

Factors Influencing Implementation of Non formal Education in Rushinga District of Mashonaland Central Province in Zimbabwe

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Abstract: Non formal education is seen to be any organized systematic educational activity conducted outside the framework of the official educational system in a given setting, to provide selected types of learning to a particular sub group in the society. In Zimbabwe formal schools are therefore used for this purpose. Such facilities have close resemblance to formal schools in that they aim at transmitting the formalised curriculum that finally lead to formal school examination. However, they differ in school practices, management, financing, and staffing conditions. This kind of education is provided to youth and adults in Zimbabwe. The purpose of this study was to assess the factors influencing implementation of non- formal education in non-formal schools in Rushinga district of Zimbabwe. The study used the mixed methodology and the descriptive survey design. The target population for the study included 20 non formal schools in Rushinga district. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 80 teachers. All the 20 school heads also participated in the study. Data was analysed by the use of descriptive statistics and the findings of the study showed that school heads and teachers have relevant professional and academic qualifications to positively influence curriculum implementation in non-formal education schools. The study also found out that teacher attitudes, lack of finance as well as physical and teaching and learning resources influenced implementation of the programme. This research also established that the school heads' characteristics, such as internal supervision and professional support to teachers was minimal and, were perceived to have negative influence on the implementation of non-formal education. The study recommended that schools serving low income families can add their value through capacity building of their teachers, establishing mobile facilities such as classrooms, and toilets, engaging in income generating activities, economic empowerment of parents, sourcing for scholarships and acquisition of loans and donations. It was also noted that enhancement of internal supervision by school heads would go a long way to give professional support to teachers. The study suggests further research to be conducted on factors influencing learning achievements in literacy and numeracy skills in non- formal schools in Zimbabwe.

Keywords: Factors, Implementation, Non formal education, professional qualifications, teaching and learning resources, infrastructure

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I. INTRODUCTION

Non formal education is an alternative approach to formal basic education. It targets adults and youth who have no access to formal education; or those who have dropped out from the formal system before acquiring sustainable literacy skills. It has, in general been an expression of the desire to provide education and facilitate learning through alternative modes of delivery for youth and adults who have been unable to access formal educational opportunities.

It was seen as a panacea for the declining standards of education in the affected societies and also as a possibility of incorporating the low cost private education to bring 'Education for all on board.

The Non formal education is central to the protection and fulfilment of rights to education as stipulated in the 1987 Education Act. The objectives of non-formal education is to provide functional literacy, provide functional and remedial education for those young people who did not complete secondary education, the disadvantaged, provide education for different categories of people, give the adult citizens of the country the necessary aesthetic, cultural and civic education for public enlightenment, UNICEF (2008)

The purpose of non-formal education is the provision of skills to enhance social development and reduction of poverty and skilling or up-skilling citizens for increased productivity and national development, Oloolube, (2012). Non formal programs, therefore provide the recipients the chance of achieving literacy and basic learning needs. Non formal education in Zimbabwe supplements the Government's efforts to provide education for all and ensure access, equity and quality across all levels of basic education, Education Act (1987).

Ruto (2004) asserts that NFE is an alternative approach to formal basic education. It targets adults and youth who have no access to formal education or those who have dropped out from the formal system before acquiring sustainable literacy skills. KIE (2007), states that NFE focuses on specific learning objectives, learning needs, target clientele, organisational and curricular flexibility, relevance to contextual realities and cultural acceptability. The NFE came into play as an alternative that provided a flexible operational environment that takes into account the plight of many disadvantaged youth and Adult Zimbabweans.

This is an accelerated education programs which enables learners to complete within a certain period to acquire the same competences as learners in the corresponding levels in the formal education. The curriculum has vertical and horizontal linkages and equivalences with formal education curriculum.

The subjects offered in basic NFE program include academic subjects are the same as those offered to eradicate illiteracy and innumeracy. It involves voluntary participation; teaching is delivered by qualified professionals and volunteers, Thomson (2000). Non formal education programs are often context specific and concentrate on the participant's true needs.

Generally, implementing NFE curriculum in Zimbabwe is a joint effort of all stakeholders in the provision of education. Mugisha (2006), states that quality in education cannot be achieved when access to education is increased, when at the same time teachers are not equipped appropriately with the teaching pedagogy, the school heads need to be equipped with the administrative skills.

Statement of the Problem

Although an outcry has been made by the Zimbabwean government to provide quality non-formal education, considering that the programme is being conducted in formal schools which factors could be affecting its implementation?

Purpose

The aim of the study was to assess the factors influencing implementation of non- formal education in non-formal schools of Rushinga district in Zimbabwe.

Research objectives

- To determine how the professional and academic qualifications of teachers influence implementation of Non-formal education.
- To establish how teacher's turnover influence implementation of non-formal education.
- To determine how teacher's attitudes influence implementation of the programme.
- To establish whether the physical and teaching and learning resources influence the implementation of non-formal education.
- The objective of the study was to determine how the academic and professional qualifications of teachers influence implementation of NFE curriculum.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study used the mixed methodology and employed descriptive survey research design to obtain factual information concerning factors influencing implementation of non -formal education in non -formal schools of Rushinga district in Zimbabwe. The design helped in getting the opinions, attitudes, preferences and perceptions of specific factors that influence NFE Curriculum. Where the design is used, the status and nature of the situation as it exists with respect to the variables or conditions of the situation can accurately be determined (Borg & Gall, 2007). Simple random sampling technique was used to select (20) school heads, and 80 teachers to participate in the study. The data was collected using questionnaires and observation check lists. The questionnaire had both open ended and closed items. They were administered to school heads and teachers. The school heads questionnaires covered details of academic and professional qualifications and the implementation of the NFE. Teachers' questionnaires were designed to evoke responses on gender, experience attitudes and the academic and professional qualifications. Most of the questions in the questionnaire were objective. However, there were few structured questions to draw out more information on academic professional qualifications of the teachers. The questionnaires were validated by pre-testing on population sample similar to the target population to determine their validity and effectiveness. A test re-test method was used to ensure reliability of the instruments. The test results were consistent, and the possible random error had been greatly minimized, hence the precision and consistency of the instruments (Kathuri & Pals 2005).

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data collected. Percentages were used to analyse academic and professional qualifications of the school heads and teachers and resources in schools.

Table 1: Demographic data for school heads and teachers

Category	Academic O level and above	Professional	
		Trained	Not trained
School heads	20 (100%)	20(100%)	0
Teachers	80(100%)	80(100%)	0

It can be observed from Table 1 above that all school heads (100%) and all teachers (100%) in non-formal schools have academic qualifications of Ordinary level and possess either Certificate /diploma in education. This indicates that they are all professionally trained. As of school heads they are capable to supervise non-formal classes. It also shows that all the teachers in the study area were trained. This means that they are knowledgeable enough to teach non-formal education. This is in line with Okumbe (2001) who posits that training provides teachers and other employees with specific knowledge and skills in order to enable them perform specific teaching tasks. Training increases productivity for both quantity and quality of its output. It improves the workers' morale and job satisfaction and motivation. It also reduces obsolescence among employees, creates a sense of personal growth and reduces problems which are associated with supervision of employees. It can be concluded that Academic and professional qualifications of teachers is key to implementation of non-formal education.

Table 2 Resources for non-formal education in non-formal schools

Resources	No. of Schools	Adequate %	No. of Schools	Inadequate %
Classrooms	4	20	20	100
Suitable furniture	0	0	20	100
Textbooks	2	10	18	90
Financial assistance	0	0	20	100

The findings of the study in Table 2 reveals that lack of finance to source material resources, unsuitable infrastructure and furniture, is affecting the implementation of NFE. Non formal education in Zimbabwe has been in operation since 1980. Just like any other changes, it has had its fair share of teething problems. From the findings of the study, these challenges can be attributed to failure to have an adequate time to prepare for the implementation of NFE. As a result of this, many non-formal schools are not ready for the implementation of the curriculum. Though relevant policy has been put in place to guide the people in charge of the implementation, negative attitude, pressure of work and remuneration is adversely affecting non-formal education.

III. CONCLUSION

The academic and professional qualifications of teachers are paramount to the implementation of non-formal education. It was found out that all teachers in non-formal schools had basic professional qualifications to teach the programme but are being affected by work overload negative attitude lack of resources and lack of incentives.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that the government should add its value through financing non-formal education, establishing mobile facilities such as classrooms, and toilets, introduce income generating activities to the community, economic empowerment of parents, sourcing for scholarships and acquisition of loans to beef non-formal education. In addition, the school heads should enhance their internal supervision of the professional support for teachers. The study suggests further research to be conducted on factors influencing learning achievements in literacy and numeracy skills in non-formal schools in other districts.

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