



School Factors Contributing to Low ZIMSEC Pass Rate: A Case of Tapiwa Primary School, Gweru District in Zimbabwe

Dr. Gambiza Cathrine

Atlantic International University, Honolulu, Hawaii

gambiza0@gmail.com

Abstract: *The research focused on school factors that contribute to low ZIMSEC performance at Tapiwa Primary School Gweru District in the Midlands Province, Zimbabwe. The study sample was composed of (10) participants (5 males and 5 females) it used a Thematic case study research design with a qualitative approach. The findings revealed that there is a significant correlation between ZIMSEC performance and perceptions of learners towards insufficient educational facilities, lack of teaching and learning resources, and inadequate infrastructural resources. Research recommends civil education awareness campaigns to parents, teachers and learners on the importance of appropriate school factors. There is need for school authorities to ensure benefit from government and NGO programs without any corruption. It is further recommended that various stakeholders be involved in the planning of special policies to improve the teaching and learning resources and to look into inadequate infrastructural resources for learners in rural (satellite) schools. Further adjustment of the distribution of materials from Schools' Improvement Grants (SIG) and the engagement of Public Private Partnership (3Ps) to suit needy schools is recommended. Further research on other grey areas that contribute to low ZIMSEC performance in grade seven that were not covered is recommended.*

Keywords: *Performance, Education, ZIMSEC, Teaching, Infrastructure, Zimbabwe*

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1. Introduction

It is a fact that a certain number of ethnic minority children in the West are growing up in poverty. It may seem queer that a developed country has elements of poverty but this makes it clear that poverty is inevitable. Hence, poverty remains a problem across the globe. A research by Boca (2021) reflected that students in Romania appreciated the learning materials for their education. Maffea (2020) identified learners revealing that lack of school resources is extremely detrimental to their learning. However, poverty is more serious in sub-Saharan Africa and Getie (2020) found out that learning environment had negative impacts on students' attitudes in Ethiopia. Chinyoka's (2017) research in Zimbabwe identified that learning materials have a significant correlation to students' performance.

Poverty is not necessarily setbacks but can be setups for comebacks in most societies! The solution to having poverty becoming comebacks lies in situations where people are not quick to solving poverty situations before the desired angle is achieved. The desire for effective teaching and learning resources and to have good pass rates has become a driving force in education within the 21st century, hence this study. It is crucial that teaching and learning resources meet the global standards. Inadequate educational materials result in American students' performance ranking lower than the international average (Wei and Dzung, 2014). Nigeria has been attributed to inadequate instructional materials for effective teaching and learning (Krukru, 2015). Featherstone (2017) noted that education in Sub-Saharan Africa revealed a significant relationship between paucity teaching and learning resources and academic achievement. Therefore, there should be a link between teaching-learning resources and low ZIMSEC performance.

Poverty, a stubborn fact of life even in rich countries, can be rectified after taking note of the societal weak institutions. Curbing such challenges would need a consensus on the solutions before it is late than never. Collective national and global intervention may be the best way out. World Bank (2018) noted that Finland has one of the highest education scores in the world maybe because it has reasonable educational infrastructures in place. Australia fails to meet the global standards due to the shortage of infrastructural resources in the country (Deloitte Access Economics, 2017). A Kenyan research established that poor educational infrastructural resources affect learner performance (Lilian, 2015). Makwinj (2017) reported that Botswana has dilapidated buildings which negatively impact on learner performance. Examination statistics across Zimbabwe authenticate that a number of learners fail their education (Ndlovu, (2017). The researcher intends to unveil the gap of the correlation between inadequate infrastructural resources and low ZIMSEC performance.

There is a knowledge gap on school factors that contribute to low ZIMSEC performance in Gweru District. It is against this background that the study sought to unearth the causes of low ZIMSEC performance at Tapiwa Primary School in the Gweru district of the Midlands Province in Zimbabwe.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This study sought to establish poor educational facilities that contribute to low ZIMSEC performance at Tapiwa Primary School in the Gweru District, Midlands Province in Zimbabwe. The poor ZIMSEC performance prompted the researcher to undertake on a study to establish poor educational facilities that contribute to ZIMSEC pass rate in Gweru District, of the Midlands Province in Zimbabwe.

1.2 Research Objectives

This study was guided by the following research objectives:

1. To establish the perceptions of learners towards lack of educational facilities.
2. To explore lack of teaching and learning resources as poor school factors that contribute to low ZIMSEC performance.
3. To establish inadequate infrastructural resources as poor school factors that lead to low ZIMSEC performance.
4. To suggest intervention strategies that can be used to alleviate the low ZIMSEC pass rate in primary schools.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Framework

Sitko (2013) defines conceptual framework as the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that support and inform about the study. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a psychological theory proposed by Abraham Maslow as noted in sociological books. Professor Maslow's theory parallel many other theories of human developmental psychology. The theory creates a classification system which reflects the universal needs of an individual or society as its base and then proceeding to more acquired emotions. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is used to study how humans intrinsically partake in behavioural motivation (Browning, 2014).

Motivation is an internal or external state of an organism that drives it into action (Browning, 2014). It is thus an energiser of behaviour towards some goal in any direction, positive or negative. According to Akcay and Akyol (2014) extrinsic motivation originates in factors outside the individual. Physiological needs (the strongest and most demanding) are to be satisfied before higher needs can be fulfilled. The physiological needs will be used to describe the effect lack of infrastructure, teaching learning resources have on academic achievement. The physiological needs to be met at school include infrastructural resources, teaching and learning resources, and physical needs. Physiological needs ensure that learners' intrinsic motivation is stirred towards the positive direction.

This theory is relevant in that it gives consideration to the basic human motivation when lower-level needs are satisfied. The school environment needs to cater for teaching and learning resources and infrastructural resources to ensure intrinsic motivation and enhance academic achievement. When basic needs have been satisfied, (by the learner in this case) then the next level is addressed (that is academic achievement). Hence, the nature of moving up the hierarchy of needs is automatically achieved. Maslow's Theory of Motivation addresses that beautifully.

Maslow's hierarchical needs theory is relevant in almost all fields of life because whether you are home or at office you start your day with basic needs. Maslow's hierarchical needs are an on-going process thus learners are motivated at all stages. Once one satisfies the first level, there is that desire to meet other needs, for example, when clothes, food and school resources are taken care of, then self-esteem and motivation become key to excel in their school work (Browning, 2014).

MASLOW'S MOTIVATION MODEL

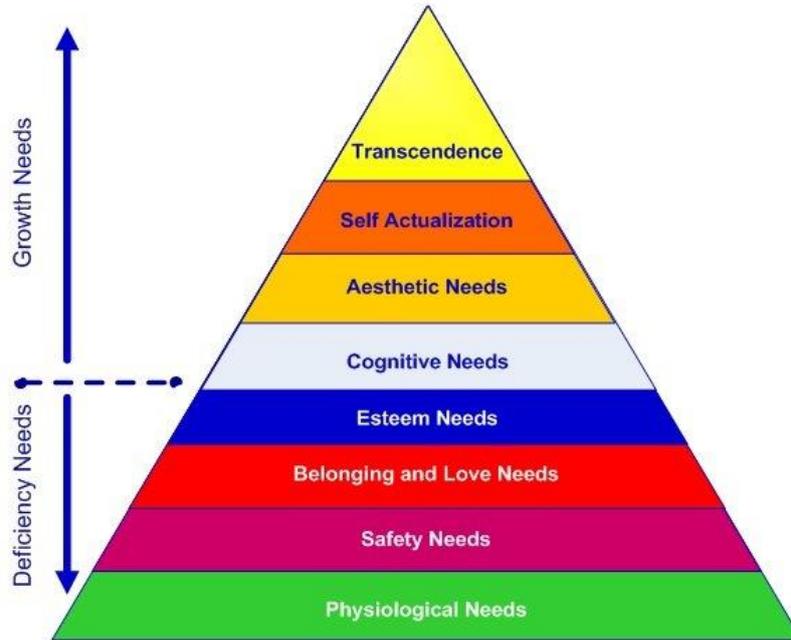


Fig: 1 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Maslow's theory of motivation is very simple to understand. Even laypersons can understand and relate to this theory because we all go through one or the other stage of needs' pyramid during our lifetime. Hence, as far as the poor are concerned, their need will always be limited to the lower level of need on the pyramid restricting any upward fulfilment of the other stages.

One of the disadvantages of the theory is it is very difficult to measure the satisfaction which one gets after satisfying each level of needs. Maslow's theory is subjective in nature as no method or machine can deal with human mind. However, Maslow's Theory of Motivation is still one of the most used and important theory when it comes to measurement of needs hierarchy within human beings.

The researcher differentiated the factors contributing to low pass rate in elementary results in global context, continental context, sub-Saharan context and Zimbabwean experience. The perception of learners towards Mathematics as a subject, inadequate infrastructural resources are, family socio-economic status and the effect of the level of parental involvement are among the factors assessed within this research. Generally, there are analysts coming out with explanations as to why the global, continental, sub-Saharan and national pass rates have dipped. Some of these theories are clearly self-serving with the agenda of the speaker taking primacy over a 360-degree view. There is the need to avoid too broad generalisations and assess each factor within its own context deliberately matching the institutions.

2.2 Learner perceptions towards lack of educational facilities

Findings by Duncombe (2017) indicated that lack of resources in schools is extremely detrimental to the students' learning. Radisic, Videnovic and Baucal (2018) discovered that school socio-economic backgrounds and students' perceptions are relevant to performance in Europe. Kuliya and Usman (2021) unveiled the fact that Nigerian students have a growing interest on e-learning but it is a thorn in the flesh for the country. This research seeks to unmask the student perceptions towards poor school educational facilities and ZIMSEC performance.

2.3 Lack of teaching and learning resources

Teixeira et al (2017) observed that classrooms, laboratories, and equipment are crucial elements of learning environments in schools. According to the World Bank (2018) Uganda had a strong correlation between textbooks availability in the classroom and students' examination performance. Micheal (2015) discovered that many classroom blocks in Tanzania have no computer facility except a school computer laboratory. Tanyanyiwa (2017) revealed that Zimbabwe has inadequate libraries and laboratories which correlate to learner under-performance. Therefore, the quality of learning materials is an ingredient for education. Literature review shows that many researchers argue that the availability of teaching and learning resources appear to be the most consistent factor in predicting learner performance in primary schools. Clear research lenses will be used to clarify how ZIMSEC performance

is related to the availability of teaching and learning resources.

2.4 Inadequate infrastructural resources

Gilavand (2016) showed that appropriate educational furniture had positive impact on the ratio of learning and educational progress of students at elementary level. About 90 percent of children in Sub-Saharan Africa go to primary schools that lack electricity (Toosi et al, 2015). Makwinj (2017) concurs with Sichone (2019) in Malawi saying there are deteriorating standards of classrooms and failure of students in Botswana. Some poor primary girls are likely to miss out lessons after they begin menstruation if sanitary facilities are poor or non-existent. There is inadequacy of learning space and associated facilities in rural and densely populated urban settings (Tanyanyiwa, 2017). Many researchers noted a high correlation between infrastructure resources and learners' achievements. The researcher wonders how the Zimbabwean situation will be like in this regard. The pinnacle of this research rests upon finding the correlation between inadequate infrastructural resources and ZIMSEC performance.

3. Methodology

Methodology can be described as a coherent group of methods that complement one another with the ability to deliver data and findings that reflects the research question suiting the researcher's purpose. The concept called research methodology often refers to methods or a method that is used by the researcher in extracting data from the field or within a specific delimitation often it may also require the researcher to consider concepts that underlie the methods (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). There are three research concepts used in any study namely qualitative, quantitative and the triangulation method which is also known as mixed research. The study employed the qualitative approach to gather poor school factors that contribute to low ZIMSEC performance from the Head of station, deputy head, learners and teachers.

Qualitative research is concerned with detailed descriptions of situations and events. People interact, observe behaviours and discuss their experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts. The study applied qualitative research approach to establish trustworthiness during the process of gathering data for the research. Qualitative approach gathers the attitudes, opinions, behaviours, and other defined variables of the population which is necessary for the rich in-depth data gathering. Qualitative research design is naturalistic in that the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the research setting (Patton, 2015). The approach is significant to the finding rich and comprehensive information of school factors that contribute to low ZIMSEC performance.

3.1 Research Design

The distinct plan on how research problem will be attacked maybe likened to a research design. Creswell and Creswell (2017) define research design as the plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions and control variance. The research design typically includes how the data will be collected, what instruments will be used and how the instruments will be used along with the intended mean for analyzing the data collected. This study followed a case study research design with a qualitative approach using Tapiwa Primary School. A research design is a road map that one decides on to follow during the research journey to find answers to the research questions as trustworthiness, accuracy and as economically as possible. The research design consists of methods and procedures for conducting a research project.

Emphasis is based on the participant's experience and subjective understanding of the research topic. Qualitative research is greatly focused on information rich participants rather than a broader representative sample. The research will not be concerned about the number of people to participate in the research but rather their characteristic to allow diversity. It is argued that good interviews are those in which the subjects are at ease and talk freely about their points of view. Good interviews produce rich data filled with words that reveal the respondents' perspectives. The study area will be in the Midlands Region in Gweru District focusing on Tapiwa Primary School.

3.2 Population of the Study

Population is the aggregate membership of a distinct class of people, objects, or events. Bryman (2016) defines population as a set of all members about which a study intends to make inferences. Thus, population is all the individuals or units of interest and typically there is not available data for almost all individuals in the population. The chosen target population for the research was one hundred percent present. The population targeted in this study was five previous grade seven learners, the head, deputy head of station and two teachers. This study was based on finding poor school factors that contribute to low ZIMSEC pass rate.

3.3. Sample and Sampling Procedure

3.3.1 Sample

A sample is a subset of the total populations selected for observation and analysis. Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) write that a sample is a selected section of the total population which will be under observation and thorough analysis. A sample is a group that is actually studied and drawn from the large population. The knowledge gained from the sample is a piece of the total population under the study. The sample size constituted of five previous grade seven learners, two teachers, a

deputy head and head of station. The sample percentage will be a true representation of the total population. The sample comprised a few individuals who had grade seven experiences. This research will study a representative sample to establish poor school factors that contribute to low ZIMSEC performance.

The number alluded to in the population was too large to use for the purpose of the research so a smaller number was selected in order to analyze data properly. The poor economic situation and the restrictions imposed by COVID-19 limited the researcher to a small sample of one out of 54 primary schools in Gweru District. This might compromise the trustworthiness of the researcher's findings within the district. The sample comprised a head of station, a deputy head, five previous grade seven learners and two teachers who had necessary experiences. The study will unveil school factors that contribute to low ZIMSEC performance using qualitative analysis.

3.3.2 Sampling procedures

Sampling can be said to be a process of drawing a sample from a population. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their study (Cohen et al, 2017). Researchers use purposive sampling when they want to access a particular subset of people, as all participants of a study are selected because they fit a particular profile. Participants who are known or judged to be good sources of information are specifically sorted out and selected for the sample.

In qualitative research, the researcher should try to pick a setting or a group that is large enough so that the research does not stand out, but small enough so that one is not overwhelmed by the task. Convenience or purposive sampling will be used in choosing previous grade seven learners and education professionals as they were concerned with either the teaching, learning or monitoring of educational service in schools. Purposive sampling is when researchers thoroughly think through how they will establish a sample population, even if it is not statistically representative of the greater population at hand (Cohen et al, 2017). As the name suggests, the researcher went to this community on purpose with the impression that these individuals fit the profile of the people that were needed to be reached.

The purposive sampling was chosen because findings do not always have to be statistically representative of the greater population of interest, but is qualitatively generalizable (Tasiran, 2014). Researchers select a better sample after prior information about their particular communities of interest. Purposive sampling has various technique options used which include, typical, extreme or deviant, critical maximum, variation, and homogenous. The researcher used the critical case sampling as a type of purposive sampling in which one case was chosen for investigation because the researcher

believed that by investigating it, insights into other similar cases would be revealed.

Purposive sampling enables researchers to squeeze a lot of information out of the collected data. This allows researchers to describe the major impact their findings have on the population. This sampling method is a popular method used by researchers due to the fact that it is extremely time and cost effective when compared to other sampling methods. Further, the numerous technique options outlined above make purposive sampling a versatile research method that can be tailored to enhance a study's effectiveness. Sometimes purposive sampling may be the only appropriate method available if there are a limited number of primary data sources that can contribute to the study.

The primary downside to purposive sampling is that it is prone to researcher bias, due to the fact that researchers make subjective or generalized assumptions when choosing participants. When researchers need to ensure that elimination of bias is as much as is possible, they are better off using a form of probability sampling. However, researcher bias is only a real threat to a study's credibility when the researcher's judgements are poorly considered, or when they have not been based on clear criteria.

3.4 Data Collection

Qualitative research approach helps ensure trustworthiness of the findings. Miles et al (2014) describe that the qualitative approach gathers the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and other defined variables of the population which is necessary for the rich in-depth data gathering. The researcher applied primary data collection instruments for this study. Primary data was collected through interviews.

3.4.1 Unstructured interview

The use of unstructured interviews was done. Unstructured interviews were conducted with the Head of School, deputy head, teachers and previous grade seven learners. The interviews lasted for at least thirty minutes. The respondents were comfortable to use a mixture of English and Indigenous languages. The unstructured interviews focused on capturing the thoughts, attitudes and experiences of the respondents. The researcher utilized an unstructured interview guide and to collect consistent data through focusing on thematic areas on the guide as highlighted. The use of an unstructured interview guide assisted the researcher to maintain consistency while covering all the thematic areas.

Unstructured interviews were utilized to collect data from the participants. The qualitative research interviews are targeted at gathering descriptive data from lived experiences with much respect to the meaning of the described phenomenon. However, this

study did not use the face-to-face interview due to the COVID-19 pandemic challenges. The interview was administered over the phone for at least forty minutes. The interview was recorded too. The researcher kept the participants guided and on track.

The use of questionnaires gives some degree of non-response among the respondents. The non-response rate is kept to a minimum in unstructured interviews. The researcher patiently waited for each respondent's answer in order to maximise on minimum response rate on school factors that contribute to low ZIMSEC performance. The research had hundred percent subjects' response rate, which was good. The interview was done using a cell phone. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017) an appointment is necessary to ensure that the respondent is not out of place and is psychologically prepared for the interview. Where participants are not psychologically prepared, then the interview process may not continue well. The researcher made appointments over the phone to enhance the psychological preparation of each respondent during the research on the school factors that contribute to low ZIMSEC performance. The same questions were asked to each interviewee, thus enabling the comparison of information given. The use of the same questions helped the researcher explore other important information that arose on the interview session though not pre-set. The interview remained flexible and school factors that contribute to low ZIMSEC were fairly identified.

3.4.2 Data Collection Procedures

Thematic analysis or narrative approach will be used to analyze data. It was chosen based on its strengths of appreciating how stories can bring an understanding about an individual on people's lived experiences (Patton, 2015). Identification of themes was very critical for making sense of the respondents' experiences. The process also involved transcribing and coding the data manually. After coming up with identified codes, themes and categories the data was analyzed.

Data presentation and analysis is a process of editing, coding, classifying and tabulating the collected data. The process involves operations which are performed with the purpose of summarizing and organizing the collected raw data. The Thematic analysis was used to group data into themes. The qualitative data obtained using interviews of the case study was analysed by considering major themes to extract relevant information. This assisted the researcher in making descriptions of the data collected from the field basing on research objectives and derived conclusions on what to take regarding its usefulness.

3.4.3 Prolonged Data Collection Period

The interviews lasted for at least half an hour. The subjects were interviewed more than once to ascertain the results and ensure trustworthiness. The unstructured interviews focused on capturing the thoughts, attitudes

and experiences of the respondents thereby giving trustworthy information. The researcher utilized an unstructured interview guide to collect consistent data through focusing on thematic areas on the guide.

3.5 Ethical Consideration

The researcher ensured freedom of participants by seeking informed consent of all the respondents. Informed consent guaranteed that respondents were aware of the purpose of the study and thus participated freely. A consent form was attached to the interview. All participants were informed about withdrawing from the research at any time if they wished to do so and no obligation would be involved. In cases of the researcher wanting to record some audios, the researcher first sought for consent from the participants before commencing with the interview.

All participants will be assured of their confidentiality during the post research. All participants' rights will be respected during and after the research. The researcher assured the subjects not to reveal their identity off to anyone other than the researcher and her staff (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). The findings were securely stored and only accessible for the research purposes to achieve the maintenance of privacy and confidentiality. The use of a password where a computer is used maintains privacy and confidentiality. Lock and key were used to have a high degree of privacy and confidentiality of the subjects. Names and identification of participants changed to codes or pseudo names to protect their identity.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Perceptions of learners towards lack of educational facilities

The perceptions of learners towards lack of educational facilities emerged as one of the factors that contribute to low ZIMSEC performance. Before responding, learner 1 wanted some clarification to this question. After the researcher explained she had this to say:

"I had a negative attitude towards the poor educational facilities within our school as this resulted to our class failing to reach our fullest potentials because of lack of educational facilities unlike our peers from other schools."

When probed further to explain how negative attitude on the subject impacts on her general performance in ZIMSEC, she had this to say, *"I was not motivated to keep on putting effort in school work as I always lacked necessary resources like furniture, library or standard school structures. I scored very low no matter how hard I tried because of the inadequate school facilities."*

Teacher B concurred with the above sentiments when he noted that:

“Inadequate educational facilities affect the attitude of learners. Learners with a negative attitude do not put much effort in the school work resulting in failure at ZIMSEC.”

The deputy head also cited negative attitude as one of the causes of poor results at ZIMSEC grade seven results and commented that:

“Learners have a negative attitude towards school work due to the poor educational facilities hence; they are not motivated to put much effort in their work resulting in low ZIMSEC performance.”

Negative attitudes of learners towards school work due to poor educational facilities was often cited as a factor contributing to low ZIMSEC performance. The educational facilities were viewed as substandard hence it is considered as negatively affecting performance. Findings from the study also unearthed that negative attitudes breeds lack of interest leading to low motivation which is one of the major reasons for low ZIMSEC performance among learners in rural (satellite) schools. Motivation has adverse effects on learners as it grossly affects their perceptions towards learning environment ultimately leading to low ZIMSEC performance.

This is in line with findings by Duncombe (2017) who argue that students' attitudes about lack of resources in classrooms cause extreme distress which influence learning. Maffea (2020) concurred saying that studies demonstrated that lack of resources in schools is extremely detrimental to students' learning.

From the point of view of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, Maslow cited in Browning (2014) argues that motivation needs must be gratified first before academic performance, which is a structure in the higher level. The needs are important and it is necessary to gratify them in-order for an individual to self-actualize. Therefore, it is imperative for the needs of learners to be met in-order for them to self-actualize and become influential members of society. Lack of motivation hinders the proper learning of students as they fail to pass ZIMSEC examinations.

4.2 Lack of teaching and learning resources

It emerged from the study that lack of instructional resources was mentioned as one of the factors contributing to low ZIMSEC performance. Learner 4 had the following to say:

“The school did not have textbooks. I needed a textbook to grasp concepts. I borrowed an old textbook from my teacher's child. She gave me one and I was very happy.” Learner 4 laughed before proceeding: *“I wish we had a library, computer and a laboratory. I would have used them and ensured that I pass my ZIMSEC grade seven*

examinations. Computers are necessary for academic use and performance”.

Concurring with learner 4, learner 5 noted that:

“There were no textbooks to use at school or at home. This made it difficult for learning. A computer, laboratory or library would have assisted and maybe I might have improved. Computers could have enhanced me advance scientifically, technically and mathematically while navigating”.

Teacher A concurred with learners 4 and 5 about the need for learning resources saying:

“Learners need instructional materials to make their learning easier and meaningful. Teachers need instructional materials for effective teaching and learning. The e-learning with computers is a promising option for improving performance.”

The deputy head sighed before admitting on the lack of teaching and learning resources as he had the following to say:

“Textbooks and computers are effective tools for learning and teaching and good academic performance. A library and a computer laboratory with computers may enhance better pass rates too. The constraint to get these materials is money.”

The research study established that teaching and learning materials like textbooks, a library and computers enhance academic performance. It is true that the majority of the participants clearly admitted that lack of teaching and learning resources are one of the hindering factors to academic achievement. The study also established that the school is behind in terms of current use e-learning technology which enhances performance. With computers and other teaching and learning materials at the school, the grade seven ZIMSEC learners may improve on pass rate.

The research findings are supported by World Bank (2018) who noted that children without textbook availability correlate to low academic achievement. Tanyanyiwa (2017) concur saying inadequate libraries and laboratories are an ingredient for low academic achievement. It was noted that learners are keen to learn with computers. Learners may work above their frustration level when teaching and learning resources are available.

Browning (2014) writes that from the Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, satisfying the basic needs stimulate the function of cognitive powers of an individual. When the learners are stimulated by the teaching and learning resources, this may enhance their ZIMSEC grade seven performance. In this case the physiological needs are to be met before attaining the higher ones. Inadequate basic physiological needs negatively impact on the intended ZIMSEC performance.

4.3 Inadequate infrastructural resources and impact on ZIMSEC pass rate

It was observed from the study that lack of inadequate infrastructural resources was a major contributing factor to low ZIMSEC performance. The disappointments of the research participants are expressed below. Learner 3 noted that:

“The classroom had no door or window panes. It was not safe. There was a shortage of furniture. The school had a nearby borehole. The playground was out in the open. People often herd their cattle within the playground. The toilets were few with less privacy.”

Learner 2 had the view that:

“The school was not a safe place at all. The toilets were in bad shape and deprived us our privacy. There was no sanitation waste management in place. I had to absent myself twice or so a month and missed lessons. There is no electricity. We have inadequate furniture. I am used to learning without enough furniture. However, it is difficult. I play truancy at times.”

Agreeing, teacher A concurred but hummed before saying:

“Water is no problem here. No electricity. There is limited furniture. The classrooms are not enough for the children. The learners’ security is at stake regards the fence. There are limited toilet facilities to accommodate the number in the school. The toilets are inappropriate for girls. They are too small for older girls.”

The Head of School gave the same sentiments:

“The borehole has safe drinking water. The toilets are not appropriate for older girls. The toilets need to be re-constructed. The school has no electricity connection. Furniture is inadequate. The learners have a hard time as some write on their laps. The handwriting is not neat”.

According to the findings from the interviews, it was noted that inadequate infrastructural resources was cited as a factor that contribute to low ZIMSEC performance. The respondents agreed that there was no electricity, inappropriate washrooms for girl and limited furniture which affect the ZIMSEC performance. The findings gathered showed that inappropriate toilets mostly affect female learners.

The subjects clearly indicated that there is a period when water is scarce at school. Inadequate or scarce water supply affects the learning process and contributes to low ZIMSEC performance. The respondents indicated that safety is instrumental to ZIMSEC performance.

Lack of adequate furniture affected pass rate as supported by Toosi et al (2015) who agree with the researcher’s findings saying the provision of suitable

supply of electricity and positively correlate with better educational outcomes. Gilavand (2015) concur saying there is a correlation between lack of furniture and performance. The findings are in line with Makwinj (2017) who notes that deteriorating standards of classrooms correlate with failure of students in Botswana. Other scholars such as Tanyanyiwa (2017) and Sichone (2019) concur that there is need to have school toilets and classrooms that are well-designed and spaced, taking into account the health and safety of the students during learning.

Safety is a need within the second stage of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory. In Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, the stages are in their chronological order. This suggests that when the stages are followed, it may pave way for ensuring better ZIMSEC performance. Students would learn well when safe at a school.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Research findings indicated that primary learners are greatly affected in their performance by poor educational facilities. In support, Getie (2020) notes that poor learning environment had negative impact on students’ attitude. Most failures were mainly found among those who had a negative attitude towards the subject and lacked motivation in the area. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory cited in Browning (2014) acknowledges that motivation needs must be gratified first before the higher level.

The study unearthed that lack of teaching and learning resources are among the major factors that work against ZIMSEC performance. Findings are supported by World Bank (2018) who posits that lack of educational facilities are to be put in place. This problem is most prevalent amongst the primary learners and has a great effect on their schooling performance. Lack of teaching and learning resources make it difficult to cope with school work because the subjects need practice resulting in them performing badly and ultimately failing. Browning (2014) argues that from the Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory, satisfying the basic needs stimulate the function of cognitive powers of an individual.

Inadequate infrastructural resources have often been cited as a contributory factor against low ZIMSEC performance as shortage of classrooms, toilets and libraries which make learners feel deprived and unsafe, hence, they underperform in their school work. A study in Botswana on inadequate infrastructural resources identified the cause of low pass rate of learners as they are reluctant to learn in dilapidated classroom blocks and use inappropriate washrooms hence, they end up with low academic pass rates (Makwinj (2017). According to Sichone (2019) girl learners often need their privacy when using washrooms failure of which may result in monthly absence due to lack of

menstruation privacy. Such inconsistent attendance tends to negatively affect the performance of the learner. Akcay and Akyol (2014) agree that physiological needs are the strongest and most demanding on Maslow's needs theory, thus they need to be attended to.

5.2 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings discussed above the study recommends that:

1. Civil education and awareness of parents, teachers and learners on the importance of the need for learning materials need to be made a matter of urgency if the current situation is to be amicably dealt with.
2. School authorities should ensure that proper and deserving learners from low socio-economic status are selected to benefit from government and NGOs' programs such as the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) and Highlife respectively.

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3. The government should plan some special policies to improve the teaching and learning resources for learners in rural (satellite) schools by engaging donor agencies like CAMFED and Plan Zimbabwe to come up with laid down policy guidelines and control measures to ensure that teaching and learning resources are equally and equitably distributed to the needy.
4. The government in partnership with various stakeholders involved in education should plan some special policies to improve the inadequate infrastructural resources for learners in rural (satellite) schools along with funding for alleviating poverty for better ZIMSEC results from well-wishers. The adjustment of the distribution of materials from Schools' Improvement Grants (SIG) to suit the needy and the engagement of Public Private Partnership (3Ps) with the disadvantaged rural schools may turn fruitful.
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