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The Impact of Irregular Schooling on Teaching and Learning a Case of Zimbabwe's Education System in Mashonaland West Province During The Period 2008-2010 *(pp. 95-112.)*

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Abstract: The study sought to establish the impact of the irregular schooling of 2008- 2010 on teaching and learning in Zimbabwe. The study focused on schools in Mashonaland West Province, randomly selecting three rural secondary schools and conveniently sampling three urban secondary schools from which a sample size of 250 form two and 'O' Level students was selected. The objectives were to establish the level of school attendance among pupils and teachers, time spent actually learning and school dropout/ repeat cases as well as to investigate the behaviours and attitudes of pupils towards schooling, punctuality, and discipline as a result of teachers' strikes. A survey research method was used with questionnaires as data collection tools from students and interviews were held with headmasters. Findings revealed that most of the pupils attended school for less than two months in 2008 with very little time spent actually learning, while a moderate improvement was noted in 2010. Student misbehavior mostly lateness, noisemaking, not doing homework and absenteeism were rampant in the schools and pupils dropped out of school to help fend for their families and the girl child was more affected. There are many students who repeated grades when schools opened in 2009 due to inadequate content coverage in 2008. The study recommends that government puts in place a programme of learning to cater for the many children who dropped out of school and those who did not adequately learn due to the teacher strikes and economic hardships of the time. Parents should be oriented to own schools and be proactive in developing and maintaining the quality of education for their children. The government and responsible authorities should also work towards increasing teachers' salaries to levels commensurate with the cost of living in line with their qualifications as recognition of the role they play in the development of human, social and cultural capital. There should be programmes for nurturing teacher professionalism through a proactive teacher training programme in the various teachers'

colleges and provincial education structures. Families should be encouraged to treat children the same regardless of sex or abilities so as not to lose the gains made in the fight for gender equality.

Key words: schooling, pupil, teachers, families, student misbehavior

INTRODUCTION

The education sector in Zimbabwe has been bedeviled with so many problems in the past ten years, a major one being brain drain. Many teachers mostly in Mathematics and Science have left the country for greener pastures. The remaining teachers have been at loggerheads with government for better remuneration, especially during the period 2008-2010. Learners lost a lot of learning time in those three years due to irregular operations of the schools and also due to the shortages of teachers in schools. It is this scenario that triggered this research as observations show that no research has been done to explore the impact of irregular schooling on teaching and learning in the period under review.

Statement of Problem

The 2008 to 2010 period has been marked by high rate of irregular school attendances by both teachers and pupils. Chief amongst the reasons for this occurrence was the failure to agree in terms of remuneration between the employer (government) and the employees (teachers). As a result there was continuous stoppage of lesson delivery by the government employees in schools. In the final analysis, students were to write examinations and still needed to proceed to the next grade, college or university. It was the researchers' concern to find out the impact of this irregular schooling on teachers' execution of duties and responsibilities and pupils learning.

Justification

Zimbabwe's education system has for sometime been one of the highly rated and the country had one of the highest literacy rates in Africa. For the three years (2008-2010), education had the worst strikes ever with some rural schools stopping operations 2008.. The teachers were either on full strike, or on go slow, Learners during the period hardly covered any syllabus fully but were expected to sit for examinations at the end of the year. This research sought to establish the impact of these teacher strikes that resulted in irregular schooling, on teaching and learning to bring out the effect of this on pupils' behavior (attendance, discipline, and punctuality), attitude towards learning and progress in learning. Exposing the impact could help policy makers, employers, parents, teachers and pupils

appreciate the importance of working together so that access to education is guaranteed for future learners. The research is an eye opener on the seriousness of the problem because children spend most of their time at home.

The Theoretical Framework

This research is based on the conflict theory that sees the social world in continual struggle, Schaefer (2006). The existence of conflict in society between competing groups is inevitable. The conflict need not be violent and may take the form of labour negotiations. In Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Teachers' Association (ZIMTA), Progressive Teachers' Union (PTA) and the Public Service Commission (PSC) have been negotiating with government for better salaries. The existence of social inequalities in society is the major cause of conflict and the education system has not been spared. Inequalities in education systems are perpetuated by struggles between social classes. In carrying out this study the researchers sought to ascertain the impact of the conflict on teacher and student behaviour, attitudes and delivery of services. According to Haralambos and Holbon (2002), the conflict theorists are interested in how society's institutions (including family, government, religion, education and the media) help to maintain the previleges of some groups while keeping others in a subservient position. Dahrendorf 1959 cited in Schaefer (2006) noted that the focus on social change and distribution of resources makes conflict theorists more radical and activist than functionalists. Functionalist's view is that every member of society plays his/her role for society to be functional and remain in a state of equilibrium. Teachers are expected to deliver their service while it is the employer's responsibility to pay for services rendered so that the service provider constantly provides the much needed services

O'Donnell(1992) highlights on the social conflict theory which is Marxist based and argues that individuals and groups within society have differing amounts of material and non-material resources and that the powerful groups use their power to exploit groups with less power. Money is seen as the mechanism which creates social disorder. The existing scenario since 2008 where teachers go on strike more than they teach is a result of money (salaries). The powerful tend to hold on to their budgets where teachers feel they are inadequately paid and the teachers hold on to withdrawing their labour. However, it is the children of the low class who suffer since their parents cannot afford sending them to private schools or for private tutoring where the powerful send their children. In this struggle, social inequalities exist and are more pronounced on the girl child who is deprived of the opportunity to attend school. The Sunday Mail In-depth (14 November 2010:D2) reported that young girls in Chipinge were dropping out of school to get married after grade seven due to their parents' failure to pay fees. The paper notes that, in some schools that are close to the Mozambican boarder, as few as two girls in a school sat for the 2010 'O' level

examinations. The cycle of poverty therefore continues as a result of inadequate schooling for the poor resulting in the early marriages, unemployment, or being engaged in low paying jobs (working for the powerful).The functionalist would argue that everyone in society has a role to play to save the current situation that is undermining the education sector, which is key to economic development. The 2010's analysis of national exams shows that irregular schooling compromised enrolment and performance; the most affected were children from low class and people in rural areas, see table 1-3.

Table 1: Performance of pupils at Grade 7Level 2005-2009 as showing candidates obtaining 4-24 units as analysed by the Ministry (The Herald Thursday 29 April 2010 by Felex Share)

Province	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Bulawayo	82.82	85.03	87.82	79.00	72.00
Harare	83.34	81.70	84.57	74.57	72.00
Manicaland	52.67	54.78	69.33	44.88	34.77
Mashonaland Central	59.67	44.16	67.85	65.00	24.80
Mashonaland East	59.05	53.39	61.34	47.67	31.10
Mashonaland West	60.82	61.15	57.02	38.80	28.00
Masvingo	67.45	67.70	47.81	47.65	37.97
Matabeleland North	49.93	32.16	53.16	34.84	23.05
Matebeleland South	66.55	49.54	61.61	32.73	29.92
Midlands	69.99	64.71	74.98	50.70	39.40
National	**62.42**	**68.03**	**70.45**	**51.50**	**39.30**

The table shows that Mashonaland Central was worst affected at 67.85% in 2007 to 24.80% in 2009. Nine out of eleven provinces had a pass of rate below 40% which shows a serious decline in performance where pass rates were below 50%. Only two provinces had above 50% decline in performance showing that irregular schooling impacted on performance of all students in the ten regions though the impact varied. Mashonaland West Province had been scoring above 50% in the years before 2008 but declined to as low as 28% in 2009.The province ranked third lowest in two consecutive years, 2008 and 2009 which is a cause for concern. It is noted that all provinces decreased in pass rates the best being at 79% (Bulawayo) which had scored 87.82% in 2007.

Table 2: 'O' Level enrolment and pass rates by gender 2007-2009

Year	Gender	No. of registered candidates	No passing 5+ subjects	National % pass rate
2009	Female	44,209	7,472	16.90
	Male	42,992	9,381	21.82
	Total	**87,201**	**16,853**	**19.33**
2008	Female	71,450	8,910	12.47
	Male	71,390	11,722	16.42
	Total	**142,840**	**20,632**	**14.44**
2007	Female	85,291	10,354	12.14
	Male	93,983	15,319	16.30
	Total	**179,274**	**25,673**	**14.32**

The table shows that there was a decline in student enrolment each year from 2007's 179,274 to 87,201 in 2009 with a slight improvement in pass rates from 14.32% in 2007 to 19.33% in 2009.

Table 3: Analysis of 'O' Level students enrolment and those passing five or more subjects in Mashonaland West, district by district

Year	Makonde	Chegutu	Kadoma	Zvimba	Kariba	Hurungwe
2008	26.2%	17.0%	15.6%	10.4%	9.1%	8.1%
2009	18.62%	27.6%	18.35%	16.04%	5.49%	12.8%

Hurungwe district has the lowest pass rate of 8.1% while Makonde district had the highest pass rate at 26.2%, and this may be an indicator of rural areas being more affected by irregular schooling in performance.

Table 4: 'A' Level National enrolment figures and pass rates by gender2007-2009

YEAR	Gender	Entered candidates	No passing	National %pass rate
2009	Female	9,694	7,567	78.06
	Male	13,908	10,574	76.06
	Total	**23,596**	**18,141**	**76.88**
2008	Female	13,079	9,012	68.90
	Male	19,526	12,973	66.44
	Total	**32,605**	**21,985**	**67.43**
2007	Female	13,014	10,151	78.00
	Male	21,112	15,686	74.30
	Total	**34,126**	**25,837**	**75.71**

This table shows a decline in enrolment of students at 'A' level, 32 605 in 2008 and 23 596 in 2009 a similar trend as at 'O' Level in table 3. There was a decline in pass rate in 2008 at 67.43% as compared to76.88% in 2009. The improvement could be attributed to the change which was a result of drop in rate of inflation at the introduction of a new currency, as quality of life improved attendance improved and teaching and learning improved as well.

An analysis of the grade seven, 'O' level and 'A' level results from 2007 presented in the Herald of Thursday 29 April 2010 showed a downward trend in 2008 and an upward trend in performance for the year 2009 though the improvement was slight. To note is the fact that higher pass rates were in the urban districts (Bulawayo, Harare, Makonde for Chinhoyi City schools, Chegutu, Kadoma) were most of the elite groups dwell and the extra lessons syndrome dominate, leaving the rural areas and low class children at a disadvantage.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In Israel, non regular schooling refers to second chance system were dropouts are from regular education are given a chance to further their education. The second chance system is perceived as a moderator of inequalities that are prevalent in the mainstream of education. It provides another opportunity for a dropout to return or move onto the track one dropped out of or missed (Hannan, 2010). In this research irregular schooling refers to the education trend where schools are operational on and off with no pattern or consistency, resulting in students' absenteeism due to uncertainty on whether learning will take place as teachers may or may not call for duty.

Irregular schooling also occurred in the UK due to various causes some of them complex, according to an article on promoting good attendance (http://www.wakefield.gov.uk). The irregular school attendance is cited to be due to a range of personal problems of the children, school or family. This is not different from the Zimbabwean scenario, however, of late Zimbabwean school children's irregular attendance attributed to teacher- cause than student's personal problem or family. "Perennial strikes over salaries by teachers have in recent years characterised the opening of schools, a situation which has affected the country's education system", reports Felex Share, Herald 6 January 2010. Teachers were on strike more often than not in 2008, and these affected pupils' behavior, learning and attitude towards schooling. A local school that had a reputation of punctuality, adherence to wearing complete school uniform and high levels of discipline is now the opposite. Other causes cited for irregular attendance are ill health, poor school curriculum or school climate not conducive to learning, teacher absenteeism and low staff establishment. Low motivation by teachers due to poor remuneration may contribute to school environments that are not conducive to learning as teachers' emotions have an effect on the learner

(http://nationalstrategies.standard.dcsf.gov.uk/node/88482). Teachers were sending away children whose parents had not paid money for incentives. The child feels neglected, segregated/ discriminated and little or no learning takes place. Presently parents see teachers as people milking them as most parents are paid less than teachers yet they are expected to pay the extra money for incentives. The minister of education said, " Our wish is to scrap incentives as they have created inequalities in the education system as well as increasing tension between teachers and parents but there is a danger that if we cut them now, we may see a massive exodus of the teaching staff, (the Herald 6 January 2010). On March 3, 2010 the Minister reiterated that teacher incentives would continue even though they were illegal, "---because discontinuing them is tantamount to destroying the entire education sector", Education, Sport, Arts and Culture Minister David Coltart, told Parliament on Wednesday. The scenario here is one that leaves the poor parent exposed. Teachers are known to be role models for learners. The school has a hidden curriculum which, according to Meighan and Siraj-Blatchford (1997) develops pupils' attitude to work, community members and leadership. This may be observed as aggression, submissiveness, and standards of work produced, cooperation, discipline and attendance. Giddens (1993:78) alludes to the fact that the school is a socializing agent where children, through the hidden curriculum learn to be quiet in class, punctual at lessons and observe rules of school discipline. He goes on to say that reactions of teachers affect the expectations children have of themselves. This means that if teachers are care free of children's school attendance, discipline and performance, the children will also have a care free attitude towards the same.

Education has been assigned a key role in strategies for poverty elimination, human capital development and economic growth in developing countries like Zimbabwe. However, achievement of these goals, including universal primary education by 2015 remains elusive as this has been complicated by globalization that has resulted in international flows of trained teachers, (Morgan, Sives and Appleton 2006). Brain drain mostly affected the teaching and health professions (16.9%) of the total number of Zimbabweans abroad in 2002, as reported by Dr Chetsanga in a SIRDC research "Analysis of the cause and effect of the brain drain in Zimbabwe". The most common reasons cited for emigrating were low salaries/ remuneration, while 8% mentioned political reasons. The education system is suffering severe constraints from the double impact of brain drain and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This has reduced the quality of manpower in education and the ripple effect on other sectors that absorb school leavers holding certain qualifications. The UN News Centre reported on 16 October 2008 that the education system in Zimbabwe suffered due to low salaries, poor attendance by teachers and students, transport and food problems. The report cited 40% of teachers attending lessons and a third of pupils reporting for lessons and that

Education officers were ill-equipped to run national examinations commencing in October 2008.

UNICEF, on http://www.unicef.org/media reported on 10 February 2009 that 94% of schools in rural Zimbabwe remained closed and called for prioritization of the education sector by the new government. The report called this a "national disaster," describing the children in rural schools as living on the margins and struggling on numerous fronts. These children are now deprived of the only basic thing that can better their lives. Access to education at all levels is perceived as critical to the process of achieving gender equity and women empowerment (Morley et al, 2006) and not only for women empowerment but empowerment of all human beings. Education for all has become a policy priority as a consequence of the 1990 Jomtien Conference, according to UNESCO, (2004). Barriers to children's enrolment especially the girl child include poverty, conflict, cultural practices, availability of schools and the school curriculum (Kirk and Garrows, 2004). The 2008 scenario in Zimbabwe saw all these barriers in existence. Morley et al (2006) notes that the eight Millennium Development Goals adopted in 2000 as a means of measuring development progress in all countries up to 2015 tend to communicate the number of children on a register rather than attendance, progression, completion and achievement. Morley further observes that countries such as Nigeria, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Uganda used in the study have girls' participation approaching gender parity but there is discrepancy between enrolment and attendance, enrolment figures overstate the number of children who actually attend school.

It is the responsibility of government to pay teachers' salaries, provide learning materials and school maintenance to fulfill the basic right of providing every child with an education. Presently most parents are carrying the burden of paying teacher incentives, high school fees and levies to augment teacher salaries and maintain schools. The Minister of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture was quoted in the Herald of 6 January 2010 as saying paying of teachers' incentives would continue, citing that the government had no money to raise teachers' salaries. This is in tandem with what takes place in ---as reported in English,.aljazeera.net which states that parents have searched for alternative methods to educate their children, including arranging for private lessons and paying teachers in one way or another. In some schools in Zimbabwe parents have paid teachers things like groceries, goats, mealie-meal, chickens, and clothes so that their children are taught. The Herald of 7 May 2009 reported that in Harare, former group 'A' schools had their teachers at work as they had been promised allowances to be paid from levies while in other schools most children were not going to school as teachers were on strike since 2008.

The researcher seeks to examine the impact the long periods of irregular schooling had on teaching and learning taking into account pupils' and teachers' behaviour (discipline, attitudes) and aspirations, now that things are on the mend.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was:

- To establish the level of school attendance among pupils and teachers, time spent actually learning and school dropout/ repeat cases.
- To investigate the behaviours and attitudes of pupils towards schooling, punctuality, and discipline.
- To propose a monitoring, rewarding and management system for minimising irregular schooling.

METHODOLOGY

A survey was used to carry out the research in six schools in Mashonaland West Province (3urban and three rural schools). The survey was used to observe what transpired in the schools during the period 2008 to 2010. The survey makes it possible to describe what one sees and observes, as alluded to by Gay, Mills and Airasian (2006). Instrumentation in the research included documents (registers for the period 2008-2010 for a class now in form 3 and 4, disciplinary committee records, and teachers' student progress records), to see the trend of attendance, dropouts if any and reasons, repeating cases and learning progress. Questionnaires were used to collect data from pupils while interviews were held with school heads. Appointments were made to distribute and collect questionnaires after getting permission to carry out the research from the Provincial Director as well as from the headmaster of each sampled school.

The collected data was presented qualitatively for causes, effects and impact, quantitatively for frequency of pupil school attendance, disciplinary cases and progression of pupils to show impact. Tables, pie charts or frequency distribution tables were used.

Population and sample

The population of the study were pupils in 54 secondary schools in Mashonaland West Province during the period 2008-2010. Teachers, school headmasters and pupils in these schools are part of the population. Borg and Gall (1983) viewed sampling as selecting a given number of subjects to represent the whole population. The sample should be representative enough of the defined population. Makonde District has –high schools and

10% of these made the sample (pupils, teachers and parents), however, all heads of the selected schools automatically formed part of the sample for purposes of interviews. Random sampling was used for picking rural day secondary schools while convenience sampling was used for the urban and boarding school sample. A total of 250 students and five headmasters were used as the sample.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings will be discussed with respect to research questions. Data were collected using questionnaires, interview guides and documents are presented in tables, graphs, pie charts and narrations.

Data analysis

Table 5 Distribution of students' respondents by sex and age

Sex	Age Range	Frequency	Percent
Female	13-15 years	59	23.7
Male	13-15 years	42	16.9
Female	16-18 years	77	30.6
Male	16-18 years	68	27.1
Male	19+ years	4	1.7
Total		**250**	**100**

There were 59 (23.7%) female respondents in the 13-15years and 77 (30.6%) females in the 16-18 years ranges and only 4 (1.7%) male respondents in the 19+ year age range. Most of the respondents (69.4%) were in the 16 to 18 year range.

Table 6: Time spent attending school in 2008, 2009 N=250

Duration	**2008**		**2009**		**2010**	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Less than 2 **months**	144	57.6	59	23.7	21	8.5
2-4 months	47	18.6	26	10.2	101	40.6
5-6 months	42	16.9	110	44.1	30	11.8
7-9 months	17	6.8	55	22.0	98	39.1
Total	250	100	250	100	250	100

In 2008, 57.6% of the students attended school for less than 2months and only 6.8+% attended for school for 7-9months. This shows that the majority of students were out of school for more than six months in 2008. The majority who attended school for less than 2 months however, indicated that very little time was spent actually learning in that period. This therefore means that very little content was covered yet national examinations were written end of that year at grade seven, form four and six levels. This explains the decline in enrolment figures in the 2008 period as indicated in tables 1-3. In 2009, 44.1% of the respondents attended school 5-6 months while only 10.2% attended for 2-4 months. There was an improvement in school attendance in 2009. The table shows a 40.6% attendance n the 2-4 months attendance and an 8.5% in the 2-4 months, showing an improvement in attendance. However, the general trend shows that absenteeism is still rampant in the schools.

Table 7(a): Cross tabulation-Time spent attending school and time spent actually learning

		Time spent attending school 2008			Total
	1	2	3	4	
actually learning2008 very little	117	21	13	0	151
Little time	42	0	0	4	46
Sufficient time	25	8	8	0	41
A lot of time	8	0	4	0	12
Total	**192**	**29**	**25**	**4**	**250**

The table shows that very little time was spent attending school and actually learning as indicated by 117 respondents. Interviews with parents revealed that children were at home most of the time during 2008 and those who attempted to attend school there was no learning, no homework given and follow ups by teachers on work given for homework. This explains the poor performance in examinations as students did not get adequate preparation in terms of content coverage and guidance. The finding is in tandem with Morley et al (2006) who noted problems in achieving the millennium goal due the discrepancy between enrolment and attendance in the schools. Learners are registered students who may or may not attend school; may come to school but little time is spent

actually learning (on task). The high rate of enrolment does not necessarily mean completion of the education cycle. The goal of education is not attained when learners don't attend school and do not write examinations at the expected level.

Table 7(b): Cross tabulation 2010 school attendance and time spent actually learning

		2010 School attendance			Total
	TIME	3-4mths	5-6mths	7-8mths	
Learning time	Very little	4	34	13	51
	Little	4	15	8	27
	Sufficient	0	20	4	24
	A lot	0	80	68	148
		8	1 49	93	250

Attendance was noted starting at 3-4 months with only 14respondents having learnt for very little time while 149 attended 5-6 months and of these 80 spent a lot of time actually learning, followed by 93 who attended school for 7-8 months of these 68 spent a lot of time actually learning. The 148 respondents who indicated that they spent a lot of time actually learning in 2010 show a positive trend as compared to 12 in the results in table 7(a). The findings reinforce the point that teachers influence learners' behaviour and attitudes, (Meighan et al 1997). Teachers' failure to attend school and actually teach left children idle for long periods and some decided not to come to school regularly.

Table 10: Times absent from school 2008

	2008		2009		2010	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
1-5 times	110	44.1	80	32.2	221	88.1
6-10 times	30	11.9	132	52.5	12	5.1
11-20 times	89	35.6	21	8.5	17	6.8
Always	21	8.5	17	6.8	250	100
Total	250	100	250	100		

One hundred and ten respondents (44.1%) were absent at most five times, while eighty nine (35.6%) were absent 11-20 times and only twenty one (8.5%) were always absent in 2008. Pupil's absenteeism role modeled teachers' strike or non attendance.

There was an increase in the number of pupils absent 6-10 times from only 30 (11.9%) in 2008 to 132(52.5%) in 2009 and a decrease in 11-20 range from 89 (35.6%) in 2008 to 21 (8.5%) in 2009 and a slight decline in the 'always' absent range. The issue of absenteeism is a major area of concern in the schools as it is evident that pupils were absenting themselves in 2009 after the continuous irregular school attendance in 2008 due to teachers' strikes.

Eighty eight percent (88%) of respondents were absent from school at one time or another, with some 4 (6.8%) being absent 11-20 times and 3 (5.1%) were absent 6-10 times. None of the respondents was always present, and this is an indicator that there was no continuous learning in the schools for all learners. Kirk and Garrows, (2004) and UNESCO (2004) alluded to conflict and other barriers that hindered children from breaking the cycle of poverty through education. Losing hours each day deprived pupils in the schools from accessing quality education that prepared them for chance of landing better paying jobs.

Table 13: Drop out of girls and boys in 2009, N= 250

Dropouts by Gender	**Frequencies and percentages**		
	1-4	**5-10**	**10+**
Girls	62% (155)	22.8% (57)	15.2% (38)
Boy	87.2 % (218)	12.8% (32)	_
Totals	47.25% (93)	29.11% (68)	45.67% (114)

Eighty seven percent of respondents indicated that there were between 1-4 boy dropouts in their classes while sixty two percent noted 1-4girls dropped out of school. There was a higher girl drop out identified in the 5-9 and above ten ranges for girls (22.8% and 15.2 % respectively) who dropped out as noted by respondents. Interviews with Heads of schools revealed reasons for dropping out of school as: pregnancy, with as high a figure as ten girls being said to have fallen pregnant, lack of school fees- students cited the introduction of paying fees in foreign currency as having pushed most pupils out of school during the first term of 2009. Most boys were said to have gone seeking employment to cushion their family incomes (being fish mongers, dealing in money exchange, gold panning and seeking employment in farms/ shops). A few remained at home during the first term as they were not sure teachers would go back to work (these later came back towards year end and remained a class behind their colleagues). Morley et al (2006) and Kirk and Garrows (2004)

made similar observations and noted that this scenario hindered the achievement of gender parity and education for all.

Table 14: Pupils remaining a class behind

Number remaining a class behind	Respondents	
	No	%
1-4	76	30.5
5-8	98	39.1
9-12	34	13.5
Above 12	42	17.0
Total	250	100

Ninety eight (39.1%) pupils cited a range of 5-8 pupils having remained a class behind, 76 (30.5%) pupils noted 1-4 pupils remained a class behind. Asked why their peers decided to remain a class behind, respondents explained that it the pupils most likely took this decision after the realization that little learning had taken place in 2008. This confirms findings on table 9 showing that, little time had been spent actually learning and attendance to school had been mostly at 1-2 months. Learning was observed to have taken place in private schools and some schools in urban centres, (The Herald, 7 May 2010). However, these findings show that some schools in urban centres faced the same problem where very little learning took place hence pupils are repeating levels.

Table 15: Frequency of learner misbehavior 2008 to 2010

	Fighting		**Bullying**		**Noise**		**Not doing homework**		**Truancy**		**Lateness**		**Totals**	
Year	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
2008	1	1.7	-	-	6	10.2	1	1.7	2	3.4	7	11.9	17	28.9
2009	3	5.1	-	-	16	27.1	3	5.1	2	3.4	10	16.9	34	57.6
2010	2	3.4	3	5.1	5	8.5	6	10.2	2	3.4	6	10.2	24	40.8

In 2008 lateness (11.9%) and noise making (10.2%) dominated other misbehaviours, while in 2009 there was notable increase in noisemaking (27.1%) and (16.9%) for lateness. Fighting increased in 2009 to 5.1% from 1.7% as well as not doing homework. A total of 57.6% of student respondents misbehaved in one way or another in 2009 as compared to a total of 28.9% in 2008. However, there is a decrease in lateness, fighting and noise making

in 2010. Of concern was the increase in not doing homework in 2010 that is at 10.2% from 5.1% in 2009 and the aspect of bullying at 5.1% in 2010 when this didn't appear in 2008-9. This may be attributed to socialization- behave learnt during idle times when students were not attending school mostly in 2008.

Table 16: Ratings on discipline, teaching, dressing, punctuality and attendance 2008-2010, N = 250

Rating	Year	Discipline		Teaching		Dressing		Punctuality		Attendance	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Very Good	2008	29	11.8	17	6.7	64	25.4	8	3.3	25	10.1
	2009	64	25.4	55	22.0	102	40.6	51	20.3	55	22.0
	2010	144	57.6	136	54.2	148	59.3	123	49.1	97	38.9
Good	2008	42	16.9	25	10.1	64	25.4	80	32.2	21	8.4
	2009	119	47.4	110	44.0	97	38.9	93	37.2	76	30.5
	2010	76	30.5	89	35.5	76	30.5	89	35.5	102	40.6
Poor	2008	97	38.9	93	37.2	55	22.0	102	40.6	93	37.2
	2009	58	23.73	58	23.73	25	10.17	72	28.81	89	35.60
	2010	29	11.86	12	5.08	8	3.38	21	8.47	29	11.86
Very Poor	2008	19	32.20	27	45.76	16	27.11	14	23.74	110	44.06
	2009	2	3.39	6	10.17	6	10.17	8	13.56	29	11.86
	2010	-	-	3	5.08	4	5.07	4	6.78	21	8.47

Table 16 shows that in 2008 all the five aspects were poorly rated with teaching rated by 83.05% (37.29% + 45.76%) as poor followed by attendance at 81.35% (37.29% + 44.06%) and punctuality with 74.41 %. In 2009, attendance, punctuality and teaching remained low though there was a significant improvement ranging between 52.5% - 66.1% of respondents who rated these as good. Respondents indicated a more significant improvement in all five aspects in 2010. Respondents were asked to give reasons for any changes in ratings in the year 2009 and 2010. The following were the reasons given; in 2008 people were too busy

running around looking for food thus taking time off school activities, the introduction of foreign currency made it possible for people to meet their basic needs (including payment of school fees) teachers improved instructional delivery, and the political and economic stability enabled society to focus on the education of its people. Schaefer (2006) Haralambos et al (2002) confirm a conflict theory position that groups compete for resources and protection of their interests.

CONCLUSIONS

The research findings present the following conclusions;

Most students attended school for at most 2months with very little learning done and an improvement noted in 2009 and 2010. However, the situation is still bad for effective teaching and learning. School dropout and the record of pupils who remained a class behind as a result of inadequate attendance and content coverage were high. More girls dropped out of school than boys. School dropout and erratic attendance was attributed to teacher absenteeism and students searching for food and money for survival (as fish mongers, gold panners, forex dealers, cross boarder traders etc) due to the economic meltdown. More girls dropped out of schools for different reasons such as pregnancy, families prioritizing the boy child when paying fees.

Findings revealed that there were higher levels of indiscipline during the period with noise making, lateness and not doing home working rated as high. Teaching was rated very poor in 2008 and has improved to be rated 'very good' by 54.2% in 2010. However, this is not yet good enough. Performance is linked to discipline of both teachers and pupils in terms of dress, attendance, punctuality, teaching and doing homework as shown by the levels of indiscipline and poor performance of pupils in the research.

Recommendations

Respondents were asked to suggest what could be done to improve the areas of weakness noted and the following suggestions came up and thus make up part of the recommendations;

- Government should put in place a programme of learning to cater for the many children, who dropped out of schools, did not adequately learn or grasped taught content due to the teacher strikes and economic hardships of the time (call them the lost generation!).
- Parents should be oriented to own schools and be proactive in developing and maintaining the quality of education for their children

- Increasing teachers' salaries to levels commensurate with the cost of living in line with their qualifications as a recognition of the role they play in the development of human, social and cultural capital.
- Nurturing teacher professionalism through a proactive teacher staff development programme in the various teachers' colleges, provincial structures and Universities.
- Making education free and compulsory up to Ordinary level to enable everyone access to education since most parents are struggling to pay school fees.
- Encouraging families to treat children equally regardless of their sex and abilities.

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