

## **RESEARCH MANAGEMENT AND POLICY LANDSCAPES: A CASE STUDY OF HIGHER TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NAMIBIA**

**Dr. Sudhir Agarwal \***

Professor, Department of Business and Management, College of Business and Economics  
Kampala International University Kampala,Uganda

Contact No: +256702082366 , 9670933296, Email: Sudhiragrawal08@gmail.com

**Lovemore Matipira\*\***

Namibia University of Science and Technology

**Jairos Kangira\*\***

University of Namibia

**Hilen Kapenda\*\***

University of Namibia

**Eino Mvula\*\***

National Commission on Research, Science and Technology

**Vincent Ntema Sazita\*\***

The international University of Management

**John-Grafft Ndungaua\*\***

Namibia University of Science & Technology

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper articulates research management and policy landscape as a mirror for changing research management in Higher Tertiary Education (HTE) in Namibia. The research design for the study is based on Interpretivism and the exploration of literature on research management and policy landscape in Higher Tertiary Education in Namibia. Thus, secondary data and content analysis remains indispensable in this study. The paper makes positive contribution in the manner in which research management and policy landscapes are integrated and managed in Namibia higher institutions by offering an empirical account of

expanded ideas on research management in Higher Tertiary Education Institutions. It provides an exploration of literature in the areas of higher education landscape in Namibia and the history and research capacity of the (HTE) in Namibia. The research also covers the dilemmas of research management that includes policy and strategy; international trends and policy challenges amongst others. Issues related to internationalisation of tertiary education in Namibia focusing on government policies and institutional activities that support the aims of internationalisation are also discussed in this paper. Finally, the paper explores the concept of institutional saga in (HTE) and its impact on universities capacities to deliver on set mandate. The conclusion and recommendations drawn from this analysis remains indispensable to all players involved in Higher Tertiary Education institutions in Namibia and other geopolitical spheres.

**Key words:** *research management; policy landscapes; internationalisation; institutional saga and Higher Tertiary Education.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, a number of developments have occurred that put enormous pressure on tertiary institutions in terms of expectations to meet the demand of stakeholders. According to Meek and Davies (2009), public sector tertiary institutions are expected to respond to government regulations and policy initiatives, new market pressures and new technological developments. These usually centre around rapid growth, restricted funding, changing models of financing, shifting priorities for teaching and research programmes, new measures that seek to lift institutional productivity, new processes that seek to assure programme quality, rising competition from private sector and offshore competitors, the rise of online modes of education, and demand for greater industry and community engagement.

This is a global trend which has become more prevalent in transitional economies, particularly Africa, albeit at different levels, and Namibia is no exception. Therefore, this paper presents a critical analysis of the research management, policy and strategy as well as internationalisation of higher education in Namibia focusing on the existing universities. In addition to this, the analysis touches on the development of the universities organisational saga, a concept that has to do with the values and beliefs of the institution as guiding principles for excellence in research, teaching and community service. In the analysis, the following questions are addressed:

1. Dilemmas of research management, policy and strategy. Considering the current public policy debate about Namibia's tertiary education sector an attempt is made to answer the following questions:
  - a) What are the priorities from the viewpoint of the government and for institutions themselves?
  - b) On what kinds of issues are different groups of institutions at odds, arguing for different policy settings?
  - c) At university level, what priorities do different groups advocate when considering their own strategic choices and prospects?
  - d) From the perspective of universities, how serious does this challenge to lead and manage research "in such a way as to maintain an appropriate working environment within which research can thrive" appear to be?
  - e) Is there agreement among Academics and Management on how best to respond to managing research and the university in times of change?
  - f) Where are there shared priorities, and where does universities and government(s) seem to be at odds?
2. International trends and policy challenges
  - a) How important is 'internationalisation' for Namibia's tertiary education system and for universities, and what kinds of activities are the main focus of policies and programs?
  - b) How well do government policies and institutional programs support their stated aims?
  - c) What kinds of research strategies should be adopted to enable the institutions to do good work sustainably, whether in a national or an international setting?
3. Evolving missions and tertiary sector systems
  - a) Do the universities have a 'saga, if so, how widely shared is it?
  - b) To what extent is central components of personnel, programme, external social base, student subculture and imagery found at the universities in Namibia?
  - c) How does a saga help or hinder universities capacity to deliver their mission?
  - d) When linking this saga to institutional changes, would it be likely to facilitate change or to block change, or both?

These are some of the questions that draw attention in this literature exploration. This paper is divided into six sections. Section 2 provides an overview of the higher education landscape

in Namibia and the history and research capacity of the universities in Namibia. This section also gives the information and data required to answer the questions posed above. The answers are presented in Sections 3, 4 and 5. Section 3 presents the dilemma in higher education, research with emphasis on the current debate in Namibia regarding government priority and that of tertiary education institutions. Section 4 examines the issues related to internationalisation of tertiary education in Namibia focusing on government policies and institutional activities that support the aims of internationalisation. Section 5 addresses the institutional saga at the universities in Namibia and its impact on their capacity to deliver on their mandate. The conclusion and recommendations drawn from this analysis are presented in Section 6.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The paper focuses on the exploration of literature survey on research management and policy landscape in Higher Tertiary Education in Namibia. As an explorative study, the paper focuses on qualitative research approach in the context of analysing research management and policy landscape in (HTE) in Namibia. The philosophy of Interpretivism focuses on in-depth discovery of the truth in a particular phenomenon under investigation. The paper is rooted in deductive logic, given the abundance of literature available in the area of study. Whilst Namibia has three established universities namely, the University of Namibia, Namibia University of Science and Technology and the International University of Management, this research is based on a single case study in that an in-depth analysis of the University of Namibia is considered.

However, emerging patterns in the paper on research management and policy landscapes in Namibia are also extrapolated to the other institutions in the country in order to give a wider pictorial view of the phenomenon under study. It is also important to point out at this stage that the paper considered purposive sampling technique in selecting the University of Namibia as a single case study. Canons of qualitative data collection and analysis remains indispensable in this research. Ethical considerations were considered during exploration of secondary data collection as well as analysis and interpretation, given its sensitivity. As an explorative literature survey study, the paper is not religiously rooted into the traditional structures of systematic approach of carrying out research. Needless to say, validity and reliability of the data collected remains intact and within the scope of carrying out empirical research study. We argue that the findings of this qualitative study remains important to all

stakeholders involved in Higher Tertiary Education in Namibia and other geopolitical spheres.

#### 1.1.1 Namibia's Higher Education Landscape: A Brief History of Higher Education in Namibia

Namibia is located in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region. The country shares some historical attachments to South Africa, the former colonizer. The Namibian Constitution and the Education Act (2001) guide the framework for the educational system in Namibia that includes amongst others, compulsory school attendance for the first seven years of primary school for children between the ages of six and sixteen. Different phases of schools are categorized as follows: grades 1-4 (lower primary), 5-7 (upper primary, end of compulsory school attendance), 8-10 (junior secondary) and 11-12 (senior secondary). After finishing Grade 12, the student receives the Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate (NSSC) and are allowed to attend a Namibian University if the student meets the entry requirements.

Since 1990, the Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) has made significant investments in the higher education sector. There are only two public universities in Namibia namely, the University of Namibia established in terms of University of Namibia Act No. 18 of 1992, and the Polytechnic of Namibia (now, Namibia University of Science and Technology) established in terms of the Polytechnic of Namibia Act No. 33 of 1994. While the Polytechnic of Namibia concentrates on skills demanded by the industrial sector such as technical or administrative studies as well as engineering and biological sciences, the University of Namibia (UNAM) covers other traditional university subjects. The only private university, the International University of Management (IUM), concentrates on management and information technology as well as subjects prevalent in the hospitality industry. All the three universities have established regional centres in other parts of the country, and the focus appears to be that of expansion within the country in addition to numerous engagements with other international universities globally. The three universities are jostling to establish a market niche through vicious regional campaign within Southern Africa Development Community SADC. The race entirely rest on provision of higher education and research in Namibia.

Despite the fact that the government has been investing heavily into the educational system, around 20% of the national budget, the enrolment rate at tertiary education level is still low at 9% (Global Competiveness Report, 2013-14). Although this enrolment rate is lower than that

of South Africa which is 15%, it is still higher than that of other countries in the region such as Mozambique and Tanzania which have 4.9% and 3.9%, respectively (ibid).

On a scale of 1 to 7, Namibia's quality of education, availability of research training and the extent of staff training scored 3; 3.5 and 4, respectively (Global Competiveness Report, 2013-14). The greatest challenge for tertiary education is to eradicate the weaknesses of primary and secondary education in Namibia. Most outstanding is the weaknesses in science and mathematics. Due to these problems, tertiary institutions currently receives moderate applicants from the school system. Thus, funding is diluted by being forced to spend money on bridging programmes to bring students up to acceptable levels before they start their courses. Higher tertiary institutions are faced with challenges of hiring qualified lecturers and professors. While some are quite respected among Southern African scientists, the average standard is not very high. The World's Economic Forum Global Competitive Index (2013-14) portrays the rating of 4 out of 7 on the extent of staff training, suggests that there are still not enough qualified Namibian candidates coming out of the educational system to steer the institutions of higher learning.

Given the weakness in the education system from primary to tertiary level, it is not surprising that this has also affected the innovation system in terms of capacity for innovation, quality of research institutions and the university-industry collaboration which all scored between 3 to 3.5 out of 7 (ibid), resulting in the ranking of Namibia at 85 out of 148 countries as shown in Table 1 below. These ratings are also lower than that of South Africa, but relatively higher than some of the countries in the region like Mozambique and Tanzania respectively.

**Table No. 1**  
**2013-14 World's Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Index**

		Score	Ranking
1	The 2014 Global Competitiveness Index Ranking and Score	3.9	90
2	Stage of Development Rating	2	
3	Market Size • 10.03 GDP (PPP\$billions)	12.3	0.02
4	Higher Education and training		
	5.02 Tertiary Education enrolment, gross %	9.0	119
	5.03 Quality of the educational system	3.0	118
	5.07 Availability of research and training services	3.5	116
	5.08 Extent of staff training	4	69
5	Innovation		
	12.01 Capacity for Innovation	3.4	84
	12.02 Quality of scientific research institutions	3.5	84
	12.04 University-industry collaboration in R&D	3.4	73

Source: Global Competitiveness Report (2013-14)

#### 1.1.2 Brief History of the University of Namibia and its research capacity

The University of Namibia (UNAM) was established by Act of Parliament, in 1992, following the recommendations of a Special Commission for Higher Education. As a national, public university, UNAM has a key role to play in national development. At its establishment, the University of Namibia had one campus only but currently it has grown tremendously and consists of 12 satellite campuses most of which are scattered across the country, Namibia. In terms of research capacity this increase indicates that the number of students, technicians, staff members as well as researchers has increased proportionally.

For the purpose of this paper, data on research capacity and international orientation of the universities in Namibia were collected and tabulated in Table 2. The collected data reflects convenient sampling technique in which the University of Namibia was considered. Since the University is still young, it remains strongly a teaching university. As indicated in Table 2, the academics at UNAM managed to publish only 367 peer reviewed papers which translate to 0.43 publications per academic staff per annum. Moreover, investment in Research and Development (R&D) at 1% of the total revenue is very low, which is also reflected by the low percentage of the students (5%) enrolled for higher research degree at Master's and PhD levels at the university (University of Namibia Institutional Data, 2004 to 2013).

The collected data reflected in Table 2 below, shows that the University of Namibia has been able to attract international students at a progressive rate that shows the numbers increased from 587 in 2004 to 1196 in 2013. The increase in the numbers of international students followed the same trend with the increase in the total student population. The percentage enrolment of international students fluctuated between 10 and 12% during the same period. It is evident that the University is geared to take advantage of internationalisation as reflected in the percentage of research funded from international sources at 20% and also its academic staff of whom 95% have been trained overseas. If these statistics are extrapolated to the other universities in the country namely, The International University of Management and the Namibia University of Science and Technology, Namibia as a country will be moving on the positive direction in terms of research engagement and management.

**Table No. 2**  
**University of Namibia Institutional Data from 2004 to 2013**

Topic	Indicator Label	Indicator Description	Intl Indicator Details	Intl Indicator/Sources	Data for 2012
Research Involvement	Peer Reviewed Publications	Number of academic research publications	Institutional self-reporting	As reported to Government	367
	Peer Reviewed Publications per Academic	Number of academic research publications per academic	Ratio of publications to staff	As reported to Government	0.43
	% Research income	Research income as % of all revenue	National and international competitive grants won as a % of all revenue	As reported to Government	1%
	HDR students per institution	HDR student load as a % of total student load	Institutional self-reporting	As reported to Government	5%
International Orientation	International students	Number of international students	Number of foreign degree seeking students accepted in 2000 and 2011	Institutional and/or government reporting	587 in 2004 1985 in 2011 1997 in 2013
	% International studs	% of all students that are international	% of foreign degree seeking students accepted as a proportion of all degree seeking students in the years 2000 and 2011	Institutional and/or government reporting	10% in 2004, 12.3% in 2011, 11.9% in 2013, 12.7% in 2014
	International research income as % of all research income	The relative proportion of international income is one indicator of international orientation	Research income from international sources as a % of all research income	Institutional and/or government reporting	20%
	% Staff with overseas qualifications	% of academic staff that obtained their highest qualification overseas	FTE academic staff, only staff with location of qualification known are included in calculation	Institutional and/or government reporting	95%

Source: Survey data

## 1. Dilemmas of Research Management, Policy and Strategy

### 1.1 Current public policy debate about the Namibian tertiary education sector

In their paper, Meek and Davies (2009) observed that tertiary education is high on many countries national policy agendas due to its relevance to economic competitiveness. These authors also note that today tertiary education is much more diversified, and includes institutions such as polytechnics, university colleges and technological institutes. This has resulted in an increased pressure on the part of tertiary education institutions to supplement public funding with private income; demonstrate performance more transparently; manage resources more effectively; collaborate more widely; and compete in markets both locally and across national borders. On the other hand, policy makers are also faced with challenges related to aligning national and institutional priorities; financing the whole system sustainably; ensuring that tertiary programmes of study are high on quality, and student access, and responsiveness to employer needs; and ensuring that the results of research programmes are robust, relevant and widely disseminated.

Some of the above-mentioned challenges are relevant to the Namibian tertiary education system and form the basis of public policy debate on tertiary education in Namibia. The public policy debate on tertiary education in Namibia centres primarily on four issues namely, funding of the higher education, access to tertiary education, quality of higher education and responsiveness to employer need. From the policy makers' perspective these have been well articulated in various national documents such as Vision 2030, National Human Resources Plan and Higher Education Act No. 26 of 2003.

In 2004 Namibia adopted a long-term perspective plan, namely Vision 2030 (GRN, 2004), which serves as a basis for planning the country's future. Vision 2030 sets the macro-economic framework and the long-term targets through which the vision of Namibia's society is to be achieved. The "Vision" stipulates that Namibia, by 2030, will transit into an industrialised and globally competitive country of equal opportunity, realising its maximum growth potential in a sustainable manner, with improved quality of life for all Namibians. In order to achieve this ambitious goal, Namibia needs to develop human capital and build institutional capacity to absorb the labour force necessary to meet the demands of the economy, and address the problem of human resources skills shortages across all industrial sectors.

Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) set the foundations to provide the country with the necessary roadmap to respond to the structural mismatch between skills and available jobs by formulating the National Human Resources Plan (NHRP) (GRN (2012)). The NHRP is the instrument of choice for Namibia to directly address unemployment and skills shortages, and hence contribute to the competitiveness of domestic firms for increased private sector growth and improved performance. The focus is to direct the NHRP to the labour market demand, improve the quality of educational and training outcomes, and invest substantively in research and development.

The overall policy of government for the education sector put emphasis on improving access, equity and efficiency in the higher education system while ensuring coordination to avoid duplication of efforts (NCHE, 2010). In order for the above mentioned policy objectives to be achieved, the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) was established by an Act of Parliament, Higher Education Act No. 26 of 2003. According to the Act, the objectives of the NCHE are to promote the establishment of a coordinated higher education system; access for students to higher education institutions; and quality assurance in higher education and to advise on the allocation of funds to public higher education institutions. In addition to the NCHE, there is also the National Qualification Authority (NQA) which is responsible for the governance of higher education and oversees higher education frameworks and policy matters.

The issues being addressed by the policies on tertiary education in Namibia include funding of the higher education, access to tertiary education, quality of higher education and responsiveness to employer need, are relevant to Namibia's advancement. As indicated in Table 1 above, enrolment rates at tertiary education is low at only 9%, the quality of education, the availability of training in research are also relatively low. Appropriate interventions are thus required to redress the situation.

#### 1.1.1 Priorities from the viewpoint of the current government and for institutions themselves

There is a degree of alignment between the priorities as set out from the government view point and what tertiary institutions are setting for themselves. This is primarily due to the fact that the Ministry of Education has made it compulsory for tertiary education institutions to ensure that their strategic plans are aligned to those of the Ministry of Education which are also aligned to National Policies and programmes. Despite these pronouncements, higher education system in Namibia still faces a challenge in that there is lack of cooperation among

the actors in higher education. When setting their priorities in response to the government policies, these institutions in most cases try to address priorities simultaneously without concentrating on specific areas that are in line with their mandates or competences. This has resulted in a high number of academic programme overlaps at the three universities in Namibia (NCHE, 2010)). Nearly all HEIs to varying degrees offer Bachelor's degrees in Human Resources, Business Administration, Financial Management, Travel and Tourism Management, and so on. This implies that there is very limited cooperation among local counterparts on any of these academic programmes resulting in duplication of efforts. In addition to duplication of efforts, HEI have not been able to demonstrate the necessity of some courses and their relevance to Vision 2030. In some cases, it has been questionable as to whether some programmes are capable of producing a highly skilled labour force – one that can drive Namibia into a knowledge-based economy. More questions about the relevance of HEIs' programmes to national priorities are still to be answered.

#### 1.1.1 Priorities setting by the University of Namibia when considering its Strategic choices and prospects

While HEIs in Namibia continue to be reluctant to collaborate, within institutions, course overlaps are apparent. At UNAM for instance, each department across faculties teaches courses on the research process. Although there is the element of disciplinary relevance, the question and the challenge is – Can't these courses be run in a more cost-effective manner? Course on research methodologies can be run at Faculty basis to guarantee the needs for specialisation. The course of Academic Writing for Postgraduate Students taken by Master's and PhD students from all the seven Faculties is a good example of an all-inclusive course that has saved the university a lot of funds. The International University of Management (IUM) adopted similar approach in research methodology teaching in which lectures are offered at faculty level and at times integrating the faculties. Despite the success of this course, there are calls from students across the country for the university to offer it online so that students can take it from their locations. The Postgraduate School has indicated that students taking this course will choose between the online mode and face-to face mode in the near future.

## 1.2 Current Public Policy Debate on Management of Research

### 1.2.1 Challenges in Management of Research at HEIs

The arguments for and against centralised research planning are well known. Taylor (2006) argues that good management must reflect institutional culture, local and national circumstances and many other contextual factors. At national level the Namibian government adopted the National Policy on Research, Science and Technology (NPRST) in 1999 and enacted the Research, Science and Technology Act of 2004 (Act No. 23 of 2004) which signify the importance of effective application of scientific and technological skills for the production of goods and service to national development. The overall objectives of the Policy and Act are to enhance coordination, thus increasing efficiency in resource use; facilitate scientific human and institutional capacity building; ensure sustained financing of priority R&D projects; and promote science as a preferred area of study. The objective of the policy and the act aims at putting some mechanism in place for research management through a coordination approach, which is really relevant to strengthen the research and innovation system in Namibia. As indicated in Table 1 above, the innovation system is weak with the rate of 3 out of 7, which calls for appropriate interventions to strengthen innovation capacity. In terms of the Research, Science and Technology Act of 2004 (Act no. 23 of 2004), the National Commission on Research, Science and Technology has been mandated to coordinate, develop, promote and fund research, science and technology in Namibia.

In line with the National Policy on Research, Science and Technology (NPRST), UNAM developed and approved a Research strategy in 2005 which has been revised and developed into a fully-fledged Research Policy for the University together with the Research Ethics Policy. The University of Namibia's Fourth Strategic Plan (2011 -2015) outlined four strategic themes in which research and development (R & D) is one of them. Hence, it is clear that R & D forms key aspects of the University' core business by addressing the essential aspects of research activities and outcomes as indicated below:

- Establishing institutional research administrative support to attract research and publications grant;
- Encouraging research mentorship;
- Improving the research culture;
- Developing a responsive reward system for research and publications;
- Increase research output;

- Expanding research activities and research collaborations;
- Developing relevant Research Policies; and
- Establishing a Science Technology Park (Research Policy, 2013, p.6).

The Research Ethics Policy was developed from the principle of internationally acceptable ethical guidelines and code of good practice for the different categories and disciplines of researchers. This policy seeks to direct research agendas that take into consideration ethical issues with strategic focus on and alignment with local, national, regional and research associates of UNAM (Research Ethics Policy, 2013).

Although the University of Namibia has a clear research strategy, Johnson (2013, p. 30) warns that having a “well-developed, informative and detailed strategic plan, which has resulted from your strategic thinking and strategy- making, is just the start of the process. Your plan must be communicated widely and transparently throughout your university, and ideally then accepted and acted upon by all staff and ideally students.” Communicating information from one unit to another has been a great challenge at all the universities in Namibia particularly, the University of Namibia. With wide-spread university campuses in the country, it is not surprising that some academics struggle to receive the research strategic planning and the ethics policy of their respective Universities. The situation is common in all the universities in Namibia.

1.2.2 Managing Research at the University in time of change: Researchers and Senior Management Perspectives: The University of Namibia has established a Research and Publications Office whose mandate is of fostering research in all the Faculties at the University of Namibia. The role of this office in research management is well understood by both the researchers as well as senior management.

1.2.3 University of Namibia’s Priority in relation to that of Government: The government research priority has been formulated in response to the challenges identified in the fourth national Development Plan 4 (NDP 4). This year the National Commission on Research, Science and Technology, through a stakeholder consultation process developed the first ever Namibia’s National Programme for Research, Science, Technology and Innovation. This programme sets the national agenda for research and development and also priorities over the next three years.

The areas covered:

- a) Economic and Social Enablers

- Health, Agriculture and Fisheries, Water, Energy, Indigenous knowledge, Social Sciences and Humanities Logistics, Environment and Tourism, Mining and Geosciences
- b) Technology Enablers
- ICT, Manufacturing technologies, Biotechnology

This is the first attempt for Namibia to set STI priorities; it is quite clear that the implementation of these priorities will be a challenge given the limited resources. It is expected that the university will align its priority to that set at national level. In this case, the NCRST, which is the funding Agency, will issue calls for research proposals in those identified research areas. As already shown in Table 2, the University of Namibia's own research budget is very small representing only 1% of the total revenue, which means Government, through the NCRST, will be able to use the research funding instrument to ensure the alignment of research priority of the University to that set at national level.

## 2. International trends and policy challenges

### 2.1 Importance of Internationalisation of Tertiary Education

The concept of internationalisation has evolved over the last decade as stated by Knight (2004) while the process of internationalisation of tertiary education has accelerated over the past two decades (Santiago, Tremblay, Basri & Arnal, 2008a). From several literatures, the term internationalisation conveys different meanings, understanding and interpretations to different people (Bartell, 2003 & Knight, 2004) and as such, it is used in a variety of ways. In most cases, it is also used interchangeably with the concept globalisation (Santiago, et al., 2008a; Bartel, 2003) to reflect education-related cross-border activities. For example, according to the definition proposed by Arum and van der Water (1992) as cited in Knight (2004), internationalisation is “the multiple activities, programs and services that fall within international studies, international educational exchange and technical cooperation” (p. 9). Similarly, Soderqvist (2002) as cited in Knight (2004, p. 10) defines the term internationalisation as:

*“a change process from a national higher education institution to an international higher education institution leading to the inclusion of an international dimension in all aspects of its holistic management in order to enhance the quality of teaching and learning and to achieve the desired competencies (Knight, 2004, p. 10)”.*

According to Held et al., as cited in Santiago et al. (2008, p. 235), define the process of globalisation as *“the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness.”* Likewise, Bartell (2003, p.46) views the concept globalization as an advanced phase in the evolving process of internationalisation. According to Ordorika (2006), as cited in Meek & Davies (2009, p.43), *“Globalization has substantially modified the nature of contemporary Nations-States as the principal organizers of capital accumulation and as bearers and creators of national identities.”* Some authors have proposed a broader meaning of the term globalization as opposed to Bartell who considers globalization as a subset within a broader concept, internationalisation.

Therefore, given these various definitions and interpretations, de Wit (2002) as cited in Knight (2004, p.10) concluded that:

*“as the international dimension of higher education gains more attention and recognition, people tend to use it in the way that best suits their purpose. While one can understand this happening, it is not helpful for internationalisation to become a catchall phrase for everything and anything international. A more focused definition is necessary if it is to be understood and treated with the importance that it deserves. Even if there is not agreement on a precise definition, internationalisation needs to have parameters if it is to be assessed and to advance higher education. This is why the use of a working definition in combination with a conceptual framework for internationalisation of higher education is relevant (p. 10)”.*

Consequently, Knight (2004) proposes a working definition for the term internationalisation as *“The process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (p. 11)*. It is interesting to note that the term ‘process’ has been used in both the definitions of the two concepts internationalisation and globalization. Hence, the term process highlights an important aspect because as Knight alludes to, it *“denotes an evolutionary or developmental quality to the concept.”*

In the context of this paper, internationalisation is taken to mean “the inclusion of an international, intercultural and/or global dimension into the curriculum and teaching learning process “(Knight, 2004, p. 6) at tertiary institutions as opposed to the “anthropological perspective definition that focuses on the individual student outcomes rather than the process of organisational internationalisation...” as given by Dobbert (1998) cited in Bartell (2003, p. 46). Accordingly, the term internationalisation is being used more and more to discuss the

international dimension of higher education, and more widely, postsecondary education (Knight, 2004).

Bartell (2003) proposed that in order to understand the process applied in internationalizing the university, the following components should form an integral part of the process:

1. College leadership;
2. Faculty members' international involvement in activities with colleagues, research sites, and institutions worldwide;
3. The availability, affordability, accessibility, and transferability of study abroad programs for students;
4. The presence and integration of international students, scholars and visiting faculty into campus life; and
5. International co-curricular units (residence halls, conference planning centres, student unions, career centres, cultural immersion and language houses, student activities and student organisations) (p. 46).

These proposed components should however be used as guidelines because institutions missions and visions vary and hence how they incorporate internationalisation and globalization should support their policies and main programs. Santiago et al. (2008a, p.236) has proposed several trends that have prompted growing interest in internationalisation as follows:

- The process of globalization in the economic sphere has translated in the education sphere into growing demands for an international dimension of education and training.
- Rapid acceleration in global economic integration over the past fifteen years has translated into a growing internationalisation of the labour market for the highly skilled.
- The internationalisation of the labour market for the highly skilled is also connected to the increasing demand for tertiary educated workers for the new economy.
- Demographic trends have also triggered interest in internationalisation by tertiary education institutions (TEIs).
- The emergence and rapid expansion of tertiary education export industries in some OECD.

Santiago et al. (2008b) observed that the reasons why internationalisation is important is due to the following factors:

- growing demand from students and employers alike for tertiary qualifications that have a strong international component – both from the perspective of the curriculum content and exposure to different cultures that helps develop intercultural skills and competencies
- maintenance or improvement the country's economic performance and relative standing, and to achieve a number of social goals
- increased opportunities for cost-sharing that arise when bringing together expertise from several research settings;
- contribution to multiculturalism and the development of cross-cultural awareness
- contribution to building strong links between countries whose nationals are involved in student exchange

## 2.2 Government policies and institutional programmes support in support of Internationalisation of Higher Education

### 2.2.1 Regional Approach to internationalisation of tertiary education

SADC has long recognized the importance of internationalisation in higher education hence the adoption of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training (1997) which sought to:

- Reserve space for 5% of student admissions for SADC students.
- Work towards standardisation of university admission requirements.
- Develop mechanisms for the transfer of credit within universities in the region.
- Encourage student and staff mobility.
- Ensure, within 10 years, that SADC students and home students have the same rights as far as accommodation and fees are concerned.

The SADC Protocol on Education and Training is supported by the SADC Protocol on Science, Technology and Innovation (2010) which encourages cooperation among SADC Member States as well as with non-member states and other organisations.

### 2.2.2 National Approach to internationalisation of tertiary education

Although internationalisation was not prioritised due to the urgent need to facilitate development, access to higher education, the ratification of SADC Protocol on Education and Training, and the SADC Protocol on Science, Technology and Innovation by Namibia signified the importance that government attaches to this subject. Namibia has developed its qualification framework which is aligned to the regional qualification framework. The

National Programme on Research, Science, Technology and Innovation (NPRSTI) (2014 to 2017) has been developed in terms of Section 18 of the Research Science and Technology Act, 2004 (Act 23 of 2004) with the aim of providing a comprehensive framework for actualising Namibia's Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) development aspirations. The NPRSTI encompasses the steps Namibia needs to take in creating all round capacities in STI infrastructure; developing a critical mass of scientists and engineers that are necessary for spearheading and sustaining industrial development and economic transformation; increasing research and scientific innovation support mechanisms through capitalisation of the STI Fund; and enhanced private-public partnerships and international collaboration. This is another indication of how Namibia embraces internationalisation of Higher Education.

### 2.2.3 The University of Namibia's approach to Internationalisation of Higher Education

Data presented in Table 2 reveals that the University's internationalisation approach is in pursuit of the following objectives:

- growing demand from students and employers alike for tertiary qualifications that have a strong international component – both from the perspective of the curriculum content and exposure to different cultures that helps develop intercultural skills and competencies
- contribution to the efficiency of tertiary education systems in research – and by extension, to the national innovation capacity – as a result of externalities in knowledge production
- academic exchanges allow for a faster circulation and dissemination of research results produced elsewhere and provide significant impetus to research and innovation that would not occur in isolation

In view of the above, the University of Namibia has implemented a strategy to encourage enrolment of international students through its marketing strategy which includes participation in international career fairs especially in the regions. This strategy appears to be working well as the University of Namibia's enrolment figures over the past 10 years from 2004 to 2013 reveal that some of the targets (5% of sectoral space and local fees) for SADC students as set out in the SADC Protocol on Education and Training have already been met by Namibia. Between 2004 and 2013, the number of international students ranged between 10 to 14% approximately (see Table 2 and also Figure 1). The international student number grew from 580 in 2004 to 2000 in 2013. Over this period the average increase in international student participation has been 24% per annum. This means that although the University of

Namibia’s student population is comparatively small when compared to some big universities in the region, there is a significant growth and the University compares favourably with other universities in the world in terms of international participation.

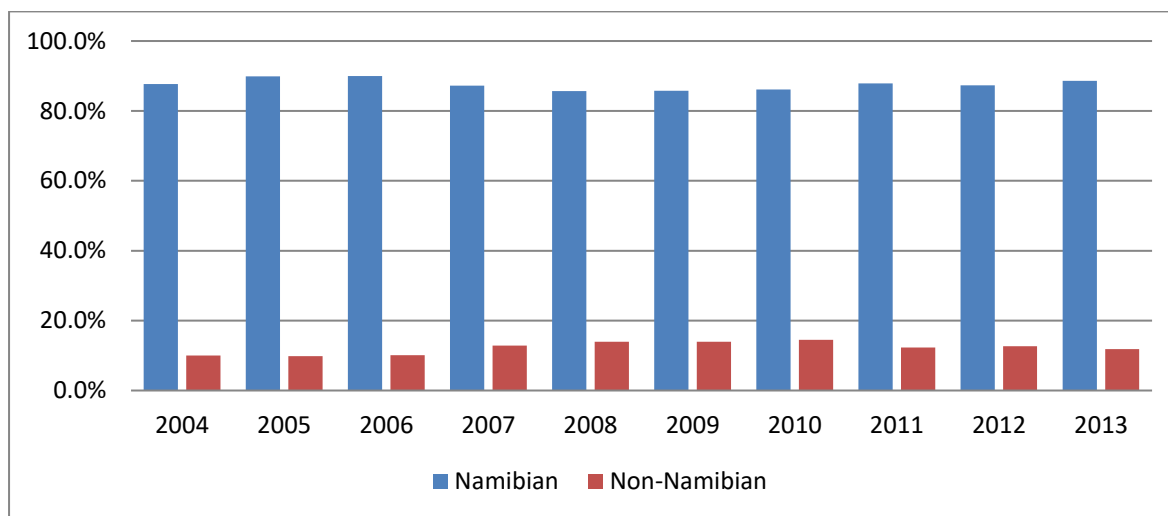


Figure 1: Enrolment by Nationality 2004-2013 (Source: University of Namibia (2013))

In pursuit of its internationalisation objectives UNAM also implements a people mobility (students and staff) form of internationalisation in which student or staff spent long or short-term periods at a foreign university. According to the information obtained from the International Office at the University of Namibia, the number of exchange students has risen from six in (2010) to 30 in (2014). The students were mainly from Sweden, Norway, Finland and Germany. Plans are underway to accommodate 37 students from American universities in 2015. The University of Namibia currently has 114 partner Universities worldwide. Every year 20 University of Namibia academics go to other universities as exchange staff. Nearly the same number of research professors is accommodated at the University of Namibia annually. The people mobility form of internationalisation seems to be working well at UNAM as it is evident in Table 2 which reflects that about (95%) of its staff hold overseas qualifications.

### 2.3 Strategies to enable the University of Namibia to do good work sustainably and national and international levels

From the work of Santiago et al. (2008b), the trends and challenges of internationalisation identified in the paper have assisted with the identification of key strategies that could help countries and institutions achieve their internationalization goals and maximizing returns of opening up to Internationalization Corporation and exchange. In this section, the strategies

applicable to Namibia and the University of Namibia are listed and appropriate explanations are given to justify their relevance. The strategies are as follows:

(a) Overall strategy and steering of internationalisation policy: Namibia currently does not have a formal national strategy and comprehensive policy framework for internationalisation. It is important that such a strategy and policy framework is developed at national level taking into consideration the needs of the country, building upon natural advantages and acknowledging constraints. The primary goal here would be to maximise the benefits of internationalisation in the national context.

(b) Attractiveness and international competitiveness of the tertiary education system:

According to the data obtained from the University of Namibia, the majority of international students at UNAM come from the SADC region and majority of these students come from neighbouring countries (see Figure 2). Between 70 to 90% of all international students come from the SADC region, while the non SADC African countries represent 6 to 10%. This implies that UNAM has not managed to attract students beyond the SADC region possibly due to insufficient marketing beyond the SADC region. For this reason, as strategy focused on creating structures to promote the national tertiary education system is required.

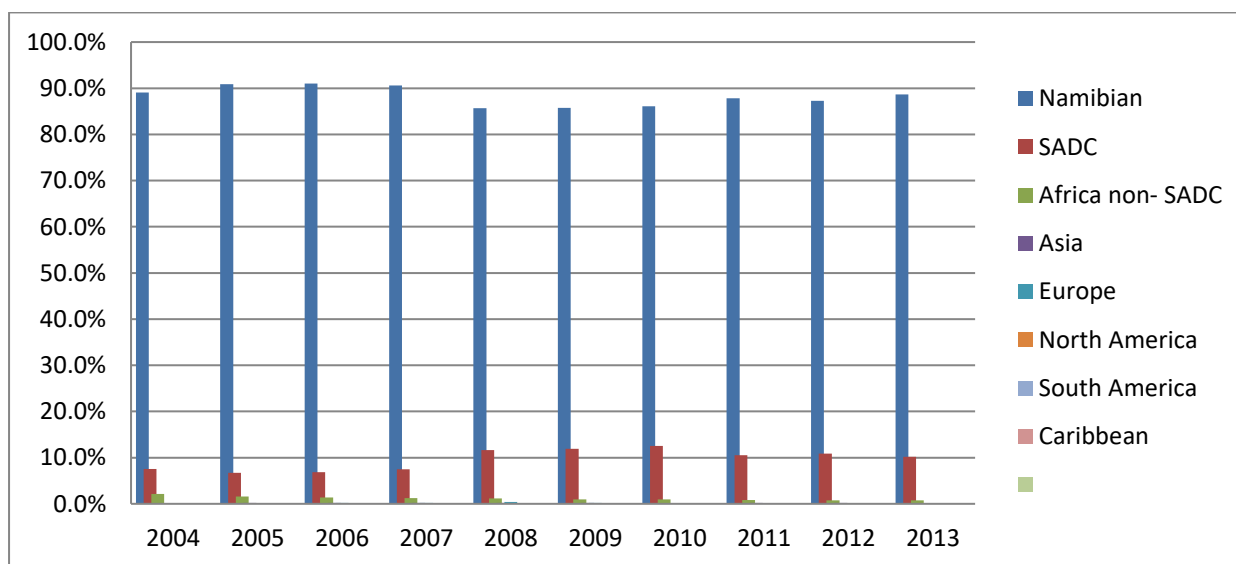


Figure 2: Enrolment by world region 2004-2013 (Source: University of Namibia (2013))

(c) Internal dimension of internationalisation: The fact that only 20 students are participating in student exchange at UNAM is discouraging and calls for a strategy to encourage the mobility of domestic academic staff and students. UNAM should develop a culture of mobility amongst students by integrating short-term exchanges as regular part of its programmes and develop twinning programmes with foreign TEIs

through disseminating information on the benefits of mobility. The development of credit transfer schemes and recognition mechanisms, the portability of public funding as well as financial support could also be explored.

3. Towards establishing an organisational saga for excellence: This section traces the concept organisational saga at the University of Namibia. The line of argument is that the institution's general saga is stated in its Vision and Mission, supported by sub-sagas initiated at Faculty and School levels. As can be noted in the previous and following sections, to a great extent, the University of Namibia has some of characteristics of organisational saga as described by Clark (1972).

4.1 Defining the concept 'organisational saga': In our opinion, we had always attributed the concept of organizational saga to and particularly the term 'saga' to associated with something bad happening in an organisation and attracting media hype, for example, fraudulent activities of top management attracting such headings as: "Minister implicated in diamonds mine saga"; "Saga rages on at resettlement farm"; and "Who will be named next in the sex saga?" This view has changed to accommodate the positive concept 'organisation saga'. This new understanding of the concept organisational saga stems from Clark's (1972) seminal paper titled "The organisational saga in higher education". According to Clark:

An institutional saga may be found in many forms, through mottoes, traditions, and ethos. It might consist of long-standing practices or unique roles played by an institution, or even in the images held in the minds (and hearts) of students, faculty, and alumni. Sagas can provide a sense of romance and even mystery that turn a cold organisation into a beloved social institution, capturing the allegiance of its members and even defining the identity of its communities (1972, p. 235).

In other words, it is through their sagas that institutions or organisations achieve their distinctiveness and uniqueness. What is important to note is that a saga can be initiated by one person or a group of people. This initiation of a saga is done by setting values, beliefs and best practices for the organisation which have to be followed strictly without deviation. A saga is a story that finds a strict adherence from its believers; it is like an ideology that unifies people according to shared beliefs about the organisation. When an institution has developed a strong saga, it is expected that all its members rally around the saga to propel the institution to greater heights. New staff members have to follow the institution's shared values and beliefs, otherwise they have to leave the organisation

because “the faculty cadre of believers helps to effect the legend, then protect it against later leaders and other new participants who, less pure in belief, might turn the organisation in some other direction” (Clark, 1972, p.181). In addition to the loyalty of the staff members and their commitment to excellence, the institution’s alumni and members of the community also believe in the institution’s saga, because of the trust and loyalty they have for their institution. Relating this to the University of Namibia, it is argued that its story, the institutional saga, started when it was begun in 1992.

4.2 Tracing the University of Namibia saga: In a bid to explain the University of Namibia’s organisational saga, it is important to revisit the Mission, Vision and Motto of the institution. This is done following Clark’s description of an institutional saga given in the preceding section. The University of Namibia’s saga is imbedded in the three statements cited below.

- (a) Vision : The Vision of the University of Namibia is stated simply as: “To be a beacon of excellence and innovation in teaching, research and extension services”.
- (b) Mission: The mission of the University of Namibia is: “To provide quality higher education through teaching, research and advisory services to our customers with the view to produce productive and competitive human resources capable of driving public and private institutions towards a knowledge-based economic growth and improved quality of life”.
- (c) Motto: The Motto of the University of Namibia is: “Education, Service and Development”.

4.3 The University of Namibia’s research saga: Since its establishment by an Act of Parliament in 1992, the University of Namibia has been developing an organisational saga centred on excellence in most of its operations, particularly in research. The analysis of documentary evidence and observation has led to the conclusion that the development of the University of Namibia saga is an on-going process. The excellence saga is discernible in the faculty’s commitment to research, teaching and community engagement. In this paper, the main focus is on the research part of the core areas of research, teaching and community engagement of the academic members of the University of Namibia. The restriction to research has been necessitated by the requirements of the paper in terms of its size. It is also subsumed that teaching and community engagement benefit from research.

There are a number of examples that can be cited at the University of Namibia to meet Clark’s characteristics of an institutional saga. One example of excellence in research can be noted in the outstanding work of Professor Enos Kiremire, a distinguished chemist who has

since registered seven patents on malaria treatment with the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). “These patents have been certified as novelty and have industrial application by WIPO, which means they can be developed by relevant industries in the fight against malaria” (Annual Report, 2012, p.5). Prof Kiremire has become an icon of research in malaria related diseases not only in Namibia, but also internationally. Related to this, a collaborative research being undertaken by another scientist, Dr Davis Mumbengegwi in collaboration with Dr Hugh Sturrock of the University of California and Dr Roly Immo Kleinschmidt of the London School of hygiene, has made a claim that malaria will be eradicated in Namibia in 2020 (Annual Report, p.98). In addition to this, the University of Namibia has proved its commitment to the improvement of healthcare in the country by establishing the Schools of Medicine, Nursing and Public Health, and Pharmacy with aid from Government and the private sector. This shows that the Government and the private sector have trust in the capability and expertise of the University of Namibia in charting the development of the country in the global knowledge-based economy. The collaboration of the University of Namibia School of Medicine and University of Stellenbosch Medical School (South Africa) is another good example of internationalisation that will benefit the former. On the importance of internationalisation, Santiago, Trenblay and Arnal (2008b, p.237) note that: “Internationalisation contributes to the efficiency of tertiary education systems in research – and by extension, to the national innovation capacity – as a result of externalities in knowledge production. Academic exchanges allow for a faster circulation and dissemination research results produced elsewhere and provide a significant impetus to research and innovation that would not occur in isolation.”

In a case that can be described as leading by example, the Pro-Vice Chancellor: Research and Academic Affairs, Prof Osmund Mwandemele was recently appointed a member of the Presidential Economic Advisory Council (Namibia). He was also appointed to serve on the South African Ministry of Science and Technology’s Advisory Committee on Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) for the development of Science and Technology (Annual Report, p.44). In such exploits, trust of and loyalty to the institution are boosted. Image building or ethos is crucial in developing an organisational saga. In the PVC’s case, “the saga is a strong self-fulfilling belief; working through institutional self-image and public image” (Clark, 1972, p.182). The PVC’s exemplary leadership shows an observance of the Hippocratic Oath for university managers: “to the best of my ability I will build my enterprise’s capacity to support academic projects, by strengthening its

resources, relationships and reputation, guided by statements that define public mission” (Sharrock, 2010, p.374).

Still on adherence to excellence, it is academics from the University of Namibia’s Law Faculty who run the Justice Training Centre (JTC) in Namibia. JTC equips and prepares lawyers for admission into the legal profession in Namibia. The excellence of JTC has attracted many lawyers from within the Southern African region. Being the only institution that trains lawyers in Namibia, the University of Namibia enjoys the support of the large number of its alumni in the public and private sector. Recently, a group of alumni published a book on law through the University of Namibia Press.

Guided by the Motto “to teach is to touch lives”, the committed members of the Faculty of Education have continued to produce teachers who “touch” the lives of many learners throughout the country. Despite this huge achievement, there is a concern on the low English proficiency of teachers produced by the University of Namibia. The English language proficiency test written by teachers countrywide at the behest of Government in 2011 showed that most teachers performed below average. The good thing is that the University of Namibia was given millions of dollars by Government to redress the situation through in-service training of the teachers. At the time of writing this paper, teachers are going through remedial training in English.

The Research and Publications Office has the mandate of fostering research in all the Faculties at the University of Namibia. Its compilation of published articles, books, book chapters and monographs is a clear testimony of the research saga of the University of Namibia. Every year the Research and Publications Office, in collaboration with the University Centre of Excellence, the Multidisciplinary Research Centre (MRC), organises a Research Day yearly where research outputs from all Faculties are displayed. The public is invited to come and observe the results of research. The University of Namibia academics have also demonstrated their excellence in research by presenting research papers at international conferences. The Journal for Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences (JSHSS), launched in 2012 by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Studies, is an example of a publication that has consistently published research articles from all faculties of the University and from the international community. This journal is marketed online by EBSCO HOST Publishers based in the United States of America. This has assisted in making the University of Namibia visible on the international scene.

The Zero Emission Research Initiative (ZERI) Project, whose research focus is edible and medicinal mushrooms, has attracted funding for research from NEDBANK Namibia, the United Nations development Programme (NDP), Global Environmental Facility (GEF), the United Nations University (UNU), Rossing Foundation Namibia, and the Southern African Network for Biosciences (SANBio) and from several donors. It is through the trust and loyalty (Clark 1972) that these organisations have for the quality of scientific research that makes these organisations pump money into ZERI. In other words, the social base, comprising local and international communities of believers, supports the research activities of ZERI academics because they are doing an excellent job. In turn, the University of Namibia researchers fulfil the expectations of the stakeholders by producing quality research work in mushroom science, technology and innovation. The ZERI team has trained personnel from schools, colleges and interested members of the public on how to grow mushrooms in their backyards. This has not only provided necessary skills but has added to the improvement of the eating habits of those who have undergone training and their families.

With the establishment of the University Central Consultancy Bureau (UCCB), the University of Namibia has become the first port of call for public and private organisations seeking research and training in various fields. By using expertise abound in all the Faculties, UCCB has managed to rack in millions of dollars necessary for the development of the University. For example, in 2012 the Consultancy Division of UCCB, earned the Bureau N\$15 131 400.13 (Annual Report, 2012, p. 127). In addition to the consultancies that academic staff members have through UCCB, the Multidisciplinary Research Centre (MRC) has the sole mandate of fostering and carrying out scientific research at the University of Namibia. Some of the areas in which MRC academics have successfully carried research include: renewable energy, indigenous knowledge systems (IKS), human wildlife conflict, biodiversity and HIV/AIDS. The academics are also commissioned to carry out research on various areas by both public and private organisations in the country.

**4.4 Challenges:** The foregoing section seems to suggest that everything is well, yet there are challenges that hinder the furtherance of research excellence at the University of Namibia, thereby affecting the development of its saga. Some academics pay lip service to the institution's values and belief in a research culture. There are academics that do not have interest in research and community service; they are only contented with teaching. Such academics think that conducting research is a waste of their time. Others talk much about research whilst on the ground, practice the opposite. Lack of funding is another stumbling

block for research projects. Government funding has never been and will never be adequate. There is a need to develop a more viable research unit that forges strong ties among the University, industry and government. Large teaching loads and student-lecturer ratio take much of the time that would have otherwise been spend conducting research. This is a common problem in all the universities in Namibia. The University has not yet developed a clear-cut policy that defines the institution as a research intensive or teaching intensive institution. Such a distinction would give/assist in leading academics accordingly and make them thrust their energies in a more focused area of specialisation. As it is, it is more through academics' intuition that they should research and publish, patent or perish (Johnson, 2013). The strategic planning of research and management need to be more focused. The junior lecturers who are recruited every year need to be assisted by experienced researchers at Departmental and Faculty levels. This can be achieved through collaborative research leading to co-authoring of papers for publication.

### **SUMMARY**

The information provided in this section touches on relevant aspects of an organisational saga as described by Clark (1972). The adherence to the values and beliefs as contained in Mission, Vision and Motto of the institution by academic staff is of paramount importance. The examples of excellence provided in this section attest to commitment to upholding the institution's organisational saga by some serious academics at the University of Namibia. This is not to say there are no challenges faced by the institution. Despite some of the challenges mentioned in this section, it can be concluded that the University of Namibia's organisational saga is still at its infancy stage. The saga has played a significant role in improving the ranking of the University of Namibia.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This paper has demonstrated that, as the premier institutions of high learning in Namibia, the three universities particularly the University of Namibia has attempted to fulfil its mandate of providing skilled manpower for the developing economy. Drawing students from a weak primary and secondary school system, the University has managed to train lawyers, nurses, social workers, engineers and teachers, among other professionals highly needed in this knowledge-based economy. Despite low funding from the government, the University of Namibia academics have produced research output of international standards. Its academic staff and students are involved in exchange programmes with international institutions, though on a limited scale. The exchanges are in line with the

international goals of internationalisation which result in the cross fertilisation of researchers and students from partnering institutions. Internationalisation can also be noticed in the academics that come from different countries armed with the requisite skills in a wide spectrum of fields of specialisation. This makes the University of Namibia an international institution of higher education in its true sense.

The paper has demonstrated that the University of Namibia has characteristics of institutional saga enshrined in its Mission, Vision and Motto. The institution has a cadre of faculty that believes in the institution's commitment to excellence in research. In some cases, these academics have been able to collaborate with academics from international universities on research projects. In order to have maximum cooperation on the adherence to the institutional saga, it is recommended that the University of Namibia introduce the Hippocratic oaths suggested by Sharrock (2010) when new academic staff members join the University. The introduction of the Hippocratic Oath should be extended to other this in the country, including the International University of Management and the Polytechnic of Namibia. The new members of staff should be made to swear: "To the best of my ability I will support open, independent and systematic inquiry, high standards of learning, and the creative and responsible uses of knowledge...( Sharrock, 2010, p.374)." When this is done at the outset, it is believed that staff members will 'buy-into' the goals and aspirations of the institution. This code of conduct will go a long way in giving the new staff members a more focused guideline of what they are expected to do that what is in operation at the moment.

Limited funding has been identified as the major constraint in the operations of the universities in Namibia and not only the University of Namibia. As a government institution, the University of Namibia should step up efforts to seek more funding from industry. It is hoped that the newly created National Commission on Research, Science and Technology will facilitate the award of substantial amounts of funds to improve the quality of research at the University. The NCRST needs to form a special division that gives grants to academics who publish research papers in refereed journals as an incentive. Incentivising research can go a long way in encouraging academics that are eager to conduct research but lack resources. The said division can go a step further and reward academics who supervise doctoral students to completion. The completion rate of PhD students has been very low. NCRST can take a leaf from the South African TEIs which benefit from the National Resources Foundation (NRF) in that country. Once funds are made available in the proposed division, academics can apply for research grants as individuals as a team. The Research and

Publications Office should also take a leading role in sourcing funds from industry and not just wait to distribute meagre internal funds from the University coffers. There is also great need to identify priority areas on which the scarce funds are spent in a particular year. Setting priority areas should be part of the research strategic planning and management of the Research and Publications Office and the whole University.

The paper provided literature exploration on *Research Management and Policy Landscape* as a mirror for changing research management in Higher Tertiary Education (HTE) in Namibia. Using the University of Namibia as a single case study, the paper concludes that there is much that needs to be done in the areas of research management at university level. It also emerged that universities are failing to collaborate in order to enhance government initiatives and internationalization policies in higher tertiary education in Namibia. It emerged that institutional saga remains indispensable in building institutional corporate culture towards research.

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