Challenges Affecting Intake 35 – Diploma in Education Students' Progress and Success in Action Research Projects: Perceptions of Research Students at Morgan Zintec Teachers' College in Zimbabwe

By

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Abstract

A survey of 150 purposively sampled third year Intake 35 Action Research Students was undertaken on 6 October 2010 at Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College one of the twelve semi-open and distance learning teacher education institutions in Zimbabwe. Respondents were asked to identify and explain institutional and student-related factors that negatively affect their progress and success in action research project. Major factors found to impact negatively on students' progress included financial problems, lack of books and journals, poor communication and poor supervision by some tutors. Personal and domestic factors were found not to be significant. Among other recommendations, it was suggested that supervisors and markers of action research projects need thorough training. Libraries should offer more books, journals and internet facilities. The college needs to consider giving action research project students research theory lectures at least three times a term each time they (students) are resident at the college.

Keywords: *Challenges, Diploma in Education, Diploma in Education Students, Action Research Project, Action Research Project Students*

1. Introduction

Primary Teachers' Colleges have been operating in a semi-open and distance learning mode using the 2-5-2 system in which students spend the first two terms at the college, five terms in the field undertaking teaching practice and the last two terms at the college to complete their course (Tsodzo, 2001). It is against this background that teachers' colleges, the world over, are coming under increasing public and governmental scrutiny with respect to what they do, how well they do it and the quality of teachers they produce. Zimbabwe has the highest literacy rates in Africa has generated a lot of interest on the issues of accountability, quality and effectiveness at Morgan (Zimbabwe Integrated National Teacher Education Course) ZINTEC College. One of the major challenges facing the Department of Distance and In-service Education at Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College is the low quality of some action research projects. The question is why some diploma in education students not all successfully complete their action research projects. The paper investigates findings of a month's investigation into student-related factors and institutional-related factors that affect students' progress and success in the research at Morgan ZINTEC College in Zimbabwe.

1. Background of the study

The Diploma in Education (Primary)
The Diploma in Education (Primary) is offered as a three-year programme by Morgan ZINTEC College in collaboration with the University of Zimbabwe's Department of Teacher Education. To be admitted into the programme, the applicants are required to have at least 5 '0' level passes including English Language and Mathematics with at least a grade C or better. Previous teaching experience as a teacher awaiting training is an added advantage. The programme is aimed at equipping student teachers with

basic and functional instructional and administrative knowledge to enable them to handle problems in the areas of educational administration, supervision and planning and policy issues through research.

The Diploma in Education (Primary) Structure
The Diploma in Education (Primary) programme consists four areas namely: Syllabus 'A' in which they cover Theory of Education. Syllabus 'B' exposes students to Professional Studies which guides students on how to effectively teach eleven primary school subjects (mathematics, English Language, Shona/IsiNdebele Language, Home Economics, Social Studies, Environmental Science, Music, Art and Craft, Physical Education, HIV and AIDS Education and Religious and Moral Education. Syllabus 'C' deal with the action research project and is initially registered during the first year in the above eleven subject areas departments and should be presented to the departments by the end of the 9th term at the college. The fourth area is Teaching Practice in which students will be attached to mentors in schools where they will be deployed for five terms.

Delivery Methods
The mode of delivery used by Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College is based on the use of mass lectures, modules and face-to-face tutorials. Mass lectures and face-to-face tutorials are two hours long each. These sessions serve a variety of purpose that include:

- Mini lectures by tutors
- Group discussions

Modules are used for study by students during the five terms they will be away from the college doing teaching practice.

Assessment Procedures
The assessment procedure is made up of two assignments (20%) and written examination (40%). Each student is required to do an action research project and it is marked out of (100%). Teaching practice weighs in with (40%) final in the assessment.

The Action Research Project
The action research project is an important part of the Teacher Education programme. It helps the student teacher to improve one's instructional sills and practices (Sidhu, 2001). It is a student activity designed by the student in consultation with a subject lecturer (supervisor) at the college. According to Sidhu (2001), action research projects should be structured for beginning researchers. In a structured project, students come up with topics to work on and are given guidelines to follow. The Department of Distance and In-service Education at Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College requires students to undertake structured projects. These should be organised into five chapters involved the following ten processes:

Table 1: The Research Project Process

Chapter	Activities
1	- Specifying the research problem - Formulating the research topic or title - Presenting background of the study - Presenting statement of the problem - Formulating hypotheses or research questions - Discussing the significance of the study - Stating delimitations and limitations - Stating assumptions - Defining key terms - Outlining organisation of the study

2	- Reviewing literature
3	- Designing the research: creating, adopting or adapting a research design and data collection method - Describing the population, sample and sampling techniques - Collecting data
4	- Analysing and presenting data - Discussing research findings
5	- Summarising major findings of the study - Drawing conclusions - Making recommendations - Compiling references - Compiling appendices

Following these processes, research students are asked to specify a classroom-based research problem, undertake an inquiry into it. They are offered advice on how to select a topic, offered a series of methods and techniques for data collection. They are given guidelines on analysis, presentation and discussion of the research findings. Throughout the project, the student is expected to work in consultation with the supervisor. The question to ask is why not all students each year successfully carry out their action research projects. This high struggle rate in action research projects has a negative impact on the efficiency of any teacher education programme. For a student to be awarded with a Diploma in Education, he/she must have successfully all the taught courses including the action research project and teaching practice.

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of the present study was to examine student-related challenges and institution-related challenges that negatively impact on students' progress and success in the action research project course at Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College in Zimbabwe in 2010.

Statement of the Problem
The present study sought to answer the following question:
In what ways do student-related and institution-related challenges affect students' performance in action research projects set at Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College in Zimbabwe?

Research Questions
The study was guided by the following questions:
1. Who is a Diploma in Education student? What are his/her characteristics?
2. What are the student-related challenges that affect students' progress and success in action research projects?
3. What are the institution-related challenges that affect students' progress and success in action research projects?
4. How can the Department of Distance and In-service Education at Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College improve the success rate of students' action research projects?

Importance of the Study
Action research projects undertaken for the Diploma in Education programme are widely regarded by both staff and students as an important component of the curriculum. Any student who fails the action research project is failed or deferred. Questions related to why some students succeed and others fail their research projects are of both of theoretical and practical importance. Thus, findings of the present study would be of great significance to full time and semi-full time distance educators and researchers in general and to project supervisors and their students in particular.

2. Literature Review

In most conventional institutions, students have access to their lecturers or tutors or to fellow students for help, advice or information. In distance and semi distance learning systems, the student is more likely to experience isolation even alienation from the institution. He/she may be geographically remote from the central or its local centre, and either living at some distance from fellow students or unaware of their existence even if they do live nearby. Thus, students in distance and semi distance learning systems face not only the problems of conventional students but also those generated by the system itself (Nyawaranda:2005). In this review of literature, we categorise these problems as student-related and institution-related challenges.

Student-related Challenges
A number of studies have been undertaken on factors that affect the success and progress of students in research work. Pearson and Kayrooz (2004) concur that right at the initial stage, quite often, students fail to define a research problem from either a conventional of technical meaning. This breeds frustration. Cresswell 92003) and Thomas and Nelson 92001) identify lack of training and experience in research methods as an obstacle to students' progress in research. Dysthe, Samara and Westrheim (2004) believe that students fail to prepare a clear and precise research proposal thereby failing to communicate to the supervisor, exactly what information will be obtained and how it will be obtained. This leads the supervisor to demand that the student spends more time on the research proposal and clarify issues before proceeding to the next stage. In agreement with Dysthe, Samara and Westrheim (2004), Nyawaranda (2005) says some students fail to distinguish between writing a research proposal and a research report, thereby, wasting valuable time on developing the research proposal before they could undertake the intended study.

At the Zimbabwe Open University, the responsibility to ensure good progress and success in the research project is to a large extent, placed on the student Kangai and Mapolisa, (2008). Research students' responsibilities among others are:
- To plan and discuss with the supervisor the research topic and timetable for the research
- To discuss and agree on a schedule of meetings and appropriate feedback
- To take note of and respond to feedback and guidance from their supervisors
- To keep systematic records of work completed
- To write up and submit the project report within time and in accordance with university guidance for the submission of research projects

The working foregoing findings managed to establish challenges that affect undergraduate and post graduate students' performance in conventional research work at university level. They however, did not pin point the degree to which such findings apply to Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College students carrying out action research projects at diploma level. Hence, the need for carrying out the present using the studied college action research project students.

Institution-related Challenges
The second objective of the present study was to identify and describe institutional challenges that negatively affected research students studying for the Diploma in Education. A number of studies have examined intuition-related challenges that affect students' progress in research projects. According to Aspland, Edwards, O'Leary and Ryan (1999), some supervisors lack relevant training and experience to supervise research students. Pearce (2005) found out that some supervisors are rigid and teach research the way the were taught thereby frustrating the student in the process. In a paper delivered at a workshop in Mashonaland Central, Nyawaranda (2005) highlighted some of the common criticisms usually levelled against research supervisors in Open and Distance Learning institutions. Chief among them were that some supervisors lack relevant experience, lack relevant knowledge and skills required for the

supervision of research projects, have little guidance and direction, hold few meetings with the research students. Again, these findings seem to be tailored for university students undertaking either basic or applied research at undergraduate or post graduate levels rather than teacher education students undertaking action research projects at diploma level. It was against the background of such findings that this study was carried out to determine the extent to which institution-related challenges applied to the conduct of action research project at Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College.

Research Design

Researchers have come up with various research design the major ones being the surveys, experiments, case studies, historical and correlation research designs. The present study adopted the survey research design. The survey design was preferred because it is the most appropriate design where perceptions of participants are sought (Punch, 2004). The survey design is one of the most effective ways of conducting research. It is effective in gathering information that describes the nature and extent of specified data, providing a systematic attempt to collect information, describe it and explain perceptions, beliefs, values, views and behaviour (Thomas and Nelson, 2001). The survey design permitted the present researchers to ask research subjects to respond to questions in the questionnaire regarding challenges that research subjects faced in carrying out action research project at Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College. Also, it enabled the researchers to collect data from a large group of subjects, that is, 156 students.

3. Methods and Procedures

The population of the present study consisted of all, that is, 156 Intake 35 students in their final year, who had completed or not completed their research projects. A questionnaire was distributed to a purposive sample of 150 students who were present on the day of the visit. Purposive sampling was used to extract respondents for this study who were considered as representative enough (Leedy, 1997). The researchers also capitalised on a two-fold benefit of purposive sampling that Kumar (2008) advances.

- First, the primary consideration of purposive sampling is the judgement of the researcher as to who can provide the best information to achieve the objectives of the study.
- Second, the researcher only goes to those people who in her own opinion are likely to have the required information and be willing to share it.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

The data were analysed using themes that were drawn from the research questions.

Discussion of Findings

Analysis of data in the present study revealed a number of challenges that affected the progress and success of action research students at the Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College. In this study, we discuss these factors under the following research questions that guided the study:

1. Who is a Diploma in Education student at Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College? What are his/her characteristics?
2. How do student-related and institution-related challenges that affect his/her progress and success of action research project?

The present researcher discusses findings of the present study in the light of theories and assumptions of distance and semi-distance education and also refers to findings of previous research studies.

Who is a Diploma in Education student at Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College? What are his/her characteristics?

Key characteristics of a Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College student include gender, age, marital status, spouse's/guardian's/parent's occupation and distance from home to the supervisor at college during teaching practice.

Table 2: Distribution of Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College students by gender, age, marital status, occupation, spouse's occupation, source of income and distance from home to college N = 150)

Gender	Frequency	Frequency (%)
Male	74	49
Female	76	51
Total	**150**	**100**

Age in Years	Frequency	Frequency (%)
21 – 30	81	54
31 – 40	59	39
41 – 50	10	7
Total	**150**	**100**

Marital Status	Frequency	Frequency (%)
Married	133	89
Single	8	5
Widowed	9	6
Total	**150**	**100**

Number of own children	Frequency	Frequency (%)
1	10	7
2	15	10
3	69	46
4	47	31
5	9	6
Total	**150**	**100**

Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College students' / Parents' / Guardians' Employment	Frequency	Frequency (%)
Teachers	96	64
Any other	54	36
Total	**150**	**100**

Distance from the college to home / school	Frequency	Frequency (%)
0-50km	137	91
51-100km	8	5
101-150km	5	4
Total	**150**	**100**

Analysis of data revealed that 49% of the Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College action research students were male whilst 51% were female. This gender imbalance was a typical reflection of the total student population at the college that seems to deliberately enrolee more female students than male students. Information about the age of students showed that 54% of the students were in the 31 – 50 years age group, 39% were in the 41 – 50 years age group and 7% were in the 51-60 years age group. The mean of

the respondents was 31 years. The studied students were relatively young. Therefore, it may be argued that their age other than other factors could not negatively affect their progress and success of their action research project. The marital status of the respondents showed that 89% were married, 5% were single and 6% were widowed. The number of own children per student was between 3 – 4 children. By implication, students bore some family responsibilities which could underpin their success and completion rates of the action research project. This student information enabled me to describe a typical student at a relatively young adult (21 – 40 years), married with 3 – 4 children, with 96% of the students' bread winners employed in the education sector and 4% employed in other jobs. With the current economic performance of Zimbabwe, one might not be wrong to indicate that economic factors may affect the students' performance in action research at Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College.

The majority of students (91%) lived either at the college or near it, that is, within a distance of 0-50 kilometres to visit the project supervisor at his or her place. Only 5% of the student lived between 51 to 100 kilometres whole 4% lived within a distance of 101 – 150 kilometres during teaching practice. All things being equal, most students would contact their supervisors regularly. Perhaps what could be of worry to students was the non-availability of supervisors who could be engaged in lectures, research, lecture notes making and in the field supervising other students on teaching practice.

We then used these characteristics act as the basis for studying student-related challenges that affect research students. The study identified ten common factors (see table 3 below).

Table 3: Student-related factors affecting the Diploma in Education (Primary) students' progress and success on the action research project in decreasing order of frequency

Factor	Percentage of students affected
College fees	88
Typing and binding the research project	84
Home and work pressure	82
Distance travelled to see the supervisor	81
Training and experience in research	79
Demands of other courses	75
Students' health	39
Marriage	21
Children	18
Friends	15
Age of student	15

Financial Problems
Knaper (1988) and Aspland (1999) in Kangai and Mapolisa (2008) argue that distance and semi-distance learners are more likely to have insecurities about learning more than traditional students.

Although distance and semi-distance education are driven by the philosophy of affordability and cost effectiveness, findings of the present study show that 88% of the action research students considered the college fees coupled with monthly travels to college in order to meet the supervisors too prohibitive. This was even worse before the dollarization of the Zimbabwean economy before 1 February 2009 when the studied Intake 35 students were in their second term of teaching practice. Besides their college fees, students have other financial commitments to meet (feed, clothes, children' school fees and a host of service bills).

Distance

Cropley and Kahl (1983) in Pearson and Kayrooz (2004) argue that the most unique feature of distance education, not surprisingly is distance. This has a myriad of implications for the distant learner. Among these implications are the isolation of the learner from resources, support and peers, the lack of face-to-face interaction with tutors and delayed feedback. In contrast, one interesting finding of the present study was that Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College students were not complaining about isolation from tutors and peers or the lack of face-to-face interaction or support. In the present study, 81% of the students saw the cost of travelling to see the research supervisor as a major factor that hindered their progress and success on the action research project. One of the roles of the research supervisor at the college is to maintain contact with the student through regular personal supervision meetings. On average, a student has to make about 10 visits to see the project supervisor. The frequency and nature of these sessions will vary depending on the nature of research and the progress the student is making. A good number of students (58%) as they responded to the open ended questionnaire indicated that they sometimes failed to visit their supervisors for advice because of high travelling costs. These distances present their own particular problems and challenges to the research student. One of the assumptions of distance education is that these large distances and the geographical separation of the learner and the tutor is mitigated by the use of appropriate instructional technology, albeit more costs for both the supervisor and the supervisee.

Home and Work Demands

Kennedy and Powell (1976) in Gaffarella and Barnett (2000) report that distance learners operate in an environment meant primarily for other purposes such as the home or the work place. Learners, therefore, often face household duties or have full time or part time jobs. In the present study, 73% of the action research students said their progress on the action research project was negatively affected by their jobs. This was true since all of them were student teachers who were paid lower than temporary teachers who had n3ever had a feel of theories of learning. Whilst male students (80%) said home demands did not affect their research work, female students (60%) said home duties as wives and others negatively affected their progress on the action research project. Single, divorced or widowed women students did not mention their marital status as a negative factor in their research work. This is not surprising given that in rural Zimbabwe, tradition expects married woman to perform almost 90% of the household duties (cooking, laundry and taking care of the children) even if they hold full time jobs elsewhere. Even if they have maids, it is still their responsibility to see to it that the maid performs these duties well. In thses findings, researchers agree with Cropley and Kahl (1986) in Anderson, Dan and Laughlin (2006) who argue that often the distance learner is in a setting meant primarily for other purposes such as the home or the workplace and often face household duties or have full or part time jobs. Hardy and Boaz (1997) in Aspland et al (1999) found out that distance learning requires students to be more focused, better time managers and to be able to work independently. This means the successful distance education student needs to have a number of characteristics such as tolerance for ambiguity, a need for autonomy and an ability to be flexible (Thekeld and Brzoska, 1994) in Pearson and Kayrooz, (2004).

Demands of other Courses

Most (75%) of the action research students indicated that demand of other courses affected their progress and success in research work. One student indicted that during teaching practice, for example, she was expected to perform instructional duties as scheming, planning, teaching and remediation of learners on top of co-curricular and extra-curricular duties. Another respondent pointed out that while they are residential at college, they are piled with a lot of assignments, note taking and writing projects. According to these students, such factors worked against their progress and success in action research work.

One interesting finding in the present study was that the following factors affected very few students, student health (39%), children (18%), age of the student (18%) and friends 915%). Three students indicated that they drew a great deal of inspiration and motivation from their friends and children.

Institution-related Factors
Lack of Journals and Books

Findings of the present study show that 85% of Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College action research students considered lack of books and journals as some of the major factors affecting their progress and success. Research shows that successful research students tend to be comprehensive and p to date in reviewing the literature (Kangai and Mapolisa, 2008). However, Zimbabwe is a developing country and academic libraries are only found in the urban centres. This, therefore, means that distance students in the rural areas have to travel to their local centre library to read. Students have also complained that the college library rules and regulations place some restrictions on access to reading materials. Materials that are heavily demanded and there are so few of these, are placed on closed access and they are available for use within the library only. Books on short-term loan can be borrowed out for three days and books on long-term loan can be borrowed out for only seven days. The fine for not retuning a book is US $2 per day, delayed. This is an enormous amount to a student who has other competing needs requiring limited finances. These stringent library measures compounded by lack of relevant books and journals was seen by students as a serious hindrance to their progress and success on the action research project.

Training and Experience in the Research Project
One of the critical factors affecting the progress and success of action research students is the lack of training and experience in the research project. Most of the students would be undertaking research for the first time. Most 79%) of the students indicated that they were not exposed to research theory since the college has no provision for teaching the course on the timetable. This course is meant to equip students with the knowledge and skills required in the action research project. The major focus of the course is to give students a theoretical understanding of five key stages of the research process:
1. Identifying and specifying the research topic
2. Reviewing literature (conceptual and related studies)
3. Designing the study (methodology)
4. Collecting data (schemes of work, lesson plans, children's written/practical work, questionnaire/observation/interview data)
5. Analysing data, presenting and discussing findings (summary, conclusion and recommendations)

Table 4: Percentage of students finding the project difficulty at each stage

Chapter	Activities	1	2	3	4
1. Introduction	- Formulating research topics - Specifying the research problem - Presenting background of the study	70%		65%	70%
2. Literature Review	- Linking the study to prevailing theories in the discipline - Linking the study to previous research studies - Justifying the study			60%	80% 68%
3. Methodology	- Choosing research design - Explaining data collection methods - Describing the population, sample and sampling techniques - Collecting data	90% 58% 90%	86%		
4. Discussion of Findings	- Analysing, presenting and interpreting research data	78%			
5. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations	- Summarising the major findings of the study - Drawing conclusions - Making recommendations - Compiling references - Compiling appendices	85%	67% 73% 84%	54%	

Table 4 shows that students felt very challenged by writing literature review as 80% of them could not link their studies to prevailing theories in the discipline, while 68% of them could not link their studies to previous research studies and 60% of them found it hard to justify their studies. Writing methodology was fond to be among the simplest tasks of compiling a study. Ninety percent of the respondents indicated that they were able to explain data collection methods. Another 90% of them pointed out that they were able to collect data while 58% of them indicated that they were able to describe the population, sample and sampling techniques.

In connection with factors affecting students' progress in research, one student complained:
"In my case, the tutor indicated some factors which I was to include in my research project. I did so. However, these factors were later indicated to be left out by the final marker. These deliberations, therefore, confused me. There was no common understanding between the supervisor and the marker, although I am made to believe that the supervisor marks the work he supervises. The project may be marked by a second marker during moderation. Unfortunately, the moderator may not understand my circumstances in the same manner the supervisor does".

The sentiments of this student agree with the findings made by Nyawaranda (2005) and Kangai and Mapolisa (2008) who observed that research students usually complain that their supervisors sometimes lack relevant experience, lack relevant knowledge and skills required for the supervision of research projects, give too little guidance and direction, and allow too few meetings with the students. Lack of clear guidelines for research has been proved to be one of the major factors contributing to students' quandary (60%). Because there is no frequent contact with lecturers, students may have trouble in undertaking research (Gaffarella and Barnett, 2000). In this regard, action research students at Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College meet their supervisors once a month during their teaching practice.

Poor Communication
Poor communication was considered by 53% of the respondents as one of the major factors affecting their progress in research. According to Beaudoin (1990) in Kangai and Mapolisa (2008), lack of instantaneous communication in distance education causes the delivery system to be formal and rigid. Although face-to-face tutorials remain optional for distance learners, the action research project shifts a considerable amount of responsibility to the student to make personal contacts with the project supervisor for guidance and advice. The same author goes on to note that distance learners are at varying degrees of readiness to undertake research at their own. Each action research student thus, needs some degree of personalisation or individualisation of instruction to suit his/her particular situation.

5. Conclusions

Typing and binding the action research project, despite being optional was also considered 84% of the students as a major factor that negatively affected their progress in action research project as most students were not gainfully employed to afford typing and binding costs. The challenges that were said to be impacting negatively on the progress and success of Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College action research project students include both student-related and institutional related-factors. Major student-related challenges indicated were financial problems that included the cost of travelling to see the supervisor, purchasing stationery and the cost of typing and binding the research project. Most students looked after dependents, thus, their limited financial resources could be strained by competing demands of other courses and family and social responsibilities. Students' age, health, children and friends had no major effect on students' performance in action research project. In some cases, children and friends were found to be inspirational and motivational to students undertaking action research.

Major institutional-related factors that were said to adversely affect research students included lack of books and journals, lack of clear guidelines and in some cases, lack of experience in research on the part of the supervisors. Research theory lectures were not delivered to prospective action research project

students as the lecturer did not appear on the college's master time table. In the absence, research theory-based lectures in the Professional Studied Departments, students had to rely on the lecturer's research expertise and background for research advice and guidance. Poor communication between the institution and research students was also considered as a major factor that negatively affected the progress and success of action research project students. Sometimes supervisors were not found at their offices much to the disadvantage of the student. They could be out researching lecture notes or undertaking internal/external supervision of Teaching Practice or academic work-or even on study leave. Some supervisors could even be on vacation.

6. Recommendations

In light of the above findings and conclusions, the researchers made the following recommendations:

- Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College through the Department of Distance and In-service Education needs to explicitly specify its policy regarding the typing and binding of action research projects if ever students are not to be stressed economically as they undertake their action research project work.
- The college needs to expedite the processing of students' loans through Government's Cadetship for the purposes of financially supporting the students during their action research project work.
- Now that colleges are receiving computer donations, students should be trained in the use of computers so that they could type their own research projects.
- Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College authorities should ensure that supervisors and markers of action research projects are well trained and qualified in order to effectively and efficiently supervise and evaluate students' action research projects.
- Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College should endeavour to equip her library with adequate and relevant books and journals for research and internet facilities so that research students can access current knowledge and information.
- There is need for Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College Department of Distance and In-service Education could improve communication with its research students through letters during teaching practice so as to keep them informed of departmental expectations, important dates and the progress the student is making in his/her research.
- Action research project students need to be exposed to at least three research theory lectures every term they are residential at the college. By implication, an introduction to research methods course needs to be part of Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College's master time-table for implementation by the Professional Studies Department. This would go a long way in making the research work an enjoyable and fruitful academic undertaking on the part of both the student and the supervisor.
- Morgan ZINTEC Teachers' College needs to come up with an integrative and participatory committee co-chaired by the two departments of Professional Studies and Distance and In-Service Education and lecturers-in-charge of 15 departments to coordinate the crafting of user-friendly action research project guidelines and the writing of a relevant research module and handouts.
- More research need to be carried out in the same area at macro-level covering teachers' colleges countrywide and making use of qualitative and triangulation research methodologies as well, since the present one was largely quantitative.

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