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The Impact of Independent and Private Schools in the Education Sector in Zimbabwe with Particular Reference to Harare Metropolitan Province

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Abstract:

This study aims at exploring the impact of independent and private colleges in promoting the development of the education sector in Zimbabwe. It seeks to answer the following research questions: What is the history of the education sector in Zimbabwe?; What is the role of private and independent Colleges in providing secondary school education?; In which specific ways are private and independent secondary colleges improving the quality of education in Harare?; and Which methods can be adopted in promoting inclusive participation in the development of quality education in Zimbabwe? The aim of this study was to explore the ways in which the independent and private colleges have been contributing to the education sector in Zimbabwe. The speed of change and the explosion of new private secondary schools in Harare challenge us to have a paradigm shift away from negative perceptions about independent colleges in Zimbabwe. This has important implications for the role of the private school, which is being the major provider of knowledge and skills. In order to answer these questions, a mixed approach of qualitative research and quantitative research were used. Two main methods were used in data collection which are interviews and questionnaires. The findings suggest that private schools are playing a leading role in educating citizens in Harare, although there is need to work together with public schools with the support of government to promote quality education in secondary schools.

Keywords: Education sector, impact, private and independent colleges, performance, quality education, Zimbabwe

1. Background /Introduction

This study attempts to explore the impact of private and independent colleges to the development and strengthening of secondary education in Zimbabwe. This study uses the case analyses of five schools in Harare which are; Denmark College, Christ College, Herentials College, His Mercy Christian College and Pinewood High Schools. An independent and private school is one that is not maintained by a local authority or national government but by individuals, groups of individuals, institutions or organizations. Private and Independent schools enjoy a large measure of autonomy in the running of their affairs outside the day-to-day control of the government. Private and independent college's participation in education has increased dramatically over the last two decades across the world, serving all types of communities from high-income to low income families. The Zimbabwean government encouraged the private sector to provide education and enrolment in private colleges, leading to a boom in enrolment in Harare. In terms of general statistics there are about 2000 registered colleges and about 300 unregistered colleges in Harare, some of which are operating in houses, churches, and other unfavorable learning conditions.

The phenomenon of private and independent schools/colleges in Zimbabwe remains conceptually elusive and controversial to educational traditionalists who believe in state centric education. Most independent schools in Harare appear to have borrowed and still borrow heavily from practices of public schools. The proliferation of independent schools in Zimbabwe has generated fierce contestation with some arguing that they are fleecing desperate consumers whilst others think they are filling the gap where the government is failing to provide quality education to citizens. There is an ongoing debate about private education, notably for-profit education, leading to the commercialization of the education sector despite the fact that it is recognized as a public good. In Zimbabwe, there has been a calls advocating for the strengthening of regulations on private educational institutions which are viewed as offering substandard education as well as caricatured as bogus institutions motivated by profit making at the expense of service quality. However, research has indicated that some public schools are actually offering sub-standard education as compared to private and independent colleges who are providing quality education with affordable rates. It is against this backdrop that this thesis seeks to investigate the impact of private and independent colleges in the education of citizens in Zimbabwe. This study is situated within the context of business management looking at how private players in the education sector can influence the holistic development of the education sector in Zimbabwe.

2. Significance

The significance of the study for the study, which is often known as the justification of the study has two important dimension: The theoretical and the practical. The theoretical need or justification derives from the fact that during the process of knowledge construction, scholars are able to fill certain gaps within the framework of their topic. The practical significance is concerned about the various stakeholders who will find the results interesting and relevant for their own interests. These have to be identified and their interest has to be clearly articulated.

2.1. Theoretical Significance

2.1.1. Shortage of Literature on the Subject

As such the role of private and independent educational institutions and their impact in the development of the education sector in Zimbabwe has never been a discourse of much interest to most researchers. Scholars and policy makers on the national and international levels assume that the role of private independent schools in the education sector has been weak. However, a careful review of available data, often even from the same authoritative sources, demonstrates that there are reasons for serious concerns regarding this perspective. Therefore, this study is justified because it will offer valuable insight on the contribution of private and independent college sector in providing quality education in Harare and Zimbabwe at large.

2.1.2. Limited Empirical Knowledge on Linkage between Public and Private Education

This study will also provide information on the limited empirical knowledge on the link between private players and public players performance in the education sector. The continued poor performance of some government and negative perceptions on private schools in Harare despite their significant contribution in providing quality service has given rise to the need to undertake this study.

2.2. Practical Significance

2.2.1. Education Policy Makers

The most critical challenge facing education policy makers in developing countries including Zimbabwe is access to data which is relevant, timely, and accurate on which to base their policy deliberations. Effects of poor quality of data are often experienced in everyday life, but often without making the necessary connections to their causes.

2.2.2. Monitoring and Quality Control for Education

The study will also be relevant for the various authorities who are involved in the monitoring and quality control of education institutions. It will motivate the stakeholders to monitor and adjust educational sector institutional set ups and policies to improve educational performance.

2.2.3. Public Private Partnerships

The study will add the new dimension of the public-private partnership specifically of educational sector; this further will help to improve the quality of secondary school education in Zimbabwe.

3. Review of Related Literature

3.1. Theoretical Framework

The study has been conducted using critical theory in the context of qualitative research tradition. It is important to note that, this research is located within the critical theory paradigm. The researcher found it appropriate to employ the critical theory paradigm since the purpose of the study is to gain insights into academics' perspectives on the impact of private and independent colleges on the education sector in Zimbabwe. Denzin and Lincoln (2005:194) states that-the ontology of critical theory is shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, and ethical and gender variations|| as well as transformation through the research process itself (Van Ransburg, 2001). In addition, Carr and Kemmis (1996:197) argue that a-critical approach strives to replace one distorted set of practices with another hopefully less distorted set of practices.

3.2. The History of Asymmetry in Zimbabwean Education

The Zimbabwean education system has an elaborate history of asymmetry. In the early stages, the education system derived asymmetries from colonial educational administration. The government of Zimbabwe inherited a 90-year legacy of inequality from the colonial Rhodesia that encompassed the social, economic, political, and educational aspects of life, which oppressed and discriminated against the black majority (Richards and Govere, 2003; Peters and Chimedza, 2000). According to Dorsey (1989), legislation, whenever necessary, was enacted to ensure that black development did not pose a serious threat to white development and interests. Thus, continued manipulation of the economic, political, and education structures was particularly important in maintaining white dominance during the colonial era.

The coming of independence enabled more black people to have increased access to education. However the education system was still unable to absorb all African people in the system and this continues up to date. Thus the emergence of the private school is justified by this traditional deficit.

3.3. Post Independence Expansion of Student Access to Schooling

Upon gaining independence, significant changes in education were inevitable (Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2004). The government gave first priority to the reconstruction and reopening of schools that had been closed during the liberation wars, which included nearly one-third of the primary and secondary schools, particularly where the war was intense (Csapo, 1986; GoZ, 1980). The second priority was to expand the educational system at all levels, but particularly at the secondary school level, to redress the extreme imbalance and inequality inherited from the colonial era (Dorsey, 1989). Strategic advent of the private sector in education has led to the rapid expansion of access to education in several countries. Although it is true that some private schools are expensive, the majority of the private schools in Harare, charge very low fees, such as 50 per month (Andrabi et al. 2006). In this way, independent private colleges provision of secondary education has increased enrolment in urban areas and among low-income households at a very low cost. These examples show that, the private and independent colleges in Harare have contributed to the development of quality education as well as satisfying unmet demand for schooling.

In the United States, the number of private companies providing supplemental academic services (academic tutoring) increased by 90 percent in just one year, between 2003 and 2004. Patrinos et al (2009), using a rich set of individual level data, revealed that increased school competition is shown to have statistically significant positive effects on student performance in mathematics, but no significant effects in English and Swedish. Interacting school competition with student characteristics, the results indicate that immigrant students and those in need of special education tend to gain more from increased school competition than others, while adverse effects on students from less-educated families are found in terms of English and Swedish performance.

Patrinos et al (2009) in International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (2009) found existing evidence from around the world that show the correlation between private provision of education and indicators of education quality is positive, which suggests that the private sector can deliver high-quality education at a low cost. Using data from the OECD's programme for International Student Assessment Woessman (2005) showed that publicly operated schools deliver lower test score compared privately operated schools, but publicly funded private schools are associated with higher academic achievement than publicly operated institutions.

Mark Bray (1996) in Sumra, et al (1999) observed the private sector's expanding role in Tanzania educational sector responds to one or more of the following concerns: - the shortage of resources to support public provision of services; the perception that public education is inefficient; the demand for greater parental choice in education; and pressures to make schools more accountable to their clients. Sumra et al (1999) proved that rapid growth of the private sector on education sector in Africa during the 1990s indeed opened educational opportunities. This is also corroborated by Tooley and Dixon (2003) in their detailed study of private schools in Hyderabad, that: 'parents turn out to be active choosers of schools for their children.

Centrally to this Sumra et al (1996) revealed that the expansion has been accompanied by a rise in access to secondary school among children from disadvantaged backgrounds; and at the level of schools, by significant staff turnover as schools compete for the same pool of teachers, and a narrowing of public-private sector differences in school effectiveness. Genevois (2008) argues that private sector is becoming an essential partner in promoting educational sectors in order to reach the Millennium Development Goal for Education for All in 2015. This is further motivated by the Basic Human Rights as promulgated by the United Nations especially the 1990 Jomtien Declaration that called for revitalized partnerships at all levels in order to achieve Education for All (EFA) (Galabawa and Agu, 2001).

3.4. Role of Government

Traditionally, it has been the role of the government to provide school education to the appropriate age group. However, private schooling is growing in many countries including Zimbabwe. Part of the reason for this seems to be that public schools are performing poorly, with high teacher absence rates, bad teacher student ratio lack of teaching activity and low pupil achievement levels (Chaudhury, et al., 2006).

3.5. Contrasting Public and Private Schools

Chifunyise (2001) points out that in Zimbabwe, 94% of primary schools and 87% of secondary schools are owned and run by missions, church organizations, and boards of trustees, commercial companies, and urban and rural district councils. She further states that most of the private schools are registered, therefore, eligible for certain benefits from the government and, at the same time required to maintain certain standards.

One international classification of education (OECD 1990) defines private education as that provided in institutions managed by private persons but this definition covers a wide variety of situations. Public institutions are wholly funded by the government; others are state aided to a wide extent while private and independent colleges receive no government aid at all. Further, in any one country, the situation may vary over time and according to the level or the type of education. Even though any simple distinction between the two types makes diversity within each sector, from a policy point of view the distinction remains useful when assessing expansion of the system. Expansion through the public system implies a direct role for the government in both finance and school management, whereas expansion through the private sector implies a more independent way and private way of operation.

3.6. Higher Academic Achievement

The existing evidence from around the world shows that the correlation between private provision of education and indicators of education quality is positive, which suggests that the private sector can deliver high-quality education at

a low cost. Using data from the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment, Woessmann (2005) showed that publicly operated schools deliver lower test scores than privately operated schools, but publicly funded private schools are associated with higher academic achievement than publicly operated institutions. Therefore, partnerships in which the private sector is the operator and the public sector is the financier have the potential to increase enrolment while keeping the education budget in check.

4. Objectives of the Study

- To explore the role of private and independent Colleges in providing secondary school education.
- To assess the ways in which private and independent secondary schools are improving the quality of secondary education in Harare
- To recommend on the methods of promoting inclusive participation in the development of education in Zimbabwe.

5. Assumptions of the Study

This research study is based on the assumptions that:

- The majority of registered private and independent colleges in Zimbabwe contribute immensely to the development of quality education as well as creation of employment
- Despite the negative perception about the contribution of private and independent colleges in the education sector, these institutions are providing better education than that of government institutions in Harare.
- There are many people in Harare who are now enrolling their children to private and independent colleges than in public schools.
- The possible causes of poor performance in secondary schools in Zimbabwe might be due to the lack of strategic partnerships between the public and private sectors in education.
- There would be maximum cooperation from all the research respondents.
- Authentic partnership between private and public schools if implemented properly may achieve a noble cause of providing excellent performance in schools.
- Respondents would not be greatly influenced by the position of the researcher and therefore would respond objectively to questions.

6. Delimitations of the Study

This thesis is delimited to the private and independent colleges in Zimbabwe's Harare Urban. The population of the study comprised of Teachers, headmasters/principals, learners, Ministry of education regulators and directors of selected schools. Because of their importance to the education sector, in terms of employment creation, and also contribution to the national economy only identified schools will be evaluated. This study will specifically focus of the period ranging from 2000-20016. This time frame is critical because it witnessed the unprecedented advent of private and independent colleges when the Zimbabwean economy began to sneeze because of the sanctions and political upheavals. In addition, the multi-currency regime is also under the identified time frame which makes the evaluation critical. The researcher evaluates the five identified schools as case analyses and these are: Pinewood High School; Denmark College; Herentals College; Christ College; and His Mercy Christian College. In order to represent the entire breath of private and independent colleges in Harare, the researcher chose these five colleges because of their similar traits in terms of growth and quality of service being offered.

7. Operational Definitions

7.1. Impact

Refers to the force of impression of one thing on another. It can also refer to a significant or major effect that leadership in the context of the school has on the performance of the school. The term impact points to an impinging of striking especially of another factor against another. A general effect of a variable on the other is what is referred to as an impact in this thesis.

7.2. Performance

This term performance refers to the ability of learners, teachers and the school as a whole to attain high levels of achievement in various areas of the curriculum such as; good pass rates in various school subjects, good performance in sporting activities and clubs, meaningful and memorable educational tours and field trips, prizes, for example, for being the best school in some geographical area.

7.3. Private and Independent College

Refers to a school that is not maintained by a local authority or national government but by individuals, groups of individuals, institutions or organizations. The government only provides the legal framework but is not involved in the recruitment of staff supervision of staff. However, the curriculum offered is directly taken and approved by the government aligned ZIMSEC in the case of local secondary and primary education.

7.4. Quality Education

Refers to how well the internal operations of the school are run, for example; performance of the school or college, a good and favourable learning environment, quality classroom interactions, and curricula.

8. Design of the Study/Technique Used

According to Kothari (1993) research design refers to the plan or procedure for gathering information, indicating the steps and how the research is going to be carried out in the search for the answers that the researcher is seeking guided by a conceptual structure. For the case of the impact of private and independent colleges on the educational sector in Zimbabwe, specifically secondary education in Harare's five schools, the researcher used qualitative descriptive design, so as to simplify the interpretations of findings. Mason (1998) defines qualitative research as a multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive and naturalistic approach to its subject matter.

Qualitative research reported in terms of verbal description rather than numerical form. It employs semi-structured interview, observation checklist and documentary analysis, which are flexible as well as sensitive to the social context in which data are produced (Cohen et al, 2000).

9. Sampling Technique

In this study a combination of purposeful and convenient sampling was used. Moore (1991:8) and Robson (1995:141) argue that selecting whichever units of the population are easily accessible is called convenience sampling. McMillan and Schumacher (1997:174-175) argue that convenience sampling techniques are less costly, save time, ensure ease of administration and high participation while allowing generalization to similar subjects, hence it was deemed appropriate for this phase of the study.

For this phase of the study a convenient and purposeful sample of five schools was selected, guided by the views of McMillan and Schumacher (1997:169) who argue that a convenience sample is a group of subjects selected on the basis of being accessible or expedient. The five schools namely; Denmark, Christ College, His Mercy Christian College, Herentals College and Pinewood College were chosen on the basis of being closest to the researcher's work place. From each of the selected five schools, 5 school headmasters were purposively selected to ensure information-rich participants (Parton in McMillan & Schumacher 1998:397; Marshall 1998:60). Since the researcher intended to use focus groups to collect data from the school managers, five members per group was deemed an appropriate sample size. Daymon and Holloway (2002:192) corroborate this saying, "five members is about right for most research purposes associated with traditional focus groups; it is large enough to provide a variety of perspectives but small enough not to become disorderly or fragmented."

Marshall (1998:60) says one form of purposive sampling is strategic informant sampling which is, "... selecting the people whom you think can give you the most information." This strategy of purposeful sampling was used as it was felt that school managers (including senior teachers) would have a lot of information on the impact of the programmes that were established to evaluate the impact of private colleges in educating citizens at secondary education level.

Purposive strategic informant sampling (Marshall 1998:60) was also the rationale for including the heads of the five selected schools in the sample. The heads are in charge of implementing the quality of education in private and independent schools, and it was felt they were information-rich participants (Parton in McMillan & Schumacher 1997:397).

10. Tools for Collecting the Data

The researcher used triangulation approach to enhance validity and reliability of data collected. The Triangulation approach uses multiple source of data collection- interview, questionnaires, classroom observation checklist and documentary review. These techniques facilitated cross checking of the accuracy of information which is collected. As Cohen et al., (2000) argues; exclusive reliance on one method may bias or distort the researcher's picture of the fact under investigation. No single research instrument is adequate in itself in collecting valid and reliable data on a particular problem, rather the use of multiplicity of techniques is the best method, and it facilitates complementation and supplementation of data.

10.1. Interview

According to Kothari (2004) interviews involve a set of questions, intended to collect information through oral or verbal communication in a face to face contact between the researcher and the respondents. Cresswell (1994) holds that personal interviews are the most common and most effective means of obtaining detailed information in a survey. Specifically semi-structure interviews were used, whereby the interview guides had a list of issues to be covered and questions to be answered. As Kirshinaswani (2003) argued, with a semi-structured interview, the interviewer has the freedom to probe the interviewee to elaborate on the original response or to follow a line of inquiry introduced by the interviewer. Therefore, interview guides were used to gather information on the impact of private schools on quality education on secondary schools to the governmental officials especially District education Officer and two of his subordinates were interviewed to know their views and attitudes towards the possibility of delivering quality secondary education through private schools in Harare District.

11. Validation Procedures

Validity refers to the quality/accuracy of data gathering instruments or procedure that enables it to measure what it is supposed to measure (Best and Khan, 1993; Ary et al., 1996). Reliability refers to the degree of consistence (Denscomber, 1998; Ary et al., 1996). Reliability of research instruments is a degree of consistency with which it measures whatever it is measuring (Ary et al., 1996). In this research work instruments used to collect data were assessed through distributing it to other experienced researchers or their feedback. This had the effective impact of correcting various anomalies and ambiguity to see the degree of consistency. A brief pilot test was run at other private schools to see how the responses would come out. After the process, various adjustments were made before final deployment.

12. Experimentation/Field Work Details

12.1. Fieldwork Procedures

When collecting research data it is very important that strict ethical standards are maintained at all times (Bell 199:53). Amongst others, this is to ensure that the rights and welfare of the subjects are protected. This study did take into consideration certain ethical provisions as outlined below.

12.1.1. Approval for Conducting the Research

For research conducted in an institution like a school system approval for conducting the research should be obtained from the institution (McMillan & Schumacher 1997:195; Bell 1999:52). For this study the researcher wrote to the Secretary for Education, Sport and Culture asking for permission to do the research in the schools since he is the most senior officer in the Ministry. Data collection only commenced after the approval to do the research had been obtained.

12.1.2. Informed Consent

Tuckman (1994:13-14) argues that subjects have the choice to participate, or not to participate in any research. Thus if subjects are to participate in a study the researcher must obtain their informed consent (Robson 1995:471-473). Informed consent was achieved by providing an explanation of the research, the implications of participating, and that respondents were free to withdraw their services at any time (McMillan & Schumacher 1997:194). The researcher met the respondents in their schools. The purpose of the study was explained in detail to the respondents. Even though permission to carry out the study had already been granted by the Secretary for Education, Sport and Culture it was imperative to talk to the respondents and get their consent as Bell (1999:58) says, "Getting management permission is one thing, but you need to have the support of the people who will be asked to give interviews or complete questionnaires."

12.1.3. Confidentiality and Anonymity

Data collected for research must be secured, treated in confidence and made public behind the guise of anonymity (Christians 2003:139; McMillan & Schumacher 1997:193). In this study the respondents were requested not to expose their names, or those of their schools during the interviews. In the data analysis the names of the schools are not referred to. This was meant to protect the reputation and images of the schools in the face of whatever results would emerge from the study as Oppenheim (1996:83) says, "The basic ethical principle is that no harm should come to the respondents as a result of their participation in the research."

12.1.4. Honesty and Accountability

It is important that the researcher is honest and accountable in dealing with subjects. The researcher in this study undertook to keep all information availed in good care and use it exclusively for the study. No deception was used on the respondents.

12.1.5. Access to Results

McMillan and Schumacher (1997:194) insist that subjects are entitled to the research results. Due to prohibitive costs it was not possible to give copies of the completed study to all the sampled schools. However, one copy of the research report will be given to the office of the Regional Director of the region that participated in the study as well as the Secretary for Education, Sport and Culture.

13. Tools for Analysis

The study was essentially a descriptive qualitative study of the contribution of private schools in the educational system focusing on Harare, Zimbabwe. While there was some statistical data that was collected mainly using survey questionnaire, the data was mainly descriptive in nature. The richest feedback would come from the FGDs and interviews. Thus in order to process the data, the researcher clustered it into themes using thematic analysis.

The descriptive statistical data was analysed using an SPSS program and graphics presented in the main thesis document. However, the most important trends that have been presented in the section on results derive from the totality of insights that reached after analysing all the data that is available. The results are shown in the section below.

14. Findings/Discussions

The evidence from this study is that private secondary schools predominantly respond to two different kinds of demand from households. The number of places available at secondary school in Harare has been restricted for many

years and many more wish to attend than have the opportunity to go to attend schools. For households in the top quintile by wealth, this excess demand can be met by paying privately. The second group of parents express a kind of differentiated demand in the belief that quality and character of private secondary schools is superior to that of government schools.

Private schools in Zimbabwe have a lot of autonomy in their management. Apart from a one off inspection of schools and the closure of a few schools with very poor facilities and teaching staff, there is minimum regulation of the sector. Schools appear to be allowed to operate with weak or pseudo governing bodies, and poor accounting systems. Autonomy is part of the problem in the Zimbabwean, rather than part of the solution. More firm regulation is needed to ensure that both public and private schools provide good quality education in safe and healthy environments for children.

To ensure greater transparency and accountability private secondary schools which are licensed and regulated should publish annual accounts which are independently audited, provide standardized information on examination performance at ZIMSEC, maintain public list of staff members and attendance, and share details of school development plans. Protocols should be developed for the collection of school fees and the obligations of both parents and schools in relation to the fee-paying participation. This should address questions of the mechanism for raising fees periodically, clear indications of what fees cover and do not cover, procedures related to non-payment and the protection of children's continuous education experience, curriculum specifications, and facilities.

15. Conclusions

Many for profit private schools appear to operate very 'efficiently'. Their owners extract the maximum that they can in fees and other costs, and invest the minimum possible in maintaining infrastructure, providing teaching and learning materials. The infrastructure available in a proportion of the private secondary schools in our case study sample is inadequate and insufficient to lead to the sustained achievement of national learning goals.

This means in practice that many learners in public schools do not have enough good chairs to sit on, desks to write on, textbooks, clean toilets, and places to wash their hands, water to drink or safe, dry, well lit classrooms. The ablution facilities are usually in deplorable state than at the private school. The owners of for profit private schools regard them as businesses and run them accordingly, to maximize profit. In many cases they appear to make very healthy profits. This level of efficiency is not desirable.

A more 'inefficient' system where schools have higher costs but provide a better education for children in a safe environment seems to us to be preferable. Licensing and regulation should incorporate plans to ensure that registered schools meet minimum standards and improve over time towards national norms of provision.

The contracts held by teachers in Zimbabwean private schools, or the almost total lack of them, encourage short termism by teachers and school management. There is evidence of high turnover in the private school sector, which is likely to result in discontinuities in children's educational participation. There is considerable volatility of enrolments in case study schools from year to year. Low levels of achievement are likely to be associated with discontinuities in schooling. It is important to develop strategies to reduce the number of schools children attend, especially if they are in the private sector.

Teachers in private schools are employed in many different ways, are often not qualified as teachers, and may be paid below the daily poverty line. Protocols should exist for the employment of teachers in licensed and registered private schools, which conform to national legislation on employment practices. The teachers should be paid wages above the poverty line, and should never collect fees directly from students. Eventually most private school teachers hope to secure employment in the government sector where wages are higher, conditions of employment better and there are opportunities for career development. The incentive structure linked to exam results, may improve results, but these do not mean real learning has happened. These structures create incentives for teaching to the test, exam cramming, superficial learning, rote memorization and corruption.

Performance in independent and private schools is better than the least competitive form of government secondary provision, but this masks extreme diversity within the private sector and the effect of socio-economic status on performance, which is a more likely explanation for the difference than school type. Performance in private schools is not better on average than more competitive government schools with professional, qualified teachers on long term contracts. There is no evidence to suggest from this that the more autonomous private sector with greater power to hire and fire teachers outperforms the government sector in performance.

Independent and private school owners in Zimbabwe do take risks; they invest their own money in land and infrastructure, hire teachers and set up as a business. So risky is much of their business that banks are not willing to finance it without high interest rates and collateral. Private school owners are unwilling to open schools in chains to maximise their profits and efficiencies due to the risks and lack of trust in manager and sub-contractors. The antagonistic relationship between private school owners and the government means that there is unlikely to be risk sharing between private school owners and the government in the short term. Risk sharing must come with regulation and transparency, which are both in short supply at the moment.

16. Recommendations for Further Research

The nature of the educational enterprise is such that there is rarely one cause for a particular phenomenon. Multi-factor causation is in most cases the rule and not the exception. Therefore some wide-ranging decisions and recommendations can be taken to improve the quality of education in Zimbabwean secondary schools. The discussion presented in each chapter of this study was centred on the provision of quality education in schools and the different strategies to improve the quality in education. The opportunities to improve the quality of education are also looked at. In

the following section of this discussion some recommendations are provided which could be considered in schools. For improving the quality of education in Harare the study recommends that;

- Efforts should be made to provide support reforms that focus on teaching and learning outcomes, appropriate goals and relevant content, values as well as skills, sufficient and effective instructional time, structured teaching in child-centered classrooms and assessment for learning improvement. Central government should give priority to where teaching and learning actually takes place which are schools. A lot needs to be improved in the secondary education system if the system is to match with best international practices.
- Teacher education provided through colleges and universities should have policies that enable the development of competent, flexible and resilient teachers capable of revitalizing schools and responding to changing demands of the environment and practice. From the look of things teacher education policies have remained the same colonial policies yet society is changing and the changes that take place in society have critical implications on the operations of our teachers. Teaching in the 21st century requires a teacher who is highly competent in the use of information communication technology since we are living in a world of changing technology.
- There is a critical need to improve the standard of classrooms in both the private and public schools and also to increase the number of classrooms in the schools to avoid a situation where three teachers conducting lessons simultaneously share the same room. This kind of learning atmosphere does not provide for quality learning outcomes since overcrowding of pupils may result in the spread of infectious diseases.
- The Government of Zimbabwe should provide an enabling environment, with good learning materials, that are used well by teachers, a safe health infrastructure, professional and motivated teachers and well organized, well led schools which are the central institutions for improving quality. This should also be accompanied by building strong professional support systems and knowledge infrastructure and perhaps also developing and maintaining sound, coherent, long term education sector policies and a nationally owned financially realistic framework for quality related reforms
- It is noteworthy that improving the quality of education while expanding access, require a level of sustained investment that is beyond the reach of many schools even if national budgets for education were to rise. This therefore means that there is need to invest more on the part of central government if our schools are to achieve world class excellence in the provision of education.
- The study also recommends that planning and managing the quality of education in schools requires the availability of accurate and timely information that links together resource inputs to educational output, teaching learning conditions and processes and appropriate indicators of the knowledge, skills and values acquired by the pupils. There is need to provide for strategic planning based on accurate information. There is also need to consider issues of analyzing the schools environment for their suitability to provide for quality education. Zones such as public markets and Central Business District may not be the right venue for the school.
- The Zimbabwe system of education should adopt the Quality Education Project (QEP) which emphasizes on reflective practices. This is critical to achieve a system effective in a long term perspective. The project will most probably train teachers in schools and demonstrate how it can be done for in-service and support teachers to develop reflective practices as it is mandated. The QEP programmes were tried in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Zambia The fundamental thinking behind the QEP, contrary to common practices and approaches to address the quality of education, is that people have to identify the problem in education by themselves and not to be informed by others. The long-term objectives of the QEP would be to contribute to improving the quality of education by working within order to achieve high quality improvement in the delivery of education in schools, more attention should be given to the need for educational planners to share information pertaining to the provision of quality education.
- Regular workshops need to be provided for, to share information on how best to improve the quality of education in both public and independent schools. This could be done at cluster, district and provincial levels. Such workshops should draw participants from teacher education colleges, ministry of education both primary and secondary and ministry of higher education, researchers, non-governmental organisations participating in education, universities and known academics. All these parties would make a significant contribution in providing information that would improve the quality of education in schools. If the quality of education in schools is to improve it has to start in teacher education colleges and universities. In many countries, including those in Africa, teacher education is a part of the problem of poor quality in education rather than it being the solution. This is because in reality, teacher education tends to perpetuate traditional, unreflective and teacher centered pedagogy rather than challenge it and come up with more user friendly pupil centered pedagogy.
- There is need to establish networks of international planners that will facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experiences and approaches to planning and improving the quality of education in Zimbabwean schools. This would assist in addressing barriers to quality education, build partnerships, develop accountability and in the process combat corruption. Such issues of cooperate governance are crucial. Schools have been affected by corruption in resource allocation and the general management of the institutions and this could be reduced if partnerships could be established rather than relying on school development committees which are not effective enough to monitor the development of education in their schools.
- School heads and their deputies have multiple functions in the education system and they occupy a pivotal position in management which includes planning, organizing, leading and controlling activities in the schools and

stimulating the internal life of the school and as a result a lot more needs to be done in their staff development of management.

- The study also suggests that a lot more needs to be done for ongoing development and capacity building for school development committee members who are not very clear about their operations in schools. Such exercises are necessary since most of these organs are not aware of their roles. Support structures and training should be seen as a vital process given the lack of skills, competencies and confidence in the operations of school development members. A key challenge facing the education sector in Zimbabwe has been to equip communities with skills and knowledge to mobilize resources to address challenges facing schools.
- Hand in hand with school development committees, both public and independent and private schools need to establish senior management teams which would regularly meet with established committees to improve the operations in their schools. There is need for an education management training to be provided to both heads of schools and school development committees to equip them with current management skills. A well co-ordinated capacity building programme is necessary in schools which should be adopted and implemented so as to provide school heads, school development committees and education officers with the knowledge, skills, information and material resources necessary to sustain quality education.
- Given the limited increase in funds currently available for education from the state, or from additional taxes at any level of government, obligatory parental contributions in form of fees are recommended. The payment of obligatory school fees should be a legal requirement for every parent with a pupil in school. It is recognized that the provision of quality education for all pupils at no direct cost to parents and communities is not affordable. Communities need to pay a substantial amount of money towards the education of their children for the purchase of resource materials necessary for effective teaching. Cost sharing in the purchase of educational products is most recommended if the quality of the product is to improve.
- Resources need to be provided and made available for schools and district authorities to provide core services such as administration, quality assurance and monitoring teacher support and planning. Within this context, there should be funds provided for reconstruction programmes in schools, which have been disadvantaged by colonial policies. There is also need for a complete re-conceptualization of what information should be collected from schools in order to assist with planning the quality of education. Most independent and private schools have been disadvantaged and as a result there is need to collect information from these schools and to be used for reconstruction purposes.
- Regional education officers need to conduct staff development programmes at school or at cluster level with teachers and heads of schools in private colleges. These programmes would provide teachers with current teaching strategies, so that they can be innovative and effective under unfavourable conditions as those found in Harare. College and university lecturers could be engaged to run these staff development programmes. While it takes time to change teacher attitudes and practice, attention should be given to capacity training and these training programmes need to be taken to schools to avoid a situation where teachers practice in a different context from which they teach on daily basis. This therefore means that there is a need to ensure high technical standards for the collection, preparation and analyzing of information required for planning the quality of education of which information relating to teachers is crucial.
- The research findings strongly suggest that supporting pre-school education and primary will lead to an improvement in the efficiency of secondary education and the quality of education as a whole. This can be done through the development of meaningful two way dialogue between the ministry of education officials and the schools. Pre-school education can best be implemented and improved with the assistance of schools which are the users and consumers of the products.
- Parents and school authorities need to identify the causes of the declining quality of education and ways of improving and work together to achieve one goal. There is need to encourage participation of parents in decision making through the creation of parent-teacher associations, local education supervisors and other structures involving parents who work to establish problems facing their schools and finding ways of addressing them. Parents and teachers should in this context seek to address the several major gaps in most educational provision and come up with strategies to improve the quality of education in their schools. Quality improvements in schools require the participation of parents in decision making on issues relating to learning and teaching of their children.
- There is need for a clear and strong strategic quality education plan which identifies a critical time line and outcomes. This will manage the planned expansion of quality education work and identify programme and project outputs in relation to measurable milestones. This therefore means that educational planners should come up with a thematic strategic plan or focus on the quality of education which should continue to be a major priority in their development work. Strategic plans should have a focus on quality education delivery rather than on increased enrolment only. The goal of enrolment and large numbers has been achieved, the focus now should be on quality education delivery. This can also be achieved, through a clear focus on the nature of classroom learning activities rather than just resource input only.

16.1. Areas for Further Research

More research is needed on the impact of independent in improving educational standards in Zimbabwe. There are more independent schools in Harare, and the majority of which are elite with big enrolments despite a culture of

looking down upon them. There is still inadequate data on how many private schools are providing better education than the public schools. More detailed analysis of supply and demand and patterns in independent and private colleges versus government institutions in Harare. There is need for identification of areas in secondary schools where there is a high turnover of children in private schools coupled with illustrative case studies to establish the extent of transfer between public and private schools and the likely length of a school career within each school for different groups of students. In addition, there is need for a close enquiry into the financing of private schools in relation to fee structures, income from fees and other sources, default rates on fee payments, and information on costs including salaries of teachers and other staff, learning materials, building maintenance, and any building costs, mortgages, and loans that may exist and need to be serviced.

17. Limitations of the Study

Typical of most scientific research, this study encountered several challenges which however did not threaten the credibility of the study. This thesis was limited in the first place by non-response from the participants as some of them seemed ashamed to divulge what is affecting them. To this effect the researcher explained the advantages of the research to the operations of the enterprises and to the entrepreneurs. Findings of the study are meant to assist those colleges facing operational challenges in Harare.

The participants at first glance thought that the researcher was a regulatory authority functionary soliciting for information that could be used by the government to discipline the entrepreneurs operating and owning Colleges in Zimbabwe. Some of the participants were suspicious of the motivation of the research until the researcher explained to them that the study was for academic purposes. They eventually felt comfortable to respond to the questions during interviews after assurances that the work was for academic purposes only. The researcher assured the participants of confidentiality on the information that they provided and also explain the benefits the study would bring to the participants. In carrying out the research, the researcher had few participants who were not conversant with English Language and the vernacular language was used to clarify certain issues.

The number of cases that could be covered was constrained by time, resources, and geographic location. This meant that the small sample chosen for case studies cannot be regarded as representative. While some information about private schools, such as their fees are widely publicized, others are not. There was sensitivity as a result of a crackdown on unregistered schools operating in poor quality premises with unqualified teachers that took place in 2015 and in some cases during the beginning of every year. This has led to reluctance to divulge information about the level of qualification of teachers and the number of teachers, including the salaries they receive as the Ministry of Education now uses these as some of the causes of poor service delivery in private and independent colleges. The finances of these schools are shrouded in secrecy, many proprietors use their own personal bank accounts for school finances, do not appear to keep accurate records of financial transactions, deal mainly in cash and there do not appear to be any audited accounts available.

This made it difficult to calculate the income and expenditure of the schools; nevertheless rough estimates of income and expenditure were made from the data that was collected. In some of the schools staffing and enrolments were unstable with considerable changes from year to year. In some schools data and records were not kept properly and/or were unavailable. This made it difficult to construct a picture over time of trends in areas such as enrolment and performance. Lastly, self-reported performance data often seemed unreliable and exaggerated to give a favourable impression of achievements especially in cases where tangible documentation was not available. Where possible the researcher has triangulated data given by schools with ZIMSEC exam board and Cambridge University Examination and observational data.

18. Tentative Structure of Dissertation (Brief Descriptions of the Chapters)

Given below is a diagrammatic sketch of the research project report structure

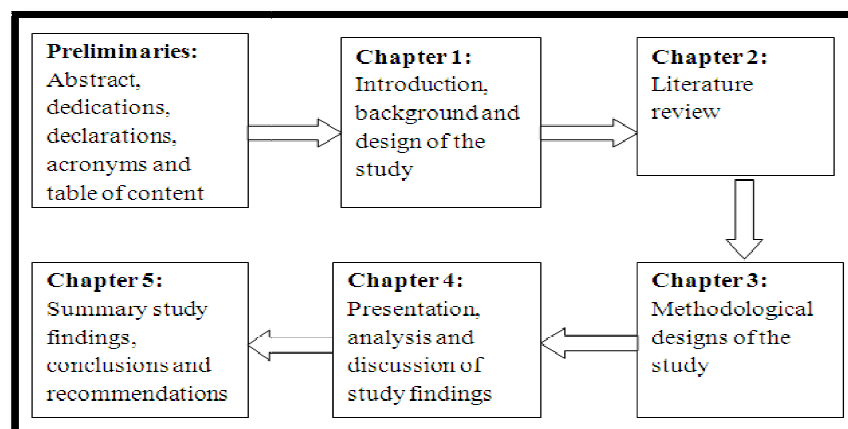


Figure 1

19. References

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