



Full Length Research Article

**VIEWS OF STUDENT TEACHERS AND LECTURERS ON CHALLENGES FACED IN THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ZIMBABWE INTEGRATED TEACHER EDUCATION (ZINTEC)
TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMME**

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to find out the views of student teachers and lecturers on the challenges faced in the implementation of the ZINTEC programme. The multiple case study design was used and five teacher colleges participated in this study. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants. The participants included student teachers and lecturers. Data were generated through focus group discussions for student teachers and interviews of lecturers. Data were analysed through interpretive study analysis. The study found out that there were a number of challenges faced by both student teachers and lecturers during the implementation of the ZINTEC programme. These included work overload on the part of the student teachers. Lecturers had problems in covering syllabus content and experienced an increase in student lecturer ratio. The study recommended that the implementation of the ZINTEC programme should be reviewed to improve the effectiveness of the training programme. The study concluded that the ZINTEC programme had implementation challenges that needed to be addressed in the context of quality.

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INTRODUCTION

The Zimbabwe Integrated Teacher Education Course (ZINTEC) is a teacher preparation programme for training primary teachers in Zimbabwe. The programme is a three year teacher preparation programme and it is structurally organised in such a way that for two terms the student teachers are resident in college and they are equipped with theory teaching and subject matter content. The second session is a teaching practice session in which student teachers are involved in teaching practice for five terms and they return to college for two terms in which the student teachers are equipped with content and pedagogical theory. The ZINTEC programme is an open and distance learning (ODL) programme of training teachers in which the greater part of the time the students are on teaching practice. Initially the ZINTEC programme had duration of four years in which the graduates were awarded a certificate in education but currently the programme is a three year programme and graduates are awarded a diploma in education.

However, implementers of the ZINTEC programme have raised concerns on the challenges they are facing in the implementation of the ZINTEC programme. This research would like to explore the challenges faced by both student teachers and lecturers in the implementation of the ZINTEC programme

Literature Review

When Zimbabwe attained political independence in 1980 massive expansion of the primary education sector called for more qualified teachers. The increase in primary school enrolment required that the number of teachers also increase (Zvobgo, 1998). The initial focus of teacher education was quantitative expansion without consideration of quality. The conventional system of education could not satisfy the ever increasing demand for qualified teachers. This led to the development of a new teacher training programme known as the Zimbabwe Integrated National Teacher Education course (ZINTEC) in 1981 (Chivore, 1990). The Zimbabwe Integrated Teacher Education Course (ZINTEC) in 1981 was funded by United Nation Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) (Zvobgo, 1998). According to Chivore (1990) The aims and objectives of ZINTEC programme in 1980, included the need to meet the primary teacher shortage through an in- service type of teacher

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education and the need to develop a teacher education programme which is better placed in terms of better dissemination of knowledge guided by socialism as a principle/ideology for Zimbabwe. The other aim was to effect change through teacher education whose practical operation must highlight learning by doing-thus effecting theory with practice to develop a professional teacher with skills needed in the appropriate teaching techniques and capable of providing active learning experiences to pupils, for example, the concept of education with production. ZINTEC aimed at developing an all round primary school teacher with positive attitudes and values that would promote meaningful involvement in community development. Currently some of the aims no longer obtain, such as the need to disseminate knowledge guided by the socialist ideology. According to Ncube (1983) ZINTEC born out of a war situation and the traditional approaches were unable to meet the current needs of supplying high quality qualified teachers for the school system and that teacher trainee participated in community activities would change their attitudes. ZINTEC was able to meet the quantitative needs of the country but the question of quality was not addressed. In the last decade Zimbabwe has faced the problem of brain-drain losing most of the teachers to the neighbouring countries especially South Africa.

The structure of the programme implementation included three phases. Phase one was 16 weeks of theory work in college, Phase two 3years of teaching practice, and phase 3 of 16weeks of theory in college. During the first 16 weeks the students were involved face to face contact with lecturers, introduction to professional foundations, namely, philosophy of education, sociology of education, and psychology of education. Other subjects were, applied education and practical subjects such music and physical education. In the second phase students would be in the teaching field and would go for teaching practice and study theory of education through distance education modules and attending vacation courses as a continuation of face to face support or attend weekend seminars or lecturers. The last 16 weeks involved the activities such as residential study of theories and relate these to the field experiences and written examinations and certification of the student (Chivore 1990).

Currently each Teachers College can enroll three intakes per year of approximating 200 students per intake. The current teacher education programme in Zimbabwe has been modelled around the ZINTEC model and the current model uses the 2-5-2 model. All the teachers colleges are operating in an open and distance learning model using the 2-5-2 model in which students spend two terms in college doing theory, five terms in field on teaching practice and two terms in college to complete the course being exposed to more theory and writing final examination (Mapolisa, 2013). The primary teacher training colleges are using the ZINTEC model of teacher training teachers and this programme is producing teachers for the country. This paper solicited the views of both student teachers and lecturers on the challenges they were facing in the implementation of the ZINTEC programme.

Current Practices in Teacher Education in Zimbabwe

Teachers are trained in eight government teacher primary colleges and three private colleges. The teachers graduate with

a Diploma in Education. Entry requirements to train as a teacher considers five ordinary level passes with a C grade including Science, Mathematics and English as compulsory subjects (Zvobgo, 1998). The teachers colleges are supposed to be associate members of the Department of Teacher Education of the University of Zimbabwe. The Department of Teacher Education coordinates and monitors their curricula and assessment systems for quality. The department of education offers external examination services to colleges through external assessment. This associate scheme, according to Chivore (1994), ensured that the entry qualifications, general regulations, curriculum and certificates are awarded to successful candidate by the University of Zimbabwe. According to Nziramasanga (1999) the current teacher education system has quality challenges that need to be addressed. Through this research it is hoped some of these challenges would be investigated and a possible solutions could be found.

Statement of the problem

Student teachers and lecturers have experienced problems in the implementation of the ZINTEC teacher preparation programme. The government directed that all primary teacher education institutions had to employ the 2-5-2 model of teacher development. The question is what challenges are being faced by both student teachers and lecturers in the implementation of the ZINTEC programme?

Research Questions

- What are the challenges are faced by student teachers in the implementation of the ZINTEC programme?
- What are the challenges are faced by lecturers in the implementation of the ZINTEC programme?
- How can the challenges faced by both lecturers and student teachers be overcome?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This was a qualitative research. Qualitative research involves the researcher studying the participant in their natural setting (Cresswell, 2007). The natural setting is the schools. Qualitative research was preferred because it allowed the researcher to conduct the research in a natural setting in this case these were the Teachers' Colleges. The researcher visited the Teachers Colleges and interacted with both the student teachers and lecturers during data generation.

Research Design

A multiple case study design was used in this study to focus on participation in the various Teachers' Colleges are attached. The case study design was preferred because it allowed the research to focus on key players and situations affecting the implementation of the ZINTEC programme. According to Best and Khan (1993), a case study enables the researcher to examine a social unit of institution in a given context and be able to understand it better. The researcher wanted to get a better understanding of the mentoring process in the schools. According to Best and Khan (1993), a case study enables the

researcher to examine a social unit of institution in a given context to be able to understand it better. The researcher wanted to get a better understanding of how the ZINTEC programme was being implemented in the Teachers' Colleges.

Sampling Procedure

To purposive sampling techniques was used to identify the participants to this study. The participants included student teachers and the lecturers in Teachers Colleges. The purposive sampling technique enabled the researcher to pick individuals with the vital information to ensure relevant data would be collected (Creswell, 2007). The participants were student teachers and lecturers were current studies and lecturers in the Teachers College. Student teachers selected were 3rd year in their final year of teacher training.

Data Generation and Analysis

To generate data interviews and focus group discussions were used with both lecturers and student teachers (Cresswell, 2007). The researcher was able to clarify complex questions and follow up on the responses made by the participants. To generate data lecturers were interviewed and student teachers participated in the focus group discussions. Documents were analysed to complement interviews and focus group discussions and the documents were the strategic plans of the Teachers' Colleges and the college policy documents.

Data Analysis

The interpretative study analysis was used to analyse the data. During data analysis the following steps were followed coding, categorising, The researcher had to structure the categories of data so that they would be meaningful. Analysis also involved selecting the categories and relating them to other categories. The researcher had the task of integrating the categories to generate meaning and understanding, which involved describing relationships action, events and the intervention of the participants

RESULTS

Data generated was presented according to the responses of the participants and the documents analysed. Analysis of policy documents in the Teachers' Colleges showed that the Zimbabwe Integrated Teacher Education Course (ZINTEC) model was guiding teacher education and training in Zimbabwe. These findings to some extent concurred with the findings of the Nziramasanga Commission Report (1999) which reported that all primary training colleges were using the ZINTEC approach to train teachers. The ZINTEC model involves students being exposed to theory in the first two terms in residence at the college and are deployed for teaching practice for five terms. In the last two terms students are in college getting more theory and they write final examinations for certification.

Lecturer Views

Lecturers raised the following concerns about the role played by the ZINTEC model in teacher preparation. According to the

lecturers, the ZINTEC model affected teacher training in that the 2-5-2 model increased the number of students enrolled every year but the challenge was that there was increase in the lecturer-student ratio which compromised quality of delivery. The programme relied on schools for teaching practice yet these schools were not well resourced. This impacted negatively on the quality of teacher education. Student teachers were not regularly supervised because of lack of resources. Teachers' Colleges did not have adequate vehicles and time to visit the students on teaching practice the number of times prescribed by DTE. Lecturers had a challenge in selecting the amount of content to adequately prepare student teachers theoretically to be able to teach in the first two semesters when they proceeded for teaching practice. The ZINTEC model forced lecturers to make individual decisions on which topics from the syllabus to cover to prepare students for teaching practice. Lack of adequate time to cover key topics in the syllabus had a negative impact on student acquisition of theoretical knowledge related to content and pedagogy.

Student Views

Student views implementation of the ZINTEC programme were that:

- Student teachers are overburdened with ODL assignments during teaching practice without adequate modules and library resources. This affect the quality of assignments they produce.
- The period of teaching practice was considered too long by students the result is that it will not be productive and useful for their professional development. Students attached to ineffective mentors will fail teaching practice assessment.
- Student teachers felt they were not well equipped with adequate content and pedagogical skills to effectively do their teaching practice.
- The students considered the ZINTEC programme as a crush programme overloaded with too much work to be done in a very short time. The student teachers ended up cheating the various records

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study showed that the structural model guiding teacher education in Zimbabwe is the Zimbabwe Integrated Teacher Education Course (ZINTEC) model. It was also found that the ZINTEC model provides a longer period of teaching practice (5 terms) and less time for theory (4 terms). The ZINTEC model requires students to beef up theory by writing assignments while on teaching practice. Most colleges do not have supporting mobile library facilities to support students on teaching practice who are expected to write high quality assignments to beef up their content. Student teachers are not equipped with adequate theoretical knowledge before proceeding to do practical teaching. The students' views on the ZINTEC programme were that the model over loaded them with distance learning assignments and modules to read without adequate library facilities hence assignments written are of poor quality and are done to meet college requirements. Student teachers considered the period for teaching practice to

be too long as a result it was unproductive in ensuring professional growth of student teachers.. Student teachers who were attached to good mentors benefited but those attached to ineffective mentors found teaching practice unproductive. Lecturers, however, considered the lengthy period of teaching practice as beneficial to students' professional development since they had a lot of time to apply theory they learn in college. The findings reflect that quality of teaching practice is compromised by a number of factors such as work overload, lack of support services and the lengthy period of attachment.

Recommendations

- The review of implementation of the ZINTEC model to ensure improved quality of teacher preparation.
- Too many subjects are due at College thus creates too much work the study recommends introduction of subject specialisation. Teachers colleges for trainee teachers
- Enrolments in student enrolment in Teachers' Colleges should take into cognisance lecturer-student ratio.
- The ZINTEC programme needs to be reviewed in the context of quality to ensure high quality graduates are produced.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the ZINTEC programme is facing challenges in its implementation. The student teachers a facing the challenge of work overload while the lecturers are facing the challenges of covering the syllabus as well as prepare student teachers adequately for teaching practice in a short time. The quality of teachers produced can be improved by reviewing the implementation of the ZINTEC programme.

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