TEACHER QUALITY IN ZIMBABWE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents results from a survey of secondary school teachers in government schools, church schools, and rural day schools about teacher variables that have a positive effect on student achievement. The evidence obtained showed that:

(a) A significant number of teachers in Zimbabwe lack professional training, lack longer teaching experience which implies weaker practical instructional skills, and lack adequate formal schooling which is essential for raising verbal skills and subject content competence. In parti-cular, the majority of teachers in rural day schools were under the age of 24 years, had no university education, had no professional training , and lacked experience.

(b) Minimal effort was being directed at school, district and regional staff development activities for secondary school teachers to raise the quality of instruction which in turn leads to higher student achievement.

(c) The majority of teachers indicated that the time for instruction allotted to their subjects was sufficient.

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*The researcher was responsible for analyzing the results and for writing this paper.

(d) Secondary school teachers have made insignificant contributions to curriculum development and innovation. A significant number of teachers reported that the national syllabi were not easy to adapt to school conditions and lacked sufficient guidelines on how to draw classroom implementation documents.

(e) Negligible interactions were taking place between schools and the world of work to enhance student learning and to promote transfer of knowledge to real life situations.

(f) The majority of teachers expressed great need for inservice training to upgrade their professional and academic skills.

Introduction

Teacher quality is an important factor, highlighted in literature on school quality and effective schools, that has potential to boost student achievement (Fuller, 1986; Purkey and Smith, 1983; Cohn and Rossmiller, 1987). The variables contributing to teacher quality include:

(i) Pre-service teacher training which is essential for developing pedagogical skills for effective classroom practices,

(ii) Academic qualifications which to a large degree indicate the level of subject mastery by the teacher,

(iii) Inservice teacher training for upgrading the skills of practising teaching staff to raise the quality of instruction and subject content knowledge,

(iv) Teacher's length of experience which provides a measure of the teacher's practical mastery of instructional skills,

(v) Teacher's verbal proficiency which contributes towards greater student and teacher interactions,

(vi) Teacher's salary which to a large extent affects the recruitment and retention of qualified and experienced competent teachers,

ii) Tenured full-time compared to temporary teachers where the former show more motivation and commitment to teaching , and greater teaching effectiveness.

Saha (1983) summarized empirical results relating teacher variables and student achievement in 21 less developed countries. He found that teacher-related variables have positive effects on student achievement. In particular Saha noted that trained teachers make a difference for more advanced grades (forms), and especially for the more difficult subjects in the school curriculum.

Regarding training and conditions of service for teachers, Cohn and Rossmiller (1987) have stressed the need to attract competent individuals to careers in teaching, provide them with appropriate training to develop their knowledge base and pedagogical skills, and create conditions and incentives to retain able teachers in the schools. Cohn and Rossmiller see both monetary factors (e.g., salaries and opportunities for advancement) and nonmonetary factors (e.g., status, esteem and respect) as important elements for teacher satisfaction.

In reviewing literature on effective schools Purkey and Smith (1983) identified nine organizational/structural variables which included schoolwide staff development programme based on the expressed needs of teachers and involving the entire school staff, and effective use and allocation of more time to academic subjects. Purkey and Smith have stressed the need to closely relate staff development programmes to the school's instructional programme. Regarding time, they have argued for minimal allocation of time to nonacademic activities. In a recent literature review Cohn and Rossmiller (1987) noted that effective schools are characterized by effective use of time available for instruction. They further observed that in effective schools a larger percentage of the school day is devoted to academic subjects,

students spend more time in learning activities, and class periods are free from interruptions. Rossmiller (1983; 1986) found that the time spent on-task in learning activities was associated positively with student achievement measures and that the relation was stronger for low-achieving students than for high-achieving students. Garner (1978) also found a positive relation between the amount of time students spend on homework and student achievement.

On the schoolwide staff development, Bondi and Wiles (1980) summarized the findings of Gordon Lawrence which characterize effective and successful school-based staff development programmes (pp. 114-115):

(i) Teacher attitudes are more likely to be influenced in school-based than in college-based inservice programmes.

(ii) School-based programmes in which teachers participated as helpers to each other and planners of inservice activities tend to have greater success in accomplishing their objectives than do programmes which are conducted by college or other outside personnel without the assistance of teachers.

(iii) School-based inservice programmes that emphasized self-instruction by teachers have a strong record of effectiveness.

(iv) Inservice education programmes that have differentiated training experiences for different teachers are more likely to accomplish their objectives than programmes that have common activities for all participants.

(v) Inservice education programmes that place the teacher in active roles (constructing and generating materials, ideas, and behaviour) are more likely to accomplish their objectives than programmes that place the teacher in a receptive role.

(vi) Inservice education programmes that emphasize demonstrations, supervised trials, and feedback are more likely to accomplish their goals than are programmes in which the teachers are expected to store up ideas and behaviour prescriptions for a future time.

(vii) Inservice education programmes in which teachers share and provide mutual assistance to each other are more likely to accomplish their objectives than are programmes in which each teacher does separate work.

(viii) Teachers are more likely to benefit from inservice education activities that are linked to a general effort of the school than they are from "single-shot" programmes that are not part of a general staff development plan.

(ix) Teachers are more likely to benefit from inservice programmes in which they can choose goals and activities for themselves, as contrasted with programmes in which the goals and activities are preplanned.

Regarding specific topics for staff development, Nyagura and Reece (1989) established, in priority order, instructional related areas considered by heads of secondary schools to be most valuable for their teachers. These areas include:

- Use of a variety of teaching methods,
- Developing schemes of work based on the subject syllabus,
- Developing effective lesson plans,
- Maintaining effective classroom discipline,
- Updating or increasing subject content knowledge,
- Effective use of learning resources other than textbooks,
- Counselling pupils with personal problems.

The dramatic expansion in secondary education (see Table 1) following Zimbabwe independence in 1980 has been characterized by decreasing student academic achievement rates in public examinations (see Table 2).

Table 1
Expansion in Zimbabwe Secondary Education
(1980-1989)

Year	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. of Students	74321	148690	227647	316438	416413
% Increase over 1980 figure	0.0	100.1	206.3	325.8	460.3
No. of Teachers	3736	6112	8349	11191	14718
% Increase over 1980 figure	0.0	63.6	123.5	199.5	294.0
No. of Schools	197	694	738	790	1182
% Increase over 1980 Figure	0.0	252.3	274.6	301.0	500.0
Teacher Pupil Ratio	1:19.9	1:24.3	1:27.3	1:28.3	1:28.3
Year	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
No. of Students	482000	537427	604652	653353	695882
% Increase over 1980 figure	548.5	623.1	713.6	779.1	836.3
No. of Teachers	17315	19487	21981	23899	24856
% Increase Over 1980 figure	363.5	421.6	488.4	539.7	565.3
No of Schools	1215	1276	1395	1484	1502
% Increase Over 1980 Figure	516.8	547.7	608.1	653.3	662.4

Teacher Pupil Ratio	1:27.8	1:27.6	1:27.5	1:27.3	1:28.0

Source: Annual Reports of Secretary for Education, Various Years, Ministry of Education.

TABLE 2
Achievement Rates in Zimbabwe Junior Certificate English and Mathematics Examinations (1984 - 1988)

	English			Mathematics		
Year	No. Sitting	No. Passing	Pass Rate) (%)	No. Sitting	No. Passing	Pass Rate (%)
1984	101086	29300	29	101087	17701	18
1985	149670	80832	54	122461	15770	13
1986	129909	62660	48	130266	23865	18
1987	146674	62377	43	146241	13672	9
1988	169913	58252	34	169009	26716	16

Source: Annual Reports of Secretary for Education

This study, motivated by low student passing rates, was launched in 1989 to obtain information regarding teacher quality variables which, according to literature on effective schools, have positive influence on student achievement.

The Study

The population for this study consisted of teachers employed in 1133 secondary schools offering technical subjects during 1989 as reported by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. Technical subjects offered by the schools included: Agriculture; Building; Home Economics; Metalwork; Technical Drawing and Woodwork.

The main concerns of the study were to:

1. determine the experience, qualifications, ages and the teaching responsibilities of secondary school teachers by school type.

2. determine staff development activities for secondary school teachers.

3. determine teaching staff composition based on untrained, underqualified and trained criteria.

4. determine the range of enrichment educational activities used by secondary school teachers.

5. determine curricular oriented activities in which secondary school teachers participate.

6. determine the adequacy of time allocated for instruction.

7. assess pupils', teachers' and parents' attitudes to school curriculum subjects as judged by teachers.

The Method

Using a two stage probability sampling design, 753 teachers from 157 schools were selected to participate in the study(see Table 3). Of the selected sample, 384 (51.0%) returned the survey questionnaires. In terms of sex, 125 (32.6%) of the teachers who

returned completed questionnaires were female and 252 (65.6%) male. Seven of the teachers declined to give their sex. In terms of school type, 16 teachers were at Former Group A (formerly all white) schools, 162 at Former Group B (formerly all black) schools, 33 at Church run schools and 173 at Rural Day secondaryschools.

Table 3
Distribution by Province of Secondary School Teachers Selected for the Study

Province Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
Total Schools	49	215	96	120	108	144	82	87	232	1133
Number of Schools Selected	13	31	11	12	18	15	13	13	31	157
Number of Teachers Selected	75	165	37	60	52	68	87	28	181	753
Number of Teachers Responding	58	66	18	40	28	26	43	14	91	384
Response Rates(%)	77	40	49	67	54	38	49	50	50	51

The data collected was analyzed using frequencies and corresponding percentages together with some crosstabulations by school type, and the Chi square test corrected for continuity.

Findings and Discussion

Qualifications, Experience and Teaching Responsibilities of Teachers

The data on qualifications, age and experience of teachers revealed that the majority of teachers in rural day schools were under the age of 24 years, had no university education, had no professional training, and lacked experience. These deficiencies have serious consequences on the levels of academic achievement of students in rural day secondary schools. Table 4 provides a summary of data on characteristics of secondary school teachers.

Table 4
Characteristics of Secondary School Teachers By Type of School

Characteristic	Former Group A N=16	Former Group B N=162	Conventional Church N=33	Rural Day N=173	Total N=384
Age Category in Years					
Under 24	-	48	6	109	163
25 - 29	7	62	13	47	129
30 - 39	4	41	11	12	68
Over 40	5	11	3	5	24
Highest Academic Qualifications Held					
Grade Eleven Form	-	12	4	11	27
4/O-level Form	3	91	14	121	229

6/A-level	2	34	5	34	75
Bachelor's Degree	6	15	8	2	31
Other	5	10	2	5	22
Highest Professional Qualifications Held					
Not Trained	4	31	7	90	132
Under-qualified	-	15	5	4	24
(PTL,PTH,T3,T2A,T2B)					
Secondary Teacher's Certificate	5	98	14	49	166
Graduate Certificate in Education	2	1	3	1	7
Diploma in Education	3	-	-	-	3
B.Ed.	-	3	2	-	5
Other	2	14	2	29	47

N.B. Figures show the number of teachers possessing or exhibiting the identified characteristic.
-This denotes no observation in that cell.

The differences in the distribution of teachers across school types by age were very highly significant (Chi square = 71.22, df = 9, $p < .001$).

The differences in the distribution of teachers across school types by academic qualification were very highly significant (Chi-square = 62.79, df = 12, $p < .001$).

teachers include : inadequate housing; lack of transport; lack of communication facilities; shortage of or lack of water; inadequate recreational facilities; lack of electrical power; lack of teaching and learning resources; and inadequate or non-existent health services.

Staff Development of Secondary School Teachers

Evidence obtained in the study shows that minimal effort is being directed at staff development activities for teachers. Only 19.5 percent of the teachers reported they had participated in half-day inservice seminars or workshops during school terms over a period of two years. Another 18.5 percent reported they had participated in full-day inservice while only 6.8 percent reported they had participated in after-school inservice seminars or workshops over the same period of time.

During school vacations over a period of two years, only 3.1 percent of the teachers reported they attended half-day inservice seminars with 10.7 percent reporting they participated in full-day inservice, 15.6 percent in week-long inservice, 2.9 percent in college vacation courses, and 2.6 percent in university vacation courses. It was observed that no teachers at rural day secondary schools reported participation in university vacation courses.

As already noted from the literature on effective schools, inservice training is essential for upgrading the skills of teachers in order to raise the quality of instruction and to update the teacher's subject knowledge. The limited staff development for secondary school teachers is a matter of great concern since the majority of these teachers have low academic and professional training, and therefore require greater assistance and guidance. The situation is particularly critical in rural day secondary schools where about 71 percent of teachers are untrained and up to 99 percent lack university education.

Teachers were asked to rate topics for inservice training in terms of those which would be of great value, of value, of little value and not of value to their work. The responses are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5
Needed Inservice Activities as Reported by 384 Secondary School Teachers

Topic and Rating	Teachers Responses: Former Group A	Former Group B	Conventional	Rural Day	Total	At least of Value
	N=16	N=162	N=33	N=173	N=384	
Understanding Growth and Development of Adolescents:						
Of Great Value	5	63	14	75	157	273
Of Value	4	56	11	45	116	(71.1)
Of Little Value	1	19	3	11	34	
Of No Value	1	5	1	6	13	
Undecided	5	19	4	36	64	
Working with Parents of Students:						
Of Great Value	4	50	8	46	108	251
Of Value	2	60	13	68	143	(65.4)
Of Little Value	1	19	7	15	42	
Of No Value	2	9	2	5	18	
Undecided	7	24	3	39	73	

Implementing Language Policies:

Of Great Value	1	50	13	63	127	226
Of Value	4	41	12	42	99	(58.9)
Of Little Value	3	30	4	17	54	
Of No Value	2	14	1	10	27	
Undecided	6	27	3	41	77	

Effective Use of Audio and/or Visual Aids:

Of Great Value	8	76	18	79	181	268
Of Value	3	41	9	34	87	(69.8)
Of Little Value	1	12	2	16	31	
Of No Value	-	8	1	7	16	
Undecided	4	25	3	37	6	

Working with Students who have Physical or Mental Handicaps:

Of Great Value	4	47	15	55	121	224
Of Value	4	46	9	44	103	(58.3)
Of Little Value	1	18	3	17	39	
Of No Value	1	22	3	16	42	
Undecided	6	29	3	41	79	

Developing Schemes Of Work Based On The Subject Syllabus:

Of Great Value	6	83	15	92	196	286
Of Value	7	40	11	32	90	(74.5)

Of Little Value	-	14	2	14	30	
Of No Value	-	3	1	2	6	
Undecided	3	22	4	33	62	

Developing Effective lesson plans:

Of Great Value	5	74	13	86	178	271
Of Value	6	44	9	34	93	(70.6)
Of Little Value	-	15	4	11	30	
Of No Value	-	4	2	6	12	
Undecided	5	25	5	36	71	

Use of Variety of teaching methodologies:

Of Great Value	6	96	22	99	223	299
Of Value	6	30	9	31	76	(77.9)
Of Little Value	-	9	-	5	14	
Of No Value	-	1	-	1	2	
Undecided	4	26	2	37	69	

Effective use of small-group learning activities:

Of Great Value	6	71	14	50	141	265
Of Value	5	47	12	60	124	(69.0)
Of Little Value	-	14	2	16	32	
Of No Value	-	3	2	10	15	
Undecided	5	27	3	37	72	

Implementing the philosophy of Education with Production:

Of Great Value	3	51	11	60	125	245
Of Value	4	57	15	44	120	(63.8)
Of Little Value	1	20	3	26	50	
Of No Value	1	9	1	4	15	
Undecided	7	25	3	39	74	

Counselling students with academic problems:

Of Great Value	7	72	11	71	161	273
Of Value	2	46	15	49	112	(71.1)
Of Little Value	2	16	3	7	28	
Of No Value	-	5	-	10	15	
Undecided	5	23	4	36	68	

Counselling students with personal problems:

Of Great Value	3	71	13	52	139	257
Of Value	5	46	12	55	118	(66.9)
Of Little Value	2	17	5	17	41	
Of No Value	-	6	-	11	17	
Undecided	6	22	3	38	69	

Maintaining effective classroom discipline:

Of Great Value	6	76	17	79	178	267
Of Value	4	39	9	37	89	(69.5)

Of Little Value	-	13	3	12	28	
Of No Value	1	9	1	8	19	
Undecided	5	25	3	37	70	

Effective Use of textbooks:

Of Great Value	5	61	14	70	150	251
Of Value	5	43	10	43	101	(65.4)
Of Little Value	2	22	1	16	41	
Of No Value	-	9	3	8	20	
Undecided	4	27	5	36	72	

Effective Use of learning resources other than textbook.

Of Great Value	6	82	13	78	179	291
Of Value	3	50	15	44	112	(75.8)
Of Little Value	2	5	2	9	18	
Of No Value	-	-	-	4	4	
Undecided	5	25	3	38	71	

Effective teaching in laboratories and/or workshops:

Of Great Value	2	54	9	56	121	190
Of Value	2	24	8	35	69	(49.5)
Of Little Value	4	28	4	25	61	
Of No Value	2	29	5	16	52	
Undecided	6	27	7	41	81	

Effective use of community resources:

Of Great Value	4	48	11	62	125	251
Of Value	5	56	14	51	126	(65.4)
Of Little Value	1	28	4	15	48	
Of No Value	1	6	-	7	14	
Undecided	5	24	4	38	71	

Updating or Increasing subject content:

Of Great Value	9	109	20	105	243	292
Of Value	3	18	8	20	49	(76.0)
Of Little Value	-	6	1	7	14	
Of No Value	-	5	-	6	11	
Undecided	4	24	4	35	67	

(Column percentage)

- This denotes no observation in that cell.

In reviewing Table 5, it is evident that topics considered of great value by at least 50 percent (i.e. at least a total count of 192) of the teachers include: updating or increasing knowledge of subject content; use of a variety of teaching methods; and developing schemes of work based on the subject syllabus. By considering topics rated to be of great value by at least 45 percent of the teachers (i.e., at least a total count of 173), we see that there is close agreement in the identification of inservice training needs of secondary school teachers as perceived by heads of schools and by teachers. Research has shown these areas to be important

teacher quality variables that enhance student academic achievement (Fuller, 1986; Madaus, Airasian and Kellaghan, 1980; Cohn and Rossmiller, 1987).

The data in Table 5 also show a very close agreement by school type in the rating of topics considered to be at least of value. This close agreement ranges over the first eleven topics in Table 5. While parents in Former Group A schools are very active in both social and academic school activities, only 37.5 percent of teachers in these schools considered knowledge and understanding of how to work with students' parents to be at least of value. The desire for such knowledge was considered to be at least of value by 67.9 percent of teachers in former Group B schools, by 63.6 percent of teachers in conventional church schools, and by 65.9 percent of teachers in rural day secondary schools. Regarding inservice training on how to implement the philosophy of Education with Production, only 43.8 percent of teachers in former Group A schools considered it to be at least of value with 66.7 percent in former Group B, 78.8 percent in conventional church, and 60.1 percent in rural day schools considering it to be at least of value. The low ranking by teachers in former Group A schools might be a reflection of minimal work being done by these schools in the area of Education with Production.

By combining the two categories "of great value" and "of value", it is observed that eleven topics were considered to be at least of value (see last column in Table 5) by more than 66 percent of the teachers. Fifteen of the 18 topics were considered to be at least of value by more than 60 percent of the teachers. The topics ranked to be at least of value by more than 66 percent of the teachers include: updating or increasing knowledge of subject content; use of a variety of teaching methods; developing schemes of work based on the subject syllabus; effective use of audio and/or visual aids; maintaining effective classroom discipline; developing effective lesson plans; counselling students who have academic problems; understanding growth and development of adolescents; use of a variety of teaching methodologies; counsell-

ing students with personal problems; and effective use of small group learning activities. It is evident that the needs for inservice training for secondary school teachers abundantly exist, and therefore require attention.

On the question of who should provide inservice training, the teachers provided responses summarized in Table 6.

Table 6
Suggested Organizations by Teachers to Provide Inservice Training

Group or Organisation	Response By Type of School					
	Former Group A N=16	Former Group B N=162	Conventional Church N=33	Rural Day N=173	Total N=384	Rank*
Head of School	1	17	8	23	49	9
Teachers' Association	2	31	11	34	78	5
Curriculum Development Unit	1	25	12	27	65	7
Regional Office	5	64	13	50	132	3
Head and Teachers	7	69	17	46	139	2
Subject Association	5	62	11	62	140	1
Education Officer(s)	1	22	7	30	60	8
Ministry of Education Head						

Office	1	24	7	44	76	6
University's Deparment of Curriculum Studies	7	48	10	36	101	4

**Ranking of the groups is based on the total responses across the school types.*

As is evident from Table 6, groups or organizations selected by more than 25 percent of teachers include head and teachers (36.2%); subject association (36.5%); Education Regional Office (34.4%); and University of Zimbabwe Department of Curriculum Studies(26.3%).

While 36.2 percent of teachers suggested that the head and his/her teachers should provide inservice seminars or workshops, Nyagura and Reece (1989) advanced reasons why such inservice training is likely to fail to address the key instructional areas indicated in Table 5. These reasons include:

- most school heads are not sufficiently trained in curriculum and instructional theories,
- the majority of teachers lack adequate specialized training in content subjects,
- the majority of teachers are untrained and therefore lack basic knowledge in the foundations of education.

However, greater involvement of teachers and head of school should make the inservice training more effective and relevant (Bondi and Wiles, 1980).

While education officers are responsible for quality control of education experiences in schools, only 15.4 percent of teachers suggested that education officers should provide inservice semi-

nars or workshops. This relatively low dependence of teachers on education officers might be a reflection of a number of problems which include:

(i) Education officers have neglible professional influence on teachers due to their inability to visit schools more regularly because of lack of transport; the number of schools far exceeds the number of education officers and therefore time is insufficient to visit schools regularly.

(ii) Education officers lack formal training in curriculum and instructional theories which are essential tools for supervisors of classroom instruction and activities.

(iii) Education officers lack skills for organizing and running inservice training.

Enrichment Educational Visits

In this study we posed questions to teachers related to the important issue of educational visits intended to enhance pupil learning and to promote transfer of knowledge to real life situations. Regarding visits made by teachers and their pupils, 6.8 percent indicated they visited business sites at least once per year, 7.8 percent visited industry, 12 percent visited agricultural sites, 5.5 percent visited museums, and only 1.8 percent of the teachers indicated they made educational visits to government agencies.

The major reason given for failure to make educational visits was lack of money. About 14 percent of the teachers raised the issue of liability and insurance for pupils on educational visits as a constraint.

Curriculum-oriented Activities

The analysis of data related to curriculum-oriented activities revealed that secondary school teachers have made insignificant contributions to curriculum development and innovation. Only 11.2 percent of the teachers indicated they had contributed to subject panels by reviewing drafts of proposed national syllabi. Even at school level very little curriculum work is undertaken by teachers. Only 21.3 percent of the teachers had contributed to curriculum development through their subject departments, participation at district, regional or provincial committees while only 8.5 percent reported contribution through subject associations and 1.9 percent through national subject panels.

For teachers to participate fully in curriculum development, literature (e.g., Bondi and Wiles, 1980) stresses the need for high professional competence of teachers and curriculum supervisors (education officers). However, 18.7 percent of the teachers indicated they had not been afforded the opportunity to participate in curriculum development and innovation. On the other hand 35.7 percent of the teachers indicated they would like to have more opportunity to review drafts of proposed syllabi to influence meaningful change in the school curriculum.

On the question of clarity of national syllabi aims and objectives, 79.2 percent of the teachers indicated these to be sufficiently spelt out to guide teachers in their day to day teaching. On the question of the existence of school syllabi derived from national syllabi, 84 percent of the teachers confirmed existence of such syllabi with objectives to be attained by pupils arranged by form levels, and 52.8 percent indicated they had participated in developing the school syllabi. On the adequacy of the national syllabus in assisting teachers to draw schemes of work and lesson plans to meet the special needs of pupils, 36.3 percent felt the national syllabi were very adequate and 44.5 percent felt the national syllabi were not easy to adapt to school conditions while 19.2 percent of the teachers felt the national syllabi did not provide sufficient direction to draw schemes of work. The

problems confronting teachers could be greatly reduced if curriculum implementing guidelines are provided to schools. In addition, preservice and inservice courses should devote a significant amount of time to relevant curriculum issues.

Allocation of Time to Instruction

Evidence obtained indicated distribution of time to instruction ranged from 3 to 9 periods per week per subject. The duration of a period was reported to be between 35 and 45 minutes both bounds being inclusive. On the question regarding the sufficiency of instructional time for the subject, 67.4 percent of the teachers indicated that their subject(s) were given sufficient amount of time in the school time-table, and 59.5 percent were contended with the length of a period.

Attitudes of Pupils, Parents and Teachers to School - Curriculum Subjects

In this study, we posed questions to teachers related to their attitudes and perceptions of the attitudes of pupils and parents towards the school curriculum subjects. In regard to pupils' attitude towards learning, 78.8 percent of the teachers reported that pupils were eager to learn the subjects these teachers taught, and only 9 percent reported that pupils were reluctant to enrol in subjects these teachers taught, while about 9 percent reported pupils as being indifferent to the subjects these teachers taught.

In reporting their perceptions of the school community toward the school curriculum, 78.3 percent of the teachers indicated that parents were eager to have their child(ren) study the subjects which these teachers taught, 15.7 percent felt that parents were indifferent about their child(ren) studying the subjects taught by these teachers, and 6.0 percent of the teachers reported that parents were reluctant to have their child(ren) study the subjects which these teachers taught.

In reporting their own attitudes towards the subjects they taught, 87.5 percent of the teachers believed their subjects were important for all pupils, 9 percent believed it was up to pupils to choose the subject(s), and 3.5 percent believed their subjects should be taken only by the brightest pupils.

The high percentage of teachers (87.5%) who hold the view that their subjects are important for all pupils suggests greater commitment by teachers to their subjects. Such high commitment should be influential in raising teacher expectations on student performance which in turn should increase student commitment in the subjects and therefore better student performance in these subjects.

Conclusions and Implications

While research on effective schools has shown that inservice teacher training, especially in less developed countries, will raise the quality of instruction which in turn leads to higher student achievement, results obtained in this study revealed that minimal effort is being directed at staff development activities for secondary school teachers. In addition it was found that very few school-based inservice training seminars or workshops for teachers were taking place. It was found that a significant number of teachers had difficulties in adapting the national syllabus into an implementation school syllabus sensitive to the special needs of the learners and to the overall school conditions.

To reduce the effects of these professional constraints on student achievement, more support should be provided through inservice training, production of curriculum implementation guidelines, clinical supervision of teachers by education officers, and creation of more training opportunities for the temporary untrained and underqualified teachers.

In order to improve the low teacher quality in rural day secondary schools, greater material and financial inputs are essential in order to improve both social and learning conditions in these schools. In view of the poor learning and teaching conditions in rural day secondary schools (Nyagura and Reece, 1989), and of lowly qualified, untrained and inexperienced teachers, some key questions require serious consideration.

- How does the quality of education in rural day secondary schools compare to that in other types of secondary schools?
- What is the effect of learning in rural day secondary schools regarding consideration of graduates from these schools for teacher training? Apprenticeship? Lower sixth form studies?
- How equitable is the distribution of educational resources to all secondary schools in Zimbabwe?
- How effective are secondary school education officers in providing instructional leadership to untrained and underqualified teachers?
- What are the student achievement, dropout and repetition rates in rural day secondary schools and how do these compare with rates in other schooltypes?

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