

Students' Failure, a Shared Blame in Zimbabwean Secondary Schools-The Way Forward

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Abstract: *High rates of student failure in Zimbabwean Secondary Schools are a problem nationwide. Effective teaching and efficient management of schools requires information as to the causes of failure. One approach to acquiring this information is to improve our understanding of what the students themselves perceive as the causes and antecedents of school failure. In this article, we analyze the perceptions of the factors of academic failure among public and private secondary school students. A total of three hundred and ninety three students from twenty secondary schools drawn from the five of the nine provinces in Zimbabwe participated in the study. The major factors of failure at Ordinary level courses, according to sampled students, are quality of teaching and previous student preparation. A culture of high expectancy on the part of teachers, parents and administrators may be key to influencing learning success.*

Keywords: Students' failure, Shared blame, Pedagogy, School management practices, effective teaching and learning, student perceptions of teaching methods, teacher performance evaluations, student achievement

1. Introduction

This article draws most of its information from the research the author carried out when he was doing his PhD thesis titled; **"Effectiveness of performance appraisal systems in relation to teacher dedication in public and private secondary schools in Zimbabwe"**. The research was conducted in five of the ten provinces in Zimbabwe namely, Mashonaland West, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland Central, Midlands and Harare. Part of the information is from the ready literature.

The literature provides some possible answers to questions relating to higher student failure rates in Zimbabwean Secondary Schools. A number of psychosocial, organizational, teacher and student variables seem important in influencing learning success or failure: Parenting practices and parental involvement with the school explain much of the variation in school performance according to Desimone (1999). Student perceptions of meaningfulness, challenge, choice and appeal of class activities have been associated with motivation and learning (Raineri and Gerber, 2004; Gentry and Springer, 2002). In addition, the art and science of teaching (delivery methodology) has been found to be the most important factor in improving student achievement in schools (Ballone-Duran, Czerniak and Haney, 2005).

2. Background to the Study

There are hues and cries among stakeholders in education over the growing rate of failure in Zimbabwean secondary schools in recent times. Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC) could notice the growing failure rate in the yearly decline in students' performance in the Ordinary Level. Stakeholders in education blamed students for general unpreparedness to study as one of the major causes of students' failure. Teachers were also blamed for lack of dedication to their jobs, which has inadvertently affected the academic performance of student. Whoever may be blamed for student failure, the

general view is that high quality teachers are education's best resources and assets (Ayodele, 2004).

Thus, the ability to teach effectively depends on the teacher's knowledge and knowledge occurs in a variety of forms. Teacher effectiveness is impeded if the teacher is unfamiliar with the body of knowledge taught and the teachers' effectiveness is subject specific. The implication of this for teachers is that they must thoroughly understand the content of what they teach. The teachers, whose understanding of topic is thorough, use clearer language and they provide better explanation than those whose background is weaker. The way the students perceive the teachers in terms of their (teachers) knowledge of content of subject matter may significantly affect the students' academic performance.

The standard of teaching in public secondary schools is characterised by lazy teachers, increasing absenteeism among teachers, general poor quality of tuition and teachers' strikes over salaries and poor working conditions. The Herald (Zimbabwe) paper dated Thursday 5 July 2012 (first page) carries a heading that says "Civil servants give government two week ultimatum". In the story, the Apex Council, which brings together the Public Service Association, Zimbabwe Teachers Association (ZIMTA), Progressive Teachers Association (PTUZ) and Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (TUZ) and chaired by Mrs Tendai Chikowore had met the previous day (4 July 2012) with the National Joint Negotiating Council (Government). According to the Apex Council, the government came to the negotiating table "empty handed"

The civil servants have given Government a two-week ultimatum to improve their salaries and working conditions or face a nationwide strike. In their demands submitted on the 4th of July 2012, the workers are demanding an all-inclusive salary of US\$564 for the least paid worker and 15% of the basic salary as rural allowance. The least paid Government worker as of now is getting US\$269 (The Zimbabwean Herald, 5th July 2012).

Teachers Union of Zimbabwe President, Mr Lovemore Mufamba, said Government had promised to increase salaries in July, but was now reneging on the agreement. He said, they were invited to the meeting but surprisingly they did not want to talk about welfare issues, but wanted to focus on peripheral issues and non functional committees, like the resource tracking one which is not a bread and butter issue Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) Secretary Raymond Majongwe said a political decision was needed to ensure civil servants get an increment.

The above cases explain lack of motivation on the part of the teachers especially those teaching at public secondary schools. The government does not have enough money to meet the teachers' demands. Despite the dissatisfaction with low salaries that are far below the poverty datum line, teachers get excited when their students perform well in public examinations. Parents also find joy in the success of their children despite the lack of the necessary support from their part.

This paper explores the complex issues of student engagement and school retention from a critical/sociological perspective. Dominant discourses on student alienation, estrangement and underachievement are generally couched in a language of blame and deficits with responsibility for the problems being sheeted home to (a) individual students, families, neighbourhoods and/or cultural groups (b) teachers and schools, and (c) public education systems. What is largely missing from these discourses is a lack of recognition of the structural inequalities, which pervade society and sustain educational disadvantage

Drawing on Paulo Freire's philosophy and pedagogy, I argue that an analysis of student engagement and disaffection must involve both a critique of the dehumanizing forces that operate within and outside schools, and the development of a renewed project for a critical pedagogy that challenges the logic of instrumental reason and neoliberal approaches to education policy. With reference to recent ethnographic research, I discuss the tensions involved in implementing school-based responses in the current policy environment and highlight some of the innovative responses to concerns of educational disadvantage and student engagement in the secondary years of schooling.

3. Review of Related Literature

The high students' failure rate at Ordinary level in Zimbabwean Secondary schools, especially public secondary schools leads to a series of important questions for educators and other educational leaders and policy makers. We ask first, why should this be the case? What are the factors students identify for the high failure rate? Are there relations between the factors identified by the students and other variables? In addition, what implications for teaching, curriculum, and school organization can we infer?

The literature provides some possible answers to these questions. A number of psychosocial, organizational, teacher and student variables seem important in

influencing success or failure: Parenting practices and parental involvement with the school explain much of the variation in school performance according to Desimone (1999). Student perceptions of meaningfulness, challenge, choice and appeal of class activities have been associated with motivation and learning (Raineri and Gerber, 2004; Gentry and Springer, 2002). In addition, the science teacher has been found to be the most important factor in improving student achievement in schools (Ballone-Duran, Czerniak and Haney, 2005)

Anthony (2000) reported a study of perceptions of factors influencing success in mathematics and emphasized the role of motivation. Students and lecturers agreed on the importance of motivation; however, their opinions diverged in relation to factors such as importance of active learning, help seeking and student effort. Lecturers emphasized controllable student characteristics, while students were more prone to blame failure on course design and teaching quality.

Easton (2002) interviewed students from an alternative residential high school in the United States of America in order to determine perceptions of learning needs. Students identified the need for self-esteem, personal accountability, and personalized learning. They talked about the need for teachers who care and about active learning. They further mentioned the need to feel emotionally safe, the need for high expectancy on the part of the school and the need for self-directed learning/learning by choice.

In analyzing student-generated solutions to enhance the academic success of African-American youth, Tucker, Herman, Pedersen, Vogel and Reinke (2000) found that both academic preparation of students and positive peer influences would enhance academic success and that praise and encouragement by teachers and parents is needed to facilitate student schoolwork and achievement. They further affirm that student achievement seems to be associated with occupational aspirations. Similarly, Wong, Wiest and Cusick (2002) state that student perceptions of teacher behaviours that promote the development of student autonomy, parent involvement, competence and self-worth were predictors of motivation and achievement. Factors such as age and gender may also be related to attitudes concerning factors of achievement.

3.1 Teacher's share of blame

Most teachers in the public schools have little time to check on the student's progress. In fact going to work is just a formality. Some go to work without being clear on what to teach and how to teach. To some it is: I will see when I get there; meaning to say what to teach is something to be decided on in the classroom and not predetermined and planned. Most of the time the teachers demean their poor salaries and working conditions. Teaching is a calling to a few if any of the teachers of today. In the minds of most, if not all teachers is the mentality that teaching like any other profession should enable those in it to have a decent standard of living. Proper thinking, but sadly despite efforts by schools to

give incentives to teachers, some teachers are not even giving the barest minimum effort in their service delivery. It is also sad to note that, in the 21st century the bulk of the teaching is still teacher-centered. It is common knowledge that student-centered learning brings positive results.

Effective teaching is the use of a variety of knowledge, skills, and best teaching practices to disseminate information to produce the desired learning, actions, or strengths in students, and is rooted in a belief system that emphasizes student achievement (California State University Northridge, 2006). Torff and Sessions (2005; 305) suggested that effective teaching is “a balanced blend of pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge”.

Content knowledge, sometimes referred to as subject matter knowledge, is the first component of effective teaching, equipping teachers with the educational background they need to engage students in learning the content, assess their students’ knowledge of the content, and push them to higher levels of understanding and application (Fuhrman and Lazerson, 2005; Torff and Sessions, 2005). Teachers earning bachelor degrees or taking college classes in their content areas, and mastering their subjects at levels that exceed what they must know to teach their students (Levine, 2005; Neill, 2006) attain content knowledge. When teachers earn a major or minor in their content areas, students benefit by demonstrating higher academic achievement than when teachers take few or no content area courses (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Stronge, 2002).

There is great need for the teachers to be conversant with Paulo Freire’s critical pedagogy. Freire’s critical pedagogy does provide a set of worthy ideals and principles to assist teachers develop pedagogies that are more engaging for the students. Freire’s critical pedagogy is set out in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1993;54) where he describes a prevailing ‘banking concept’ of schooling, characterized by a deficit view of students and didactic teaching practices which position students as passive objects, rather than active subjects capable of changing the world. In such a school ‘the teacher teaches and the students are taught; the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing; the teacher talks and the students listen—meekly’. Students are rendered voiceless in this environment. Freire (2001) asserts that teachers should respect what students know and take advantage of their knowledge of their own environment and culture. Writing about his teaching experiences in a New York ghetto school, Frank McCourt describes the reaction of his students as stunned amazement when he asked them for their views on a controversial issue (Mccourt, 2005;118). ‘Their faces are blank,’ he says. ‘Nobody ever told them they had a right to an opinion’. The model of teaching and learning mirrors oppressive relations in society insofar as it denies student subjectivity and is more intent on preserving the status quo than in challenging unjust social relations.

Freire, demands a critical reading of the world and the word. Children need to grow in the exercise of [an] ability to think, to question and question themselves, to doubt, to experiment with hypotheses for action, and to plan, rather

than just following plans that are imposed upon them. (p. 37) What this amounts to is a case for a pedagogy which challenges students to ‘build a critical understanding of their presence in the world’ (p. 75) and one that assists them to acquire knowledge and resources to engage in social activism. It is important to note that Freire does not advocate a content-free curriculum or a laissez-faire approach to teaching and learning. On the contrary, he insists that educators must be competent in specialist fields of knowledge; for example, in language acquisition and literacy methods of teaching, and they must at all time engage students in a rigorous and demanding curriculum. Teachers, he argues, have a duty to provide students with an agenda and to correct them when necessary, but the exercise of this authority has to be balanced with an abiding commitment to authentic dialogue, democratic practices and participatory forms of learning.

In an introduction to *Pedagogy of Freedom* (Freire, 2001), argues that the banking or transmission theory of knowledge is alive and well in American schools as the old notion of a liberal education has been replaced by a training model in which teachers teach to externally administered tests and students engage in meaningless rote learning. He goes on to state:

Where once liberal, let alone radical, educators insisted that education be at the core of an activity of self-exploration in which, through intellectual and affective encounters, the student attempts to discover his/ her own subjectivity, now nearly all learning space is occupied by an elaborate testing apparatus that measures the student’s ‘progress’ in ingesting externally imposed curricula and, more insidiously, provides a sorting device to reproduce the inequalities inherent in the capitalist market system.

Freire does, however, outline an empowering alternative in the form of a critical pedagogy, which, according to (Shor, 1992, pp. 33–35) is:

- Participatory in that it involves students in negotiating the curriculum
- Situated in the life worlds and language of students
- Critical because it encourages critique and self-reflection
- Democratic in that it is constructed mutually by teachers and students
- Dialogic insofar as it promotes dialogues around problems posed by students and teachers
- Desocialising in breaking down the culture of silence that often pervades classrooms
- Multicultural because it recognizes the gendered, racialised and classed experiences of students
- Research-oriented
- Activist because it is directed towards change; and,
- Affective in that it is concerned with the development of feelings as well as social inquiry.

Teachers acknowledged the importance of supportive relationships in nurturing an ethos of care and trust with students as a precondition for learning. Some saw the potential to engage students through integrated approaches to learning. Notwithstanding certain

constraints, described earlier in the paper, they were striving to:

- Develop a more student-centred approach to instruction with an emphasis on success oriented learning
- Promote participatory and cooperative forms of learning
- Utilize the notion of situated pedagogy (Orner, 1996) through learning activities which encouraged students to explore their own personal interests and those of the community
- Incorporate generative themes into the curriculum arising from popular culture, youth identity, media studies, the arts, local heritage, the physical environment and new technologies
- Develop curriculum that was more responsive to the community context
- Utilize the funds of knowledge in the community to enrich curriculum, and
- Encourage students to think more critically about the media and consumer society.

3.2 Student's Share of Blame

Hard working teachers are let down by lazy students. Such hardworking teachers when they meet the class, they make clear the topics to be covered and the objectives to be achieved. What it would require then are students who read in advance so that when the teacher comes for the lesson, the grey areas are made clear and this will bring about deeper understanding on the part of the student. What we see in schools are students who come to lessons very much unprepared who even during the lesson would not pay attention. Rarely would such students ask questions on grey areas. Most students do not get to the expected standard of learning readiness. High cases of drug abuse and drunkenness are reported in most schools. More time is spent doing mischievous things than schoolwork.

The problems of student engagement and underachievement are commonly attributed to the deficits and pathologies of individuals, families and neighbourhoods (Dei, 1993; Hursh, 2006; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997), rather than any failings within the schools and the political system. A widely shared perception of students in so-called 'disadvantaged schools' is that they lack the academic ability and potential to engage in higher learning (Thomson and Comber, 2003), that they can only cope with hands-on learning and the so-called 'practical subjects'.

3.3 School Administration's share of blame

The school administration should make a deliberate effort to supervise the teaching and learning process. There is no or few supervision going on in schools and so teachers are at liberty to do whatever they want. The school administration should provide adequate teaching and learning resources to enable meaningful teaching to take place. The school administration should motivate the teachers in any form within its means. It should also encourage parents to be involved in students' learning process by paying the due fees on time, attend school

meetings, check on their children's schoolwork and create a conducive home environment that allows the children to study.

It seems that barely a month goes by without some reference in the mainstream media to a crisis in education framed in terms of falling standards, poor discipline, inappropriate teaching practices and poorly trained teachers. According to ideologies of the right, schools are failing students because they lack clear curriculum guidelines, they overemphasise social aspects of learning at the expense of rigorous academic studies, and they attach too much weight to direct instruction instead of student-centred learning, especially in the basics of literacy and numeracy. The solution to this crisis, as advocated by critics like Donnelly (2004) and Yeeke (2005), runs something like this:

- Make teachers and schools more accountable by naming and shaming failing schools,
- Define what and how students must learn by implementing a prescriptive subject based curriculum,
- Extend standardized testing practices and place much greater emphasis on formal whole class learning.
- In short, the answer to 'falling standards' is greater uniformity, standardization and compliance.

3.4 Parents' share of the blame

Parents have an important role in the upbringing of the students. They have to clothe and feed the students, provide moral support, give positive comments on their children's schoolwork, if the children's schoolwork is below standard and the parent says, "I know you can do better than this." The sense of self-worth comes into the child's mind and this encourages him/her to better his/her performance. Negative comments by the parent will render the child useless and the child will eventually perform badly and will lose self-worth. The parents should pay school fees on time so that the child is not sent out of school for non-payment. Some of parents are not able help their children because they have not gone far with their education. Some of the parents only attained primary education, especially those from the rural area. The 2012 CENSUS information shows that most of the parents in the rural areas have attained at least primary education. The least educated parents cannot secure formal employment to enable them to raise funds for their children's education. They are not able also to help their children in doing homework because they have less knowledge of the content.

3.5 The Public Service's share of the blame

The public service as the employer of teachers should see to it that the teaching profession maintains its status as a noble profession by seriously taking care of the teacher's welfare. When the community looks at the teachers, it should see the worthiness of the teaching profession. When the teachers look miserable then the profession will be undermined. Most people today do not want to join the teaching profession. A case at hand is the scenario at Bindura University of Science Education. We are all aware that this university was introduced to train teachers

in the areas- Mathematics, Science and Geography from the Cuban Programme training in those areas. The University has more students in the business studies than sciences.

3.6 Teachers' Training Colleges' share of blame

Teachers' Training Colleges have the mandate to train teachers, who should come out reach in content knowledge and teaching skills, more importantly on teaching skills, teachers who are familiar with student centered learning methods. Due to shortages of trainee teachers, most Teachers' Colleges are introducing bridging courses for those with less than five O'Level passes. All it means is that at the end of the day, the quality of teachers produced through bridging courses is compromised.

4. Methodology

This section presents the research design, study population, sample size and sampling techniques, data collection instruments, validity and reliability of research instruments, procedure and data analysis. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative techniques of data collection and data were analysed using descriptive and relational Statistics with Pearson Product Correlation Coefficient and Regression analysis

This research was designed making use of Saunders's "Onion" (Saunders et al.2003, as adapted by Vaughan-Jones, 2010). The "Onion" philosophy can be Positivism, Interpretivism or Realism. The Positivism underscores the importance of hypothesis testing in a controlled experiment so that deductive reasoning is informed by facts. It is further argued that this philosophy may have an element of objectivity (Vaughen-Jones, 2010). A limitation with this philosophy is that even if scientific methods used had led to results that are objective in nature, human beings apply such methods. It is therefore, argued that an element of subjectivity cannot be ruled out. Another research philosophy of the "onion" is Interpretivism that is usually used in social studies and whose reasoning is inductive and with an element of subjectivity. In essence, this philosophy tries to generalize results of a sample to the whole population.

The research philosophy employed can be generally classified as Interpretivism, a philosophy that suggests that it is worthwhile to probe deep into people's behaviours and understand them clearly. It is a line of thought that centres on feelings and emotions. The shortcoming of this philosophy is that it is perceived to be "subjective", (Vaughen-Jones, 2010).

The use of multiple methods in a study secures in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question because it adds vigour, breadth and depth to the investigation (Cresswell, 1994:174; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998:163; Salomon, 1991:10). Most quantitative data gathering techniques condense data in order to see the bigger picture. Qualitative data-gathering techniques, by contrast, are best understood as data enhancers, because when data

is enhanced, one can see key aspects of cases more clearly.

This qualitative study was designed to explore secondary school students' perceptions of effective teaching. According to Creswell (2005; 39). qualitative research is "a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of participants, asks broad, general questions, collects data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants, describes and analyzes these words for themes, and conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner. Creswell (2007; 148) states three procedures for analyzing data in qualitative research as follows; "preparing and organizing the data, reducing the data into themes, then representing the data in figures, tables or a discussion". The constant comparative approach was used throughout the analysis meaning that data from the focus groups were reviewed and cross-compared until no further information or conclusions could be drawn (Merriam, 1998).

The researcher designed a survey questionnaire for appraisers (school heads and heads of departments (H.O.D), students (as co-appraisers and beneficiaries of the system) and appraisees (teachers) in public and private secondary schools in Mashonaland West, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland Central, Harare and Midlands. As suggested by Fink (1995), only purposeful statements based upon research objective and hypotheses were included. Some questions were closed to elicit standardized response. Medium of communication was English with focus on use of conventional language. Wording of survey questions/statements was kept simple and unbiased and questions of trivial nature were avoided.

For this study, data were gathered using two methods: questionnaire and focus group interviews. An open-ended questionnaire began with seven demographic questions addressing the students' gender, ethnicity, grade level, grade point average (GPA), homework amount, and years attending private schools. A classroom scenario and one question asking them to identify and describe characteristics of effective teaching followed these. Six focus groups made up of seven or eight students from each high school provided a way for the researcher to capture information-rich data on the topic of effective teaching (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Using a set of semi-structured questions, students in the focus groups discussed their perceptions and experiences, and responded to each other's ideas and views regarding effective teaching (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2007). Follow-up questions were used to clarify the information discussed in the focus groups.

5. Presentation and discussion of study findings

The first part of this chapter gives demography of the respondents. The respondents represented by the figures below comprises of the appraisers (school heads and heads of departments (HODs) and students) and appraisees (teachers) from both public and private secondary schools from the five provinces namely

Mashonaland West, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland Central, Midlands and Harare. From six hundred and fifty five school heads, heads of departments (HODs) and teachers, three hundred and sixty four (56%) were males and two hundred and ninety one (44%) were females. This implies that males are still dominating the teaching profession.

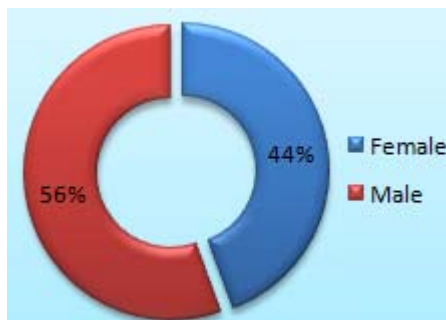


Figure 4.1: Distribution of respondents by gender

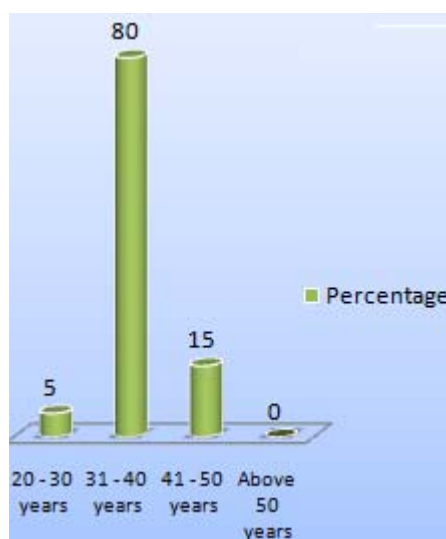


Figure 4.2: Distribution of respondents by age

Figure 4.2 above shows the age distribution of the respondents. Five percent of the appraisers and appraises were in the age group 20-30 years, eighty percent were in the age group 31-40 years, fifteen percent were in the age group 41-50 years and from the sample no respondent was above fifty years. Therefore, the majority of the teachers are the age group 31-40 years. This implies that most of the teachers are married.

Figure 4.3 below shows the academic qualifications of the respondents. The respondents who had "O" level constituted one percent, respondents who had "A" level added up to thirty-seven percent and respondents who had Bachelor's degree, constituted sixty two percent. This shows that most the teachers are degree holders. In Africa, Zimbabwe has the highest literacy rate. In fact, it is number one on literacy rate.

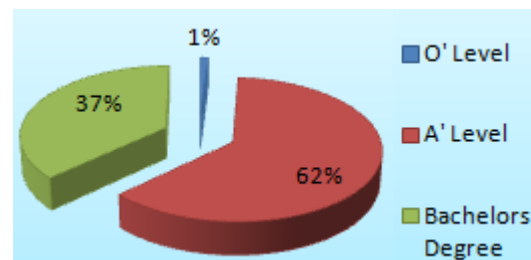


Figure 4.3: Distribution of respondents by academic qualifications

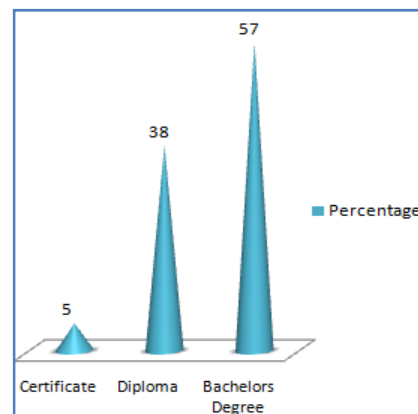


Figure 4.4: Distribution of respondents by professional qualification

Figure 4.5 shows the teaching experience of the respondents. Five percent of the respondents had 3-5 years of teaching experience, forty-eight percent had 6-10 years of teaching experience, thirty two percent had 11-15 years of teaching experience and fifteen percent had 16-20 years of teaching experience. Overall, Zimbabwean-teaching profession still has highly experienced teachers despite losing a number of experienced teachers to neighbouring countries like South Africa and Botswana due to poor working conditions in Zimbabwean Secondary schools especially in public secondary schools. In Zimbabwe, teachers would struggle to secure teaching post at private secondary schools where working conditions are good and where teaching and learning resources are in abundance. Those teachers who fail to secure teaching post at private secondary schools would opt to go to neighbouring countries. Most of the teachers in the public secondary schools are optimistic that conditions would change for the better or their fortunes to teach at private secondary schools or go to neighbouring countries would come.

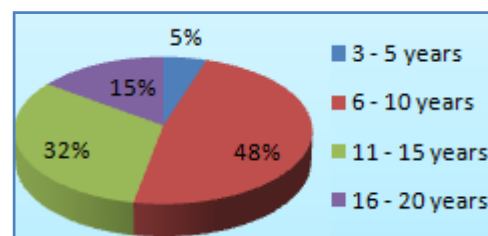


Figure 4.5: Distribution of respondents by teaching experience

Table 4.1: Association of professional qualification and teacher dedication to duty

			Teacher's Dedication to work				Total
			Very Poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	
Professional Qualification	Certificate	Count	5	10	8	6	29
		% of Total	0.8%	1.5%	1.2%	0.9%	4.4%
	Diploma	Count	53	87	69	41	250
		% of Total	8.1%	13.3%	10.5%	6.3%	38.2%
	Bachelors Degree	Count	90	133	36	117	376
		% of Total	13.7%	20.3%	5.5%	17.9%	57.4%
Total		Count	148	230	113	164	655
		% of Total	22.6%	35.1%	17.3%	25.0%	100.0%

Table 4.1 shows the distribution of the association between professional qualification and teacher's dedication to work. In the very good category on dedication to work teachers who had Certificate in Education had 0.9 percent, holders of Diploma in Education had 6.3 percent and holders of Bachelors degree had 17.9 percent. It therefore implies that teachers who are highly qualified are more dedicated. On the very poor category on dedication to work, the distribution was Certificate holders 0.8 percent, Diploma holders 9.1 percent and Bachelors holders 13.7 percent. The high percent of very poor dedication to work by the Bachelors degree holders is an indication that these are frustrated by poor working conditions including poor salaries which are not commensurate with their level of education.

Table 4.2: Chi-Square Tests for association between professional qualification and teacher dedication

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	44.278 ^a	6	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	44.768 ^a	6	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.36	1	0.549
N of valid cases	655		

Table 4.2 gives the Chi-square test for the association between professional qualification and teacher dedication. The hypotheses been tested are that;

H₀; There is no association between professional qualification and teacher dedication.

H₁; There is an association between professional qualification and teacher dedication.

Since Chi-square, calculated value of 44.278 is greater than critical value of 12.59 and the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 we reject H₀ at 5% significance level and conclude that there is an association between professional qualification and teacher dedication. The more one is professionally qualified, the more one is dedicated to work.

Table 4.3: Association between teaching experience and teacher dedication

			Teacher's Dedication to work				Total
			Very Poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	
Teaching Experience	3-5 years	Count	4	14	5	10	33
		% of Total	0.6%	2.1%	0.8%	1.5%	5.0%
	6-10 years	Count	69	117	27	114	327
		% of Total	10.5%	17.9%	4.1%	17.4%	49.9%
	11-15 years	Count	53	72	42	32	199
		% of Total	8.1%	11.0%	6.4%	4.9%	30.4%
	16-20 years	Count	22	27	39	8	96
		% of Total	3.4%	4.1%	6.0%	1.2%	14.7%
Total		Count	148	230	113	164	655
		% of Total	22.60%	35.1%	17.3%	25.0%	100.0%

Table 4.3 shows the association between teaching experience and teacher dedication. The findings are that on the very good category on teacher, dedication to work those teachers who had a teaching experience of 3-5 years constituted 1.5 percent, 6-10 years had 17.4 percent, 11-15 years had 6.4 percent and 16-20 years had 1.2 percent. The most dedicated group was found to be 6-10 years of teaching experience and the reason could be that the group was forward looking. The group could have been hoping to get teaching posts at private secondary schools or getting to neighbouring countries where attractive salaries are paid, as they are still young and energetic. Private secondary schools employ young experienced teachers who are also actively involved in sports. The 16-20 years of teaching experience group with the least percentage (1.2%) might have lost hope in getting employment at private secondary schools or neighbouring countries as they are old enough to be actively involved in sports.

Table 4.4: Chi-Square for association between teaching experience and teacher dedication

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	82.889 ^a	9	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	81.627 ^a	9	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.645	1	0.006
N of valid cases	655		

Table 4.4 below shows the Chi-square test for association between teaching experience and dedication to work. The hypotheses been tested are that;

H₀; There is no association between teaching experience and dedication to work.

H₁; There is an association between teaching experience and dedication to work.

The findings are Chi-square calculated value of 82.889 is greater than the critical value of 16.92 and the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 so we reject H₀ at 5% significance level and conclude that there is an association between the teaching experience and dedication to work. Those teachers who are reasonably experienced and still young show some amount of dedication since they are optimistic that they might join private secondary schools or go to neighbouring countries when working conditions in the country seem not to improve. The old teachers only wait to retire.

Table 4, 5: Availability of Resources and Technologies by type of school

Type of School		Teacher's Dedication to work					Total
		Very Poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Excellent	
Private	Count	4	28	63	80	6	181
	% within type of school	2.2%	15.5%	34.8%	44.2%	3.3%	100.0%
	% of Total	1.0%	7.1%	16.0%	20.4%	1.5%	46.1%
Public	Count	46	73	50	40	3	212
	% within type of school	21.7%	34.4%	23.6%	18.9%	1.4%	100.0%
	% of Total	11.7%	18.6%	12.7%	10.2%	0.8%	53.9%
Total	Count	50	101	113	120	9	393
	% within type of school	12.7%	25.7%	28.8%	30.5%	2.3%	100.0%
	% of Total	12.7%	25.7%	28.8%	30.5%	2.3%	100.0%

Table 4.4 shows the availability of teaching and learning resources and technologies in private and public secondary schools. From the private secondary schools, the very poor and poor categories constituted 17.7% and the good, very good and excellent constituted 82.3%. It then implies that private secondary schools in Zimbabwe have more teaching and learning resources and technologies compared to their counterparts. From the public secondary schools, the very poor and poor categories constituted 56.1% and the good, very good and excellent categories constituted 43.9%. This shows that most public secondary schools have limited teaching and learning resources and technologies. This explains the reason why academic results at public secondary schools are very poor.

6. Student Responses to Questionnaire

The questionnaire issued to the students required them to evaluate their teachers on stipulated qualities of teaching. The qualities assessed on the teacher were;

- Lesson plans have clear objectives developed from the curriculum,
- Communicates lesson objectives to the students at the beginning of the lesson,
- Lesson teaching integrates the use of available resources and technology,
- Knows the subject matter well enough to have an in-depth conversation about it,
- Links content with previous lessons and /or students' own experience,
- Gives clear and specific instructions /explanations
- Provides the opportunity for students to participate responsibly in the learning process,
- Creates a climate of courtesy and respect
- Positively re-enforces effort, achievement and desirable behavior through praise and recognition)
- Takes precaution to protect students, equipment, materials, textbooks and facilities
- Attends school regularly
- Attends classes punctually
- Dress appropriately
- Supports co-curricular activities of the school
- Builds and maintains rapport with colleagues
- Builds and maintains rapport with school authority
- Builds and maintains rapport with students
- Builds and maintains rapport with parents

7. Overall Findings

Most of the students from private secondary schools indicated that lesson plans have clear objectives developed from the curriculum and that these objectives are communicated them at the beginning of the lesson. One form 6 student interviewed pointed out that, every student is provided with a copy of the syllabus in each of the subject he/she does. He went on to say, "With the syllabus I am able to study in advance and get to the lesson much prepared". Contrary to the case above, most of the students from the public secondary schools pointed out that, teachers come and teach without having to spell-out the lesson objectives. Two form 6 students from one of the public secondary schools had this to say, "We only believe that whatever the teacher teaches is in the syllabus, since we are not provided with a copy of the syllabus".

On teaching and learning resources, students from private secondary schools indicated that in each subject, each student is provided with at least two textbooks. In addition to the availability of the textbooks, their schools have a number of modern computers from which they can access more information. Students from public secondary schools pointed out that textbooks were inadequate. However, students thanked UNICEF for providing students in forms 1 to 4 a textbook each in the following six subjects, English Language, History, Science, Mathematics, Geography and Shona. One form 3 student from public secondary school said, "If UNICEF had not intervened, the situation was going to be extremely bad". Most of the form 5 and 6 students expressed dissatisfaction with the state they are in. Most of the students indicated that textbooks are scarce. In some cases, the only textbook available was that for the teacher. One form 6 student had this to say, "With only the teacher's copy it becomes difficult to learn Mathematics".

It was pleasing to note that from both private and public secondary schools, there teachers who are rich in the subject matter in all the subjects being taught. One form 5 History student from one public secondary school had to say, "Despite the shortage of textbooks, we have a very good History teacher. When he explains historical events, it would appear as if he was there when the events were happening".

On lesson delivery, students from both private and public secondary schools indicated that some of the teachers were able to link perfectly well the content to be taught to the content previously taught and their own experiences. They also indicated that the instructions given by those teachers during the lessons were so explicit. One Form 4 Maths student from private secondary school had to say, "My Mathematics teacher is very good, he links topics to the extent that you would see it as one continuous topic". She went on to say, "My Form 3 Mathematics teacher made my life miserable, the topics seemed to be disjointed". One Form 4 student from public secondary school said, "We have a very good teacher who links topics and gives instructions to the extent that the less-able students can follow". She went on to say, "A

combination of a very good teacher and textbooks provided by UNICEF ensures the betterment of students' results.

Students from private secondary schools pointed out that teachers respect them and that they are active participants in their learning process. They indicated that most of learning process is student-centred. One Form 6 Business Studies student said, "We are set into groups of three and given topics to research on and we then make class presentations". He went on to say, "Class presentations are quite educative, for the discussions involve everyone. Other members of the class will add whatever the group will have left out. The teacher then summarises the whole discussion, making additions where necessary". His last words were, "We enjoy the lessons". Contrary to the above students from public secondary schools pointed out that, most of their lessons are teacher-centred. One Form 6 Business Studies student had to say, "Most of our lessons, it is the teacher coming to give notes and explaining those notes".

8. Conclusion

Assessing teacher performance leads to many benefits to students. By regular and systematic evaluation system, teachers will increase their productivity and efficiency in order to provide students with new teaching methods, improved leaning atmosphere and more detailed research on subject outline and contents. Teachers must feel they are been supported in holding all students to high academic standards and in presuming that students possess ample abilities. Fonseca and Conboy (1999) report a case study of an intervention with introductory physics students fraught with negative attitudes and repeated failure. The experience showed that continuous engagement of the students within meaningful contexts and in a supportive environment (characterized by personal commitment on the part of the teacher, high teacher expectancies and clear objectives and policies), can improve student performance. The study offers insights and suggestions on strategies to improve students' knowledge, competence and expectancies.

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