

Primary School Teachers' Perceptions of their role in the Planning and Implementation of Staff Development in Hwange District of Matabeleland North Province in Zimbabwe

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Abstract: This study sought to explore primary school teachers' perceptions of their role in the planning and implementation of staff development programmes in Hwange District of Matabeleland North Province in Zimbabwe. It adopted the qualitative research methodology and the case study design where the case of five selected primary schools was used. The study population comprised senior primary school teachers in the area under study and a sample of 30 (n=30) teachers was considered to accomplish the study. The sample was obtained through the Purposive sampling method and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were used as the data generation technique while FGD guides were utilised as the actual instruments to gather the data. Consistent with qualitative inquiries, the researchers were the primary research tools, hence, the moderation of FGDs was done by the researchers. Interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) of the generated data was done and the data was simply presented in prose form. The major findings were that teachers generally understood school staff development to involve the sharing of ideas on pedagogical and other school related issues in order to improve the teachers' performance. Central to the study, findings revealed that the teachers played different roles in both the planning and implementation of school staff development programmes. The study, therefore, concluded that primary school teachers at the schools studied were generally involved in the organisation of school staff development programmes though ordinary teachers were less involved compared to head teachers and teachers-in-charge. Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the researchers recommended, among other things, that the involvement of teachers in the organisation of staff development would be more effective if they were to be involved in the design of the school staff development plan (SSDP) including having a consensus on their current and future staff development needs and goals thereof. In addition, that teacher is involved in determining the suitable time for staff development as well as identifying suitable facilitators from among themselves. Furthermore, the researchers recommended that a study of this nature be conducted at a larger scale as the current one was based on limited cases.

Keywords: Teachers, Perceptions, Role, Staff Development, Staff Development Planning & Implementation.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Today's schools are currently facing their greatest challenge, namely, to provide quality education [1]. As noted by Steyn [2], several educational studies [3-5], confirm that educators can play a key role in making a difference in the quality of education and that investing in teachers' development may have more positive effects than investing in any other physical resources. Accordingly, the turn of the 21st Century has witnessed many societies beginning to engage in serious and promising educational reforms; with one of the key elements in most of these reforms being the 'professional development of teachers' [6].

As noted by Reimers [7], contemporary societies are increasingly acknowledging that teachers are not only one of the 'variables' that need to be changed in order to improve the education system, but that they are also the most significant change agents in these reforms. This double role of teachers in educational reforms: being both subjects and objects of change makes the field of teacher professional development a growing and challenging area; and one that has received major attention during the past few years (Reimers, *ibid*)

Murphy-Latta [8] cited in Dennis and Susan [3] notes that;

Throughout the history of education, numerous theories and issues have been emphasised as important factors in teaching and learning, as well as in fostering the general school improvement, but the need for professional development for school staff came to the forefront since the 1960's.

Thus, in order to survive in the 21st Century, staff development in education is called for because of the increase in the complexity of the nature of work which has meant that there is an added need for school staff to adapt and develop within and outside the school system.

Since the mid-1980s, school staff development has been the focus of considerable research, and yet, most of the available literature provides compelling evidence that a significant number of schools have not implemented effective staff development programmes, with some reluctant schools rarely conducting it for their school staff [9]. Even in cases where teachers were well trained in Teacher Education Colleges, the researchers are of the view that with the passage of time, there is undoubtedly a chance for the development of gap within their knowledge and pedagogical skills, hence, reflecting on the indispensable role that staff development plays in schools as learners' achievement and school effectiveness are fundamental outcomes.

Brooks (ibid) further remarks that teachers generally participate in staff development programmes for many reasons; including;

- An interest in lifelong learning;
- As a sense of professional and moral obligation;
- To maintain and improve their specialised teaching competences;
- To enhance career progression within their teaching profession; and
- To keep abreast with new knowledge, skills and technologies as well as dynamic educational practices.

As noted by Joyce and Showers [4], besides teachers' personal and professional motivations, school staff development is quite instrumental in the institution's general improvement and effectiveness.

The reputation of any school is, in essence, determined by its effectiveness in producing good pupil results as well as an individual who is developed holistically; including physically, cognitively, socially, emotionally and morally. By so doing, quality in education is assured, which, according to Liston [10], is related more to the relevance and value of the school's vision, mission, goals and objectives, as well as the attainment of identified school outcomes.

Evans [5] acknowledges that there has recently been a significant increase in the level of interest and support that teachers throughout the world are receiving

in their professional development; and evidence of this includes the following;

- The accumulating literature which is available; including documents, essays and research reports on models and practices of teacher professional development;
- Central government, national and international organizations have commissioned the implementation of initiatives which aim to improve the professional skills and knowledge of teachers for the benefit of learners;
- Several donor agencies have acknowledged the importance of teachers' professional development and have sponsored studies with the purpose of learning how to support such efforts more effectively;
- Most educational reforms currently being designed and/or implemented include a component of teacher professional development as one of the key elements in the change process that leads to national socio-economic development.

Thus, teacher professional development is a critical endeavour in the teaching profession which has essentially received support at different levels ranging from the support by teachers themselves, by the school, community, central government, other organisations to the global community. This new emphasis in the significance of school staff development has been welcomed by teachers and the education fraternity in general as it represents a much needed appreciation of teachers' work; and also promotes the concept of teaching as a profession of integrity (Reimers, ibid).

Rout and Behera [11] are of the view that "Good teachers constitute the foundation of good schools and improving teachers' skills and knowledge is one of the most important investments of time and money that local, state and national leaders can make in education". This shows that there is need for concerted efforts in supporting teacher professional development initiatives as teachers' upgrading is in essence, central in fostering school effectiveness and the general quality of education. It is against this backdrop that the current study sought to explore primary school teachers' perceptions of their role in the planning and implementation of staff development programmes in Hwange District of Matabeleland North Province in Zimbabwe.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In spite of the the indispensable significance of staff development in every school, the role of teachers in its organisation, regardless of the fact that they are central to the endeavour, leaves a lot to be desired. This is largely because teachers may be considered by the school system as passive participants in staff development programmes who are there simply to be staff-developed. The problem at stake, therefore, is whether school staff development attains effectiveness

if the teachers' role in its planning and implementation is taken for granted or even undermined.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The major purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions of their role in the planning and implementation of staff development programmes in the schools they were stationed in Hwange District.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by the following specific research questions;

- What do teachers understand by the concept of 'school staff development'?
- What is the role of teachers in the organisation of school staff development?
- How does the involvement of teachers in the organisation of school staff development programmes enhance the effectiveness of their professional development?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The primary significance of this study was to ascertain what teachers understood by the concept of 'staff development' as it has implications on their professional development. More importantly, it was envisaged that the study would reveal teachers' understanding of their role in the planning and implementation of school staff development. In addition, the study was also expected to shed light to school authorities on the implications of involving teachers or not in the organisation of school staff development programmes in order to foster the effectiveness of the programmes.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Concept of 'School Staff Development'

Generally, the definition of 'staff development' has different notions; with some authorities referring to it as 'in-service education and training' (INSET), 'on the job training', 'continuous education', 'professional development', 'professional education and training', career advancement and so on. According to Ganser [12] "staff development, in a broad sense, simply refers to the development of a person in his or her professional role". In the context of education;

Staff development generally entails continuing career professional development; which is an ongoing programme of education and training planned to enable educators to reinforce their knowledge and develop the required skills for the performance of specific teaching functions; as well as acquire additional knowledge and skills to meet educational changes including curricular, programme emphasis, enactment of new legislation and so on [13].

Halliday [14] clarifies that "Staff development in the teaching fraternity involves the continuous acquisition of skills and knowledge, both for the

teaching staff and other school personnel, career advancement encompassing all types of facilitated learning opportunities, ranging from programme to subject meetings, workshops, seminars, conferences and informal learning opportunities". It comprises a planned process whereby the effectiveness of school staff, collectively or individually, is enhanced in response to new knowledge, ideas and changing educational circumstances in order to improve directly or indirectly the quality of pupils' education and development.

This implies that 'school staff development' is a somewhat broad concept in that it encompasses the professional development of both teaching and non-teaching staff (Steyn, *ibid*). However, the current study specifically focused on the professional development of teachers or educators; who in this study were both classroom practitioners and head teachers.

More specifically, Glatthorn [15] says that; *Teacher professional development involves planned activities within and outside schools that are meant to assist teachers in attaining knowledge, new skills, attitudes, values and dispositions; thereby gaining increased levels of professional competence for the benefit of learners. It is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically.*

By gaining increased experience in one's teaching role, teachers systematically gain increased experience in their professional growth through examination of their teaching ability. Professional workshops and other formally related meetings are a part of the professional development experience for teachers [12]. Much broader in scope than career development; teacher professional development can also be viewed as growth that occurs through the professional cycle of a teacher. Moreover, professional development and other organized in-service programmes in schools are designed to foster the growth of teachers that can be used for their further development [16].

For Halliday (*ibid*), the essentials of teacher professional development today include:

- Planned and structured learning experiences designed to make the fullest use of the abilities and potential of school staff for present and future needs of the education service;
- Staff improvement programmes and incentives meant to increase school staff's satisfaction and commitment, and;
- The use of processes to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the teaching-learning experiences for the benefit of learners.

Champion [17] posits that regular opportunities and experiences for contemporary

professional development over the past few years have yielded systematic growth and development in the teaching profession.

Notably, recent years have witnessed the professional development of teachers being considered as 'a long-term and continual process that includes regular opportunities and experiences planned systematically to promote growth and development in teachers' knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. This shift has been so dramatic that many have referred to it as a 'new image of teacher learning', a 'new model of in-service teacher education and training', a 'revolution or new paradigm of teacher professional development (Reimers, *ibid*). Teacher professional development has, thus, moved beyond simple in-service workshops and has expanded into a more robust system of continuing education and training. In order to advance in their careers, teachers should seek out professional development opportunities which are ongoing and aligned with classroom and the general school standards and assessments.

Thus, it can be said that school staff development largely focuses on teachers as being the central elements or beneficiaries; and that it is characterised by the continual professional development of their knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and dispositions within the school for the ultimate purpose of fostering school effectiveness and the improvement of student outcomes. It essentially includes formal and informal professional development experiences for the educators resulting in improved job performance and the accomplishment of school goals.

Theoretical Framework and its Implications for the Role of Teachers in the Organisation of School Staff Development

For Sparks and Louck-Horsley [18], one of the best ways to better understand the role of teachers in the organisation of staff development is to consider the theoretical framework that is specific to staff development within the school system, namely, the 'school staff development theory'; within which there are several models that seek to explain the practice. For the purpose of this paper, four models were considered, namely, the 'self-directed', 'partnership', 'inquiry' and 'observation' models. Essentially, these models address the central role that teachers play in the entire organisation of school staff development; ranging from its planning, implementation to evaluation.

It is imperative, however, that the concept of 'staff development planning and implementation' be briefly defined first, since they are the focus of this paper. In the context of education, 'staff development planning' involves the examination of teachers' current and future professional development needs, looking at how these might be met; which helps to structure their training needs. On the other hand, 'staff development

implementation' in the context of education entails how the school staff development plan (SSDP) is practically applied and accomplished for the benefit of educators; while the ultimate purpose of school improvement is kept in mind [19]. The same source further stresses that unplanned staff development programmes in any organisation are unlikely to bring the desired returns on the valuable time and money spent on them, hence, the critical need to plan before the implementation of any staff development is considered.

For Sparks and Louck-Horsley (*ibid*) the fundamental assumptions of the 'self-directed' or 'individually guided' model of staff development include that individuals;

- Can best judge their own learning needs;
- Are most motivated when they select their own learning goals;
- Learn most efficiently when they initiate and plan their learning activities;
- Are capable of self-direction and self-initiated learning; and
- Learn most effectively when they have a need to know or when they have a problem to solve.

It has been observed that adults become increasingly self-directed and that their readiness to learn is motivated by real life problems and the simple desire to accomplish set tasks [20]. This model applies to teachers' professional development in that teachers should have a role in directing their own professional development including the identification of problems relating to their work as well as setting staff development goals and tasks.

The 'partnership' or 'collaborative model' of staff development, according to Tikunoff and Ward [21], is premised on the following basic assumptions:

- People working closest to the job best understand what is required to improve their performance;
- The processes of curriculum development and school improvement generally nurture teachers' growth and effectiveness especially if the teachers are actively involved;
- Teachers acquire important and useful knowledge & skills through their direct involvement in the organisation of staff development activities.

The model, thus implies that there is need to actively involve teachers in the planning and implementation of staff development programmes; particularly in determining why and how the staff development should be conducted. Teachers should, depending on circumstances and nature of staff development programmes, also be actively involved in their professional development activities as both participants and facilitators.

The 'inquiry' or 'investigative model', which tends to directly address teachers as the the objects of

staff development, presents the following basic tenets, according to Louck-Hosley *et al.*, [22];

- Teachers are generally intelligent, inquiring individuals with legitimate expertise and important experience;
- Teachers are inclined to search for data to answer pressing educational questions and to reflect on the data to formulate solutions applicable to their work;
- Teachers will develop new understandings of their work as they continue formulating educational solutions to their day-to-day challenges.

Thus, as Ingvarson [23] cited in Sparks and Simmons [24] puts it, this model acknowledges that teachers are ‘active inquirers’ and that their cooperation is critical in their professional development and in the general attainment of educational goals.

The ‘observation’ or ‘assessment’ model, according to Blanchard and Johnson’s [25] cited in Louck-Horsley *et al.*, (ibid) may take different forms including peer coaching and clinical supervision as well as teacher evaluation. Its major underlying assumptions include that;

- Reflection and analysis are central means of teachers’ professional growth-observation and assessment of instruction can provide the teacher with data that can be reflected upon and analyzed for the purpose of improving student learning;
- Reflection by an individual on his or her own practice can be enhanced by another’s observations-having ‘another set of eyes’ gives a teacher a different view of how he or she is performing with students;
- Assessment of classroom teaching can benefit both involved parties- the teacher being observed and the observer. The observed teacher benefits by receiving helpful feedback from a colleague while the the observer benefits by watching a colleague at work, preparing the feedback, and discussing the common experience; and
- When teachers see positive results from their efforts to change, they are more apt to continue to engage in improvement-As teachers apply new strategies in their work, they can literally see changes both in their own and their students’ behaviour, while in some instances, measurable improvements in student learning will also be observed.

Thus, as this model may involve multiple observations and assessments spread over time; and can help teachers see that gradual improvement and change in educational endeavours is possible for both themselves and the learners.

A cursory Review of the Role of Head Teachers in the Organisation of Staff Development Programmes

The American Federation of Teachers [26] asserts that school heads also exercise significant

influence on teacher professional development. Accordingly, four areas where they have the opportunity to have a substantial impact on teacher professional development are;

- The school head as an instructional leader and learner;
- The creation of a conducive professional development environment for teachers;
- Direct involvement in the design and delivery of staff development content; and
- The assessment and evaluation of staff development outcomes particularly at the broader school level.

Notably, this is in the context where the school head is considered as essentially an educator or a head teacher [6].

Furthermore, Darling-Hammond & Sykes [46] note that there is a large body of evidence that identifies one of the key roles of the school head as the design of principles for effective, high quality professional development for teachers. For them, developing guidelines for the design, delivery and evaluation of staff development is an important step in the development of professional learning cultures in schools. The difficult task for the school head often comes in putting the design principles into practice; particularly with regards identifying competent educators who can take responsibility to facilitate specific professional development programmes for fellow teachers in the face of dynamic and complex environments of schools. For Barth [27], the bottom-line of the matter is that the school head or principal; though he or she is primarily a teacher, is in a unique position to influence the organisation of staff development and to affect the overall quality of teacher professional development within the school.

From the foregoing reviewed related literature, the researchers comprehend that school staff development is essentially targeted at educators or teachers who broadly include ‘classroom practitioners’ and ‘head teachers’; as they are arguably the most central stakeholders of staff development within the school system. It is from staff development that educators’ knowledge and pedagogical skills are enhanced; leading to improved learner performance, general school effectiveness and the attainment of quality education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the qualitative research methodology which is generally appropriate when a social problem needs to be explored, or because we need a detailed understanding of the problem or issue at stake [28, 29]. The case study method or design which Eisenhardt [30] defined as “an in-depth examination of an extensive amount of information about very few units or cases for one period or across multiple periods

of time” was utilised. It is a research strategy which focuses on understanding the social dynamics present within single or specific cases.

The case of five primary schools in Hwange District of Matabeleland North Province in Zimbabwe was, accordingly, used. The case study method was preferred mainly because of its several advantages including its perspicuity in eliciting participants’ perceptions through their lived experiences, knowledge, beliefs and assumptions [31, 32]. In addition, the case study was preferred because it is concerned with a rich and vivid description of events relevant to specific cases which are studied in their real contexts [33, 34]. The study population, which Kuhn [35], Marshall and Gretchen [36] view as the totality of all elements or subjects that conform to a set of specifications, comprising of the entire group of persons that are of interest to the researcher and to whom the research results can be generalized, comprised senior primary school teachers and head teachers in the area under study.

A sample of 30 (n=30) primary school senior teachers and head teachers in equal proportions from each school was considered for the study. The sample was obtained through the Purposive sampling method, which Best and Kahn [35] echoed by Godwin [37] say that it essentially involves choosing the most qualifying individuals to serve as participants; ensuring that the entire sample’s elements have similar or related characteristics. Using the technique, the researchers were able to identify data rich sources [38] as in the current study; senior primary school teachers and heads were the rich data sources as they all had wide experience in teaching in general and staff development in particular as either participants or facilitators.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were used as the research technique while FGD guides were utilised as the actual instruments to gather research data. Consistent with qualitative research [31, 39-41], the researchers were the primary research tools, hence, the moderation of FGDs was done by the researchers. The participants from the selected research sites responded to the FGD guides during different afternoons when they were meant to be involved in school staff development programmes; which allowed for the study to use enough and free time without disturbing children’s learning. Before using the instruments, the researchers pre-tested them with four teachers and one school head from a nearby primary school which was not one of the research sites, thereby enabling the consolidation of items on the FGD guide as found appropriate by the researchers.

Interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) which is appropriate when research data has been gathered through mediums such as the qualitative researcher, interviews, focus groups, observation, and

so on was done [38, 42]. The data was then simply presented in prose form which literally reflected the senior primary school teachers’ and heads’ perceptions of their role in both the planning and implementation of staff development programmes in the different schools they were stationed. In spite of the researchers being educationists with comprehensive background experiences in school staff development, the limitation of researcher bias was circumvented through ‘phenomenological bracketing’ of personal experiences and perspectives as recommended by Chan *et al.*, [43] and Ray [44]. Accordingly, the researchers were, therefore, able to explore teachers’ perceptions on their role in the organisation of staff development independent of their bias.

STUDY FINDINGS

The study revealed the following findings;

- Teachers generally understood school staff development to mean an array of related notions; as the following excerpts from participants show:
 - “School staff development is about us as teachers coming together in order to share ideas on how to improve our teaching”;
 - “To me, it means formally organised school-based interaction by us teachers which is meant to promote effective teaching”;
 - “It is whereby we gain increased knowledge and skills about teaching which is meant to benefit our pupils”;
 - “I think it is about helping each other as teachers in areas of need regarding our work, such as interpreting the syllabus, teaching of new subjects, and so on. I am sure my colleagues will agree with me that it is more appropriate now because of the recent introduction of the New Curriculum”;
 - “It involves our work-shopping of each other at school level in areas that are critical to our work as teachers”;
 - “I think it is generally about enlightening each other as teachers on certain areas of teaching that prove difficult to the majority of us”;
 - “Since we are at a school, I think it means school-based programmes meant to equip each other as teachers with teaching skills in specific subjects or topics”;
 - “For me, it is both about sharing new ideas regarding our work as teachers as well as how to deal with school children with learning and behavioural problems. I say so because as qualified teachers, we are generally familiar with classroom management since we learnt it at College”;
 - “I take it to mean all the in-service training experiences here at school which are meant to help us as teachers to gain more teaching skills so that we become better teachers”;

From the above, it is noted that teachers understood school professional development as a process intended for their benefit; that it entailed organised sessions where they are enlightened by school authorities or among themselves on different issues relating to their work. In other words, it involved sharing of ideas on pedagogical and other school related issues in order to improve the teachers' performance [12, 14].

- Teachers indicated that they played different roles in the planning and implementation of school staff development programmes; as expressed in the excerpts which follow;
- “We sometimes identify problem areas within our teaching role; such as syllabus interpretation, scheming, teaching of specific subjects and topics in which we need assistance. However, most of the time staff development topics are suggested for us by school management particularly the school head”;
- “Most of us as senior teachers are sometimes involved in facilitation of topics as and when assigned by the school head; such as the teaching of specific subject topics, especially the ones we majored at College”.
- We are also given an opportunity to conduct class demonstrations while fellow teachers observe or we observe fellow teachers teach. In this way, we benefit from each other's feedback”
- “If given the task to facilitate in a staff development session, I personally do some research and prepare some notes which I will use for facilitation”;
- “One of our common roles as teachers is participation during staff development sessions; for example, we make contributions, ask questions, respond to questions, work in groups and so on”
- “I am often assigned by the school head or teacher-in-charge to write minutes of a staff development session”;
- “As one of the most senior teachers at this school, I sometimes chair staff development sessions if the school head and teachers-in charge are not around;”
- “In some instances, we are given an opportunity to identify learning challenges of some pupils then recommend to school authorities the need to have staff development sessions in order to share ideas on how to help them”;
- “Another important role we play is to implement in the classroom what we would have learnt during specific staff development sessions”;
- “I personally do classroom evaluation of the impact of what I would have learnt in a staff development session. For example, as an Infant Teacher, I can do this through assessing my pupils' ability to read after attending a session on ‘How to improve infants' reading”;

Thus, the teachers indicated that in school staff development, they played a number of roles such as facilitating at sessions [21], conducting demonstrations, evaluating fellow teachers' work in the classroom, serving as rapporteurs, participating in the sessions and monitoring the implementation of specific programme outcomes.

- On the other hand, school heads and teachers in charge, who were primarily considered as educators or teachers in this study; played even more critical roles in staff development planning and implementation; as the following excerpts show;
- “As the head of the school, I design the school staff development plan (SSDP) usually in consultation with my deputy head and teachers in charge (TICs). We usually do a termly plan based on what we think would benefit teachers though we sometimes consider some of the teachers' recommendations”;
- “I determine the most suitable time for the conduct of staff development sessions basing on the flexibility of the school timetable”;
- “I often undertake facilitation of staff development sessions; particularly regarding administrative issues such as circulars, ministerial policies and regulations”;
- “I am responsible for identifying teachers who are qualified and experienced in specific areas then assigning them tasks to facilitate in some of the staff development sessions”;
- “I or my deputy head chairs the staff development meetings but if both of us are not there, we assign the TIC or the most senior teacher to do so”
- “I write termly reports on staff development sessions in which I highlight important issues such as number of sessions held, achievements, challenges faced and so on”;
- “I am responsible for the creation of a conducive environment for effective school staff development. This can include a flexible timetable, use of a suitable venue, provision of appropriate resources if available”;
- “I also liaise with other schools on their staff development initiatives in order to learn from their experiences so that such experiences can also be implemented within my school”;
- “I also ensure the successful implementation of set staff development programmes and try to follow up so that they lead to teacher effectiveness and high student outcomes. In relation to this, I evaluate specific professional development outcomes at school level; such as the grade seven pass rate, change of school tone and so on”.

From the list of roles given above, head teachers and teachers-in-charge seemed to play the more critical roles of planning the school staff development sessions, deciding on timing of the activities and the facilitators, facilitating some sessions,

creating environments for effective school staff development and evaluating the effectiveness of the school staff development programmes for the school. Most of the roles by the school heads were found to be in harmony with reviewed related literature by the American Federation of Teachers [26], Bredeson [6] and Darling-Hammond and Sykes [46]. This implies that teachers were more of recipients of school staff development; negating Sparks and Louck-Horsley's [18] theory; that effective school staff development should be self-directed.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that primary school teachers were generally involved in the planning and implementation of school staff development programmes, as either senior classroom practitioners, teachers in charge or school heads. However, ordinary teachers were involved minimally in the running of the staff development sessions as revealed by some of the excerpts above.

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the researchers recommended that even though teachers were involved in the organisation of staff development, their involvement would be more effective if;

- Teachers were to be involved in the design of the school staff development plan (SSDP) including having a consensus on their current and future staff development needs as well as the related goals thereof;
- Teachers were to be involved in determining the suitable time (basing on the flexibility of their class timetables) for staff development as well as identifying suitable facilitators from among themselves;
- Teachers were rewarded for participation in staff development programmes, such as getting acknowledgements of participation through school-based certificates, some form of promotion where appropriate and so on;
- Primary schools would establish a school staff development committee (SSDC), made up of senior teachers who majored in different subject areas which would enable the committee to have a diversity of ideas and content for the staff development sessions. The school head could be an Ex-officio member of the committee;
- Staff development programmes were to be chaired on exchange basis by senior teachers rather than by the School Head or his Deputy always. In the same vein, teachers, should take more responsibility of the conduct of staff development sessions in order to foster a spirit of ownership and sustainability.
- Teachers were to be given opportunity to participate in staff development at broader scales, such as at cluster, district, provincial and national levels. By so doing, primary school teachers would

be able to share experiences and standard practices in their professional development;

The researchers also recommend that a study on the professional development of teachers be conducted at a larger scale as the current one was based on limited cases (i.e. selected primary schools in one district of Matabeleland North Province in Zimbabwe).

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