



ISSN 2278 – 0211 (Online)

Teachers Voices: Challenges of Double-Shift Sessioning in Gweru Urban Primary Schools

Dr. Mercy Kurebwa

Senior Lecturer, Department of Educational Studies Zimbabwe Open University, Zimbabwe

Abigirl Lumbe

Administration Officer, Midlands Region, Zimbabwe Open University, Zimbabwe

Abstract:

The purpose of the study was to establish the teachers perceived challenges on double session. The study employed an interpretive research approach. Participants for focus groups and in-depth interviews were selected through purposive sampling to come up with information rich participants. Data were thematically analyzed in line with the qualitative research approach. The study revealed that limited contact time during teaching and learning, difficulty in managing classrooms, poor pupil performance and the neglect of other curriculum subjects are the challenges faced by double-shift sessioning teachers in Gweru Urban. The research recommended that governments support for double-shift sessioning schools, work shopping of teachers to have requisite skills in double-shift sessioning, infant to attend morning sessions only and building of more primary schools so that double-sessioning shift can be slowly phased out.

Keywords: Double sessioning, hot-sitting, education, teacher, double-shift sessioning

1. Background

Many developing countries with constrained resources have adopted a double-sessioning system as a way to serve more students (Sagyndkova, 2013). At the dawn of independence Zimbabwe faced an increase in the demand for education. A number of schools were built but could not match the increasing demand for education. Urban schools faced a higher student enrolment ratio than their rural counterparts. As such double-shift sessioning was introduced to cater for the high demand of education in urban centres. The largest schools, former group B and low paying fee schools practice double-shift sessioning. In Gweru urban, schools in high density suburbs engaged in double-shift sessioning because of the high demand for education.

According to Towindo(2012), “Owing to the low investment in the construction of new schools education authorities have been forced to deal with such problems”. Pupils in mentioned schools spend 3 ½ hours in class while other counterparts spend up to 2 hours. It would appear that teachers view double-shift sessioning as one of the reasons why pupils fail. Towindo (2012) commented, “Over the years public examination results for grade seven, ordinary level and advanced level students in a single school session are better than those in double session or hot- sitting”. It is for this reason that researcher intended to unravel experiences and perceptions of teachers and heads in double-shift sessioning schools in Gweru Urban.

1.1. What Is Double-Shift Sessioning?

Double-shift sessioning allows two groups of pupils to use one set of facilities (Bray, 2000). Harper (1982:67) also sees double-shift sessioning as “two different groups of education taught by the same teacher utilising the same classroom locale, one group during the morning session, and the second group during the afternoon session. The term double session is used interchangeably with the concepts of double-shift, platoon, afternoon session, half-day (Bray, 2000). In Zimbabwe double-shift sessioning is also called hot sitting, however, different teachers teach different sessions. Double-shift sessioning allows existing sets of facilities and students to serve more students.

1.2. Rationale for Double-Shift Sessioning

Griffith (2000) is of the opinion that through double-shift sessioning, there is effective utilisation of resources. Bray (2000) concurs and posits, “The main purpose of doubleshift system is to increase the supply of school places while avoiding serious strain on the budget. It permits saving in terms of land, building and other facilities (Bray, 2000). Meerel (1980:2) is also of the view that, “Over building to meet peak enrollment needs becomes expensive”. Double-shift sessioning serves the purpose of alleviating the problem of

infrastructure for a short period of times. Other purposes of double session is to use human resources more intensively and effectively (Bray 2001:12).

1.3. Effects of Double-Shift Sessioning

Bray (2000:34) highlights that it is almost impossible to achieve high teacher effectiveness due to the nature of the environment exposed to both teachers and students. Thus planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation are unlikely to capture the complexity of what happens in a double-shift school (Katjaita, 2011). On the other hand effective teachers who are well supported with curriculum resources and materials can achieve a great deal more in short time than ineffective teachers with few materials can achieve in twice the time a double-shift system which is generally flawed with countless limitations (Sternman, 2005).

According to (Bray 2002:42) the academic achievement of children in double-shift is often as high as children in single schools and that poor performance in double-shift schools can be attributed to socio-cultural factors than number of shifts in a school. From this perspective hot sitting may not have a negative impact on the teaching and learning environment.

Angula (1990) highlighted that double-shift sessioning has helped more countries to move towards universal education. However double-shift sessioning is used where there is an immediate need of solving the crisis situation of lack of space for a short period. Research has showed that the afternoon group may be tired and hungry (Harper 1987:17). Mutorwa (2004) also pointed out that teachers complain about the conditions in which they find their classrooms. This aids in making the atmosphere for double session inferior to that of single-shift schools (Moelanyane, 2004).

(Bray, 2000) is convinced that multiple-shift schooling creates problems. The author further asserts that double-shift sessioning seriously reduces the teaching learning time making it difficult for teachers to cover the curriculum subjects. This may hinder teacher effectiveness. Jewel, (2002), views teacher effectiveness as, "achieving what you have set out to do". Achieving curriculum objectives may be difficult due to the unavailability of time resources.

It is in light of the above background that the researchers sought to unravel the perceived challenges in implementing double-shift sessioning in schools.

2. Purpose of the Study

To find out teachers perceptions on the challenges of double-shift sessioning?

3. Objectives of the study

To establish the challenges faced by teachers in double-shift sessioning schools.

To explore how double sessions impact on the teaching learning situations.

4. Research Questions

What are the challenges faced by teachers and students in double-shift sessioning schools.

How do the challenges impact on the teaching learning situations?

5. Research Methodology

A qualitative interpretive research approach was adopted. Qualitative research allowed the acquisition of in-depth information from teachers regarding their feelings, emotions and perceptions in so far as double-shift sessioning is concerned (Creswel, 2000). The population consisted of all primary school teachers from double-shift sessioning schools in Gweru Urban. Two focus groups of teachers were conducted. Twenty (20) teachers also participated in in-depth interviews. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants of the study. Purposive sampling is a non-random technique method where the researcher selects information rich cases for the study approaches (Zint and Montgomery, 2007:3). Data from individual in-depth interviews and focus groups was thematically analysed in line with the qualitative research approaches (Manning and Luyt, 2011). Themes that emerged from the data were identified.

6. Findings and Discussions

6.1. Double-Shift Sessioning Challenges

6.1.1. Contact Time

100% of the interviewed teachers indicated that contact time was a major challenge with double-shift sessioning in Gweru Urban Schools. Teachers highlighted that they could not cover all the curriculum subjects with the given time. Both the morning sessions and the afternoon sessions had limited time in the classroom. One teacher had the following sentiments; "I find it difficult to attend to all the subjects of the curriculum as such I tend to concentrate on subjects that are examined at Grade Seven level. I do not pay attention to subjects like music and physical education." Furthermore, the interviewed teachers revealed that some of the subjects were hurriedly taught and some pupils failed to grasp the concepts. In agreement, Bray (2000:47) said, the school day is more pressurised; everybody seems to be in a hurry. Cardenns in Sagyndkova (2013) concurred and said that on the average, afternoon shift schools have lower levels of quality, higher levels of failure and dropout rates in comparison to morning shift schools sharing the same facilities.

The teachers also revealed that it would be easier to help those pupils who fail to understand concepts during remedial period, but remediation also suffered due to lack of contact time. One teacher revealed that, "Due to lack of teaching time, I have to resort to unorthodox make shift teaching methods". It also emerged from the study that the pupils end up seeking lost time through extra lessons which strain the parents economically."Parents lamented of spending their hard earned cash on extra-lessons." (Kurebwa & Mushoriwa, 2014).

It further emerged from the study that co-curricular activities were for pupils in the morning session only because they were conducted in the afternoon. This tended to disadvantage all the groups of pupils who attended afternoon lessons. Co-curricular activities aim to develop an all round student (Ingale, 2014).

6.1.2. Classroom Management

Teachers revealed that it was difficult to maintain order in shared classrooms. This was echoed by 84% of the participants. Teachers felt that classroom management is affected because of the feeling that the room belongs to someone else, hence a lack of belonging. Teachers also revealed that sometimes they lose their belongings in these shared classrooms. It was also observed that furniture in these shared classrooms was worn out. To this end Bush (2003:138) echoed that, "In double-shift schools, there is "fluid participation" in the management of a school. There is a problem of accountability as each teacher would leave the responsibility of maintaining the class to the other teacher.

It was also revealed that teachers cannot leave work on the chalk board overnight for use the following day.

6.1.3. Pupil Performance

Most teachers (90%) agreed that pupils' performance was affected by double-shift sessioning. They highlighted that both the teachers and pupils become tired during the afternoon. Due to high temperatures, some pupils found it difficult to concentrate resulting in minimal teaching and learning. 84% of the participants revealed that concentration span of pupils was low in the afternoons. (Bray, 2000) noted that time was the major cause of low pass rates and that breaks and lessons are cut to accommodate the time factor.

6.1.4. Other Factors

The study further revealed that there was wastage of time during change over. 90% of the teachers indicated that there was wastage of time during the change over sessions. Teachers also revealed that curriculum subjects were not adequately dealt with during teaching and learning. The teachers also attributed high failure rate in schools to double-shift sessioning.

Truancy was another challenge which this study revealed. Interviewed teachers indicated that truancy was rampant in children who attended afternoon lessons. The teachers indicated that some pupils who come to school in the afternoon engage in truancy. Truancy was attributed to the lack of child supervision by parents who would have gone to work during the morning.

7. Conclusions

The study sought to investigate the perceived challenges of double-shift sessioning in Gweru Urban Schools. Generally it was observed that hot sitting had a number of challenges which included lack of contact time, difficulty managing classrooms, poor pupil performance, wastage of learning time and the neglect of other curriculum subjects. The study also concluded that it was difficult to produce an all-round developed child as children in the afternoon sessions found it difficult to attend to co-curricular activities.

8. Recommendations

- There is need for support by government to give more resources to schools that offer double- shift sessioning.
- Junior classes to attend afternoon sessions while infant classes attend morning sessions to enable better concentration for infants in the morning.
- Regional officers to workshop and equip teachers with relevant skills to manage double-shift sessioning.
- The government needs to continue developing school infrastructure so that double-shift sessioning can slowly be phased off.

9. References

1. Angula. N (1990) The National Integrated education system for emergent Namibia; Draft Proposal for Education reform and renewal, Namibia Education Training and Trust Fund.
2. Bray, M. (2000). Double -shifting design and operation for cost -effectiveness: London, Commonwealth Secretariat: Marlborough House.
3. Bush T (2003) Theories of educational leadership and Management. London: Sage Publications.
4. Creswell (2008) J.W. Research Design. A qualitative and mixed method approaches. New York. Sage Publications
5. Ingale A. R. (2014) Role of Co-curricular activities in students' life. Scholarly Research Journal for Humanity and English Language. Vol 1/IV
6. Harper, W.C (1987) The Platoon system of education as implemented in primary school of the department of national education of South West Africa. Masters Thesis. Wits. Johannesburg.
7. Jewel, BR (2000) An integrated approach to business studies: Essex Pearson Ltd.

8. Katjaita, M.U.(2011). Masters Thesis: An investigation into the management of implication of double-shift schooling in the Khomas Region in Namibia. Rhodes University.
9. Kurebwa, M. and Mushoriwa T.D (2014) Extra Lessons: Is there a conflict of interest? The case of Gweru Urban Schools. International Journal of Advanced Research, Volume 2, Issue 4, 649-655.
10. Manning, R. & Luyt, C. (2011) Qualitative Data Analysis; A practical Introduction. Sage Publications
11. Meerel, R.G (1980) A report on alternatives to school building construction, Utah State Board of Education, Salt Lake City.
12. Moelanyane, P.P. (2004) School Management team members perceptions on how policy change has impacted on the leadership and management of education. Masters Thesis. Rhodes University Grahamstown.
13. Zint M. & Montgomery, N (2007) Purposeful sample. London. Sage Publications.
14. Mutorwa, J (2004) Access to education 1990-2000. Reflections on the implementation of Namibia's Policy towards Education for All: Windhoek Grandberg Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
15. Sagyndykova G. (2013) Academic Performance in Double-shift schooling. University of Arizona, Tucson. 85721.
16. Sterman J.D Torrestre J.W. (2005) Learning from evidence in a complex world. Retrieved February, 2015, from [webmit. Edu/jesterman/www](http://web.mit.edu/jesterman/www).
17. Telda H.K .(2003) The implementation and organisation of double shift in Eritrea. University of Asmara
18. Towindo.L. (2012). "Hot seating burns the child". Zimbabwe Sunday Mail, 19-25, February 2012.