

Influence of Seconded Teachers on Learner and School Achievements: A Case of an Upgraded Combined Secondary School in Choma District in Zambia

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Abstract

This paper details findings of a study which investigated emerging issues from teacher secondment on learner and school performance. The study used qualitative research, employing a case study research design. The sample consisted of 32 participants who were purposefully and randomly sampled. Interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FDGs) and observations were used to collect data which was analysed thematically. It was revealed that most of the teachers that taught the senior classes at the school where the study was conducted from were underqualified. In addition, the school administrators, that is, the head teacher and the deputy head teacher, were also found to have held low qualifications for their respective jobs. In terms of the learner performance, it was revealed that the learner performance both in the ECZ grade nine examinations and the end of term examinations were low. The study recommended that the Ministry of General Education should employ qualified administrators (utmost, first degree level qualification) and should be assigned to secondary or combined Schools; qualified teachers (utmost, first degree level qualification) should be deployed to teach secondary school classes in secondary or combined (secondary section) Schools; the Ministry of General Education should equip upgraded secondary or combined schools with adequate learning and teaching materials in order to improve performance.

Key words: Learner, Performance, Teacher Secondment, School, National development.

Introduction and Background

Secondment of teachers in Zambia has existed since the independence era. This aspect, as coined by the British system, refers to a temporal transfer of an officer to other duties other than what they are specialised in and other than what they were specifically trained or employed for (Comment: Citation). In case of the teaching profession, teachers in some schools have been seconded to teach higher grades and subjects they did not hold the relevant qualifications for and were not trained to handle. This has mainly been due to the shortages of teachers in some schools, among other reasons (Reupert, 2011; Simuyaba & Chibwe, 2016; Kaarin, 2017).

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Despite a good number of specialised teachers world over, the levels of teacher secondments are still high (Thomson et al, 2012). This was alluded to by Simuyaba and Chibwe (2016:3) who contend that “though plans are underway to implement the provisions of the Teaching Profession Act No. 5 of 2013 as well as the Teaching Profession Regulation of 2016, many unqualified persons still teach in our Zambian schools, both public and private”. Teachers not qualified to teach at secondary school still teach in the spirit of secondment.

Secondment of teachers provides a process for an external organisation to meet a short term specialised human resource requirement, where that need cannot be effectively met through the normal appointment processes. On the part of the seconded employee, it was observed that the secondments brought about increased knowledge as they interacted with the new jobs (Kaarin, 2017). As such, McDonagh (2007) argues that teachers continue to be seconded through their boards of managements in order to meet the needs at hand. This practice is rife in the European countries, America and Africa, including Zambia.

Regionally, like in South Africa, teachers have also continued to be seconded to other teaching positions on various agreed terms and conditions. If the seconded teachers are not happy with the given terms and conditions, they often decline the secondment appointments (Rishipal 2011). In Zambia, secondment entails a teacher employed to teach at primary school grades asked to take up (teach) a senior grade. Teacher secondment often times involve a teacher at primary school asked to teach certain subject(s) (specialties) at secondary school grade level. Circumstances that necessitates teacher secondment include the following: a secondary school inability to secure a secondary school trained subject teacher in the district; a teacher at primary school promoted to teach at secondary school and there being a vacancy needing a secondary school teacher, thus gets requested to take up teaching at secondary school (secondment); attrition, brain-drain, transfers, promotion of subject teachers at secondary schools (Comment: Citation). Comparatively, secondment has been witnessed in community schools, as untrained individuals take up teaching before they are trained, merely based on the strength of their willingness (voluntarism) and strengths in some subject areas (Falconer-Stout, Simuyaba and Mayapi, 2014).

In the Zambian contexts, secondment of teachers continue to pose a challenge in the education system. Precisely, the secondment of teachers continues to be done in specialised subjects such as science, mathematics, technology and computer studies to fill up the teaching vacancies in the secondary school sections of the Zambian education system. The problem is rife in the rural secondary schools of Zambia. This has posed a challenge in the sense that the teachers will not have fully acquired the relevant knowledge and skills in key subject areas entrusted to them in the secondment arrangement.

Today, secondment of teachers exists, mostly in rural based primary, secondary and combined schools such as Mboole Day Secondary school in Choma District and Nkandabbwe Day Secondary school in Sinazongwe district. This is because most of the highly qualified teachers shun to take up teaching appointments in rural based schools.

Among other reasons highly qualified teachers avoid working at the rural based schools due to lack of social amenities, absence of electricity (connectivity to the national grid of electricity supply, telecommunication, technology disconnect, modernity backwardness), transport, health facilities, among others (Rishipal, 2011). In the southern region such as Botswana, Zimbabwe and Malawi, the secondment of teachers also exists mainly due to the fact that highly qualified teachers reject opportunities to work at some remote schools. On the other hand, in England, secondment of teachers is mainly done for the purpose of covering an officer who may be on leave at a particular time. Moreover, secondment is used for the purpose of enhancing new skills and attitudes of teachers in another school (Local Government Association, 2020).

The objectives of the study were twofold:

1. To establish the emerging issues from teacher and administrator secondment on learner and school performance; and
2. To describe the performance of seconded teachers and school administrators in the targeted school in the study.

The question that necessitated the study was to establish the extent to which these seconded teachers were contributing to the learner and school academic achievement at the named school.

Literature review

On a wider perspective, secondment is the assignment of a member of one organisation to another organisation for a temporary period. In the education sector, secondment is designed to facilitate the temporary assignment of a teacher to a position in a host organisation, where the work to be carried out by the seconded teacher is of clear benefit to the education system or is in the public interest. Rishipal (2011) observes that a secondment arrangement involves an employee being temporarily assigned to another part of their own organisation, a different employer within the same group or, in some cases, a different employer altogether. In the military, for example, an exchange officer is a commissioned officer in a country's armed forces who is temporarily seconded either to a unit of the armed forces of another country or to another branch of the armed forces of their own country.

In terms of the conditions of service, the employee typically retains their salary and other employment rights from their primary organisation but they work closely within the other organization to provide training and share their knowledge and experience. This corroborates with Thomson's (2012) observation that secondment is a more formal type of job rotation. This is not to be confused with temporary work. However, complications can arise, particularly where the employee is seconded to a completely different employer. A secondment amounts to a three-way arrangement between the employee, his or her original employer and the host employer so there may be issues around managing work, protecting business interests and deciding which employer retains overall control of the employee. There are a number of steps that employers can take to protect themselves, whether they are the employee's original employer or the host employer.

Practically, an officer on secondment is likely to remain the employee of his or her original employer while on secondment, and the usual duties employees owe to their employer will continue to apply. However, Ntata (2017) contends that for the secondment to be a success, the host needs the officer on secondment to follow its day-to-day instructions and comply with its policies, for example, around data protection, bribery risks and dignity at work. Therefore, the host should ensure that the secondment agreement provides for this.

In the education sector in Zambia, the secondment of teachers has existed for a long time. Precisely, the practice has been in existence since the introduction of basic school education within the primary schools in 1987 (Kelly, 2006). The plans to introduce basic education were developed during the Interim National Development Plan of 1987. At the time, there was need to have more qualified teachers to take up the Grades 8 and 9 classes in all the secondary school subjects. However, as the situation was, there were few teachers to fill up the assignments which arose. In order to kick-start the teaching programmes of the new Grades 8 and 9 classes in the primary schools, the Ministry of Education seconded several Primary School Certificate holders to teach subjects at Grade 8 and 9 levels. The situation was worse in the rural based schools.

Additionally, in secondary schools, too few teachers who held bachelor's degree certificates existed. On one hand, this situation prompted the Ministry of Education to second some teachers in critical subjects that only held Secondary Teachers' Diplomas, to teach senior classes; and on the other hand, teachers who were studying various subject areas irrespective of the year of study, were seconded to teach those subjects at secondary schools on need; other teachers still pursuing further studies (upgrading) and other teachers not pursuing further studies (not upgrading) but with many years of service in teaching at primary school level of education were seconded to head and deputise secondary schools (Kelly, 2006). Notwithstanding the above, in secondary schools where teachers were under-staffed, a lot more teachers were seconded to teach senior classes regardless of whether the subjects they were assigned to teach were critical or not. The preceding scenario was evident regardless of the teachers assigned to study those subjects further or not; some were seconded merely based on length of time in teaching service (Mabwe-Atuba Combined School Management Meeting Minutes, January 2018, 2019; Mabwe-Atuba Combined School Opening Meetings Minutes, October 2019; Mabwe-Atuba Combined School Closing Meetings Minutes, August 2018, December 2019). Ultimately, though, the prospect for teacher professionalism, which was at variance with teacher secondment, lies in the implementation of the Teaching Profession Act No 5 of 2013. This implies that the Teaching Council of Zambia will eliminate all those officers without the stipulated minimum requirements for teaching (Simuyaba & Chibwe, 2016).

What is interesting, on the other hand, is the reluctance of some teachers in rural based schools to upgrade their teaching qualifications. Most of them are still in possession of their lower teaching qualifications despite being seconded to teach senior classes and head senior schools (Simuyaba & Manchishi, 2016). Nevertheless, some teachers are trying to upgrade their qualifications although they are doing so at a snail's pace. In all this, the seconded

teachers' input in the teaching is below the expected performance level and output norm. One of the issues which arose is that they were or are not trained to teach the levels that they are actually teaching now. They are simply there just to maintain a status quo (Mabwe-Atuba Combined School Management Meeting Minutes, January 2018, 2019; Mabwe-Atuba Combined School Opening Meetings Minutes, October 2019; Mabwe-Atuba Combined School Closing Meetings Minutes, August 2018, December 2019).

Methodology

A case study was adopted. A case study design was used because it allowed the researchers a rare opportunity to gain in-depth understanding of individuals (seconded teachers). Researchers (Ellet, 2007; Swanborn, 2010; Yin, 2008; Merriam, 2009; Flick, 2007; Bickman & Rog, 2009; Holstein & Gubrium, 2011; Creswell, & Plano Clark, 2011; Gomm, 2000; Saunders et al., 2000) reveal that a case study provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles. It further enables readers to understand how ideas and abstract principles can fit together.

The study was conducted at Mabwe-Atuba Combined School in Choma district of Southern Province of Zambia. It is situated 80 Kilometers from the western central business location of Choma District.

The school has existed since 1966 as a primary school. In order to provide basic education (Grade 8 to 9), the school was upgraded to a basic school in 2008. It had been offering basic education since then. With the financial support of the German donors, the school was then renovated in 2016 and earned the status of a Combined School. This role of mission agencies and other voluntary organisations, in supplementing the work of government, was noted by Kelly (2006:176) when he said:

The Party and Government have the responsibility of ensuring that educational facilities are available to all citizens. However, due to limited resources, the state has not been able to make adequate provision for everyone. Therefore, the important role played by mission agencies and other voluntary organizations will continue to be appreciated and encouraged by the Party and Government, especially, in pre-school, primary, special, secondary, technical and teacher education.

The first grade ten learners enrolled in 2018 at the school. Currently, the institution runs from grade one to grade eleven, and renders the school a truly "combined school". The objective of the combined school education system was to provide both a primary and secondary education that was to be accessible to the learners within their locality and at minimal costs. The school has an enrollment of 364 boys and 253 girls, making a total of 617 pupils. Of the 617 pupils in the school, 399 were enrolled in the primary school section while 218 were enrolled in the secondary school section which has grade eight to grade eleven classes currently.

The sample size was thirty-two participants, comprising one head teacher, one deputy head teacher, five heads of departments, fifteen teachers (8 seconded and 7 un-seconded) and ten pupils from Grade 10 and Grade 11. Gender sensitivity was exercised when sampling by ensuring that both male and female respondents had almost equal representation. Purposive sampling and simple random techniques were implored. They were appropriate for this particular study because the selected participants were better placed to give their experiences on teacher secondment in relation to learner and school performance.

The tools used for collecting data were interview schedules, Focus Group Discussion Guide (FGD) and lesson observations that were done on the randomly selected seconded teachers teaching at senior secondary school section of the school. Some of the data was also collected from the school documents such as the learners' score sheets and results analysis of different grades both on locally prepared examinations and final examinations administered by the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ). Focus group discussions were also held with pupils. The tools used herein are in tune with what a case study research design requires. For instance, Yin (1994) contends that typically a case study research uses a variety of evidence from different sources, such as documents, artefacts, interviews and observation, and this goes beyond the range of sources of evidence that might be available in a study. An interview with the head teacher of the school was held. The head teacher gave a record of the historical background of the school and the general administration of the school in accordance with the years of experience as a teacher and years of stay at the same school. The deputy head teacher was also interviewed. She also gave her insights of being an administrator at a school that had so many teachers who were seconded to teach in the secondary school section.

Later on, the 6 members of staff that were seconded to teach at the secondary school section were also interviewed. They gave insights on their experiences in teaching subjects that they were not fully trained in. The un-seconded teachers were also interviewed to give their insights on performance of seconded teachers in a secondary school. Furthermore, Focus Individual Interviews (FII) and two focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with ten learners, consisting of five in each group. Discussion points with pupils centered on their teaching-learning experience as well as their engagement in extra-curricular activities at school. In addition to the interviews that were done with the administration, the teachers and the selected learners, lesson observations were also requested for from the head teacher so as to get more understanding of the actual lesson delivery from the seconded teachers teaching in the secondary section. Having interviewed the head teacher, the deputy head teacher, all the seconded teachers, un-seconded teachers, and the randomly selected pupils including conducting the lesson observations, the researchers were able to collect the relevant data necessary to analyse the situation of the teacher seconded in relation to the learners and school performance. Additional data was collected through document analysis, which involved the review of pupils' progress charts and the results analysis which were done by the school system term-by-term and after the final ECZ Grade 9 results publication. In the event that pupils were interviewed to say something about how teachers taught, it became prudent to see their performance

as evident in their performance records (tests, continuous assessment, etc.). The data that was collected was analysed thematically narratively s.

Thematic data analysis focused on identifying patterned meaning across the dataset collected. Narratives obtained through focus group discussions were herein analysed and triangulated with document review data.

The researchers heavily relied on the major critical strategies proposed by leading qualitative researchers from various fields as essential for producing trustworthy and believable findings in qualitative research (Ellet, 2007; Swanborn, 2010; Yin, 2008; Merriam, 2009; Flick, 2007; Bickman & Rog, 2009; Holstein & Gubrium, 2011; Creswell, & Plano Clark, 2011; Gomm, 2000; Saunders et al., 2000). These were:

1. *Expert consensual validation* from others familiar with the topic under study at various stages of the research process. In the present study, this involved independent analysis of the data by others (for instance, research colleagues, a cohort of participant informants).
2. *Member Checks* aimed at recycling of analysis back to informants. Here, the researchers arrived at conclusions, gave (Comment: what was given here?) informants and thereafter, feedback was requested about the accuracy of the content. This helped the researchers and informants to view the data consistently.
3. *Searching for disconfirming evidence* allowed the researchers to actively search for disconfirmation of what was or is believed to be true. This was done against the assumption that 'a proposition deserves some degree of trust only when it has survived serious attempts to falsify it' (Cronbach in Lather 1986: 67).
4. *Thick description* built the trustworthiness of the study since the researchers designed a very detailed account of the context or setting within which the study took place and provided a thorough description of the procedures from the beginning to the end.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

To present and discuss the findings, the objectives of the study are recalled:

1. To establish the emerging issues from teacher and administrator secondment on learner and school performance; and
2. To describe the performance of seconded teachers and school administrators in the targeted school in the study.

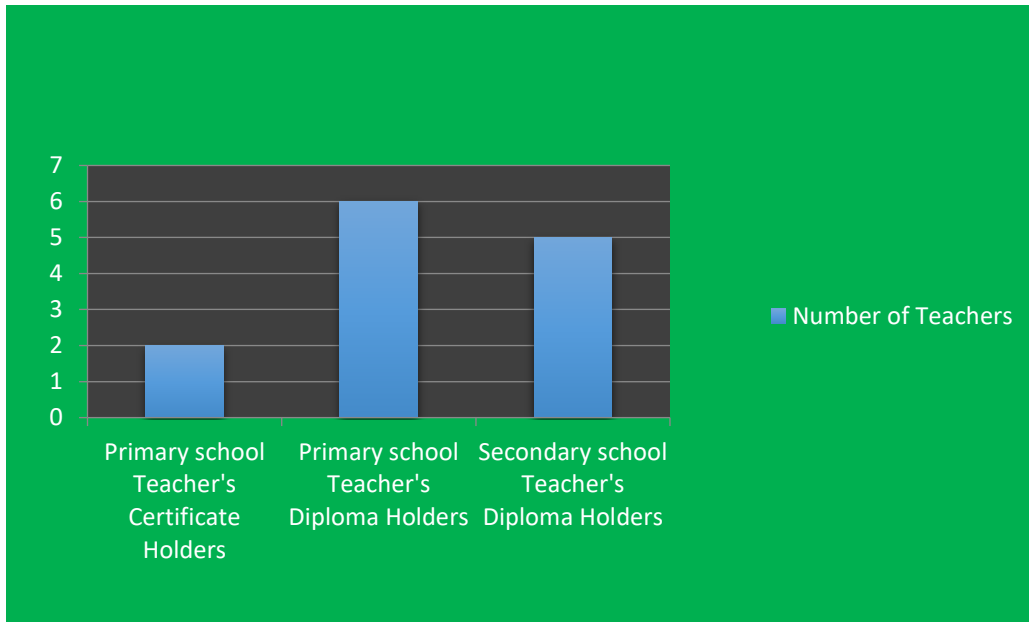
The findings herein are categorised in themes and triangulated, beginning with the demographic information. The following are thematic areas: etiology of teacher secondment at the sampled school, inability to upgrade teaching qualifications, learner performance, lesson delivery observations, and involvement of teachers who are seconded in activities in school.

Demographic Information

Findings showed that out of fifteen teachers handling secondary school section, only two were degree holders. The rest of the teachers that taught the secondary school section were

seconded and professionally, two of them held Primary School Teacher’s certificates, six of them held Primary Teacher’s Diplomas and five of them held Secondary Teacher’s Diplomas as shown in the Figure 1.0 below.

Figure 1.0: Number of Seconded Teachers by Qualification



: Source:

Among the five Heads of Departments that were in the school, only two were degree holders with substantive appointments by the Teaching Service Commission, while three held Secondary Teachers’ Diploma Certificates without Teaching Service Commission appointments.

Etiology of Teacher Secondment at the Sampled School

The study revealed that generally the teachers who had been around the school at the time it was being refurbished were promised not to be transferred from that school. As such, a request was made to the superior education authorities that the teachers should not be disadvantaged in any way during and after the refurbishment of the school. Doing so would accord them the rarest opportunity to enjoy the improved school environment. It was understood that the said teachers and the administration were proactive in the supervision of the works and the mobilisation of the community during the refurbishment of the school.

Administratively, the school was headed by a male head teacher who only held a Primary Teachers’ Certificate. The head teacher had been around in the school and was instrumental in the infrastructure upgrading activities of the school. Subsequently, he saw the upgrading of the school by a German donor called the ‘Profession and Future in Macha’

who pledged to help the community educationally. The female deputy head teacher, too, only possessed a Primary Teacher's Diploma Certificate and had also been around in the school when it was being upgraded. The narrative below shows the unanimous voice of teachers interviewed:

The continued stay of the two top administrators, even when the school had been upgraded was requested by the sponsors of the refurbishing project that they, (the two top administrators) stay in the school in order to improve the school further in terms of infrastructure. The other request that was made by the sponsors of the school in liaison with the Choma District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) to the Provincial Education Officer – Southern Province, was that the head teacher who was about to be retired by the Teaching Service Commission owing to him attaining his retirement age of sixty years and needed to stay on until his retirement from the Teaching Service Commission.

In support of this, Kelly (2006) had predicted this problem of teacher secondment when he contended that it would remain subject to a number of constraints for some years to come. The departments whose subject teachers were seconded because of the critical shortage of staff to teach were Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Biology and Computer Studies.

Inability to Upgrade Teaching Qualifications

Varying revelations of teachers' inability and unwillingness to upgrade their teaching qualifications were made with protracted standpoints. At least three teachers who were seconded to teach at the secondary school section contended that the level of the school at the time did not warrant them to upgrade their qualifications. Still two of them revealed that they were too busy with other activities such as farming to engage in tertiary education again, meaning upgrading their professional qualifications. The remaining research participant revealed that he did not upgrade his qualifications because he had not thought about it on a serious note due to the education commitments and pursuit of tertiary education of his biological children and dependents. This is shown by participants' verbatim words below:

I am the firstborn child in our family of ten. My parents do not work, they have never worked before. They are peasant farmers. The responsibility I have of taking my siblings to school outweighs my personal ambition to further my studies. At least I must see the majority of them through to tertiary education as well. That will lessen my burden of fending for my parents and sorting out their problems, too. (Male Teacher, Aged 40 years).

Going back to college or university is not my priority at the moment. I was given 100 hectares of land by the headman and chief here. I produce enough for my nuclear family and extended family. What more would I want to achieve at this age by going back to school? Tertiary education is for young ones now, not me anymore (Male Teacher, Aged 50).

My wish for now is to be married, to get married. College or university really isn't on my plan for now. Men fear ladies who are very educated and not married. Who will marry me if I become very educated and single? What is worse for me is being in this remote place with farmers and the clergy as the majority. Principal officers at the district office rarely give permission to teachers to go out of stations. What can a youthful lady

like me do? It is all confusing, anyway. I receive pressure from friends, though, that if I went back to college I might widen my search for a marriage partner. (Female Teacher, Aged 30).

I have worked as a teacher for over ten years now and not seen a promotion. Will going back to college and upgrade guarantee me upward movement, promotion? My friends are languishing with their newly acquired diplomas and or degrees. It is more of wasted money and time. They could have just invested that in their youthful children. Females are rarely promoted in education (Female Teacher, 47).

Learner Performance

Learner performance was found to be on the average. However, the interactions that were done with the learners themselves revealed (Head Teacher, Head of Department, English Language, Observation A₁, A₂) that the learners had the potential to excel to greater heights academically. Most of them that the researchers interacted with had shown signs of intelligence in them, except that they did not enough qualified teachers to handle them academically. The learners confided that they studied some topics which were avoided by teachers in science and mathematics on their own and performed fairly well in tests.

Our teachers are committed. They all come to class every time, and they rarely miss classes. We all like them (Boy, Grade 11).

The Biology teacher skipped teaching the topic on 'Reproduction' saying 'ninselefy'e' (CiBemba phrase, meaning 'it is all insults'). Since he is the only one who teaches that subject, we cannot ask for help to be taught by another teacher at the school (Girl, Grade 10).

We have this mathematics teacher who has a well-known history at this school of not teaching topics in mathematics that are tough for him such as 'angles', 'trigonometry' and 'algebraic expressions'. During times to teach those topics he goes on leave and returns to take up other successive topics. When we, pupils, complain and report to the deputy head teacher he only says, 'Kuwayawayafe bane' (CiBemba phrase, meaning 'not being serious'), kibutata banake' (SiLozi phrase which means 'it is trouble my children'). He advises us to read on our own (Boys, Grades 10, 11; Girls, Grades 10, 11).

From the learner's separate interviews, further revelations were made pertaining to how they were being assessed in science.

When it comes to the end of topic or end of term tests, our teacher usually, gets test samples from the colleague who teaches the other class of grade eleven in science. Sometimes he avoids the tests that are set by the school. Instead, he sets his own, which does not give us a good measure in terms of acquisition of knowledge in science. (Boy, Grade 11).

The grade nine results analyses accessed from the school statistics for the last three years (2016-2018) indicated that there was no significant improvement in the pass percentages of the school which were 51 per cent in 2016; 49 per cent in 2017, 41 per cent in 2018. One of the reasons advanced by the school administrator interviewed was that the results at grade nine showed a decline in pass percentage partly due to the massive activities that were happening in the school during the period of the refurbishment of the school. Partly,

that poor performance recorded was due to the confidential information disclosed by the administrators that the classes were handled by three seconded teachers in the past three consecutive years in question.

Furthermore, the document analysis of termly results revealed a similar trend in terms of learner performance at the school. While seven of the learners that participated in the study had average to above average academic performance in three quarters of the subjects they took, three of the learners still had low marks. This entailed that the results ranges in most subjects were fairly high. However, when compared in real terms, there were learners whose results scores were 75 per cent in some subjects; some scored as low as 7 per cent, which did not give a representative average performance score of learners, a trend which can really mislead at face-value analysis, in terms of learner performance results score aggregate.

Pupil progression cards and records kept in the school guidance and counselling office further showed steady improvement in pupil performance. This was against the highly held assumption by many teachers and parents that when a pupil proceeds to grade ten with bare passes in all subjects (learners who just obtain a full certificate with mere bare passes in all subjects) he/she struggles through the secondary school level of education. At this school, results showed consistent improvement in learner performance as they transitioned from grade ten to grade eleven on one hand, and as they moved into grade twelve, too. According to the learner participants, the improvements they attained were attributed to the acquisition of some knowledge and skills as the learners interacted with several education materials; interaction with other teachers within and outside the school setting, as they progressed in their school grade levels, ten to eleven, so far. Excerpts of viewpoints aired during the focus group discussions below highlight this:

Since our mathematics teacher runs away from teaching topics in mathematics that are tough to him like 'angles', 'trigonometry', we go to another mathematics teacher at a neighbouring school for assistance. When schools close we also ask our fellow pupils from other schools, those in boarding schools and others in weekly boarding schools to help with class notes and textbooks (Boys and Girls; Grades 10 and 11).

In contrast to this finding, Ntata (2017) asserts that for the secondment to be a success, the host needs the officer on secondment to follow its day-to-day instructions and comply with its policies.

For this reason, seconded teachers must have adequate training to handle all topics in the respective grades in order to ensure effective teaching and academic advancement of learners.

Lesson Delivery Observations

Two of the seconded teachers were observed in session and worrisome revelations were made with regard to their subject content knowledge, instructional strategies, and

classroom management. The two seconded teachers who were observed in teaching sessions had inadequate subject content and lacked varying teaching methodologies to be able to handle senior classes they were teaching. Even when the learners were trying to ask the teachers questions within the topics that were being taught, teachers exhibited inconsistencies in their responses as well as the delivery of lessons. Below are teacher expressions which are indicative of substandard service delivery:

Teacher-pupil engagement was exaggerated. Primary school learners are over-curdled compared to secondary school learners. A striking balance in this regard distinguishes a teacher who handles primary from secondary school learners (Observation A₁).

When asked by pupils in an English Language class, why the submission in his rewrite sentence was said to be incorrect, the teacher merely said 'It was wrong because it was not in the teachers' book'. This was said repeatedly while raising the teachers' book high for all in the class to see, with a smile (Observation A₂).

The teachers observed showed huge inadequacies in how to bridge various gaps identified in their teaching encounters. It was clear from the class observers' standpoints that the seconded teachers were re-learning all areas of weakness shared with them. They were more of 'banking' inputs from the observers than reflectively taking part in the after-class observation discussions (Observation A₃).

From the lesson monitoring programs that were done in the school by either the school administration or the heads of departments, the quality of lesson deliveries differed from those that were seconded and those that had the qualifications for senior secondary teaching. From the separate interviews, revelations were stunning.

I usually have a tough time when advising a seconded teacher technically who is handling senior classes. Not only do I have to deal with the content of the subject matter, I also have to deal with the methodologies that he or she uses in the classroom. This is all because the seconded teachers have not attained the required training to be able to handle the lessons at senior level effectively (Head of Department, English Language).

When the reports are brought to my office, as head teacher, I am usually compelled to make a follow up. I usually do my own observations to ascertain the situation. The reports are usually proved as true (Head Teacher).

The un-seconded teacher participants interviewed who hold Bachelors' Degrees and teach at the secondary school section also made similar remarks to the observations made during classroom teaching sessions of the two teachers.

The top two administrators, as it were, the Head Teacher and the Deputy Head Teacher, both of them having been holders of the Primary Teacher's Certificate and a Primary Teacher's Diploma, respectively, had challenges in running the upgraded school, since their training was primary school based. It is in this regard, that most of the secondary school

administrative systems are not familiar to them. From the teachers interviewed, the administrators usually fail to offer proper guidance in most academic issues as they are in a habit of finding out so many issues, even simple ones, from the nearby secondary schools. As a matter of fact, good leadership is synonymous with excellence in schools. However, the current system of appointment through secondment of teachers does not always ensure that schools get the quality of head teachers they deserve as stipulated by MoE (1996: 160).

Additionally, some of the guidance which the two top administrators need are usually given by then two Substantively Heads of Departments who had earlier served in secondary schools as class teachers then. These two Heads of Departments are very instrumental in the school.

Involvement of Seconded Teachers School Activities

The following were revelations from participants about the involvement of seconded teachers who are seconded in activities in school performance

Regarding the academic co-curricular activities such as the Junior Engineers and Technicians Scientists (JETS) projects by the learners, the school tried to come up with required projects but usually failed to meet the requisite standards. This is often alluded to the below standard qualifications and knowledge of the seconded teachers to the school (Not Seconded Teacher, Male, Aged 42 years).

Other active subject associations activities such as the Social Sciences Teachers Association of Zambia (SOSTAZ) and the Business Studies Teachers Association of Zambia (BUSTAZ) too, posed challenges to the learners due to lack of adequate preparations from their teachers. The learners usually tried to participate in the above-mentioned subject association activities but performed poorly as a result (Not Seconded Teacher, Female, Aged 35 years).

Learners in the school were able to articulate issues pertaining to academics, a sign that the overall performance of the school was good (Seconded Teacher, Female, Aged 40 years).

Pupils in the school have the potential to excel to greater heights academically, but needed the highly qualified teachers to help them in all their academic endeavors and co-curricular activities (Seconded Teacher, Male, Aged 54 years).

The school administration contended that more resources by the government and cooperating partners needed to be allocated to the school in order to improve teaching-learning materials and other requisites of the school as was the case even in the early nineties (1990s). They cited MoE (1992: 32) and its role in sourcing for support from cooperating partners like SIDA and FINNIDA who in the past provided additional assistance besides the provision of learning materials in schools. Notwithstanding this gesture, these materials are lacking in most of the key subjects such as sciences and computer Studies.

The verbatim revelations point to the need for the existing teachers in the school with lower academic and professional qualification to upgrade their qualifications. The observations they advanced on the performance of the school did not bring out key determinants of a school and learners in today's fast-evolving Zambian community, which is ever influenced by the global education community. As a matter of correct practices in education, Ingersoll (2004) contrasts by arguing that teaching involves the use of a wide body of knowledge about the subject being taught, and another set of knowledge about the most effective ways to teach that subject to different kinds of learners.

Conclusion

Findings of this study show that the learner and school performance are affected by the seconded teachers who are not qualified to teach at the levels that they are meant to teach. Even administrators who lack the relevant qualifications for the levels of the schools that they manage are not adept, methodical and effective in many ways.

Furthermore, findings showed that teachers seconded to teach senior grades exhibited variations revelations regarding teaching-learning competencies, learner engagement, teacher-learner attitude, classroom management, teacher subject content knowledge and mastery, and learner subject mastery trajectory manifest. What was sad, however, was that the school contended that it could not expose them, transfer them, take them back to schools commensurate with their training because in most cases they had unmatched backing from superiors.

The other overarching verbatim revelations point to the need for the existing teachers in the school with lower academic and professional qualification to upgrade their qualifications.

Implications

Having concluded the research, the following implications arose:

- (i) MoGE, through the Teaching Service Commission should assign qualified administrators (e.g. with first degree level qualification) to the Combined Secondary School for learners and the school to perform well;
- (ii) MoGE should deploy qualified teachers (e.g. with first degree level qualification) to teach secondary school classes in Secondary or Combined Schools in Zambia (Secondary section), for learners and schools to perform well;
- (iii) MoGE and Schools (Comment: Should "Schools" equip? Clarify) should equip the upgraded Secondary or Combined Schools in Zambia with adequate learning and teaching materials with the purpose of improving performance; and
- (iv) District Education Standards Officers and Schools should intensify purposive monitoring of teachers in subjects that are handled by seconded teachers.

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