

Educational Goals For Practical Subjects: Factors That Determine Implementation Of Physical Education And Home Economics Curriculum In Masvingo Primary Schools, Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study was to find out factors that determine the implementation of Physical Education and Home Economics educational goals in Masvingo Primary Schools, Zimbabwe. The descriptive survey design based on the qualitative paradigm was adopted in which an open-ended questionnaires and in-depth interview were used as data collection instruments. A sample of fifty participants which was composed of forty (40) teachers and school heads was conveniently sampled and ten (10) school heads were purposively selected. The findings from this research revealed that most teachers did not understand the Physical Education and Home Economics Physical Education and Home Economics goals. The current study revealed that the major factors that impacted in the implementation of the goals were lack of knowledge and clarity of the goals. Other factors that influenced the implementation of subject goals included cultural norms and values, material, financial and human resources. The study recommends that teachers should be involved in the formulation of curriculum goals in order to reduce factors that negatively impact on the implementation of PE and HE. This would enhance teacher awareness and deepen their level of commitment to the teaching of the subjects.

Keywords: Educational goals, practical subjects, curriculum, implementation,

Background to the Study

From time immemorial, the debate on the goals of education has been a perennial problem throughout history (Mberengwa & Johnson, 2004). There has been concern on the link between educational goals and the effective implementation of Primary School subjects. Some of the practical subjects taught in Zimbabwean primary schools are Agriculture, Home economics, Physical Education and Practical Arts. However, this study pays particular attention to Physical Education (PE) and Home Economics (HE) which have received little attention from scholars (Bhebhe & Nxumalo, 2017). Since the advent of formal education in historical times practical subjects such as Physical Education and Home Economics have always focused on the achievement of goals (UNESCO, 2006). The major goals of teaching PE and HE in primary schools are to equip learners with lifelong skills that enable them to contribute to the economies of their nations and also for self-sustainability. The major goals of the subjects are in line with those of Bhebhe and Nxumalo (2017). Through the teaching and learning of practical subjects, the acquisition of skills and knowledge is enhanced. These subjects are preparation for many occupations in the lives of many learners since the recipients are equipped with skills to face challenges in the world of work. Home economics subjects are concerned with clothing and nourishing learners in order to meet the basic needs of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs as highlighted by Magwa and Mudekunye (2019). On the other hand, PE focuses on the development of a complete individual. The goals of teaching Physical Education promote a healthy lifestyle through physical activities, sport and life skills. Thus, both PE and HE share the same goals of equipping learners with survival skills that are beneficial to their families, communities and nations. The fundamental goal of teaching Physical Education and Home Economics is to prepare students for the challenges of the twenty-first century by providing opportunities to attain skills and

knowledge that promote industrialization in many education systems of the twenty first century (Kotschwar, 2014; Kirk, 2012; UNESCO, 2012). To date, the teaching of PE and HE in Zimbabwean primary schools is meant to develop the body, mind and soul in the context of holistic education. As such, Physical Education now caters for the development of the cognitive, affective social and psychomotor domains of the learner. The implementation of PE and HE is governed by a number of factors ranging from lack of knowledge, financial, material and human resources. Cultural norms and values are also factors that influence the realization of PE and HE goals. Bhebhe and Nxumalo (2017) argue that if teachers are not aware or unable to translate subject goals, conflicts and frustration may arise due to various misinterpretations leading to distortions in teaching. Musangeya, Tanyongana and Mumvuri (2000) contend that some teachers in Zimbabwean primary schools find it difficult to sensibly interpret and understand subject goals, content and pedagogy. This is compounded by the perceived top-down approach in curriculum development in which teachers as key implementers feel excluded from curriculum design. In this regard, Mudekunye (2018) observes that in Zimbabwe, teachers have been conditioned to regard curriculum policy goals as a "sacred goat" - a responsibility of education administrative authorities with teachers rarely involved in the formulation of goals. Bhebhe and Nxumalo (2017) and Musangeya et al. (2000) argue sensibly that teachers should be involved in curriculum development because if they are excluded, teachers find it difficult to assess and implement them. This may lead to teacher misconceptions of subject goals and the development of negative attitudes towards the teaching of the subject. Stronge and Grant (2014) and Mberengwa and Johnson (2004) point out that teachers encounter problems in curriculum implementation because policy makers and subject planners write unclear statements of subject goals and of the means towards these goals resulting in a distorted

appreciation of the curriculum. Based on this, it is argued that this affects the level of commitment of teachers to the teaching of subjects such as PE and HE. Manwa and Manwa (2013) concur that teachers may fail to accept policy goals if they are unclear and diffuse and if the means of implementation are not specified. Lack of appreciation of curriculum goals usually contributes to the development of negative attitudes towards curriculum implementation and a reduced level of commitment to the subject. Stronge and Grant (2014) agree that in some cases, lack of clarity and disagreement with policy goals are caused by new goals and curriculum programmes which are sometimes deliberately stated at a general level in order to avoid disagreements or conflicts and promote acceptance and adoption among teachers. Leithwood and Sun (2018) posit that the official curriculum is meaningless unless teachers are committed and are able to translate it into an operational document. Mberengwa and Johnson (2004) caution that although conflict over goals is inevitable and may never be settled, the middle ground must be found among teachers who might have various preferences and societal beliefs. Offorma (2016) argues that curriculum goals are an embodiment of cultural values and teacher commitment. This might mean that when teachers fail to understand curriculum goals due to different cultural beliefs and societal values and norms, this may act as filters when implementing subject content. This is supported by Esu & Enu (2009) who says that beliefs may impose constraints during implementation and engender serious attitudinal problems towards a curriculum. Mberengwa and Johnson (2004) suggest that awareness of policy goals is significant in the implementation of any subject. The concept of awareness relates to teacher commitment which is a key factor that influences the teaching and learning process. Teacher commitment is the psychological identification of the individual teacher with the school and the subject matter or goals and the intention of the teacher to maintain organizational membership and become involved in the job well beyond personal interest (Offorma, 2016). According to this view, the higher the teacher's psychological identification, the higher his sense of commitment will be. Policy goals provide the basis for designing, implementing and evaluating the PE and HE curriculum; hence lack of awareness of policy goals may cause implementation constraints on the part of teachers. When teachers are aware of the policy and instructional goals, the core curriculum is reinforced through the development of important workplace skills (Esu & Enu, 2009). This will lead to connections across the curriculum enhancing students' critical thinking skills and help make Physical Education goals into action. In this regard, Mudekanye and Sithole (2012) stress that teachers who perceive Physical Education goals positively invariably do everything in their content interesting and engaging to students (Tope, 2012). The implication is that teachers as key curriculum implementers may influence curriculum positively or negatively when they translate power to ensure success whereas those who view Physical Education negatively would consider the teaching of Physical Education a waste of time. This echoes in some way the position of Manwa and Manwa (2013) that a positive impression in the teaching of a subject is often the result of good knowledge, understanding and translation of the goals while a negative impression usually emanates from teachers' lack of awareness of subject goals. In ancient

Greek times, there was a belief in the concept of health and well-being of an individual that was based on a sound mind in a sound body (Siedentop, 2003). Brain-based research supports that a combination of nutrition and physical activities in schools promotes cognitive development. Kamtsios (2010) and Rately (2002) reveal that physical activity optimises alertness, attention, motivation and mental health and when students learn complex motor patterns, complex synaptic connections are formed in the brain thereby improving the brain's ability to process new information. The brain responds to nutrition and motor development like muscles do, growing with it and withering without (Rately, 2002; Rately & Hagerman, 2008). It is against this background that the study sought to investigate factors that determine the implementation of physical education and Home Economics curriculum in Masvingo Primary Schools and providing possible solutions to rectify the situation.

Research Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To find out the factors that determine the implementation of PES and HE subject goals of primary schools in Masvingo.
2. To establish the effects of factors that determine the implementation of educational goals of PE and HE

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed the descriptive survey design incorporating a qualitative paradigm. The descriptive survey was appropriate owing to the need to clarify and interpret conditions as they existed in natural surroundings. The use of the qualitative paradigm was to validate the study and permit a complementing dimension which made it possible to use two data collection instruments. A descriptive survey based on the qualitative paradigm allows researchers to collect soft data which represents the feelings and emotions of participants (Creswell, 2012; Gray, 2011; Yin, 2011; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). This was done to allow triangulation of data, eliminate bias and enhance the validity and reliability of the research findings. Leedy and Ormrod (2011) assert that researchers should not be biased in order to represent the views of the participants.

Population and Sample

The population comprised three hundred and thirty-one (301) teachers and ten (10) school heads from 10 primary schools. Three council schools, three government schools, two church-related schools and two private schools were sampled. A sample of fifty teachers and school heads was conveniently sampled. Forty (40) participants were trained teachers (two PE and two HE teachers from each school) and ten (10) school heads were purposively selected for their relevance to the issues being studied and for their potential to provide the study with rich data. The research used the open-ended questionnaires and in-depth interviews to obtain data. The self-administered open-ended questionnaire was used to capture data on respondents' views and their effects on implementing PE and HE goals. Guion, Diehl and McDonald (2012) argue that the use of two instruments in data collection allows researchers to

make some checks and balances. The open-ended questionnaire was used for its suitability for collecting a large corpus of data and for its convenience in administration. Its weaknesses such as failure to appraise the non-verbal behaviour of respondents and to determine the seriousness with which respondents answered questions were counterbalanced by the use of the in-depth interview which added an extra perspective (Creswell, 2012; Gray, 2011; Yin, 2011). Data were also solicited through the use of the face-to-face in-depth interview with heads and teachers to establish their views, opinions and perspectives. The interviews in which the researchers were participants enabled them to probe for more information and observe interviewees' reactions, gestures and expressions which suggested additional non-verbal meanings. These in-depth interviews in a way added information to the open-ended questionnaire responses.

Results and Discussion

The findings are presented in two broad sections which represent the two areas of focus as identified in the research objectives. Results from this study revealed that all participants submitted that there were numerous factors that interfered with the implementation of the PE and HE curriculum goals in Zimbabwean primary schools. The major factors that inhibited the implementation of PE and HE curriculum were lack of knowledge and clarity of goals. All participants acknowledged that inadequate knowledge of Physical Education goals resulted in distorted teaching and misconceptions caused by misunderstanding of subject goals. There were also other factors that emanated from the study and these included cultural norms and values, material, financial and human resources. This is presented and summarised in the table below.

Table 1. Factors that impede the implementation of PE and HE curriculum goals

Factors	Number of Participants
Teachers' knowledge and clarity of subject goals	
Lack of knowledge on goals	30
Lack of clarity on subject goals	15
Aware of subject goals but disagree with them	5
Availability of resources	
Inadequate material, human and financial resources	40
Out dated equipment and facilities	45
Lack of sponsorship	46
Cultural norms and values	
Negative norms and values on PE and HE implementation	35
Positive norms and values on PE and HE implementation	15

The results suggested that successful implementation of the PE and HE curriculum is based on teachers' awareness and clarity of subject goals. This is consistent with Manwa and Manwa's (2013) view that mastery of goals is important in the teaching process for it induces positive attitudes among teachers. Thus, when teachers understand subject goals, they are guided in the selection of teaching and learning materials, strategies and activities that contribute to the development of positive attitudes. The above position is further reinforced by Mudekunya and Sithole (2012) who assert that a positive impression is often the result of a deep conviction of the worth of Physical Education on the part of knowledgeable teachers who are committed to provide pupils with a relevant, enriching and effectively planned programme. On the other hand, a negative impression emanates from a narrow "keep them busy" programme run by knowledgeable teachers (Katzenellenbogen in Amusa et.al, 1999). The findings on also revealed that majority of teachers misunderstood the basic subject goals and were unable to follow the requirements and implement them. One teacher lamented that no workshop related to subject goals was contacted in order to update and clarify the goals. This confirms Mberengwa and Johnson's (2004) assertion that an official curriculum which requires teachers to interpret goals

is meaningless unless teachers are able to translate it into an operational curriculum. In same vein, Manwa and Manwa (2013) observe that quality teaching in primary schools require expertise among teachers. Thus, it is essential for teachers to be able to translate subject goals into reality for this allows the teacher to select developmentally appropriate activities for the learners and build the teaching units respectively. The results further showed that inadequate knowledge to interpret PE and HE goals resulted in incapability in teaching the subject and led to the development of negative attitudes towards teaching. One responded confirmed that subject goals are not clear and not well presented. This confirms Schildkamp's (2013) position that the problem of goal interpretation may result from the degree of their complexity. This would involve examining the change with regards to the degree of difficulty of skills required and extent of alteration in beliefs, teaching strategies and use of materials. Inadequate knowledge to interpret goals also leads to negative perceptions about the subjects. This affirms Musangeya et.al's (2000) views on the teaching of PE and HE which reveal two major problems which negatively contributed to teacher misconceptions. The first is that practical subjects are considered for the slow learners. Secondly, in primary schools, teachers did not

appear to take PE and HE goals seriously since they did not value its potential contribution to a child's development career prospects. The researchers' informal observations during many years of teaching and training at primary school level were that teachers seemed to be unaware of and lacked commitment to practical subject goals with the resultant negative attitudes towards PE and HE. The results also confirm Mberengwa and Johnson's (2004) observation that the belief among some teachers that practical subjects are not core subjects and may not contribute reasonably in the professional field. Some teachers' negative perceptions may emanate from their lack of involvement in curriculum planning issues. One participant submitted that curriculum designers do not involve the implementers of the goals at the initial stages of goal formation. Across a variety of grade levels in practical subjects, if teachers are involved in effective goal-setting practices, it may help them to focus on specific outcomes, encourage learners to seek academic challenges, and make clear the connection between immediate tasks and future accomplishments (Stronge & Grant, 2014). Subject goal setting basically taps into four elements of tasks that motivate teachers and students: providing them opportunities to build competence, giving them control or autonomy, cultivating interest, and altering learners' perceptions of their own abilities (Usher & Kober, 2012; Wolters, 2004). Without such components, the positive effects of goal setting may be lost. It emerged that teacher disagreement with goals caused by lack of clarity led to frustration and low morale which may have resulted in the development of negative attitudes towards the subject. This is consistent with Bhebhe and Nxumalo's (2017) view that for teachers to be in agreement with subject goals, a curriculum should have clear and specific goals which promote the adoption and development of positive attitudes among teachers. In addition, the findings affirm the observations of Marzano (2009) that teachers disagree with goals when policy makers and programme planners write vague and abstract goals which they fail to put into action. The implication is that to inculcate commitment on the part of teachers, policy makers should involve them in order to create a sense of belonging and ownership of the programme. This is in accordance with the observations of Moeller, Theiler and Wu (2012) that participation is one of the factors which enhances teacher commitment alongside efficacy, feedback, collaboration, learning opportunities and resources. The sense of commitment on the part of teachers was also affected by PE and HE objectives which are not guiding enough in terms of producing a physically educated person. Lack of teacher commitment to subject goals and efficacy may negatively influence student performance (Manwa & Manwa, 2013; (Moeller, Theiler, & Wu, 2012; Tope, 2012). The above scenario was compounded by a situation where PE and HE are non-examinable subjects while subjects such as Mathematics, English and Shona are examinable. These findings confirm the view of Musangeya et al. (2000) that practical subjects such as PE and HE which are not directly examinable and are not perceived not to lead to higher education or meaningful employment. This resulted in teachers having negative attitudes towards teaching PE and HE with some regarding the slots for them as time for play, leisure and keeping pupils busy. The data also revealed that subject goals were unclear, not guiding enough, not easy to understand, interpret and implement. Owing to this, most teachers revealed that they were not

committed to the implementation of PE and HE goals. Consequently, these teachers had negative attitudes towards teaching the subjects. This may be due to the fact that teachers who are the main actors in curriculum implementation were not involved in the goal setting planning stage. However, results of this study reflected that a few respondents' were aware of subject goals but disagreed with them. This was confirmed by a few respondents who echoed that some of the goals are contradictory to cultural norms and values. Owing to this, teacher efficacy enhanced the degree of commitment of the teachers resulting in them teaching the subject with great enthusiasm. Lack of resources to implement PE and HE goals result in teachers having numerous challenges that hamper the teaching and learning of the subjects (Mudekunye, 2019). For without resources teachers will be discouraged to implement the subject goals. In many primary schools in African countries, Zimbabwe included. Thus, the implementation of subject goals for practical subjects continues to be difficulty due to the use of inadequate resources. All teachers involved in this study were expressing their concerns of inadequate resources which were hampering the teaching and learning of practical subjects. Beliefs that practical subjects are not rated as core subjects may prevent the availability and allocation of resources in schools (Moeller et al., 2012). This could imply that teachers may fail to appreciate their subject goals. Accordingly, when this happen the process of curriculum implementation for practical subjects may be crippled. In Zimbabwe, the education system still reflects inequalities in access of resources in primary school subjects. This has resulted in various forms of disparities between the implementation of different subject goals. Most teachers expressed that there was unfair distribution of resources, sponsorship, scholarships and inappropriate equipment and poor facilities allocated to practical subjects. Sinyei, Mwonga and Wanyama (2012:625) observe that the implementation of any curriculum requires the use of appropriate resource materials and facilities. Sinyei et al. (2012) suggest that it is the kind of resources available that enhance the successful implementation of any subject goals. This could mean that the success of the implementation of any curriculum depends entirely on the equipment and facilities the school may have. Sinyei et al. (2012:625) further contend that material resources should not only be available but provided in the right qualities and quantities to ensure the successful implementation of subject goals. Provision of resources is determined by the availability of funds in schools for money is a major resource in the implementation of any educational curriculum (Mudekunye et al., 2012). In Southern African nations such as Zimbabwe, where the donor community has dried up, there are insufficient funds for personnel salaries, construct and maintain facilities. Not only do schools fail to secure money for the aforementioned resources but may fail to up-date technology (Mudekunye, et al., 2012). Many governments, companies and other stakeholders also appear to give fewer sponsorship opportunities to practical subjects but to core subjects (Khan, 2010:146). What is most difficult is that Zimbabwe has continued to face economic challenges such as the high inflation rates, poverty, lack of foreign currency and foreign aid (Mudekunye et al., 2012; Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), 2010; Right to play, 2006). Hence, it may be problematic for schools in Zimbabwe to construct

buildings and purchase standard material resources. The world over, the availability and provision of human resources influences the implementation of educational goals to a greater extent. To this end effective teaching of PE and HE requires well trained personnel who are able to interpret and translate the subject goals from syllabi into activities (Akiiki, 2009). Such personnel were able to effectively implement subject goals. When implemented well, these subject goals have a significant positive influence on student outcomes and school cultures (Leithwood & Sun, 2018; Moeller, Theiler, & Wu, 2012). Musangeya et al. (2000) underscore that a skilled and committed cadre is essential for an effective curriculum implementation. Teachers usually do well when they have the mandate to control their learners (Marzano, 2009). This means that successful curriculum implementation requires determined professionals who are equipped with appropriate skills. In the same vein, Al-Rawahi and al-Yarabi (2013) reiterate that teaching is shaped by the capability and interest of classroom practitioners. In this regard, primary school teachers who may not understand pedagogical aims may usually display little interest in the implementation of their curriculum. Khan, Qureshi, Islam, Khan and Abbas (2012) also propose that a teacher who teaches any curriculum subject should be qualified to teach in order to be able to plan, organise, implement, manage and cautiously evaluate the subject taught. Thus, in PE and HE, as in any other practical subjects, teachers who are knowledgeable are effective and students tend to benefit more from them as they engage in the learning process. Some teachers submitted that despite the shortage of resources they were expected to be creative as they transmit knowledge and skills to their students. Practical subjects promote the well-being of learners, families and diverse societies through the study of physical fitness and the provision of basic human needs such as food, clothing and management of resources. Culture plays an important role in the formation and implementation of subject goals. Cultural norms and values govern experiences of teachers and learners which include the social aspects that influence the implementation of subject goals in primary schools (Mudekunye, 2018). Primary school teachers are obviously attached to their societies as agents of socialisation (Booth, 2004). Thus, this inherent task influences how teachers perceive subject goals which may be contrary to the norm of their societies. This therefore results in failure for teachers to implement subject goals due to negative emotions from teachers. There is an inseparable relationship between the cultural values for teachers and the subject goals to be implemented (Bhebhe & Nxumalo, 2017; Manyonganise, 2010).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study revealed that most of the teachers were not aware of PE and HE goals and what they entailed. This determined the success or failure of the implementation of the PE and HE subject goals. Teachers who were unaware of subject goals had negative attitudes towards the subject while those who had little understanding developed negative attitudes. Inadequate knowledge to interpret goals led to negative perceptions towards the subjects. Some were aware but felt that the goals were abstract and difficult to interpret for they were not involved in their formulation, a situation which resulted in conflict and distorted teaching. Other factors that were also mentioned as impeding the implementation of PE

and HE goals were cultural norms and values and resource unavailability.

- In view of the findings and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were made: On the lack of clarity of goals, the Zimbabwean Ministry of Education Sports and Culture needs to ensure that teachers are continuously updated on policy goals and what they entail through policy circulars.
- On the issue of teacher's negative misconceptions of subject goals, there is need for Provincial Directors, Education Officers and school heads to educate teachers on the role of Physical Education in the primary school curriculum so as to enhance the development of positive attitudes among teachers towards the teaching of the subject.
- There is also need for policy makers to involve teachers who are the curriculum implementers before the introduction of new policies to enlist their support and deepen their level of commitment.
- The Ministry of Education Sport and Culture should ensure that the subjects is officially examined on its own the end of the primary school course. This would enhance the development of positive teacher attitudes towards the teaching of the subjects.
- Primary teacher training colleges should take a serious view of PE and HE in their training to minimise knowledge gaps on the part of personnel when it comes to the subject goals and what they entail. This will promote knowledge in the subjects and consequently efficacy which in turn increases awareness and commitment to subject goals.

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