their ability to pay; financial need should not be a barrier to access and success in higher education.

Providing optimal opportunities for learning and creation of knowledge has been an issue since (HBU) has been hit hard by the declining financial resources from the state which prevented them being granted optimal opportunities for learning and creation of knowledge. Most of them are relying on the third stream of income based on their

research initiatives that have been a backlog since they have to utilize that money for their continual survival. Meanwhile, they have not been able to compete with other universities, especially historical white universities

The Education White Paper 3: A programme for the transformation of higher education (1997). The main purpose of this policy was to identify different strategies for higher education transformation. This policy aimed at transforming higher education as a means to redress inequalities of apartheid which was also in line with the new democratic government of the African National Congress (ANC) policy objectives to achieve equity and redress the injustices of the past (OECD,2008). To buttress this further, it outlined and described the challenges, needs, purposes, goals, structure, desired growth, governance and funding mechanism for the higher education system. The White paper 3 (RSA DoE, 1997, P.6) also identified the means of improving the quality of teaching and learning, securing and advancing the high level of research capacity, capacity-building and human development, establishing a free and open academic climate. The white paper's argument is based on the new funding framework which differs from one of the apartheid regimes and set to prioritize the goal-orientation and performance-related issues to fulfil the vision and goals for transformation of HE systems.

The **(NPHE) National Plan for Higher Education (2001)** provided a way forward for the advancement of higher education in South Africa. In line with the democratic government development directions, it sought to address past inequalities and transform the higher education system. The plan provided a single qualification framework for all higher education institutions to allow mobility, progression and collaboration in the sector. This means it removed barriers to access higher education for the previously marginalized populations and further recognized the need for production of graduates with necessary skills for the 21st century and to build high-level research capacity to address the research and knowledge needed for South Africa.

Necessary targets are to be established for the shape and size of HE system, including massification and participation rates, institutional and programme mixes and equity and efficiency goals (NPHE, 2001:12). That implied that targeted numbers of higher learning

institutions and enrolments were to be set to improve equity and efficiency. This was to be done through a planning process in conjunction with funding and appropriate regulatory framework which will be steering towards achieving goals and targets set by the plan (NPHE, 2001:10). It suggested the effective use of funding which requires the development of new funding formula based on the funding principles mentioned in the White paper. In contrast, the White paper proposed the replacement planning model in which development of HE system that would be driven and National policy goals and objectives achieved through a combination of instruments which are National and Institutional three-year rolling plans that has indicative plans which facilitate the setting of objectives and implementation targets that can be adjusted and revised annually (MoE, 1997:13).

The planning model in HE funding involves three steps which are:

- The Ministry determines national policy and goals and objectives.
- Higher education institutions develop three-year rolling plans indicating how they intend to address the national goals and objectives and
- Interaction between the Ministry and institutions results in the approval of institutional plans, which would lead to the release of funds based on the quantum of available funds.

The new funding framework and the associated planning processes are in line with the government Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), which controls the national budgets process. The MTEF involves the three-year rolling budgets which are adjusted, updated and revised annually, to review the growth of departmental budgets. In the context of revenue generation and affordability, the relationship between departmental policy priorities and the government's strategic objectives, expenditure patterns, inflation adjustments. In HE, it concerns issues such as enrolments and output patterns and trends, cost pressures and efficiency measures.

MoE (2011) approved the implementation merger of higher education institutions which was recommended by the National Plan for Higher Education Mergers were intended to bring harmony and unite institutions which were divided by the legacy of apartheid. They

were also found to be the optimal management of the system to achieve enrolments targets.

The white paper on Higher Education (2013) titled "*Building an Expanded, Effective and Integrated Post-School System*", stresses the significance of integration of various forms of HE into a more co-operative body of learning. It further committed to progressively introduce "free education" for the poor as soon as resources are available. Section 4 of this Act provides the roles of the universities as to giving citizens the high level of skills required in the labour market, especially as centres for research excellence. They are secondly seen as dominant producers of knowledge; they assess and find new applications for existing knowledge to keep South Africa independent, inventive and able to stave intellectuals to develop post-industrial countries. Finally, universities are perceived as being responsible for social justice, creating equity and equitable conditions to reverse the imbalances of the past.

The National Development Plan (2030) which is also included in higher education transformation system is a current strategic roadmap for all sectors of development in South Africa. In the education sector, it offers a long-term perspective to reduce poverty and inequality by 2030. The government realized the importance of a functional education system that would enhance human capacity development to ensure better citizens and the whole nation for economic growth. These development targets aimed at higher education included:

(a) Increase the graduation rate of further education and training colleges to 75%.

(b) Produce 30 000 artisans per year.

(c) Increase participation rates in further education and training colleges to 25%.

(d) An additional 1 million learning opportunities per year, which meant a target of 1 620 000 enrolments in HE per annum by 2030 and stated that all qualifying NSFAS students be given the full cost of study and those who cannot qualify based on the means test, be granted access to bank loans.

(e) Increase graduation rates to more than 25% by 2030.

(f) Produce more than 100 doctoral graduates per million by 2030.

3 Theoretical Framework:

3.1 Introduction

The theoretical framework of a research project relates to the ideologies on which the research takes place and gives logical clear explanations in the theoretical aspects and practical issues of the study undertaken. Theory can be addressed as to how authors explore the essence of a problem without being able to use its name, which can be seen uniquely distinctive about a certain type of thing found in nature (Locke, 1706:43). As a result, this section looks at the Resource Dependence Theory (RDT) and the Theory on Planning (ToP). It also helps to explain how these theories give coherence to understand the focus of this study and what it intends to provide.

3.2 Resource Dependence Theory

Massen and Gomitzka (1999) state that the assumptions of this theory is the pliability of the institutions that enable them to adapt to any environmental change that may endanger its critical resource relationships, for an example if the higher learning institutions are more productive, they can generate their funds for survival instead of relying on the decreasing government funding. The key argument is that the survival of the institutions is threatened when its critical resources are taken. The resource dependence theory has been outlined in external control between the organizations where it analyzes the sources and consequences of power in inter-organizational relations by its founding fathers Aldrich and Pfeffer, (1976) and later Pfeffer and Salancik (1978). By inter-organizational relations, they seek to determine where power and dependence come from, and how those that run the organizations use their power and manage their dependence. The motivation of the theory was of those running the organization to ensure an organization's survival and at the same time enhance their autonomy, while maintaining stability in the organization's exchange relations (Pfeffer, 2003). Emerson (1962) agrees on the notion of Massen and Gomitzka and explained the impotence of exchange relationship, whereby

two organizations, A and B, may rely on each other for survival. For instance, if organization A (Government) has power over B (Higher education institutions) because A has resources that B values though they are unavailable, that means that B is dependent on A to a degree that A has power over B, but that does not mean that A and B can never have power over each other, making them interdependent.

Pfeffer (1987, pp.26-27) argues that resource dependence perspective and inter-organizational relations can be regarded as (1) that organizations are not autonomous, but rather are constrained by a network of interdependencies with other organizations, (2) that interdependence, when coupled with uncertainty about what actions will be of those with which organizations are interdependent leads to a situation in which survival and continued success are uncertain, therefore (3) organization take actions to manage external interdependencies, although such actions are inevitably never completely successful and produce new patterns of dependence and interdependence. The theory may be based on how the organization chooses the best alternatives which will not limit their freedom to govern relations with their exchange partners and allow them to minimize uncertainty and dependence and maximize their autonomy. For example, if the organization relies on a sole-source of another supplier, then the best solution is to find and maintain alternatives. On the contrary, Cisciario and Piskorski (2005) disagree with the argument presented by Pfeffer and Salancik, that mutual dependence and power imbalance combined create interdependence in Resource Dependence Theory. They argue that power imbalance and mutual dependence have opposite effects on a tendency of behavior for an organization to engage in mergers and acquisitions. They concluded that separating and measuring power imbalance and mutual dependence independently, can be seen as an obstacle in merger and acquisition activity while mutual dependence drives merger and acquisition activity. Their argument is based on the notion that powerful organization is less willing to enter into a merger with their dependents, as they lose the advantages of being the power-holder in a relationship.

To survive declining State financial support, South African Higher Learning Institutions have to adapt to the existing economic exchange relationships to address their current resource needs and also initiate new exchange relationships. This theory relates to the

study that Higher Education Institutions do not exist in a vacuum; they are embedded in their environment and often influenced by it. This is because they depend on resources provided by the external environment, thus, they are expected to adapt to existing economic exchange relationship to address their current resource needs. As public funding has been decreasing, the universities had no choice than to also increase the tuition fees to maintain their survival. If free education is to be provided to students, Higher education institutions must produce the maximum required graduates. There should be an economic exchange relationship and this would mean that the government would receive capital returns on investing in higher education. This is envisaged to stimulate economic growth, and the free higher education would be sustaining itself for future students. The higher education institutions have to look for other alternatives, like a merger with private companies and international donors to assist the government to sustain the proposed policy, rather than relying on the government as a major supplier of funding education.

3.2 Theory on Planning

The Planning Theory is concerned with the process in which planning occurs. It is one of the components of management functions. Lane (2005) stresses that the blueprint planning (which was associated with the early planning thinkers) may be concomitant to public participation as it has two important legacies: the idea that planning is an apolitical activity and the idea that there is a single unified public interest.

Campbell and Marshall (2002) opine that public interest in planning has three roles: "It legitimizes planning as a state activity, based on planning ethics and practices; another is a norm for planning practice: this is how practitioners perceive it and how professional institutions mention the public interest (Campbell and Marshall, 2000). After applying this norm, it leads to the third role: the public interest as a creation for evaluating planning and its products: policies, projects and plans (Alexander, 2002). Troan (1968) posits that planning is distorting in such a way that they may not bring the desired outcomes. These are some of the reasons for that to be true.

- Predictions are required to be made about the future when planning, whilst those predictions may likely be perfectly accurate.
- Planning may be based on perceptions about current conditions, and these may be based on inaccurate or incomplete information.
- Planning is based on current objectives or notions on what is desirable, and these can change over time so that before a plan is fully accomplished its objective may be discarded.
- The actions chosen to carry out a plan may have results different from those that were expected.

The theory relates to the study in a way that the proposed public policy on free higher education should have been planned and discussed with the public before its announcement. The government advisors on policy-making should practice the appropriate planning methods when planning public policies. This will ensure public participation in the decision-making process and a single unified public interest. Their planning should be based on knowledge about current conditions, about the future and the effects of current actions, and that the accuracy and completeness of knowledge will bring desired outcomes that would sustain future generations.

2.3 Summary of the Theories

The above theories (Resource Dependency and Theory on Planning) have explained the best way to correlate the focus of the study. Their weaknesses and strengths have shown what could be expected concerning the benefits and challenges linked to appropriate and improper implementation of the proposed free higher education policy. The next chapter will focus on Research Methodology.

Chapter Three

Methodology and a brief profile of the University of Zululand and University of KwaZulu-Natal.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research design and Methodology procedures that were used conducting this study. Specifically, on how data was collected. Methodology plays a vital role in implementing a research study and gives directions on its design and implementation, and for this study qualitative approach was employed.

3.2 Research design

Research designs serve as plans for conducting a research project. However, not all qualitative research commences with a research design (Yin, 2011). He further states that they do not only serve as a plan but as a guide considering dealing(s) with past event features of the study. It is the description of specific methods and instruments which are going to be undertaken by a researcher in data collection and administration procedure of the instruments. Gorard (2013) refers to the design as not only about techniques and procedures but about convincing a wider audience of skeptical people that the results of the research are based on decisions that are as safe as possible. Two primary approaches can be used in conducting a study, which is qualitative and quantitative methods. The study employed a qualitative approach but integrates little quantitative approach when analyzing the graphs and percentages from data collected through unstructured open-ended questionnaires.

3.3 Qualitative Approach

Kumar (2014) defines qualitative approach as a method that uses flexible and unstructured ways to explore the enquiry and focuses on the description, narration of the feelings, experiences and perceptions. Adams and Smith (2003) explain qualitative studies as the examinations of the meanings, perceptions, experiences and

understandings of those involved in the activity or event being studied. As the study focuses on exploring and understanding the meaning and perceptions of the respondents on free higher education and its implications on the university produce, the qualitative approach is best suitable for this study (Creswell, 2014). The study employed primary and secondary data collection method, where the descriptive and textual analysis was used. Newspapers articles, journals, government gazettes, internet, interviews and questionnaires were employed to gather relevant data for the study. In the questionnaires, both open-ended and close-ended questions were asked to collect data from students and academic staff members. Also, unstructured interviews were conducted for the Department of Education officials. An unstructured interview is one in which a researcher has every flexibility in terms of questions that are asked to the respondent(s).

3.4 Quantitative Approach

Quantitative research consists of those studies in which the data concerned can be analyzed in terms of numbers. It is based more on its original plans and its results are more readily analyzed and interpreted (Hughes; 2006:2). Henning (2004:3) posits that in quantitative studies, the focus is on control of all the components in the actions and representations of the actions and representations of the respondents, variables are guided with an acute focus on how variables are related. The main aim and strength of employing quantitative approach in this study are to aid the generalization of the result.

3.5 Target Population and Sampling Procedures

A target population is a group of respondents that meet the designated set of criteria (Brynard, Hanekom and Brynard, 2014). They further explain the population as the people of the same characteristic that the researcher is keen to conduct the study from. The targeted population which was randomly selected for this study were university students as well as the academic staff members from the University of Zululand (Dlangezwa Campus), the University of KwaZulu Natal (Westville Campus) in Durban and the Department of Education officials at Empangeni. The reason, why the researcher chose the two identified universities is that the Unizulu was a previously disadvantaged

institution with a high population of black students who were from a poor background, while the University of KwaZulu Natal was for the historically white. The researcher envisaged the collection of useful data that could be generalized to the relevant study. Moreover, academics are regarded as main stakeholders in higher education institutions.

Kumar (2011) states that a smaller group of respondents drawn from a large population is called a sample of the population. It is further emphasized that the purpose is to maximize the representatives of the drawn population to allow generalization to be precise.

The study employed the Purposive Sampling. Sarantakos (1997) explains that the purposive sampling can be employed by a researcher if they prefer to use a subject with a purpose on their minds, that the subject chosen is relevant to the study and reason for using purposive sampling procedure is that the targeted population (The University of Zululand students, the University of KwaZulu Natal students and staff members of both Universities and Department Education Officials) are all relevant stakeholders in higher education which can be consulted to collect the necessary needed data and generalize it from the expected findings of the study.

A total of eight (8) students and two (2) academic staff members from the University of Zululand and fifteen (15) students and three (3) academic staff members from the University of KwaZulu Natal, were randomly selected using purposive sampling. The reason for larger sampling size in the University of KwaZulu Natal is because UKZN comprises 5 campuses which are: Edgewood, Westville and Howard College, Medical school and Pietermaritzburg campus, while (Unizulu) comprises only two campuses, Main campus and Richards Bay. Also, one (1) higher education official from the management position was selected. The questionnaires were distributed to the students and academic staff members and 1 interview was conducted for the Higher education official.

3.5.1 Brief Profile and History of University of Zululand and University of KwaZulu-Natal

The University of Zululand was established in 1960 as an affiliated college of the University of South Africa and is located at KwaDlangezawa semi-rural area under Umhlathuze municipality at Mpangeni area. Due to separation development imposed by the apartheid government, it was initially designated for Zulu speaking students only. As a result, this pre-historic, geographical arrangement, the university remained predominantly Zulu speaking and the majority of the students comes from rural and disadvantaged areas of KwaZulu-Natal. The Council on Higher Education (2014) revealed that only about 15 per cent of the students come from urban areas. The KwaDlangezwa campus is the administrative seat (main campus) of the University, with other campus situated at Richards Bay. Both campuses have been seen with the rapid enrollment from 9318 in 2007 to 17939 in 2019. The two campuses offer approximately 252 accredited degrees, diplomas and certificates in eight faculties.

The University of KwaZulu-Natal formed a merger with the University of Durban-Westville (campus in Durban) and the University of Natal (campus in Pietermaritzburg) in 2004. It was a difficult process as university cultures, traditions and histories caused major tensions between the students and the staff members.

The University of Durban-Westville was established in 1960 as the University College for Indians on Salisbury Island in Durban Bay. Throughout the 1960s, there was a relatively low number of students as a result of Congress Alliances policy of shunning apartheid structures. During the 1980s, this policy instigated a strategy of education under protest which sought to transform apartheid institutions into sites of struggle. Student enrolment grew rapidly in the 1970s which led to the college being granted university status.

The following year, it was named the University of Durban-Westville and moved to Westville area which was a site for the major anti-apartheid struggle. The University of Durban-Westville became an autonomous institution in 1984, opening up to students of all races. The University of Natal was founded in 1910 in Pietermaritzburg and gained its independent status in 1949. Meanwhile, the Distinctive Howard College was opened in

1931. Due to its foundation as an institution of merged colleges, the racial and social make-up of the university became diverse (UKZN n.d).

Since the end of apartheid, thousands of students from previously marginalized background have been educated in this institution. Although changes can be noted, staff profile in academia is still occupied by mostly white personnel while the Administrative side is positioned by mostly black personnel (UKZN, 2014). The following figures 3.1 and 3.2 show the map of the University of Zululand (Kwadlangezwa Campus) and the 5 campuses of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

The research instruments that were used for this study were questionnaires and interviews. The students were given the questionnaire together with the participant informed consent form which is attached in Appendix A, B for the unstructured questions that would allow the respondent to explore and flow freely on his/her perceptions. Appendix A was informed consent and C were the unstructured questionnaires which were allocated to the Academic staff members.

Section A of **appendix B**, which was the questionnaire guide for the students consisted of personal bio data. Each respondent was expected to state some of their bio-data such as gender, level of study, etc. **Section B** had open-ended questions and the respondents were allowed to be interviewed as some of them preferred not to write down answers, which helped the researcher observe them as they were expressing their feelings, thoughts and suggestions. **Appendix D** shows the open-ended interview questions which were conducted for the high ranking official at the Department of Education.

3. 7 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher was granted ethical clearance by the University of Zululand where the study was registered, to proceed to collect the data that was needed in the research project. A letter was written and sent via e-mail to the registrar of the University of KwaZulu-Natal to ask for a Gatekeepers approval to research by collecting data from the

students and academic staff members of the institution. Permission was granted through a signed letter of approval which was issued to the researcher. Another letter was sent to the Department of Higher Education and Training, unfortunately, there was no response up until the time when the researcher chose to approach the Department of Education at Empangeni area, where permission was verbally granted to conduct the interview. All the respondents were given the **Appendix A (Participant informed consent)** to read and fully understand the aim and objectives of the study, so they would know the intentions and their right's before signing it and taking part in the project.

3.8 Data analysis

Content and textual analysis were used in analyzing the relevant qualitative data collected from the works of literature, books, newspaper articles, journals and the respondents' perceptions, as it allows the researcher to include a large amount of textual information. Kumar (2014) stresses that content analyses identify the main themes that may emerge from the respondents through the process of analyzing the content of interviews or observations.

3.9 Data Control Measurements:

3.9.1 Reliability

When the researcher applies a specific technique to the same object and the results are repeatedly the same, it can be concluded that the matter is reliability (Babbie, 2001). Although it is further explained that it does not ensure accuracy any more than precision does. Sarantakos (1998) refers to reliability as the consistent results produced by the same instrument. For this study, external reliability and Test-retest methods were employed, where there will be the consistency of data across the sites. The students and the academic staff members were tested with questionnaires and retested later with the same instrument to see if the results will be the same.

3.9.2 Validity

Babbie (2001) explained that validity concerns the empirical measure of good enough quality reflects with the real meaning of the concept under scrutiny. Sarantakos (1998) posits that validation measures what is supposed to be measured and produces accurate results. There are several measures to validate a researcher's work, for this study External validity was used, where the data obtained was related to transferability and generalizability of the findings. The validity was applied through transferring the original data obtained through the questionnaires and interview and it was generalized after the analyzed data.

These are the "other tactics" that were employed, such as "Replicating a finding", where the researcher added information which was expected to be consistent or different from original finding. The researcher was aware that this could strengthen or weaken the original finding.

3. 10 Problems encountered

The two officials whom the researcher intended to interview at the Department of Higher Education and Training could not be reached on time, they did not respond to the letter that was e-mailed to their assistants to schedule the meeting. Hence, the researcher had to turn to alternatives, which was the Department of Basic Education. Due to time constraint, no Gatekeepers letter was given to the researcher by the department. Some of the respondents had difficulties in understanding the questions, especially about the policy of free higher education, and then the researcher had to clarify some of the questions. The questionnaires were distributed and collected the following day, to give the respondent time to express themselves deeply about their thoughts and feelings. Some of the respondents did not fully answer the questionnaire and the researcher had to consider those as invalid and new questionnaires were distributed in place of the incomplete ones.

3.11 Limitations of the study

The University of KwaZulu-Natal comprises five campuses, however, the researcher only adopted one campus due to financial constraints and limited time. Similarly, the University of Zululand has two campuses, but only the main campus was adopted for the study.

Chapter Four

Data analysis, Interpretation and discussions

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the data that was collected and interpret it to make concise meaning rather than to be prolix. The research project aimed to gauge and compare the perceptions of academic staff and students on the policy of free higher education at the University of Zululand commonly called UNIZULU (KwaDlangezwa campus) and the University of KwaZulu- Natal otherwise called UKZN (Westville campus). The extended perceptions were gathered through the DoE Department of Education official, as to enrich the relevant collected data. All the respondents shared their inner thoughts and feelings on the implementation of free higher education as they are also stakeholders.

4.2 Presentations, Analysis and interpretations of the Results

A total of fifteen (15) students from UKZN (Westville campus) and eight (8) students from UNIZULU (KwaDlangezwa campus) responded to survey questionnaires with the aid of field workers who were also students at the above mentioned higher learning institutions. The questionnaires aimed to elicit personal biodata, perceptions on the sustainability, the benefits, and challenges of free-higher education if improperly implemented and suggest the alternative policy that could be probably adopted. There were also 3 academic staff members from UKZN and 2 academic staff members from Unizulu who responded to the questionnaire. Besides, a government official from the DoE was interviewed. Lastly, the documents on free higher education from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) were obtained through Unizulu libraries, analyzed and discussed.

4.3 Section B: Themes Relative to the objectives of the study

The study used semi-structured questionnaire, the qualitative textual analysis was employed, employing extracting themes from the responses of the respondents. The descriptive results presented and discussed below are arranged in terms of themes emanating from the objectives of the study and sub-themes identified from the responses of the respondents.

4.3.1 Perceived sustainability of Free-higher Education

*** Graduate employment**

*** Corporate tax, vat, donations**

*** Investing more resources for better and quality education**

*** Monitoring**

According to the respondents, more graduate employment can create enough government revenue to sustain the policy of free higher education. High unemployment of the graduates caused the government to lose high revenue that can be returned by the tax collected from the employment of graduates to fund the policy of free higher education.

Most of the respondents from the University of Zululand indicated that the government should create more permanent job opportunities for students after graduating. They further highlighted that government can create a graduate tax which would be deducted to the newly employed graduate to fund the sustainability of free higher education. This concurs with Cloete as he posits that South Africa has a high return of graduate employment and high tax collection (Cloete, 2016). Bakarar (2015) also agrees with this on his paper "Radical rethinking proposal entitled Deferred Graduate Retirement", which entails that graduate retirement should be raised.

The majority of the respondents at the University of KwaZulu-Natal also highlighted on more job creation for graduates as a suitable way to sustain the policy on free higher education. This would be done by creating more jobs for the graduates and implementing a high graduate tax rate when they are in the labour market. The majority of these

perceptions concur with those of the respondents from the University of Zululand. The findings by Bakarat (2015) supports these perceptions as it indicates that graduate tax can increase public funding for universities, as the graduates have high life expectancy than non-graduates. This is expected to shift the fees from students to graduates. In other words, if graduates are taxed for a long period, free higher education could be sustained.

As consequence to these findings, it is clear that if the government does not address the issue of graduate unemployment, the policy of free higher education seems impossible as there has been no clear indication where the money would be generated to sustain it. If this situation persists in South Africa, more graduates may find themselves in the unemployment zone or without permanent jobs. This was supported by one of the student respondents who stated that: *"I graduated 3 years ago and I couldn't find a job for my qualification. I only got a 12-month non-renewable contract for an internship and now I'm back at the university to do my post-graduate degree because there are no permanent jobs for us in the real world"*. These findings concur with the findings of a study conducted by the Department of Education DoE (2001) which reveals that the government has been wasting an estimated R1. Billion annually on higher education without any policy to generate revenues. Although the South African government has introduced transformation policies that would allow more access to higher education for previously marginalized communities however, there is no clear indication of how the proposed policy would be sustained.

The majority of the respondents at the University of Zululand further indicated that increase of corporate taxes, VAT as well as seeking for more Foreign Donations are the best solutions for the government to sustain free- higher education. Some students suggested that the government should increase VAT from all stakeholders (Parents, Students, and Corporate Businesses) as this could be their way of participating in the funding of the policy. This concurs with the submission and presentation of the University of Zululand student representatives to the Commission of Enquiry to free higher education (UZ presentation and submission, 2016). The university argued that since tertiary education has public benefits, public-private-partnership and social investment bonds should be founded, whereby the government, private companies and income tax will fund

this policy of free higher education to meet the needs of tertiary institutions. They also maintained that students should pay for their education once they earn a high income. This would be made through income-contingent taxes to ensure future generations have access to higher education. Badat (2015) agreed with this notion as he stated that tertiary education has both public and private benefits and students should financially contribute to attaining it.

One of the academic staff members in the University of Zululand suggested that South Africa cannot manage free higher education for all as the economy is not stable and taxpayers are already complaining about high tax. Although perspectives by the South African Union of Students (SAUS) slightly differed from those of (UZ) as they maintained that students should not pay anything. They were quoted: '*The students are not to be the ones who must bear the burden of paying, but the State, Universities, Private sector should make contributions*'. The president of the Union stated that this could be done through government wage bill cut, where salaries of Vice-Chancellors, government ministers and mayors are cut to fund free education as well as Nationalization of Mines and Banks. However, a study by HESA (2008) disagrees with these findings as it maintained that through progressive taxation, less privileged will be made to pay for the education of the rich.

While some of the survey questionnaire at the University of KwaZulu-Natal responded with the disagreement of the feasibility of free higher education as there is the country's economic situation is unstable One of the respondents said: "*Given the current state of economy at large, I do not feel that free-higher education is feasible or can be sustained*". These perceptions concur with those of Badat (2015) who opines that implementing free higher education without increasing public funding would create an unstable environment, where more wealthy would send their children to private universities or overseas institutions. The higher education system has been influenced by superpowers and this affects South Africa as a state and its economy, for example, South Africans are currently living in trepidation of a potential downgrade by rating agencies such as Moody's Investors Service, Standard and Poor's and Fitch. The responses from the UKZN respondents that free education for all in South Africa is not possible with such limited

financial resources coincides with the work of Dunga and Mncayi (2016:170) who opine that developing countries are not possible, as it would compromise the quality of education and strain the scarce resources that are already unavailable.

This is a clear indication that there is still a conflict of interest in the policy of free higher education on how it could be sustained to benefit future generations. This is also the results of little or no consultation with the stakeholders before it was announced. This also relates to the theory on planning, where it seems that there was no proper planning which could result in the predictions of not bringing the desired outcomes.

Investing in more resources that can produce better and quality education was also highlighted as one of the most perceived ways to sustain free higher education. One of the resources mentioned was that more qualified lecturers are still needed to be employed at undergraduate levels. These include Doctors and Professors. Most of the respondents complained about the junior lecturers who are hired while they are underprepared to facilitate the students in higher learning institutions. They further stated that this could be witnessed by a high failure rate of students. The finding by the Council for Higher Education (CHE) (2013) supports this when it reveals that the higher education sector exists in an economic reality characterized by the problem of scarce resources.

South African undergraduate system comes at a higher cost, mainly as a result of government underfunding and inefficiencies at the undergraduate level. These perceptions also correspond with the Resource Dependence theory, when it states that the organizations survive to the extent that they are effective in acquiring and maintaining resources. The survival of the organizations relies on the critical resources and they could be threatened if they are deprived of the duly desired resources.

Lastly, the respondents mentioned monitoring as the critical part that would ensure that the implementation of the policy of free higher education is met. Most of the respondents reveal that through proper or stronger monitoring of the implementation of this policy relatively, the sustainability of the policy could be guaranteed. This would be done firstly by combating corruption in many higher learning institutions so that only deserving students would be the beneficiaries. One student was quoted "*NSFAS administrators are*

corrupt and they have been awarding funds to the students who don't qualify for it, and also this policy cannot be sustained if proper monitoring is not done". The findings by the NSFAS Ministerial Review Committee report of 2009 and NSFAS 2014/2015 annual report concurs with these perceptions as it observed the downfall overall performance which was instigated by number of factors, such as underfunding from government, corruption in allocation of Loans/Bursaries leading to undeserving students obtaining the bursaries and the lack of qualified and skilled staff due to cadre deployment.

One of the respondents who is a deputy dean of a faculty highlighted two points on ensuring monitoring, which is: (1) Exclusion policy that would ensure that only deserving students who are doing well on their studies benefit from this policy and under-performing students should not be catered for. (2) Entry requirements should ensure only students groomed for university are selected. Coughlan (2002) on his unpublished report supports the importance of considering the potential candidate that it should not only be based on their matric performance, but there should be good access tests for a student to be admitted in tertiary education. The Conference paper presented by Cliff, Yeld and Hanslo in 2003 on Assess the academic literacy skills of entry-level students using the Placement Test in English for Educational Purposes (PTEEP) also concurs with the perceptions of the Deputy Dean and Coughlan as it states that (PTEEP) are the examples to the access tests, as to identify those students whose school-leaving results would not indicate their potential to succeed in higher education. It further revealed that most of the students who have been admitted based on (PTEEP) tests have a sustainability education retention and graduation rate, compared to those who were accepted on the strength of their school results. With the above findings and perceived sustainability of the proposed policy, the South African government still needs to develop and implement proper ways to sustain free higher education.

4.3.2 Perceived benefit of free higher education

*** More access to higher education for the poor**

*** Economic growth**

The benefits of the proposed policy of free higher education were perceived by most respondents at the University of Zululand and the University of KwaZulu-Natal as it would bring the massification to higher education. This would mean that those who had been previously marginalized and coming from the less privileged background can have access to higher learning institutions. Akojee and Nkomo (2007) disagreed on this notion as they pointed on the disadvantages on the implementation policy of the Transformation of Education, which still does not clearly grant "access" by providing student "success", but simply granting access as ensuring their participation in higher education (Uleanya and Gamede, 2017). Similarly, given the point raised by Akoojee and Nkomo (2007), Johnston (2004) had earlier noted that the transition policies on education have resulted into the cost of higher education is more expensive in recent years. This has been done through the expropriation of HE by the new policies that were meant to redress the past. This was achieved through increasing access to previously disadvantaged students which left the institutions indebted and having scarce resources. These findings relate to the theory of planning whereby government policies have been seen as distorting and not providing the desired outcome. This may be because of the predictions that were made as planning for the policies on higher education was unlikely accurate. Also, those perceptions that were made about that current condition were based on incomplete information. This contradicts the government policy on higher education and National Plan on Higher Education NPHE (2001:10) which implies that targeted numbers of higher learning institutions and enrolments are to be set to improve equity and efficiency. This has to be done through a planning process in conjunction with funding and appropriate regulatory framework which will be steered towards achieving goals and targets set by the plan.

It is clear that if tuition fees are already making unsustainable resource demands to the government, what about free higher education? One of the academic staff members at

the UZ agreed that it would benefit students by increasing access to higher education. He also posits that less privileged parents would suffer more by paying high taxes to fund this policy. This also concurs with the finding of Cloete (2015) on the feasibility of free higher education in a developing country like South Africa, as it may give advantages to the richer and the middle-income households who can afford to pay for it.

Some of the students complained about insufficient funds provided by NSFAS and recommend that free higher education would provide every poor student with a chance to be enrolled in higher learning institutions. The findings by Borat & Pillay (2017) support this as they revealed that National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) is currently under pressure because of insufficient financial resources, as a result of a growing number of students who cannot afford the rising costs of tertiary education, yet do not qualify for aid or preferential loans. They were quoted as saying that "*NSFAS has failed to provide all the deserving students with student loans and some of us had to stay at home because of being financially excluded*". The study conducted by Africa check (2016) concurs with these perceptions as it had earlier revealed that NSFAS is the reason why students want free education. This is because, once the previously disadvantaged students are financially excluded, they turn to want free education because of their increasing debts, meanwhile, they will be prevented from registering the following year.

Most of the respondents at both universities also highlighted that the benefit of free higher education would improve economic growth as many graduates would be able to enter the job market. This concurs with the finding of Pillay (2015) who posits that South Africa's economic situation can be identified by the concomitant inefficiencies in the higher education sector, which are external, whereby there are low graduate outcomes to provide for the need of the economy. A statement by the North-West University (2016) disagrees as it emphasized that free education for all generates inequalities and it is not affordable in poor political economies such as South Africa where there are rapid enrollments that require extensive financial resources to sustain the quality of education.

4.3.3 Perceived challenges on free higher education

- * High failure and Long Completion Rate, Student drop-outs**

- * Poor Quality of Education**

- * Inadequate Funds**

- * Efficiency**

High failure, as well as non-completion of degrees in record time and student drop-out, were perceived by most respondents at the University of Zululand and the University of KwaZulu-Natal as part of the challenges that may be encountered by higher learning institutions if the policy is improperly implemented. Firstly, this could result in the massification of underprepared students who will be underperforming with a high failure rate which could lead to students taking many years to complete their studies. One of the respondents at UKZN mentioned that *"There are students whom I was first enrolled with the same year and doing the same degree, they are still doing undergraduate degree"*. The findings revealed by the statistics from the Council for Higher Education (CHE) (2013) support these perceptions as it revealed that undergraduate system has been absorbing large numbers of students whom they knew that they have 30% chance of completing in 5 years (CHE, 2013). DHET and CHE (2015) cohort study findings also agree with and revealed on their statistics that out of 1 million children who enter grade 1, only 100,000 will enter university and 53,000 will graduate after 6 years. This can be witnessed by the study conducted by Cliff in 2014 on "Entry-level students reading abilities and what these abilities might mean for academic readiness", which indicates that first-time students entering higher-learning institutions are unprepared and they lack reading abilities, which results on not performing well academically. Which has resulted in government wasting an estimated R1.6 billion annually on higher education funding, without any sustainment of producing the graduates that are needed to stimulate economic growth in the country? That shows South Africa has produced the lowest possible output with high possible costs incurred in higher education. The Cohort studies were undertaken by Council on Higher Education (CHE 2015, p.15) further revealed that the three-year degree taken by the new

students in higher education, less than half complete their studies and the other half that do not complete; they take up to six years to graduate. This results in wasted financial resources that could have supported a needy and deserving student.

Some of the respondents commented on the challenge of poor quality of education if this policy is improperly implemented. This could be done because of the large number of students compared to the academic staff and scarcity of resources such as venues/lecture halls that the institutions held. The result revealed by CHE (2016) supports these perceptions that the lack of proper career guidance and quality teaching methods, especially in the previously marginalized universities result in drop-outs. Cloete, Sherppard and Schalkwyk (2016) pointed out the problem of inefficiencies in HE system in Africa as (1) the massification on education systems which have inefficiencies as capacity could not cope with the demand, where it starts from the schooling system and runs to the undergraduate system.

This is because of the psychological impact on society that not paying for a service rendered, devalues and loses sustainability of that service. This can be witnessed through the preference of historically whites' universities which are considered to be the best choice for many students rather than the counterpart black universities, because of the better support (academically and financially), and better student life and employment opportunities.

The government official that was interviewed at the department of education indicated that inadequate funding could be a problem for the policy of free higher education. This was because of the large number of students who want to enrol in tertiary institutions, while this policy would be channeled through NSFAS who is struggling with financial resources to meet the rapid enrollment of students. He further highlighted the overwhelming capacity of the new applicant which makes it impossible for students to be funded on time. He quoted "NSFAS administration needs to be completely changed so it would be effective and it would be in a better position to review all applications and disperse and collect funds in time". This corroborates the finding of the survey conducted by DoE (2015) which reveals that NSFAS has hardly recovered the interests, whereby

recovery rates dropped in 2011 from R600 million to R200 million in 2014. Although cost-sharing models have been introduced to relieve the government from subsidizing higher education, there are still challenges in the administrative procedures to collect the money from those students who benefited, so the scheme would be sustained for future generations.

Lastly, efficiency as a result of little or no planning and consultation with all relevant stakeholders was indicated by some of the respondents. They further highlighted that since it is a huge policy it would create a problem in implementation. The government official was quoted "*This is still a serious administrative problem as there was a little consultation on how it would be implemented, and could lead to the consequence of what we are seeing right now*". This also relates to the Theory of Planning. It argues that planning is based on current objectives or notions of what is desirable, and these can change over time so that before a plan is fully accomplished, its objective may be discarded. Also, the actions chosen to carry out a plan may have results different from those that were expected

4.3.4 Perceived alternative policy

*** Public-Private Partnership**

Most of the respondents responded to a perceived alternative policy that would compensate for free higher education as a Public-Private Partnership. They indicated that the government should attract more private companies to invest in higher education; after the students have graduated they could be employed in those companies at a stipend salary for some time. This concurs with the submission of the University of Zululand student representative council to the commission of inquiry to free higher education. Where they stated that because of the public benefit received from tertiary education, the public-private partnership should be founded to meet the tertiary institution's needs, but also maintain that students should pay for their education once they earn a high income (UZ, 2016). This could be made through income-contingent taxes to ensure that future generations have access to Higher education.

4.4 Discussions of the Findings

The findings of the study revealed that South Africa still faces a huge problem of graduate unemployment. Although South Africa's President (Cyril Ramaphosa) on the State of the Nation Address of 2018/2019 revealed that government would work in partnership with business, organized labour and community representatives to create opportunities for young people to be exposed in the world of work through creating a million internships in the next three years, apprenticeships, mentorship and entrepreneurship. This concurs with the perceptions of most respondents and the literature reviewed on graduate employment and the increase of graduate tax as the possible way to sustain the policy on free higher education. No permanent job opportunities that were mentioned that could sustain this policy through graduate tax as the graduate has long life expectancy compared to non-graduates.

The findings on the perceived increasing VAT, Progressive TAX and Donations indicated that there is still a conflict of interest between the relevant stakeholders on how the policy should be sustained. This has been witnessed by some respondents and reviewed literature that by progressive Taxation and increasing VAT, fewer privilege people will suffer more as they would be made to pay for free higher education for the rich. Some of the findings revealed that a country like South Africa is not ready for this policy as it is economically unstable. This has shown that little consultation was made by the government with relevant stakeholders during the planning phase of this policy.

The findings also revealed that Investing in more resources for quality education could sustain the policy of free education. The inefficiencies at the higher education system have resulted in a high rate of drop-outs and a high failure rate. This implies that more qualified academic staff members are needed to be hired by the department of higher education and training. This is supported by Resource Dependency Theory that if the survival of the Organizations is threatened if they are deprived of their critical resources, and that there should be an exchange in the economic relationship, whereby the Tertiary institutions are producing sufficient graduates to stimulate economic growth.

The findings on monitoring were referred to as the most critical part, as not all the perceived points could be ensured that implementation was correctly made. Most of the respondents at the University of Zululand and the University of KwaZulu-Natal highlighted that proper monitoring measures should be applied so that all deserving students would be catered for with the policy of free higher education and those who are underperforming should be stripped of the benefit of this policy. They further revealed that NSFAS as a sole government agent for providing the policy is still having administrative problems and corruption and it needs to be restructured.

The findings on the benefit of free higher education were perceived to increase access for previously disadvantaged people into the tertiary system. Some of the pieces of literature by Akoojee and Nkomo (2007) such as ". Access and quality in South African Higher Education: The Twin Challenges of Transformation" and Bunting and Cloete (2008). "Governing access to higher education in South Africa", did not support this notion as they revealed that transition policies in higher education granted more access while neglecting more success of the students. The higher education has been absorbing many students whom they knew would not complete in record time. This made the undergraduate education to be more expensive. With regards to economic growth, in some ways, it could bring a prosperity of the economy, as more graduate can be employed and tax generated from them would stimulate the economy. However, some literature such as Cloete in 2015 strongly disagrees on "The Flawed ideology of free-higher education" that the idea of free higher education privileges the rich and posits that it is exceptionally wrong. This indicates that it would bring more inequality in society. This is because it is envisaged that the poor will be made to pay for the benefit of this policy as equally as the rich people, while some of the rich will send their children to overseas universities for better employment opportunities.

The findings on the challenges of free higher education if improperly implemented could be the high level of student drop-outs, long time to complete degrees and increased failure rate. This concurs with the literature of Letseka and Maile (2008) which reviewed that South African Universities are ranked the lowest in graduation rates across the world, which is because of poor financing an overwhelming gap between the secondary level

and higher education. The challenges of financing higher education. Poor quality of education is the challenge facing with South Africa as there is that psychological impact on the society for not paying for a service which devalues the provision of that service and its sustainability. Government has not provided or set the administrative procedures for allocating to all deserving students, to avoid what is currently happening at many universities across the country demanding that they are not being paid on time by NSFAS. This is due to poor planning which results in improper implementation.

4.5 Summary of the discussions

The above chapter highlighted the perceived findings on the policy of free higher education from the University of Zululand and the University of KwaZulu-Natal. It indicated on the perceived sustainability, the benefit and challenges of this policy if improperly implemented. The findings have shown that currently, the government has done little consultation with the relevant stakeholders which have been witnesses to many student protests across the country. The findings also reveal that although the two identified universities have a different historical background, they share most identical perceptions on this policy. The following chapter will reveal the concluding discussions on how the policy could be sustained, highlights on its benefits and challenges and lastly, it would recommend a possible or alternative policy that could be adapted to compensate the proposed policy.

Chapter Five

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussions of the findings and makes recommendations that can assist the Department of Higher Education, Students, Academic staff members and all relevant stakeholders to ameliorate the implementation of Free Higher Education. It is on the best interest of the researcher that all relevant stakeholders can acquire new knowledge from the findings and recommendations of this study to improve and advance the future interest of the general public.

5.2 Conclusion

The study demonstrates one of the most crucial challenges in South African Higher Education Sector. The student movements and protests across the country have instigated the announcement of the policy of free higher education. The study examined the perceptions of academic staff members and students at the University of Zululand (KwaDlangezwa Campus) and the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Westville Campus) with specific reference to the sustainability, challenges that may be encountered if improperly implemented and benefits of this policy. The study revealed the perceived themes that arose as the policy has been considered not effective enough.

South African icon and former President Dr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela once said in one of his famous speeches, *"Education is the most powerful weapon with which you can change the world"*. Unfortunately, the state has good higher education policies on paper towards ensuring equity, redress, equal access and providing optimal opportunities for learning and creation of knowledge, however, the implementation is poor and seems not to be yielding the desired result. A strategic approach in planning, monitoring and evaluation of policies that will ensure tertiary education efficiency, economic and the students' needs is urgently needed to revamp the Higher Education Sector in South Africa

in the context of this study. Accordingly, several possible solutions have been identified and perceived for the policy to be successful. The study suggests that the government and the Department of Higher Education and Training reviews and implements the following recommendations.

5.3 Recommendations

Sequel to the findings of the study, the following suggestions are made:

- The government should urgently develop a new policy that would create more jobs for the graduates. This policy should be made through consultation with Private-Public companies and other businesses to ensure the combat of graduate unemployment. Graduates should not only be awarded Internships, Learner ships as it is considered informal employment, but a permanent post should also be generated for the government to develop a graduate tax once they are in the labour market which could generate more revenue that could sustain free higher education.
- The VAT should not be increased as the majority of the people have not been able to cope with the current unstable economic situation which has witnessed many households not being able to afford the fees increment at the universities. Instead, the department of higher education and training should propose a policy that would ensure that all higher learning institutions can generate their revenue through the third streamline (More Research Publications). This would help the students to build their career profile while studying and the money generated will assist the financially needy students.
- The government needs to invest more resources in higher education institutions that may help students to succeed. These include more qualified human resources who will fill the academic staff post needed in higher learning institutions, such as Doctors and Professors. This will provide the students with more experienced staff who will facilitate quality education. Also by providing updated books, journals, computer labs and writing centres, that will enhance student writing while developing their language skills, quality education and weekend classes which will be facilitated by qualified and experienced academics.

- The inefficiencies that have been happening in the undergraduate system have caused higher education to be more expensive. Transition policies in higher education should be restructured. More access to higher education for previously disadvantaged can be seen as the right thing to do, but there should be policies developed by the Department of Higher Education and Training which will ensure that more access is equivalent to more success of the student. By this, high failure rate, student drop-outs and non-completion in record time will be minimized. Furthermore, the government should build more institutions of higher learning to be able to meet the demand of the large number for students who want to be enrolled at the tertiary level. This would help to prevent overcrowding, high student ratio compared to available academic staff members, large class size, amongst others.
- The findings also indicated that higher education has been absorbing many underprepared students who are not likely to complete in record time, rather drop-out from their studies. Higher education entry-level requirements should be toughened to ensure that the less deserving and underprepared students are given other options like to begin at the foundation phase which would only be supported by NSFAS loans. Once they have progressed successfully into the first year, the policy of free higher education can start to cater to them.
- Proper education at the administrative side of NSFAS should be taken into account. This would help them to implement this policy effectively and efficiently without maladministration and mismanagement.
- Lastly, evaluation and monitoring should be made timeously, as to evaluate if there was proper implementation of the policy. This can help policymakers to foresee if the desired outcome and objectives are being achieved, so that if otherwise, the possible alternatives could be implemented as early as possible without further damages.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

The study is limited in the following ways:

- Only the perceptions of Academic staff members, Students and a Government official from the Department of Basic Education were used to recommend solutions to the study.
- The research was conducted at two universities in KwaZulu Natal Province of South Africa. The universities are: The University of Zululand, KwaDlangezwa Campus and The University of KwaZulu-Natal, Westville Campus.
- Only one government official from the Department of basic Education was available for interview in order to contribute to the findings, meanwhile, the researcher intended to make findings from the Department of Higher Education and Training officials. Time constraints and lack of resources was also the issue.

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APPENDICES

APPENDICE A..... ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

APPENDICE B..... GATEKEEPERS APPROVAL FROM
UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

APPENDICE C..... PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT

APPENDICE D..... ENGLISH QUESTIONNAIRES FOR
THE STUDENTS

APPENDICE E..... ENGLISH QUESTIONNAIRES FOR THE
ACADEMIC STAFF MEMBERS

APPENDICE F..... INTERVIEWS QUESTIONS FOR THE
(DoE) OFFICIAL

APPENDICE G..... Maps of the University of Zululand and the
University of KwaZulu-Natal

APPENDICE A: Ethical clearance certificate

**UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**
(Reg No: UZREC 171110-030)



RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Website: <http://www.uz.ac.za>
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ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Certificate Number	UZREC 171110-030 PGM 2018/546		
Project Title	A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF MEMBERS AND STUDENTS ON FREE HIGHER EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND AND THE UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU NATAL		
Principal Researcher/ Investigator	HN Gwala		
Supervisor and Co-supervisor	Dr TC Adetiba		
Department	Public Administration		
Faculty	Commerce, Administration and Law		
Type of Risk	Med Risk- Data collection from people		
Nature of Project	Honours/4 th Year	Master's	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
			Departmental

The University of Zululand's Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) hereby gives ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above mentioned project. The researcher may therefore commence with data collection as from the date of this certificate, using the certificate number indicated above.

- Special conditions:**
- (1) This certificate is valid for 1 year from the date of issue.
 - (2) Principal researcher must provide an annual report to the UZREC in the prescribed format [due date- 05 October 2019]
 - (3) Principal researcher must submit a report at the end of project in respect of ethical compliance.
 - (4) The UZREC must be informed immediately of any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the documents that were presented to the meeting.

The UZREC wishes the researcher well in conducting research.


Professor Gideon De Wet
 Chairperson: University Research Ethics Committee
 Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research & Innovation
 05 October 2018

CHAIRPERSON
 UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND RESEARCH
 ETHICS COMMITTEE (UZREC)
 REG NO: UZREC 171110-30

08 OCT 2018

RESEARCH & INNOVATION OFFICE

APPENDECE B: Gatekeepers Approval Letter



4 December 2018

Mr Freedom Nkululeko Gwala
University of Zululand
Email: freedomnkululeko25@gmail.com

Dear Mr Gwala

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) towards your postgraduate studies, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"A Comparative Analysis of the Perceptions of the Academic Staff Members and Students on Free Education at the University of Zululand and University of KwaZulu Natal."

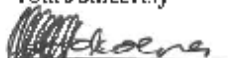
It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by handing out questionnaires and/or conducting interviews with academic staff members and students from UKZN.

Please ensure that the following appears on your notice/questionnaire:

- Ethical clearance number;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using 'Microsoft Outlook' address book. Identity numbers and email addresses of individuals are not a matter of public record and are protected according to Section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the Protection of Public Information Act. For the release of such information over to yourself for research purposes, the University of KwaZulu-Natal will need express consent from the relevant data subjects. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely


MR S S MOKOENA
REGISTRAR

Office of the Registrar

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0) 31 280 8006/2208 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 280 7824/2204 Email: registrar@uqn.ac.za
Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Founding Campus: Engwood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

APPENDECE C: Participant Informed Consent

Participant informed consent declaration

Dear Participant

Project title: A Comparative analysis on the perceptions of the Academic staff members and the students towards free education in higher learning institutions at the University of Zululand and University of KwaZulu Natal.

I am Freedom Nkululeko Gwala who is a Master's in Administration degree candidate and supervised by Doctor T.C. Adetiba from the Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Zululand has requested my permission to participate in the above-mentioned research project. The questionnaire will require 5 to 10 minute of your time.

The nature and the purpose of the research project and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of the research project is to compare and analyze the perception of the academic staff members and students towards free education in higher learning institution at two Universities, one which is previously black and the other previously white.
2. By participating in this research project I will be contributing towards looking at comprehensive Universities in South Africa. The study will help by contributing the perceptions of the students and academic staff members and possibly come up with possible policy recommendations if ever they can be challenges. It is in this regard that this study intends to critically analyze the perceptions of the academic staff members and students on free- Higher Education in the University of Zululand and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and the study will benefit the whole country as, South Africans are the stakeholders in higher education. The study will comprise of 23 students, 5 academic staff members from both the Universities and 2 higher education officials.
3. I will participate in the project by contributing my inputs and my perceptions on the study.

4. My participation is entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.

5. I will not be compensated for participating in the research, but my out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.

6. There may be risks associated with my participation in the project. I am aware that:

a. The research embarked on will not harmfully disturb the physical, social security of the contributors. The possibilities (risks) and profits of the research to the potential contributors will be fully reflected; if this research could lead to pointless physical damage it will not be commenced.

b. There is a 0% chance of the risk materializing.

7. Confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained and that my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has been involved in the conduct of the research.

8. Any further questions that I might have, concerning the research or my participation will be answered by Freedom Nkululeko Gwala, (cell: 0731509825)-Email: freedomnkululeko25@gmail.com

9. By signing this informed consent declaration I am not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

I..... have read the above information/confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurized in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

.....

Participants signature

.....

Date

Thank you in advance.

.....
3. What are the challenges that may possible emerge from this policy if improperly implemented?

.....
.....
.....

4. Which alternative policies could be adopted to compensate the free-higher education in South Africa?

APPENDECE E: English Questionnaire for the Academic staff members
Questionnaire Guide for Academic staff members

Section A: Personal Bio data

1. Gender

a. Male { }

b. Female { }

2. Occupation in at higher learning institution.

.....

2. Number of Years of working at the higher learning institution.

a. 1- 10 years { }

b. 11-20 { }

C.21- 30 years { }

d. 31 years and above

Section B:

1. How can, the policy of free- higher education be administered to ensure its sustainability?

.....
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.....
.....
.....

2. What are the challenges that may possible emerge from this policy of free-higher education if improperly implemented?

.....

.....
.....
.....

3. How can South African students benefit from free- higher education?

.....
.....
.....

4. What is the alternative policy that can be adopted to compensate free-higher education?

**APPENDECES F: Interview Questions for the Department Basic Education
Government Official.
INTRODUCTORY LETTER**

Interviewee

I am a registered Master's student in the Department of Public Administration at the University of Zululand conducting a research study on the topic titled "A comparative analysis of the perceptions of the academic staff members and students on free education in higher learning institutions in the University of Zululand and University of KwaZulu Natal". The study has been cleared by the Department of Public Administration examination committee and the Office of Research and Development from the University of Zululand.

You are therefore kindly requested within your valuable time to assist in answering some questions on the perceptions of the academic staff members and students on free education in higher learning institutions in the University of Zululand and University of KwaZulu Natal.

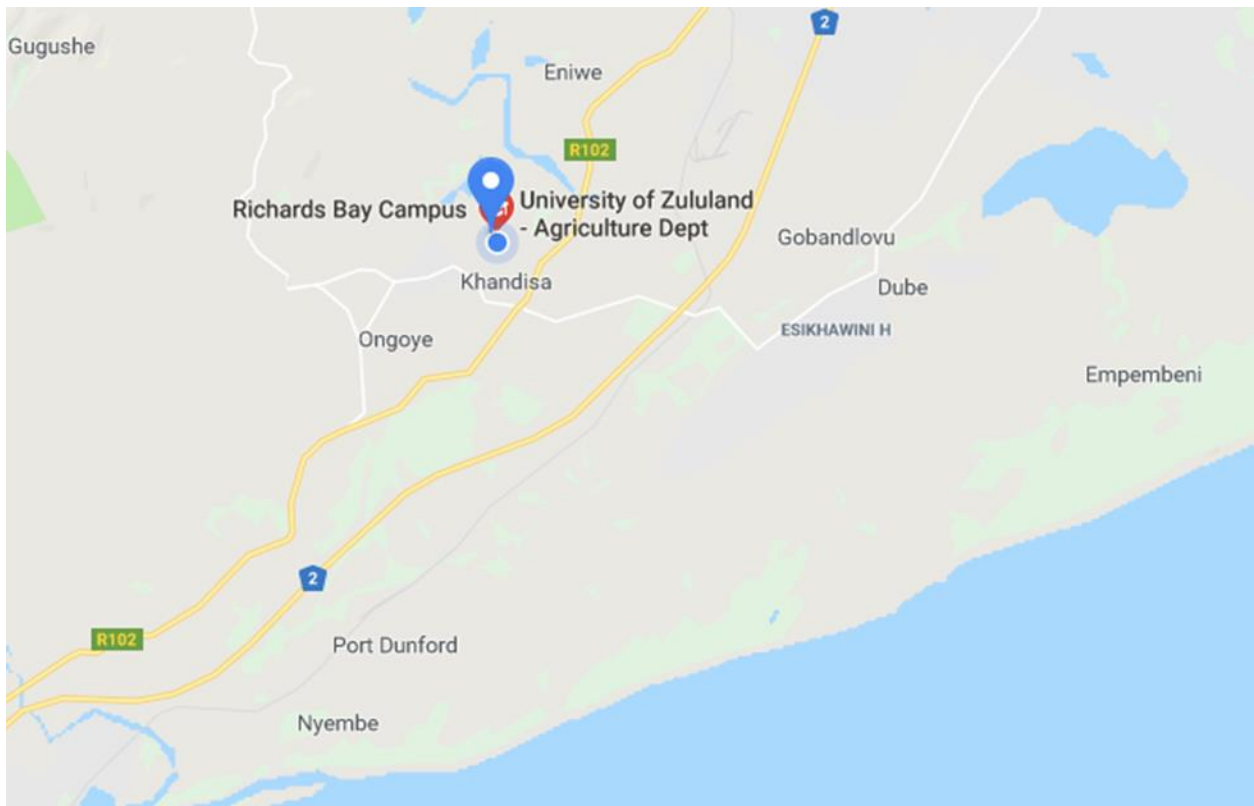
Thanking you in advance

F. N. Gwala

Interview Schedule for Higher education officials

1. What are the administrative procedures that would be used to sustain the proposed policy of free-higher education?
2. What would be the benefits of the proposed free-higher education if appropriately implemented?
3. What are the possible challenges of the proposed policy of free-higher education, if it is improperly implemented?
4. Which alternative policy would be the adopted to compensate the proposed policy of free-higher education?

Appendices G: Maps of University of Zululand and University of KwaZulu-Natal
The figure 3.1 showing the map of the University of Zululand (KwaDlangezwa campus)



Source: [https:// www.google.com/maps/search/university-of -zululand/@-28.8774795,31.8240](https://www.google.com/maps/search/university-of-zululand/@-28.8774795,31.8240)



The figure 3.2 showing the map of University of KwaZulu-Natal (Westville Campus)

Source: [https://www.google.com/maps/search/university-of -KwaZulu-Natal-Westville-Campus/@-29.8345018,30.8503592,12z](https://www.google.com/maps/search/university-of%20KwaZulu-Natal-Westville-Campus/@-29.8345018,30.8503592,12z)