

TEACHER'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAP. A CASE STUDY OF IN KADOMA EAST CLUSTER OF MHONDORO-NGEZI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of Performance Lag Address Program (PLAP) in Kadoma East cluster of Mhondoro-Ngezi district in Zimbabwe. The researcher examined teachers' attitudes in terms of their appreciation level of PLAP in helping lagging learners, whether PLAP is a strenuous and demanding teaching process, their preparedness to spend on PLAP and their level of happiness in implementing PLAP. A survey to determine teacher's attitudes against PLAP was carried using twenty teachers (10 males, 10 female) from five primary schools in Kadoma East cluster in Mhondoro-Ngezi district in Zimbabwe. Measures of central tendencies (mode and mean) were used to analyse data from the study. The study found out that primary school teachers teaching in Kadoma East cluster of Mhondoro-Ngezi district of Zimbabwe had negative attitudes towards implementing PLAP. They indicated that they were appreciating the importance of PLAP, PLAP was a strenuous teaching activity and demanding teaching process, were not prepared to spend time on PLAP and were not even happy to implement PLAP. This study recommends PLAP staff development programs that are aimed to make teachers appreciate the value of PLAP teaching and learning

Key terms: Teachers, teaching, attitudes, Performance Lag Address Program, cluster

INTRODUCTION

What is Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP)?

According to Nkoma (2013), Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP) is a catch up programme which focuses on addressing learning gaps from grade three up to seven in primary schools by improving teacher's capacity to provide catch up learning. PLAP as a programme help learners to realise their last point of success and the teacher helps the child to catch up to their present grade. It is an individualised teaching, learning programme which begins by determining the last point of success for each learner and systematically closing the gap, (Kurebwa&Mabhanda, 2015). Jeyacheya (2015) asserts that by applying differentiation as a technique to lagging learners enables faster acquisition and mastery of concepts. The entry point of PLAP is that pupils sit for performance lag diagnostic examination used to establish their challenges. Results of this test will help teachers to provide strategies to help them catch up to where they should be Nkoma (2012). The program involves revisiting the syllabi and targeting concepts that have proven persistently difficult for pupils to catch (Jeyacheya, 2015). According to the Ministry of Education Sports and Culture

(2012) during the process of implementing PLAP, the evaluation program entails assessing the teaching process, teacher and pupil's records, resource provision, supervision monitoring and evaluation programs. The teachers need to detect challenges which pupils face and design strategies to help pupils so that they catch up and be on the same level with others (Nkoma, 2013). PLAP and normal remediation are different. Firstly, the usual remediation procedures work on the students' weakness within the pupils' level of study. As for PLAP pupils' weakness is believed to have cropped up from concepts missed at lower levels, thus affecting their present performance (Nkoma, 2013). PLAP is only done in Mathematics and English

Mukoko and Mdlongwa (2014) however view PLAP as a form of remediation since it seeks ways to improve learners' performance. The success and failure of the implementation of PLAP is highly dependent on teachers. According to Musa and Bichi (2015) the success of an educational enterprise particularly in terms of quality depends to a large extent on the quality of teachers thus it also applies to the implementation of PLAP. Musa and Bichi (2015) added on to say that no adequate training can take place without competent teachers to handle the programme. This means teachers have an important role on the success of PLAP implementation. Ibidado (2007) supports that teachers have an important role to play towards the implementation of PLAP in order to achieve the set national objectives. Therefore, the teacher's failure to have the right attitude towards the implementation of PLAP results in a rising number of learners with dyslexia and dyscalculia.

Performance lagging in Zimbabwean Context

The Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP) in Zimbabwe came about with the realisation that during the years 2006 up to 2009 there was a decline in the educational gains in the country (Nkoma, 2014). Education experienced learning characterized by strikes, stay away and even abandonment of classes. There was reduced teaching and learning in schools (Jeyacheya, 2015). Schools which produced zero percent pass rate were recorded as a result of the exodus of the teaching personnel. Most learners operated below their grade level. For example, according to the research carried out in Manicaland in 2010, it was found out that pupils in Grade five were operating at grade two levels which translated to three grades below their normal grades (Nkoma 2013). Despite this, there still was an automatic promotion of learners to the next level. The number of schools recording zero percent pass rate continued to increase significantly (Nkoma, 2014). The under-achievement at both primary and secondary schools (Jeyacheya, 2015).

In Zimbabwe a teacher is entitled to teach up to forty pupils per class at primary level. The teacher is supposed to teach at least nine lessons which are time tabled to 30 minutes in every lesson, (Ministry of Education Sports and Culture, 2013). It is during this time when the teacher is supposed to give individual work to those children according to their grade level as per result of the PLAP test. This number is often increased to sixty making it difficult for the teacher to meet individual needs. Thus PLAP may not be received well by the teacher because of work overload and also considering time as a resource in administering different levels of pupils in one lesson. The teacher therefore becomes the key point of success or failure of PLAP. It is against this background that the researcher has found it necessary to carry out the research on investigating the teacher's attitude in the implementation of PLAP.

Goal of the study.

This study aimed to explore teacher's attitudes towards the implementation of PLAP in in Kadoma East cluster of Mhondoro-Ngezi district in Zimbabwe. The study specifically aimed to facilitate accessing experiences and voices of teachers who are implementing the PLAP programme.

Methodology

A survey approach was used to collect information on teacher's attitudes towards the implementation of PLAP in in Kadoma East cluster of Mhondoro-Ngezi district in Zimbabwe. Creswell (2012) survey methods are very effective in collecting information a selected attribute from a sample of respondent drawn from a target population through the use of questions. Survey method has the advantage that the findings can be generalised to the target population (Creswell 2009). Thus in this research findings obtained represent the general teacher's attitudes towards the implementation of PLAP in in Kadoma East cluster of Mhondoro-Ngezi district in Zimbabwe.

The research instruments

The research used questionnaires to elicit information on teacher's attitudes towards the implementation of PLAP in in Kadoma East cluster of Mhondoro-Ngezi district in Zimbabwe.

Sample and Sampling procedures

The sample of the study was comprised of 20 teachers (10 males and 10 females). This sample constituted 25 % (Creswell, 2012) of teachers teaching in in Kadoma East cluster of Mhondoro-Ngezi district in Zimbabwe. The research used a stratified random sampling. The respondents were selected by separating the population into non-overlapping groups of similar characteristics called strata and then selecting a sample from each stratum (Creswell, 2012). The study used stratified sampling techniques because the study population was heterogeneous and organised in isolated (strata).

Pilot testing

An equivalent of 15% of similar subjects from each similar strata was used to test the content validity and reliability of the research instruments. The pilot participants were selected using convenient sampling method from a similar population from a neighbouring town to avoid sharing of information.

Data collection procedures

Permission for teachers and students to take part in the study was sought from the Ministry of Education Sport Arts and Culture. With the information on the location of selected teachers in Kadoma East cluster of Mhondoro-Ngezi district in Zimbabwe the researcher made appointments with heads of schools to visit their schools for data collection. Data was collected over a period of two days.

Data presentation and analysis

The research used quantitative methods of data presentation and analysis (Creswell, 2009). Tables were used in data presentation because they are easily read and understood (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001). Raw scores were converted into percentages to explain the information

Ethical Considerations

This study was guided by principles that provide a generalized framework of how the research must be conducted. The study addressed the following ethical considerations:

(a) Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation

Respondents who were teachers teaching in regular classes of Kadoma-Ngezi district were given all relevant information about the risks or harm that could arise if they participate in the research. They then choose to participate or not to participate in the study (Makore- Rukuni 2004). They were also allowed to pull out of the research at any point should they wish to without any penalties.

(b) Protection from Harm

The research made sure that respondents were not being exposed to any undue physical harm or psychological harm. The researchers tried to be honest, respectful and sympathetic towards all participants and if by any chance participants required debriefing after an interview the researchers provided this and made referral whenever possible (Cohen, Manion& Morrison, 2001).

(c) Confidentiality and Privacy

The researchers promised to protect the anonymity of the research participants and the confidentiality of their disclosures by consent to the release of personal information. Respondents’ information and responses shared during the study was kept private to protect identities of participants (Creswell, 2009).

Results

Results on the teacher’s attitudes towards the implementation of PLAP in Kadoma East cluster of Mhondoro-Ngezi district in Zimbabwe were presented using the following questions on the research instruments on teacher’s attitudes towards the implementation of PLAP.

Do teachers appreciate the importance of PLAP in helping lagging learners?

Respondents who were teachers teaching in regular classes in Kadoma East cluster of Mhondoro-Ngezi district in Zimbabwe were asked if they were appreciating the importance of PLAP in helping lagging learners. Their responses are presented in table 1.

Table 1 Response to whether teachers were appreciating the importance of PLAP in helping lagging learners

		Strongly Agree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Totals	
Variables	Respondents	F	F(%)	F	F(%)	F	F(%)	F	F(%)	F	F(%)	T(F)	F(%)
Designation	Deputy/Head	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
	Established teacher	5	28%	1	6%	1	6%	5	28%	6	33%	18	101%
	Teacher in charge	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
Professional Qualification	Diploma in Education	5	35%	0	0%	1	6%	05	29%	6	35%	17	99%
	First degree	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%	1	33%	1	33%	3	99%
Experience in teaching	12 years plus	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	60%	5	100%

	10-11 years	0	0	1	33%	0	0%	1	33%	1	33%	3	99%
	8-9 years	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
	6-7 years		0%	1	100%		0%		0%		0%	1	100%
	4-5 years	0	0%	0	0%	1	50%	0	0%	1	50%	2	100%
	2-3 years	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%	1	33%	1	33%	3	99%
	below one year	1	20%	0	0%	0	0%	2	40%	2	40%	5	100%

+/-1 % error

Table 1 shows the responses of whether teachers appreciated the importance of PLAP in helping their lagging students. All heads of schools and teachers in charge (100 %) strongly agreed that they were appreciating the importance of PLAP in helping lagging learners. From the group of established teachers 28% also strongly agreed that they were appreciating PLAP, 6% were in agreed category, the other 6 were not sure, 28% disagreed and 33% strongly disagreed. By professional qualifications, 35 % of those with diplomas in education strongly agreed that they were appreciating the value of PLAP, 6 % not sure, 29% disagreed and 30% strongly disagreed. Thirty-three percentage of the agreed that they appreciated PLAP and the other 33% disagreed and strongly disagreed. Using experience, 40 % of those with 12 years plus experience in teaching experience strongly agreed that they appreciate the value of PLAP, and 60% strongly disagreed, those in the 10-12 years' group 33 % agreed that that they appreciate that PLAP is useful and the other 33% disagreed and strongly disagreed. Hundred percentage of those in the 8-9 years' group agreed that they appreciate PLAP and 100 % of the 6-7 years' group agreed as well. From those in the 4-5 years of teaching experience 50 % were not sure of whether they were appreciating PLA or not and the other 50 % strongly disagreed, from those in the 2-3 years' age of service 33 % agreed and the other 33% disagreed and strongly disagreed that PLAP was an appreciable activity. From the less than one-year group 20% strongly agree that PLAP was appreciable and the other 40% disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Is PLAP is a strenuous and demanding teaching process?

Respondents were also asked to give their views whether PLAP is a strenuous and demanding teaching process Their responses are presented in table 2.

Table 2 Responses from teachers on whether PLAP is a strenuous and demanding teaching process

		Strongly Agree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Totals	
Variables	Respondents	F	F(%)	F	F(%)	F	F(%)	F	F(%)	F	F(%)	T(F)	F(%)
Designation	Deputy/Head	0	0%		0%		0%		0%	1	100%	1	100%
	Established teacher	8	44%	3	17%	1	6%	1	6%	5	28%	18	101%
	Teacher in charge	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
Professional Qualification	Diploma in Education	8	47%	3	18%	1	6%	0	0%	5	29%	17	100%
	First degree	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%	1	33%	1	33%	3	99%

Experience in teaching	12 years and above	5	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%
	10-11 years	0	0%	1	33%	0	0%	1	33%	1	33%	3	99%
	8-9 years	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
	6-7 years		0%	1	100%		0%		0%		0%	1	100%
	4-5 years	0	0%	0	0%	1	50%	0	0%	1	50%	2	100%
	2-3 years	1	33%	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%	1	33%	3	99%
	below one year	2	40%	1	20%	0	0%	0	0%	2	40%	5	100%

+/-1 % error

Table 2 shows the responses of whether teachers considers the implementation of PLAP as a strenuous activity or a normal teaching activity. All heads of schools and teachers in charge (100 %) strongly disagreed that the implementation of PLAP was a strenuous activity but a normal teaching activity. From the group of established teachers 44% also strongly agreed that the implementation of PLAP as a strenuous activity nor a normal teaching activity, 17% were in agreed category, the other 6 % were not sure and disagreed while 28% strongly disagreed. By professional qualifications, 47 % of those with diplomas in education strongly agreed that the implementation of PLAP as a strenuous activity and not a normal teaching activity, 18 % agreed, 6 % not sure, 29% strongly disagreed. Thirty-three percentage of the degreeed strongly agreed that the implementation of PLAP was a strenuous activity or a normal teaching activity the other 33% disagreed and strongly disagreed. Using experience, all (100%) of those with 12 years plus experience in teaching experience Strongly agreed that the implementation of PLAP as a strenuous activity not a normal teaching activity while 33 % of those in 10-12 years' group agreed that PLAP as a strenuous activity not a normal teaching activity the other 33% disagreed and strongly disagreed. Hundred percentage of those in the 8-9 years' group agreed that PLAP as a strenuous activity not a normal teaching activity and 100 % of the 6-7 years' group agreed as well. From those in the 4-5 years of teaching experience 50 % were not sure of whether PLAP as a strenuous activity or a normal teaching activity or not and the other 50 % strongly disagreed, from those in the 2-3 years' age of service 33 % agreed and the other 33% disagreed and strongly disagreed that PLAP as a strenuous activity not a normal teaching activity. From the less that one-year group 40% strongly agree that PLAP as a strenuous activity not a normal teaching activity, 20% agreed and the other 40% disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Respondents who were teaches were also asked whether they were prepared to spend on PLAP against learners whom are viewed as having low expectations in passing the public examinations. Their responses are presented in table 3

Table 3: Responses from teachers' on whether they were prepared to spend on PLAP against learners whom are viewed as having low expectations in passing the public examinations.

Variables	Respondents	Strongly Agree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Totals	
		F	F(%)	F	F(%)	F	F(%)	F	F(%)	F	F(%)	T(F)	F(%)
Designation	Deputy/Head	1	100%	0	0%		0%		0%	0	0%	1	100%
	Established teacher	3	17%	3	17%	0	0%	4	22%	8	44%	18	100%
	Teacher in charge	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
Professional Qualification	Diploma in Education	2	12%	3	18%	0	0%	4	24%	8	47%	17	101%
	First degree	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	99%
Experience in teaching	12 years and above	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%	1	20%	2	40%	5	100%
	10-11 years	1	0%	1	33%	0	0%	1	33%	0	33%	3	99%
	8-9 years	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
	6-7 years	1	0%	1	100%		0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
	4-5 years	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	50%	1	50%	2	100%
	2-3 years	0	33%	1	33%	0	0%	1	0%	1	33%	3	99%
	below one year	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%	5	100%

+/-1 % error

Table 3 shows the responses of whether they were prepared to spend on PLAP against learners whom are viewed as having low expectations in passing the public examinations. All heads of schools and teachers in charge (100%) strongly agreed that they were prepared to spend on PLAP against learners whom are viewed as having low expectations in passing the public examinations. From the group of established teachers 17% also strongly agreed that they were prepared to spend on PLAP against learners whom are viewed as having low expectations in passing the public examinations, 17% were in agreed category 22% disagreed and 44% strongly disagreed. By professional qualifications, 12% of those with diplomas in education strongly agreed that they were prepared to spend on PLAP against learners whom are viewed as having low expectations in passing the public examinations, 18% agreed, 24% disagreed and the other 47% strongly disagreed. All 100% of the degreeed strongly agreed that they were prepared to spend on PLAP against learners whom are viewed as having low expectations in passing the public examinations. Using experience, 40% of those with 12 years plus experience in teaching experience agreed that they were prepared to spend on PLAP against learners whom are viewed as having low expectations in passing the public examinations, 20% disagreed and the other 40% strongly agreed. Thirty-three percent of those with 10-11 years teaching experience y agreed that they were prepared to spend on PLAP against learners whom are viewed as having low expectations in passing the public examinations, the other 33% disagreed and strongly disagreed. Hundred percentage of those in the 8-9 years' group agreed that PLAP as a strenuous activity not a normal teaching activity and 100% of the 6-7

years' group agreed they were prepared to spend on PLAP against learners whom are viewed as having low expectations in passing the public examinations. From those in the 4-5 years of teaching experience 50 % disagreed they were prepared to spend on PLAP against learners whom are viewed as having low expectations in passing the public examinations and the other 50 % strongly disagreed. From those in the 2-3 years' age of service 33 % agreed and the other 33% disagreed and strongly disagreed that they were prepared to spend on PLAP against learners whom are viewed as having low expectations in passing the public examinations. From the less that one-year group ALL (100%) strongly disagree that they were prepared to spend on PLAP against learners whom are viewed as having low expectations in passing the public examinations

Teachers were also asked if they were happy implementing PLAP in their day to day teaching activities. Their responses are indicated in table 4

Table 4 Response from teacher if they were happy with PLAP

Variables	Respondents	Strongly Agree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Totals	
		F	F(%)	F	F(%)	F	F(%)	F	F(%)	F	F(%)	T(F)	F(%)
Designation	Deputy/Head	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
	Established teacher	2	11%	4	22%	1	6%	3	17%	8	44%	18	100%
	Teacher in charge	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
Professional Qualification	Diploma in Education	1	6%	4	24%	1	6%	3	18%	8	47%	17	101%
	First degree	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	100%
Experience in teaching	12 years and above	0	0%	2	40%	0	0%	1	20%	2	40%	5	100%
	10-11 years	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%	2	67%	0	0%	3	100%
	8-9 years	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
	6-7 years	1	0%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
	4-5 years	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	100%	2	100%
	2-3 years	0	0%	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%	2	67%	3	100%
	below one year	1	20%	0	0%	1	20%	0	0%	3	60%	5	100%

Table 4 shows the responses of whether they were happy implementing PLAP in their day to day teaching activities. All heads of schools and teachers in charge (100 %) strongly agreed that they were happy implementing PLAP in their day to day teaching activities. However only 11 % of the established teachers agreed that if they were happy implementing PLAP in their day to day teaching activities, 22% agreed, 6 were not sure, 17% disagreed and the other 44% strongly disagreed. By professional qualifications, 6 % strongly agreed that they were happy implementing PLAP in their day to day teaching activities, 24 agreed, 6 % not sure, 18 disagreed and 47% strongly disagreed. All (100%) of the degree holders strongly agreed that they were happy implementing PLAP in their day to day teaching activities Using experience, 40 % Of those with 12 years and above teaching experience

agreed that, 20% disagreed and the other 40% strongly disagreed. they were happy implementing PLAP in their day to day teaching activities. From the 10-11 years teaching experience 33 agreed that were happy implementing PLAP in their day to day teaching activities and 67 % disagreed. Hundred percentage of those in the 8-9 years' group agreed that and 100 % of the 6-7 years' group agreed while 100% of the 4-5 years strongly disagreed. From those in the 2-3 years' age of service 33 % agreed that they were happy implementing PLAP in their day to day teaching activities and the other 67% strongly disagreed. From the less than one-year group 20% strongly agreed that they were happy implementing PLAP in their day to day teaching activities, 20% were not sure, agreed and the other 60% strongly disagreed.

Discussion

Based on data presentation and interpretation from this study, this study found out that teachers teaching in in Kadoma East cluster of Mhondoro-Ngezi district in Zimbabwe were having negative attitudes towards implementing of PLAP in their day today teaching activities. Most teachers indicated that they were nit appreciating the importance of PLAP to learners. This finding is consistent with Jeyacheya's (2015) study on whether teachers were appreciating the value of PLAP in their classes. In his study Jeyacheya (2015) noted that teachers do not use content differentiation and modification to cater for lagging learners. This suggest that they were not appreciating assisting learners with different level of abilities in their classes. Techers in this study also indicated that PLAP was a strenuous and demanding teaching process This negative position was also echoed in Nkoma (2014) study on the attitudes of teachers on PLAP. Nkoma (2014) observed that teachers felt that it was better to have PLAP as a definitive once-off exercise instead of making it a continuous process in helping the lagging learner. This suggest that PLAP was more of a strenuous and demanding teaching process

The results from this study also indicated that teachers in in Kadoma East cluster of Mhondoro-Ngezi district in Zimbabwe were not prepared to spend their time on PLAP against learners whom are viewed as having low expectations in passing the public examinations. This study finding is consistent to that of Mapiko and Chinyoka (2014) who view that teachers do not enjoy implementing PLAP because of the challenges they face which include different class levels in one grade, and each level needs its own material and content tailored to the student's last point of success. Teachers in this study also said that they were not happy to implement PLAP. This finding is also similar to that of Mapiko and Chinyoka (2014). Mapiko and Chinyoka (2014) found out that teachers were not interested in implementing PLAP as they were feeling that the implementation of PLAP was not consistent with their salaries. They felt that their salaries were too low to accommodate this strenuous activity.

Conclusion and recommendations

This study found that that teachers teaching in in Kadoma East cluster of Mhondoro-Ngezi district in Zimbabwe did not appreciate the value of PLAP. Based on this finding this study recommends holding of PLAP workshops targeting teachers and school heads to help them appreciate the importance of PLAP so as to enhance their levels of appreciating the value of PLAP in education. This study also found out that teachers in in Kadoma East cluster of Mhondoro-Ngezi district in Zimbabwe were not happy to implanting PLAP. They felt that PLAP gave them a lot of work that were not in commensurate with their salaries and they were being made to implement it with little

resources not enough to make their work easy. This study recommends that the government through its ministry of primary and secondary education must make measures to make teaching and learning resources available to teachers for the smooth implementation of PLAP.

Teachers reflect negative attitudes and lack of motivation towards the implementation of PLAP in that they are not happy to implement PLAP for students who lag behind, they do not tolerate PLAP students when implementing PLAP and they do not appreciate the importance of multi-grade teaching hence do not give adequate work to each grade level when administering PLAP. Results shows that there is lack of learner motivation which makes it hard to achieve results from PLAP. Lack of learner motivation can affect the teacher's tolerance to the lagging learner and hence explains why generally teachers did not agree that they have tolerance for lagging learners. There is also need to find other means of motivating teachers considering that they consider PLAP as an extra burden to them. This will boost their moral on PLAP implementation. However, this incentive must be results based to avoid rewarding those who may not be doing enough in as much as the implementation of PLAP is concerned.

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