



ISSN 2278 – 0211 (Online)

## Performance of Students at 'O' Level Fashion and Fabrics: A Comparative Study of an Urban and Rural School in Masvingo Zimbabwe

**Isabel M. Mupfumira**

Faculty of Education Great Zimbabwe University, Zimbabwe

**Rubaya Lynet**

Mucheke High School Masvingo, Zimbabwe

### **Abstract:**

*The study focused on students' performance in Fashion and Fabrics at 'O' Level. The investigation was in form of a comparative study of an urban and rural school in Masvingo district Zimbabwe. A qualitative case study of the two schools was conducted. The population comprised school heads, teachers, pupils and parents. Purposive and systematic random sampling was used to come up with respondents for the study. Interviews, observation and questionnaires were used to collect data. The data was presented, analyzed and discussed thematically. The findings indicated that the rural school was poorly resourced in terms of textbooks, materials and equipment. This probably contributed to poor performance of rural 'O' Level candidates when compared to their urban counterparts. It was also established through the study that financing Fashion and Fabrics was a problem especially in the rural school. This resulted in delays in the acquisition of materials for course work garments. Time was found to be a limiting factor in the effective execution of practical work due to inadequate time allocated for the subject on the timetable. This resulted in challenges in completing coursework garments. The conclusion from the study was that the urban school performed better in Fashion and Fabrics at 'O' Level compared to the rural school because it had better resources for teaching the subject. It was also concluded that the school administration in both settings did not provide adequate time on the timetable for practical work. The study recommended improvement of facilities for teaching and learning of Fashion and Fabrics especially in rural schools. The school administration should also provide adequate time on the timetable to accommodate practical work.*

### **1. Introduction and Background**

Fashion and Fabrics is a discipline that imparts both practical and theoretical skills in the learner. The Fashion and Fabrics examination incorporates both practical and theory. The examination constitutes a coursework (practical), theory examination paper and a practical examination paper. The weighting is Coursework 20%, Theory paper 40% and Practical paper 40%.

The researchers noted that there were disparities in the pass rate in Fashion and Fabrics at O' Level between rural and urban schools.

Year	2009	2010	2011
<b>Urban Schools</b>			
School A	59%	72%	65%
School B	67%	59%	84%
School C	89%	93%	87.4%
<b>Rural Schools</b>			
Secondary School D	9%	12%	0%
Secondary School E	23%	27%	13%
Secondary school F	21%	7%	1%

Table 1

The above statistics collected from the schools showed that performance from rural schools is very poor as compared to their urban counterparts. The statistics showed that urban schools performed well while their rural counterparts performed way below average. This left one with unanswered questions as to what made rural candidates perform badly when compared to their urban counterparts.

The rural schools might be facing challenges of funding to equip the Fashion and Fabrics department. When one of the researchers visited a friend in the rural area she noticed during a practical lesson, some pupils just seated while others were sewing and wondered what could be the problem.

In view of the above, the study was meant to evaluate the reasons behind the disparity in performance in Fashion and Fabrics between the rural and urban schools.

## 2. Research Questions

The research was guided by the following questions:

- What constitutes a favorable teaching and learning environment for Fashion and Fabrics?
- Which factors contribute towards effective preparation for examination in Fashion and Fabrics?
- What contributes towards disparities in performance in Fashion and Fabrics between rural and urban schools?
- Is there a difference in resources for teaching and learning between rural and urban schools?
- To what extent do resources in urban and rural schools contribute towards effective preparation of candidates for Fashion and Fabrics examinations?

## 3. Literature Review

The literature examined views of authorities on the impact of the school environment, resources and methodology and attitude on the teaching learning process in Fashion and Fabrics.

### 3.1. Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the pragmatist theory by John Dewey. Pragmatists propound that theory is realized in practice to form what is called intelligent practice (Singh 2007). In other words pragmatism opposes bookish knowledge by encouraging learning by doing (Oliva 1992). Pragmatism is an educational theory which tries to strike the balance between theory and practice. Pragmatism as a school of philosophy advocates for active methods of teaching and learning (Singh 2007 and Shahid 2004). In Fashion and Fabrics pupils learn through the hands on approach where learners are afforded the opportunity to marry theory with practice. Something learnt through participation by pupils is always more firmly understood and remembered. This brings about the view that pupils understand and remember better what they take an active part in.

### 3.2. Material Resources

Material resources include infrastructure for example workshops, equipment like sewing machines, ironing and cutting equipment. Mupfumira (2011) points out that the right learning environment gives students required exposure and skills. Kemp et al (1985) says appropriate instructional resources should be matched to the required task. Sewing machines are required in order for student to engage in garment construction activities.

Scarcity of resources is a contributing factor to poor performance by students. Leadbeater (2008:73) supports this position when he says that "with the present realities of scarce materials and equipment, necessary for effective teaching, there is need for teachers to be resourceful to overcome shortages of resources". Resources are important. Billiows (2001) says, lesson failure is usually due to lack of imagination on the part of the teacher who does not realise that words alone may not suffice to carry the pupil over into the imaginary situation. The need for resources is also echoed by Franklin and Biber in Hendrickz (1986:12) when they condemn passive learning by saying "The use of material resources in this case empowers pupils and puts them in control of their own learning". Adequacy of material resources makes it easy for pupils to work in groups, pairs and individually thus making pupils take on an active role in the teaching and learning of Fashion and Fabrics.

Alcott (2002) and Geoff (2009) say we communicate with each other through our senses cognitive skills, practical skills, body language. Research has shown that people remember 20% of what they see 40% of what they see and hear and about 75% of what they see, hear and do (Lindstrom in Neo and Neo 2012) this is supported by the Chinese proverb which says, "I hear I forget, I see and remember, I do and I understand". For effective utilization of all senses in the learning of Fashion and Fabric, relevant and adequate resources should be provided (Kemp et al 1985, Chamberlain and Kelly, 1981). Adequate and relevant resources help in meeting the requirements of different students, objectives, content, instructional methods and learning styles.

Geoff (2009) puts forward three learning styles i.e. visual, auditory and kinesthetic. The auditory learn through explanations, discussion and audio tapes. The visual benefit from graphic materials. Kinesthetic learners benefit from tactile approaches where students encounter ideas through action they engage in through practical experiences. A well resourced Fashion and Fabrics department is able to effectively cater for the three categories of learners.

Franklin and Biber in Hendrickz (1994:12) condemn passive learning they say "since learning is an active process and knowledge is constructed rather than acquired, the child must be provided with an environment which furthers their natural tendency to act and with the objective to explore, to manipulate and experiment". The use of material resources in this case empowers pupils and puts them in control of their own learning. Adequacy of material in Fashion and Fabrics makes it easy for pupils to work in groups, pairs or individually. This enables pupils take an active role in the teaching learning process.

The material resources at an institution will determine how curriculum is implemented (Peresu and Nhundu 1999). As a result two schools will implement the same curriculum with significant difference. For effective preparation of students for examinations,

schools require relevant and adequate resources. The Fashion and Fabrics subject should have a well equipped workshop for effective teaching and learning.

Equipping the Fashion and Fabrics department is rather difficult as UNESCO (1999) and Mavhunga in Munikwa and Chinamasa (2010) say, it costs considerably more to fund technical programmes compared to general education. Lauglo and Lillis (1988), Chowdry and Sudha Rao (1995) in support say, when education has practical training; it is bound to be more expensive than general academic education. Fashion and Fabrics as a technical subject requires sewing machines, over lockers, /pressing equipment and small equipment like, pins, scissors, and tape measures.

Chivore (1994:37) presents the opinion that “teachers well educated and trained are rendered less effective if schools lack basic facilities, equipment and materials for teaching and learning”. This is further supported by Nkomo (1995) who says, for effective learning to take place, a conducive environment must be created in form of basic facilities and materials. In the words of Kasambira (2004:17) “good teachers can be better teachers when they have plenty of material with which to work”. Gwarinda (1995) says that textbooks are an essential learning tool. They are useful for coverage of theory and explaining of techniques to be applied practically. This shows that lack of resources negatively affects the learning and teaching process and in turns the examination results.

Nyagura (1991) notes that generally most communities continue to struggle with inadequate instructional materials and poor school facilities. Chisaka and Vakalisa (2003) collaborate Nyagura’s findings when they indicate that many rural schools have inadequate resources, such as textbooks, sewing machines and other equipment needed resulting in pupils sharing and making the teaching and learning of the subject difficult. Chisaka and Vakalisa (2003) further indicate that rural schools are made worse by high teacher turnover and large classes which also pose a burden for both teachers and pupils.

### 3.3. Personnel

Mupfumira (2011) is of the view that teachers as implementers of curriculum are responsible for translating curriculum into action as curriculum is in the mind of the transmitter. Peresu and Nhudu (1990) consider teachers as the main agents of curriculum implementation because they are the ones who finally determine what learning experiences students will engage in. Teachers determine whether students are well prepared for examinations by exposing them to relevant skills and knowledge. For effective implementation of the curriculum teachers need to be adequately prepared with the right specialization and professional skills (Peresu and Nhudu 1999).

### 3.4. Approaches/Strategies

It has been observed that teaching methods can greatly influence pupils performance. Coombs (1995) recommends keeping students active and presenting content in a variety of ways. Hendrickz (1986) says the teacher should use the teaching methods which require pupils to ask questions find answers for themselves and solve problems. This shows that pupils should take an active part in the teaching learning process. For effectiveness, a teacher should adopt a number of teaching approaches (Deepak 2011). Methods which promote effective acquisition of practical skills like demonstrations and supervised practice should be used in the teaching of Fashion and Fabrics (Mupfumira and Mutsambi 2012). A person can only learn a practical skill by engaging in practical work. The demonstration method helps to set standards for practical work. Geoff (2009) in support says a demonstration provides a model of good practice. The set standard through a demonstration provides a guide for performance in practical examinations.

The multimedia approach can also be used in the teaching and learning of Fashion and Fabrics. Deepak (2002) and Chamberlain and Kelly (1981) refer to multimedia approach as teaching and learning that uses a number of media devices and techniques in the learning process. Deepak (2011) says that multimedia improves the teaching learning process, supports a range of activities and accommodates different learning styles. Blankenship and Moerchan (1979) say, utilization of multimedia contributes to teacher effectiveness because activities are built around materials and equipment for example teaching of sleeve insertion requires sewing machines, over locking machines, fabrics, threads, needles, textbooks which illustrate the procedure of sleeve insertion.

Multimedia is said to be invaluable in promoting motivation and retention in the learner (Kasambira 1993). Retention is important for success in examinations. The multimedia approach is useful in Fashion and Fabrics as it takes into account individual differences in the learners (Deepak 2011 and Kamp et al 1985). Children learn at different paces as they are affected by intellectual ability, learning styles, socio-economic background. Students are likely to be operating at different stages in their practical work so there is need for media to help them learn at different stages. Media like samples, garments, charts, instruction booklets is helpful. Deepak (2011) says use of the multimedia approach helps to promote a positive attitude among learners towards a subject. Students with a positive attitude towards a subject are likely to prepare well for the examination.

The literature has emphasized furnishing of the Fashion and Fabrics subject with relevant material resources for effective learning. The need for using methods, which facilitate active pupil involvement in acquisition of skills and competences in Fashion Fabrics has also been emphasized in the literature. Active involvement of pupils in the learning process supports the pragmatic theory where children learn by doing.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. Design

In this research, a qualitative case study was chosen as a research design. A case may be defined as an in-depth investigation of an individual or group or institution aimed at determining the varieties and relationships among variables influencing a current behavior

or status of the subject to be studied (Fraenkel and Wallen 2003). Borg and Gall (1993), Leedy and Armorod (2005), Leedy and Armorod (2010) support the study of a particular case. The research was carried out as a comparative case study of an urban and rural school. The idea was to explore the phenomenon in order to understand what caused the wide difference in performance between the schools in the different locations.

#### 4.2. Population and sample

The population of interest in this study was form four pupils, school heads, parents and Fashion and Fabrics teachers. A sample of 22 respondents participated in the study. The sample comprised 10 pupils, 4 teachers, 6 parents and 2 headmasters. Half of the respondents were drawn from each of the two schools.

The above sample was considered small enough to be manageable. Leedy (1997) says a small sample is what is recommended for qualitative research as data collection methods are time consuming and expensive.

Purposive sampling was used to select teachers. Purposive sampling does not give members of the population an equal chance as the researchers handpick those who offer the needed results (White 2005 Tuckman 1988 and Cohen and Manion 2011). Convenience sampling was used to select parents who could be easily reached. Systematic random sampling was used to sample pupils. Probability sampling, where systematic random sampling is one of the methods gives all members of the population an equal chance to be sampled. The heads of the two schools were both sampled since they were from different locations.

#### 4.3. Data collection/Instruments

According to Marshall and Rossman (1999) Punch (2005), qualitative researchers use multiple data collection methods and multiple sources of data. This brings about triangulation and authenticity to the research (Nyarawanda in Chisaka and Vakalisa 2003, Leedy 1997, Bogdan and Biklen 1982).

#### 4.4. Interviews

An interview involves collection of data through direct interaction between the researcher and the respondents (Christensen 1994). The interview was used because the researchers felt that it was the best way of accessing the people's perceptions, and construction of the reality on the performance of students in Fashion and Fabrics at 'O' Level (Punch 2005). A semi standardised interview was used. This interview type was selected because although it provided a structure it was considered flexible enough to allow for probing for further information and clarification if need be (Berg 2009). Punch (2005) supports the use of the semi standardized interview as it allows the active involvement of the respondent. The interview was used on all respondents except students.

#### 4.5. Observation

Leedy (1997) says observation seeks to ascertain what people think and do by watching them in action as they express themselves in various ways, situations and activities. Marshall and Rossman (1989) view observation as a description of event, behavior and artifacts in the social setting selected for study as seen by the researcher. Non participant observation was used to observe methods/approaches and resources used in the teaching and learning of Fashion and Fabrics. Neuman (2000) refers to non-participant observation method as recording of events by an outsider.

#### 4.6. Questionnaire

Questionnaires had both open ended and closed questions (Leedy 1997). The open ended questions provided room for respondents to express themselves in terms of teaching and learning of Fashion and Fabrics. The questionnaire was used to collect data from the students.

#### 4.7. Data Collection Procedures

Schools were visited four times to collect data. The first visit was for appointments and familiarization. During the second visit interviews were conducted with teachers and 35 minutes lessons were observed on the third visit. Slots were provided on the time table for students to fill in the questionnaire and the heads were interviewed on the fourth visit. Parents were also interviewed on the fourth visit.

#### 4.8. Data presentation and analysis

Information gathered through the questionnaire, interview and observation was presented and analyzed in narrative form.

#### 4.9. Findings and Discussion

The data were organized into recurring themes which emerged from the research. The themes were:

- Learning, teaching environment
- Information sources
- Time tabling
- Personnel
- Approaches in teaching learning of Fashion and Fabrics



## 5. Teaching Learning Environment

### 5.1. Materials

The findings showed that rural schools were poorly resourced as compared to their urban counterparts. The rural schools lacked the capacity to provide adequate teaching/learning resources for Fashion and Fabrics. The rural school head said "Pupils do not pay industrial fees that could be used to procure materials for practical subjects. The money we use comes from the tuition fees which is never enough to cater for all the departmental needs and if we distribute the money equally among departments, practical subjects suffer because the money is very little". In support, one of the teachers interviewed said "We do not have fabrics, sewing machines, you name it because our school does not provide most of the resources needed. To make it worse, parents pay school fees late, making it difficult for the school to buy the resources needed on time. You end up just dictating notes to pupils or whiling up time waiting for the day the resources will be bought". The other teacher said, "Fashion and Fabrics requirements are given the last priority or looked at lastly when other school needs have been exhausted. The other thing is that fees is paid late disadvantaging practical subject like Fashion and Fabrics resulting in delays in acquiring fabrics for coursework". Practical education is bound to be more expensive than general academic education (Lauglo and Lillis 1988, and Chowdry and Sudha Rao 1995). To make practical work possible, one of the teachers said she brings her own sewing machine and asks pupils to bring any old pieces of cloth scissors etc from home. Responses from the student questionnaire indicated that resources were a problem in the rural school. Pupils from the rural school said their school does not provide them with materials needed in Fashion and Fabrics but that they source these on their own. From the parents interview, it was evident that parents struggled to pay tuition fees for their children "I hardly have enough money to pay school fees. I spend most of the money I have on food for my family". It is difficult for the rural parents to support Fashion and Fabrics as it requires more money than subjects like English (UNESCO 1999, Mavhunga in Munikwa and Chinamasa 2010).

In the urban school, students paid industrial fees and these were used for the provision of the needed materials. The urban students were provided with the needed materials for coursework articles. This made it possible for students to work on their garments and finish them in time. Urban pupils were in a better position to prepare good quality coursework garments compared to their rural counterparts who struggled to procure materials. The learning process should be supported by relevant adequate resources (Mupfumira 2011, Kemp et.al 1985)

### 5.2. Facilities and Equipment

The findings showed that there was disparity between the rural and urban school in terms of facilities and equipment. It was established from the findings that the rural school under study had little space for Fashion and Fabrics. Pupils were crowded in small Ordinary classrooms. It was observed during the study that the rural school did not have a special room for Fashion and Fabrics they used an ordinary classroom which they shared with agriculture. The head said "the school does not have a special room for Fashion and Fabrics but its better because they have somewhere to use. They used the classroom when the boys had gone to the garden to do agriculture. The class used the small ordinary writing desks.). The situation contrasted sharply with what the researchers observed in the urban school where the Fashion and Fabrics subject was accommodated in large well ventilated rooms with good lighting. At the urban school the researchers noted that Fashion and Fabrics had two special rooms which had tables and stools creating a conducive learning environment. In the urban school pupil were working freely using working tables which facilitated cutting and construction of garments. The rural school head was quite aware of the poor conditions under which students worked as he pointed out, "There is inadequate space and equipment for pupils to practice and do their work as pupils are usually crowded on the small desks and wait for ages for a chance to use the sewing machine". The situation for the rural school was aggravated by poor socio economic status of most pupils as one of the teachers interviewed pointed out "Most of the pupils come from the working class. Their parents do not have money to supply them with tools to use at school and at home to practice some Fashion and Fabrics skills. Most rural schools struggle with inadequate resources (Nyagura 1991, UNESCO 1999 Mavhunga in Munikwa and Chinamasa 2010, and Chisaka and Vakalisa 2003).

Through observation it was noted that 20 students in the rural school were queuing to stitch on two sewing machines. Some of the students did not get the opportunity to use the sewing machine during the course of the lesson. One of the rural school teachers said "Practice by students is very difficult due to limitations in machinery. Students most of the time just sit around doing nothing waiting for their turn. A teacher from the rural school was observed conducting a speed test with twenty two pupils. Instead of pupils working individually, the students were working in groups due to limited sewing machines. This is not an acceptable way of preparing students for the practical examination. Each student is expected to work on his or her garment. Such a situation has a negative impact on student practice. Practice should be supported by adequate resources for it to be effective. The situation is quite different from the urban set up where a class of 13 was sharing 10 sewing machines. Almost a ratio of one student to one machine. This situation gave students almost unlimited access to the sewing machine. High exposure to machinery facilitated acquisition of skills and competences in garment construction. For effective learning to occur students should practice skills individually not in groups. This helps them to acquire manual dexterity which contributes to the construction of well finished garments. The contrast in access to machinery is shown by photographs under appendices. For effective teaching and learning, a conducive learning environment is required (Chivore 1994, Nkomo 1995, Kasambira 2004, Gwarinda 1995).

### 5.3. Information sources

The findings on sources of information reflected a vast differences between urban and rural schools. In the urban school, the student were exposed to a variety of information sources like textbooks, magazines, newspaper and the internet where, they could access reading material on fashion, textile fibres. The pupils in the rural schools had limited sources of matter. They had a few textbooks and most of their information was obtained from the teacher . Inadequate information sources impacted negatively on acquisition of knowledge by student for the theory examination. This resulted in students depending mostly on the teacher for theory content limiting students' ability to extend and develop what was covered during lessons. The rural school had a limited number of textbooks 5 students were observed sharing one text book compared to two in the urban school. This made it difficult for rural students to take textbooks home. A different scenario was observed in the urban school where students did not share textbooks.

### 5.4. Time tabling

In terms of timetabling, the general findings were that the time allocated to the subject was inadequate at both the rural and urban school. The urban school time table was affected by the fact that the school was divided into two sessions where students attended lessons either in the morning session or afternoon session. This made provision of adequate time a problem. It was difficult to schedule extra time for student practice because the workshops would be occupied. So students could not use most of their spare time to work on their coursework garments as one of the teachers said "Because of time tabling problems, we sometimes use weekends to complete coursework garments". The rural school had no sessions however most of the Fashion and Fabrics lessons were scheduled in the afternoon. The fact that most lessons were in the afternoon was problematic as one of the interviewees said "Most of our Fashion and Fabrics lessons are at the end of the day, when students are tired and hungry. Concentration for them is difficult especially in theory lessons". The inadequacy of time affected the rural school and this was aggravated by lateness in the acquisition of fabrics and /materials. One rural school teacher said "Due to limited time on the timetable and late acquisition of material, it is difficult for students to complete coursework garments. This was supported by another participant when she said "I do not think time allocated is enough because every year pupils do not complete their coursework garments on time" One pupil also said "Time given is not enough because we sometimes work off session in Fashion and Fabrics". Poor timetabling affected the practical exam component because students had limited time in which to acquire skills and expertise in garment construction.

### 5.5. Personnel

From the findings it was noted that in the two schools studied there was qualified personnel being holders of diplomas in secondary education qualified to teach Fashion and Fabrics. One head interviewed said "I receive qualified teachers and teachers on practice for Fashion and Fabrics are deployed to this school" This shows that teacher's qualification was not considered as a challenge. For effective curriculum implementation, the staff should be adequately prepared and have the relevant skills and competences (Peresu and Nhundu 1999). One teacher interviewed said "I am a specialist in teaching Fashion and fabrics. I trained for this subject at college so I am well versed in it". Teachers are considered as the main agents of curriculum implementation (Peresu and Nhundu 1999, Mupfumira 2011)

The findings also showed attitude towards the subject by the teachers was positive. In support one teacher interviewed said "I am well versed in the subject and I love my work, such that in some cases, I even use my money to buy some small tools for my pupils e. g thimbles, dressmakers pins, needles. If I don't buy some of the items my pupils will not know them but only see pictures of them in textbooks", One teacher in the rural school brings her sewing machine to support teaching of the subject. This was a reflection of positive attitude towards the subject. It was noted from the study that teachers did go out of their way to create more time for practical work even at weekends. Teachers' attitudes in both schools were positive and supported the teaching and learning of Fashion and Fabrics.

From the resource allocation and timetabling the reflection was that the headmasters might not be very supportive of the teaching of Fashion and Fabric. In the rural school placing Fashion and Fabrics mostly in the afternoon was not a reflection of a positive attitude towards the subject. One student said "We always come for our practical lessons in the afternoon. Why should we always come for practical lessons when it is hot? Does it mean Fashion and Fabrics is not important". Time tabling does not give Fashion and Fabrics optimum time.

A negative attitude by school administration is reflected where practical subjects are catered for last after all school needs have been exhausted. This means resources might be inadequate e. g when students use one textbook. Such situations negatively affect student preparation for examinations.

### 5.6. Teaching learning methods/strategies

Findings from literature showed that Fashion and Fabrics benefited from the use of hands on Approach, child centred and problem solving approaches (Kasambira 2004i-).

In the rural setting it was noted from the schemes of work and head interview that, teachers mostly used the lecture method. The headmaster complained that the "Teachers mostly used the lecture method with teachers notes being a source of information and chalkboard and charts as teaching learning aids being used". However teachers were aware of varied methods but were limited by availability of teaching learning materials. One of the teachers pointed out "I am aware of the varied methods I could use but I am limited by the unavailability of resources e.g. when trying to teach the machine made buttonhole without, a zig-zag machine. One is bound to just explain using pictures. During one lesson observed the teacher demonstrated the working of a dart. Some of the students

were yet to get fabric for use in preparation of garments. However, practice was not also effectively conducted due to lack of sewing machinery. The need for practice soon after the demonstration was not achieved. In one lesson observed in the rural school students worked on a speed test in groups. This was not acceptable because students could not be adequately prepared for the practical examination in this manner. Each child should work independently on the assigned work as they would in a practical examination in order to have the right exposure. This scenario contributed towards poor performance in the practical exam. The findings showed that the situation in the urban school was better. The scheme showed use of a variety of methods e.g demonstration, discussion, group work, class practice,. These approaches were supported by a variety of media. The lesson observed on the working of a pocket in a seam was followed by class practice, where students individually worked on their garments. This was facilitated by availability of sewing machines and fabrics, threads and needles. Use of variety of methods facilitated students understanding (Deepak 2011, Chamberlain and Kelly 1981, Blankenship and Moerchan 1979).

The urban students were at a greater advantage compared to their rural counterparts especially in individual practical work. Supervised practice exposed student to hands on activities where students practiced what had been demonstrated . In this way students learnt by doing (Singh 2007, Shahid 2001, Franklin and Biber in Hendricks 1994 and Geoff 2009). More exposure to practical engagement improves skill acquisition. One can only acquire sewing skills by practicing garment construction. Due to limited practice rural students were likely to perform poorly in the practical exam and coursework compared to their urban counterparts. This could in turn affect the theory paper because when I hear, see and do I understand better. Theory is understood better when one also engages in practical work putting theory into practice (Lindstrom in Neo and Neo2012 and Alcott 2002).

## 6. Conclusion

From the findings it may be concluded that effective teaching of Fashion and Fabrics required relevant facilities equipment and materials. A Fashion and Fabrics laboratory should be spacious, well lit and ventilated and contain working tables and stools in order for students to work comfortably in both theory and practical work. The research has also established that for effective acquisition of skills and knowledge in Fashion and Fabrics students required sewing machines needlework tools, fabrics, notions and reading materials in adequate amounts.

It was concluded that poor time tabling and timing in provision of materials negatively affected students in examinations. This was because time allocated was not enough for student practice and completion of coursework garments. Poor timing in provision of material resulted in late practice and preparation of course work garments.

The findings have shown that personnel in the implementation the Fashion Fabrics curriculum determine how students may perform in the examination. Qualified personnel is likely to effectively prepare students for exams. Attitude of personal affect acquisition of knowledge and skills by students. Negative attitude may have a negative effect in student performance e. g poor time tabling may result in failure to allocate adequate time for effective coverage of the syllabus.

With references to approaches the conclusion was that effective teaching of Fashion and Fabrics was supported by methods like demonstration, supervised practice. From the findings it may be concluded that implementation of relevant methods was negatively affected by lack or inadequate resources in the rural school e.g. sewing machines, fabrics.

It may be concluded from the findings that rural schools are poorly resourced as compared to their urban counterparts. This situation was likely to contribute to poor performance in the rural schools compared to urban schools.

## 7. Recommendations

The study recommends that:

- Rural schools are provided with resources needed in the teaching and learning of Fashion and Fabrics.
- The heads of schools should revisit their time tables and give Fashion and Fabrics enough time for both theory and practical lessons.
- There should be a balance in the timetable with some of the Fashion and Fabrics lessons time tabled in the morning.
- Further study is carried out in other districts and provinces so that a clearer picture can be provided on causes differences in performance in Fashion and Fabrics between rural and urban schools.

## 8. References

1. Alcott, M, (2002) An Introduction to Children with Special Needs (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) London: Horder Arnold.
2. Berg, B.L. (2009) Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences. (7<sup>th</sup> edition) Boston: Allyn Bacon.
3. Billiows, F. L. (2001) The Techniques of Language Teaching. London: Longman.
4. Blankenship, M. L. and Moerchen, B.D. (1979) Home Economics Education. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
5. Bogdan, R.C. & Biklen, S.K. (992). Qualitative Research in Education. An Introduction to Theory and Methods. (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
6. Borg, W. R. and Gall, M. D. (1993) Applying Educational Research. London: Longman.
7. Chamberlain, V. M. and Kelly, J. M. (1981) Creative Home Economics Instruction, New York: McGraw Hill.
8. Chisaka, B.C. and Vakalisa, N.C.G. (2003) Uses of ability grouping as an instructional strategy. Qulitative Inquiry in two secondary schools, The Zimbabwe Bulletin of Teacher education. Volume 12(1) page 16-19.
9. Chivore, B. S. (1994) Teacher Education Post Independent Zimbabwe. Harare: Zimfep.

10. Chowdry, A. J. and Sudha Rao (1995) Introduction to Clothing Production Management. (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) Oxford: Blackwell Science.
11. Christensen, C. M. (1994) Quantitative and Qualitative Research. New Dehli: Sterling Publishers.
12. Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2011) Research Methods in Education. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Routledge the Zimbabwe bulletin of teacher education 12(1)16-39.
13. Coombs, B. (1995) Successful: A Practical Handbook. London: Longman.
14. Deepak, S. (2011) Multimedia Approach to Teaching and Learning Process
15. Deepaksharmaeducation.blogspot.com/.../Accessed 19/06/2012
16. Fraenkel, J.R. and Wallen, N.G. (1996) How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education. New York: Sterling Publishers.
17. Geoff, P. (2009) Teaching Today: A practical Guide (4<sup>th</sup> Edition) Cheltenham: Addison Thorn.
18. Gwarinda, T.C. (1993) The Practice of Teaching. Bulawayo: College Press.
19. Hendrikz, E. (1986) Introduction to Educational Psychology. Harare: College press.
20. <http://www.affectedmapping.net/wp-content/uploads/2008/03/remixingcities.Pdf> (accessed 23 September 2008).
21. Kasambira, K.P. (1993) Teaching Methods. Gweru: College Press
22. Kemp, J. E. Dayton, D. K. Carraher, R. and Szumsku R. F. (1985) Planning and producing instructional Media. New York: J Harper and Row Publishing.
23. Lauglo, J. and Lillis, K. (1988) Vocationalisation: An International Perspective. Oxford: Pergamon.
24. Leadbeater, C. (2008) Remixing Cities: Strategies for the City.  
[http://www.affectedclapping.net/wp-content/uploads/2008/03/remixing\\_cities.pdf](http://www.affectedclapping.net/wp-content/uploads/2008/03/remixing_cities.pdf) (accessed 23/09/2010)
25. Leedy, P.D. and Ormrod, J.E. (2010). Practical Research Planning and Design. New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.
26. Leedy, P.D. and Ormrod, (2005) Practical Research: Planning and Design. (8<sup>th</sup> Edition) New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.
27. Leedy, P.D. (1997). Practical research planning and design. New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.
28. Marshall, C. & Rossman, G.B. (2008). Designing a qualitative research. London: Sage Publications.
29. Munikwa, S. and Chinamasa, F. (2010) A Survey of Secondary School Pupils Vocational and Technical Subjects Preferences in the Makonde District of Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe Journal of Technological Sciences. Vol 1 (1) September 2010 pages 45-57.
30. Mupfumira, I. M. (2011) Relevance of the Clothing Curriculum to Industry: A Case of a Polytechnic In Zimbabwe. Saarbrucken: Lambert Academic Publishing.
31. Mupfumira, I. M. and Mutsambi, T. P. (2012) An Evaluation of the Demonstration and Industrial Attachment as Strategies in the Implementation of Clothing Curriculum: a case of Masvingo Polytechnic In Zimbabwe. Journal of African Studies and Development. Vol 4(4) May 2012 pages 114-121.
32. Neo, M. and Neo, T. K. (2012) Innovative Teaching Using Multimedia in a Problem Based Learning Environment. <http://www.afb.org/section.asp?sectionID=44&DocumentID=1344> (Accessed 19/06/2012).
33. Neuman, W.L. (2006). Qualitative and quantitative approaches. (4th Edition). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
34. Nkomo, G. M. (1995) Curriculum Implementation, Change and Innovation. Module EA3AD303 Harare: Centre of Distance Education, University of Zimbabwe.
35. Nyagura, L. M. (1991) Quantitative Developments: Quality and Enquiry Concerns in Zimbabwe Primary and Secondary Schools. Harare: College Press.
36. Oliva, R. T. (1992) Developing the Curriculum. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.
37. Peresu, M. and Nhundu, T. (1999) Foundations for Education. Harare: College Press.
38. Punch, K.F. (2005). Introduction to Social Research Quantitative and Qualitative Approach. Los Angeles: Sage Publications Limited.
39. Shahid, S.M. (2004) Philosophy of Education. Lahore: Majeed Book Depot.
40. Singh, S. (2007) Philosophical Foundations of Education. New Delhi: APH Publishers.
41. UNESCO, (1999) The Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational School to Work. Paris: UNESCO