

The Performance of Newly Qualified Teachers: Implications for School Administration: A Case for Zimbabwe

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Abstract

A research was undertaken to assess the performance of newly qualified teachers in different facets of the school curriculum in Karoi Education District of Zimbabwe. Purposive sampling was used to select a sample of forty newly qualified teachers. These were selected from a population of 400 newly qualified teachers in the district. A sample of 13 deputy school heads and 13 school heads was selected from a population of 130 deputy school heads and 130 school heads. An open-ended questionnaire was used as the main data collection instrument and the data collected was qualitatively analyzed. In some cases simple descriptive statistics were used to assist in the analysis. Data was presented in tabular form where possible. These were based on the themes derived from the responses and research questions. The results show that teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe offer similar syllabi. All newly qualified teachers indicated that they had done the following main courses whilst at college: Theory of Education, Professional Studies/Applied Education, Curriculum Depth Studies and Main Subject. Almost all the teachers noted that the above first three courses were very much relevant to their teaching. Main Subject was found to be irrelevant to their teaching. Results further show that most deputy school heads and school heads found newly qualified teachers performing well in the teaching of Mathematics and co-curricular activities, but performing poorly in the teaching of reading, content subjects (Religious and Moral Education, Social Studies and Environmental Science). They were also found lacking in lesson planning and preparation, and class management. Deputy school heads and school heads also identified problems that affected the newly qualified teachers' performance at schools. These included indiscipline, absenteeism and inadequate planning and preparation. The results indicate that teachers, deputy school heads and school heads agree that school administrators have a role to play in the performance of newly qualified teachers. It emerged that whilst the college of origin had an influence on teacher performance, there were other factors that impacted on teacher performance at school level. Such factors included managerial styles at schools, motivation styles, the environment in which the school is located and teacher deployment patterns and trends after leaving college. The results also show that the performance of newly qualified teachers impacted both positively and negatively on the school and school administration. The impact includes the need to allocate resources to staff develop the newly qualified teachers in some of the areas noted, for example the teaching of reading. The study recommends that school heads and deputy school heads should be involved in the training of teachers much more than was the case at the time of the study. It is recommended that the teaching of such areas as reading among others be emphasized at both college and school levels. There is need for Continued Professional Development (CPD) for teachers.

Keywords: *Newly Qualified Teachers; Teacher Performance; School Administration; Quality Education*

1. Introduction and Background

Quality education has become a major issue in education debate globally, and Zimbabwe is no exception. Among other things quality education has been influenced by the inputs, processes and the environment

in which the education system operates (Coombs and Hallack, 1987). Teacher performance in the areas of teaching techniques and lesson delivery is viewed as contributing significantly to improving quality of education. Communities are becoming more and more involved in the development of their schools. A case in point is the establishment of School Development Committees and School Development Associations in 1992 and 1993 in Zimbabwe respectively. These are the equivalence of the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in South Africa as established by the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 (Department of Education, 1996). In return, communities expect high performance from teachers and all those involved in the education of their children.

There have been a number of questions raised regarding the teacher education curricular in Zimbabwe and other developing countries. Press reports have shown conflicts between parents and teachers. Some of the conflicts arise from the expectations of the community and behaviour of teachers both at school and from within the communities. Cases of poor performance in public examinations, coupled with the need for parents to send children for extra lessons during holidays have become a norm in Zimbabwe. This has raised a number of questions about the training and commitment of today's teacher. School heads on the other hand appear not to be satisfied with the performance of some of the teachers, whom they accuse of indiscipline. People have blamed different factors for poor performance at all levels of the education system. Among other factors, teacher performance has been part of the discourse (Teacher in Zimbabwe, 1995). There has been a decline in the performance of students in public examinations in Zimbabwe at both grade seven and Ordinary level since 1999 (Zimbabwe School Examination Council, 2001). The distribution curve for the grade seven results for example shows that most candidates got between grades 4 and 9 in General Paper, Mathematics and English (ibid).

Education does not only contribute to personal growth. Education also contributes to a country's productivity, its competitiveness in international trade, social stability and political competence (Beare, Caldwell and Millikan, 1994). To address issues of education for sustainability it is important that pertinent issues of quality and relevance of education to society go under scrutiny regularly. In that vein it is equally pertinent that teachers not only acquire the relevant skills and attitudes, but demonstrate the necessary commitment in implementing education programmes. The introduction of the performance appraisal system in 1995 was viewed as a step in improving evaluation and monitoring of performance in the public service. It would appear that despite its intended intentions the Performance Appraisal System in Zimbabwe has not contributed much in improving the performance of the public service, including education. At the time of writing this article progress had been made to terminate the Performance Appraisal System as propagated in 1995, and replace it with Results Based Management (RBM) with effect from January 2012.

Fresko & Chain (1986) carried out a study which established that thirty three percent of the students in training colleges had problems with the teaching of primary mathematics concepts. This was noted to have a bearing on their performance as qualified mathematics teachers. They further noted that there was a positive correlation between teacher qualifications and their performance in the teaching of mathematics. Fresko and Chain's study concentrated on the teaching of one subject, Mathematics. It also concentrated on student teachers, whose exposure to both the college curriculum and staff development is expected to contribute to an improvement in teacher performance.

Similarly, Chivore (1990) carried out a study on the effectiveness of the ZINTEC teacher. The assessment of the teachers was based on the opinions of the school heads. Effectiveness was assessed in the following areas; teaching practice, involvement in community work and theoretical work. The ZINTEC teachers were found to be effective in such areas as co-curricular activities, class management, classroom management, teaching and learning aids. However, they were found to be ineffective in such areas as planning, class lesson evaluation, scheming, education with production, education and the community. The study also concluded that the low qualifications of the school heads then affected their evaluation of teacher performance. However, there have been major reforms in Continued Professional Development

(CPD) of school heads and teachers in general since the launch of the Bachelor of Education degree in Educational Administration in 1993 by the University College of Distance Education. The college was later (1999) transformed into the Zimbabwe Open University.

Statement of the problem

The statement of the problem is in question form: To what extent are newly qualified teachers at primary school performing to expected standards and what are the effects of their performance to school administration and management? The question is then guided by three sub-questions.

- Which areas do trainee teachers cover at their respective colleges?
- How do deputy school heads and school heads rate the performance of newly qualified teachers?
- How has the performance of newly qualified teachers impacted on the performance of the school and school administration and management?

Significance of the study

The study focuses on teacher performance, a key tenet of the issues of quality and standards in education. It analyses the performance of newly qualified teachers within the context of contributing to the debate on education quality and standards, and education for sustainable development as well. It will assist in improving the curricular at teachers' colleges. It will assist in making education more relevant to the needs of the community and thus contributing to quality education. The debate on quality education is a never ending discourse, as such the study initiates further research in the area of teacher education and quality.

2. Literature Review

Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

The concept of quality education and teacher performance

Teacher performance has been very much viewed in relation to quality of education. Quality as a major concept has assumed a variety of conceptual meanings. Quality can be defined in terms of relating inputs to the process and the products of the same process. If we were to take this view of quality it is like we agree with the notion that quality education is "the extent to which the products or results of the education provided meet standards stipulated in the system's educational objectives" (Grisay and Mahlck, 1990: 3). Chief among this view of quality are standards and the relevance of the products of the system. Quality education has therefore been characterized by high student achievement, relevance of the skills learnt, high teacher performance and the sufficient supply of resources and learning conditions. In that respect, the production function model can be used to explain the main features of quality education. These include inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes (Coombs and Hallack, 1987). Similarly, Adams (1993) concurs with the above, but goes further to add another dimension on the discourse on quality. For instance, whilst noting that quality education has to address the phases as noted in the production function model, it has to deal with issues of reputation, technical efficiency, effectiveness, resource allocation, content and value addition. In addition to this, quality and effectiveness have been measured in terms of student achievement (Postlethwaite and Ross, 1992). Postlethwaite and Ross (1992) further argue that effective schools are those that are able to add value to the student, since average students should be able to achieve better than expected in comparison to their home situations. However, for transformation to occur in the learner, pedagogical approaches and techniques during the interaction between the student and the teacher play a crucial role (Samah, 1991).

Theory of education and teacher education

Teacher education colleges in Zimbabwe offer a variety of courses in their curricular. These include Theory of education, Curriculum Development Studies, Teaching Practice, Applied Education and Main Subject among other courses. Different colleges also call their courses by different names, although the

course content and goals might basically be alike. The present study examines some of the courses offered in Theory of Education. These include Philosophy of Education, Psychology of Education and Sociology of Education.

Akinpelu (1981) identifies at least four major roles that Philosophy of Education plays in teacher education. For Akinpelu (1981), Philosophy of Education helps the teacher to become aware of the various issues involved in education. In that respect, it provides personal and professional growth for the teacher, as it contributes to making the teacher a scholar. Secondly, it helps the teacher to develop a critical mind as it provides a platform for giving weight to the validity or soundness of arguments than the authority of the person arguing a case (ibid). Furthermore, Akinpelu (1981) notes that the study of Philosophy of Education increases the ability of the teacher to influence educational policies, and it also offers a personal intellectual education to the teacher.

Similar views are expressed for the relevance of Sociology of Education in teacher education programmes. The school is seen as part of society. It has to maintain the values of the society in which it is found. Sociology of Education plays an important role in the attempt to understand societal issues such as inequality, injustice, poverty and social change (Peresuh and Nhundu, 1999). An understanding of these problems may assist the teacher to understand and appreciate social differences found within communities, schools and students. The multi-dimensional nature of these problems and the teacher's ability to analyze may make the teacher efficient and effective in the society that he/she operates.

Psychology of Education on the other hand deals with theories of development, motivation and class management among other areas. In short, Psychology of Education helps the teacher to understand human and cognitive development, moral development, personality and motivation and how these can enhance or inhibit the teaching and learning processes, interests and attitudes (Peresuh and Nhundu, 1999).

The issue of teacher performance as noted earlier, raises very interesting views and positions in the field of education and training. Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1994:238) argue that "Consistency of behaviour of performance and of image rarely comes by accident. It is usually developed by means of a sustained training programme". Further to that they raise questions that are pertinent to this study.

- Are educators overtly dedicated to excellence of learning outcomes?
- How can they best communicate that dedication?

Teacher education as a whole has to do with the professional preparation of teachers (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). Teacher education in Africa has been characterized by diverse problems. Such problems have negatively impacted on teacher effectiveness and the quality of education provided. These problems among others include, a lack of linkage between college curricular and realities at schools, over-loading the college curriculum at the expense professional content, education theory that lacks relevance and the failure to respond to changing world needs (Hawes, 1990; Chivore, 1990).

3. Research Design and Methodology

The study used the case study design. Data was collected through the use of open-ended questionnaires which were distributed to forty newly qualified teachers, thirteen deputy primary school heads and thirteen primary school heads. Open-ended questionnaires allowed the respondents to explain their views, similar to what they would do with interviews. Collection of data was based on the three sub-questions as noted earlier. The distribution of the respondents by gender was nine males and four females for the school heads, twelve males and one female for the deputy school heads, and twenty five males and fifteen females for the newly qualified teachers (not exceeding four years in the teaching service). All the newly qualified teachers had the minimum teaching qualification of a Diploma in Education, 23.1 percent of the deputy school heads had a Bachelor of Education degree and 46.1 percent of the school heads had a Bachelor of Education degree as well and the rest had Diplomas in Education.

4. Discussion of Findings

The first question sought to **find out the major courses the newly qualified teachers studied at colleges**. All the forty teachers indicated that they had studied Theory of Education, Applied Education/Professional Studies, Curriculum Development Studies, Teaching Practice and Main Subject during their training at their respective teachers' colleges. However, the difference appeared to be in course names as some colleges referred to Applied Education as Professional Studies. The distribution of the newly qualified teachers indicated that they had trained at eight different teachers colleges that train primary school teachers in Zimbabwe.

When it came to the newly qualified teachers' views on the relevance of the courses to their teaching, all newly qualified teachers noted that they found Theory of Education, Applied Education/Professional studies and Teaching Practice very much relevant to their teaching profession. However, as for Curriculum Development Studies 50 percent noted that it was very much relevant, 45 percent found it relevant to a limited extent and 5 percent indicated that it was not relevant at all to their teaching profession. When it came to the Main Subject 5 percent indicated that it was relevant to a limited extent, 95 percent agreed that it was not relevant at all.

Teacher education has undergone reforms in many developing countries. Such reforms are related to the need to address important goals such as Universal Primary Education (UPE), Education for All (EFA) and the need for new technology in education. In line with improvements in technology, teacher education is expected to produce graduates who are technologically compliant. In line with equipping newly qualified teachers with the requisite teaching skills, there should be an aggressive effort to reform and revisit teacher education courses in Zimbabwe today. In other developing countries such as Nigeria, technological deficiencies have been found in both teachers and school managers. They have been found lacking in cognitive development in areas such as data collection, analysis and its storage and some of the courses offered at teachers' colleges tended to lack relevance to the new social order (Durosaro, 2000). As such, the courses offered raised the issue of education for sustainable development in teacher education. Furthermore, it was noted that economic factors had negatively impacted on teacher performance in some countries. In addition to this indiscipline and absenteeism had in many ways affected the delivery of sound primary education (ibid).

In Zimbabwe, teachers' colleges have all become associate colleges of the University of Zimbabwe, though they have retained some degree of autonomy in their day to day functions. It has been argued that becoming associate colleges of the University of Zimbabwe has helped the colleges in negotiating syllabi, supervision and monitoring standards (Zvobgo, 1997).

In line with the courses studied was the issue of relevance of these courses to teacher education, it was noted that different aspects of theory of education course such as Philosophy of Education, Sociology of Education and Psychology of Education were found to be very relevant to the actual development of the trainee teacher. This is a position which lends credence to literature that supports the relevance of such courses to teacher development at both pre-service and in-service training programmes (Akinpelu, 1981; Gwarinda, 1993; Peresuh and Nhundu, 1999; Beare, Caldwell and Millikan, 1994).

The next research sub-question moved away from the opinions of the newly qualified teachers on teacher education programmes and dealt **with the deputy heads and school heads' rating of the performance of newly qualified teachers**. In that regard, deputy school heads and school heads were asked to identify areas that the newly qualified teachers had performed well in their teaching. Such assessment was based on supervision reports that deputy school heads and school heads were supposed to make as part of their job description. It emerged that major areas of focus were the teaching of the following subjects:

Reading, Mathematics and Content subject (Religious and Moral Education, Environmental Science, Social Studies). Other areas of focus were class and classroom management, development projects and co-curricular activities. It emerged that 15.4 percent of the deputy school heads and 7.7 percent of the school heads noted that newly qualified teachers had done well in the teaching of reading. On the teaching of Mathematics, 46.1 percent of the deputy school heads and 15.4 percent of the school heads agreed that the teachers were doing well in the teaching of the subject. When it came to the teaching of Content subjects no deputy head indicated that the newly qualified teachers had done well in the area and only 15.4 percent of the school heads noted that their teachers had done well in the teaching of these subjects. As for class/classroom management 15.4 percent of the deputy school heads noted that the newly qualified teachers had done well and all the school heads noted that the newly qualified teachers had not done well in the same area. On development projects all deputy school heads and school heads agreed that newly qualified teachers had not done well in the area. As for co-curricular activities, 23.1 percent of the school heads and 46.1 percent of the school heads noted that newly qualified teachers had done well in co-curricular activities mat their schools.

The responses above appear to suggest that there was a general agreement between deputy school heads and school heads on the different areas noted above. It emerged that areas of least performance by newly qualified teachers were the teaching of reading, class/classroom management and development projects among others. At the same time showing that the areas newly qualified teachers had performed fairly well were the teaching of Mathematics and Co-curricular activities.

In line with rating the performance of newly qualified teachers deputy school heads and school heads were asked to comment on the teaching approaches used by the newly qualified teachers as noted in the table below.

Table 1(a): Teaching approaches used by teachers; deputy school heads' responses

N=13

Approach	Frequency	%
Lecture	6	46.2
Child-centred	3	23.1
Discussion	4	30.7
Discovery	0	0.0
Total	13	100

As shown above 46.2 percent of the deputy school heads indicated that the lecture method is the approach commonly used by newly qualified teachers at their schools. At the same time 23.1 percent chose the child-centred approach as the most used at their schools and 30.7 percent noted that the discussion method was commonly used by the teachers at their schools. According to the deputy school heads, the discovery method was not used at all by the newly qualified teachers.

Table 1(b): Teaching approaches used by teachers; school heads' responses

N=13

Approach	Frequency	%
Lecture	10	76.9
Child-centred	2	15.4
Discussion	1	7.7
Discovery	0	0.0
Total	13	100

On a similar note, 76.9 percent of the school heads indicated that newly qualified teachers at their schools mostly used the lecture method, 15.4 percent noted that they used the child-centered approach, and 7.7 percent indicated that they at times used the discovery method. As for the discovery method, like the

deputy school heads, all school heads noted that the approach was not used by the newly qualified teachers at their schools.

As shown above, deputy heads and school heads seem to concur as their responses show that the most used approach by the newly qualified teachers was the lecture method. Studies have shown the disadvantages of using such an approach on young children. Some of the disadvantages are related to the short attention span associated with young children. Furthermore, there have been arguments to the effect that children learn more by doing and discovering than being lectured at. Considering the school going age for primary school in Zimbabwe, it is safe to say the method was being used on children of the ages between 6 years and 13 years. There are a number of issues that come to the fore about the teaching methods adopted by teachers. It could be that some methods are much easier to implement than others. Secondly, it might be that some methods lack emphasis right from pre-service training to in-service training. Thirdly, it might be a factor that some schools lack clear emphasis on specific teaching approaches. This therefore raises questions about the role of the college on the performance and teaching approaches adopted by a teacher. Within that context it was noted that the performance of teachers was very much related to the training programme and college of origin. This was noted by Chivore (1990) in the study of ZINTEC students. Fresko & Chain (1986) also noted that a significant number of student teachers in training colleges in Zimbabwe then had problems with the teaching of primary school mathematics concepts. There was fear that lack of such requisite skills at training level would negatively affect their performance in the teaching of Mathematics as qualified teachers. Whilst the college of origin can be perceived as contributing to a teacher's performance there are other factors worth considering. These factors include staff development programmes at school level, supervision and management, and the environment in which the school is found. Other factors have included the values and attitudes of the teacher. In addition to these, inputs, processes and organizational culture at school level have been observed to play a significant role in teacher performance.

The third and final sub-question was, How has the performance of newly qualified teachers impacted on school and school administration?

In view of the above question, deputy school heads and school heads noted a number of problems that impacted on the teachers' performance. They listed a number of problems that included indiscipline, absenteeism, inadequate planning and lesson preparation. To ameliorate some of these problems deputy school heads and school heads had to put measures in place to assist the newly qualified teachers. Among the approaches used to improve the performance of the newly qualified teachers are Performance Management and Appraisal system, staff development sessions at school level, demonstration lessons, guidance and counseling and refresher courses. Central to these approaches is the role of the school head as a manager and administrator. The role includes staff development, supervision, guidance and counseling, monitoring and evaluation (Chivore, 1995). The quality of performance by the teacher can therefore be improved through a number of interventions. The quality of performance can be improved by participative management as demonstrated by performance management/ appraisal, career development, effective leadership and supervisory behaviour and motivation of staff (Bates, 1996).

What emerges from the views of the deputy school heads and school heads is that they have a crucial role to play in the performance of the newly qualified teachers. The areas of weakness noted above demand that resources be expended in the development of the newly qualified teachers. As such, the school administration might have to spend more on staff development to improve performance in different weak areas. On the other hand, the deputy heads and school heads might have to allocate extra resources to staff develop the affected teachers. The general poverty levels in most rural communities in developing countries make such a venture unattainable. In the same vein, deputy school heads and school heads might have to spend much more time supervising and assisting newly qualified teachers at the detriment of other equally important groups such as untrained teachers. It should also be noted that school heads and deputy heads in Zimbabwe have to take up classes in addition to their administrative and

management roles. Untrained teachers and under-qualified teachers are still a common phenomenon in Africa and other developing countries. For example, in Zimbabwe the expansion in the enrolment at both primary school and secondary school since 1980 saw corresponding increases in the need for teachers to match such an expansion. It was therefore necessary to come up with innovative ways of training teachers and at the same time making use of untrained teachers. This gave rise to programmes such as the Zimbabwe Integrated Teacher Education Course in 1981, as noted earlier. Despite that effort, untrained teachers remain a key component in the Zimbabwean education system.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study revealed at least four pertinent issues regarding the training and performance of newly qualified teachers.

- There is an urgent need to evaluate some courses offered at teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe today. Such courses include Main Subject. Low performance by newly qualified teachers in such areas as class and classroom management calls for the evaluation of the teaching practice programme at teachers' colleges.
- Considering that the core business of primary school education is to equip pupils with basic skills in literacy and numeracy, teachers' colleges should emphasize the teaching of reading during training as most newly qualified teachers were said to be lacking in the teaching of reading skills.
- There is need for a coordinated approach to the supervision of teachers involving senior teachers, school heads, teachers' colleges and district education officers.
- The Zimbabwe government should allocate resources for the Continued Professional Development (CPD) of all teachers especially newly qualified teachers.

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