

An Assessment of oDL Students Views on the implementation of Zimbabwe's new education curriculum Building and Impact Sub-theme Capacity Building and Impact

Rittah Kasowe

*Senior lecturer Educational Studies Zimbabwe Open University P.Bag 984 Bindura Zimbabwe
Corresponding Author: Rittash Kasowe*

Abstract: Considering that the thrust of the curriculum is premised on the development of competences and promotion of national identity including inculcating values for capacity development, ODL institution like Zimbabwe Open University has a role to capacitate practitioners in management. Hence the aim of this study was to assess ODL students' views on how the Zimbabwean new education curriculum is being implemented and explore implementation strategies for possibilities to enhance capacity building. The quantitative methodology and descriptive survey was used. The population was 120 educational studies students from Mashonaland Central Regional campus. A sample of 40 students randomly selected was drawn from the population. Data were collected through the use of a questionnaire. The study revealed that ODL students were trained to teach the old curriculum and had vast experience in the education sector. However they were being affected by lack of expertise, negative attitude, and fear of the unknown to implement the new curriculum. Both infrastructure and material resources were a challenge to them. In addition they were experiencing work overload and attended minimal staff development to implement the new curriculum. Parents as stakeholders have negative attitudes towards the new curriculum. The study recommends that there is need to: provide resources, in service teachers, merge curriculum subjects and to make awareness campaigns to parents before implementing the new curriculum so as to enhance capacity building.

Keywords: Curriculum; Implementation; Strategies.

Date of Submission: 16-12-2017

Date of acceptance: 28-12-2017

I. BACKGROUND

The development of education and training in Zimbabwe has undergone many phases after the attainment of national independence in 1980. During the various phases, significant policy measures were taken which reflected the socio-political ideologies of the period. The Zimbabwe government embarked on reform course designed to eliminate the imbalances and inequalities that existed in the education and training sector. This broad policy resulted in the institution of democratization of education. This ushered in expansive and extensive provision. The phenomenon expansion necessitated a comprehensive review of the current system of education. Within this broad policy another new policy spelt out three aims of education for Zimbabwe. The aims emphasized that education should develop pupils who were master in building a new culture derived from the best of Zimbabwe's heritage and history and that the new curriculum for Zimbabwe was to underline initiative, self-reliance, innovation and creative qualities. (Nziramasanga 1999).

In an effort to address the three aims, The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education on Friday 25 September 2016, announced that they are going to release a new education curriculum draft which is meant to enforce major changes in the education system. The education draft was presented to the Cabinet and was approved on September 22. Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Dr Lazarus Dokora said that the new education syllabus is meant to modernize the education system to be in line with modern technologies and an assessment of the schools' infrastructure is going to be conducted to see if they are ready for the new system. He advocated that his ministry would proceed to produce subject syllabi, restructuring of Grade Seven General Paper to include Agriculture and development of specimen papers for Grade Seven and Ordinary Level (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Secretary's Circular No2 of January 2017).

The Minister alluded that the new Curriculum framework is intended to prepare graduates of the education system to have the following skills: critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, leadership skills, good communication skills, team building and technological skills.

The Framework outlines the following learning areas for the three learning levels: Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Dr Lazarus Dokora in a presentation entitled "Ground Zero: Getting Traction," launched the implementation of the new curriculum in Kadoma on Saturday 21 January 2017. The new curriculum came into effect in January 2017. Zimbabwe introduced the new curriculum in line with recommendations of the Nziramasanga commission of enquiry 1999. The implementation of the new curriculum in Primary and Secondary is guided by the Curriculum framework of 2015-2022. Subjects such as Agriculture, languages, Information Communication Technology, Science, Mathematics, Science, Statistics and Physics are going to be introduced at an earlier stage in schools since some stakeholders suggested that subjects like Mathematics, Science and Technology should be taught from as early as Early Child Development. (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Secretary's Circular No.2 of January 2017). Considering this new innovation it is therefore necessary to investigate its applicability in the existing schools.

Statement of the problem

In spite of the positive legislation meant to empower learners in the education system in Zimbabwe there is no evidence on the ground that schools are indeed fully implementing the new curriculum effectively.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess ODL students' views on the implementation of Zimbabwe's new education curriculum Building and Impact in Zimbabwean primary and secondary schools. The findings of the study can be adopted, modified or improved for use by the Public Service Commission and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education.

Research objectives

- To establish whether teachers are able to implement the new curriculum in Zimbabwe
- To determine resources availability in schools
- To identify factors affecting the implementation of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe

Research questions

- Are teachers capable to implement the new curriculum?
- Do schools have adequate resources to implement the new curriculum?
- Which factors are affecting the implementation of the new curriculum?

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Curriculum Philosophy

While curriculum can be conceptualized in a number of ways, the notions of "intended" and "implemented" curriculum are useful for curriculum developers. The intended (or "official") school curriculum is expressed in policy documents, curriculum frameworks or guidelines, frameworks of standards and assessment, syllabi, textbooks and other instructional materials and clearly defines the structure, content and methods of intended learning experiences. This "intended" curriculum is then put into practice through real teachers interacting with real students in real schools. It is the "real" or "implemented" curriculum that shapes students' learning experiences and determined their learning outcomes (Basic Education Curriculum Guide 2002). In line with the aims of education and the overall aims of the school curriculum, encompass the learning goals that students should;

- recognize their roles and responsibilities as members in the family,
- recognize the society, and the nation; and show concern for their well-being;
- understand their national identity and be committed to
- contributing to the nation and society;
- develop a habit of reading independently;
- engage in discussion actively and confidently
- develop creative thinking and master independent learning skill
- possess a breadth and foundation of knowledge (Basic Education Curriculum Guide 2002)

Conceptual framework

The term "Curriculum" is defined as the set of total learning experiences through which students learn. The Curriculum Framework has three interconnected components namely; key learning areas, generic skills and values and attitudes and to encompass these learning areas:

- A range of capacities is required to facilitate curriculum implementation that is understanding: core concepts curriculum implementation cycle; approaches to encouraging discourse about curriculum philosophy, concepts, change and the implications for education systems; Issues in school based training and teacher education and Strategies for promoting new approaches to teaching and learning, information and communications technology; for effective implementation in schools.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used the quantitative methodology, and made use of the descriptive survey research design. According to Anderson (2011) the descriptive survey design looks with intense accuracy at the phenomenon and then describes precisely what the researcher sees. The questionnaire was used to collect data. As Bell (2013) observes, the questionnaire increases reliability as an instrument of gathering data because of its greater impersonality. The population comprised all 120 students of educational studies department in Mashonaland Regional Campus. A sample of 40 randomly selected respondents was used. Respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. The researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to the selected respondents and collected them after one week. The questionnaire produced descriptive statistics around the variables under study.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study set out to examine views of ODL students who are teaching on the implementation of Zimbabwe 'new curriculum

Table 1: Composition of teachers by qualifications working experience and workshops attended

Professional qualification	Female	Male	Total
Certificate	2	1	3
Diploma	15	14	29
Degreed	3	5	8
Working experience			
1--15	6	5	11
16-30	14	15	29
Senior grade	18	17	35
Teacher grade	2	3	5
Workshops attended on new curriculum	1	1	2

As table 1 above reveals, teachers' professional qualifications were distributed evenly amongst male and female teachers the variance is very minimal. All attended a one day workshop on new curriculum.

Table 2: Teachers responses on factors affecting the implementation of the new curriculum

Categories responses	Agree	Disagree	Total
	%	%	%
Teacher factors ; Lack of expertise, knowledge, negative attitude	98	2	100
Shortage of resources	100	0	100
Attitudes of parents	96	4	100
Mistiming	98	2	100
Time on task	100	0	100
Teachers Resistance to change	80	20	100
Workload	100	0	100

Information on Table 2 above shows that all of teacher factors (98%), shortage of resources (100%), attitudes of parents (96%), mistiming of implementation (98%), time on task (100%), teachers resistance to change (80%) as well as workload (100%) were factors affecting the implementation of the new curriculum to enhance capacity building in Zimbabwe.

V. DISCUSSION

The findings from this study reveal that both ODL students who are qualified teachers believe that the new curriculum though quite beneficial, it was over rushed. Teacher and community preparedness was not done for awareness considering that a new innovation requires knowledgeable people from the schools advisory services and the community for successful implementation. Evidence from the study reveals that teachers were generally in possession of professional qualifications relevant for the old curriculum. For example, most teachers had diplomas and degrees that did not include subjects like mass displays. This corroborates observations by Chiweza (2007) who postulates that the teaching of curriculum subjects is not about literacy, but how to use different techniques for the art of teaching to be understood by learners for capacity building. There is lack of teacher preparedness. In other words Kasambira (2003) argues, relevant teaching qualifications contribute immensely to pupils' performance and understanding. Teacher training is fundamental to successful delivery for capacity building (Mhloyi, 2012).

Evidence reveals that teachers did not have adequate resources be it infrastructure and material resources for effectively teaching the curriculum subjects introduced. The curriculum subjects require resources like syllabi, textbooks charts pictures video and other audio-visual aids so that learners have fee of the practical realities of the newly introduced subjects. There is also need to have many resource persons with relevant expertise coming in to help or complement the teachers, efforts (Cox, 2005). Evidence from the study reveals that parents were not actively taking part and have negative attitudes towards the implementation of the new curriculum. There could be a number of factors at play that cause this apathy from parents. As Glasgow and Whitney (2009) postulate, the extent of parental involvement depends among other things on how frequently curriculum planners approach parents and the more involved parents become. Parents are also unaware of their legal obligations to participate in school activities.

This is in contradiction with Corner (2004) who states that parents who are informed about their legal obligations understand goals and methods being taught and they can enhance their children's learning. Parents' and teachers attitudes were also seen as another factor that exacerbated the implementation of the new curriculum. Negative attitudes on the implementation of the new curriculum by both parents and teachers are likely to cause boredom and lack of desire to honor the innovation. Due to the fact that its change there is fear of the unknown being experienced by teachers.

VI. CONCLUSION

Given The Background Of The Above Findings The Researcher Makes The Following Conclusions:

- Teachers lack expertise to implement the new curriculum.
- Teachers have negative attitude towards the new curriculum
- Implementation is being affected by lack of both infrastructure and material resources.
- The new curriculum has increased workload of teachers.
- Parents and the entire community have a misty understanding of the new curriculum

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Inlight Of The Findings Of The Study The Researcher Therefore Recommends That There Is Need To:

- Embark on a lot of staff development programmes to acquaint teachers with relevant skills and knowledge concerning the new curriculum
- Provide resources for successful implementation
- Merge the old and new curriculum subjects to reduce workload.
- Make awareness campaigns to the community concerning the innovation.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Anderson, C. (2011). Research in education. London: D.P. Publications Bell, J. (2013). Doing your research methods. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- [2]. Chiweza, D. (2000) HIV and AIDS: The last stand, Harare: Able City Corner, J. P. (2004). Home/school relationships as they affect the academic success of children. Educational Review, 1(3):253-262
- [3]. Cox, E. (2005). Problems and possibilities for Religious Education. London: Prentice Hall Inc.
- [4]. Glasgow, N. A. and Whitney, P. J. (2009). What successful schools do to involve families: ss partnership strategies, Corwing Press, SAGE.
- [5]. Government of Zimbabwe (2017) (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Secretary's Circular No.2 of January 2017). Zimbabwe Harare: Government Printer
- [6]. Kasambira, K. P. (2003). Teaching methods. Harare: College Press
- [7]. Mhloyi, M. (2012). Knowledge beliefs and practices. A baseline survey for the Government of Zimbabwe. Harare: UNICEF.

- [8]. Nziramasanga (1999). Report of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training Government of Zimbabwe
- [9]. The curriculum Development Council(2002).Basic Education Curriculum. The Education Department HKSAR
- [10]. TKI TEKETEIPURANGA Te Tahuhuote Matauranga, New Zealand: Ministry of Education
- [11]. UNESCO (2011) Education for sustainable development. Paris: UNESCO

Rittah Kasowe. "An Assessment of oDL Students Views on the implementation of Zimbabwe's new education curriculum Building and Impact Sub-Theme Capacity Building and Impact." IOSR Journal of Engineering (IOSRJEN), vol. 07, no. 12, 2017, pp. 51-55.