Journal of Studies in Social Sciences
ISSN 2201-4624
Volume 17, Number 2, 2018, 89-111

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Inclusion of Home Economics Industrial Subjects in the Curriculum of Masvingo High Schools, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to find out the inclusion levels of Home Economics industrial subjects in the curriculum of Masvingo high schools, Zimbabwe. This inquiry employed a descriptive survey design so as to establish the inclusion levels of the industrial subjects. A sample of forty-two participants was conveniently sampled from six high schools which were also conveniently selected from fifteen high schools in Masvingo. In-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires were used as instruments to collect data from the school heads, Home Economics teachers and school pupils studying Home Economics subjects, respectively. Data were presented in narrative form and analysed around the research questions. The findings from this present study revealed that only six schools out of the fifteen high schools in the district are offering industrial subjects. The study established that three government schools and one mission school offered the subjects because they were chosen as pilot schools. This may imply that there is very little which is happening as far as the inclusion levels of the very important industrial subjects. The study also revealed that the major factors inhibiting the implementation of the policy to include industrial subjects in high schools were lack of resources, knowledge and information about the importance of the vocational subjects. The study therefore recommends that there is need for all stakeholders to put concerted efforts and finance the Home Economics subjects in order to improve on the implementation levels. School heads and or school administrators should be conscientised by the curriculum implementation section of the Ministry of Education on the importance of industrial subjects.

Key words: industrial subjects, home economics, domestic subjects, inclusion, education

Introduction and background of study

The introduction of industrial Home Economics subjects in Zimbabwean high schools has, of late, come under spot-light by most educationists. Inclusion levels of Home Economics industrial subjects in Zimbabwean high schools has become a cause for concern because if these subjects are well-taught students acquire skills that are essential for survival and that are important in the creation of self employment. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) cited in the Zimbabwe's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TEVT) report (2005), the inclusion of technical subjects in Zimbabwe requires special attention. Such an attention might improve the inclusion levels and address the concerns that emanated from the abolishment of the F2 system, a pre-independence education system which focused on crafts or practical subjects. This system was replaced after the introduction of vocational and technical subjects in high schools at Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 (UNESCO TEVT Report, 2005). Before independence, the teaching of practical skills was focused on training scholars who would become good mothers and fathers who would be able to take care of their families. It also aimed at producing individuals who would work as domestic workers in the homes of the affluent. The main reason for phasing out of F2 system after independence was therefore aimed to replace the domestic oriented system with that which promoted the development of technical and vocational skills which equipped pupils with occupational skills for self or formal employment (Mupinga et al. 2005)

Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2013) contend that there is a controversy on the nature of the curriculum that should be offered to schools such as domestic or industrial oriented in developing countries such as Zimbabwe. The debate is centered on how developing countries may reduce the effects of poverty on the ordinary citizen through vocational and technical education. They, however, argue that developing economies need an education system that produces people who meet the needs of the society and have

practical survival skills (Little, 2008). In Zimbabwe, such an initiative was brought forward in the back-drop of the nation's attempt to get rid of the F2 colonial education system on crafts and practical subjects that the newly independent saw as reserved for the black Zimbabweans who were considered to be slow learners. According to Nziramasanga, (1999) the pre-colonial education system considered practical subjects as for the slow learners. This stereotypical attitude could be the reason why the subjects in the curriculum were mostly domestic-oriented Home Economics subjects.

There was a paradigm shift after both the educationists and industrialists in Zimbabwe realised that the education system was producing graduates who were basically trained to use domestic machines and techniques that were not aligned with mass production. For a long time, education in Zimbabwe had been dominated by the traditional practical subjects such as Home Economics, Woodwork and Metalwork (UNESCO Zimbabwe TEVT report, 2005). The government's realisation that there was the need to modify and align the technical subjects with the demands of the industry and commerce inspired the change from domestic-oriented practical subjects to technical and vocational subjects, the latter of which were industrial and design oriented. This resonates with Avodo's (2014) assertion that technical and vocational education sustains the technological and industrial growth of the nation's economy.

Education systems in the colonial era in Africa including Zimbabwe were heavily criticized for being too theoretical and for ignoring the practical aspects that could prepare youths for productive careers (UNESCO, 2008). Similarly, in 1997 educationists in Hong Kong saw the need to introduce technical education in the school system alongside the structural changes in the Hong Kong economy (Hong Kong Education Bureau, 2011). This was consistent with the economic changes that were taking place across the globe where technical skills were considered critical for the development of the industry. In that case, the role of education was not only to enhance learning capabilities among students but also to develop values that could enable them to become

productive, self-reliant, versatile, civic-minded, as well as to be mentally, emotionally and physically fit citizens (Values Education, 2008).

Mupinga, Burnett and Redmann (2005) assert that vocational programs in high schools provide the skills and competencies that are required for gainful formal and/or informal employment. The argument is that industrial production is done on a large scale while domestic production is for the small scale production of goods. Machinery used in the industry is more complicated and technologically more sophisticated than the domestic ones. There are also some industrial machines which have no domestic versions such as large electric cookers and flocking machines. The Nziramasanga Commission in 1999 was tasked by the Government of Zimbabwe to look into the education system focusing on the quality of education offered to the people of Zimbabwe. The commission recommended that industrial practical subjects be compulsory in both primary and secondary.

Mupinga et al. (2005) state that lack of resources and absence of a clear cut implementation strategy have hindered the implementation of the process of including practical subjects, and Home Economics in particular, in the high school curriculum. At middle secondary school in Zimbabwe, which is forms 3 and 4 (an equivalent to GCE 'O' Level), students are expected to study, in addition to the academic subjects, at least two Technical and Vocational subjects and one Business/Commercial subject. A fairly wide range of Technical and Vocational subjects are on offer, and examined at the end of 'O' Level. These include, among others, Agriculture, Building Studies, Fashion and Fabrics, Food and Nutrition, Home Management, Metalwork, Technical Graphics, Woodwork, Business Studies, Commerce, Computer Studies, Economics, Art and Music. The vocational subjects that are offered as single subject courses are examined by the Higher Education Examinations Council (HEXCO) leading to a National Foundation Certificate (NFC) qualification. The subjects on offer fall under the following categories: Applied Arts, Automotive Engineering, Building Construction and Allied Trades, Computer

Studies, Electrical Engineering, Hotel Catering and Tourism, Mechanical Engineering, Science and Technology, and Performing Arts (extract from Speech given by David Coltart; Zimbabwe Minister of Higher Education, African Brains Conference, 2012).

The then Domestic Science which was done during the colonial era was given a new name Home Economics after 1980 when Zimbabwe got its independence. This was mainly done to include the economic aspect into the subject, and not the industrial one (David Coltart; Zimbabwe Minster of Higher and Tertiary Education, African Brains Conference, 2012). The new subject name, Home Economics, is still linked to domesticity because of the descriptor 'Home' which implies domestic work. Domestic sewing and cooking, for instance, are quite different from the industrial garment construction and catering, respectively. The Zimbabwean curriculum Needle Work at primary is Fashion and Fabrics at High school and Clothing Technology at tertiary level. Tertiary level subjects focus on industrial techniques as they train for the industry. The gap and lack of alignment between primary and high school domestic oriented subjects have caused the introduction of industrial subjects such as industrial pattern construction, garment construction and catering at National Foundation Certificates which are used as entry point to National Certificate at polytechnic college. Mumbengegwi (2001) suggests that there was a shift in the focus of high school education to emphasise design and technology. This implies that the introduction of technical and vocational subjects in high schools adds value to the subjects as they are linked to the industry.

The call from the government for schools to introduce industrial subjects such as industrial pattern construction, garment construction and catering seemed to be an awakening call to the schools to consider the importance of a smooth progression from high school to tertiary education (Nziramasanga, 1999). The government of Zimbabwe, in response to the Nziramasanga commission of 1999, committed itself to improving the quality and relevance of the education system through vocationalisation of the high school curriculum in order to link it to the polytechnics and industry (Raftopoulos, 2003).

The mismatch between domestic subjects and industrial subjects had been a result of the conflicting ideas in the two syllabuses. This is because the terms and procedure in both syllabuses are different in that the industrial version focuses on rapid mass production whereas the domestic version focuses on domestic and utilises slow and more complicated methods that are linked more to tailoring, which is an expensive way of constructing clothes. The use of high tech machinery in the industry has also revealed the gap in knowledge on how to use equipment that exists between students who study the different Home Economics subjects. For instance, in the use of commercial patterns the emphasis is on how to use commercially ready-made patterns and how one can adapt the patterns while in industrial pattern construction the emphasis is on designing and constructing own patterns rather than using ready-made patterns. The approaches and equipment used in the teaching of domestic and industrial subjects were therefore different.

The inclusion of the industrial subjects in the high schools also encourages specialisation that leads to refinement of skills. Ngerechi (2003) posits that vocationalisation of the curriculum helps in refining students' skills and encourages specialisation that produces not only craftsmen, artisans, technicians but also technologists. So far, Home Economics subjects seem to lack specialisation at high school level. Fashion and Fabrics combines a bit of textile fibres, commercial patterns, and sewing of garments. The industrial version for Fashion and Fabrics streamlines the areas such as pattern construction, garment construction and textile science. These subjects are treated as stand-alone subjects in-order to encourage specialisation which is a requirement in factories in order to achieve mass production. This enables the production of good products which compete on the market. The domestic version trains students to manage home and small scale problems associated with fashion and fabrics. Indoshi, Wagah and Agak (2010) posit that skills training stimulate self confidence and self-reliance that lead to creativity and self-employment. The proposal to include home economics vocational subjects seems to have

faced the challenge of lack of equipment. Industrial and high tech equipment is expensive for most schools which are self-funding. Parents raise funds for tuition and to buy consumables and get very little support from the government. Mudekunye, Manwa and Manwa (2012) observe that the funding system for practical subjects in Zimbabwe is inadequate and most schools offering practical subjects are underfunded. Funding of practical subjects has also become a burden to most parents who are marginalized due to economic challenges (Kapungu, 2007).

There are, however, many more several issues that influence the teaching of industrial subjects at high schools. Besides the challenge of resources, there is the issue to do with whether the domestic and industrial subjects versions be both offered concurrently or that the domestic version should be phased out. The implementation process has been successful to a certain extent in government schools. However, most council and private schools have not yet adopted the idea. It is against this background that the study seeks to find out what is the real problem causing this non-compliance.

Factors that influence the inclusion of the subjects in schools

School administrators and Home Economics teachers in Zimbabwe are the key players in the implementation of the subjects since there is no clear policy that makes it an obligation for all schools to offer the subjects. Griffiths (2005) emphasises the role of school administrators and teachers in the implementation of any curriculum. This may imply that some school heads may have their reasons for not implementing vocational subjects in their school curriculum. In Zimbabwe, there is no sustainable funding policy for technical and vocational subjects since the 2001 and 2002 policies left the initiative to the individual school heads whether to implement or not the industrial subjects (UNESCO Zimbabwe TEVT report, 2005).

It seems that some government schools which have better facilities were encouraged to include the industrial subjects in their curriculum. Private schools such as mission and council schools have the choice of leaving these subjects out since they may have limited

facilities. According to UNESCO Zimbabwe TEVT report (2005) many school heads opt to allocate minimum funds to vocational and technical subjects due to financial constrains. Some group A schools which have excellent facilities may not be aware of the programs or their importance. In support of this view, Nagard (2006) posits that the attitude of considering white collar jobs as more prestigious than blue collar jobs may cause some school heads to ignore practical subjects. In addition, some Home Economics teachers who were trained during the colonial era may not be aware of such developments since they were taught the domestic and not the industrial version. The same applies to the old school heads who may fail to reconcile the domestic version and the industrial version since they may find no reason to implement the new industrial program.

The teaching of industrial subjects in Zimbabwe is a brain child of the post-independence government. The post independent government saw vocational education as one of the answers to the creation of jobs. Zengeya (2007) states that, Zimbabwe, in response to the emerging economic challenges, decided that vocational training could help solve the problem of unemployment. It was discovered that industrial subjects could lead to self employment given that there were finances available to start one's own business. Similarly, Hawke (2000) and Lynch (2000) posit that the purpose of vocational and technical subjects in high schools is to provide individuals with occupational skills for self employment and also for employment in specific jobs. The emphasis on practical skills in Zimbabwe has prompted the introduction of polytechnics in all the country's provinces.

National Foundation subjects when done in high schools will progress to national certificate in Polytechnics. Such progression is far much better than from the domestic syllabus to industrial syllabus. The gap in the knowledge of the importance of such smooth progression has caused a challenge in the implementation process. School administrators who belong to the post-independence curriculum may be aware of the

importance of industrial subjects but lack both material and human resources. Lack of finance and teachers who were trained to teach vocational subjects may be an inhibiting factor.

Another problem could be that educational sponsors such as parents may find it difficult to pay for extra costs of consumables since the pupils could then be studying both the vocational and domestic subjects. For instance, a student could be taking Fashion and Fabrics for ZIMSEC and Pattern Technology for HEXCO, respectively. Mudekunye et al. (2012) aver that parents were over burdened by the demands from schools. This was because parents contributed in various means such as paying tuition fees, practical fees, levies and also in kind. Grants from the government were not enough to run the schools hence the need for parents to assist in a greater way. Coordinating two subjects which are examined by two boards could also be a challenge to some school heads that are used to the traditional Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC) board expectations. Administering two parallel examinations at one school may also be a challenge in terms of time tabling and the facilities to cater for both examinations. The fear of change by school administrations, teachers and pupils could also be a discouraging factor in the implementation process. Parents may also be afraid of change thereby discouraging their children to do the vocational subjects. However, those few parents who are aware of the advantages of the subjects may even initiate their inclusion in the nearby schools.

The high costs and the difference in industrial tools and equipment which are used by those offering the domestic version has discouraged most Home Economics teachers and administrators to introduce the subjects. Mudekunye et al. (2012) posit that procurement of industrial equipment is expensive. They also note that in-service training for teachers on how to use high tech machinery may be too costly to most school. Some of the equipment are very expensive while some may be reasonable but some teachers lack the knowledge on how to use the equipment and tools may be a challenge. In the case of garment construction, it can be noted that heavy duty industrial machines are expensive

and need a lot of space. The latter problem may create another problem of building structures that can accommodate the machinery. Back-up facilities of most sewing machines may also be a problem as most of them are imported.

It is against this background that the current study seeks to establish

a) the level of inclusion of home economics industrial/vocational subjects in high schools
b) the factors that influence the inclusion of vocational subjects in high schools,

Methodology

This study sought to find out the levels of inclusion of Home Economics industrial subjects in the curriculum of selected high schools in Masvingo. This qualitative research employed a descriptive survey in-order to find out the factors that influence the implementation of the policy to include industrial subjects in high schools by paying attention to six schools in the district of Masvingo. The descriptive survey was the most suitable since there was the need to study a phenomenon in its natural setting (Creswell, 2007; Denscombe, 2007). The descriptive survey was chosen for its strengths of allowing the researcher to include a greater number of participants as compared to case studies. Denzil and Lincolin (2005) assert that a descriptive survey is suitable for gathering detailed data from a relatively large number of people. Inclusion level of the industrial Home Economics subjects is determined by several factors such as attitudes, emotions and feelings of administrators and teachers as well as resources available. The descriptive survey is the best method when dealing with human behaviour (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Gray, 2009). This implies that data from this current study is soft data because it deals with human behaviour which is difficult to quantify.

The tools used to collect data for this study were interviews and open-ended questionnaires. Boyce and Neale (2006) suggest that the primary advantage of in-depth interviews is that they provide much more detailed information than some data collecting instruments. Interviews were done with Home Economics teachers since they are the key

implementers. They may decide to or not to introduce the subjects as so many variables are involved in the inclusion process. Open-ended questionnaires were used on school administrators and high school home economics students since they are pivotal in including the subjects in the school curriculum. Interviews were conducted by the researcher and took one hour per individual. Open-ended questionnaires were chosen to collect data since they give room for self-expression and opinions (Creswell, 2007). They also give an opportunity the participants to say their opinions without reservation as anonymity was maintained. The open-ended questionnaires were administered and collected by the researcher soon after the exercise.

The targeted population is the two thousand students in fifteen high schools in Masvingo district urban schools, both government and privately owned schools. Forty-two participants were conveniently sampled. Twelve school administrators, two from each school; twelve Home Economics teachers, two from each school, and eighteen pupils; three from each school, made up the sample. Cohen et al. (2011) suggests that the sample should reasonably represent the population. A sample of six schools were purposively sampled in order to include two government, one council, two mission schools and one elite private school. Two government schools were chosen since there are offering the subjects. Only one school in the area is offering the subjects and does not offer industrial subjects so the very big council and mission schools were chosen so as to find out why they are not offering the industrial subjects. Bogdan (2007) suggests that the use of purposive sampling is ideal when seeking information that requires specialised participants.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Data were presented in tables, narrative form and analysed thematically. Emerging themes were discussed and analysed around the research questions.

Level of inclusion of Home Economics industrial subjects in the curriculum of high schools and possible solutions

The findings from the present study revealed that only three government and one mission school offer the subjects from more than fifteen schools in the district. It was sad to note that from the six sample schools the three which were not offering the subjects seemed to have very little interest of offering the subjects in future.

THE STATISTICS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION LEVELS

	Number of Schools	Number of schools Offering the subjects	Percentage per section
Government Schools	5	3	60%
Council Schools	4	0	0%
Mission Schools	4	1	25%
Elite group A Schools	2	0	0%

The figures reflected in the table above indicate that very little is going on in terms of level of implementing. The myriad of factors that inhibits the implementation of levels need to be looked into and find possible solutions said one of the Home Economics teachers. From the findings it is inevitable that there are challenges faced by all stake holders who should implement the industrial subjects. This finding is consistent with Mudekunye's et al. (2012) observation that parents as the major sponsors of the education are struggling to fully sponsor it. Practical subjects in particular are inadequately funded due to the numerous requirements (Kapungu, 2007; Ndyanda & Mavuna, 2004).

The major factors such as lack of information, finances and negative attitudes need to be looked into first and then the trivial issues of numbers of subject takers maybe dealt with. Indoshi et al. (2010) suggest that environmental, administrative and curriculum related factors should be addressed first in order to achieve effective implementation of practical

subjects. The fact that NFC is offered by the ministry of primary and secondary Education but is examined under the ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education implies that the two ministries are not working closely with each other in order to close the gap in the provision of information. The Ministry of Higher Education is not directly supervising the implementation of the policy to include the subjects in schools so that they can assess the implementation levels. This means that if both ministries do not liaise with each other as they do not work together. The gap causes most schools not to be informed about the subjects and then those who are still to offer may not be encouraged to do so. When the ministries are not working together might not be able to solve some of the challenges that hinder the implementation process. A well laid out policy that encourages all high schools to implement the policy, with incentives attached, is not in place.

The low levels of implementation have been linked to unavailability of finance. Finances have been noted as a major constraint in the sense that they are used for procurement can be improved by means of involving donors and the industry in furnishing the laboratories. In the case of catering and clothing technology the industries concerned such as hospitality and the clothing industry respectively may be engaged in the formation of syllabuses so that they may be involved and have the interest in establishing the subjects. Most school heads were advocating the involvement of the industry as the major client of industrial subjects. Ngerechi (2003) suggest that to achieve the goals for technical and vocational subjects there is need for cost sharing by the government, industry and non-government organisations. The government can also furnish the laboratories which would be manned by the Ministry of Higher Education. Incentives in form of donations may be sourced in order to encourage more schools to offer the subjects.

The low levels of implementation in government, mission council and private schools are linked to the problem of attitude. Commenting on the issue of negative attitudes and low levels of implementation most participants said that there is a relationship. However, respondents felt that the issue of attitudes could be managed by a rigorous campaign on

the importance of the subjects which are not in place as yet. Very few written pamphlets and are not distributed to schools so as to inform prospective practical subjects students on the need to take up industrial subjects. Government should commission tertiary institutes to run teacher training courses for in-servicing teachers of business and technological subjects to equip them with updated knowledge about the subjects they will teach while the Education Department should conduct seminars and workshops with emphasis on teaching methodology and a change of attitudes (Hong Kong Education Bureau, 2011). Similarly, Sahu (2008) and Olunwa (2007) suggest that to maximize the usefulness of technical education, the trainee, staff situation, funding and social services must be effectively engaged with and exploited. One Home Economics teacher who was commenting on the opportunities that await those students who study industrial subjects noted that information on future prospects and the channels or avenues of higher levels of progression can be helpful. He also noted that even if one dropped out of school one would remain self-reliant if one had studied industrial subjects. Such attitudes could help to raise the implementation levels in schools. He lamented that the levels were still down because there were few workshops being held and the media was not being effectively used to disseminate the information of the advantages of including these subjects in high school. Parents and pupils, therefore, remained uninformed on the importance of the subjects. Guidance and counselling lessons were also hardly used to guide students on the relevance of these subjects hence the generally low levels of inclusion.

Factors that influence the inclusion of Industrial Home Economics subjects in the Zimbabwe school curriculum

The present study revealed that the major factors inhibiting the implementation of the policy to include industrial subjects in high schools were lack of knowledge and information about the importance of the vocational subjects. Lack of financial and human resources was also mentioned as a serious challenge for most schools. Berns (2007) posits

that if the government had not involved parents to educate their children, other education systems in developing countries could have collapsed by now. Vocational and technical subjects receive minimum support which is a cause for concern in most African countries including Zimbabwe. In the same vein, Mudekunye et al. (2012) assert that education in Zimbabwe is mostly sponsored by parents and most of them are struggling to meet the demands of the education system. This implies that there are no proper funding strategies for vocational subjects. Gatawa (2003) avows that most schools offering practical subjects are under funded by the government. It is well known that many of schools throughout the African continent lack the resources, lack the equipment that is needed to ensure that an adequate vocational education is provided to children (extract from Speech given by David Coltart; Zimbabwe minster of higher education at African Brains Conference, 2012)..

Most school administrators in private schools indicated that they were not aware of the idea to include industrial subjects in the school curriculum. Some school administrators were aware that there were such subjects but did not have the right information on the implementation procedure. This is despite the fact that UNESCO Zimbabwe TEVT report (2005) suggests that dissemination of information be the responsibility of the government through in-service training of school heads and specialist practical subject teachers. Zengeya (2010) asserts that the implementation of the policy to include technical and vocational subjects was not very effective due to the failure by the all stake holders to meet the training demands in order to effectively implement the teaching of the subjects. Most Home Economics teachers were aware of the importance of the subjects especially the younger generation but were either not sure of the demands or afraid of change. One middle aged female teacher said that it was lack of training and subject knowledge that caused the elderly teachers to lack the confidence to introduce the new subjects. Another seasoned Home Economics teacher also stated that she had been trained to teach

domestic subjects since the polytechnics were introduced only after Zimbabwe's independence in 1980.

Some teachers said that they were trained at teacher's training colleges which were using the colonial syllabus which regarded practical subjects as for slow learners hence they needed to train them to be domestic workers and also for small scale productions. Another finding from one of the teachers stated that lack of resources was the challenge regarding the production of teachers who could teach vocational education. This problem arose from the fact that in Zimbabwe the tradition has been to teach academically orientated subjects so there are very few teachers with the necessary skills to teach vocational subjects (extract from Speech given by David Coltart [Zimbabwe minster of higher education] at African Brains Conference, 2012).

Some school heads were skeptical about the future prospects of the pupils who did the subjects. They were not aware of the fact that national foundation certificate (NFC) and fashion and fabrics (F/F) subjects were important in different contexts. For instance, NFC is more important when entering polytechnics and F/F equally important when entering Á level and teachers' colleges. Such gaps in knowledge have caused some administrators to take industrial subjects as a myth. This could be exemplified in the response of one school head of a former group 'A' (former expensive schools for the elite) high school for the elite who seemed to have an attitudinal problem. In his response the school head showed that at their school they considered sports as more important than other practical subjects. Art and design, as a technical subject, is also more highly rated than other subjects to the extent that it overshadows other practical subjects and sports such as hockey, cricket and swimming. This is consistent with Andosh et al's (2010) observation that in elite schools art is more highly rated and is offered by most private elite schools. Their curriculum provides a lot of time to sports. Most of their funds are also channeled towards sports. Home Economics teachers cited such negative attitudes towards other practical subjects as a challenge. Another point they noted was that most school heads

focused their attention on theory subjects and looked down upon practical subjects. Such attitudes influenced the low level of support school administrators gave to known practical subjects.

One school head whose school offered the industrial subjects said that the government had imposed the inclusion of the practical subjects against their wishes. He, however mentioned that as time went on, they realised the importance of the practical subjects and have since opted to introduce more of these subjects such as Computers that are examined by HEXCO. Some Home Economics teachers indicated that they had a negative attitude towards the subjects since they were expected to campaign and convince the students to do the subjects. Most students' parents rate practical subjects as especially for slow learners because of the colonial mentality (Indoshi, 2010; UNESCO Zimbabwe TEVT report, 2005). In addition, pupils were not forced to do more than one practical subject so taking up a second subject was a matter of choice. Some H/E teachers were failing to have subject takers even with the good attitude and enthusiasm most teachers noted that it was a challenge to secure a viable or reasonable classes for the industrial subjects. Research suggests that the inclusion of a technical curriculum in schools is supposed to be in the early stages of the student's learning so as to instil a positive attitude towards vocational and technical subjects at tender age (Hong Kong Education Bureau, 2011). Teachers revealed that pupils were known to be complaining of the time factor and resources. For instance, a student who was in a Fashion and Fabrics class indicated that their hands were already full and that they could not afford to take up any more subjects. The school head of one mission day school offers the industrial subjects because they were chosen as a pilot school and eventually adopted the idea as they discovered that it was for the advantage of the pupils.

Most Home Economics teachers who participated in this research expressed disappointment that the industrial subjects were allocated by the school administrators to the weak classes. Indoshi et al. (2010) posit that ranking of subjects across the

curriculum is one of the major causes of negative attitudes towards practical subjects. This implies that rating other subjects as more important than others undermines the importance of other subjects. This was also cited as a source of discouragement to the Home Economics teachers since some of the weaker classes were said by the teachers to be having pupils with behaviour problems. It was also revealed that the teaching of subjects such as Garment Construction required self-motivation since there is need for the teacher/student to apply her/himself more seriously in order to produce good garments. Some teachers stated that slow learners may find such subjects as a challenge and very bright students usually shun practical subjects as they opt to do science and mathematics.

Conclusion

The findings from this study indicated that there is a lot to be done in order to improve the inclusion levels of Home Economics industrial vocational and technical subjects. Most schools are not offering or including the Home Economics industrial subjects in the curriculum because of many factors such as lack of information and finances. The study concluded that if something is done as a matter of urgency some industrial subjects may die a natural death and treated as non-existent in the Zimbabwean curriculum.

Recommendations

The current study therefore recommends that all the stake holders be involved in the implementation process through financing and educating school heads on the importance of the subjects. In order to achieve more of a balance between academic and vocational subjects there is need to develop funding strategies for schools. Another critical strategy is of course curriculum development and review for all practical subjects that is heavily funded and that obliges school heads to implement the subjects. The industrialists should be involved in both curriculum planning and implementation programs. Projects may be done at local/school levels that are specifically for financing industrial subjects by subject specialists with the help of the school administration.

Construction of school uniforms for the high school involved and neighboring primary schools may be a fundraising project manned by the school through the garment construction section in order to finance the subjects.

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