DRIVING QUALITY INSTRUCTION THROUGH TEACHER CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMES IN ZIMBABWEAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The continuous growth of professionals' knowledge and skills is an essential part of improvement globally in all professions and teaching in particular (Boyle, Lamprianou & Boyle, 2001). Conventional wisdom dictates that engaging in teacher continuous improvement programmes (TCIPs) results in quality instruction. Despite acknowledging the improvement practices as valuable, it has been observed that teacher continuous improvement programmes are still largely under researched in developing countries such as Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe currently there seems to be an apparent disconnect between teacher continuous improvement programmes and quality instruction. Hence, the purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between teacher continuous improvement programmes and quality instruction. The findings of the study are based on experiences from a selected education district in Harare, Zimbabwe. In order to understand the prevailing problem, the study adopted Peter Senge (1990)'s Systems Thinking Approach. Influenced by the Interpretivist paradigm, the study utilises the exploratory case study research design. Data collection techniques included interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. One of the key findings of the study is that the models of continuous improvement programmes directly influence quality instruction. It further concludes that both institutional and personal factors significantly impact on the character of teacher continuous improvement. It is hoped that the insights drawn from the findings would significantly contribute to the implementation of quality instruction in primary schools.

Key words: continuous improvement programme, teacher, quality instruction, Zimbabwe

Introduction and background

Continuous growth of knowledge and skills for professionals is an essential part of global improvement in all professions including teaching (Boyle, Lamprianou & Boyle, 2005:1). In any education system, continuous growth focuses on teachers as they are the central players in improving learners' performance (Smith & Gillespie, 2007; Desimone, Smith & Ueno, 2006:178; Knight & Wiseman, 2005: 387). Thus there is a general belief that engaging teachers in improvement programmes results in quality instruction. Teachers have the mandate to pass on current, relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours to learners to achieve good performance. It is for this reason that teachers continuously involve themselves in various Teacher Continuous Improvement Programmes (TCIPs) to stay abreast with professional developments.

Definitions of TCIPs are various, multifarious and used interchangeably but all describe the training and support that occur after teachers have received initial training. Craig, Kraft and Du Plessis (1998) state that some refer to this teacher learning as staff development, professional development, refresher courses, in-service training (INSET), continuous professional development (CPD) or teacher continuous improvement (TCI). TCI is a newly crafted term which Gray (2005a: 5) claims was coined by Richard Gardner who was in charge of professional development for building professions at New York University in the mid-1970s. Justifying its operation, Gray (2005b:5-6) emphasises that it was used because it did not differentiate between learning from courses and learning on the job. Constant fluxes of terminology show that TCIP is not a static concept but a social construct and fluid in nature having a distinctive feature of contextuality (Pitsoe & Maila, 2012:320), however having the overarching goal of seeing the students succeed in school and life.

Bolam (1993: 3) defines TCIPs as on-going processes building upon initial teacher training (ITT) and induction, including development and training opportunities throughout a career and concluding with preparation for retirement. Coetzer (2001, p.78) defines it as, 'any activities aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills of teachers by means of orientation, training and approaches". In this study, TCIPs are defined as systematic, designed learning and teaching programmes for teachers meant to make them better, suitable and relevant as a result of renewing the existing curriculum knowledge, teaching skills and attitudes to suit the current contexts and needs of learners. TCIPs aim to ensure that teachers have access to current knowledge needed to be effective and improve their pedagogical skills, curriculum knowledge and attitudes so that they keep abreast with any innovation, challenges in the teaching and learning process and achieve quality instruction. (Starkey, Yates, Meyer, Hall, Taylor & Stevens, 2009: 186). However, a number of authorities concur that quality as a term is elusive, relative hence difficult to define (Machingura, Magudu, Maravanyika, Moyo & Musengi, 2012: 66; Sallis, 1996a: 10; Whitaker, 1998: 110). In addition, Sallis (1996b: 10-11) argues that quality is determined by the passive observer or critic of the service (teaching instruction) that is being delivered, the way the customer and the service is delivered.

In the Zimbabwean context, participation in improvement programmes can be traced back to the colonial period (1900 to 1979). During the colonial era, racially motivated models dominated the system. Experts, in the white person's perception, cascaded information regarded as relevant to white pupils. Thus a few teachers were selected to attend workshops or staff development meetings. They aimed at ensuring quality education and upholding high pass rate in whites only schools (Also known as Group A Schools) (Gatawa, 1986). There was segregation on teacher deployment and development of schools (ibid) as efficient teachers would be placed in the white only schools. The programmes were more of remediation and enrichment hence deficit-models or standards-based models were employed.

Before independence (1980), Colonial government had improvement programmes that mostly targeted school heads. The belief was that good, strong and knowledgeable leadership would translate into an efficient school workforce. This could be one of the reasons why in Zimbabwe before independence, best teachers were recommended by school inspectors to undertake an administrative skills training course at Domboshawa Training Institute. Also, it was mandatory for administrative posts holders to go for in – service courses during school holidays at designated centres in various provinces to refresh their leadership skills and curriculum knowledge. At this point even heads from group B schools were expected to participate.

After independence, the numbers of teachers who applied for manpower development leave increased steadily as confirmed in the Ministry of Education Circular Ref: A/231/12, on Implementation of Manpower Development Leave Quota System (2002). Opportunities were now open to all eligible teachers who had served the Ministry for at least two years. Applications increased annually from 1000 in 1999 to 1645 in 2000 and 1845 in 2001. The Government also expanded the number of teacher training colleges offering in-service diplomas in infant education or special needs education to include Masvingo, Seke, Mutare, and United College of Education (UCE) with UCE offering Special Education as well. A total of 739 teachers (202 females and 537 males) had graduated by 1989 (Zimbabwe Annual College Report, 1989). Opportunities for primary school teachers to go for degree programmes were increased in 1993 when the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) through the then Centre for Distance Education, started to offer the Bachelor of Education in Educational Administration Planning and Policy Studies (BEDEAAPS). It also targeted at improving the managerial skills of school heads. The programme was later transferred to the Zimbabwe Open University where a total of 6 222 school heads graduated with BEDEAAPS between 1997 and 2002 (ZOU Graduation Handbook: 1997-2002). Teachers who were not in the managerial positions also participated in the programme.

After realising the overwhelming response from school heads and teachers, there was a massive expansion of institutions of higher learning offering TCIPs. The government established more universities which included Masvingo State University (now Great Zimbabwe University or GZU), Midlands State (MSU) and Gwanda. Private institutions such as Solusi, Africa University and Women's University in Africa (WUA) also responded

to the demand. These universities offer Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programmes on part-time, block release and full time basis. However participation is self- directed. Van Eekelen, Vermunt and Boshuizem (2006: 418) describe self-directed professional development as TCIP arising from the teacher's own initiative. Bouchard (1996:2), however, observed that self-directed TCIPs appear to be most prominent when teachers or professionals operate in deprived environments. Thus teachers and school heads went on to embark on self- sponsored and self - initiated programmes after realising that it would take years before one could be granted study leave. Universities also introduced part time programmes after realising the constraints experienced by teachers in getting study leave. Teachers who participated in education related programmes, however, enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (primary), Bachelor of Education Early Childhood Development, Bachelor of Education Special Education and Diploma in Special Education that is offered. However, some engaged in programmes that were non- related to the primary education curriculum. There were no systems in place to monitor or evaluate the relevance of some of these private studies as some teachers would grab whatever came in their way just to have the degree qualification and never declared their studies to the responsible authorities or employer.

The Government alongside the institutionalised programmes established the Better Schools Programmes that were run at cluster level in different education districts with the goal of reaching all primary trained teachers. The programme also aimed at improving school heads' administrative skills and knowledge and teachers' pedagogical skills in the teaching of Mathematics and Science using the schools clustering approach within various districts. The programme was accessible to nearly all schools as it was to change both teaching methods and attitudes of teachers and learners. In spite of all efforts poor performance continued to be experienced contradicting Johnson and Fargo (2010) findings that there is positive association between student achievement and TCIP.

Statement of the problem

Pursuing continuous improvement programmes by workers in general and Zimbabwean teachers in particular is not a new phenomenon. Zimbabwe primary school teachers have historically pursued different types of TCIPs at various levels, up to degree level. The problem that confronts the Zimbabwe education system is continued poor academic performance though research findings in other contexts have indicated a positive association between students' achievement and teacher continuous improvement (Johnson & Fargo, 2010: 230).The acquired knowledge and skills seem not to be translated into quality instruction. Previous researches have focused on the goals, perceptions, evaluation of government initiated programmes and models but lacking systematic inquiry into the apparent disconnect between TCIPs and quality instruction. Thus, the study sought to explore how TCIPs drive quality instruction in Zimbabwe primary schools.

Purpose of study

The purpose of this study is to explore how TCIPs drive quality instruction in Zimbabwe primary schools.

Research questions

1. Which TCIP models do primary school teachers engage in?
2. What are the purposes of the improvement programmes?
3. How are TCIPs driving quality instruction in primary schools?

Significance of the study

The major goal of this study is to bring forth information that may improve quality of instruction in Zimbabwean primary schools and those in similar contexts. Furthermore, the study hopes to provide theoretically inspired models to assist in solving the recurring curriculum implementation problems. The study findings or conclusions inform future research for policy formulation and practice. Despite acknowledging the value of improvement practices in education, Hardman (2011) observed that teacher continuous development programmes (TCIPs) are still largely under researched especially in developing and low income countries. Apart from having limited studies in developing countries, there is also limited empirical data pertaining to how TCIPs are really run and their relationship with quality instruction in developing countries such as Zimbabwe, hence the need for such a study in Zimbabwe.

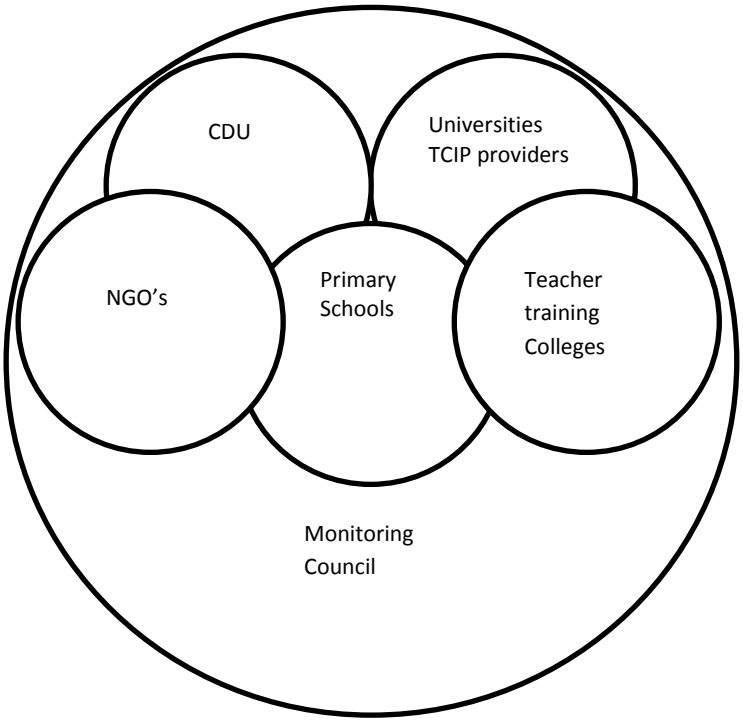
Theoretical framework

The relationship between TCIPs and quality instruction in Zimbabwean primary schools was explored through Senge's (1990) **Systems Thinking Approach**. System Thinking is defined as a conceptual framework or body of knowledge and tools that may be used to create a clearer full picture of a system and help people see how to change them effectively (Checkland, 2012:446; Flood, 2010:270, Senge, 1990:175). Senge (1990) and Senge , Roberts, Ross, Smith and Kleiner (1994) view systems thinking as a discipline of seeing wholes, a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things or for seeing patterns rather than static snapshots (p.23). Senge (1990) holds that five disciplines underpin and contribute to building a robust learning organisation. These are personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning and systems thinking, a discipline that enables people to see the big picture within any system as parts that are connected and influence the rest. Any change in any one part affects the whole system. Personal mastery helps people view reality objectively and see their connectedness to the whole system or world. Mental models determine how one perceives the social reality and this has an understanding and influence on how action would be taken, so it shapes a person's behaviour and decisions. Shared vision clarifies how organisational vision emanates from the collaborative feedback, mostly conflictual feedback processes of its stakeholders for a common purpose. Team learning is a discipline that suspends individual assumptions but uphold group discovered insights. There is adoption of collective thinking as people believe that group ability is greater than the sum of its individual member talents.

Following the Systems Thinking Approach, Zimbabwe education is the whole system that is made up of subsystems or parts within it such as the universities, primary and secondary schools, teacher training colleges and curriculum designers as well as non-governmental organisations (NGO) that have a hand in education. These according to Senge (1990) are interconnected in a non-linear structure (see fig. 1 below).

If any of the identified parts for example the primary schools, fail to perform their effective teaching function as per the TCIP shared vision requirements, the whole system get crippled in a way that might not be noticed quickly as cause and effect are not closely linked to time and space (Senge et al, 1994). Senge (1990) is of the opinion that changes should be done in consultation with other parts. If solutions are hurriedly suggested and implemented considering the period of the unnoticed gradual decay, there is a danger of suggesting the obvious solutions that might backfire or worsen the situation. Without systematic thinking people are tempted to use solutions that might work temporarily, flattering the system to shift the burden, that is, lose focus of the problem and tend to ignore it. At some point the same system might find the same problem reoccurring after a certain period as the root cause would not have been addressed.

Fig. 1 **Systems Thinking Approach to education system**



When confronted with problems, according to The Systems Thinking Approach all the parts that constitute the whole, the schools, universities, NGOs that support education and curriculum designers should collaboratively determine how each part contributed to manifestation of the problem, identify the cause and come up with solutions.

Models of TCIPs

The TCIPs are varied in nature, process and quality. There are two dominant categories of TCIPs namely traditional philosophy and constructivist paradigm. Pitsoe and Maila (2012a:318) explain that, the improvement programmes of traditional orientation have adopted the positivist and behaviourist approach. Programmes are underpinned by the idea of cascading which is based on the idea of the transfer of knowledge rather than the construction of knowledge. They are availed in the form of workshops, seminars, conferences and in-service training programmes as they maintain the "one size fits all" approach (Pitsoe & Maila, 2012b: 320).

The constructivist paradigm appears to be compatible with the beliefs and assumptions of the emerging world-view which is the reverse of the traditional approach (Pitsoe & Maila, 2012c:320). This site based approach is rooted in the constructivist paradigm. Site/ school or practice based approach is based on the understanding that learning occurs within normal working environment (Engelbrecht, Ankiewez & De Swardt, 2007: 584). It is largely managed by teachers in order to fulfil their direct and specific professional needs. The approach draws upon methodologies of reflective practice, action research, adult learning, and community of practice, teacher/educator portfolios, collegial development, peer coaching and mentoring, as well as formal and informal professional networks (Engelbrecht et al, 2007:584). According to site-based approach, TCIP needs are identified through a participatory process that involve teachers /educators in identification of their own needs (Ono & Ferreira, 2010: 62).

Purposes of TCIPs

Different educational practices, conditions and needs of different countries influence the purpose of the TCIPs that exist within a particular country. Friedman and Woodhead (2008) , Gordon (2004) and Madden and Mitchell (1993) came up with similar core purposes of the improvement programmes after carrying out some studies though differently expressed. The three core purposes of the improvement programmes are:

1. updating and extending the professional knowledge and skills to ensure continuing competence in the current job;
2. training for new responsibilities and for a changing role;
3. developing personal and professional effectiveness and increasing job satisfaction.

Gordon (2004) further identified the purposes as the improvement of teaching and learning, curriculum development, restructuring and instruction development and, improvement of student assessment and school-parent collaboration. Friedman and Woodhead (2008) also outlined three multiple purposes of improvement programmes which are to; maintain

knowledge, skills and competence, improve and broaden the knowledge and skills and, develop personal qualities necessary to execute professional and technical duties.
Although these different functions noted by different people have some common elements in them their differences can be compared on a continuum of three levels which include knowledge and skills expansion, transformative role and competence at current roles. Thus a number of research studies such as Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon and Birman (2002); Lessing and de Witt (2007) Gauteng in South Africa and Parise and Spillane (2010) USA were conducted to ascertain the noted functions in different contexts using different methodologies.

Expansion of knowledge and skills base

Lessing and de Witt (2007) conducted a survey to establish teachers' perceptions on the value of professional development programmes. During the initial stages of the programme, the planning stage, teachers were asked to identify their shortcomings in teaching then suggest the workshop items. The facilitation process included demonstrations and discussions and teachers were not regarded as passive recipients, they took active roles in their learning. During the evaluation stage, 95% of the participants valued the programme citing that they managed to acquire the most needed knowledge about learners with special needs and the skills to teach them. Besides that, they confessed improvement of the pedagogical skills citing that the facilitators married theory to practice during presentation. Teachers observed demonstrations and were also given room to also try out the demonstrated strategies. When teachers are actively involved in their learning, they improve on their knowledge, skills and commitment to the work.

In two different researches, Desimone et al (2002) and Parise and Spillane (2010) studied the effects of improvement programmes on teacher's instruction in different contexts in order to deduce the purpose of TCIPs. Participants who worked with Desimone et al (2002) were engaged in a three year longitudinal study whilst Parise and Spillane (2010) conducted a survey study with Mathematics and Science teachers in USA. Both teams discovered that, positive change would occur in instruction if teachers experience consistent high-quality professional improvement programmes. Furthermore, change does not just happen naturally; rather it depends on the nature or form of the programme and quality of teachers' experiences (Desimone et al, 2002: 83, Mokhele, 2013:74). This confirms the observation of the aforesaid studies that when teachers are not actively engaged, the impact is minimal. According to Parise and Spillane (2010:339), collaborative discussion is the strongest predictor of teacher change. This signifies the importance of selecting activities for the programme that are associated with teacher needs, experiences and to learners' requirements whose voices are heard through their teachers. The observation stresses the need to assess, identify teacher, learner and environmental needs before rolling out the programmes. The qualities of the programme determine whether teachers would gain new knowledge and skills. To illustrate this, Rossi, Akgal, Gazi and Isman (2011) also carried out qualitative case study research and confirmed that teachers who were involved in action research realised improved knowledge

or skills. This came as a result of people learning from each other within their work settings. Findings confirmed the need for participation if a teacher is to expand his or her knowledge base. In addition, Rossi et al (2011) like Parise and Spillane (2010:339) bring up a very crucial aspect of collaborative learning as it places teachers in situations to share views and ultimately exchange knowledge.

Empowerment tool

Desta, et al (2013) study in Ethiopia and Mokhele (2013) in South Africa confirmed that by expanding teachers' knowledge and skills base some improvement programmes become empowering tools. Mokhele's study examined science teachers who were regularly involved in workshops, cluster meetings and conferences on how to teach Science. The study concluded that when teachers acquired necessary skills and knowledge needed in different subject areas, they became confident in their teaching. Such teachers would not be threatened by or hesitant to teach the new content to learners. Instead, they would possess a strong belief that knowledge and skills they updated are relevant to the context (Bolam, 2000:270).

Transformation purpose

With reference to the same study Mokhele (2013) conducted, it was shown that those teachers who had little or no knowledge of teaching science ended up with changed beliefs attitudes, confidence and knowledge to teach once rated as a difficult subject as an easy package. The teachers, however, confirmed that such a situation would be reached after engaging in a variety of workshops, cluster meetings and networking with institutions of higher learning as one of the teachers who was not a science teacher at first ended up teaching natural sciences and treating it as a very easy discipline, bringing about the impact of duration on TCIPs. Effective programmes are sustained over a longer period. Depending on the goals, however, some need more time to allow teacher participation.

There are certain times when external expertise is required to enrich the usual local knowledge. The results also confirm Madden and Mitchell (1993)'s idea of having improvement programme training teachers for new roles or responsibilities. From Mokhele's study, teachers were continuously engaged in connected activities even when they had visits. That confirmed the importance of coherence of content and activities to the participant's usual roles when doing the programmes. When chunks of disconnected knowledge are given to the teachers they will not attach any value but continuously express dissatisfaction.

The foregoing reflects a close link between the TCIP models, their purpose and implementation. Also, the support systems contribute heavily on how the TCIPs drive the quality of instruction in primary schools.

Methodology

This research employed the qualitative approach and used exploratory case studies to solicit information from the TCIP graduates. Data was collected using individual semi – structured interviews so that rich details of teachers' views and experiences could be recorded in real

life contexts (Yin, 2008). Questionnaires for school heads and document analysis to validate the provided information were also used. The five cases were purposively selected. The first case was purposively and conveniently determined and then snowball sampling to locate the rest of the hard to reach cases.

Findings and discussion

Models

Since the main purpose of the study was to establish how TCIPs are influencing quality instruction in schools there is need to establish first the model under implementation. All participants from different institutions indicated that their improvement programmes could be categorised under models of the traditional philosophy. The programmes are centrally designed and controlled as universities decided on what to offer and lecturers determined the content without considering participants' needs. Information was cascaded to students by lecturers who considered themselves experts while teachers adopted a passive role of information consumers. Furthermore, participants concurred that models were "One –size – fits all' as teachers from different geographical environments and with different shortcomings received the same training. These descriptions buttress top-down explanation or cascading model where programmes come as impositions and surprises from the top omitting the teacher's voice (Bailey & Rowland, 2011; Mathekga, 2004; Newton & Riveros, 2012).

Observations from the five cases also concur with Moncada (2007)'s opinion that processes are centrally initiated and controlled. Consistent with the Systems Thinking approach participants argued that as a result of not consulting on the real needs of teachers at times the programmes were not scratching where it itches as some courses were a repetition leaving out their needs unaddressed. Their observation reinforces McDevitts (1998) and Dichaba and Mokhele (2012)'s study findings on the effectiveness of such models that exclude teachers in pre and pro implementation that in most cases fail to serve their purpose. Such an observation strengthens Senge's systems approach suggestion that systems should bring on board the stakeholders and beneficiaries when coming up with programmes or implementing policies. Main emphasises is on practising the interactional approach so that the universities would know what was covered during initial training and where to take the improving teachers to. During group interviews the participants recommended the implementation of the hybrid model where both top- down and bottom up approaches are blended and adopted.

Further questioning unveiled how the programmes are rolled out to the participants. The five participants noted that the designs lacked the practicum phase which according to them could be used as an evaluation tool to determine whether the theoretical knowledge can be put into practice. They supported Edmonds and Lee (2002) cited in Kryvonis (2013) who argued that models dominated by the lecture style of teaching appear unclaimed by teachers who choose more active and practical styles of learning.

Driving of quality instruction through detailed subject knowledge or content

Interviewees identified various ways in which TCIPs drive quality instruction in schools. The driving methods were exposed through self – assessment outlining how the improvement programmes enhanced their quality instruction. All the five cases indicated that the programmes equipped them with detailed content in specific curriculum subjects. However, the general thinking was that specialising in one area was insufficient as compared to the teaching requirements in primary schools of teaching thirteen subjects. Acquisition of adequate content in specialised subjects created room for teachers to understand and interpret the syllabi and content demands. Findings confirm Parise and Spillane (2010), Lessing and de Witt (2007) and Desimone et al (2002)'s findings that teachers who acquired most needed knowledge confessed improvement of pedagogical skills. The point of departure is that for participants of this study, knowledge was not generated through collaborative learning; rather it was cascaded from experts. This also buttresses the observation that cascading in itself is not to blame but what matters is how activities are designed and implemented (Mokhele, 2013, Mathega, 2004).

In this study it is reflected that having adequate knowledge even with no practicum allowed teachers to understand, select and tailor down content to the grade level of learners and their learning abilities. Content could be married with most suitable teaching methods they thought could help them teach the content in an understandable manner. One can conclude that cascading relevant detailed content could be a prerequisite of an effective TCIP.

Confidence as a driving tool

The other driving strategy of the improvement programmes drawn from findings is that they empower teachers. Participants of previous studies (Desta, Chalchisa & Lemma, 2013; Mokhele 2013) explained that instruction improved as a result of confidence in their teaching. The five cases, supported by their school heads stated that TCIP graduate teachers were no longer afraid of teaching new content as a result of the detailed content that they acquired. The five cases also confirmed that teaching was no longer a threat even when done under supervision. School heads also confirmed that teachers who participated in improvement programmes were empowered as they feared neither teaching nor the supervisors. The finding is closely linked to the first purpose in that empowerment is as a result of having adequate detailed content to teach at any level and give assistance to learners when need be.

When questioned on programme content coverage, the participants indicated that they covered syllabus interpretation, scheming and planning, teaching strategies in specific subjects, assessment of learners and research. In real practice one cannot talk of quality instruction cases when such identified components are excluded. With the evidence on the ground, the programmes covered what and how aspects which Sallies (1996: 11) perceives as quality as he claimed that quality is determined by the way the customer in this case the learner views the service and the way the service thus teaching instruction is well covered. Therefore, programmes could be used to influence quality instruction as long as the content

covers the crucial teaching components. Otherwise what could be emphasised is implementation which has been found varying based on enhancing factors.

Transformation as a driving tool

One of the study findings is that TCIPs drive quality instruction through transforming teachers. TCIP prepares teachers to function in other sectors as entrepreneurs, counsellors or remedial consultants. This results from gaining detailed content that responds to various needs of socio economic environment. Participants confirmed that as a result of implementing what they acquired during training one can hardly find a non- reader in their classes while another confirmed performing both administrative roles and consultant role in physical education. Again the findings buttress what Madden and Mitchell (1993) observed and concluded that TCIPs prepare for new roles and responsibilities however where there is coherence of content and activities. This illustrates the role played by the interconnectedness of parts in confronting systemic challenges (Senge, 1994).

Conclusions and recommendations

The study concludes that various TCIP models could be adopted based by the purpose or objectives of the programme. Teachers participate in self-directed programmes implying a specific motive to address a specific goal. According to the theory of planned behaviour intention usually shapes behaviour which usually motivates a teacher to implement what was acquired. The traditional model that is dominated by the lecture method with the 'one size fits all' is most common in the Zimbabwe context. Although the model's weaknesses outweighs its strengths, it has proved to be effective in some aspects as it is regulated by personal motives concurring with Mathega (2004)'s argument that failure depends on the quality of planning and implementation rather than weaknesses of the model itself. Also, the study concludes that improvement programmes that do not change the teacher's curriculum knowledge and quality of instruction are deemed to fail. Presence of quality instruction should manifest in improved learner performance and the teacher's conduct of main roles. However, unless TCIPs fulfil their purposes and teachers are supported quality instruction would remain a dream.

Recommendations

The study recommends the adoption of the hybrid model so that the designed TCIP curriculum does not meet the needs of teachers, school or learners by coincidence but be a resultant product of stakeholders' contributions as recommended by systems thinking approach. The study also recommends that programme designers are urged to find a place for practicum phase in the curriculum so that the participating teachers have a test and trial feel before they transfer knowledge and skills to their respective schools.

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