

**Perceptions of English Teachers on the new curriculum in Zimbabwe:
a case study of selected schools in Masvingo District**

By

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DECLARATION

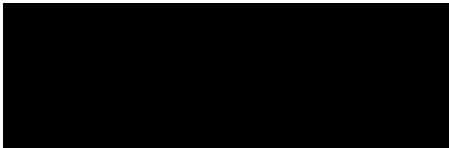
Submitted in fulfilment/partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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30 November 2023

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to all my friends who have stood by me in very difficult and challenging times.

“Only the story can continue beyond the war and the warrior.”

Chinua Achebe.

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I owe this study to my God the creator of this universe for the courage and fortitude which he bestowed upon me and the lesson to take life one day at a time.

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to analyse the perceptions of English Teachers in Masvingo District of Zimbabwe towards the implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum also known as the Updated Curriculum or New Curriculum. The English Language is currently the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) in Zimbabwe. Students must pass English Language as a subject at Ordinary Level (Form 4) for them to proceed to Advanced Level (A-Level), which is the exit level for admission into university. It is also one of the formal requirements for one to secure employment in public and private sectors. It is thus important for this learning area (subject) to be properly constituted to suit the needs of the Zimbabwean citizenry by ensuring that its relevance remains uncompromised by ill-considered policies that are implemented by government policy makers. This study investigated teachers' perceptions towards the curriculum changes, focusing mainly on the changes relevant to the teaching and learning of the English language as a subject. Purposive sampling techniques were used to select Secondary School English Teachers in Masvingo district. The motivation for conducting this study emanated from widely reported cases of discontent expressed by parents, teachers, and learners on the changes that the updated curriculum brought, prompting possibilities of defiance, non-compliance, and outright rejection. The study therefore sought to investigate the perceptions of teachers regarding the curricular changes. Grounded in phenomenology the study focused on selected teachers of English as a High school subject. A total of 120 teachers from 30 schools in the district participated in a questionnaire survey while 10 more participated in an interview to establish the teachers' perceptions on the new curriculum. The findings of the study were that 80% of the participants agreed that the updated curriculum was a positive development, but all invariably agreed that the curriculum needed improvement. It was also established that the major issues with the new curriculum were its Continuous Assessment Learning Area component (CALA). Another significant finding was the perceived lack of

consultation by government, leaving most teachers feeling aggrieved that government simply had forced them into a curriculum that they did not know anything about. This lack of consultation was compounded by the government's seemingly inadequate training of its teachers on the new curriculum. It is the recommendation of this study that government must review the updated curriculum with the aim to reconsider its position on CALA. Further to that, government must also establish training programs to acquaint teachers with the updated curriculum to ensure a smooth and efficient transition of the new curriculum.

KEY TERMS

New Curriculum, updated curriculum, competence-based curriculum, English Language, Masvingo, CALA, phenomenology, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), Nziramasanga Commission

IABHUSTIRAKI

Lolu cwaningo belufuna ukuhlaziya imibono yothisha besiNgisi esikhundleni saseMasvingo mayelana nokuqaliswa kwekharikhulamu esekelwe emakhono eyaziwa nangokuthi yikharikhulamu ethuthukisiwe futhi kwezinye izimo eyaziwa ngokuthi yikharikhulamu entsha. ULimi LwesiNgisi okwamanje lululimi lokufunda nokufundisa (LoLT) eZimbabwe kusukela kwaqala imfundo. Ngaphandle kwayo umuntu ngeke aqhubekele ku-Advanced Level, ekolishi noma eNyuvesi. Futhi kungenye yezidingo ezisemthethweni ukuze umuntu athole umsebenzi ezinkampanini zikahulumeni nezizimele. Kumqoka-ke ukuthi lendawo yokufunda (isihloko) isungulwe ngendlela efanele ukuze ihambisane nezidingo zezakhamizi

zeZimbabwe ngokuqinisekisa ukuthi ukusebenza kwayo kuhlala kungenakubekwa icala ngenxa yokungasebenzi kahle kwamithetho nokunganaki yiziphathimandla eziphethe. Lolu cwaningo luphenye imibono yothisha mayelana nokubuyekezwa kwekharikhulamu, kugxilwe kakhulu ezinguqukweni ezenzeke ngesiNgisi. Kusetshenziswe amasu okusampula okuhlosiwe ekukhetheni Othisha BesiNgisi Besikole Samabanga Aphakeme esifundeni saseMasvingo. Lolu cwaningo oludingekayo lwamukelwa kulandela isikhalo sabazali, othisha nabafundi mayelana nezinguquko ezilethwe yikharikhulamu ethuthukisiwe, okwadala amathuba okudelela, ukungathobeli kanye nokwenqatshwa ngokuphelele. Ngakho-ke ucwaningo lufuna ukuphenya ngembangela yokungeneliseki ngokunikeza othisha izwi ngalolu daba. Ngokusekelwe ku-phenomenology ucwaningo lugxile kothisha besiNgisi abakhethiwe esifundeni saseMasvingo. Kuqashelwe ukuthi u-80% wabahlanganyeli uvumile ukuthi uhlelo lwezifundo olusha luyintuthuko enhle, kodwa bonke bavumelana ngokungaguquki ukuthi uhlelo lwezifundo ludinga ukuthuthukiswa. Kwaphinde kwatholakala ukuthi izingqinamba ezinkulu ngohlelo olusha lwezifundo ingxenye yalo yeNkalo yesiFundo yokuhlola Eqhubekayo (CALA). Ukungaxoxisana nohulumeni okucatshangelwe ukuthi kushiye iningi lothisha liphatheke kabi ngokuthi uhulumeni uvele wabaphoqa ukuba bangene ohlelweni lwezifundo abangazi lutho ngalo. Lokhu kungabi khona kokuxoxisana kwengezwe wukuqeqesheka kukahulumeni othisha bakhe okubonakala kungenanele ngohlelo olusha lwezifundo. Kuyisiphakamiso salolu cwaningo ukuthi uhulumeni kumele abuyekeze uhlelo lwezifundo olusha ngenhloso yokubhekisisa isimo salo kuCALA aphinde aqhamuke nezinhlelo zokuqeqesha ukuze othisha bajwayelane nekharikhulamu ethuthukisiwe.

IMIGOMO EYINGQONDO

Uhlelo olusha lwezifundo, ikharikhulamu ethuthukisiwe, ikharikhulamu esekelwe emakhono, Ulimi lwesiNgisi, iMasvingo, i-CALA, i-phenomenology, uMnyango wezeMfundo, uMnyango wezeMfundo yamabanga aphansi neSekondari (MoPSE), iKhomishana yeNziramasa

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBC	Competence Based Curriculum
MOPSE	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
ZIMSEC	Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council
BSPZ	Better Schools Programme of Zimbabwe
ESR	Education for Self-Reliance
KBC	Knowledge Based Curriculum
CIET	Commission of Inquiry into Education
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching

Chapter: 1 Introduction

1.1. Introduction and background to the research

This chapter will provide a brief introduction on the background of curriculum change process in Zimbabwe since 1980. A history of the challenges that existed in post-independence which culminated into the Nziramasanga Commission will be discussed. Other key features to this study such as the statement of the problem, its location as well as its aims and objectives will also be discussed in this introductory chapter. A definition of key terms shall also be offered in this introduction.

The attainment of independence in 1980 ushered in a new era of hope and euphoria to the masses that at last the people could now determine their own destiny freely. The new government was keen to improve the lives of people in all spheres. Education, along with many other sectors was one area the new government was keen to revamp. For example, it was argued that the inherited education system lacked “relevance, quality and orientation” to suit the changing socio-economic situation of a changing society (Nziramasanga, 1999). For more than a hundred years the education system in Zimbabwe had been one that existed in dual form. There was an education system designed for black Africans on one side and the privileged European on the other. The colonial education system was modelled along the philosophy of segregation and separate development. This education system heavily marginalised the black population and propelled the European student to upper echelons of society by providing him with a superior education to that of the African learner. As a result of this, the black child had limited opportunities in the job market, restricting him to menial and low-level clerical jobs compared to his European counterpart who had access to skilled well salaried jobs. In most cases, the African was left unemployable, left to wander the streets in abject poverty.

Following the attainment of independence from colonial rule in 1980, the government of Zimbabwe sought to revamp the education system so that it could conform with the prevailing socio-political ideology of the people. It has been realised that the education system of the previous administration created school leavers who were prepared to

only serve the colonial administration only as clerks and other such low paying occupations pegged at the very bottom of the economic ladder. The change was not only needed by government, but also by the private sector and other stakeholders who called on government to revamp the education sector.

Following these recommendations, the government instituted a Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (CIET) in 1998 under the provisions of Instrument 7C and Proclamation 3 of 1998 (Nzirasanga, 1999). The purpose of the commission was to “look into the state and structure and content of education” in Zimbabwe (MoPSE, 2015). The Commission was led by Dr Caiphas

Nzirasanga. In 1999, having completed its inquiry, CIET handed a report of its findings to the president of the Republic of Zimbabwe. This report culminated in curriculum change in 2017, some 18 years after it had been submitted to the President. Now five years after the New Curriculum was introduced, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) is in the process of reviewing the New Curriculum to measure its level of success and challenges. This process began at the beginning of the year 2023 and expected to end in December, after which its evaluation report will be made public.

Studies that have investigated processes of curriculum change globally, have demonstrated that it is a process that is fraught with challenges, but one that also provides prospects for implementation of innovative and desirable change (Gasva & Moyo, 2017). In the Zimbabwean context, serious economic challenges have afflicted the country, leading to low morale and lack of motivation by underpaid teachers and the generality of the civil service. The COVID-19 pandemic that overwhelmed the global community starting in February 2020, has exacerbated the negativity of the environment in which curriculum reform was meant to be implemented.

1.2. Findings of the Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training CIET)

The overriding finding of the CIET was that the education system was outdated and impractical. The CIET report found that the education system that had been in existence was meant to serve the interests of the colonial administration in a set up whereby the colonial citizenry would play a peripheral role in the political, social, and economic

affairs of the country. The Commission also observed that the curriculum was too knowledge based with limited pathways for learners who were unable to follow the academic route as opposed to the practical-skills oriented curriculum. It also noted that school leavers did not meet the needs of industry and were thus largely unemployable (MoPSE, 2015 & Coltart, 2012). The CIET therefore recommended a total overhaul of the education system in Zimbabwe by merging it to the socio-political and economic order that was aligned to the democratic principles and values of the Republic.

On the role of English Language, the Commission discovered that the provisions of The Education Act noted that Shona, Ndebele, and English were the country's major languages and were therefore supposed to be treated equally as well as being given equal time on the timetable (Nziramasanga, 1999). However, this was unsatisfactory and considered divisive by previously marginalised languages in the country who wanted their own languages to be accorded same status with English, Shona and Ndebele. The Commission however did not find a clear solution to this impasse. Its findings merely ratified the importance of English by recommending that instead of elevating English into its lone status as an important official language, government was to ensure that Shona and Ndebele were to be also considered as official languages without necessarily neglecting these previously marginalised languages (p.169).

1.3.Recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (CIET)

The commission made the following key recommendations:

- The government was advised to drop the old knowledge-based curriculum and adopt a competency-based curriculum which would be realized through practical-oriented learning.
- The government was advised to shift from exam-oriented teaching and learning assessment to outcome-based education.
- The CIET recommended a pedagogical shift from teaching to learning, and from quantity-based to quality-based content amongst many other suggestions.
- The CIET called for enhanced state funding of public educational institutions, and in the process to address the teacher - pupil ratio. (MoPSE, 2015).

These recommendations, made in 1999, were proposed in the context of an already declining economy. Considering the cost implications that were involved in implementing the CIET recommendations, the government was reluctant to implement the recommendations (Siyakwazi, 2016; Gasva et al., 2019). This explains why the government only started implementing the recommendations made in 1999 eighteen years later in 2017.

In 2015, the Minister of Education took the initiative to implement the recommendations of CIET. A roadmap was put in place, which the education system would follow from 2015 going forward (MoPSE, 2015). The framework provided for a total overhaul of the curriculum from an exam-based system, which focused mainly on summative measurement, to a competence-based system, which provided for both continuous assessment and examinations (MoPSE, 2015). The Updated Curriculum, also known as the New Curriculum, and officially known as the Competency-Based Curriculum became the bona-fide Zimbabwean curriculum in all government schools and most mission-based education institutions. Concerns were raised that the process leading to the adoption of the Competency-Based Curriculum had not been consultative enough, especially with respect to the involvement of teachers (Hwande & Mpofu, 2017). Amid these concerns regarding teacher-buy in, the world got caught-up in the vortex of the COVID-19 pandemic. Zimbabwean teachers found themselves in a situation where they had to navigate poor morale induced by economic challenges; the challenges of implementing a new curriculum; as well as the disruptions brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.4. Reactions to the new curriculum

Reactions to the New Curriculum in Zimbabwe were mixed. Many scholars saw its adoption as a positive change which had long been overdue (Pedzisai et al., 2014; MoPSE, 2015). However, teachers complained that government did not carry out exhaustive consultations, particularly with them as well as the parents. Teachers particularly complained that the New Curriculum was being imposed on them. They argued that they were not adequately trained, and schools were not sufficiently equipped (Hwande & Mpofu, 2017). A former minister of education, David Coltart labelled the new curriculum a “disaster”, arguing that “the newly launched education

curriculum, which comes into effect tomorrow,” was likely to throw the sector into disarray, as it was introduced at short notice and without prior consultation with educators (Newsday, 2017). A group of parents at Dadaya Mission in Zvishavane filed a lawsuit against the then Minister of Education Dr Lazarus Dokora in a bid to reverse the new curriculum (Africanewsdesk.com, 2017). The parents argued that the curriculum was not implementable considering the economic situation and the lack of consultation. An online publication carried an opinion survey on 998 teachers and Headmasters based in Harare, on the feasibility of implementing the new curriculum. All of them agreed that while it was a good development, they did not agree that it should be implemented (The Patriot, 2017). The reasons advanced by the 998 teachers and headmasters who participated in the opinion survey were many and varied. Some argued that there were inadequate human resources to carry out this implementation. Others cited financial constraints, shortage of resources such as textbooks, computers etc. One Headmaster captured the sentiments of many by giving an example of the new curriculum saying, “the intended curriculum includes content for learners with special needs, but trained personnel to handle such learners is inadequate” (The Patriot, 2017). All these concerns raised by parents and teachers demonstrated the view held by many, that more work in terms of consultation and provision of resources needed to be done. However, despite these wide protests, government proceeded with implementing the new curriculum.

1.5. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to critically examine the perceptions of English teachers while implementing the New Curriculum. This study seeks to evaluate the perceptions of English Teachers in the understanding that perceptions are the very basis of how teachers will behave in the classroom. This is based on the belief that teachers tend to teach as they believe (Marungudzi, 2009). The implementation of the New Curriculum was severely affected by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the negative reception from stakeholders. The study therefore seeks to explore how educators perceive the new curriculum especially when executing their duties as English teachers which, in this context, involves interpreting and implementing it. The study presents an opportunity to assess the limits and possibilities obtaining from such

a situation. Insights from this study present an opportunity for the education sector to explore countless opportunities for curriculum innovation.

1.6. Statement of the Problem

Like many former colonies of the British government, Zimbabwe adopted the language of its former coloniser which in this case is English as the language of state and instruction in virtually all schools in the country (Marungudzi, 2009). So, self-rule has seen English as a learning area emerge as perhaps the most important subject in the school curriculum of Zimbabwe. Since all the subjects in Zimbabwe's curriculum are offered in English, its importance has doubled since 1980. It is very clear that with the current global trends, English will perhaps emerge as the most important subject in SADC as well as in Africa where over three hundred languages are currently being spoken as official (Barnard, 2010). There are several reasons as to why English has emerged as important. Many scholars are of the view that English is perceived as a language of integration. It is therefore taught in many curricular because it encourages people to have it as a common language thereby fostering unity and sameness (2010).

In Zimbabwe's curriculum, a learner is deemed to have passed matriculation if such a learner has obtained five 'O' level subjects including English Language (Marungudzi, 2009). This implies that even if a learner obtains more than five subjects without English, then that learner would be deemed to have failed and thus would be unable to proceed to tertiary or to seek employment. This makes English language a critical subject to all learners in Zimbabwe. The pass rate of this subject is extremely low in most schools in Zimbabwe. Most candidates fail "O" level mainly because they would have failed to obtain grade C or better in English. The pass rate of English itself is poor across the country. For example, in 2019 the national pass rate of English was 31.6%, in 2020 it dropped to 24.8% and in 2021 it rose to 26.34% (New Zimbabwe, 2021).

The introduction of the competence-based curriculum, put in context, will need to be critiqued from the point of view of English teachers. Their perceptions will contribute critically to the new body of knowledge on how and why they feel the way they do about the new curriculum. This would be one of the many necessary steps required to unpack greater understanding of English teaching and the new curriculum from the teachers

themselves. What makes this study more critical is that it does not only problematize the curriculum, but also its implementation which was viewed as chaotic.

1.7. Location of the Study

The study was conducted at selected secondary schools in Masvingo District. The research utilised purposively sampled English teachers within 30 secondary schools that are in proximity to one another in Masvingo district. This gave an estimated number of 200 English teachers to participate in the study. Out of these 30 schools three were further selected for the interview data collection where the researcher sought to interview between 12 English teachers. These schools are **Rekayi Tangwena High, Joshua Mqabuko** and **Herbet Chitepo (All pseudonyms)**. These were selected because of their proximity to one another and because they were accessible to the researcher. These three are all rural based schools run by Masvingo Rural District Council. Their proximity to one another made it convenient for access by the researcher.

1.8. Research aims

The study sought to examine the perceptions of English teachers towards the new curriculum. This study had been incepted against the unfortunate perception that the curriculum implementation process was not done in a consultative manner. The Ministry of Education had been accused of riding roughshod over the concerns of the community and teachers. This study therefore sought to fill the perceived gap left by teachers in the implementation process so that they too, could voice their concerns about the curriculum. As the real foot soldiers, it was therefore crucial to ensure that their concerns are articulated and hopefully, corrective measures put in place, particularly at this early stage of the curriculum implementation process.

1.9. Research objectives

1. To explore the perceptions of Zimbabwean high school teachers of English towards the new curriculum.
2. To understand why Zimbabwean high school teachers of English perceive the new curriculum the way they do.

3. To explore the challenges and opportunities experienced by Zimbabwean high school teachers of English in implementing the new curriculum.

1.10. Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of Zimbabwean high school teachers of English regarding the new curriculum?
2. Why do Zimbabwean high school teachers of English perceive the new curriculum the way they do?
3. What are the challenges and opportunities experienced by Zimbabwean high school teachers of English in implementing the new curriculum?

1.11. Research limitations

One of the major problems in research processes is the problem of generalizability of the findings. There is always that question to ask: to what extent can the data be generalized? Can the views of teachers in Masvingo district alone, given the diversity of Zimbabwe be said to reflect the views of all the other teachers in Zimbabwe? The other challenge lies in the type of sampling used in the study. The researcher used purposive sampling because he had to choose a convenient research sample, closer and more accessible to him. Obviously, this creates an element of bias on the part of the research in that he chooses an area already familiar to him where participants might be tempted to say what they say to please the researcher.

1.12. Delimitations

To address the problem of generalizability, the researcher had to increase the size of the sample to a point where it would be safe to do. Two tests were conducted to determine the size of the sample necessary to carry out this research. The first was a KMO- measure of sampling adequacy together with Bartlett's test of sphericity. Both tests measured the size of sample and the extent to which the findings of this study could be made valid.

1.13. Ethical considerations

An ethical clearance was provided to conduct this research. All sound ethical considerations were followed during the conduction of this research. Participants were advised about their rights to privacy, informed consent and were advised to pull out of the research process any time they felt uncomfortable.

1.14. Organization of the study

This study consists of five chapters. The first Chapter is the introduction. This introduces us to the research topic, the problem statement, research questions and the background to the study. Chapter two consists of a discussion of related literature on the issue of curriculum change. This is provided through a series of curriculum change processes from a global perspective and selected African countries other than Zimbabwe. Chapter three discusses the methodology of the study while Chapter four is the data presentation, analysis, and discussion. Chapter five will provide the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

1.15. Definition of key terms

- **Competence based curriculum** is a curriculum which focuses on competencies that must be acquired by the learner during a leaning a learning process.
- **Perception** is the sum of what a person knows or believes about something.
- **Continuous Assessment Learning Area** is a form of assessment where learners do an extended research activity submit it as course work.

1.16. Conclusion

This introductory Chapter has unpacked the contentious issue of the introduction of the Updated Curriculum (also known as The Competence-Based Curriculum) in Zimbabwe by providing the background leading to its implementation. This introductory chapter explained how the introduction of the Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training led by Dr Caiphus Nziramasanga recommended a total overhaul of the education sector of Zimbabwe. These recommendations were taken up by government some eighteen

years later, leading to the introduction of the Updated Curriculum. The write up detailed some of the problems that hindered the smooth implementation of the new curriculum such as poor governmental consultation, inadequate resources, and perceived government intolerance. It is against this background that this study was done to clearly investigate the issues surrounding the perceptions of teachers towards this curriculum. This will then provide insight into the reasons for the said perceptions and the mapping of strategies going forward. The Chapter also discussed the aims of the study together with a statement of the problem and critical questions relating to the study.

The next chapter carries out a review of related literature about curriculum change and the problems associated with it.

Chapter: 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature that is relevant to the process of curriculum change as envisaged in the Zimbabwean context through the Competence-Based Curriculum. A review of how curriculum change has been implemented in some countries in the global landscape will be done. This review will gradually narrow down to some countries in the Southern African region and eventually to the Zimbabwean case. The chapter also briefly discusses the theoretical underpinnings of this study which will be discussed in some detail in Chapter 3.

2.2 English Language as an Important Competence

Zimbabwe, a former British colony, inherited the English language during the colonial period which spanned the period 1890 to 1980. During the colonial period, missionaries who were on a path to evangelize the newly annexed colony made efforts to send the black population to school (Nkomo, 2008). In turn, these newly educated graduates would assist in the business of spreading Christianity in their communities. Thus, efforts were made early on to ensure that one of the basic skills to be taught to the young natives was the use of the English language with the sole purpose of ensuring that it became universally accepted and used in the colony. Nkomo points out that English became the bona fide language of work and government the very moment the British took over power. Over the years English became a language of power to the black population. According to Nhongo and Tshotsho (2020), the dominance of English Language was a deliberate effort to annihilate native languages by promoting English as a language of power.

Upon the attainment of political independence in 1980, the newly constituted majority government continued using English as the language of work and government. The education act of 1987, which was amended twice, in 1990 and 2006 underscores the importance of English by mentioning it along Shona and Ndebele, (the two major languages of Zimbabwe) as a language of teaching and learning. An excerpt of this policy pertaining to language teaching reads:

1. Subject to this section, the three main languages of this country, namely, Shona, Ndebele, and English, shall be taught in all primary schools from the first grade as follows:

- a. Shona and English in all areas where the mother tongue of the majority of the residents is Shona; or*
- b. Ndebele and English in all areas where the mother tongue of the majority of the residents is Ndebele.*

2. Prior to the fourth grade, either of the two languages referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) of subsection (1) may be used as the medium of instruction, depending upon which language is more commonly spoken and understood better by the pupils.

3. From the fourth grade, English shall be the medium of instruction: Provided that Shona and/or Ndebele shall be taught as subjects on an equal-time allocation basis as the English language (Government of Zimbabwe).

The act, as shown above, places English at par with local languages. However, the reality is that English seems to have more superiority over Shona and Ndebele as implied above. The act explains that these languages are equally important but goes on to say English is an option for either Shona or Ndebele speaking learners, thereby making it the default language for such speakers of Shona and Ndebele.

Nkomo (2008), makes the following observation:

The choice of the English language in Zimbabwe will be considered first. It should be noted that the role of English is not optional, but compulsory.

Subsections 1 and 3 respectively stipulate that 'English shall be taught' and 'English shall be the medium of instruction'. Teaching English as required, 'in all primary schools from the first grade', implies that it may be used as the medium of instruction at that early level; and according to practice (p. 355).

The above quote by Nkomo demonstrates the importance of English as a critical competence amongst learners. This underscores the importance the researcher placed on the current study. The short argument to note is that currently English is a key subject in Zimbabwe's curriculum and if curriculum change is being implemented then it must be done properly and effectively to ensure a smooth competent transition in line with best practice globally.

Kufakunesu (2017), sums it aptly when he points out that 'English has unquestionable linguistic superiority' as a language because in SADC alone it is the language of cohesion (p. 6). It is spoken in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Lesotho, and Swaziland. As such it must be taken as a critical skill to ensure Zimbabweans learn it right. Currently in Zimbabwe, English is not only important as a language of learning but also as a language of assessment as well. This means that all the other subjects, except vernacular languages are not only taught in English but examined in English as well.

2.3 The Significance of Perceptions

The term 'perception' is one of the most important terminologies in the study of human cognition. Barat (2005) defines perception as the process by which people regard, analyse, retrieve, and react to any kind of information from the environment. The Cambridge Dictionary defines it as "a belief or opinion, openly held by many people based on how things seem". It goes on to say that perception is the state or the condition of being conscious of things around us using our physical senses. The two definitions coincide in their meaning on the idea of cognition. Thus, to perceive is to be aware, to know of, and or to understand the state of things. Another critical observation from the definitions above is that perception is an experience we develop. It is an understanding of things around us through *experience*. This is backed by Schreurs et al., (2009), who posit that perception is a process whereby sensory stimulation is translated into organized experience. It is therefore critical to understand that for perceptions to develop, experience is an essential requisite. Human beings develop their different perceptions about things around them because of experience. Merleau-Ponty (1978), gives a view which sums all this by saying:

Perception is not a science of the world, it is not even an act, a deliberate taking up of a position; it is the background from which all acts stand out and is presupposed by them. The world is not an object such that I have in my possession the law of its making; it is the natural setting of, and field for, all my thoughts and all my explicit (p. xi).

Merleau-Ponty here raises a pertinent point which is that as we exist in our own natural world, we are constantly developing our own understanding of the various realities around us in a manner which is not deliberate through the natural experiences exposed to us.

There are many factors which shape our understandings of things around us. These factors may be within us like our culture, values, and our thought processes. But our perceptions may be shaped by factors around but outside of us such as environmental factors.

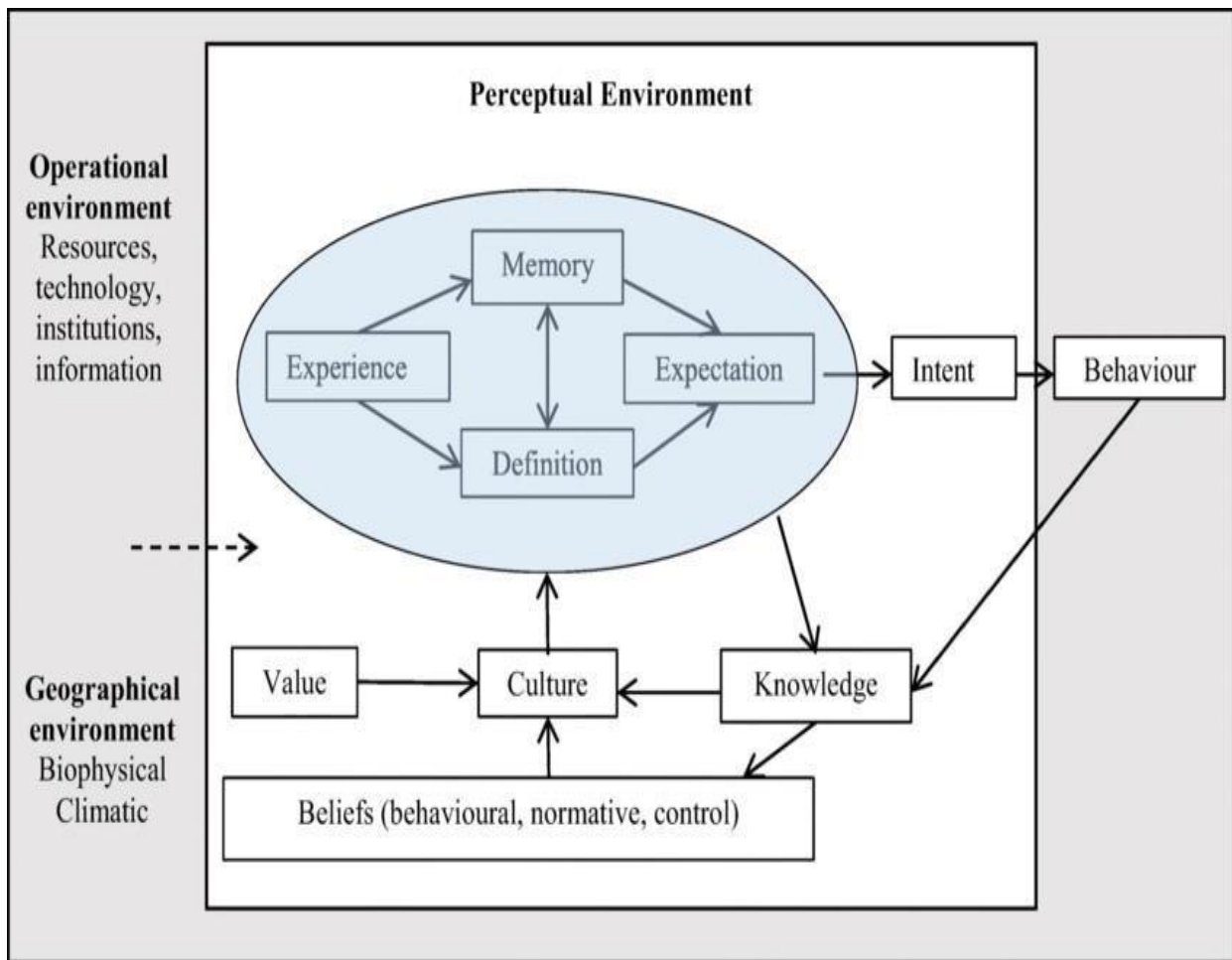


Figure 1: An Illustration of how perception occurs (Singh et al., 2018)

Figure 1 above illustrates how the perception process works (Singh et al, 2018). The diagram illustrates the two major sources of perception namely, environmental, and internal factors. As can be seen on the figure, environment factors may be divided into two namely, our geographical environment i.e. where we live, and our social life and the operational environment, where we conduct our day-to-day business activities. These two provide a form of experience which may be referred to as active experience while internal factors like culture, values and our knowledge provide innate experience. How the two (active and innate experience) interact within an individual becomes our perceptual development hence perception.

2.4 Importance of Perception

Human behaviour is a complex phenomenon which constantly needs deeper and acute understanding. Schreurs (2009), points out that it is important to understand perception

because it helps organisations to effectively evaluate worker performance, understand human relations and predict future behaviour. Schreurs goes on to explain factors affecting perceptions amongst which are some presented in tabular format below. For this study, I argue that perceptions are fundamentally important because they influence how teachers conceive and teach the Competence Based Curriculum.

2.5 Factors affecting Perception.

Table 1: Factors Affecting Perception

The factors in the perceiver that affect perception are:	Factors in the Target	The factors in the situation that affect perception are:
Attitudes- Attitudes have a powerful influence on what we pay attention to, what we		Time- The time at which an object or event is seen affects perception.
Remembrance (Memory), and how we interpret information. Different attitudes lead to different interpretations	Novelty- Novelty targets are more likely to be noticed than the targets observed in	Events happening or not happening as expected
Motives- Motives stimulate individuals. It is unsatisfied need. They exert strong	The past.	Work setting- The changing context of the work setting influences perception. For
Influence on perception. For example, hungry people tend to see images of food.	Motion, sound, size- They shape the way we see the target. Loud people are more	Example: stressful work situations distort perception.

Emotions- An individual's emotional state strongly influences perception. Anger and	likely to be noticed.	Social setting- The changing social setting influences perception.
Frustration distort perception.	Background- a target is not looked at in	Male student wearing earrings may not be
	isolation. The relationship of target to its	noticed in a disco but highly noticeable in
Interests- Individual interests differ considerably. Interest influences the focus of	background influences perception.	The classroom.
Attention. Differences in individual interests result in differing perceptions.	Proximity- Objects that are close to each other tend to be perceived together.	

Partly adapted from www.benchpartner.com (2023).

Table 1 gives a summary of the factors affecting perception as summarized by www.benchpartner.com (2023). A cursory glance may show some of the factors that may have affected the implementation of the Competence Based Curriculum. For instance, some of the factors indicated above include frustration, workplace environment, attitudes, and many others. It is therefore crucial that researchers unpack perceptions to understand and explain social phenomena effectively and meaningfully. The study of perceptions falls within what Bennet (1995), refers to as 'perspectivism', a theory which deals with how human beings perceive the world around them. Matsuura et al., (2004), underscore the importance of teachers' perceptions arguing that teachers "teach as they believe" since their beliefs, attitudes, assumptions, and experiences shape how they influence the various "instructional judgements and decisions' (p. 472). This is also backed by Goodman (1985), and Marungudzi (2009).

Marungudzi (2009), argues that it is crucial for researchers to study the perceptions of teachers to gain insight in their world because teachers teach as they perceive the reality around them.

The literature on perceptions is important for this study in that it illuminates the deep-rooted reaction that teachers demonstrated to curriculum change and how it was influenced by a variety of factors. Studies that have explored the concept of perceptions regarding curriculum change, implementation or evaluation include Kreber (2010). Kreber investigated the relationship between students' course perception and their approaches to studying undergraduate science courses in Canada. Yildiz and Selçuk (2013), studied, "Teachers' Perceptions on The Effectiveness of Curriculum Mapping" in Turkey. Akdemir and Sinan (2018) investigated student perceptions for the Second Language Learning in Technology Enhanced Learning Environments. These studies are only a few to illustrate the importance of perceptions in curriculum related research. They demonstrate that understanding perceptions is one of the most critical ways of understanding and controlling human behaviour. These arguments are important for this study because they provide important insights into understanding the factors that influenced how teachers perceived the New Curriculum in Zimbabwe.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by phenomenology as a guiding theoretical framework. Phenomenology was first developed by Edmund Husserl late in the nineteenth century (Larsen & Adu, 2022). Its focus is the study of experience. According to Larsen and Adu, (2022), this theory focuses on the subjective understanding of how individuals know things. It is subjective because an individual's perception of reality around him/her is unique and peculiar to his/her situation. These perceptions of an individual's reality are what Husserl terms 'experience' (Larsen & Adu, 2022).

Phenomenology is derived from the Greek '*phainomena*' which refers to how things appear (Donoghue & Punch, 2003). Phenomenology focuses on describing anything that presents itself, be it physical objects, emotions and even thoughts (p. 6). For Woodruff, phenomenology studies "the structure of consciousness as experienced from

the first-person point of view (Woodruff, 2018). This means that phenomenology is largely concerned with how individuals shape their experiences.

There has been some controversy regarding phenomenology. It has been perceived by some as a methodology, a paradigm, and a philosophy (Barrow, 2017 p. 24). The confusion has risen perhaps from its somewhat unclear definition leading to some confusion. For example, Maykut and Morehouse (1994), explain that phenomenology is an overarching perspective that encompasses qualitative research. Vagle (2014), describes it as just an “orientation to qualitative” methodology (p. 12). However, it is Woodruff (2018), who unpacks phenomenology much more clearly. He argues that it can be both a theory and a methodology depending on the circumstances such as what the researcher wants to achieve. He argues that traditional philosophy had four fields namely, ontology, which is the study of being, epistemology the study of knowledge, ethics, the study of right, and logic the study of how to reason meaningfully. Woodruff proposes a fifth discipline by adding phenomenology which is the study of experience. This proposal somewhat augments the philosophical skills of thought by underscoring the role of experience in knowledge creation. He adds, “how I see, conceptualise, or understand the object I am dealing with, defines the meaning of that object in my current experience” (Woodruff, 2018 para 6).

The above discussion attempts to demonstrate that phenomenology is a crucial theory applicable to this study. Since the study seeks to investigate the perceptions of teachers, a phenomenological approach is considered appropriate and useful for purposes of exploring the aims of the study considering that according to it, reality is experiential. By studying the experiences of the participants, we get to explore and understand how these experiences have shaped their perceptions.

2.7 Curriculum

This section discusses the literature relevant to curriculum. It discusses what curriculum is and the various change processes associated with its innovation. Understanding all this is detrimental as it underscores the importance of curriculum to a nation’s education system. To demonstrate this, I highlight the curriculum change processes that have occurred elsewhere in the world outside Zimbabwe.

2.8 Definition of curriculum

There are varying definitions to the term curriculum. Hessman points out that the term originates from the Latin word 'curere' which means to track or follow a course (Hessman, 2019). Null (2011), refers to curriculum as simply "what is to be taught" (p. 1). These definitions align with Moore (2015), who sees curriculum as merely a path that must be followed in an instruction process. These definitions above, all agree that for curriculum to be seen as such, it must follow a predetermined path. Or that there must be some form of pattern or order that must be followed. This demonstrates that curriculum is therefore a highly organized and deliberate path that must be followed. This is reinforced by Travers and Westbury (1989), who see curriculum as "intended", "implemented" and "attained". This shows that, according to Travers and Westbury, curriculum is what one intends to teach or what one has taught or achieved thus reinforcing Lynch and Knight's perception that curriculum can be seen as either a process or a product (2011).

The above definitions imply that curriculum is a planned process designed to provide instruction to a learner. This further suggests that someone must take the initiative of doing the planning process. This is a clear indication that in curriculum study, there must be a higher authority who must be in a position of power and influence to do the planning (Munna & Kalan, 2021). In most countries the convener of a curriculum structure is the relevant ministry of education such as The Ministry of Basic Education in South Africa and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe. Once this curriculum has been mapped out, it is then disseminated to schools and other relevant stakeholders. Schools then use the curriculum framework from the relevant ministry to design their own school curricular. To conclude on the above discussion, curriculum can therefore be defined as the "sum total of all learning experience" and the "intended learning outcomes" that a school provides (Hessman, 2019).

2.9 The Importance of Curriculum

As has been indicated above, the importance of curriculum cannot be emphasized. Curriculum is the central part of the whole education. It is the blueprint upon which the

education of a nation or school is hinged. Hessmann (2019), calls it the “hearth” of the learning experience, without which there would be no schools (2019). Curriculum ensures that the standard of instruction is of good quality by ensuring that there are set outcomes that must be met by teachers. These standards become the yardstick which teachers use to ensure and measure whether learners qualify for the next grade or whether outcomes have been met in the first place. Curriculum becomes critical in that it furthers the economic agenda of a nation. This means that curriculum is often tailored to suit the socio, political and economic needs of a country. Thus, it is designed to provide answers to a country’s problems (Bilboa et al., 2008). For example, a country may be having a critical shortage of competent science and technology human resources. Curriculum may then be drafted in such a manner as to promote the education of science and technology in schools. Another example is that curriculum may be designed to suit the growing global trends, particularly in technology. Nowadays with the possibility of pandemic outbreaks like COVID-19, it has become necessary to find ways of providing safe and meaningful learning via virtual platforms. Therefore, a properly drafted curriculum will take cognizance of such rapid changes in education to ensure smooth learning. All this reinforces the importance of curriculum as well as the view that curriculum implementation and reform are all deliberate processes that require careful thought.

2.10 Some Perspectives on Curriculum

There are several different perspectives on the concept of curriculum. Munna and Kalan (2021), identify two dominant models namely, curriculum as a product as well as curriculum as a process. To this discussion a few models of curriculum will be discussed as advanced by Lynch and Knight which are curriculum as product, as process, as knowledge and as praxis Lynch and Knight (2011).

2.11 Curriculum as Product

This approach is also known as the behavioural objectives model. This model focuses on the products of curriculum (O’Neill, 2010). This approach dwells more on the “plans and intentions” of curriculum and seeks to establish a curriculum that is broken down into manageable bits for ease of instruction (Lynch & Knight, 2011). It has one great

disadvantage in that it is the teacher who is at the centre of the instructional activity because it is the teacher who gets to manage content. The second weakness is that emphasis is placed again on the product, making other elements of the learning process appear immaterial and merely as collateral. This therefore implies that a teacher who decides to use this approach must strive for a balance between what is being taught and what needs to be achieved so as not to totally isolate the learner.

2.12 Curriculum as Process

This approach is different from the product approach in that while the product focuses on the ultimate product, the process approach sees curriculum as a process rather than an end. This means that it focuses on the key processes of teaching and learning by adding value on them, so that the whole learning process is enriched by placing the learner at the centre (Munna & Kalan, 2021). Since this approach places the learner at the centre of the learning experience, ultimately it is the learner who gains invaluable experience in the process. There are several advantages with this approach. It focuses on the roles of the teacher and the learner at the centre of the whole process. Lynch and Knight (2001) point out that this approach is ideal in that it seeks to place emphasis on the process, which comprises of the teacher, the learner, the content, and the environment, thereby making conditions ideal for lesson delivery, ultimately assuring a more satisfactory outcome. The only disadvantage is that the process approach is often time consuming as its focus is more on the means than on the end. For example, in the school set up, an English teacher can use the process model to discuss on the various concepts around the learning of English, the ideal classroom as well as the type of resources essential for the learning activity. This entire process will be done as a collaborative activity between the teacher and the learners. While this approach is ideal for contemporary classes that use the competence-based approach, there are serious limitations caused by insufficient time for implementing all these requirements.

2.13 Curriculum as Knowledge

Lynch and Knight (2011), point out that curriculum may also be perceived as knowledge. This entails the view that curriculum is a passive commodity which must utilised by participants. Usually, curriculum is viewed as knowledge when it is broken

down into usable bits in the form of outlines or summaries (p. 1). Lynch and Knight further point out that curriculum as knowledge is often transmitted to schools and learning institutions as syllabi. This offers a list of topics that will be covered in a particular grade. This knowledge is therefore broken down into usable and digestible bits there by allowing for orderly assimilation and processing by learners. It is critical for teachers to have a thorough understanding of syllabi to ensure that only correct and relevant knowledge is transmitted. This will also ensure that learners get to learn what they learn at the right age group.

2.14 Curriculum as Praxis

Curriculum as praxis is a conceptualisation through the belief that, focus on curriculum must ultimately lead to human empowerment (Grundy, 1987). The word praxis can be seen as referring to practice, exercise, usage, or habit. Grundy argues that “curriculum as praxis is a conceptualisation of curriculum derived from an orientation towards human well-being and which makes an explicit commitment to emancipation of the human spirit” (Yek & Penny, 2006 p. 7). Grundy’s argument here is that in curriculum as praxis, the teaching and learning process is moved to the level of “critical pedagogy” where the learning process is problematised thereby encouraging a dialogic confrontation between the content and the learners. This means that both the teacher and the learners must interrogate the curriculum and “negotiate essential meaning” from it. Perhaps what is critical to note is that praxis seeks to provide real life situations to learning content so that learners are equipped to deal with life after school.

2.15 Types of Curricula

Hessman (2019), identifies essentially three types of curricula namely explicit curriculum, implicit curriculum, and the null curriculum. Other scholars identify many other different types of curricula which may not be within the scope of this discussion. A quick discussion of the following types will suffice.

- i) Explicit curriculum: This is the official curriculum specified in official documents from the relevant authority or at school. The explicit curriculum is what learners go to school for and ultimately write exams for. It is the curriculum that is enforced at the school by the

principal. This type of curriculum is not only confined to the classroom but also include sporting activities and other co-curricular matters.

- ii) **Implicit Curriculum:** This is also referred to as the hidden curriculum. This type of curriculum focuses on certain types of behaviour that are acquired or learnt at school without official sanction. An example of such lessons that learners may learn include things like friendship, dating, loyalty, and many other concepts which are not directly taught in the classroom. This means that hidden curriculum can be negative or positive. It is therefore crucial that a teacher reinforces positive aspects of hidden curriculum and covertly encourage them, particularly those that built a learner, like the virtues of hard work.
- iii) **Null Curriculum:** This type of curriculum focuses on things not taught at all. It is noteworthy that, not all content can be taught at school. There are some content that cannot be taught at school for one reason or another. It might be due to insufficient content, inadequate training, or a matter of government legislation. However, such content diffuses, eventually reaching the learners. An example is the issue of teaching Bible Knowledge or Religious Education in schools both in South Africa and Zimbabwe. Both governments have removed Religious Education/Bible Knowledge studies from schools because they have felt it is irrelevant. So, learners end up getting exposed to this curriculum through informal platforms at school like Scripture Union or during their sporting activities.

2.16 Curriculum Innovation

The term curriculum innovation refers to ideas and practices that are new from the ones that currently exist (Hessman, 2019). Harr et al., (1995 p. 60), point out an innovation as an “intended and deliberate process to bring out desired effects and change”. These two definitions of curriculum innovation imply that for innovation to occur there must be an existing curriculum that must be worked on for purposes of improvement. (Hessman,

2019). This supposes that the need to improve rises, because the old curriculum would have, for some reason failed to meet the expected outcomes, or perceived to have been no longer appropriate to the needs of the target population. All this demonstrates that curriculum innovation is an informed and purposeful process (Grundy, 1987). Hessman (2019), further stresses on that point by adding that curriculum should be characterised by a regular review to ensure that it keeps abreast with global changes and general norms and standards of best practice. Perhaps a general question might arise as to who must innovate the curriculum? Bilboa et al. (2008) points out that curriculum is a national document and a purveyor of a nation's identity and as such, it is the responsibility of government to ensure that the nation's curriculum serves that nation by aligning it with the nation's developmental blueprint. In Zimbabwe all curriculum development and innovation must be aligned to Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) which is the country's developmental blueprint. As has been pointed out by Hessman on the importance of a regular curriculum review, the Zimbabwean curriculum review is carried out every seven years. The committee for curriculum review which has not yet been named sat on Monday 4 April 2022 to commence the review process of the newly introduced competency-based curriculum.

2.17 Curriculum Implementation

Curriculum Implementation (CI) is defined as the process of putting into “practice the officially prescribed course of study” (Gondo et al., 2019 p.61). This definition concurs with Hwande and Mpofu (2017) who point out that curriculum implementation is that transition from theory to practice. This demonstrates that that there are two phases in the process of curriculum implementation namely, the planning of ideas about curriculum and the transformation of these ideas into action. Kurasha and Chabaya (2013) further assert that curriculum implementation put simply, is putting it into work to achieve set goals and objectives for which the curriculum was designed for. This is best summed by Okello and Kagoire (1996) who defined it as the sum of all activities involved in translating curriculum design to a learning situation. This demonstrates that it is the actualisation of “teaching and learning methods, learning areas and assessment procedures” into the recommended practicalities. To sum it up, curriculum

implementation according to Fullan (1983), is a process which involves translation of ideas or a program into action to bring about a desired change.

2.18 Factors necessary for successful implementation

Curriculum implementation is an organised process as cautioned by Kurasha and Chabaya (2013). There are therefore several factors that must be put into consideration when implementing the curriculum. These ideas advanced here summarise some of the most critical factors for successful curriculum implementation. Ahmed and Lukeman (2015), Hwande and Mpofu (2017), Gondo et al., (2019), identify some of the following factors:

- i) Adequate Funding
- ii) Adequate Equipment
for ICT
- iii) Adequate Human
Resources
- iv) Adequate training
- v) Adequate space

2.19 Stages in the Curriculum Implementation Process

Gwen (1996) and Hessman (2019) identify up to twelve steps that are divided into four stages in the process of Curriculum Implementation. These are the planning stage, the content and method stage, implementation stage and the evaluation stage.

The planning stage

At this stage the curriculum developers carry out a needs assessment where a swot analysis is done to determine whether the present curriculum is still relevant to the needs of a particular society. When issues have been identified, a curriculum development team is assembled and given a mandate to carry out

preliminary investigations necessary for curriculum change. The team is further informed of its roles and functions with regards to what must be done on evaluating the efficacy of the present curriculum. This stage was done in Zimbabwe in the early 1990s when the government commissioned the CIET commission into the state of education in Zimbabwe. The first stage culminated in the production of the 1999 CIET Commission report later to be known as The Nziramasanga Commission Report. Hwande and Mpofu (2017) narrow the first stage of curriculum as the years between 2014 and 2016 which suggests that stage one overlapped into the next stage by one year.

i) Content and Method

According to Gwen (1996), this stage of curriculum implementation requires the designation of an “experiential method” where content is designed, and objectives are set (1996). The curriculum development team sets outcomes and device strategies on when and how the set outcomes will be achieved. The content is also broken into manageable bits and the sequence organized on how the content would be disseminated. Other essential features at stage are the identification of learning styles, and activities relevant to the intended curriculum. This stage affirms what happened between the post publication of The Nziramasanga Commission report and 2015 when the new curriculum was incepted.

ii) Implementation

At this stage the curriculum is produced as a full document to be implemented. The team carries out a pilot testing phase before and after revision to check for compliance. Once this is done, a bigger team which will act as facilitators is recruited. These facilitators are then trained for macro implementation. Gasva and Moyo (2017) refer to this stage as the zero-draft stage. This is the stage when the newly updated curriculum was implemented as a draft to await further evaluation. The review committee now sits to begin another phase. The curriculum review committee met on 4 April 2022 to begin a review of the curriculum (NewsDay Zimbabwe, 2022).

iii) Evaluation and Reporting

At this state an evaluation process is done on the new curriculum. Gwen (1996) suggests two types of evaluation namely formative and summative evaluation. Gwen points out that formative evaluations will be used to test needs analysis, product development and testing strategies that were used on the new curriculum (Gwen, 1996). Summative evaluations are then used to evaluate outcomes on whether the curriculum is compatible or not. When all this is over, a report is then made to different stake holders such as government, teachers, non-governmental organisations on the findings of the team. If the report is positive a request for resources is then made to initiate final implementation.

2.20 What is Competency Based Curriculum

The competence-based curriculum has been around for quite some time. In fact, some scholars believe that the CBC was first put in practice in America in the late 1970s and some even put it to as far back as the very birth of the United States of America late in the 19th century (Richard & Rodgers, 2001). However, this curriculum has gained momentous currency in the 21st century due to emerging global challenges in America, Europe, Africa and finally to the rest of the world, as most countries view it as an answer to the many problems facing them.

There are varying definitions to the CBC. Komba and Mwandangi (2015) define it as a “functional approach to education” (p. 74) which focuses on skills known as competencies on learners. This movement later spread to the rest of the world as it gained more traction across the globe. Samudera (2017), defines competence-based curriculum as “a design based on specific competencies is characterized by specific, sequential, and demonstrable learning of the task, activities, or skills” which constitutes the act to be learned and performed by students (p. 3). The emphasis on tasks, activities demonstrates that this curriculum has a practical side to it whose intention to impart certain skills to the learner. Samudera (2017), goes on to say:

Competency-based curriculum is a curriculum that emphasizes the complex outcomes of a learning process (i.e., knowledge, skills and attitudes to be applied by learners) rather than mainly focusing on

what learners are expected to learn about in terms of traditionally defined subject content. In principle such a curriculum is learner-centred and adaptive to the changing needs of students, teachers, and society. It implies that learning activities and environments are chosen so that learners can acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to situations they encounter in everyday life. Competency-based curricula are usually designed around a set of key competences/competencies that can be cross-curricular and/or subject-bound (p. 4).

Samudera's (2017), definition clearly highlights the important tenets of CBC above. For example, he clearly indicates that on this curriculum, the focus is on the learner and how he/she acquires the said competencies. It is therefore a learner centred curriculum because of this focus. It impresses upon the learner certain skills which may be divided or broken down into categories like, knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In fact, Nikolov et al., (2014), explain that the competencies can be classified as knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and behaviours that will assist an individual to perform much more efficiently in each profession, duty, or activity (p. 4).

These competencies may be classified differently according to how an individual performs at an institution. For instance, there are some which may be classified as "soft competencies". These are competencies which relate to one's behaviour, whilst "hard competencies" are those which relate to one's knowledge of technical skills.

There are also "common competencies" which relate to groups with the same characteristics relating to an organisation (p. 4). There are in fact many other such categories of such competencies which are not in the scope of this discussion.

Nikolov et al., (2014), put it that there are seven universal competencies which schools and other centres of learning must strive to develop amongst learners. There are:

- Communication in the mother tongue.
- Communication in foreign languages.
- Competence in mathematics, science, and technology.
- Digital competence.

- Ability to learn.
- Intercultural and social competencies, and civic competence.
- Initiativeness and entrepreneurship (p. 5).

Perhaps of note, is that it is critical to give a brief discussion as to why CBC is such a topical issue in the 21st century. The reasons are varied, but all mainly point to an evolving world which continues to demand more and more unique capabilities to school leavers. The advances in technology and the digital world have resulted in the need to prepare graduates who do not just fit in this world but those who can survive in it by providing their unique competencies (Mwita et al., 2022). CBC has been extensively adopted all over the world, notably in countries like America, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Indonesia, France, Australia, and Mexico to mention only a few.

“This was done to better prepare learners for the higher education demands and job market requirements in the 21st century, which appears as a worldwide trend in offering relevant skills that match employers' requirements” (p. 474). This is further backed by Nikolov et al., (2014), who posit that the world has seen the CBC as the answer to most of the world's problems, particularly in the world of work which has become more complex, thus requiring a sophisticated and skilled workforce (p. 2). Africa has also joined the world in adopting the CBC and what is noteworthy is that each country adopts learning outcomes relevant to each country's unique situation.

2.21 Competence-Based Curriculum. A World-Scape view

This section gives a world view of curriculum implementation processes across the world with a special focus on the developed world. This overview will help to put in perspective the curriculum implementation process in Zimbabwe by detailing the implementation process in the United States of America, Germany, and Australia to select only a few. This is critical to this study because it illustrates the complexities involved in curriculum implementation and the need for proper planning if it is to be done successfully. This world-scape will also demonstrate the growing importance of Competence Based Curriculum all over the world by briefly looking at the factors motivating the adoption of CBC and the challenges that emanated thereof.

2.21.1 Curriculum change in the United States of America

Mulenga and Kabombwe (2017), point out that the switch to competence-based model in the United States was necessitated by the 'behavioural movements of the 1950s which advocated for outcomes. This also encouraged teachers to express their lesson objectives in observable behavioural terms. Burton (1977, p. 31), points out that the adoption of a competence-based mode would improve "effectiveness of schools, teachers, and teacher educators; and serve to address society's concern about unsatisfactory performance in the development of programmes in teacher education." Interesting to note is that America's model of CBC was two-fold. It measured the competences of teachers by how the learners acquired their own competencies thereby underscoring the importance of the teacher as being the same with that of the learner (Mulenga & Kabombwe, 2017).

The implementation of the CBC was met with some success. For instance, Muchira et al., (2023), point out that in seven evaluative studies to assess whether the CBC had brought in any notable improvements in the United States, it was noted that there was a huge improvement by students in engagement and problem-solving skills. Further to that, it was observed by five authors that because of CBC, students exhibited lifelong learning as well as improved critical thinking skills. Also, four authors discovered that such students demonstrated a better conceptual understanding of learning content. The students also demonstrated genuine commitment to community related issues as well as exploring solutions to such community issues. Finally, two authors observed that these students also demonstrated higher engagement levels with their peers which meant that their social skills had somewhat improved because of their exposure to CBC (p. 67).

However, despite the successes detailed above, there were a few challenges that hindered the smooth implementation of the curriculum. Researchers found that project-based learning and experiential learning, critical components of CBC in the United States were only being done minimally in a few schools. This meant that the CBC was not being fully implemented in most schools.

Another problem that was observed was that teachers complained of inadequate pre training and in service training. This was because the United States had no clear

policies on in service training although focus was placed on teacher competence resulting in too many summative assessments leaving no space for the teacher to develop personally (Muchira et al., 2023).

Finally, another challenge was that policies governing teachers' training and education were enacted at multiple levels and departments, that is, the federal state, local authorities, professional and church organisations, other civic bodies. The result was that these policies invariably ended up conflicting with one another thus hampering the smooth implementation of the curriculum process (p. 67).

2.21.2 . Curriculum Change in Australia

The CBC was adopted in Australia in 1990 because of a governmental policy change after the government had observed severe problems with the existing curriculum. Mulenga and Mulombwe (2017), intimate that there was a deep gap between education and industry. Captains of industry complained that the quality of graduates being produced was below standard and unemployable. Smith (1996) pointed out that training institutions focused too much on knowledge and content and were comfortable with following traditions rather than doing a critical needs analysis to better train graduates that would fit in the world of work (p.172). Technological advances also necessitated the need for curriculum change as the government wanted to produce competent graduates who will meet competitive emerging global trends.

Hellwig (2006), points out that the CBC implementation has been met with some success in Australia. For instance, the number of competent graduates increased with more and more students focusing on digital competencies. Furthermore, the number of graduate placements at area of internship has increased with many demonstrating an ability to work by themselves. However, in the same breath, Hellwig points out that government's emphasis on assessment has resulted in teachers focusing more on assessment rather than training the student. Also, teachers tend to fall under enormous pressure to assess the students within the required time frames which ultimately demotivates teachers.

2.21.3. Curriculum change in Germany

Germany implemented the CBC in the 1970s although it formally became recognisable as such in the 1990s. The change to move over to CBC was necessitated, like in many other countries, by a need to improve and adjust it to the country's changing needs. Mulenga and Kabombwe (2017), point out that when CBC was formally ratified it was implemented in Vocational Education and Training (VET) and it focused on a group of competencies called 'vocational action competence' (p. 122).

Vocational action competence was divided into three competences namely, **"domain/subject competence, personal competence, and social competence"** (Mulenga and Kabombwe, 2017, p. 122). [Emphasis mine].

Germany has achieved a measure of reasonable success in its implementation endeavours. Consequently, its challenges have been minimal. Alexander (2012) identifies only two challenges with Germany. Firstly, she identifies what she terms "curriculum overload" (section iii, 1-2). A situation where there is just too much to do with the curriculum. For instance, she identifies more foreign languages, more subjects, self-assessments, reforms, administrative activities, competitive financing, European Union standards expectations, too much work to do resulting in teacher fatigue and burn out. Secondly, there is lack of digital competence among teachers resulting in poor or lack of supervisory capacity thereby hampering the smooth delivery of the curriculum.

To conclude, it is therefore clear that CBC is a curriculum which has spread to all parts of the world and that even the world's best economies see value in it. The CBC model has also been adopted in most countries with each country in the developed world modifying it to suit their unique needs.

2.22 Implementation of Competence-based curriculum in Africa, overview

The following section details the curriculum implementation process in some countries in Africa. The African context is particularly relevant to this study because it directly relates to the Zimbabwean situation. For instance, the study revealed that the curriculum implementation process in three African countries was motivated by almost the same reasons and the challenges encountered thereof, were largely identical. For

purposes of comparison three African countries whose curriculum implementation process was studied are Kenya, Tanzania, and Namibia.

2.22.1 Curriculum Change in Kenya

The government of Kenya has revised its curriculum three times since the attainment of its independence. Cheptoo and Ramdas (2020), point out that before the inception of the Competence Based Curriculum (CBC), Kenya used an 8.4.4 curriculum which was modelled along the principles of self-reliance. The 8.4.4 curriculum was fraught with many challenges chief of which was that it failed to “accomplish its mandate” (p. 3206). Cheptoo and Ramdas point out that the driving principle in the motto of the self-reliance mantra of the 8.4.4 curriculum was its focus on practical subjects. These subjects were envisioned to empower students with skills for life after school. However, due to government incompetence, many schools did not have the equipment, skills, even properly built classrooms for such subjects. As a result, many schools simply had a ready excuse to not teach the subject. In the end, the curriculum became too academic and then did not properly constitute the school leaver (p. 3206). These challenges were like those of Zimbabwe in all respects, prompted a revision of Kenya’s curriculum three times in 1992, 1996 and 2002. These curriculum revisions did not bear any fruit as most graduates did not gain any skills for employment. A decision was then taken to change the curriculum to suit the constitutional requirements of Kenya and to align the curriculum to international best practice. Further to that, in 2010, Kenya signed an East African harmonization agreement which sought to align all the goals of the East African Community to a synchronised vision of 2030 (p. 2307). The government of Kenya then carried out a needs assessment in 2009 to revamp the curriculum having noted the prevailing challenges with Curriculum 8.4.4. (Sifuna & Obonyo, 2019). But however, Cheptoo and Ramdas (2020), argue that the government did not do due diligence on the implementation of the competence-based curriculum. There was no research to inform its implementation as to whether the CBC model would meet the needs of the Kenyan people. This again resembles the outcry that emanated from parents on the implementation of the CBC in Zimbabwe. UNESCO-IBE (2017) observed that the pilot study to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum had so many inaccuracies on the supposed understanding of the CBC curriculum by teachers. Teachers were found to be unaware of the basic tenets of competence-based curriculum. The teachers could

not interpret its practice and application making it impossible to assess its efficacy. Further to that, Cheptoo and Ramdas (2020), noted that the curriculum at its inception had few to no resources, a problem which was compounded by large classrooms which made it a nightmare to employ learner- centred pedagogies.

Altinyelken (2015), in Cheptoo and Ramdas (2020), give an accurate prognosis on the problem facing the implementation of the CBC in Kenya saying:

reform failure in developing countries are (sic) mainly due to fundamental contradictions of the adopted educational curriculum where problems and content and settings are different. The application of reform in a different context might produce different practices and learning outcomes (p. 3211).

The challenges besieging curriculum implementation in Kenya and perhaps the rest of the developing world are the apparent contradiction between what needs to be done and, as Altinyelken (2015), accurately points out, the perceived contents of the CBC. This ultimately results in a gap between expectation versus reality. As a result, many critics have argued that the CBC is a western curriculum suitable for small classrooms, few learners and abundant resources as can only be found in the developed world.

2.22.2. Curriculum Change in Tanzania

The process of curriculum change in Tanzania has undergone a similar trajectory with that of Kenya and Zimbabwe. At independence, the Tanzanian government inherited a colonial based education which was knowledge based with little to offer the people except a theoretical content. Muneja (2015) postulates that the short comings of the colonially inherited education system prompted a review of the education system of Tanzania to align it with the needs and expectations of the Tanzanian people. Subsequently, since Tanzania attained independence in 1961 the curriculum has been reviewed three times in 1967, 1979 and 1997 (Muneja, 2015).

Nkya (2021) notes that the curriculum of Tanzania contained some rudiments of competence-based curriculum through the Education for Self-Reliance (ESR) which was initiated as far back as 1967. ESR philosophy emphasized learners' acquisition of

skills that would enable them to solve problems affecting the country and promoting self-reliance “on the basis of self-reliance” (p. 34). Mgaya (2015) points out that students were taught to develop competencies that promoted activities related to the development of their communities as espoused in the philosophies of Julius Nyerere, who believed that accordingly, education must produce sustainable graduates. However, a review that was conducted in 1997 problematised the ESR curriculum as being too knowledge based and focused too much on content and theoretical knowledge of concepts without any practical back up (Kilipamwambu, 2021). Consequently, most school leavers were unemployable and of an extremely low standard such that it was evident that the curriculum was not in line with Tanzania’s vision 2030.

Eventually, it was decided to discard the ESR curriculum in favour of a more modern Competence Based Curriculum which was being adopted in most of Central, East and Southern Africa.

However, just like in Kenya, Zimbabwe and elsewhere in Africa, the transition from ESR curriculum, which was content based to CBC, has encountered numerous problems some of which persist till today. For instance, Kilipamwambu alleges that the successful implementation of CBC has been severely curtailed by lack of resources (p. 26). This is backed by Luhambati (2013), who points out that lack of resources is a major impediment to the successful implementation of the CBC, particularly classrooms, as secondary schools in Tanzania are currently grappling with the problem of huge numbers of learners.

In a study that was conducted by Mgaya (2015), in which he sought to investigate the implementation of the CBC at a given boarding school, it was discovered that teachers rarely demonstrated an understanding of what the CBC was. In a preliminary study, teachers could not even explain competently the major tenets of CBC, and neither could they clearly explain the difference between the knowledge-based curriculum (KBC) and the newly introduced CBC. This unfortunate situation demonstrated that government did not do due diligence on consulting, training, and motivating teachers about the new curriculum. This is echoed sadly by Kilipamwambu (2020) who points out that there was a perception amongst the teachers and everybody else that teachers were not

perceived as key players in the consultation and implementation of the CBC. This ultimately, resulted in the apathy and lack of interest of teachers in implementing the CBC. This is confirmed by Mgaya's 2015 study which showed that teachers often used the KBC approach and CBC in the classroom when they should be using the latter. Mgaya concluded that in most Tanzanian secondary schools, the KBC curriculum was often, the default curriculum in the schools.

In a similar study, that was conducted by Nkya (2021), in which he sought to evaluate the implementation of the CBC amongst secondary schools in Arusha province, Tanzania, it was discovered that many teachers totalling to about 70% of the participants, viewed positively the transition from the KBC curriculum to the CBC. However, 60% of these indicated serious challenges in implementing it. These challenges ranged from inadequate training, shortage of resources such as textbooks, laboratory equipment and extremely large classrooms which challenged successful lesson delivery.

Further to the above, Mgaya (2015), mentions other problems. For example, he argued that the shortage of textbooks was compounded by the fact that the few textbooks that were available were poorly constituted with "mismatching designs and implementation" strategies (p. 15). There were no teachers' guides and other basic textbooks as mentioned earlier. As if that was not enough, government did not bother following up to check progress and to provide support to teachers to enhance the smooth implementation.

In conclusion, it has been noted that despite the good intentions the government demonstrated in switching the curriculum from KBC to CBC this is not enough. Government needs to do much more to win teacher buy in as well as ensure competent implementation. Resources must be availed, and proper in-service training provided to all the teachers.

2.22.3. Curriculum Change in Namibia

Namibia has not been left behind in the various post-independence processes to do with curriculum change. Like many countries in Africa, Namibia inherited a colonial education which was chauvinistic and elitist in nature and one which seemingly

promoted apartheid practices leaving behind the needs of the general citizenry. Before independence, the colonial administration practiced what was known as Bantu Education, an education system where the medium of instruction was mainly Afrikaans and white supremacy was promoted (Katshuna & Shikalepo, 2023). Consequently, the newly democratically elected government soon set about reviewing the national curriculum in line with the political and national vision of the people of Namibia. Namibia gained its independence in 1990. Since then, the government has made major revisions to its curriculum, amounting to more than three times with minor revisions no less than five terms (Kambeyo et al., 2023).

The first post-independent curriculum review was done in 1993 which culminated in the introduction of the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and the Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education (HIGCSE) in 1994. The curriculum was further revised in 2006 and the IGCSE and the HIGCSE were replaced by the Namibian Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary and the Namibia Senior Certificate High Level (NSSCOIH). The third curriculum review was done in 2019 which saw the introduction of the Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary (NSSCO) and the Namibia Senior Secondary Advanced (NSSCA) (Katshuna & Shikalepo 2023, p.6439). All these reviews, according to Kambeyo et al., (2023), were made to align the curriculum of Namibia to the national strategic developmental goals as well as to tune it to vision 2030.

The Revised Curriculum, currently in force in Namibia seeks to steer Namibia towards an 'education for all' by 2030. It puts the learner at the centre of the learning experience by teaching knowledge, values, and competencies. These competencies or core skills are "learning to learn, personal skills, social skills, cognitive skills, communication skills, numeracy skills, and Information and Communication Technology skills" Kambeyo et al., (2023, p. 22).

However, despite the enthusiasm and the rave reviews about the Revised Curriculum which has led the Ministry of Education to refer to it as the "curriculum for the future" (p.21), the implementation story has not been without its share of challenges. These challenges are almost scripted as if word for word with those of Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and elsewhere in the developing world.

In a study that was conducted by Josua et al., (2022), which was designed to assess the challenges facing the implementation of the Revised Curriculum, it was discovered that the shortage of resources was one of the major issues. It was established that the issue of resources was threefold. There was inadequate resource in terms of learning materials such as textbooks and equipment for STEM subjects. Further to that, it was established that financial resources were largely insufficient to purchase utilities other than textbooks such as projectors, internet as well as ICT equipment. Then there was the problem of human resources. These were largely inadequate. The few teachers who were there were poorly trained or untrained. As a result, most did not have a conception of what the Revised Curriculum entailed (p. 73). Taole (2015, p. 274), underscores the importance of resources to ensure the smooth “delivery of the curriculum”. This therefore implies that the shortage of resources becomes a major source of curriculum implementation failure if intervention is not done expeditiously.

The other challenge that was discovered by Josua et al., (2022), in their study was the huge teacher-pupil ratio. Although, the study did not specify the recommended ratio, teachers somehow felt overloaded and overwhelmed by it. And this, coupled with undertrained and underqualified teachers, somewhat hampered successful curriculum implementation.

The other challenge that was discovered in the study was a lack of training on the part of teachers. It was established that very few teachers and principals had received adequate training. Bhengu and Mkhize (2014) as cited in Josua et al., (2022), point out that the inception of the Revised Curriculum came as a new experience to some teachers who saw it as a new concept and therefore could not apply it effectively in the classroom. Consequently, these teachers were unable to write inclusive lesson plans, provide competent assessment and practise relevant pedagogical activities that were aligned to the Revised Curriculum. Poor conceptualisation of the new curriculum was noted also by Apsari (2013), Molapo (2016) and Hellen (2019), who opined that if teachers did not understand a curriculum they were supposed to teach, then it derailed the whole process of curriculum implementation.

As can be easily observed from the brief discussion of curriculum implementation in some three African countries, curriculum implementation is a tumultuous process. The

many similar challenges amongst these developing countries imply that developing countries are the ones mostly at risk from implementation challenges. This can be attributed to the fact that developing countries are still facing challenges in terms of financing capacity due to poor economic status. This eventually translates into a shortage of resources and many other challenges related to it.

2.22.4. The curriculum implementation process in Zimbabwe

As has already been discussed above in the preceding paragraphs, Zimbabwe embarked on an ambitious plan to change its curriculum in line with the growing global trends. Curriculum implementation in Zimbabwe is the mandate of one central authority known as the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) (Gasva & Moyo, 2017). In 2015, under the guardianship of the then Minister of Education Dr Lazarus Dokora, the CDU unveiled the so-called new curriculum to an unexpecting public. The implementation was necessitated by the findings of CIET later to be known as The Nziramasanga Commission. This commission had made recommendations 18 years prior to which government had agreed, that the curriculum of Zimbabwe needed to be changed. The commission noted several flaws on the old curriculum some of which have been discussed earlier. The following list shows some of the problems associated with the old curriculum.

The Nziramasanga Commission noted that the education system existing then was merely an inherited flawed curriculum which did not equip the students with lifelong skills. Rather, it promoted a knowledge-based system which did not train school leavers to survive the post school environment (Nziramasanga, 1999). Another critical flaw amongst many was that the curriculum did not equip all the students with relevant competencies. As such the so called 'slow learners' were left out in the classroom. It was hoped that the new curriculum would train all the students with relevant competencies to survive the world of work. So, students who failed their 'O' levels were dismissed as failures even though there was room for developing other competencies. The government also felt that the old curriculum did not speak to the needs of industry as such, the graduates produced by this system were unusable (MoPSE, 2015). The government also points out that the old curriculum was too exam oriented with limited pathways for students to follow as a result, there was many school leavers who got out

of the system doomed to failure. As can be seen, all the African countries who have changed their curriculum in favour of the CBC, realise the inefficacy of the colonial education system. Namibia, Tanzania, South Africa, Kenya, and many other countries have felt the same effects of the knowledge-based curriculum hence this adoption enmasse of the CBC.

Now the implementation has not been easy. It has been met with widespread resistance and complaints by parents and teachers. The government acknowledges this and points the cause of these implementation challenges as being caused by the following:

- Teaching and learning materials.
- Infrastructure
- Syllabus design and implementation
- Teacher and administrators' capacities and mind-sets (resistance to change)
- Parents and community buy-in
- Digital divide (MoPSE, 2017)

It is interesting that the challenges that have been identified by MoPSE are again like those that have been raised in Kenya, Tanzania, Namibia, and many other countries not discussed in the write up. The government proposes several intervention strategies to meet these challenges, but it remains to be seen whether it will have political willpower to push through with this intervention. For instance, government talks of creating strategic partnerships with all stake holders, seeking donor funding, and buying more resources for the roll out. The paragraphs below discuss some of the implementation gaps that were picked by a study of the related literature.

2.23 Gaps in the implementation process

As has been pointed out earlier in this discussion, the new curriculum in Zimbabwe has met widespread condemnation and resistance from many quarters. An example of this is the case between Dadaya High School parents versus Lazarus Dokora, the then Minister of Education. The parents alleged that the minister had deliberately failed to consult them in the implementation of the new curriculum (Hwande & Mpofu, 2017). Lack of consultation is not the only complaint against the implementation process.

Gondo et al., (2019), opined that the whole implementation process was faulty and did not inspire confidence in the new curriculum. Gondo et al., argue that the curriculum did not get the complete buy in of all stake holders and as such it was unimplementable. In a study that was carried out by Global Partnerships in Education it was discovered that whilst all teachers who were consulted agreed that indeed a new curriculum was necessary, all agreed that they had not been adequately prepared for it (Gasva & Moyo, 2017). Siyakhwazi (2022), blames government for its lack of sincerity in the implementation. He accuses government of lacking commitment and political will to support the implementation. Government has therefore failed to allocate funding, failed to hire and train human resources necessary for the implementation as well as provide other resources such as ICT equipment and textbooks (Siyakhwazi, 2022). Raymond Majongwe, President of the Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe pointed out on 2 April 2022 that teachers are still failing to interpret the new curriculum five years after its introduction. On Monday 4 April 2022, the current Minister of Education acknowledged that the implementation process has encountered serious challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic and Cyclone Idai (NewsDay Zimbabwe, 2022).

The many complaints by various stakeholders as has been indicated by a few examples above suggest serious gaps in the implementation process. There is a clear indication that the implementation process did not strictly adhere to the four stages of curriculum implementation as proposed by Gwen (1996). It is noteworthy, to point out that whilst many complaints about the new curriculum have been raised, very few solutions have been proposed. One of the simplest solutions as suggested by Vandayer and Killan (2003), would have been to simply suspend or delay the implementation of the new curriculum until the conditions had become ideal. But the government chose to ignore due process and rode roughshod through the whole process thereby creating conditions for poor reception.

2.24 Conclusion

A review of literature has given a succinct definition of what curriculum is and has shown that it is a somewhat contested but crucial to understand concept in the context of Competence Based Curriculum. A discussion on the issue of curriculum change and its processes has been entered into by clearly explaining the different stages necessary

to follow for successful implementation. This discussion has been necessary to reflect comparatively on the curriculum implementation process in the Zimbabwean context. A further discussion on the different implementation process in the global landscape as well as in Africa has been done to put in context the implementation process in Zimbabwe. The literature review has shown that the curriculum implementation process is fraught with challenges which are almost similar in both the developed and the developing world. Some of the challenges identified above in the literature review, include but are not limited to shortage of resources, inadequate training, and perceived government failure to provide adequate scaffolding to teachers.

The next chapter discusses the methodology which was used in the study and the theoretical underpinnings that guided it. A discussion on the research tools and the data collection process will also be done.

Chapter: 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology that was used to conduct the study. The chapter begins with a description of the research design followed by a discussion of the methods of data collection. It also discusses the sampling strategy that was used as well as the advantages and disadvantages of the tools used for data collection. will also be discussed and motivation for the choice of either tool.

3.2 Research Design

A research design is defined by Ansari et al. (2022) as a framework that explains the whole plan of conducting a study. Creswell (2014) defines a research design as a type of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research which gives “specific direction for procedures” in a study. It is what is referred to as a strategy for research (Creswell, 2014). These definitions show that a research design provides the framework for which data is collected and analysed. A research design therefore focuses around but not limited to some of the following concerns in research; purpose of study, type of study, the extent to which the researcher is involved in the study, setting, unit of analysis and other such factors.

This study was conceived as a Mixed methodology, Interpretivist and Convergent parallel mixed research design. These methods were used on a single case study whose objective was to embark on a diagnostic and fact-finding mission on the perceptions of English teachers within the district of Masvingo. The following paragraphs unpack the nature of these designs.

3.3 Philosophical Assumptions of the Study

Creswell (2014) defines philosophical assumptions of the study as ‘world views.’ A world view is a set of beliefs that guide action (p. 35). Creswell goes on to say that these world views have been defined differently by scholars. They are defined as paradigms, epistemologies and ontologies or broadly conceived, as research

methodologies (p. 35). These worldviews become the guiding principles of a research process. A discussion of the philosophical assumptions that guided this study follows below.

3.4 Mixed Research

Creswell (2014) defines a mixed method research as:

an approach to inquiry that combines both qualitative and quantitative forms of research. It involves philosophical assumptions, the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the mixing or integrating of both approaches in a study (p. 293).

Johnson and Christensen (2014) define mixed method research as “the class of research studies in which a researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research approaches and techniques in a single research study” (p. 648).

An analysis of the two definitions above will show that this type of methodology is simply a deployment of two or more research methodologies or research paradigms. It is a blending of two different paradigms in a study, usually the qualitative and the quantitative methodology. The study will therefore be part qualitative and part quantitative. Creswell (2009) raises several advantages to this method and points out that it allows for the use of both methodologies of data collection by harnessing the advantages of either method. For example, the qualitative research methodology is mainly interested in how social phenomena occurs the way it does and why it happens the way it does. These are basically the whys and the hows of things happening in a particular place (Silverman, 2013). On the other hand, the quantitative research seeks to address the what and the who questions of a research phenomenon. In a mixed research methodology blending these two can ensure that the efficacy of data collection procedures, analysis and recommendations is enhanced. For instance, this research focuses on investigating the perceptions of teachers and why they feel the way they do regarding the new curriculum despite perceived government support and its commitment to education. The questions to ask using this method will therefore be open ended thus allowing for an exploration of social phenomena. On the other hand, the researcher may ask closed type of questions which give the respondent an option of

either agreeing or disagreeing. In this study, the quantitative approach was then adopted to address research questions that sought to establish attitude, perceived difficulties and agreement and other such variables critical for this research, whilst the qualitative sought reasons and explanations, hence the need to combine them both paradigms.

Another factor that made this research particularly ideal for mixed research is that while qualitative research focused on the definition of concepts and detailed description of phenomena thus allowing for a thorough understanding of the issues at hand (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The quantitative methodology sought to establish empirical evidence of these perceptions. Of note is that after such description of phenomena a researcher may deploy a quantitative approach such as surveys and predetermined instrument questions to establish a relationship between variables. Such responses may therefore only be scientifically collected and analysed through scientific means, particularly for questions that are based on a Likert scale. The underlying philosophy in using the mixed research is that the two methodologies do not substitute one another but instead complement each other (Lakshmi, 2019).

The mixed methodology approach therefore allowed the researcher to collect descriptive data as well as non-descriptive data. Descriptive data was analysed qualitatively using themes whilst non descriptive data was analysed scientifically and packaged on SPSS software for analysis.

Johnson and Christensen (2014) argue that the mixed research approach is the most ideal approach because it combines the relative strengths of the two different approaches and ensures the rigour of the whole process of data collection and analysis. This means that using the mixed approach has the distinct advantage of adding rigour to the whole research process. Johnson and Christensen (2014) emphasize a general rule of thumb when using mixed research, which is that a researcher should employ more than one approach or strategy in the process of data collection to ensure the rigor and fidelity of the study. This is the reason why this study used more than one method of data collection namely, the questionnaire method as well as the interview method. Data analysis was also done by means of empirical analysis using the SPSS software as well as using the traditional thematic approach.

Johnson and Christensen (2014) point out that the guiding philosophy in the use of this methodology is usually pragmatism. The pragmatic researcher usually adopts both methodologies as suitable to different needs throughout the study. The main principle of this approach is what works to achieve the desired results (p. 648). There is no specific pattern or principle of merging these two methodologies. Using the pragmatic philosophy, the researcher simply uses each methodology as appropriate, and as, when necessary, at any stage of the research.

This methodology was appropriate for this research because it addressed the research limitations mentioned in Chapter 1 section 11 namely the size of the sample and the removal of bias. As indicated, the size of the sample was problematic because it was small. The mixed methodology ensured that the study was rigorous enough to remove the possibility of bias thereby ensuring its fidelity. Johnson and Christensen (2014) mentioned several advantages to this approach. For example, the principle of complementary strength mentioned earlier on. This approach allowed the use of scientific data such as numerals, figures and even pictures within the study which would have been impossible had it been wholly qualitative. The use of numerical data was very useful in this study where a lot of numerical data was presented in statistical format.

3.5 Convergent Parallel Mixed Research Design

Creswell (2014) identifies some major types of advanced mixed research namely, convergent parallel, explanatory sequential, exploratory sequential and the embedded design. This study will use the convergent parallel approach. Lakshmi (2019) points out that this approach involves the use of both the qualitative and the quantitative methodologies simultaneously and then compare the data for similarities and differences. Creswell (2014), adds:

The key assumption of this approach is that both qualitative and quantitative data provide different types of information often detailed views of participants qualitatively and scores on instruments quantitatively and together they yield results that should be the same (p. 269).

Lakshmi (2019) indicates that the key characteristic of this design is that it allows for a concurrent or parallel data collection and analysis. Results can then be analysed for similarities and differences. This is also backed by (Creswell 2014), who suggests that same constructs or concepts and same variables are used to collect data and analyse it. The data is thus collected from the same sample, although qualitative data may be remarkably smaller than quantitative data. This creates a minor complication of unequal sampling (Creswell, 2014). But Lakshmi (2019) argues that the unequal sample sizes should not be seen as problematic but instead researchers may use the same population for both the quantitative and qualitative methods with only a reduction of the size in the qualitative methodology since the one methodology is used to validate and complement the other. Data analysis may be done where the results are compared one after the other, merged or done side by side (Lakshmi, 2019). This is the same approach that was used in this research where the same population was used to gather quantitative and qualitative data and the analysis was merged as suggested by Lakshmi (2019).

3.6 Pragmatism

According to Cohen et al. (2018) and Creswell (2014), pragmatism dates to the days of Dewey and Mead in the early 20th century. Pragmatism is a philosophy that rises out of actions and situations. Its primary concern is to provide practical solutions to different situations. As an approach, it focuses on what works and how solutions to different problems can be found. Pragmatism does not rely on a given method but devices methodology as the situation demands. Pragmatism is therefore the guiding philosophy behind mixed research (Creswell, 2014). This study was influenced by pragmatism in both methodology and data analysis. To effectively give voice to the perceptions of English Teachers, it was therefore envisioned that using both the quantitative and the qualitative methodologies would provide more meaningful data as opposed to a single methodology.

3.7 Interpretivist Paradigm

The interpretivist, also known as the anti-positivist paradigm, is one of the philosophical assumptions used to understand qualitative research. Creswell (2018), postulates that

philosophical assumptions are the first ideas we develop during the start of a research process.

Interpretivism is based upon the creation of meaning within social contexts. It argues that people are social beings and are therefore deliberate in their day-to-day dealings with one another and in the process, creating their own reality. Interpretivists therefore argue that the researcher can never truly understand society from the outsider's perspective. Instead, it must be studied through 'direct experience' (Mack, 2010, p.7). The role of the social scientist is therefore to "understand, explain and demystify social reality through the eyes of participants" (p. 7). Cohen et al., (2018), argue that interpretivism is ideal for social research because it seeks to understand individual experiences and is against the generalisations of human beings. Secondly, interpretivists argue that there are multiple experiences to single events or situations, and it is the multiplicity of these voices which create meaning. Lastly, reality needs to be examined through the eyes of the participants. This was the guiding principle to this study which utilised phenomenology to detail clearly the experiences of participants.

3.8 Ontological Assumptions

Mack (2010) defines ontology as the study of reality. It is the study of claims and assumptions about social reality, its composition and how these units of reality interact with one another. In short, it is the study of existence (Cohen et al., 2018).

The ontological assumptions of interpretivists are that social reality is seen by multiple people, and these multiple perspectives differ from one person to the other. Reality is therefore indirectly constructed based on an individual's perspective. As such, events cannot be generalised since people interpret and create their own meanings of events and situations (Mack, 2010; Cohen et al., 2018). Understanding ontology also played a critical role on the researcher's design because the researcher had to recognise that reality is a construct based on the individual perspective.

3.9 Epistemological Assumptions

Woodruff (2018) defines epistemology as the study of knowledge. It is the study of how we know what we know. Mack (2010) adds that it is the study of what we mean when say we know something.

Cohen et al., (2018) point out that interpretivists argue that knowledge is subjective and arises from how we interpret the different experiences we encounter in our day to day lives. This means that knowledge arising from situations cannot be reduced or simplified to other situations, rather it merely enhances our understanding of phenomena. All knowledge is therefore not discovered but constructed by the different situations that humans encounter in their daily activities. Epistemology played a role in this study because it recognised that research participants created their own knowledge from their experience with the new curriculum thereby emphasising the role of personal experience in creating reality.

3.10 Axiological Assumptions

Axiology concerns itself with values and judgements including aesthetics (Arora, 2010). These values guide how the researcher views the study. For instance, participants are viewed not as subjects but as human beings who must be viewed as having agency and therefore able to make judgements on what they view as morally right, acceptable, and wrong. These assumptions guided this research on the principle of ethics where the research had to take into consideration the role of ethical practices during interactions with research participants.

3.11 Phenomenology

One other philosophical assumption that has been getting traction lately is phenomenology. The views on phenomenology are divergent. It is perceived by some as a theory and a methodology and scholars like Patton (1990) and Woodruff (2018) argue that it must be included in the traditional philosophies alongside ontology and epistemology. This is because while ontology concerns itself with reality and epistemology with knowledge, phenomenology concerns itself with experience. Lodico et al., (2006), posit that phenomenology attempts to capture the essence of the “human

experience” (p. 7). This study, in line with the philosophy of phenomenology seeks to capture and give voice to the perceptions of the individual participants in the study by detailing their experiences. Thus, according to this phenomenology, all ontology and all epistemology is experiential. Therefore, the research tools that were used such as the interview and the questionnaire attempted to capture these experiences and attempted to get meaning from them.

3.12 The Case Study

This investigation is a case study of schools in Masvingo district. Yin (2014) defines a case as a scientific study that investigates a “contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context” (p. 23). This is echoed by Zainal (2007) who defines it as a thorough investigation of a single case or event. A case study can therefore be defined as a focused study of a case, scenario, or event over a particular period. A case study is usually ideal when there is need to answer the basic questions like why? or how? Johnson and Christensen (2014, p.105) say that case study research is a “form of qualitative research that focuses on providing a detailed account of one or more cases.” A noteworthy feature of case study research is that the investigation in question is conducted within a real-life context. This means that the participants are often required to participate in the research process within their natural environments. Zainal (2007) points that a case study often covers a small or limited geographical location inhabited by the subjects to be studied. This is aptly summed up by Creswell (2009), who points that the case study research design is often perceived as an object of study as well as a methodology adding that it is bound by space (location) and time during the entirety of the research process. Yin (2014) gives two important reasons for the choice of case study research which apply to this study. Firstly, Yin suggests that the case study research paradigm is suitable in a study if the research questions are mainly how and why a phenomenon occurs the way it does. Secondly, it becomes a suitable methodology if the study seeks to investigate a ‘contemporary’ phenomenon. A contemporary social phenomenon therefore refers to a real-world situation as opposed to one that is entirely historical (Ansari et al., 2022).

Yin (2014) points out several key features to be noted for a successful investigation of a case study. These are the key features of a successful case study which were the driving motivation for the selection of this methodology in this study:

- a) It was used because it was the only viable method through which the investigation could successfully conducted.
- b) It addressed the research questions.
- c) Evidence was meticulously recorded.
- d) The case study was linked to a theoretical framework.

This study was based on the recommendations above by Yin (2014), and therefore influenced the choice of the case study methodology to a greater extent. Thus, the case study allowed for intense, in-depth examination of the case and ultimately culminated into a rich story that explained the whys and the hows of the phenomena under study. It was particularly suited to this explanatory design in that it covered a small geographical location and used a natural setting to investigate phenomena.

3.12.1 Advantages of the case study

There are several advantages the case study design provided to this study, some of which are indicated below.

- a) Yin (2014) raises a critical point on the advantages of using a case study, that the data raised in case study research is often used within the context of its usage. For example, participants are observed or interviewed within the very environment where they live and execute their duties. Such a scenario reduces the subjectivity of the data collected and at the same time increasing the accuracy and reliability of the data collected.
- b) This case study allowed for the use of mixed method research because participants' responses could be both categorical as well as numerical (Zainal, 2007 & Yin, 2014). The use of mixed method research assured me that the data would be much more rigorous than it would have been had only a single method been used.
- c) Zainal (2007) further adds that the detailed nature of qualitative data obtained from a case study also allows for certain complexities to be

observed that would not have been evident on other types of research. For example, in a study where one is carrying out an investigation on attitudes, the researcher may be prompted to find out the reasons why participants may feel the way they do about certain phenomena. So instead of merely explaining attitudes, one is provided with reasons for these attitudes as was the case in this study.

3.12.2 Disadvantages of the case study

Yin (2014) points out that the case study method has received severe criticism from certain quarters in the research fray, chief of which has been its lack, or perceived lack of rigor and sloppiness on the part of the researcher leading to instances of bias ultimately leading to conclusions and findings that lack fidelity and reliability (Yin, 2014, p. 21).

The second criticism that is levelled against case study research is lack of scientific generalisations. The nature of case study research is that it is characterised by a relatively small number of participants making it difficult to generalize the findings of its study to a larger population group. This overriding concern is summed up in one question. Which is, how can one generalize from one single case? (Zainal, 2007 & Yin, 2014). However, the need for generalisation was not the objective of this study anyway. The study instead sought to gain a deeper insight, deeper understanding on how teachers felt about the new curriculum.

Lastly, case studies are often undertaken over long periods of time at the same time churning out huge amounts of data that take even longer periods of time to process. These huge volumes of data thus raise further critical concerns about the management of such data. The first concern being that the researcher is in some cases not trained to handle and process such amounts of data making him/her turn over such data to a third party creating a further loophole in the whole matrix of research. Secondly, the other concern about such data is about ethical considerations. Data needs to be collected, analysed, and stored in ethically acceptable means even up to its disposal.

Despite the disadvantages of the case study levelled above, its advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. It is therefore ideal for this study because this study

sought to investigate a real-life situation by investigating perceptions of English teachers in each context. It seeks to provide a detailed explanation process of these perceptions by examining the factors influencing these perceptions making this methodology appropriate for the study.

3.13 Sampling

According to Johnson and Christensen (2014), sampling is concerned with the selection of a subset of individuals from within a statistical population to estimate characteristics of the whole population.

Sampling is the process of drawing a sample from a population. When we sample, we study the characteristics of a subset (called the sample) selected from a larger group (called the population) to understand the characteristics of the larger group. After researchers determine the characteristics of the sample, they **generalise** from the sample to the population; that is, researchers make statements about the population based on their study of the sample. A sample is usually much smaller in size than a population; hence, sampling can save time and money (p.343). **[Emphasis in the original]**.

This definition is backed by Pandey and Pandey (2015), who concede that a small population is selected to represent a greater and larger population. In this case, the sample is concerned with English Teachers only who are teachers at secondary schools in the selected study area. Singh (2006) defines sampling as the process of selecting a representative sample from the population under study. Two things emanate from these definitions, namely that a sample is smaller and must be representative of a bigger population which is the target population. For this study the smaller sample will be teachers selected from secondary schools within Masvingo District as a sample representing the whole province of Masvingo. It is the expectation of this study that the findings would have resonance or provide insights into practice in other contexts of curriculum implementation.

This study used non-probability sampling mostly referred to by some scholars as convenience sampling. This is also known as deliberate, or sometimes judgement

sampling. Cohen et al., (2018) refer to it as opportunity sampling or accidental sampling. Johnson and Christensen (2014), define non-probability sampling that entails selecting:

people who are available or volunteer or can be easily recruited and are willing to participate in the research study. That is, the researcher selects individuals who can be “conveniently selected” (p. 362).

In simple terms, this type of sampling involves the researcher as the ultimate decision maker in choosing the sample, deliberately selecting participants who are convenient to the researcher. Examples of such convenient choices are participants who volunteer for a study and proximity of such populations to the research site. The greatest weakness in non-probability sampling is that personal considerations are the supreme consideration in the sampling process. As a result, there is the risk of bias in choosing the convenient sample. Prior knowledge of the sample may further increase the level of bias as the researcher as may choose a sample that favours preconceived notions about the research problem. To counter this weakness the data collection used more than one method in line with best practice as counselled by Yin (2014). Despite the above contentions anyway, non-probability sampling was convenient and cost effective thereby expediting the collection of data within the set time frames (Pandey & Pandey, 2015).

This study sought to investigate the perceptions of English teachers in selected schools in Masvingo district. There are 70 secondary schools in Masvingo district. Out of these 70, 30 were selected to participate in the study using convenience sampling in line with Pandey and Pandey (2015), Cohen et al. (2018) and Johnson and Christensen (2014), who all counsel that this type of sampling is suitable for a study where financial resources are minimal, and time is of utmost essence. Only English Teachers in these schools were selected to participate in the questionnaire instrument of the study. Out of these 30 schools 3 were further sampled for the interview data collection as well, mainly on the realistic understanding that they were close to one another and easily

accessible hence conveniently sampled as well. Marungudzi (2009), points out that choosing a population sample mainly because it is accessible constitutes “convenience sampling” as well. Convenience in this population was determined in terms of accessibility, proximity to one another and the availability of a reliable road network service.

Of the three secondary schools selected for the interview, two had an average of three English teachers per school while the third one had six teachers of English. This provided a total of twelve teachers to participate in the study. Again, just like in the questionnaire instrument, only English teachers in the identified sample participated in the study. There was no need for further stratification in terms of gender and other strata because it was not the objective of the study and was therefore unnecessary. The sample for the interview was chosen on the same basis of convenience, which was that the schools were close to one another and easily accessible to the researcher. This information about the population is in line with best practice which cautions that when using convenient sampling, it is advisable to provide information about the sample as much as possible to have greater understanding of the population in question (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The following paragraph provides more information about the sample.

3.13.1 Sample population

The sample was made up of Secondary School English Teachers in Masvingo District. 30 secondary schools were conveniently selected for the questionnaire and the interview instrument. All schools operate under the same conditions. They all offer the same curriculum provided by MoPSE. They all offer the same National Examination administered by Zimbabwe Schools Examination Councils (ZIMSEC). Although all the schools in the study are in the same district, they are subdivided into different cluster zones according to their locations and catchment areas. However, the support structures provided by these cluster programmes under Better Schools Programme for Zimbabwe (BSPZ) are similar in most clusters. These support programmes include training workshops, administration of cluster exams and school improvement programmes. All schools in the district, cluster zones and provincial areas have adopted the Competence Based Curriculum in line with the government vision of improving the

education system in the country. Teachers in such schools operate under the same work conditions. The fidelity of the study will therefore not be compromised. This is backed by Wray et al., (2010), who point out that to acquire feasible and admissible data, certain minimal conditions must be similar. In this case the similarities are numerous, such as adoption of the same curriculum in all the participant schools, the use of English as a Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT), the rural location of the participant schools as well as their proximity to one another.

Participation for the interview was also restricted only to English teachers in the selected schools as was on the questionnaire. The schools singled out for the interviews were Rekayi Tangwena, Joshua Mqabuko and Herbert Chitepo (all pseudonyms) These schools have been in existence since the independence in 1980. Although Rekayi Tangwena was the biggest school with an enrolment of up to 800 learners. All three schools had the same catchment area within the district. The other two had a smaller enrolment with Joshua Mqabuko having 400 and Herbert Chitepo 350 learners respectively. All these three schools fall within Nyajena cluster under the same Better Schools Program for Zimbabwe cluster (BSPZ) (where schools were grouped in clusters so that they could assist and develop one another much more effectively).

Table 2: Below shows the sample size for the questionnaire.

	NAME OF SCHOOL	Estimate Sample Size	Actual Sample Size
1	MAWEZA Secondary School	3	3
2	MAZARE BUSINESS CENTRE	3	3
3	MORGENSTER MISSION	6	6
4	MUCHEKE	8	8
5	MUDARIKWA	4	3
6	MUDAVANHU	3	3
7	MUKONDE	3	3
8	MUKOSI	3	3
9	MUSHANDIKE	5	3
10	MUSHAWASHA WEST	5	3
11	NDARAMA MUCHEKE 2	10	9
12	NEMANWA (CHIRICHOGA)	9	6
13	NYABATA	9	6
14	NYIKAVANHU	4	3
15	Masvingo R C Z	6	6
16	RAMBAKUTEMWA	5	4
17	RUKOVO	6	4
18	CHARUMBIRA	4	3
19	SHINGIRIRAI COLLEGE	5	3
20	DONBOSCO STUDY GROUP	6	3
21	Masvingo SHINING STAR	6	4
22	TEMERAIRE	9	6
23	TUGWANE	10	6
24	VICTORIA HIGH	13	12
25	Masvingo VISION ACADEMY	9	7
26	VULTURESVALE ACADEMY	10	6
27	WONDEDZO	4	3

28	ZIVEZANO CHAWA	6	4
29	CHIWAWA	3	3
30	ZANO	3	3
	TOTAL	180	139

Table 3: Showing sample size for the interview.

Name of school	Number of English Teachers	Number of learners	Type of school
Rekayi Tangwena	6	800	Rural Secondary
Herbert Chitepo	5	350	Rural Secondary
Joshua Mqabuko	2	400	Rural Secondary

3.14 Data Collection Procedure

After getting ethical approval from the relevant research office from the University supervising the study, permission was obtained from the responsible authorities who are the custodians of all research processes namely, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MOPSE) The Provincial Education Director and Heads of Secondary Schools. The researcher set up a meeting with English Teachers in target schools, introduced himself, discussed and explained how the study would be conducted, its aims and objectives. Data collection commenced once permission had been sought from the participants and they had signed consent forms.

3.15 Recruitment of Participants

The researcher obtained permission from the Heads of schools to meet with potential research participants from Masvingo district. The heads of schools were addressed at a Heads of Secondary Schools District meeting where the researcher introduced himself and the purpose of the study. Individual meetings with participants were then arranged and conducted in a private space at different selected schools. The researcher then took the identified participants through the research information sheet and each participant was given an opportunity to ask questions. The researcher ensured that issues of confidentiality and informed consent were clearly and sensitively articulated as this could have been an area of concern for the participants. To alleviate any possible fear or concerns, it was emphasized to participants that the data gathered would not be used for anything else other than for the researcher's intended purpose.

All in all, a total of 120 teachers participated in the study against an estimated projection of 180 on the questionnaire instrument. The sample was subjected to a sample test by requesting the KMO measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of sphericity. The KMO value was 0.827 indicating that the data was suitable for factor analysis. A total of 10 participants participated on the interview instrument against a projected 12 estimated against the sample. It was concluded therefore, that the data obtained from this sample could be useful for different purposes within the education context as it was deemed admissible by empirical means.

3.16 Research Instruments

Pandey and Pandey (2015) point out that a researcher requires a variety of tools for data collection. These tools may vary depending on the complexity of the data to be collected. The data for this study was collected using two primary methods namely, the questionnaire and the interview method.

3.17 Questionnaire

A questionnaire consists of a list of questions or statements to which respondents must respond (Cohen et al., 2018). Pandey and Pandey (2015), define a questionnaire as a "systematic" compilation of questions that are submitted to a population under study for

which certain specific responses are required. It is a form by which a list of questions that must be answered by the respondents (Roopa & Rooni, 2017) is provided. Cohen et al., (2018) add that it is a list of “questions” that is written down to be completed by a respondent to “give his opinion” usually in the researcher’s absence (p. 472). All these definitions agree on the basic understanding that a questionnaire consists of a list of questions written down and presented to the participant who must fill it up and present it back to the researcher. This is supported by Johnson and Christensen (2014) who point out that usually the questionnaire consists of a list of questions usually requiring the respondents to answer by themselves. This implies that these questions must be of a certain level of complexity to enable respondents to respond without requiring further assistance.

The questionnaire was designed in line with Pandey and Pandey (2015)’s suggestions that it must meet some or all the following suggestions:

- It must have questions that clearly relate to the topic.
- It must seek to collect only data which may not be collected using other means.
- It has clear and easy to respond questions.
- There is no ambiguity in the questions being asked.
- There is no bias in the formulation of questions.

In this research, the questionnaire was adopted because it solved the problem of time. It was deemed most ideal because the participants were teachers whose participation and cooperation were expected considering their literacy levels and the fact that the research touched on an issue that affected their duties as teachers. Further, the questionnaire was adopted because it required special kind of responses that could only be measured through the questionnaire method. The questionnaire was structured and divided into four sections namely, section A, B, C, D and E. Sections B, C and D asked participants to measure their attitudes, pedagogical beliefs, and perceived difficulties of the new curriculum on a Lickert scale. A Lickert type of question covers attitudinal phenomena under study. Subedi (2016) asserts that it is an essential tool in collecting discrete data. This consists of a series of questions that are presented as either affirmation or negations to which the participants rate their reaction on a given

scale. The statements had a scoring grid of five variables. Respondents were asked to choose one that best explained their perceptions. The variables merely asked participants to agree or disagree with a given statement. The strength of their agreement or disagreement was varied to determine their convictions on the given statements by indicating whether they merely agreed or strongly agreed. Similarly, questions that asked participants to disagree also asked them to indicate whether they merely disagreed, or they strongly disagreed. There was also an option for those who were not sure or felt that the statement did not apply to them or was somewhat unclear. These statements were established from a thorough study of the literature surrounding the establishment of the new curriculum. Section A of the questionnaire required simple biographical details of the participants such as qualifications and experience. This allowed the researcher to measure how the level of qualification and experience influenced other variables like attitudes, perceived difficulties, and pedagogical beliefs. Section B sought to measure the attitudes of participants towards the new curriculum. Part C measured pedagogical beliefs involving the new curriculum. Part D required participants to measure their perceived difficulties towards the implementation of the new curriculum and Part E was for general information where participants were asked to give their opinion and comments on either the research or the new curriculum.

A total of 200 questionnaires were disseminated to the 30 schools identified for study. The distribution of the questionnaire was done according to a prearranged distribution schedule. There were three schedules, the first of which covered schools within Masvingo urban. The day of disseminating the first batch coincided with a district heads workshop where the researcher introduced himself and requested permission from the Heads to conduct research. Heads of schools were offered the letter of permission from the Permanent Secretary which granted access to the district in question as well as the ethical approval letter. The researcher explained ethical considerations involved in collecting data using the questionnaire in line with Cohen et al., (2018)'s counsel who postulate that the questionnaire is always an intrusion on participants 'privacy and as such due consideration needs to be exercised in observing ethical issues. The researcher explained to the Heads of schools that participation was voluntary and limited only to consenting individuals who could pull out of the study anytime they felt uncomfortable. All Heads of schools consented to bring the completed questionnaires

to the District Education Officer's office for Masvingo District which was the designated collection point.

After permission had been granted, the researcher proceeded to the schools where he met the Head of Departments of English and English Teachers where he introduced himself and the purposes of the study as advised by Pandey and Pandey (2015), who explain that it is critical to introduce yourself to the participants so that one can win their trust and subsequently, their cooperation in the data collection. The researcher explained about informed consent, their rights to withdraw, the issue of confidentiality and anonymity as well the issue of non-maleficence after which the participants signed their consent letters. This was done to all the schools in Masvingo town ensuring that Heads of Departments were advised to submit their completed questionnaire forms to their Headmasters who would then take them to the District Education Officer for Masvingo. The second schedule involved schools in the peri-urban areas of Masvingo district whilst the third and last schedule entailed schools in rural areas within the district. The distribution of questionnaire instruments took about a week to complete. All participants were advised that the completed questionnaire would be required for submission in four weeks.

3.18 The Interview

The second method of data collection was the interview method. Cohen et al. (2018), say this method involves the use of oral verbal stimuli and reply in terms verbal -oral response. They point out that the use of the interview marked a paradigm shift from seeing interview participants as simply 'manipulable data' to viewing them as active generators of knowledge through social interaction and dialogue (p. 506). Pandey and Pandey (2015) define it as a two-way communication that involves the exchange of ideas between the speakers involved. What is noteworthy is that an interview is mostly of an oral nature. Secondly, an interview entails instant feedback between the participants, which in this case is the researcher. In an interview process a rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee is established allowing for the eradication of all formalities that may possibly hinder the smooth execution of the interview. Thus, both the interviewer and the interviewee are put on par allowing for a mutual exploration

of the subject under discussion. The sole intent of using the interview method is to allow information to be collected by talking to the subject (Pandey & Pandey, 2015).

The interviews were mostly semi structured where the questions were mostly predetermined, and all questions were asked in a specific order with minor probing and elaborations. Vincze (2013) points out that a semi structured interview is personal but more formal than an unstructured interview. This order ensured that the interview was set in a pattern to ensure that it was slightly flexible to minimise time wastage. All the interviews were carried out in line with strict COVID-19 safety protocols.

The interview data was collected over a period of three days for the three schools with teachers at each school interviewed on a separate day. The three schools were advised prior to the day of the interview and a formal appointment was organised between the teachers and the researcher through the Head of Department (HOD). The schools were arranged in the following order: Herbert Chitepo was interviewed on day 1. Joshua Mqabuko was interviewed on day 2 and Rekayi Tangwena was interviewed on day 3. All the participants were coded by number according to the time each participant was interviewed. For instance, the first participant to be interviewed was recorded as Interview 1 (I.1) while the second participant to be interviewed was I.2 and so on until all the participants had been interviewed.

There was a total of 10 participants who consented to be interviewed in the three schools selected instead of the expected 12. The other two participants excused themselves from participation because they were preparing for their own examinations at Great Zimbabwe University. All interviews were recorded on a recording device and were later transcribed by a data transcription specialist.

After teachers were advised about informed consent, confidentiality as well as their protection from harm, it was pointed out that their contributions would be recorded anonymously and that there was little or no danger to their consenting to participate. In line with the issue of non-maleficence. All the schools of teachers who participated in the interview were recorded by pseudonyms to further enhance the confidentiality of responses as suggested by Cohen et al., (2018). This was more crucial on the interview sample because it was a much smaller sample compared to the questionnaire.

To enhance trust, and inspire confidence in the participants, the participants were allowed to choose their preferred venues for the interview. The interviews were highly successfully and more rewarding than the questionnaire because they allowed for a human element and as suggested by Vincze (2013), eliminated the middleman promoting feedback to be immediate. The researcher was able to probe unclear or non-committal answers, or unclear responses. This saved a lot of time since data could be verified immediately by asking the interviewee to repeat themselves or to clarify further. The interview also allowed for an opportunity to view my participants not as subjects but as human participants with a view to contribute meaningful data in my study as explained by Cohen et al., (2018).

There were minor logistical challenges which however did not affect the data collection process. For example, on day two of the interview, there was a slight delay in conducting the interviews because the participant teachers on the day were conducting end of term exams for their classes, which had started late that day because of heavy rains. After the exams, the interview was conducted successfully without any further challenges.

The interview tool was designed in such a way that it would complement the questionnaire. For example, whereas the questions in the questionnaire had questions that used a Lickert scale, the interview had questions that required participants to explain their opinions and detail their experiences. The questions were crafted to elicit the following themes:

- a) To measure the level of enjoyment of teaching English. The question had a hidden catch. It supposed that a teacher who enjoyed teaching English would be conversant with the changing trends in the teaching English, particularly the new curriculum. Secondly, a teacher who enjoyed teaching language would understand whether the new curriculum is a welcome innovation or not.
- b) The other theme that the interview sought to establish were the challenges faced by English teachers in implementing the new curriculum.

- c) The third theme sought to establish the nature of support that schools have provided to alleviate and mitigate the challenges mentioned in (b) above.
- d) Another theme covered sought to covertly confirm whether the teachers agreed with the implementation of the new curriculum as well as provide reasons as to why they felt the way they did.
- e) The last theme that was to emerge from the interview would emanate from suggestions that the teachers/interviewees would offer as a conclusion to the interview process. The suggestions section was aimed at providing areas of the research that would have been unwittingly left out of the interview process. And would also help strengthen the questionnaire instrument at the same time helping teachers feel that they also may have a say in the decision-making process by allowing them to “verbalize their thoughts” (Basturkmen et al., 2004: 251).

3.19 Data analysis

The study was underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm. This approach to data analysis is based on the premise that research participants are actively involved in the whole process of research (Makue, 2015). Interpretivism allows the researcher to see the world through the participants' eyes. Smith et al., (2009), point out that interpretivism is largely “phenomenological” (p. 329) meaning that it focuses on the study of experience. Since this was a mixed method research data gathered quantitatively was also analysed using scientific methods. Such data was fed into a SPSS data analysis software where patterns and trends were analysed for correlations using Principal Component Analysis (PCA). The experiences gathered were then used to construct meaning from the data collected. A thematic approach to data analysis was used for the data that was collected qualitatively by means of the interview instrument and part E of the questionnaire instrument. The researcher analysed collected data to find common themes that appeared repeatedly. Data was then classified according to these common themes. These were then used to explain patterns and drawing conclusions that answered the research questions.

All the 120 questionnaires instruments that were collected were arranged in simple chronology after each had been coded using a simple system of numbers from number 1 to 120. These questionnaires were coded as soon as they were collected to avoid mixing them up. After coding, the data was then carefully fed into the SPSS software. In similar fashion, the interview schedule was arranged along the same principles. Each interviewee was accorded a number according to their order of interviewing. The first interviewee was coded as I.1 and the second interviewee coded as I.2 and so on as explained above. The data was carefully recorded and transcribed by a qualified data transcription specialist where it was retrieved for analysis.

3.20 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the methodology used in gathering data for this study. It explained that this study was conceived as mixed research which used both the qualitative as well as the quantitative methodology along the principles of convergent parallel mixed design. As a case study, the chapter provided an explanation as to why it was conceived as such. This led to a description of the sample, and it was noted that using empirical means such as Principal Component Analysis, the data collected from the sample was therefore admissible and could be used to provide insight into the perception of teachers on the new curriculum.

The study also explained how convenient sampling was used as the most suitable strategy in recruiting participants for both the questionnaire and interview tools used in data collection. The next chapter is a presentation of all the data that was collected and a discussion of these findings and how they impact on the perceptions of English teachers.

Chapter: 4 Data Presentation, Analysis & Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on data presentation, analysis, and discussion. Two main data collection tools were used in conducting this study. These were the questionnaire and the interview method. These two were designed in such a way that they complemented each other. The data collected from part E of the questionnaire instrument and the interview method were presented and analysed according to the themes that were established in the analysis phase. The questionnaire sought to establish how teachers felt about the way English had been changed in line with the updated curriculum. To establish these perceptions, it was necessary to establish if a relationship existed between the biographical attributes of the participants, their attitudes, perceived difficulties, pedagogical beliefs, and the reasons as to why they felt the way they did. Nicu (2017) argues that knowledge of pedagogy does not only ensure mastery of the teaching process, but it creates a professional identity out of teachers. Nicu further points out that knowledge of pedagogy enables the teacher to transform the subject to accessible segments thereby enabling the learner to make sense of the content (p. 773). Thus, for purposes of this study, it was crucial to test the participants' knowledge of pedagogy to measure the gap between knowledge and implementation. Accordingly, Section A of the questionnaire collected biographical information and Sections B, C and D measured attitudes towards the new curriculum, perceived difficulties in the implementation of the updated curriculum as well as an understanding of the updated curriculum, presented as pedagogical beliefs. Section E required participants to provide general information on the new curriculum. Section E sought to complement part D which looked at pedagogical beliefs. Therefore, the questions in E tested further, the research participants' understanding of the updated curriculum. It particularly sought to establish, what, bothered (if indeed there was any), the participants about the implementation of the updated curriculum. Section E thus asked participants to identify the policy changes that were introduced in the updated curriculum. It also sought to establish how they were affected by these changes in the curriculum. Lastly, participants were required to identify the challenges associated with the implementation of the updated curriculum and whether they would still want to proceed with this curriculum despite these challenges. The researcher thus specifically avoided asking

participants to provide reasons for the way they felt but covertly asked questions that sought to establish these very same reasons. This was done purposely to avoid leading the participants thereby obtaining biased summations. The data from the questionnaire instrument was fed through SPSS, a statistical package designed for quantitative analysis.

The interview was designed to probe further the questions asked on part E of the questionnaire instrument. The structured interview was also designed along broad themes such as: interest or enjoyment in teaching English in the updated curriculum, challenges faced, availability of support services to teachers, implementation of the new curriculum and suggestions for successful implementation of the new curriculum.

The data was collected over a period of eight weeks. So, this period allowed respondents enough time to complete the questionnaire since it was during the school term. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and that participation was entirely voluntary and informed that they could pull out of the study if they felt uncomfortable or unhappy about the whole process. Out of the 180 teachers expected to participate only 120 participated in the study. It was established that the projected figure of 180 teachers was inaccurate, and the sample was somewhat smaller. 10 participants declined to participate in the questionnaire for religious, political, and professional reasons, leaving the number at 120. After signed consent was obtained in line with ethical practices the participants were then provided with the questionnaires and requested to answer them over a period of three weeks, but they completed in 8 weeks with most citing a busy schedule and a school holiday which occurred during the data collection period.

The interviews were conducted separately after all the questionnaire instruments had been returned to the researcher. Most were brought back to the researcher by school Headmasters to a predesignated collection point in Masvingo town. The participants for the interview had been pre-booked separately and the researcher visited the schools in question for the interviews. A total number of 10 teachers participated in the interviews against an expected 12. Two could not participate because they cited pending exams, they were preparing for in their professional studies, giving a turnout of 83%.

4.2 Data Presentation and Analysis

Vincze (2013) cautions that data collected must be presented and analysed in separate segments that correspond with the relevant theme or phenomenon being investigated. As such, the data that was collected was presented according to the five broad themes as shown on the questionnaire. These five broad themes were further broken down into sub themes amounting to forty-seven sub themes.

The following data represents the data that was captured by means of a questionnaire which used both qualitative as well as quantitative approaches. As has been pointed out in Chapter 4, Sections A and E collected qualitative data while sections B, C and D collected quantitative data which was collected by means of a Lickert scale. The interview instrument was further used to collect qualitative data and used to complement the questionnaire instrument. Findings from the interview instrument are therefore presented and analysed separately from the questionnaire since these two data collection instruments used different methods.

The data presentation and analysis will be presented two-fold. The first data to be presented will be the one collected by means of the questionnaire and this will be analysed quantitatively for Sections A to D. The questionnaire itself is in two sections. The first section contains data which was collected quantitatively by means of a Likert Scale while the last section (Section E) contains data which was collected by means of open-ended questions and will therefore be presented and analysed qualitatively by means of themes. The second set of data will be the one collected by means of the interview and this will be presented and analysed qualitatively by means of themes and sub themes.

4.3 The questionnaire: Sections A-D Items 1- 41 (A Quantitative Analysis)

As has already been indicated at the beginning of this chapter, the analysis of data from the questionnaires led to the identification of five broad themes namely, biographical detail such as qualifications and experience, teaching responsibilities, attitudes towards the new curriculum, pedagogical beliefs, and perceived difficulties. Becton et al., (2009) underscore the importance of biographical information as a predictor of future behaviour. Becton et al., (2009) observes that biographical data is critical in social

sciences research because human behaviour is often guided by experience. Consequently, such past experiences like the qualifications of a person, experience obtained and even the size of classes have often been closely linked to how people formulate their opinions about their teaching experiences. For this study, the researcher focused on biographical details that were relevant to the study such as professional qualifications and teaching experience.

The presentation and analysis of the results of the study is broken down into sections based on the objectives stated in Chapter 1. The first part presents and analyses the results of the response rate and demographic data to check if the biographical information provided by the respondents could give any meaningful insights about the effect of perceptions of English Teachers on the new curriculum in Masvingo district, Zimbabwe. Using multiple response analysis, the study went on to examine the different training sessions attended by English teachers. To explore the attitude as well as pedagogical beliefs in perceived difficulties, principal components analysis (PCA) was used as the preferred dimension reduction in IBM SPSS Statistics. The results of the PCA were validated through examination of the Cronbach's alpha, factor loadings and correlation analysis. The study went on to analyse the levels of teachers attitudes towards the New Curriculum using the Chi-square test of independence.

4.4 Response rate analysis

The results presented in table 4 below, show the target and actual sample together with the response rate for the study.

Table 4: Response Rate Analysis

Target sample	Actual sample	Response rate
180	120	95%

The overall response rate for the study was quite high. Achieving such a high response rate could be attributed to several factors, such as the researcher's efforts to follow up with participants and send reminders to ensure that they complete the survey as suggested by Lalasz et al., (2014). Another factor that contributed to the high response

rate was the questionnaire's design. The questionnaire was easy to understand for most of the respondents, which led to a higher completion rate.

4.5 By demographic information.

This section presents the results for the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Demographic characteristics considered by the study to be relevant include minor subjects taught, age, education, teaching experience, other activities apart from teaching, sessions attended for training purposes, location of school, number of English classes, number of classes per week, number of learners per class.

4.6 By highest qualifications

As part of the study, participants were required to state their highest qualification and the results are presented in figure 2.

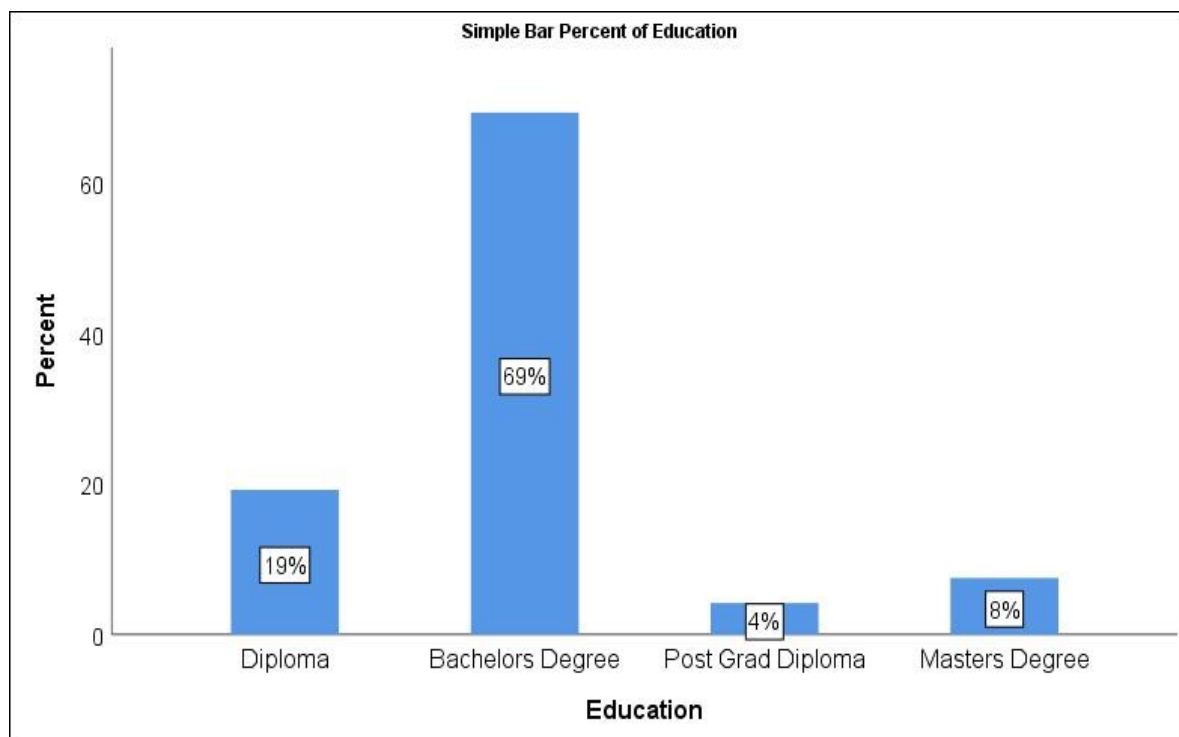


Figure 2: Response by highest qualification.

The level of education of an individual plays an important part in determining various outcomes in research. Results in figure 2 above suggested that all the English

secondary teachers were qualified. The sample was dominated by those holding bachelor's degrees, followed by Diploma, Master's and Post graduate Diploma respectively. These results suggest that most of the teachers are upgrading their educational qualifications to be holders of bachelor's degrees. Therefore, this added to the validity and reliability of the results since most of the participants could understand the questionnaire and reveal their perceptions regarding the New Curriculum in Zimbabwe. The evidence here also proves that all the participants in this study met the minimum requirements for teaching English as all were qualified and even overqualified for the job. Samsidh (2023) underscores the importance of having qualified teachers in schools suggesting that the benefits are numerous. Some of the benefits include having adequate knowledge of the subject matter, use of effective teaching methods, effective classroom management and having a positive relationship with students amongst many others. Nyagura and Riddel (1991) found out that schools with trained teachers produced better results as opposed to those with less trained ones. So, in terms of observations, comments or perceptions of these participants on the updated curriculum, the researcher was assured of the value and rigor of their assessments.

4.7 By teaching experience

Teaching experience was another variable of interest. The results of the distribution are presented in figure 3 below.

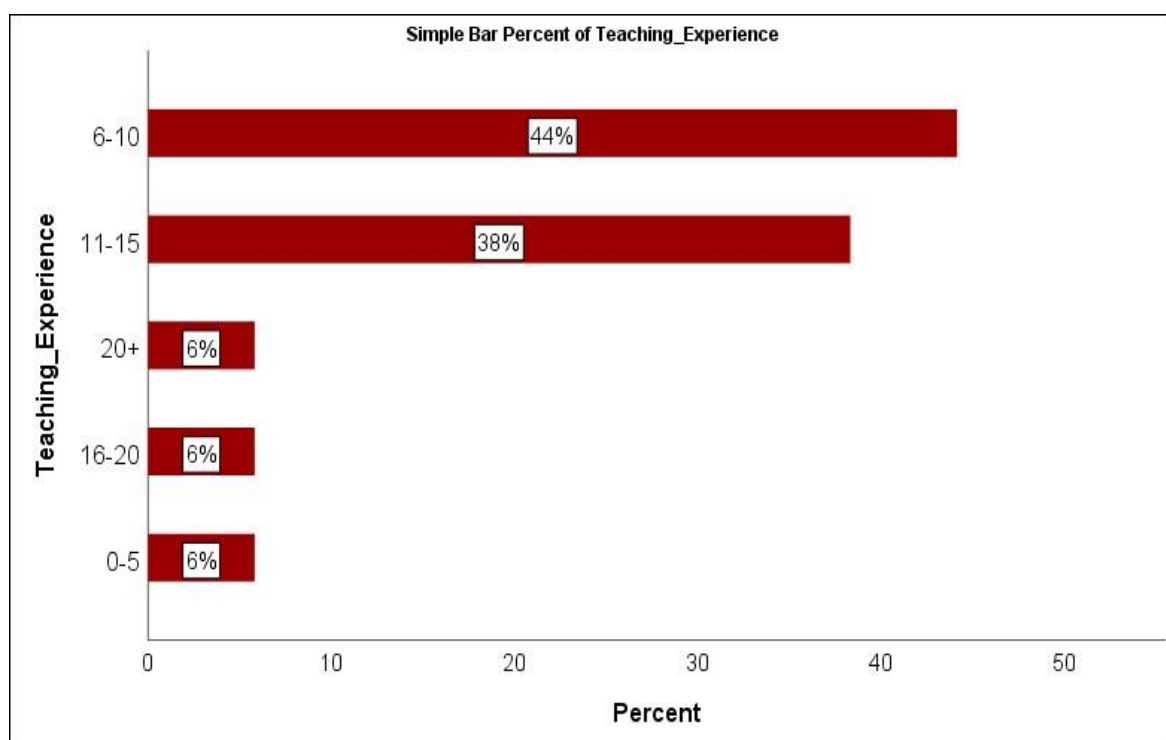


Figure 3: Respondents by teaching experience.

The results presented in figure 3 above indicate that most of the participants were in the 6 – 10 years category. Additionally, it can be noted that the distribution was followed by those with less than five years and those between 11 to 15 years of working experience. Those with less than 5 years, above 20 years and in the category 16 to 20 constituted 6% each. This research established that most of the teachers included in the study had witnessed the old curriculum and hence could compare what they were doing with what they used to do. This ensured unbiased responses from the participants since they were the right individuals to answer about their views on the recently implemented curriculum. These findings are consistent with a study that was conducted by Adeyemi (2003), in which the purpose of the study was to investigate the role of experience amongst teachers in Nigeria. The researcher found that there was a direct positive correlation between experience and performance. In fact, the study established that there was significantly increased performance by teachers who had twelve years teaching experience and more as compared to those who had less. Consequently, the study established that experience is a critical component in ensuring teacher performance (Adeyemi, 2003). The experience of teachers in this study, therefore, not only testifies to the quality of learning provided by these teachers but suggests increased awareness of what needs to be done to enhance effective teaching and

learning in schools by these teachers because of their experience. Further, the length of teaching experience also increased the worth and quality of their responses and opinions increasing the validity of data collected.

4.8 By location of school

Two locations were considered namely rural and peri urban and the results are presented in figure 4.

Figure 4 By location of school

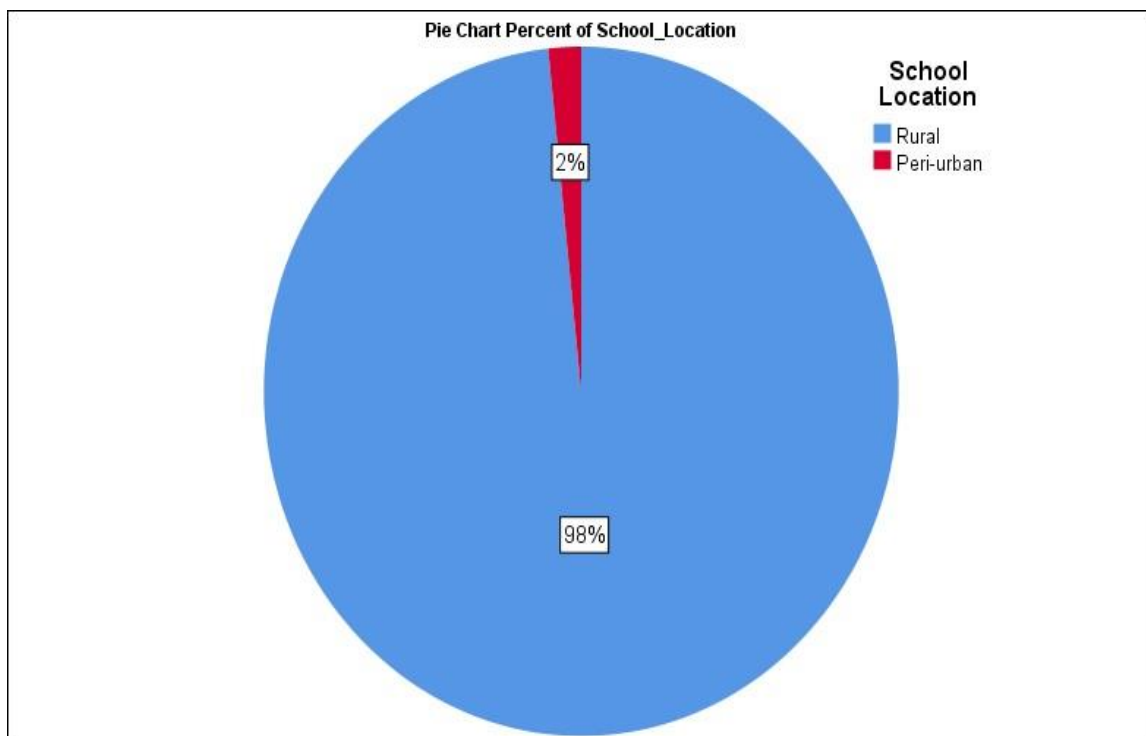


Figure 4: By location of school.

As outlined in the previous chapters, Masvingo district is dominated by rural schools. This was confirmed by results presented in figure 4 above where 98% of the respondents were from rural schools. The results therefore proved that there was no significant variation in terms of the quality of responses because of location.

4.9 By minor subject taught

The minor subject taught was another demographic characteristic of interest. The results are presented in figure 5 below.

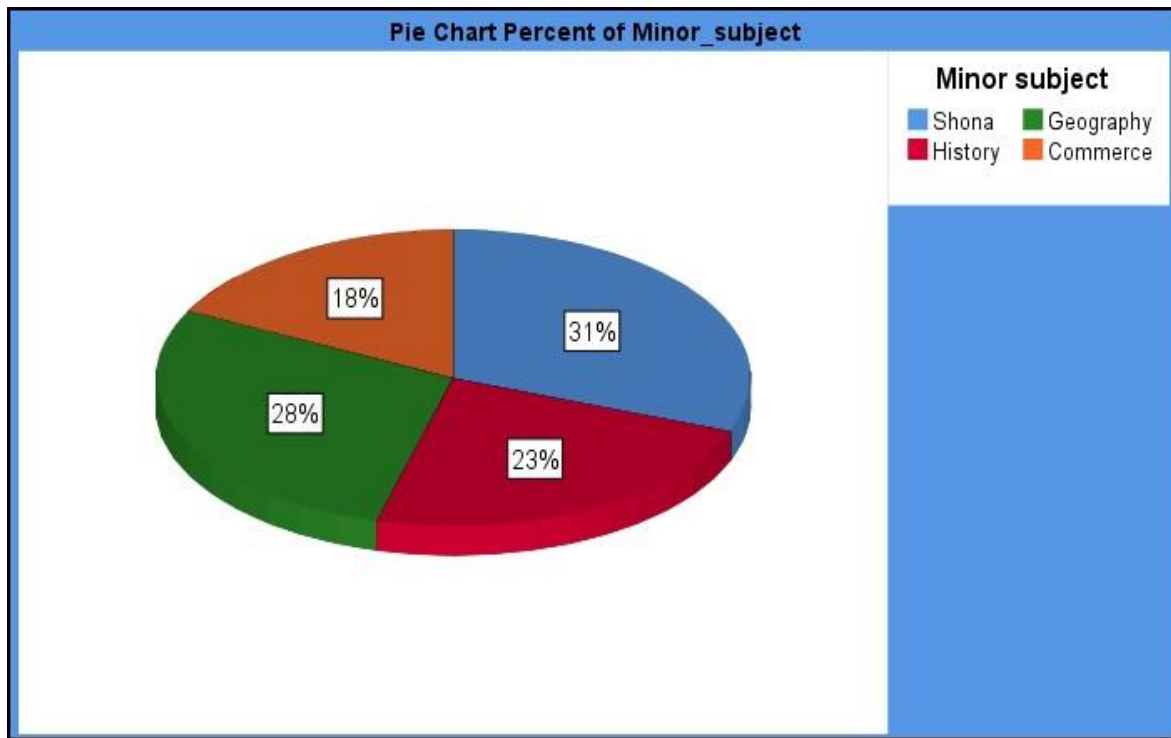


Figure 5: By minor subject taught.

After data was entered into the SPSS software, an interesting and unexpected variable emerged which was that teachers who participated in the study taught English because they studied it as a major subject. The data revealed that all participants had another subject they either studied or they taught which they viewed as a minor. It was therefore necessary to examine these other minor subjects which the teachers taught at their respective schools and observe if this had a direct influence on how teachers perceived the new curriculum. It was interesting to observe that the minor subjects were all humanities subjects. Additionally, Shona, which is a natural language was also a minor subject which could be taught by English teachers. This had the significant impact of enhancing the quality of the responses since all humanities are interrelated in terms of pedagogy and philosophy.

4.10 Training sessions attended by English teachers

The purpose of this section was to determine whether teachers, besides their experience of teaching, they had been exposed to other forms of experience which would, in turn enhance the quality of their performance. Such experience often comes in the form of workshops, ZIMSEC marking sessions, school improvement sessions etc. Omar (2014) has this to say:

... in-service training or staff development programme for teachers plays an essential role in successful education reform. It also serves as a bridge between prospective and experienced educators to meet the new challenges of guiding students towards higher standards of learning and self-development (p.6).

Omar's assertion underscores the importance of in-service training as a critical process in keeping the teacher motivated and supported as well as ensuring that the teacher keeps informed and abreast with prevailing best practices in education. The updated curriculum, as a new phenomenon obviously needed to be disseminated to teachers through such programs as workshops, seminars, school development seminars. This would mean that its rolling out would be understood and acceptable to all the teachers concerned. The findings suggest a gap between what the government and schools do when it comes to policy implementation. In table 4 below, the results on the training sessions attended by the teachers are presented.

Table 5: Training Session attended by English Teachers

Training sessions attended	N	N %
Attended School Workshops	112	93.3%
Attended Better Schools Programme of Zimbabwe Workshops	103	85.8%
Attended Zimbabwe Schools Examination Councils Workshops	26	21.7%
Attended Provincial & District Workshops	17	14.2%

Table 5 is a multiple response set and shows that most of the teachers attended workshops held at their schools. Additionally, others attended workshops organised by Better Schools Programme of Zimbabwe (BSPZ). However, only 21.7% and 14.2% attended workshops organised by Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC) and provincial authorities. These results suggested that most of the teachers required training on the new curriculum which they did not receive from the provincial authorities and the examining board. Their knowledge was only limited to local resource teachers, and this had its own challenges.

4.11 Exploring attitude, pedagogical beliefs & perceived difficulties of the NC

To analyse the attitudes towards the new curriculum, pedagogical beliefs and perceived difficulties, the study began by using Principal Components Analysis (PCA) as the preferred data reduction technique. The purpose of using PCA was to investigate the underlying latent factors or components which were represented (explained) by the questionnaire items. The results of the PCA are presented in 4.12 section below.

4.12 PCA Analysis; attitude, pedagogical beliefs, & perceived difficulties.

Table 6 below shows the PCA test of sampling adequacy in the form of the KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity. These tests were requested to evaluate if the sample size was sufficient to run principal components analysis.

Table 6: PCA tests on sampling adequacy

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.827
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2415.901
	df	465
	Sig.	.000

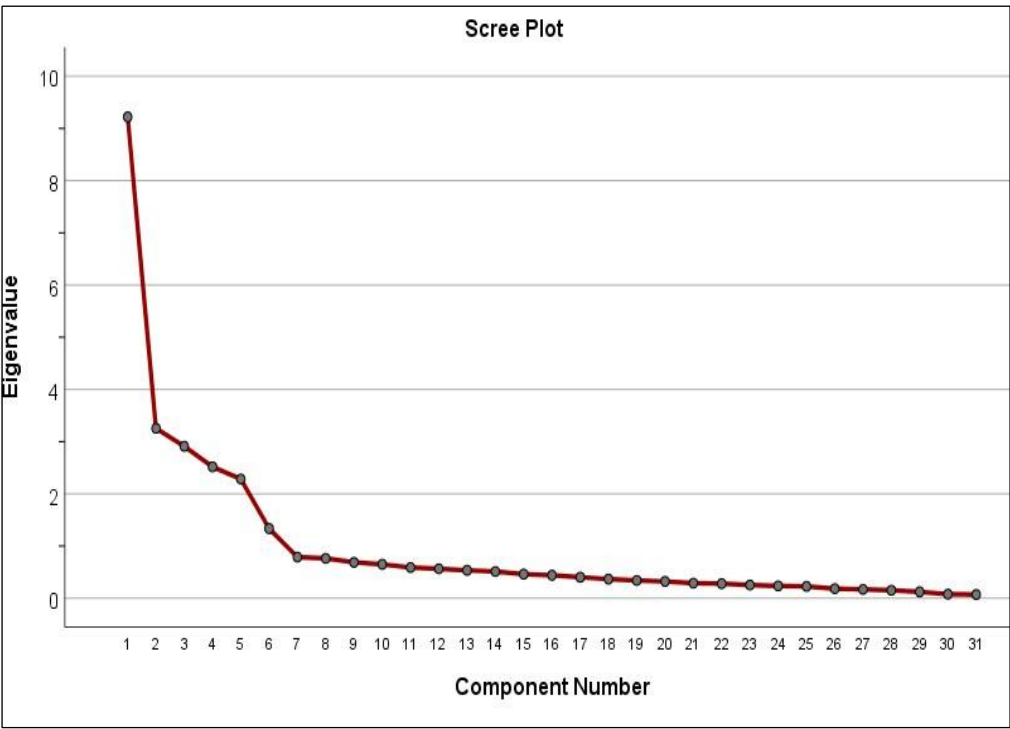
The first step was to evaluate if the sample size was appropriate to conduct PCA. This was done by requesting the KMO measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of sphericity. The KMO value was 0.827 indicating that the data was suitable for analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity had a Chi-Square value of 2415.90 with 465 factor degrees of freedom and a significant p-value of 0.000, indicating that factor analysis was appropriate. Figure 8 below shows total variance accounted by the extracted components.

Table 7: Total variance accounted by the extracted components

Total Variance Explained								
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Squared Multiple			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings ^a	
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	
1	9.221	29.745	29.745	9.221	29.745	29.745	6.474	
2	3.255	10.499	40.244	3.255	10.499	40.244	3.129	
3	2.910	9.388	49.632	2.910	9.388	49.632	5.518	
4	2.518	8.123	57.755	2.518	8.123	57.755	3.827	
5	2.283	7.365	65.120	2.283	7.365	65.120	4.843	
6	1.334	4.304	69.424	1.334	4.304	69.424	5.659	
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.								
a. When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.								

Table 7 above shows the total variance explained by the principal component analysis procedure. The initial eigenvalues and the extraction sums of squared loadings represent the amount of variance accounted for by each component. The first component explained 29.75% of the total variance, while the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth components explained 10.50%, 9.39%, 8.12%, 7.37%, and 4.30% respectively. The cumulative variance explained was about 69.42%. In this study a six-component solution with eigen values greater than 1 was accepted. Table 7 also includes the rotation sums of squared loadings, which represent the amount of variance accounted for by each component after rotation. To further support that a six-component solution was possible, Table 8 below shows the scree plot of the extracted components.

Table 8: Scree plot of the extracted components



The scree plot above shows that six components had eigen values greater than 1. Thus, only six components were acceptable in this study. Table 9 below shows the pattern matrix together with the factor loadings of the respective items.

Table 9: Pattern matrix of the extracted components

Pattern Matrix ^a						
	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
a17	.872					
a15	.853					
a18	.822					
a22	.790					
a20	.752					
a16	.697					
a19	.696					
df37		.931				
df39		.850				
df38		.835				
df40		.809				
pb27			-.850			
pb32			-.783			
pb31			-.741			

pb33			-.734			
pb29			-.725			
pb28			-.717			
pb30			-.691			
a23				-.862		
a26				-.808		
a25				-.756		
a24				-.718		
df34					.934	
df36					.848	
df35					.820	
df41					.818	
a21						-.844
a11						-.833
a13						-.770
a12						-.710
a14						-.638
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization. ^a						
a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.						

Table 9 above shows the pattern matrix resulting from a PCA using Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization rotation on a set of observed variables. The results of the pattern matrix

suggest that the items were related to each other in distinct groups, which can be interpreted as underlying constructs or factors. The items that have high positive correlations (factor loadings) with the same component are likely to measure the same construct or factor. On the other hand, variables that have high negative correlations with a component are likely to measure a different construct. The oblique rotation method used in this analysis allows the components to be correlated with each other, which can better reflect the underlying structure of the data. Table 6 also indicates that the rotation converged in 8 iterations, suggesting that the resulting pattern matrix is stable and reliable. All the items had high factor loadings above 0.7, except for two items, pb30, a14, a16 and a19 which had loadings of -0.691, -0.683, 0.697, 0.696 respectively. These two were maintained because they loaded appropriately on the correct components, even though they were below the recommended value of 0.7.

4.13 Component/factor naming

The pattern matrix in table 9 above displays the correlation coefficients between the variables and the extracted components after rotation. The analysis produced six components, labelled 1 through 6. The variables (items) that have a high positive correlation with component 1 are a17, a15, a18, a22, a20, a16 and a19. This component was named *attitude towards English in new curriculum (aenc)*. Additionally, the items that had high positive correlation with component 2 were df37, df39, df38, df40. Component 2 was named *difficulty in accessing ICT tools and internet (diff1)*. Component 3 items were pb27, pb32, pb31, pb33, pb29, pb28, pb30.

Component 3 was named *pedagogical beliefs (pb)*. Component 4 items were a23, a26, a25, and a24 and was named *attitude towards CALA (acala)*. Component 5 items were df34, df36, df35, and df41 and was named *COVID-19 & accessing learning resources (diff2)*. Component 6 items were a21, a11, a13, a12 and a14 and was named *Attitude toward new curriculum development & implementation (acid)*. After component naming, the study went on to examine the validity and reliability of the components.

4.14 Validity and reliability results

The Cronbach's alpha was used as the appropriate measure of validity and reliability. The results are presented in table 10 below.

Table 10: Validity and reliability components

Component/Factor	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Attitude toward new curriculum development & implementation (acid).	5	0.965
Attitude towards English in new curriculum (aenc)	7	0.970
Attitude towards CALA (acala)	4	0.920
Pedagogical beliefs (pb)	7	0.911
Accessing ICT tools and internet (diff1)	4	0.881
COVID-19 & accessing learning resources. (diff2)	4	0.908

The alpha coefficient is a measure of internal consistency or reliability, and ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater reliability. In this analysis, all six components had high alpha coefficients, ranging from 0.881 to 0.970, indicating good internal consistency among the items in each factor. Based on these results, the study went on to investigate if use of the relationships between the above components using correlation analysis and Chi-square test of association.

4.15 Correlation analysis

Table 11: Correlation matrix

Variable	acid	aenc	acala	pb	diff1	diff2
1. acid	—					
2. aenc	0.526***	—				
3. acala	0.426***	0.189*	—			
4. pb	0.429***	0.329***	0.252**	—		
5. diff1	-0.073	-0.108	0.062	-0.052	—	
6. diff2	-0.34***	-0.41***	-0.348***	-	0.065	—
				0.328***		

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 11 above is a correlation matrix which shows the relationship between the different dimensions of attitudes, pedagogical beliefs, and the perceived difficulties in implementing the new curriculum. On the attitude components, the highest correlation was observed between attitude towards new curriculum implementation and development and attitude towards English in the new curriculum with a correlation coefficient of 0.526 with p-value less than 0.001. The other attitude correlations had significant coefficients of 0.426 and 0.186 ($p < 0.05$). The positive relationship between the elements of attitudes suggested that attitudes towards the new curriculum, and attitudes towards English in the new curriculum and attitude towards the CALA activities move in the same direction. It was also interesting to note that there was a significant positive relationship between the components of attitude and perceived pedagogical beliefs. On the perceived difficulties, the COVID-19 pandemic and limited access to resources had significant positive relationships with other components.

4.16 Levels of attitude by number of classes

Table 12: Crosstabulation. Attitude towards NC by number of classes

Crosstab						
			Number of English Classes			Total
			< 3	3 - 5	> 5	
acid_level	Negative	Count	9	15	48	72
		% within acid_level	12.5%	20.8%	66.7%	100.0%
		% within Number of English Classes	26.5%	57.7%	80.0%	60.0%
	Positive	Count	25	11	12	48
		% within acid_level	52.1%	22.9%	25.0%	100.0%
		% within Number of English Classes	73.5%	42.3%	20.0%	40.0%
	Total	Count	34	26	60	120
		% within acid_level	28.3%	21.7%	50.0%	100.0%

	% within Number of English Classes	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
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a) Table 12 above is a cross tabulation of the number of English classes by attitude towards new curriculum development and implementation. The marginal totals show that 60% of the participants had negative attitude towards new curriculum development and implementation while only 40% showed positive attitude. Considering the number of classes, 28.3%, 21.7% and 50% reported that they had less than three classes, three to five classes and above five classes respectively. A closer inspection of the inner cells of the table suggested that those with fewer classes showed positive attitude while those with more classes had negative attitude towards new curriculum implementation and development. This relationship reveals that as the number of classes increases, chances are high that this reduces attitude towards uptake of the new curriculum by teachers. These findings are consistent with Nyagura (1993), who argues that a large teacher pupil ratio, which is a higher teaching load, has a detrimental effect to both teacher and learner performance. It demoralizes the teacher and affects learner development since the teacher would be overloaded and unable to give necessary individual attention to all students. The debate on the effect of class is still contentious with some like Copeland (2017), arguing that a huge class creates a good learning environment. Hoxby (2000) chooses the contrary view that a huge class is actually very difficult to teach. Hoxby's argument is made from a pedagogical perspective. For example, it is not easy to identify learners with difficulties in a large class. Neither is it easy to offer one on one assistance to learners nor is it possible to supervise written work. I choose to take Hoxby's view that huge classes have no place in a learning environment and are detrimental to the learning process. The study found that out of the 10 participants; 50% had a class size of more than 50 learners per class. 40% had a class size of 35 - 44 and only 10% had the low load of less than 24 learners per class. Chimbi and Jita (2021), point out that any class size that goes above 35 learners falls outside the recommended teacher pupil ration of 1:35 (Chimbi & Jita, 2021).

Table 13: Chi-test: Attitude towards NC by number of English Classes

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.984 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	26.750	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	25.603	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	120		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.40.			

A chi-square test of independence was conducted comparing the number of English classes and attitude towards new curriculum implementation and development in Zimbabwe. A significant interaction between the two variables was found ($X^2(2) = 25.98$, $p = 0.000$). From these results, it follows that high number of English classes are likely to result in negative attitude towards the new curriculum development and implementation in Zimbabwe. If teachers have many classes to teach, setting aside time for new curriculum activities becomes a challenge and this dampens their morale to accept change. This study argues that, reducing the number of classes will reduce the pressure on teachers, thereby creating more time for new curriculum activities.

4.17 Levels of attitude by number of classes

Table 14: Attitude by number of classes

Crosstab						
			Number of Classes Per Week			Total
			< 5	6 - 10	> 11	
aenc_level	Negative	Count	18	24	40	82
		% within aenc_level	22.0%	29.3%	48.8%	100.0%
		% within Number of Classes Per Week	47.4%	64.9%	88.9%	68.3%
	Positive	Count	20	13	5	38
		% within aenc_level	52.6%	34.2%	13.2%	100.0%
		% within Number of Classes Per Week	52.6%	35.1%	11.1%	31.7%
	Total	Count	38	37	45	120
		% within aenc_level	31.7%	30.8%	37.5%	100.0%

	% within Number of Classes		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Per Week	100.0%			

Table 14 above is a cross tabulation of the number of classes per week by attitude towards English in the new curriculum. The marginal totals show that 68.3% of the participants had negative attitude towards English in the new curriculum while only 31.7% showed positive attitude. Considering the number of classes 31.7%, 30.8% and 37.5% reported that they had less than 5 classes, 6 to 10 and above 11 classes respectively. A closer inspection of the inner cells of the table suggested that those with fewer classes per week showed positive attitude while those with more classes had negative attitude towards English in the new curriculum. This relationship reveals that as the number of classes per week increases, chances are high that this reduces attitude towards the subject in the new curriculum by teachers.

4.18 Chi-square test: Attitude towards NC by number of classes per week

Table 15: Attitude towards NC by number of classes per week

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.711 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	17.898	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	16.447	1	.000

N of Valid Cases	120		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 11.72.			

A chi-square test of independence was conducted comparing the number of classes per week and attitude towards English in the new curriculum. A significant interaction between the two variables was found ($X^2(2) = 16.71, p = 0.000$). From these results, it follows that high number of classes per week result in negative attitude (a situation where teachers view the NC as an unwelcome development) towards English in the new curriculum. This study argues that higher teaching loads per week negatively affects teacher's attitude towards English in the new curriculum.

4.19 Levels of attitude by number of classes

Crosstabulation: Attitude towards curriculum development and implementation by number of learners per class.

Table 16: Attitude towards curriculum dvpt. and implementation by number of classes

Crosstab								
			Number of Learners Per Class					Total
			0-24	25-34	35-44	45-49	50+	
acid_level	Negative	Count	2	7	24	30	9	72
		% within acid_level	2.8%	9.7%	33.3%	41.7%	12.5%	100.0%

		% within	13.3%	46.7%	68.6%	69.8%	75.0%	60.0%
		Number of Learners Per Class						
	Positive	Count	13	8	11	13	3	48
		% within acid_level	27.1%	16.7%	22.9%	27.1%	6.3%	100.0%
Total		% within Number of Learners Per Class	86.7%	53.3%	31.4%	30.2%	25.0%	40.0%
		Count	15	15	35	43	12	120
		% within acid_level	12.5%	12.5%	29.2%	35.8%	10.0%	100.0%
Total		% within Number of Learners Per Class	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		Count	15	15	35	43	12	120
		% within acid_level	12.5%	12.5%	29.2%	35.8%	10.0%	100.0%

Table 16 above is a cross tabulation of the number of learners per class by attitude towards new curriculum development and implementation. As previously reported, the marginal totals show that 60% of the participants had negative attitude towards English in the new curriculum while only 40% showed positive attitude. A closer inspection of the inner cells of the table suggested that those with fewer learners per class showed positive attitude while those with large classes had negative attitude towards the new curriculum.

4.20 Chi-square test: Attitude towards curriculum development and implementation by number of learners per class

Table 17: Attitude towards curriculum development and implementation by number of learners

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.628 ^a	4	.001
Likelihood Ratio	19.242	4	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	14.450	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	120		
a. 1 cells (10.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.80.			

A chi-square test of independence was conducted comparing the number of learners per class and attitude towards English in the new curriculum. A significant interaction between the two variables was found ($X^2(2) = 18.63, p = 0.000$). From these results, it follows that large classes result in teachers viewing new curriculum as a bad and unwelcome development. Having large classes means teachers will be overloaded and this limits their creativity and ability to meet the demands of the new curriculum.

4.21 Section E: General Information, Questions 42- 45 (A Qualitative Analysis)

This brief part of the questionnaire was designed with four short questions. Participants were requested to make longer responses since the questions were open ended. The questions formulated established **four major sub-themes namely:**

- i) policy changes that came with the new curriculum
- ii) ii) how the participants had been affected by the updated curriculum
- iii) iii) the intervention strategies that could be put forward to mitigate any negative effects of the implementation process.
- iv) suggestions for the improvement of the updated curriculum.

4.22 i) Policy changes that came with the new curriculum

Question 42 asked participants to briefly provide a list of the policy changes that were ushered in by the curriculum change. All the participants interviewed pointed out that the major policy change that came with the updated curriculum is the Continuous Assessment Learning Area (CALA). For instance, participant 22 said, “the only noteworthy change that came with the Updated Curriculum was the introduction of CALA which weighs 30% to the learner’s final mark as opposed to a 100% exam only in the old curriculum”. Participant 30 and 35 also echoed this saying, “the major change in English occurred only in its assessment where CALA contributed 30% to the learner’s 70% exam mark.” Other participants echoed the same sentiment with minor variations in their responses. For example, participant 79 said, “the introduction of CALA is the only significant change that was brought in by the New Curriculum.” A total 70% participants indicated that only the CALA component was the only noteworthy component in the New Curriculum. The remaining 30% of the participants stated that another policy change, other than the CALA was the introduction of learner centeredness. For instance, participant 11 said, the CALA component was introduced as a way of promoting learner centeredness in teaching so the “only change worthy taking about is putting the learner at the centre of the learning experience.” Participant Number 17 said, “another change other than the CALA was the removal of the Registers section on Section B of the English Paper 2 Exam and the introduction of

Language Structures on the same paper. Participant Number 29 added that the policy changes that occurred were the introduction of “practical learning activities.” The results above indicate an incomplete understanding of the updated curriculum. The updated curriculum also known as the Competence Based Curriculum (CBC), incorporates the basic tenets of learner centred learning and practical activities (MoPSE, 2017). These are not policy changes as suggested by the research participants but are the main features of the updated curriculum. The only clearly stated policy change that came with the updated curriculum is the introduction of CALAs as correctly mentioned by the 70% participants. The above interpretation can be attributed to inadequate training by the teachers who clearly confuse the main features of a curriculum as policy change.

4.23 ii) How the updated curriculum has affected the participants

This question required participants to explain how they have been affected positively or negatively by the implementation of the new curriculum. The question sought to identify subtle hints that could help establish the teachers’ perceptions towards the new curriculum. All participants explained that they had been affected negatively by CALAs. They explained that CALAs took away valuable time for teaching and was difficult to complete during normal school hours. As a result, many participants complained that they put many hours outside school hours which were unpaid to complete these CALAs with learners. Participant Number 1 mentioned that he “had to literally chase after the kids (sic) in order to make them do the CALAs”. Number 10 said, “they refuse to give us money, but they expect us to suffer like this with this CALA of theirs...” This level of bitterness on the CALAs was evident in most of the teachers. Number 26 said, “the introduction of CALA has taken the passion for teaching out of my life.” Number 46 added, “CALA is difficult to implement, there is inadequate time for CALA, no resources and parents are fighting us every day about CALA.” The level of unhappiness over the CALA was too high and many felt that it was ineffectual. Participant number 119 said, “the problem with CALA is that it does not serve any purpose. Our students do not have the resources and the capacity for individual work, so they do not do these CALAs themselves but instead ask their siblings, friends, and item writers to do it for them. So, it literally messes up our lives for nothing.” 40% of the teachers who complained about CALAs also complained about the shortage of resources, particularly textbooks and

internet connectivity to enable learners to do the bulk of their CALAs without too much supervision.

Participant 50 said, “This nightmare we call CALA has been poorly introduced. The government was supposed to ensure that schools have adequate resources before introducing it. Students need internet, textbooks to carry out research and smart gadgets for online research.” Number 72 added, “CALAs have turned our headmasters into lions. They want CALAs done but when you tell them that we need internet so that learners can research, they look the other side.” Number 100 pointed that CALAs has “increased teacher burn-out and most teachers have resigned from teaching as a result of their unhappiness.” A few other participants pointed out that the issue of CALA had affected them badly and had been compounded by COVID-19 restrictions. Participant 119 said, “CALA has made my teaching a nightmare and this was made specifically horrible during the COVID-19 lockdown where we were required to provide the marks for CALA when we did not even have access to the learners and the resources.” This negative perception of CALAs is therefore directly a consequence of poor training, shortage of resources and lack of support towards teachers by schools. All participants agreed that Covid-19 had also affected them and made teaching a nightmare, pointing out that the effects of COVID-19 were hugely compounded by the lack of critical resources like internet connectivity which totally made the use of virtual classroom impossible.

4.24 iii) Suggestions for mitigating the challenges in (ii) above

This question asked the participants to suggest solutions to challenges (if any) that would have been mentioned above. 100% suggested a review of the CALAs. 50% suggested that CALAs be totally scrapped, 30% suggested they be reduced from 5 to 2 while 20% suggested they be reduced to only 1. A further 30%, on top of CALAs, suggested more workshops on curriculum innovation, as well as a proper restructuring of CALAs to make it more workable. Participant 1 responding to what needs to be done said, “remove CALA.” Number 9 concurred and said the way forward is to do away with CALA. But a few other participants responded moderately by suggesting that CALAs could be reviewed and subsequently reduced in number. Number 18 said, “the idea behind CALA is not bad, but was borne out of best practice in education. I suggest that

a review be done on these CALAs and then reduced to certain subjects to minimize the burden on the teacher.” Participant 21 went further saying, “CALAs can achieve the desired result if done properly. I suggest that they, (CALAs) be introduced to a few subjects as a pilot study and then only after a proper evaluation is done then, can they be introduced to other subjects.”

This was the view that was taken by several other participants including participant number 54 who added saying that CALAs should be introduced in stages, “in line with the availability of resources starting with the most critical learning areas” and gradually cascading to other subjects over a period. This finding goes hand in hand with Ngwenya’s (2020) observation that government needs to do a serious curriculum review if it wishes to make the new curriculum functional and achieve all- stakeholder- buy in.

4.25 iv) General suggestions

40% participants suggested that a proper consultation of all stake holders on the new curriculum was to be done. Participant Number 3 commented that, “there is still a lot of resentment over the way government had shoved the NC down our throats and as a result there was a need to correct this by conducting proper stakeholder consultation on whether to proceed or not with the NC.” Participant number 16 also added that there was need to consult all stakeholders in a manner that was, fair and transparent” to ensure the good will of all participants. These responses showed that teachers still felt a measure of resentment that the implementation had been done without sufficient consultation. 50% suggested that central government and the Ministry of Education work together to ensure that resources were made available. Participant number 71 among others, said that there was need to roll out free WIFI for both students and teachers in line with 21st century best practice. The participant said, “It is absurd to ask learners to do research and fail to provide the means to do so. Government must provide free WIFI to both teachers and students to promote research.” Number 76 added, “at my school there is WIFI, but it is only used by the headmaster and a few selected individuals, so teachers and students must ask for special permission to use it, after which the password is changed. Now this is counterproductive and does not promote research at all. So, government needs to do something about internet

connectivity.” Some of the resources mentioned include, laptops, WIFI, textbooks, printers, and projectors. 10% suggested that there was also need for schools and the ministry to roll out staff development workshops as a way of empowering teachers in their implementation process. Ngwenya’s (2023), reports that the curriculum review of 2017-18 clearly revealed serious shortage of resources like CBC compliant textbooks, internet connectivity, and that despite these observations there remains a huge gap between provision of resources and their availability. So, government needs to serious look into this issue by investing much more in education than it is doing now.

4.26 The Interview

The interview was designed to give respondents more space to unpack their views on the updated curriculum. The interview offered several advantages over the questionnaires which were discussed earlier in this chapter, primary of which was that it offered instant feedback. The interview was done in accordance with laid down COVID-19 safety protocols. All interviews were recorded on a portable recording device. Two participants indicated that they could not attend the interview as they had an impending exam which left the number of participants to 10. All participants consented to the interview except one who requested to write down her responses as she could not do the interview. The teachers also consented to the interview and were advised that responses would be treated with confidentiality in line with laid down ethical procedures. Participants were advised that the purpose of the interview was to collect data which would be used for academic purposes and nothing else. Those who were interested to find out the outcome of the research were advised to contact the researcher in future or check the institutional repository for a complete report of the findings. Lastly, they were advised to feel free to pull out or withdraw from the interview if at any point they felt uncomfortable.

The setting for the interview varied with each participant. Four teachers were interviewed in their offices as it was quieter from the noises around the school. Five invited me to their homes in the Teachers’ Cottages where the interview was conducted in a warm, friendly environment. The last participant requested to write her responses due to time constraints on her busy schedule. There was a feeling of warmth and friendship, and discussions were open, and frank and the researcher notes with

appreciation the dedication and professionalism that prevailed throughout the interviews (Szilvia, 2013).

There were 11 interview questions. All of them were designed to elicit responses that covered four sub themes. These themes are as follows:

- Enjoyment in teaching the new curriculum.
- Challenges involved in teaching the new curriculum.
- Intervention strategies
- Where to from here?

These questions were crafted to test the appreciation level of teachers teaching the updated curriculum. Enjoyment is a critical facet of the teaching process. Teachers who enjoy the content ultimately impart a positive and enriching experience to students (Nyagura, 1993). Consequently, perceptions are shaped and influenced by such experiences. Teachers were also asked to explain challenges, concerns about the new curriculum and then formulate an opinion on whether they would want to proceed with the implementation process given all the scenarios.

The following excerpt is a sample of an interview that was made by the researcher and one of the participants. Participants were identified by numbers according to the timeslot they got interviewed. The first participant to be interviewed was identified as participant 1, and the second participant 2 and so on. The interview was later transcribed by an independent transcriber. This was done to eliminate bias during the transcription process. The interviewer in the transcription represents the researcher who was asking the questions. And the Participant represents the teacher who was being interviewed as one of the research participants:

Excerpt of an interview between the researcher (Interviewer) and one of the teachers in the study identified as Participant 1.

Interviewer: So, you have been a teacher for ...?

Participant 1: (coughing) it's 24 years... no 25 years 5 months to be specific.

Interviewer: And all these years you have been teaching English?

Participant 1: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you enjoy English?

Participant 1: Absolutely.

Interviewer: Are you happy teaching the New Curriculum?

Participant 1: There is nothing new about this curriculum. In fact, it is known as the Updated Curriculum or simply the Competence Based Curriculum (CBC).

Interviewer: Ohhh..h... (clearing throat) Yes... the eh Updated Curriculum. Do you enjoy teaching it?

Participant 1: Yes, I do. I like to see my learners making efforts to research their work knowing that what they are doing will contribute to their final grade. Very interesting.

Interviewer: So, have you had any challenges with the new...eh... updated curriculum?

Participant 1: Challenges my bro. (sic) It has been problems since day one.

Interviewer: Can you tell me some of these challenges.

Participant 1: Well ... there are no textbooks for this ... this Updated Curriculum, shortage of money for WIFI, too much work on CALAs ... there are many, but these are the burning ones.

Interviewer: Ok. So, what do you think must be done to solve these challenges?

Participant 1: Government must provide books. They must ensure that all subjects have the required textbooks in the updated curriculum. They must train teachers to survive this ... this CALA thing and make it eh... compulsory that WIFI is made available 24/7 (sic). Can you imagine that we end up using our own data to help students! It's unacceptable!

Interviewer: Is it? So, what do you think schools must do?

Participant 1: Schools must buy textbooks and provide data for us. Also, conduct workshops for teachers on CALAs

Interviewer: Ok. So, what must be your role or contribution as teachers in this?

Participant 1: We as teachers must be trained and be given a chance of writing material for this curriculum. Material such as textbooks, practice question papers, even items for CALA so that we feel we are part of this thing.

Interviewer: You mean you want to own this curriculum?

Participant 1: Exactly. If we own it, we will have a chance to evaluate it and correct it as we go.

Interviewer: I see. So, if you had a choice. Would you proceed with the implementation.

Participant 1: No.

Interviewer: No?

Participant 1: This curriculum is straining (sic) us my bro (sic). It is time consuming. It takes too much learning time. And what? CALAs contribute only 30% of the total final grade yet it is as if it is the main thing.

Interviewer: Ok. So, your main issue is with CALA?

Participant 1: Largely yes.

Interviewer: I see. Any other suggestions you would like to make?

Participant 1: Remove CALAs. Or at least revisit them.

Interviewer: Thank you. I will note it in my study. But I have no influence on whether to drop CALAs or not. Any last words?

Participant 1: I would like to encourage teachers of English to use learner centred approaches and to continue working hard... **(End of Excerpt)**

4.27 Themes.

4.27.1 Enjoyment

All participants (100%) agreed that teaching English was both an enjoyable and rewarding experience. The participants pointed that they all felt rewarded to see their students developing as form 1 learners with English and eventually proceeding to 'O' and 'A' Level progressively improving in English Language competence. Participant 1 said, "I have always enjoyed teaching English. The New Curriculum gives me an opportunity to say, my kids (sic) go and research about this topic and prepare a paper.

(chuckle). It will contribute 30% towards your final grade." Participant Number 3 added, "teaching is much fun to teach, especially if you get learners who are active on the CALAs." Many others echoed this sentiment throughout this question. One participant, number 7 added, "the New Curriculum has enhanced my enjoyment in teaching English. I particularly enjoy the language section. I have always been strong with grammar." This finding can be directly linked to the high level of qualifications amongst the participants and the many years teaching experience. It should be noted that the least number of years in teaching experience amongst the participants is five years. And in public service five years is considered worthy experience to be moved into senior teacher grade. (A grade where one is considered as being able to assume the role of a senior officer at school). (Circular 1 of 2000).

4.27.2 The effect of the updated curriculum on the teachers

Whilst acknowledging that updating the curriculum was a smart move on the part of government, all participants agreed that the CALA component of the update was counterproductive. They pointed that CALA took too much time to prepare. Participant 10 said, "The time to implement CALAs has affected us in a bad way because there is no provision on the timetable for CALAs. Rather, we are expected to 'cook' up time. This has demoralised many teachers particularly English Teachers because of the amount of marking involved in the subject." The following is an excerpt of the interview between the researcher and participant number 5:

Interviewer: So, tell me about your teaching experience

Participant 5: I have been a teacher for six years now.

Interviewer: Ok. So, do you enjoy teaching English?

Participant 5: Very much.

Interviewer: And the new curriculum has not taken away any of this enjoyment.

Participant 5: Yeah, yeah if you take out the CALA.

Interviewer: Meaning?

Participant 5: The CALA is an absolute nightmare. It is not practical.

Interviewer: Please explain.

Participant 5: The extra time needed for CALA is just not there. So, teachers end up cooking marks to get rid of the headache.

Interviewer: So, what do you think the government must do?

Participant 5: I would like to propose that CALA be adjusted to suit our situation... I mean, the third world situation.

Interviewer: I see. Any suggestions then?

Participant 5: Yeah... yeah... We could add an extra paper in our assessment where we deal with English in practical situations like ... eh, preparing adverts, analysing them, visual literacy etc. There are plenty of options in that direction.

Interviewer: Okay. What do you think must be done by schools on the eh New Curriculum?

Participant 5: Schools must support teachers. I have never seen a more selfish set up like that in schools. The few resources that are in most schools do not serve teachers and learners. But serve the headmaster and his admin staff.

Interviewer: So, your point is?

Participant 5: Resources like phones and internet must be available to all in the interest of learning. So, schools must be seen to be supporting teachers and learners instead of making it harder for them.

Interviewer: I get your point.

Participant 5: Thank you.

Interviewer: So, what is the role of teachers in all this?

Participant 5: All things being equal, teachers must be in the classroom teaching.

Supporting the vision of the school and government.

Interviewer: So, if you had a choice, would you implement the NC?

Participant 5: Absolutely, but I would do it right.

Interviewer: By right you mean?

Participant: Consult teacher, parents, private stakeholders, ensure that resources are available etc (sic).

Interviewer: I see. Any last comments?

Participant 5: Government must decide urgently what to do with CALAs.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for your time and for your responses... **(End of excerpt).**

They were some teachers who demonstrated a somewhat hazy understanding of what CALA is worth to the final grade. One participant pointed that it contributed only 18% to the final exam whilst another said it contributed 30%. This poor understanding of such a basic fact may be due to the inadequate training by the ministry on the teachers. What is puzzling is that the updated curriculum has been in an experimental roll out for the past five years. The only logical conclusion is that teachers were not adequately trained on this component. However, teachers appreciated the curriculum and complemented it for being learner centred. Participant 4 suggested that the curriculum affected them, “positively and negatively” adding that we need to keep the positive such as its learner centredness and discard the negative such as the CALA.” All participants agreed that for once, learners feel that they can do something practical with their schoolwork and know the percentage it has contributed to their result. One participant complained that he encountered resistance from students when it was time to do CALAs. For example,

he pointed out that he almost always had to chase after students to make them submit their work on CALA. “Sometimes students resort to cheating by asking senior students or even their parents or siblings to do it for them thereby defeating the whole purpose of this component.” 40% of the participants complained that CALA was affecting their smooth teaching because there was no satisfactory way of making learners do them. As a result, the teachers ended up doing them with learners during prime learning time, even during weekends.

4.27.3 Intervention strategies

Questions 4,5 and 6 required participants to mention intervention strategies on the part of schools, government as well as the teachers themselves. 80% of the participants all pointed out that both government and schools had to do more. They pointed out they schools had to provide internet to enable research related to run without hassle. Schools Heads were also seen as paying a blind eye to the confusion brought by CALAs. Participant 6 said, “the success of the Updated curriculum is not the prerogative of teachers only. Schools must play their part by ensuring that they purchased textbooks for teachers and learners. Government must also show its commitment by providing adequate support to schools in terms of providing resources like funding and training programmes.” This was backed by participant number 3 who also suggested that “it is not too late to do the right thing. Everyone must play their part. We hear the curriculum is in review. So, this is an opportunity for government to do the right thing by doing extensive consultations and ensuring that all stakeholders are on board.” The teachers suggested that a lot of confusion would be minimised if schools conducted workshops at school, cluster and even at district level. This, according to Participant 10, “would ensure that there was visible coordination which would in turn prove that schools were concerned about the plight of teachers.” Government was challenged to provide CBC compliant textbooks which would make it easy for teachers to focus on the core business of teaching. About 20% suggested that given proper government support and encouragement, they could also participate in writing textbooks for the updated curriculum. Participant 8 said, “It is high time government recognised the potential in its human capital. I have a Diploma in Education, a Bachelor of Education Degree and two Masters’ Degrees one in English and another one in Educational Management. Government could give us the many opportunities that come with this

Updated Curriculum and ask us to prepare textbooks, coordinate examinations and so forth, but this is not happening.

How can we support a project that does not recognise our worth?" Participant 8 pointed out that entrusting teachers with material development would empower them financially and also ensure that quality in terms of learning resources is guaranteed. The participant also added such a move would make them feel that they are important stakeholders in the process. 30% of the participants also added that if schools and government played their part then they too would do their and implement the curriculum.

4.27.4 Where to from here?

The last three questions were meant to let participants suggest what needs to be done to rectify the problems raised in the points above. 70% participants suggested that the Updated Curriculum was better off without CALA. This means that (70%) suggested the removal of CALA because they felt it did not serve its intended purpose but without the complete removal of the curriculum. But there were some 20% who wanted it scrapped totally. With 10% proposing a moderate path of keeping the updated curriculum and its CALA after a thorough revision.

Interview with Participant 7 (Excerpt):

Interviewer: If you had a choice, would you proceed with implementing this curriculum?

Participant 7: No. The curriculum does not offer much in terms of quality because of rampant cheating on the CALAs where learners have these written by relatives and siblings. So, what is the use? Besides, why would you want to implement what does not even have a textbook? This curriculum has failed before it has been fully implemented. So, I suggest it be scrapped off totally. This is a curriculum for developed countries like UK, Australia, and Japan where there are solid support structures for students, teachers and even schools. Our learners have not reached a point where they are responsible and independent to study alone. As it is, we have to babysit them so that they can at least do the work.

Interview with Participant 9 (Excerpt)

Interviewer: If you had a choice, would you proceed with implementing this curriculum?

Participant 9: Eh... eh... (clearing throat) The curriculum itself is not wholly bad. I think we have a situation here where the good work brought by this curriculum has been eroded by a spate (sic) of bad decisions. I think the introduction of this curriculum should have been gradual, say over a period. For instance, government could have waited well until the curriculum was in force before introducing CALAs.

Meanwhile, they would have been training teachers and students about CALAs.

Interviewer: So, what are you saying?

Participant 9: I am saying the curriculum has potential. What needs to be done is thorough revision of this curriculum and modification and ensure that CALAs are properly adjusted to suit our geo-sociopolitical landscape.

Interviewer: So, you are saying we should go back to the drawing board.

Participant 9: I am saying let all the processes which were skipped be done properly. Consultation of all stakeholders, teachers, parents, students, the private sector where everyone is asked to make an input on what kind of curriculum they want to see in their schools.

Interviewer: Are you suggesting this was not done?

Participant: It was not done. Or I would have been aware of it. Or maybe they consulted other people. Or they consulted themselves...(chuckle).

Generally, the findings revealed that most participants consented that the new curriculum is a positive and welcome change so much that 80% wanted it to continue while the other teachers whilst only 10% advocated for a review.

4.28 Discussion of the findings

This section provides a discussion of the findings in relation to the research objectives and the research questions as well as their implications to the development of curriculum in Zimbabwe. The results of the study identified similarities and very few disparities in the data collected despite differences in the size of the sample. One major similarity observed in the study was the distribution of qualifications in the sample. Both samples had participants' qualifications ranging from a mere Diploma in Education, bachelor's, and master's degrees. Just like in the bigger sample for the questionnaire instrument, the bulk of the participants were bachelor's degree holders. This increased the validity and usability of the data collected because qualified demonstrated increased competence among the participants. For both instruments participants indicated an overwhelming support for the New Curriculum with a response rate of above 80%. However, a similar percentage indicated the need for a thorough revision of the new curriculum to address the glaring challenges indicated in the study. Another similarity observed was the concern indicated in the CALA component of the New Curriculum with above 70% citing total dissatisfaction with CALA. Disparities existed in terms of location and the period of service. Whereas the questionnaire sample showed 44% of participants within the range of 6-10 years teaching experience and those with 11-15 years being 38%, in the interview sample it was vice versa. A total of 60% of the participants in the interview were in the 12–15-year teaching experience and only 30% in the 6–10-year range and 10% in the 16–20-year range. This finding demonstrated that in terms of experience, the interview sample had more experienced teachers. This implied that the interview sample was somewhat richer by comparison to the questionnaire. This however, provided a negligible edge over the questionnaire mainly because of the size of the sample.

4.29 The Perceptions of English Teachers and their Reasons

This study set out to explore the perceptions of English teachers on the new curriculum and to understand the reasons as to why they felt the way they did, and then to explore the challenges and opportunities emanating thereof.

The study established that all teachers who participated in the study viewed the new curriculum as a positive development in the Zimbabwean education. The teachers confirmed that in line with the Nziramasanga report, the old curriculum had long ceased to play a significant role in the developmental agenda of Zimbabwe. The old curriculum was found to be too academic and therefore, there was need to shift to a more pragmatic curriculum. This general acceptance of the New Curriculum by teachers could be attributed to the teachers themselves. The study noted that all the teachers who participated in the study were qualified, with the majority having Bachelor's degrees followed by those with Diplomas and lastly, those with Masters' degrees. This resulted in concise meaningful responses from all the teachers. This level of qualifications among the participants which resulted in insightful comments which demonstrated that teachers had an accurate understanding of curriculum issues.

However, despite their overall approval of the curriculum, teachers indicated several challenges towards the successful implementation of the curriculum which included, the introduction of CALAs, shortage of supporting resources towards successful implementation as well as inadequate training. The following paragraphs discuss these findings.

The overriding concern established during this study was that teachers felt that they were not consulted when the new curriculum was introduced. This confirmed earlier discussions in the literature review that there was generally a perceived lack of consultation between government and its stake holders when the new curriculum was rolled out (Hwande & Mpofu, 2017; Siyakhwazi, 2022). This compares with earlier findings in a separate study in Nigeria by Ahmade and Lukeman (2015), who pointed out that teachers are often not consulted whenever a new curriculum is introduced even though they are expected to implement it. This is then often perceived as a bullying and belligerent approach to policy implementation by governments often resulting in passive resistance. Thus, the findings of the research are in sync with the perception that the New Curriculum did not get wholesale buy in from teachers and other stakeholders as testified by the case of Dadaya parents who took the then Minister of Education to court over lack of consultation (Hwande, et al., 2017).

The study found that teachers complained that CALA took too much time to prepare. They argued that there was no time to do CALA as there was no such provision on the timetable. Further to that, teachers indicated that the learners themselves did not cooperate when it came to CALAs as teachers had to chase after learners thereby disrupting the whole learning process at most schools. This was further compounded by Headmasters who did not care how the teachers struggled to produce these CALAs but wanted them done anyway. Teachers somehow felt that the 30% CALA contributed towards the final mark did not warrant all the trouble they went through to produce it. Several factors could be attributed to why the teachers felt the way they did. Teachers' unhappiness with CALA can be directly attributed to inadequate conceptualization of the CALA itself. The Competence Based Curriculum is hinged upon the development of different competencies amongst learners. The CALAs were therefore a critical part of assessing the actualization of these competencies (MoPSE, 2017). This means that an incomplete understanding or application of the CALA directly cripples the successful implementation of the CBC. Therefore, the teachers' unhappiness with CALA even to the point of wanting it scrapped off totally is a serious indictment of government's ineptitude at providing the necessary training on the CBC prior to its implementation. This therefore demonstrates a gap between government expectation and teachers' competencies on the CBC. A similar study was done in South Africa by Jansen and Taylor (2003), to evaluate the curriculum changes in South Africa from 1994-2003. The study found that despite a relative success in trying to improve its curriculum in the country, there existed what they termed 'a policy gap' between what the government wanted done and what got done.

Jansen and Taylor observe:

the dominant view holds that "the policy gap" can be explained by the weak capacity within the new state, the lack of material resources for learning (such as textbooks), the restricting role of national examinations (especially at matriculation level), the weak academic and professional knowledge base of practicing teachers, and the underdeveloped infrastructure for modern schooling, especially in rural areas (2003 p. 8).

The above observation directly dovetails to the Zimbabwean situation by showing how failure to implement policies is directly attributed to several factors. Therefore, there clearly exists a policy gap between government policy and implementation. And as Jansen and Taylor (2003), rightly suggest, this is largely caused by lack of resources, poor competence amongst those responsible for implementing policy and shortage of proper infrastructure. A similar finding was done in the United States as explained in the literature review that the implementation of the CBC there, was hampered by a shortage of resources and inadequate in-service training as well (Muchira et al., 2023). This was also observed in Kenya, Altinyelken, (2015) and Tanzania (Nkya, 2021).

The case studies above indicate that many governments do not really plan fully for any policy changes that they administer, as to how they may be efficiently implemented. So, in the case between government and the teachers in Zimbabwe, there is evidence of government coming up with a policy but failing to come up with the means to implement it.

So, there is a serious need for government to urgently close the policy gap by ensuring that adequate resources such as internet, textbook and capital are availed.

There is also a need to engage all stakeholders as well as roll out training programs for teachers and parents on their roles in the successful implementation of the CBC. Jansen and Taylor (2003), suggest a situation which they term the 'politics of transition' or most appropriately the "putative political costs of reform" (p. 8). This is a conscious scaling down of radical reforms or interventions in the face of political pressure and contestation to allow for more less radical reforms until such a time when it becomes possible. For example, in the face of CALA, government may withdraw it or restrict it to a pilot study, and even limit the number of CALAs to certain 'critical' subjects until such a time when all the challenges have been dealt with. This will afford government an opportunity to strategize, mobilise the required resources and train personnel.

4.30 Opportunities for successful implementation

Yin (2014) has a term that describes organizational errors, omissions and oversights called a sociology of mistakes. This sociology of mistakes is defined thus:

“...mistakes are systemic and socially organized, built into the nature of professions, organizations, cultures, and structures. [These forms of] deviance is transformed (sic) into acceptable behaviour through the institutionalization of production pressures (originating in the organizational environment), leading to nuanced, unacknowledged, pervasive effects on decision making (p.82) [My interpolation].

Yin's (2014) portrayal of a systematic fatal flaw that occurs in organisations and government institutions where operational errors and oversights are made continuously until they become embedded within the very organisation's operations, may compare strongly with the situation in Zimbabwe. I argue that the problems affecting teachers in the implementation of the CBC in Zimbabwe are actually a 'sociology of mistakes' as conceived and explained by Yin (2014). For example, the failure by government to adequately train teachers for the new curriculum and its failure to ensure the provision of resources (among the many challenges) suggests that there is a broken line of responsibility and inefficiency affecting the whole education delivery system making it fail to function efficiently.

It was established that English Teachers who participated in the study were mostly highly qualified members with Bachelors' degree and quite a few with master's degrees. The government's failure to recognise this abundant human capital could be one classic example of a sociology of mistakes. To rectify this, MoPSE could do well to tap within its own human resource pool and engage teachers from different schools and train them to train other teachers on the key points of the CBC. Further to that, MoPSE itself already has a cluster system that was put in place by Better Schools Programme of Zimbabwe (BSPZ), and this could come in handy in coordinating the training of teachers on the curriculum. The highly qualified teachers could then be used as facilitators, material developers and item writers. Zimbabwe could potentially successfully implement the CBC if it ropes in the services of its vastly skilled manpower.

4.31 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present, analyse and discuss the findings of the study on the perceptions and attitude of teachers towards the new curriculum in Zimbabwe. In this study, English teachers in Masvingo district were the respondents.

The chapter started by presenting the findings on the demographic characteristics of the respondents which included the level of education, teaching experience, location of the school and other subjects taught apart from English. The study also analysed the results on the different training sessions attended by English teachers in the district. Principal Components Analysis was used to explore the attitude, pedagogical beliefs, and perceived difficulties in implementing and developing the new curriculum. After evaluating the validity and reliability of the components, correlation analysis and Chi square tests of association were requested in IBM SPSS. These tests established that many teachers appreciated the new curriculum as the correct and necessary step towards revamping the education sector. However, teachers indicated their unhappiness with the new curriculum because they felt that certain components of the new curriculum were a burden to them. The results also showed that teachers had a lingering resentment on the way the new curriculum was implemented because they felt that the government had not engaged with them properly. The next chapter summarizes the major findings of the study and gives a conclusion and possible recommendations.

Chapter: 5 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of all the findings that were established in the study. Brief responses to the questions raised in Chapter 1 will be rendered as well as an examination of the objectives of the study. The findings will also be put in the context of future research. Lastly, recommendations based on the findings of the study will be provided.

The study achieved remarkable success considering the logistical challenges that emanated. Ethical approval was granted late in the study which resulted in time management challenges. For the quantitative part of the study, the researcher faced logistical challenges to schools with transport and production of research instruments proving to be very costly. Despite these challenges, the research obtained a 95% response rate with none of the questionnaires spoiled. This can be attributed to the high qualifications of participants which instilled great discipline and professionalism. There were however no serious problems with the interview as the response rate was 83%. All the participants participated freely with enthusiasm.

5.2 A summary of Findings of the study

The study established that there was notable enthusiasm to the new curriculum and that most of the participants both on the questionnaire and the interview agreed that it was a step in the right direction. Most felt that the updated curriculum placed the learner at the centre of the learning experience and could be an answer to the country's education woes.

There was evidence of professional upgrading as the majority of the participants had bachelor's degrees with fewer diplomas and a reasonable number with Masters degrees. This ensured the quality of the responses as well as the fidelity of their

opinions. As such, the findings of this study may be generalized in bigger samples to a large extent.

There is evidence that the greater the qualification of an individual the greater the enjoyment and enthusiasm of teaching English. The study established that most teachers who indicated enjoyment in teaching English had qualifications higher than a Diploma in Education.

1. Bigger classes and heavy loads dampen this enthusiasm of teaching English. For instance, it was discovered most participants who had too many teaching periods and large classes had a negative attitude towards the new curriculum while conversely, those with small loads and small classes had a positive attitude towards the new curriculum. This meant there was a direct correlation between a huge teaching load and resentment towards the teaching the New Curriculum.
2. The study also established that the New Curriculum was also identified as the Updated Curriculum by participants both referring to a Competence Curriculum currently being rolled out to the rest of the continent with Rwanda in 2015, Namibia 2017 and Zimbabwe 2017.
3. This study has provided great insight on the teaching of English and the Updated Curriculum because of the high qualifications of the participants as well as the experience. It was observed that the experience of participants indicated that all had had some teaching experience of the old curriculum and that, juxtapositioned with the New Curriculum, gave the participants a chance to compare, evaluate and critique it meaningfully validating the findings of this study.

4. Findings in the study pointed to a lack of training of teachers on the new curriculum. There is evidence shown, of some training conducted in schools and workshops by BSPZ (a quasi-governmental organization focusing on improving the quality education in Zimbabwe), but the majority of the participants indicated that they had not received any governmental training on the New Curriculum. These findings are consistent with the findings of Dhlomo and Mawere (2020), who in their studies sought to evaluate the readiness of ECD primacy teachers to embrace the new curriculum. The study established that most teachers had no idea of what was expected of them as a result, they continued teaching the old curriculum in their classes.
5. Despite the overwhelming approval by teachers, of the new curriculum there was strong dissent on the use of CALAs, a critical component of the New Curriculum. Teachers felt that CALAs were not serving any purpose because there were no proper facilities for its application. They also felt that it took too much time away from prime lessons yet contributing a mere 17-to 30% of the final mark. There was strong sentiment that CALA only encouraged learners to cheat rather than to research on their own.
6. Teachers complained of a severe lack of resources and lack of support from schools and government. For instance, there were no computers, no internet, no Wi-Fi, and no textbooks to encourage learners to study. As a result, teachers used their time to research for students using their money and even their time like during weekends, to attend to students' queries.

7. Teachers suggested the total removal of the CALA component or at least a thorough revision so that it could be made relevant and commensurate with the needs and expectations of the broader masses of Zimbabwe.

5.3 A Recapitulation of the Research Questions

- The research set out to address the following questions:
- What are the perspectives of Zimbabwean Secondary Teachers on the NC?
- Why do the teachers perceive the curriculum the way they do?
- What are the challenges and opportunities in implementing the NC? A closer analysis of the questions above will reveal that all the questions have been answered. The following paragraphs attempt to address the questions above in brief.

According to the findings of the study, teachers in some selected schools in Masvingo feel that the government did the right thing by introducing the new curriculum. Most of the teachers demonstrated great enthusiasm in the teaching of the English language aptly demonstrated by the visible upgrading of their qualifications from a mere Diploma in Education to bachelor's degrees majoring in English Language Education and Masters' degrees. However, teachers feel that the NC is a good government initiative which was forced down on them without proper government consultation. Also, teachers feel that the NC is too expensive and must be adjusted to a point where it meets the needs of the populace.

To a greater extent, teachers felt that they did not 'own' the curriculum because they were not consulted when it was first mooted. This has resulted in sullen resentment on the part of teachers which has reached to a point where teachers really do not care what happens in the classroom. This unfortunate assumption emanates from the fact that teachers acknowledge in the study that they allowed learners to cheat on the CALAs so that they get good marks and get it over with. Their lack of understanding of what CALA entails demonstrates the negligent and lackadaisical approach by government to empowering teachers. This is compounded by the seemingly uncooperative attitudes from learners (as explained by one interview participant) where

teachers had to spend the greater part of their time chasing after learners to come and do their CALAs.

Zimbabwe stands a privileged chance of implementing the CBC successfully if the recommendations tabled in the following paragraphs are followed. Zimbabwe has highly qualified, dedicated, and enthusiastic teachers who only need to be nudged in the right direction for them to rise to the occasion. Secondly, the facilities of BSPZ are in a state of disuse yet they may be of great advantage for the benefit of the teacher and the student and ultimately the successful implementation of the New Curriculum.

5.4 Implications of the study and recommendations

It was established in the study that the complex process of curriculum implementation was not duly followed as portrayed by the findings in the study. As has already been indicated above, the sampling technique for this study was problematic, particularly when it comes to the need to generalise the findings of the study. But the study makes up for this limitation by its rigor in data collection and its data analysis. This helped provide insight and greater understanding in how the teachers were affected by the implementation of the New Curriculum. It can thus be concluded that Teachers in the district of Masvingo were not fully consulted during the implementation of the CBC. Although the curriculum has already been in force for the past five years. It is noteworthy that the cyclic nature of Zimbabwe's curriculum review has just ended with the start of 2023. This means that currently government is in the process of carrying out a curriculum review. Considering this, the study recommends the following measures:

- That government creates an open transparent, visible, and friendly stakeholder engagement forum that includes, but not limited to parents, teachers, civic society, church groups, higher education institutions and parents to create dialogue on the CBC curriculum. Such a forum would be effective if it is convened at all levels of society such as at villages, districts, provinces and at national level. These engagements should be publicised on national broadcasting centres, social media sites, political forums, and churches for a specific period to allow all interested stake holders to come on board. These

engagements would be best suited for creating awareness about the CBC and the motivations behind its implementation. Such an engagement will serve a twofold purpose. First, it will impress upon the stakeholders that government values their input and is willing to rectify its oversights and omissions during the implementation. Secondly, it will ensure all stake holder buy in of all the adjustments and reviews on the curriculum. Although, it might seem an expensive and tedious process, it is a simple matter because government has different structures of management in place through traditional leaders, ward, district, and provincial coordinating committees. These structures could be harnessed in such a process and ensure its smooth coordination.

- This study recommends that government, on top of the engagement mentioned above, carries out a thorough review of CALAs with the objective of either reducing subject areas where CALAs are required or coming up with strategies for making it less onerous on the teacher. The CALAs have been the greatest bone of contention with the teachers in this study. It is the considered view of this study that government carries out this review as CALA has been seen to demotivate the teachers.
- The issue of resources has also been a major complaint. Teachers acknowledge that the CBC is indeed a curriculum for the future. But the future must be firmly grounded in the present. As such basic 21st century resources such as internet connectivity or WIFI resources, computers, projectors, and smart gadgets are a critical resource in this century. In other words, schools and teachers must not be left to their own devices to provide for these. Government must be seen to walk the talk by meaning what they say and doing it. The provision of resources, particularly Information Communication
- Technology (ICT) will boost teacher confidence and learner performance. Besides, the use of ICT will develop digital competence, which is one of the critical competencies in CBC. The introduction of dependable Wi-Fi and internet connectivity will ultimately push schools to develop other 21st century savvy pedagogies such as blended learning approaches in the classroom.

These will also be useful and practical in the event of pandemic outbreaks like. COVID-19.

- One of the participants pointed out that the government must involve teachers in the preparation of training and teaching material such as textbooks, manuals, study guides and even question papers. This will ultimately empower the teachers by incentivizing them as well as rewarding them for such positive engagements. It will also make teachers come fully onboard as they will identify and own the curriculum because of the materials they would have contributed, ultimately increasing their buying in of the NC.

1. Finally, in the literature it has been observed that the CBC is now a global brand and is being adopted everywhere in the world with the rest of the world in urgent pursuit. It is strange that the East African block has made significant strides in harmonizing their curriculum into a regional one while.

SADC still falters on this great and obvious path. It is unfortunate that whilst CBC has been adopted in Botswana, South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Angola etc., there has not been a single effort to synchronize the curriculum of these countries and create a unitary curriculum that is cognizant of SADC values. It is the recommendation of this study that government engage other countries in the region with the objective of coming up with a single harmonized curriculum.

5.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, a lot needs to be done in the teaching of English in CBC. But a good starting point would be a situation where teachers as foot soldiers are given a platform to give their input in a curriculum they are supposed to be teaching.

Further to that, there is need to come up with a clear guideline on the completion of CALA in English in a manner that ensures that the teaching of English follows best

practices in the 21st century. As the world gets smaller and smaller through globalisation, it is envisioned that the importance of English as a global language will increase exponentially, more than what it is today. As a result, Zimbabwe must ensure that it follows all the prevailing trends in education and English instruction and adopt them so as to be at par with the rest of the global community.

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5.6 Appendix A: Permission to conduct Research on schools in Masvingo district

The PED

Masvingo Province

DSI Masvingo District Head of Secondary Schools Head of Departments

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Request for permission to conduct research at schools in Masvingo District

I, Knowledge Nyoni am doing research in the Department of Curriculum Studies towards a Master in Education qualification at the University of KwaZulu Natal under the supervision of Dr. Nicholas Nyika, in the Department of Education. I therefore request your permission to conduct research in schools in Masvingo District, specifically those in Nyajena Cluster.

I am conducting research on the perceptions of English teachers towards the implementation of the new curriculum during the Covid-19 pandemic. You are probably aware that the review of the current curriculum is underway in Zimbabwe. It is therefore hoped that the study will contribute immensely towards a rationalisation and validation of the new curriculum going forward.

The study will be conducted in Masvingo South East in Nyajena Cluster. Only secondary schools in the area will be selected. And only English Teachers in these schools will participate in the study. Participants will be required to complete questionnaires and answer short interview questions that I will be asking.

The study intends to bring to light the prevailing perceptions of English teachers with regards to the new curriculum, particularly in the teaching of English. It will

offer teachers a chance to reflect on and evaluate their own approaches and the challenges they encounter in the teaching of English. It is hoped that the findings will entrench within teachers a reflexive focus on their teaching approaches and highlight areas where teachers need support and development to improve in the implementation of the updated curriculum.

There is no foreseeable risk involved in the research. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation and feedback procedure will entail emailing the research findings to the participants and the department of Education.

Yours in Education

Knowledge Nyoni

Student Number 222127616

5.7 Appendix B: Informed Consent Letter 1`

I _____ hereby consent to participate in this study. I confirm that my participation is voluntary and have not been coerced to do so. I understand that I can withdraw from participating in this research any moment should I feel uncomfortable

I understand that there will be no rewards in the form of money or gifts and other such inducements have been offered to me. My participation is entirely voluntary.

I understand that the findings of the study will be kept confidential and all views contained in this research will be entirely for academic purposes and there will be no censure, intimidation or harassment that will arise from my participation.

I understand that the findings of this study may be used in journals, academic books and/or conference proceedings and that my participation will be kept confidential. I consent to the recording of any interview that may done.

I have received a signed copy of this declaration

Name: _____ (Full Name)

Signature: _____ Date _____

Researcher's Name _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date _____

5.8 Appendix C: Participant Letter and Information

Perceptions of English Teachers on the new curriculum and its implementation: a case study of selected schools in Masvingo District Dear participant

1. My name is Knowledge Nyoni. I am a student at the University of KwaZulu Natal. I am carrying out research on the topic entitled:

“Perceptions of English Teachers on the new curriculum: a case study of selected schools in Masvingo District. I am inviting you to participate in this study by giving your invaluable opinion.

2. The purpose of the study is to find out your opinion with regards to the new curriculum and its implementation. This will help in informing on how teachers feel about the new curriculum as well as assess the challenges thereof.
3. You are being invited in this study because you are an experienced English teacher, and your opinion will be highly invaluable in making this study a success.
4. You will be required to answer a questionnaire. Completing the questionnaire will take about 30 to 45 minutes of your time. However, you will be given the questionnaire for a period of two weeks, during which you will be required to complete it. On the day of submitting the completed questionnaire, you will be requested to attend a short interview of about 30 to 45 minutes concerning the research.
5. Unfortunately, no monetary incentives or rewards are available. But your invaluable contribution will be greatly appreciated.
6. You are free to withdraw from this study at any moment should you feel uncomfortable for any reason.
7. The study is safe and confidential. All the data collected will be kept confidential and will not be released to any third parties without your consent. The University takes utmost care to ensure that you, as a participant remain safe from whatever situations that may arise.
8. This study has ethical approval.
9. Findings of this study will be published in a full dissertation of the same title and will be available in the University repository.
10. Thank you so much for your participation.

Yours Sincerely

Knowledge Nyoni

5.9 Appendix D: The Questionnaire Instrument

Perceptions of English Teachers on the new curriculum and its implementation: case study of selected schools in Masvingo District

Please complete all the sections of this survey instrument appropriately. Your understanding and co-operation will be sincerely appreciated.

SECTION A: Personal Data

1.Name of your school: _____

2.Your qualifications: _____

3.In which subjects were you trained to teach your subject? Answer:

4.What is the length of your teaching experience in years: **(Please tick as appropriate)**

0 - 5

6 -10

11 –15

16 – 20

21+

5. Apart from teaching what other experience do you have? Answer:

6. Which of the following sessions have you attended over the past five years?

(Please tick as appropriate)

BSPZ Cluster workshops

Zimsec Marking sessions

School Departmental workshops

Provincial/District workshops

7. How would you describe your school? **(Please tick as appropriate)**

Rural

Urban

8. How many English classes do you teach?

Answer: _____

9. How many classes do you teach per week? Answer

10. On average, how many learners do you teach per class?

(Please tick as appropriate)

0 - 24

25 -34

35 -44

45-49

50+

SECTION B: ATTITUDES

Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements by ticking under the response of your choice. You may make only one tick for each statement.

STATEMENTS		RESPONSES				
		Strongly disagree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly agree
11	I am against the implementation of the new curriculum					
12	I was not consulted in the implementation of the new curriculum					
13	The new curriculum is a positive development					
14	The new curriculum was forced down on schools and teachers					
15	The new curriculum has greatly enhanced the teaching of English					
16	I feel confident teaching English in the new curriculum					
17	I was adequately trained to teach English in the new curriculum					

18	I know what I am doing in class most of the time					
19	I enjoy teaching the new curriculum					
20	I am of the opinion that things should be left as they are in the teaching of English in the new curriculum					
21	My school is fully prepared to teach the new curriculum					
22	English now requires ICT technologies to teach					
23	CALA have made teaching English difficult					
24	CALAs need to be improved					
25	I understand how CALA must be done					
26	The use of CALAs takes away time for teaching					

SECTION C: PEDAGOGICAL BELIEFS

Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements by ticking under the response of your choice. You may make only one tick for each statement.

		RESPONSES				
	STATEMENT	☐ Strongly agree	☐ Agree	☐ Not sure	☐ Disagree	☐ Strongly disagree
27	I believe that the new curriculum places the learner at the centre of the learning process					
28	Teaching and learning have become more meaningful since the new curriculum was introduced					

29	I think that I now teach English better since the new curriculum was introduced					
30	I believe that my students are more motivated by the new curriculum					
31	I think that that my school is providing me with adequate support to teach English in the new curriculum much more effectively					
32	I think there is adequate space for putting the learner at the centre of learning in the new curriculum					
33	I think that the advantages of reaching the new English curriculum far outweigh those of the old curriculum					

SECTION D: PERCEIVED DIFFICULTIES

Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements by ticking under the response of your choice. You may make only one tick for each statement.

		RESPONSES				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
34	It is difficult for me to teach English because of Covid-19					
35	If it were not for Covid-19 the new curriculum would have been easily implemented					
36	The shortage of textbooks has been worsened by Covid-19					
37	I have a knowledge of ICT equipment.					
38	I use ICT equipment to teach English					
39	I think my students have been able to access online teaching					
40	I think parents support learners with access to connectivity and ICT resources					

41	My learners seem to be enjoying individual research and increased responsibility over learning content					
----	--	--	--	--	--	--

SECTION E: GENERAL

(Please write your responses in the spaces provided)

42. Briefly explain the policy changes that happened in the teaching of English in the new curriculum.

Answer _____

43. What intervention strategies did your school offer to mitigate the effect of Covid19?

Answer _____

45. If there is one important improvement you would want to do on the new curriculum. What would that be? Please explain your answer

Answer: _____

46. Is there something you would like to comment about? It might be on this research, the curriculum or on Covid-19. If so, please comment on the space below.

Comment: _____

Thank you for your time.

Appendix E: Interview Questions (Semi Structured)

(Please answer the following questions as briefly as possible. Feel free to seek clarification where possible)

1. Do you enjoy teaching English at Secondary school?
2. Are you happy teaching English? Please Explain your answer either way
3. What challenges have you had so far in teaching English in the New Curriculum
4. What do you think government must do to improve teaching of the English in the New curriculum?
5. What do you think must be done by your school to help in the teaching of English in the new curriculum?
6. What contributions must teachers make?
7. How has Covid-19 affected your operations as an English teacher?
8. What has your school/government done to mitigate the negative effects of Covid.
9. If you had a choice, would you proceed with implementing the new curriculum?
10. Please explain your answer above
11. What other suggestions/comments would you like to make about the teaching of **English**?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix F: Gatekeeper's permission Letter

Knowledge
Nyoni

All communications should be addressed to

*The Secretary for Primary & Secondary
Education*

Telephone: 79489S

Telegraphic address : "EDUCA TJON"



ZTJIRAIWE

Reference: C/426/3

Ministry of Primary and

Secondary Education

P.O Box CY 121

Causeway

HARARE

15 November 2022

**RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN MASVINGO PROVINCE:
MASVINGO DISTRICT SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Reference is made to your application to carry out research from the above- mentioned district schools on the ,-esearch title:

**"THE PERCEPTION OF ENGLISH TEACHERS ON THE NEW CURRICULUM IN
SECONDARY SCHOOLS. "**

Permission is hereby granted. However, you must liaise with the Provincial Education Director of Masvingo Province who is responsible for the schools in which you want to involve in your research. You should ensure that your research work does not disrupt the normal operations of the schools. Where students are involved, parental consent is required.

You are also required to provide a copy of your final report to the Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education.

Nyambuya C pp

Deputy Director : Innovation and Development

For: **SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**