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The challenges and opportunities faced in implementing (PLAP)
performance lag programme in Makoni district schools

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CHAPTER 1

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.0   Introduction

This study explored the challenges and opportunities of the Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP) with special reference to primary schools in Makoni District, in Manicaland in Zimbabwe. Chapter one of this study, focuses on the problem and its setting. Issues discussed in this chapter include the background of the study, the statement of the problem, objectives and research questions of the study. It also discusses the significance of the study to various stakeholders in education and the assumptions upon which the study is grounded. In addition, this chapter also discusses the possible limitations that constrained the study and the delimitations of the boundary lines beyond which the study did not venture. Before winding off with a summary of the major issues raised, attention is also focused on the definitions of key terms, to create shared meanings on the salient issues that are raised in the study.

1.1 Background to the study

Before the attainment of independence Zimbabwe had few schools for the majority. After attaining independence in 1980 there was a positive massive expansion in education. The literacy rate rose to 87 percent (Ndlovu, 2013). From 2006 to 2008 the country experienced economic challenges which led to the decline in educational gains (Nkoma, Mapfumo & Mashavira, 2013). The education system in Zimbabwe experienced regressed learning resulting in some schools having zero percent pass rate at both primary and secondary levels (Muzawazi and Nkoma,

2011). Zimbabwe at one time had the best education system in Africa, with the highest literacy rate in the continent (Kwenda, 2008).

At the moment however, the country's education system is reeling from the economic challenges of the decade ending 2008 (Muresherwa, Mupa & Hlupo, 2014). The performance of the Zimbabwean education system became stable from 1995 up to year 2000 (Makopa, 2011). The situation began to deteriorate from 2000 onwards after the agrarian reform programme was introduced. The programme focused on reallocating the former white commercial farmers owned commercial lands to the indigenous people. The ensuing socio-political milieu did not go down well with some western countries who later applied targeted sanctions on political figures in Zimbabwe as a measure to limit trading linkages and support from those developed nations (Nkoma, 2014).

In Zimbabwe, Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP) was introduced as a response to the problems the Ministry of Education faced due to the collapse of the system between 2006 and 2009. The country faced political and socio-economic challenges as well as insufficient funding which made schools losing learning time in part of 2006, the entirety of 2007 and 2008, as well as segments of 2009's academic years (UNICEF report, 2011). The (UNICEF 2011)report states that 94 percent of all rural schools were closed by 2009, with pupil attendance plunging from over 80 percent to 20 percent. The (UNICEF 2011)report also he found that over 3 million children skipped fundamental steps of learning without the opportunity to retake years, pupils were simply pushed to higher forms regardless of their mastery of previous levels (Muzawazi and Nkoma, 2011).

The impact of the crisis left the child in the centre of the problem and teachers could not remain committed in the classrooms. The outcome of the 2007 to 2008 pass rate in primary schools was disastrous. The system was fragile and many teachers abandoned their teaching profession in search for better forms of employment for survival (Nkoma et al 2013). This brain drain culminated in poor service delivery there by affecting the learning and teaching processes (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2012).

According to Nkoma (2014), zero percent pass rates were recorded in certain schools as a result of the exodus of the teaching personnel. To this effect the Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture in Zimbabwe launched the Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP) in October 2012 in Manicaland Province after realizing the under achievement of students at both primary and secondary schools which was caused by socio-economic melt down from 2006 to 2008 (Nkoma, 2014) , and (Herald 10 August 2013).

According to Mukoko and Mdlongwa (2014) in the year 2010 Muzawazi who was the former provincial Education Director of Manicaland Province carried a research on why pupils in four districts (115 schools) failed. Results showed that learners were operating below their grade level. Most of them were three years behind. This was caused by absenteeism by both teachers and pupils, teachers were also not using the syllabi when teaching instead they were using textbooks (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2015). It means that the time when both teachers and pupils were absent no learning was taking place but pupils were automatically promoted to next grades. Therefore the concepts missed needed to be taught thus PLAP was conceived.

After experiencing the lagging of pupils from 2006 to 2008, schools introduced extra lessons which focused on current grade or form curriculum (Muzawazi & Nkoma, 2011). This resulted in many cases of rote learning or surface processing because children lacked prior knowledge and skills. These extra lessons were extended from afternoons to weekends and holidays. This teaching methodology did not consider the child's last point of success which focused on deep processing or understanding or comprehension. With this background we are finding pupils moving upgrades by automatic promotion regardless of how they have coped with the curriculum objectives of the previous year (Muzawazi & Nkoma, 2011). Therefore teaching failed to respond to the pace and level of the children hence there was need for too much remediation and PLAP of the pupils who were lagging behind.

With such a scenario, the teacher were frustrated and the children are not aware of what was happening in the classroom, this means the pupils are not comprehending anything and hence resulting in behaviour problems such as truancy, drop outs, bullying among others (Mukoko and Mdlongwa, 2014).

1.2 Statement of the problem

The primary and secondary school curriculum in Zimbabwe was recently reviewed and up dated with factors such as societal and technological changes. The majority of school heads, who should undertake school based supervision of teachers, did not receive adequate training in supervision to match with the new curriculum. As a result, both qualified and unqualified teachers received little support to be able to teach effectively, which significantly slowed down the uptake of the reviewed curriculum and potentially lower education standards. On the other

hand, PLAP's pedagogical principle could assist in the implementation of the new curriculum especially in the uptake of new technologies.

It was in light of the needs for PLAP's pedagogical requirements and the constraints of the Ministry of Education, Sports Arts and Culture (MOESAC) that the researcher needs to determine if teachers perception on PLAP, challenges and opportunities match their classroom pedagogy. The success of any program is enhanced by taking advantage of opportunities and overcoming challenges encountered during implementation. In order to ensure successful implementation of the PLAP in Zimbabwe, it is necessary for school authorities to understand the benefits as well as the constraints which limit the implementation of the program.

The challenges and opportunities may vary from one location to another thus the need for localized assessments. Studies done in Zimbabwe on PLAP so far did not cover Makoni District. Furthermore, the challenges and opportunities to the implementation of PLAP in the District are not document. Given the potential of PLAP to improve education, there was need for studies on the program especially focusing on the opportunities and challenges in Makoni District.

1.3 Research question(s)/hypothesis

What are the challenges and opportunities to implementing PLAP in primary schools?

1.3.1 Sub-research questions

To achieve the above end, the researcher needed to attend to the following sub research question:

- What are the challenges of implementing PLAP in Makoni district schools?

- How effective has PLAP been improving the teaching and learning process in Makoni district?

- What measures can be taken to improve the effectiveness of PLAP in Makoni district?

Purpose of study

The aim of the study is to assess the opportunities and challenges in the implementation of PLAP in Makoni District, Zimbabwe

Objectives of the study

This study seeks to:

- Assess the extent to which teachers in the four schools under study are PLAP literate

- Identify the challenges faced in implementing PLAP programmes in schools.

- Assess the extent to which PLAP has been effective to improve the teaching and learning process in Makoni district.

- Establish the measures that may be taken to improve the effectiveness of PLAP.

1.4 Significance of the study

To the researcher, as a practicing teacher undergoing an in service training in Educational Leadership and Management, this study may be important in the sense that he may leave the university well equipped with the knowledge that would help him to do his work better. The rest of the other members of the academic community and students would see this document internet and university library. They would find this study a very useful source of literature that can be reviewed as a basis for similar or related studies and for teaching purposes. This knowledge might also make school authorities in the studied districts and beyond to be better and able to handle these challenges and ensure that teacher's challenges are effectively addressed in ways that benefit both the learners and teachers.

1.5 Delimitations of the study

The study on the challenges and opportunities of implementing PLAP was restricted to the situation of four schools in Makoni district in Rusape which is 100km from Mutare and 170km from Harare, in the North West of Manicaland Province in Zimbabwe. The study focuses on primary school teachers and school heads and not any other stakeholder in education.

1.6 Limitations to the study

Limitations are those conditions beyond the control of the researcher that may place restrictions on the conclusions of the study and their application to other situations (Santrock, 2004). Research study requires a lot of preparation, movement and time to move from one place to the other to carry out interviews and deliver questionnaires to teachers and heads. As a result, financial constraints would limit the number of respondents to be covered. In addition, the researcher was a full time employee. Being a part time student, the researcher would be faced with time constraints to carry out the research on a large scale. The researcher had to ask for permission from the school head to use some of the afternoon time, after hours time and weekends to carry out his research. Thus, the research findings might not be generalized to all primary schools in Zimbabwe as the study was confined to a small manageable sample of four primary schools in Makoni District. However, despite all these weaknesses, the researcher still hopes that the sample of the primary schools used would be a representative of the diverse views from junior primary school teachers and heads. Again, the interview carried out with primary school heads on the challenges and opportunities of implementing PLAP in teaching and learning would ensure that the research remains valid and reliable.

1.6.1 Definition of terms

This section of study presents the definition of terms as they are used in the current study.

i. Performance Lag Address Programme: It is a catch up programme which focuses on addressing learning gaps of learners from grade 3 to grade 7 in primary schools by improving teacher's capacity to provide a catch up learning (MOPSE, 2015). PLAP is a programme designed to address learning anomalies and eradicate zero percent pass rate in schools (Moyo, 2013) cited in Kurebwa and Mabhanda (2015). One can view PLAP as a

programme that involves revisiting the syllabus and targeting concepts that have been persistently difficult for pupils to catch up on.

ii. CHALLENGES: The problem that should be overcome to ensure educational goals are realized (Muresherwa et al, 2014).

iii. OPPORTUNITIES: A chance for progress or advancement. It is a favourable state of affairs (Nkoma, 2013).This means to say opportunities are situations that make it possible to do something that one wants to do.

iv. MINISTRY: The term is used to refer to the current Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education or its' predecessor Ministries (Muresherwa, et al 2014).

1.7 Summary

Chapter one has highlighted the research problem. It explained and highlighted the back ground the study, the statement of the problem, key objectives to be achieved and the research questions. In addition, it also outlined the limitations that affected the study and the delimitations which the study does not venture. Chapter two would cover the review of the related literature to PLAP and its implementation.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

The main aim of this study is to establish the challenges and opportunities of performance lag address programme with special reference to primary schools in Makoni District, Zimbabwe. Chapter one discussed the background to the study, the research gap as well as the objectives. This chapter would cover the literature that was related to the topic. The literature review described, summarized, evaluated and clarified the literature that is related to the topic being studied to establish any knowledge gaps in the area of interest and to create a clear understanding of issues at stake in the study (Boote and Belie, 2005). The literature review would provide background to the PLAP as well as describe the program, and would highlight factors that affected acceptable of educational programme by primary school teachers as well as discussing the effectiveness of PLAP in the primary schools and measures to improve effectiveness of educational programmes. This chapter also highlights the gaps that the present study seeks to fill.

2.1 Identification of relevant literature

Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP) is a programme aimed at helping the learners achieve better pass rate from the effects of the worst economic meltdown of 2008. PLAP and normal remediation are different. Firstly the usual remediation procedure works on the students "weaknesses within the students" level of study. As for PLAP students weaknesses are believed to have cropped up from concepts missed at lower levels because no effective teaching and learning was taking place this affecting their present performance, (Mukoko and Mdlongwa,

2014). This intervention strategy was pilot tested in Manicaland Province of Zimbabwe and cascaded to all regions in order to alleviate the adverse effects of "learning gaps" in learners. The teachers left the profession looking for greener pastures returned to rejoin the education sector, poor pass rates remained a setback to the pupils' achievements (Muzawazi and Nkoma 2011). The aim of PLAP is to empower the teacher in assisting individual learners who are not coping with the demands of their present grade. The ultimate goal is to improve the performance of the learner experiencing learning achievement gaps so that he/she catches up with the requirements of the particular grade. The PLAP approach is not an isolated intervention strategy, but should be complementary to any other techniques that are already in use as it is one of the varied learning centered teaching methods the teacher employs in everyday teaching (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2015).

The underlying performance during the era can be statistically viewed. In 2006, no primary schools had zero percent pass rates (UNICEF Annual Report, 2009). In 2008, 45 primary schools had zero percent pass rates (UNICEF Annual Report, 2009) as cited in Kurebwa and Mabhanda (2015). In 2009, 57 primary schools had zero percent pass rates (UNICEF Annual Report, 2010). These figures are a result of the poor learning and teaching during the period (Muzawazi and Nkoma, 2011). PLAP is a result of deep-stick evaluation which focused on assessing the teacher learning process, teacher pupil records, resources provision, monitoring and evaluation programmes (The Herald, 2013). PLAP requires that the last point of success of the learner be established first through the administration of achievement tests.

The PLAP methodology focuses on the multi- grade teaching approach whereby all learners with performance lag in Mathematics and English have work suitable to their cognitive level be planned for weekly (MOPSE, 2012). Imperial research findings by Brown and Knight (1994)

cited in Kurebwa and Mabhanda (2015) pointed out that evaluating pupils learning on a continuous basis by focusing on basic instructional objectives plays an important role in maintaining the quality of education. Thus continuous assessment becomes a corner stone to PLAP (Muzawazi and Nkoma, 2011). To the best of my knowledge, no study has been carried out, focusing on the challenges and opportunities of PLAP in Zimbabwe specifically in Makoni district and Zimbabwe as a whole. It is against this background that present study seeks to close this knowledge gap.

2.2 Organisation of reviewed literature

2.2.1 Factors that affect acceptance of educational programmes in schools.

Alsauidi (2015) cites physical facilities and lack of training of teachers as factors that may affect the success of any school programme. Alsauidi (2015) further claim that the availability or lack of physical facilities may mean life or death of a school programme despite its importance to the teaching and learning process. The same study by Alsauidi (2015) also noted that if guidance, counseling programme in schools lacks the necessary facilities, it is likely to fail. It was therefore, necessary to assess if schools had the requisite facilities to enable implementation of any program.

Muzawazi and Nkoma (2011) added that educational programmes haven't much impact due to the myriad of problems facing its implementation. Reasons given include the fact that schools have very few materials and resources on guidance, counseling, performance lag address programme (PLAP) and remediation, while trained personnel in this area are few or not available at all (Muzawazi and Nkoma, 2011). Most school administrators do not give the necessary support required to run the programme in Zimbabwe. However, availability of resources may

vary within a country prompting the need for area specific studies to assess the impact of resource constrains on education programs.

Chivedza,Wadesango and Kurebwa (2012) state that one of the constraints that educational programmes in Zimbabwe suffer from its lack of parental involvement and support. The inability to gain support for the programme or to maintain and increase such support once it has been gained can be real hindrance to the development of educational programmes.

Mukoko and Mdlongwa (2014) maintain that the attitude of the teacher who is planning and presenting the programme can be an important factor in its success and failure. Chakanyuka, Chung and Stevenson (2009) found out that the quality of instruction and teacher behavior and attitudes contributes to schools programme's effectiveness. If by any chance their attitude towards the programme in question is not favorable, less may be done. Muzawazi and Nkoma (2011) found out that some programmes may not succeed in a school depending on the head teacher's attitude towards it. According to the study done by Muzawazi & Nkoma (2011) in Manicaland PLAP requires a teacher who establishes the level of performance of each child. The teacher can then proceed with the individualized teaching and learning programme, and then going back to the last point of success of each child and systematically closing the achievement gap. However to establish the learners' last point of success is a problem to teachers. Masomera and Ganga (2015) echoed that effective assessment continues to be a challenge to many teachers.

According to William (2011) assessment is a way of examining individual characteristics that are important for establishing individual intervention programmes. The Irish National Council and Assessment (2014) in Ireland says assessment is used to identify children with learning

difficulties so that the nature of support and assistance they need can be seen and appropriate strategies and programming put in place to enable them to cope with particular difficulties.

The Global Education Association (2011) says there is need to use multiple measures to assess and report on the progress of learners for accountability purposes such as curriculum based, performance based holistic assessment using scoring guides, check lists and rubrics. The association also recommends an adoption of learning for mastery model of assessment where learners are allowed to resubmit and retake tests but in Zimbabwe the learners could only write the test and put in their respective classes. Masomera and Ganga (2015) posit that the effectiveness of an instrument is measured on how it produces the required results. It makes the clarity and worthiness of the results. Assessment of primary school children should provide the correct information and valuable information to teachers and parents. The method of collecting that information should be understood by all participants that is teachers, parents and children.

According to Wilkinson and Robertson (2006) the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) was used in America by teachers in identifying the last point of success of learners during Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP) hence the grade level they are performing at English and Mathematics. Kaputa (2009) cited in Chimhenga (2017) says Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) is generally accepted as convenient and sufficient for identification purposes since it provides scores in reading, spelling and mathematics. The scores can be indicated in terms of grade level and equivalent, standard score percentage. However the grading system used in WRAT does not communicate useful information to students about their weak areas. WRAT is effective for learners in western countries because the medium of instruction is

their mother tongue, while learners in Africa, English is a second language to them (Naglieri and Chambers, 2008). Wachsler and Naglier (2006) say considering errors in the construction of tests, measurement errors, he generally presumed cultural bias which one cannot depend and rely on one assessment tool.

The greatest challenge which is even faced by teachers in rural areas is that learners have problems in interpreting questions, have difficulty in applying what they learnt to answer questions and remember what they have actually learnt (Mukoko and Mdlongwa, 2014). The challenges facing primary school teachers especially those in rural areas are many and very complex. It is upon researchers and academics to come up with strategies which best apply to the peculiar problems faced by primary school teachers in implementation of PLAP (Nkoma, 2013). Literature has shown that effective assessment may be a challenge to successful implementation of PLAP, but it cannot be the only challenge, therefore the present study seeks to investigate other challenges (Mukoko and Mdlongwa, 2014). The next section discusses advantages of PLAP in primary schools.

2.2.2 Effectiveness of PLAP in primary schools

The learning process is incomplete if the testing component is absent. It is from the results of these tests that the teachers then decide on the individual needs of his or her students. The teacher goes a step further in identifying the students' areas of weaknesses and find corrective measures so that those affected catch up with the rest of the class (Moyo, 2013) cited in Chimhenga (2017). With specific reference to PLAP, this is a form of remediation where students are believed to have been affected at lower levels where they had missed important concepts which affected their present performance (Mukoko and Mdlongwa, 2014).

Mufanechiya, Mandiudza, Mufanechiya and Jinga (2012) propound that choice of remediating pupils mainly depends on the mathematical concept to be taught. This is where PLAP comes in as a form of remediation in mathematics. Its basis is that any mathematical concept taught or developed at a higher level should have been soundly taught at the lower level and fully understood by the learners such that it will not give him or her application problems.

Kurebwa and Nyaruwata (2013) say that PLAP is consistent with democratic philosophy that all children given opportunities to learn whether they are average, bright, dull, retarded, blind, deaf, crippled, emotionally disturbed or deviant in other capacities to learn. It is however difficult to give all children the opportunities to learn. Heward (2006) went on at length to define a child who needs special assistance (the exceptional child) and the type of assistance which should be given. Heward (2006) defines an exceptional child as that child who deviates from the average child in mental characteristics, sensory abilities, neuromuscular or physical characteristics, social or emotional behavior and communication to such an extent that a modification of school practice is needed in order to develop the child to his or her maximum capacity. The exceptional child may also be a child with exceptional talent.

This tallies well with PLAP where all pupils are initially given the same pre-test and those who fail in accordance with their present grade are the ones who are to be included in the programme. The students are taught lower level concepts as compared with their current grade so as to create a sound base and background to build up on the mathematical concepts and reading skills in their present level. In the same vein (Bettinger and Long, 2004) also say remedial education aims to

help the pupils who are failing. McCray (2008) further says that remedial semantically suggests a type of teaching which rectifies some deficiencies or put things right. Such a corrective function of remedial teaching is clearly different from what the ordinary classroom aims at. This also supports the statement made by Muzawazi & Nkoma (2011) who say PLAP focuses on the foundation skills so as to understand the present concept.

McCray (2008) says remedial education aims to help the pupil who is failing. It is the best reward to the committed teacher but makes great demands on him or her. In line with this Levin and Calcagno (2008) also state that remedial treatment depends upon the ability to produce solutions to individual difficulties. This suits very well into the PLAP strategies. It is believed that if the exercise is carried out effectively the pupils will be able to reveal their strengths within two school terms (Masomera and Ganga, 2015). This present study would want to establish if the above is applicable to schools in Makoni Districtin Manicaland in Zimbabwe. The study would also want to explore if there are any other benefits of PLAP.

2.2.3   Measures to improve effectiveness of school programmes

Muzawazi and Nkoma (2011) suggest that the teachers to effectively implement educational programmes such as inclusive education, they need training to acquire the needed skills, positive attitudes and sacrificing their time to help students and being willing as opposed to be forced. Teachers need the necessary support from schools, home and the community as a whole. Physical resources are also very necessary for effective implementation of educational programmes. Nkoma (2013) found out that it is the duty of the school administration to provide

materials, equipment and facilities to the teachers. Kizlik (2012) argues that effective assessment utilizes multiple and varied methods of students performance evaluation. Assessment should be an on-going process and a continuous activity where teachers compile information about their pupils during class and out of class (Kizlik, 2012).

Monsell and James (2009) say it is appropriate for teachers to simply record their judgment of pupils during day to day classroom work and review these at intervals to come to a summing judgment. Masomera and Ganga (2015) suggest that the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) test used for identifying the level of performance of learners does not provide adequate information about the learners' problem other than just naming them. They recommended that locally designed tests which are tailor made to suit the needs of the learners and teachers can fully comprehend the nature of learners' problems.

In their research Masomera and Ganga (2015) concluded that the assessment system currently being used in schools hinders the effective implementation of PLAP. There is need for structural change of the suggested way of recording the evaluations since it does not give adequate information about the learners' performance (Looney, 2005). Masomera and Ganga (2015) say that the plight of teachers in rural areas is dire hence the government should give some incentives to teachers so that they become committed.

Mukoko and Mdlongwa (2014) outlined that teachers have shallow knowledge of the assessment techniques needed and espoused in the PLAP. Kilzik (2012) pointed out that the evaluation component of PLAP teachers' record books does not communicate useful information of learner performance and decision taken by teachers. There is need to give teachers enough time to fully

give a judgment basing on the information that they have collected. This study seeks to close the knowledge gap created by this lack of research in the area.

2.3 Summary

This chapter discussed the literature that is related to the study. It is focused on the literature about each of the three sub-research questions upon which the study is grounded. The literature only talked and tackled on the challenges of effective assessment which is just a component of Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP). This chapter has revealed the possible areas that can be explored and researched in the study. The next chapter presents the research methodology that was adopted for the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This study sought to explore the challenges and opportunities of PLAP implementation with special reference to primary schools in Makoni District, Zimbabwe. The previous chapters focused on highlighting the objectives of the study and review of the literature that is related to the topic. This chapter will discuss the methodology employed in the study. The items to be discussed in this part include; the research design, the population and sample, research instruments to be used, the data collection, presentation and analysis techniques that will be used in the study. Finally, this chapter also discussed the ethical principles and issues that are involved in the study and winding off with a summary of the major issues raised. This wasin line with what Kumar (2011) meant when he said that, the concept methodology reflects on issues related to the research design and the logic and rationale behind the use of particular data collection, analysis and interpretation procedures in the research project.

3.1 Research design

A research design is a comprehensive plan for data collection in an empirical research project (Kothari, 2004). It is a "blue print" for empirical research aimed at answering specific research questions or testing specific hypothesis and must specify at least three processes, namely the data collection process, the instrument development process and the sampling process (Kumar, 2011). Similarly, Creswell (2008) sees a research design as the glue that holds the research project together and designates the logical manner in which a research project is going to be carried out and how the individuals or other units in such a study are compared and analyzed. In addition a

research design is a plan or strategy that provides the framework for the collection and analysis of data hence answering the research question or testing the research hypothesis (Kothari, 2004). In the same vein Punch (2009; p112) says "a research design means all the issues involved in planning and executing a research project from identifying a problem through to reporting and publishing the results". This means that a research design makes a research possible.

Chiromo (2006) echoed the above position and went on to describe a research design as the arrangement of conditions for collecting and analyzing data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedures. He sees a research design as having four key parts namely; sampling design, observational design, statistical design, and operational design. According to Kothari (2004) the purpose of a research design is to ensure a comparison that is not subject to alternative interpretations. In addition Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003) argued that research design is governed by the notion of fitness of purpose. They further argue that the purpose of the research determine the methodology and design if the research. A research design ensures that findings are both valid, reliable and the research itself may be used by other researchers with an interest in the area of study.

This study used a case study which is dominantly a qualitative research design. A case study research design allowed the researcher to provide a thorough, holistic and in depth exploration of the challenges and opportunities of implementing PLAP on teaching and learning junior pupils. The case study design is based upon the assumption that the case being studied is a typical of cases of a certain type. Therefore a single case can provide insight into the events and situations prevalent in a group from where the case has been drawn. According to Dawson (2009) in a case

study the focus of attention is its idiosyncratic complexity, not on the whole population of cases. Case study research design was furthermore adopted because it is a very useful design when exploring an area where little is known or where the researcher wants to have a holistic understanding of the situation, phenomenon, episode, site, group and community. Although case studies cannot claim to make any generalizations to a population beyond cases similar to the one studied, this design provide an overview and in-depth understanding of a case, process and interactional dynamics with a unit of study. The schools that have been selected in this study provided the researcher with much information as possible to enable him to understand the case in its totality.

3.1.1 Research Paradigm

A paradigm is a school of thought which is based on an assumption concept and values that are held by a group of people. According to Kothari (2004) there are two paradigms which are quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative paradigm is a school of thought that is primarily the collection of data in the form of numbers and qualitative paradigm is the collection of data in the form of words, description and phrases (John and Delon, 2003). In this research qualitative paradigm was employed as it contains words, description and phrases. Flick (2014) defines qualitative research as any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical methods. In the same vein Denzin and Lincoln (2002) posit that qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the subject matter which seeks to make sense of it or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them.

Qualitative research uses natural settings as the sources of data because the researcher attempts to describe, interpret and explain social settings as they operate naturally in the social world. On

the other hand, a qualitative research is about exploring issues, understanding phenomena and answering questions by analyzing and making sense of unstructured data (Creswell, 2008). This is supported by Kumar (2011) who adds that, focus groups, in depth interviews, content analysis, ethnography, evaluation and semiotics are among many approaches that are used. However, qualitative research in its most basic terms involves the analysis of unstructured data, including open ended survey responses, literature review, interviews, audio recordings, videos, pictures, social media and web.

Qualitative research produces thick feelings, opinion, experiences and interpreted the meaning of their actions (Denzin and Lincolin, 2002). The research design has a flexible structure as it can be constructed and reconstructed to a greater extent (Maxwell, 2012). Qualitative approaches are employed to achieve deeper insights into issues related to designing, administering and interpreting language assessment (Chalhoub-Deville and Deville, 2008). Qualitative research admits the researchers to discover the participants' inner experience, to figure out how meanings are shaped through and in culture (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Themethods involved such as participant observation, unstructured interviews, direct observation, describing records are easy and most commonly used for collecting data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011).

Although the qualitative approach has many advantages, it also has shortcomings. According to Silverman (2010) qualitative research approach sometimes leave out contextual sensitivity, experience and focus more on meaning and experiences. Lam (2015) admitted that due to the small sample size the study results from the approach donot wish to claim wider generalization

of other contexts. Furthermore, the analysis of the cases take a considerable amount of time, and one can generalize the results to the larger population in only a very limited way (Flick, 2011).

However, the benefits outweighed constraints hence the selection of the approach among methods used in this study

3.2 Population and sample

3.2.1 Population

In research, the term population is generally used to refer to a large collection of individuals or objects that are the main focus of a scientific enquiry (Hanlon and Largey, 2011). It is a well-defined collection of individuals or objects known to have similar characteristics. On the other hand, Best and Khan (2013) assert that population is any group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher. All individuals within a certain population usually have a common binding characteristic or trait such as that under normal circumstances, the description of the population and the common binding characteristics of its members are the same (Best and Khan, 2013). In this particular study, the population of interest consists of four heads and 20 teachers who currently teach grade 3 to grade 7 in Makoni District, Tandakufa zone.

3.2.2 Sample

The term research sample simply refers to a sub-set of the population of interest in a research (Chiromo, 2006). Haralambos and Holborn (2008) defined a sample as a part of a large population which has been selected to be a representative of a large sample of population chosen for observation, study and analysis. In a similar view Chiromo, (2006) defines a sample as a smaller group of a subset of the population selected from the bigger whole population. Sampling

involves the selection of a few items from a representative of the larger area or place which forms the basis for estimating or predicting a fact, situation or outcome regarding the corpus.

According to Johnson and Christensen (2008) sampling is the process of drawing a sample from a population. Sampling is thus a way of selecting smaller representative units from a corpus in such a way that results obtained from examining that smaller representative data can be reliably generalized to the rest of the corpus (Creswell, 2008). The researcher made use of purposive sampling method.

Purposive sampling also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling is a type of non-probability sampling technique (Creswell, 2011). Non-probability sampling focuses on sampling techniques where the units that are investigated are based on the judgment of the researcher. The researcher specifically used maximum variation sampling method known as heterogeneous sampling. It is a purposive sampling technique used to capture a wide range of information relating to the things that the researcher will be interested in studying. In this case, it is the challenges and opportunities of implementing PLAP in teaching and learning of pupils in Makoni District in Manicaland Province. Maximum variation sampling method enabled the researcher to search for variation in the perspectives of the schools under study since the researcher believed that the respondents to questionnaires and interview questions exhibit a wide range of attributes, behaviours, experiences, incidents, qualities, situations and so on. All the four schools are in the same geographical area, rural area and the same district.

The researcher believes that the same location could have an impact on the challenges and opportunities of implementing PLAP in these schools. The study will employ the following

samples drawn from four primary schools in Makoni North District, Tandakufa zone which will be conveniently identified in line with the assumptions upon which the study is grouped. Only four schools were randomly selected by the researcher considering accessibility and nearness to the researcher to cut the cost and time.

3.3   Instrumentation and Data Collection Tools

The term instrumentation refers to research instruments used by researchers to collect data needed to test research hypothesis (Corbetta, 2003).In this study, questionnaires, semi-structured interview guides, and observations were used to collect data. Data was collected from the four schools from the first to the twenty-sixth of March 2018.

3.3.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire is an interview on paper. Johnson and Christensen (2008) have also defined a questionnaire as a self-report data-collection instrument that each research participant fills out as part of a research study. This means to say a questionnaire aims at getting information about participants' feeling, attitudes, thoughts, beliefs, values, perceptions and personality. Since people are living in economic driven society where they are busy, a questionnaire would allow them to respond to questions posed by the researcher during their spare time. Twenty questionnaires were distributed to Primary school teachers of the schools under study that is school A, B, C, and D in order to get feelings and thoughts of these teachers on the challenges and opportunities of implementing PLAP on teaching and learning of primary school pupils. Respondents to questionnaires or participants were purposively drawn from the aforementioned

school. Responses gathered through the questionnaires method would enable the researcher to discuss how PLAP impact on teaching and learning of PLAP in primary schools under study.

Dawson (2009) states that the chief merit of a questionnaire is that, it is possible to cover a large number of respondents scattered in a large geographical area. John and Delon (2003) note that questionnaire have standardized questions therefore, are likely to have standardized answers that make it simple to qualify and compile data. Generally, it is relatively quick to collect information using a questionnaire. Creswell (2011) state that the questionnaire allow for anonymity, hence respondents fill more secure since they are not answering face to face to face questions but writing responses on paper therefore, answers are given more freely. In addition, the questionnaire methods does not put pressure on the respondent to respond immediately, hence questions might be answered after careful thought without interviewer's thought and interference. Respondents can complete questionnaires quickly therefore immediate feedback obtained.

Questionnaires are easy and quick to collect results as they can be delivered by mail, online and mobile tools (Creswell, 2011). In this research questionnaires (APPENDIX 1) was used for demographic information of the respondent and to answer research questions concerning the challenges and opportunities of implementing PLAP in teaching and learning in primary schools in Makoni District in Manicaland Province. The questionnaire was used because it does not need a lot of time to answer and does not require much of critical thinking and does not require much of critical thinking for the respondents to answer. The researcher observed that the main advantage of the questionnaire to this study was that it consumed less time and was easy to

administer to a large group of people. Also respondents mostly had freedom to express themselves without the effect of the researchers' presence. Thus they were fast and efficient way of obtaining large amounts of data from a large number of people. The researcher was aware that the questionnaire gave no room for respondent to explain their responses and also to say out what they felt rigidity and guided nature at most questionnaires.

According to Dawson (2009) questionnaires are limited by the fact that the respondents must be literate. Literacy was not a limitation in this study as it involved teachers and headmasters as participants. In addition questions might be ambiguous and need further explanation. Respondents might also answer questions if the questionnaire contains a lot of questions. John and Delon (2003) allude that in studies where spontaneous answers are required, the questionnaire method is not suitable. The respondent may also leave the form incomplete and non-response may appear in questionnaire. To solve the problem the researcher self-administered the questionnaires and ensured that all questions were responded to.

3.3.2 Interviews

The researcher also used structured interviews. According to Lichtman (2006) interviewing is a common form of data collection in qualitative research. In the same vein Johnson and Christensen (2008) say another way to collect data is to interview research participants. They further define the interview as a data-collection method in which the interviewer (the researcher or someone working for the researcher) asks the interviewee (the research participant) some questions. Four Heads of school A, B, C and D were interviewed (one interview per school) using the interview guide (APPENDIX 2) to stick to the objectives. The intent of interviewing

heads of schools understudy were to gain insights on the overall challenges and opportunities of implementing PLAP on teaching and learning of pupils. In other words, views of teachers of primary schools pupils in the schools under study would be compared with the first-hand accounts of heads interviewed in order to see how far or near their views are in agreement or otherwise. In support Patton (in Greenfield, 2002) has also argued that the purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone else's mind. This approach had been chosen in order to ensure reliability of information.

Cohen and Marion (2004) note that the greatest advantage of an interview is the depth of detail that the interviewer obtains since the interviewer and the respondent are having conversations in which doubts are cleared and questionnaires are clarified. Kothari (2004) states that a significant merit of an interview is that, the valid of information can be readily checked. The interviewer is able to judge when the a respondent is not giving true answer or is hesitant in giving complete answers from non-verbal cues and other social cues from the respondents and social body movement of the interviewee could give the interviewer a lot of extra information that can be added to the verbal answers. Body language can show a hidden interrelatedness between emotions and subject under study. In this research interviews were used to capture information from heads of the four anonymous schools concerning the challenges and opportunities of implementing PLAP in teaching and learning in their primary schools. Each interview lasted for at least forty five minutes as some of the heads had classes to teach while others were available to give as much information as possible.

Dawson (2009) states that interviews give room for further explanation and the interviewee can give examples, thus there is very little chance of misinterpretation of questions and answers.

Generally interviewer and interviewees can express their views and answers are obtained spontaneously. An interview allows the interviewer to probe for more information and for clarification. It is also likely that all questions may be answered unlikely on questionnaire where some questions may be left unanswered. The use of interviews was intended to minimize the potential bias and in accurate, thus giving validity of the research instrument together with questionnaire and observation.

There are some limitations of the process as it tried to be time consuming, the researcher overcome this problem by having a sizable number of interviewees. Also unnecessary conservation becomes exclusive in the discussion. While there are many positives to the interviews, dishonest can be an issue since respondents cannot be hundred percent truthful with their answers. Every administrator hopes for conscious responses but there is no way to know if the respondent has really thought the questions through before answering.

3.3.3 Observation

The researcher also used observation method in collecting data using an observation guide (APPENDIX 3). According to Cohen et al, (2011) observation is a systematic viewing and noting of the seen phenomena. In addition Moyles (2002) cited in Cohen et al, (2011) posits that observational data are very sensitive to contexts and demonstrated strong ecological validity. It is the gathering of primary data by investigator's own direct observation of the challenges and opportunities of implementing PLAP on teaching and learning in primary school pupils. Teachers' record books and PLAP corner was observed in the four anonymous schools. In short, this data collection tool enabled the researcher to see for himself the challenges and opportunities of implementing PLAP on teaching and learning in primary school pupil at his school in

particular and other schools in general. In this study, observation was used to observe the infrastructure status, teacher pupil ratio, PLAP resources, total number of pupils to be assisted and the number of teachers who are PLAP knowledgeable (Appendix 3). The researcher physically visited each of the four schools on four separate occasions and observed PLAP related issues stipulated on the observation guide.

Observation is one instrument amongst other important instruments. According to Kothari (2004) observation was used to find out complex interactions in natural social settings. It further helps the researcher to note that language affects the person's world. Observation provided the best means of obtaining a valid picture of social reality. It improves the researcher's judgment during the research project. According to John and Delon (2003) observation allows an understanding of the view of the subject of the research project. Apart from that observation provided in depth studies that can serve a number of useful purpose (Dawson, 2009).

According to Cohen and Marion, (2004) observation is time consuming as the researcher needs to be present for the research to present. When the respondent does not want to participate, no observation would take place. The results generated from observational schedule may not give the actual picture of events as people (objects) are prone to alter the way they behave knowing that they are being observed or watched (Chiromo, 2006). Thus the researcher was able to describe, assess and measure the existing conditions thereby giving first-hand information. The researcher also observed the PLAP corner, time table and PLAP record books per each school. Apart from that the researcher observed PLAP record books of trained teachers per each of the named schools as well as the teacher pupil ratio.

3.3.4   Validity and reliability

According to Cohen et al (2003) validity is an important key to effective research because if a piece of research is invalid then it is worthless. In the same vein Johnson and Christensen (2008) say validity refers to the accuracy of the inferences or interpretations one makes from the test scores while reliability refers to the consistency or stability of a set of test scores. Validity must be addressed through honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved. Since the great contribution of qualitative and quantitative research is that it is culturally specific and able to produce contextually rich data, the outcomes of this research on the challenges and opportunities of implementing PLAP on teaching and learning of primary pupils at four schools in Makoni District will be highly reliable because of flexibility of the methods that were used.

Apart from observations, the researcher also employed interviews and questionnaires in order to ensure reliability. The researcher avoided bias and continuously ensured sufficient depth and relevance of data collection methods and analysis. Record keeping would be observed to ensure interpretations of data are consistent and transparent. The researcher used clear descriptions of participants' accounts to support findings. In order to provide more comprehensive set of findings the researcher would also employ data triangulation which involves numbers and explanations of such numbers. It is ethical importance for the researcher to be honest with his findings, to ensure that the data he collects is rich and it covers a wide area to allow for generalization. Lastly, the researcher would also invite participants to comment on the interview transcript tofind out whether the final themes and concepts created adequately reflect the phenomena being investigated on the challenges and opportunities of implementing PLAP in teaching and learning of primary pupils at their respective schools.

3.3.5   Pilot study

Chava, Fans and Nachmias (2008) cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) define a pilot study as a small scale preliminary study conducted before the main research in order to check the feasibility of the study to improve the design of the research instrument so as to remove the errors, ambiguities as well as testing whether the instruments were clear for comprehension. Kothari (2004) indicates that a pilot test serves to avoid unnecessary wastage of time and resources on a research that is insufficiently designed. A pilot test was conducted to another nearby school in the same zone in order to test the design methods or instruments prior to carrying out the research (Cohen et al, 2011).

This involved conducting a preliminary test of data collection tools, procedures to identify and eliminates problems, allowing the study to take corrective charges and adjustments before the actual collecting of data from the target population was carried out (Feldman, 2009) cited in Cohen et al (2011). Therefore the researcher conducted a pilot study in order to improve the validity and reliability of interviews. The participants comprised of an independent set of primary teachers and Head not from the four schools where the main study was carried out. The pilot study enabled the researcher to adjust the tools to ensure clarity, remove ambiguity and to learn to ask questions in a clear manner during interviews.

3.3.6   Ethical considerations

As part of my ethical considerations, the researcher would explain the aim of his research to all participants within the wider context of the study. The researcher would be truthful and bound with the objectives and the anticipated benefits to the community at large. Chiromo (2006) defines ethics as the standard and behaviour expected of a group as described in the group code of professional conduct. Research ethics are principles of right and wrong that guide researchers

when conducting their research. Ethics would be observed at every level such that participant's privacy is respected. Furthermore the researcher would obtain ethical clearance from the University, supervisor as well as from the educational offices before interviewing people. Confidentiality and informed consent would be respected as explained below.

3.3.7 Confidentiality

The researcher would ensure that participants would never be linked to the data they provide in the process of the research. The researcher would not record, identify and write information such as names and addresses of the participants in order to avoid jeopardizing the participants. The researcher would also inform the participants that the information gathered from respondents would not be disclosed to a third party and it would solely be for the purpose of research.

3.3.8 Informed consent

The subjects must be informed about the researcher before they decide to take part in the research (Chiromo, 2006). The basic elements of information necessary to such consent include the purpose of the research, an explanation of the procedures to be followed during the research process and also an explanation of how and why the subjects were selected to participate. Respect for the people would be adhered to at every level of the research. In achieving informed consent, the researcher would inform respondents to questionnaires about the research so that they would understand its aim and objectives. Upon agreement to the data collection terms, the participants signed a consent form (APPENDIX 4).

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Firstly in January 2018, permission was sought from Midlands State University that was Department of Educational Foundations, Management and Curriculum Studies on the 3rd of

January 2018. Secondly permission was granted from the main gate keepers at the Ministry of Education Sport, Arts and Culture in Zimbabwe. These were the Permanent Secretary's Office, the Regional Education Offices, the District Offices and the school head teachers respectively. Schools were randomly selected, but on the basis of nearness to the researcher and location used was one cluster Nyadimba. School A had 17 teachers and 680 pupils, school B had 7 teachers and 300 pupils, school C had 6 teachers and 250 pupils and lastly school D had 6 teachers and 230 pupils.

Letters and the appropriate documentation used see Appendix (1 to 8) were presented in person to the gate keepers on 30 January 2018. The gate keepers are the people in position of authority who granted permission for the study to be conducted in their area. Fortunately, all those people approached granted their permission to conduct the study. The documentation included questionnaire (Appendix 1), interview questions (Appendix 2), observation (Appendix 3) and informed consent form (Appendix 4).

3.5   Data analysis Plan

Responses from the four main tools were triangulated to check for inconsistencies and ensure sufficient data was obtained. The responses were sorted into main themes and in line with the objectives of the study. The themes included demographics, education levels of respondents, PLAP materials and resources available in schools, challenges encountered in implementing PLAP, teaching and learning of PLAP at primary levels as well as suggested solutions. After ensuring that the triangulated data were clean and well sorted according to objectives and other main themes, some of the responses were coded to enable counting of frequencies. The frequencies enabled plotting of tables and figures for further investigation. Some of the responses

such as challenges to the implementation of PLAP were tabulated to be discussed as provided by participants.

3.6 Summary

This chapter discussed the research methodology used in the study. It provided the research design, population, sampling techniques, data collection tools, data presentation and analysis methods. Issues of validity, reliability and ethics were also discussed. The next chapter would focuses on data presentation and analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The main purpose of this chapter is to address the research questions using the evidence that had been gathered by the researcher during the exercise of the data collection. In addressing the research questions, this chapter paid particular attention to data presentation, analysis, interpretation and discussion.

4.1 Presentation and Analysis of findings

4.1.1 Response rate

20 questionnaires were distributed to 4 primary schools (5 per school) and all questionnaires were returned giving 100%. That showed that the self-distribution of questionnaires, collection and interviews used were effective. 19 participants were between the ages of 20 -50 years while one was over 50 years. The results might be biased towards age. 90% of the participants had a highest qualification of an ordinary level while 10% had an advanced level qualification. That means all teachers had an ordinary level qualification which gave 100%. Also on professional qualification 70% were Diploma holders, 15% were Certificate holders, 10% were Degree qualification holders and one had a masters Degree qualification. It means 85% were non Degree holders while 15% were Degree holders.
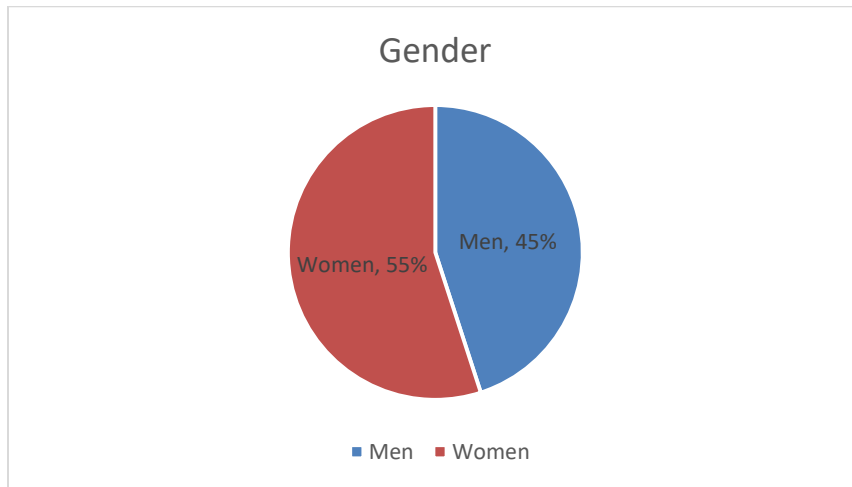
Figure 4.1   Sex of participants (Source: Survey 2018)

The figure 4.1 showed that 55% were females in the research and 45% of the participants were males. It showed that the research had more females than males and the results were more likely to be biased towards women's views.

Years	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	Above 20
Quantity	3	5	10	2	0
Percentage	15%	25%	50%	10%	0%

Table 4.1   Teaching experience of participants Source: Survey 2018

Table 4.1 showed 50% of the participants had teaching experience of 11-15 years, 25% of the participants had teaching experience of 6-10 years, 15% of the participants had teaching experience of 0-5 years, 10% of the respondents had teaching experience of 16-20 years and no

one was more than 20 years. This might have contributed to the results because the teachers were expected to acquire a lot of material things in the early years of work.

The head of school C had 11 years experience, school D had 9 years experience, school A had 8 years experience and school B had 2 years experience. That means three heads of schools had better experience and knowledge than one head. The variations in experience could have influenced on the understanding and implementation of PLAP in the four schools. 8 teachers were between 0-10 years teaching experience and 12 teachers were between 11-20 years teaching experience. That might have contributed to the results and challenges since teachers were expected to acquire materials to use at work.

4.1.2 The challenges of implementing PLAP

School	Proportion	Percentage
School A	17 out of 17	100%
School B	6 out of 7	86%
School C	4 out of 6	67%
School D	3 out of 6	50%

Table 4.2   Proportion of teachers with PLAP knowledge (Source: Survey 2018)

Table 4.2   Showed that school A was 100% PLAP knowledgeable, school B was 86% PLAP knowledgeable, school C was 67% PLAP literate and school D was 50% PLAP literate. That means to say teachers from school B- D needed PLAP training, workshops and in service training on how to implement and teach PLAP in their schools properly. 80% were PLAP literate while 20% were not.

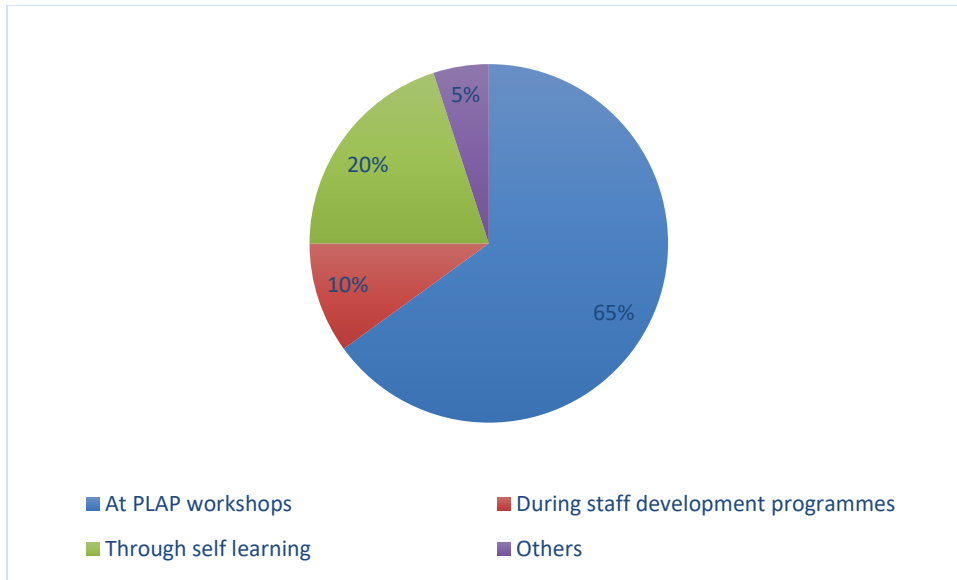**4.1.2.1   Methods in which teachers became PLAP literate**

Figure 4.2   Learning to PLAP (Source: Survey 2018)

Figure 4.2 showed that thirteen (65%) respondents learnt about PLAP at workshops, four (20%) respondents learnt about PLAP through self-learning, two (10%) respondents learnt about PLAP during staff development programmes and one (5%) respondent learnt about PLAP through others for example copying. That means PLAP workshops was more dominant.

4.1.2.2   PLAP resources at the school

 The four schools had a teachers' corner for PLAP with fewer wall charts but there were no text books for PLAP, stationery and no class time tables to do PLAP because the class time table was full of daily lessons. Wall charts were not enough for PLAP implementation programme. The interviews carried by the researcher showed that all four schools had charts used for PLAP and all of the four schools did not have any other media besides charts made by teachers. That means PLAP resources and materials were lacking causing PLAP implementation a failure.

However all school heads were in need of text books, manila, charts, printed PLAP charts and PLAP syllabi to use for PLAP. In addition the researcher noticed that all schools were in great need of materials and resources to use for PLAP because there were very few charts made by

teachers to use for PLAP lessons and school C and D had empty PLAP corners. The four schools did not have text books and Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) syllabi to be used for PLAP. There was negative attitude of learners because some learners were doing PLAP lessons while others were not doing it. All teachers at school C and D were not implementing PLAP lessons because their corners were empty. That showed negative attitude towards implementation of PLAP in the primary schools.

The four schools had an average class of 40 pupils or more in one class which showed that the teacher pupil ratio was too high for example one grade 6 class at school A had 50 pupils under one teacher. Teaching, marking and planning gave the teacher too much work load. That made it difficult to implement PLAP to all learners.

4.1.2.3 Challenges experienced in teaching and learning of PLAP

The researcher found out that there were many challenges in four schools that slowed down the implementation of PLAP such as shortage of resources, materials and time to PLAP, high teacher pupil ratio, negative attitudes of teachers and pupils, lack of knowledge by teachers and too much work load on the questionnaires, interviews and observations used.

4.1.3 Effectiveness of PLAP to teaching and learning in primary schools
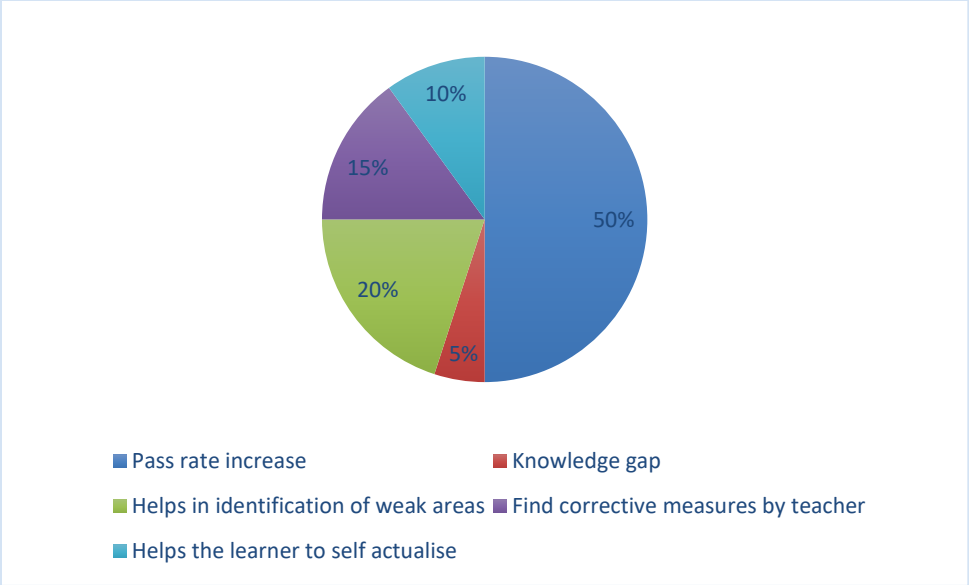
Figure 4.3 PLAP benefits (Source: Survey 2018)

Figure 4.3 showed that ten (50%) of the respondents said PLAP increase pass rate, four (20%) of the respondents said PLAP helps in the identification of weak areas, three (15%) of the respondents said PLAP provides corrective measures to the teaching methods, two (10%) of the respondents said PLAP helps in the learner to self actualize and one (5%) of the respondent said PLAP benefits in filling the knowledge gap.

4.1.3.1   Limiting   factors   of   implementing   PLAP   in   primary   schools
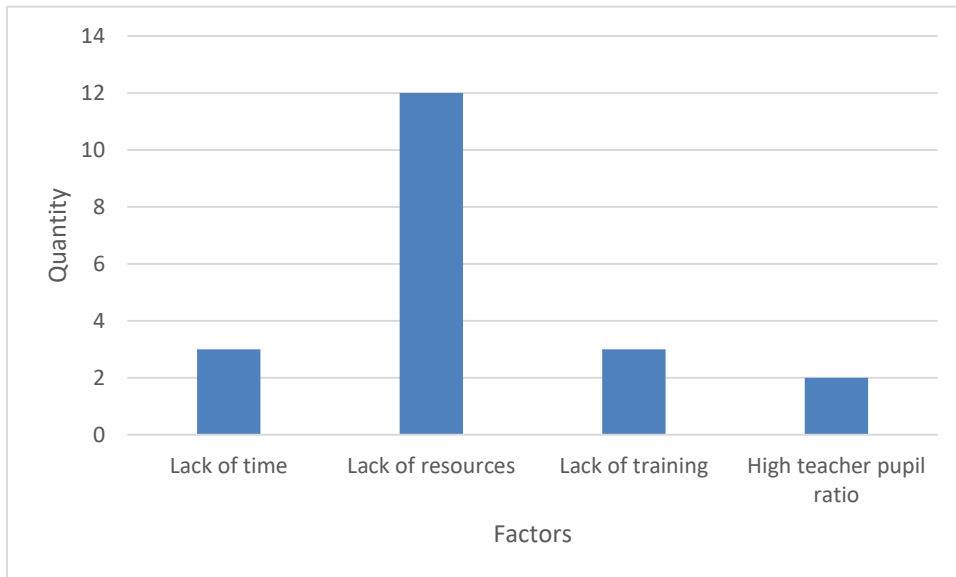

Figure 4.4 Factors limiting the implementation of PLAP in schools (Source: Survey 2018)

Figure 4.4 showed that twelve (60%) of the respondents said PLAP implementation was limited by lack of resources, three (15%) of the respondents said both lack of time and training limit PLAP implementation in schools and lastly two(10%) of the respondents noted that high teacher pupil ratio limit the implementation of PLAP.

4.1.3.2 Efforts made to ensure effective use of PLAP

School	Efforts made for effective implementation of PLAP
School A	1. Cluster workshops. 2. Issuing of few manila.
School B	1. Cluster workshops. 2. Staff developments.
School C	1. Cluster workshops. 2. Self-learning.
School D	1. Self-learning. 2. Staff development.

Table 4.3 Efforts made to ensure access and effective use of PLAP (Source: Survey 2018)

Table 4.3 showed that all schools needed cluster workshops, staff development, self learning and the provision of learning aids.

4.1.4   Measures to improve PLAP

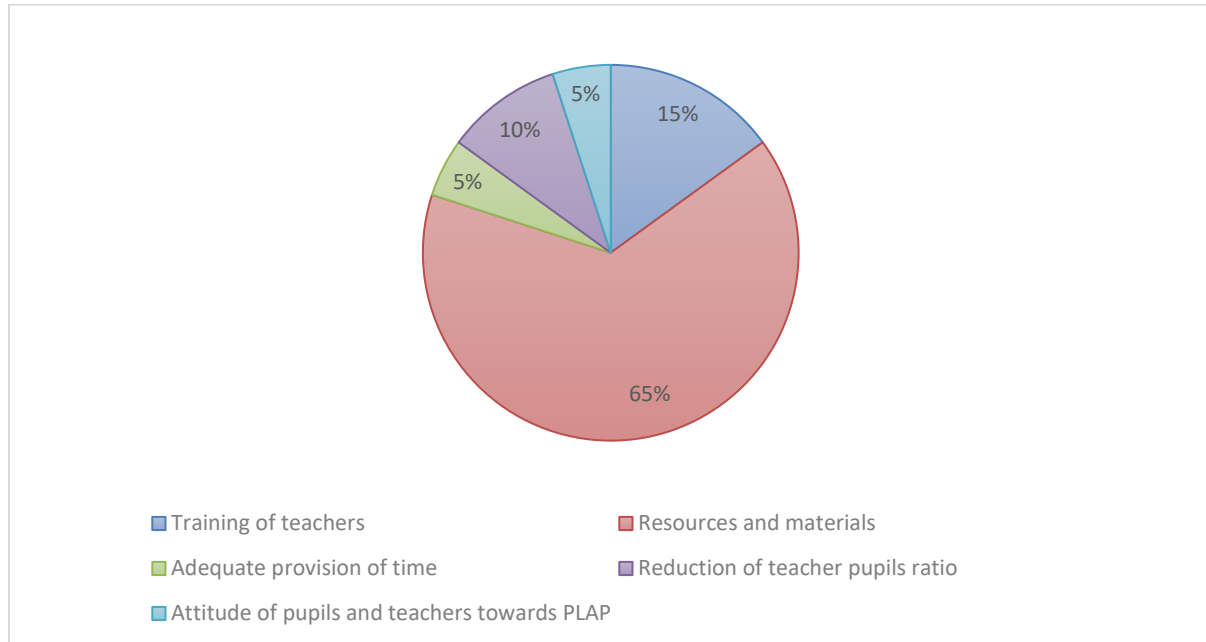**4.1.4.1   Factors that can improve the teaching and learning of PLAP in primary schools**

Figure 4.5 Factors improving the implementation of PLAP in schools (Source: Survey 2018)

Figure 4.5 showed that thirteen (65%) of the respondents noted that material and resources could improve the teaching and learning of PLAP in primary pupils, three (15%) of the respondents observed that training of teachers could improve the teaching and learning of PLAP, two (10%) of the respondents noted that reduction of teacher pupil ratio could improve the teaching and learning of PLAP in schools and one (5%) respondent each observed that both adequate provision of time and attitude of teachers and learners could improve the teaching and learning of PLAP in schools.

During the interview the researcher noticed that there was need for staff development workshops on PLAP, PLAP demonstration lessons in schools C and D and some in service training in all the teachers in the schools. As the teachers grow older they tend to forget more important teaching

skills and methods. Since the four schools are in one cluster or zone they might form one group and invited the district for the implementation of PLAP and had one in service training on the implementation of PLAP in schools. This would enable the schools to save more money, materials and resources which they might use them in their actual teaching of PLAP in the classroom. The limited appreciation, implementation and success of PLAP in schools may be improved.

4.1.4.2   Improvement of PLAP in schools.

The four schools suggested that the implementation of PLAP in primary schools could be improved by 1 Provision of adequate time for PLAP in the schools. 2 Provision of typed PLAP charts, manila and text books on what to teach and how to teach PLAP in primary schools. 3 Training of teachers at school level, cluster, district, provincial level and so on. 4 Adequate staff development programmes in schools.   5 Reduction of teacher pupil ratio in schools affordable one.

4.1.4.3   Staff Development Programmes in schools

Response	Quantity	Percentage
Yes	15	75%
No	5	25%
Total	**20**	**100%**

Table 4.4 Staff development programmes (Source: Survey 2018)

Table 4.4 showed that fifteen (75%) of the respondents had staff development programmes on how to implement PLAP lessons and five (25%) of the respondents does not have PLAP staff

development programmes. It means staff development programmes were being carried out but not to its best and fullest.

4.1.4.4   Need for PLAP training

Response	Quantity	Percentage
Yes	9	45%
No	11	55%

Table 4.5   Need for PLAP training (Source: Survey 2018)

Table 4.5 showed that nine (45%) of respondents needed PLAP training and eleven (55%) of respondents were okay to PLAP training. There was need for refresher courses on the PLAP teaching and learning in primary schools. Nine teachers needed to be taught how to PLAP the pupils at different grade levels since there were no resources, materials, textbooks and available time.

4.1.4.5   Possible solutions to PLAP

Teachers and heads suggested some of the possible solutions to PLAP which were provision of material &resources, time allocation, reduction of teacher pupil ratio, better remuneration of teachers, encouragement of teachers and learners to learn and implement PLAP in teaching &learning, reduction of too much work load and paper work.

4.2 Discussion of the findings

4 .2.1   What are the challenges of implementing PLAP in schools?

4.2.1.1   Lack of training by teachers

Muzawazi and Nkoma (2011) are of the opinion that teachers to effectively implement

educational programmes such as inclusive education and performance lag address programme

(PLAP) in schools, they need training to acquire the needed skills. Also Alsaudi (2015) cites

physical facilities and lack of training of teachers as factors that affect the success of school

programmes. That was consistent with my findings which showed that some teachers lacked

training on how to PLAP and teach PLAP in pupils. It stated that lack of training by teachers was

a causing factor for implementing PLAP in schools. The above sentiments were supported by

Mukoko and Mdlongwa, (2014), Kurebwa and Mabhanda, (2015) who said teachers are involved

in delivering PLAP lessons but they had not received any specific training on how to conduct the

lessons.

This explains a gap that is waiting to be filled in the teacher education curriculum as well as the

need to enhance in-service training skills and knowledge on how to handle PLAP

implementation in primary schools

4.2.1.2 Lack of in service workshops

Kurebwa and Mabhanda (2015) are of the opinion that PLAP was simply dropped on teachers, pupils and parents without adequate workshops and implementation. That also goes hand in hand with my findings which showed that there was lack of in service workshops in schools to both the new and the old teachers. However there was need for more training and staff development workshops because 45% of the teachers needed PLAP training and workshops.

4.2.1.3 Lack of knowledge by teachers

Mukoko and Mdlongwa (2014) outlined that teachers had shallow knowledge of the assessment techniques needed and espoused in PLAP. That was consistent with my findings which showed that lack of knowledge by teachers was a major blow to PLAP learning and teaching because all schools on the study cited lack of knowledge as a cause of challenges.

4.2.1.4 high teacher pupil ratio

Studies in Zimbabwe have shown that the quality of instruction was affected by high teacher pupil ratio, in adequate remuneration and incentives (Nkoma et al, 2013). PLAP has increased the teachers' load but still requires commitment, collaboration and support to assist learners (Makopa, 2011). That was also consistent with my findings which showed that high teach pupil ratio was a big challenge to the PLAP implementation. Also it was evidenced by all four schools citing that teacher pupil ratio was too high.

4.2.1.5 lack of time

Kurebwa and Mabhanda (2015) are of the opinion that implementation of PLAP in teaching and learning in primary schools were time consuming and laborious way of redeeming pupils from

their last point of success. That was also consistent with my findings which showed that lack of time was one of the challenges to the PLAP implementation.

4.2.1.6 Too much work load

Kurebwa and Mabhanda (2015) are of the opinion that teachers perceive PLAP as too much demanding and do not even get rest. In the same vein Nkoma (2014) says PLAP involves too much paper work and hence cheating is high in this exercise and lack of resources. That was consistent with my findings which showed that too much work load was a big challenge to PLAP teaching and learning. More so two schools cited too much work load on my questionnaire as one of the challenges. The researcher revealed that PLAP had also brought cost to the parents and teachers because teachers and parents are ending up buying extra books, pens and materials to be used on PLAP teaching and learning.

4.2.1.7 Lack of resources and materials

Muzawazi and Nkoma (2011) are of the opinion that Zimbabwean schools had very few materials and resources on guidance, counseling, remediation and PLAP. In addition Nkoma (2013) found out that it was the duty of the school administration to provide materials, equipment and facilities to the teachers. PLAP implementation was stifled by poor resources in the form of time, materials, and financial (Kurebwa and Mabhanda, 2015). That was consistent with my findings which showed that lack of resources and materials was a big challenge to the PLAP teaching and learning because all the four schools cited them. Responses and observations in the three research instruments namely questionnaires, interviews and observations showed that there was shortage of resources and materials in schools. In support Carron (1996) cited in

Chimhenga (2017) noted that students without basic resources in their environments and in schools are most likely to perform poorly.

Nziramasanga (1999) also noted the issue of equipment and claimed that the government had established resource units in some schools at primary school levels but these were not fully equipped. This was also evidenced by the responses given to questionnaires on challenges experienced, where all the teachers indicated that resources and materials were a challenge to PLAP implementation in primary schools. Nkoma (2013) said schools were having inadequate resources in the form of instructional materials, textbooks and students had a negative effect on learning. The interviews showed that all heads said materials and resources were a big problem in the implementing of PLAP in primary schools.

4.2.1.8 Negative attitudes by teachers and pupils

Mukoko and Mdlongwa (2014) are of the opinion that the attitudes of teachers who are planning and presenting the programme can be an important factor in its success and failure. Chakanyuka, Chung and Stevenson (2009) are of the opinion that the quality of instruction, teacher behaviour and attitude contributes to schools programme effectiveness. That was consistent with my findings which showed that teachers' attitude and pupils was not favourable. Teachers and pupils had negative attitude to PLAP learning.

4.2.2 How effective has PLAP been improving the teaching and learning process?

Kurebwa and Mabhanda (2015) are of the opinion that head teachers took responsibilities to supervise teachers and pupils as a way to improve pass rate in schools when PLAP was introduced in schools. In support PLAP was a programme designed to address learning anomalies and eradicate zero percent pass rate in schools (Moyo, 2013 cited in Nkoma, 2014).

That was consistent with my findings which showed that from when PLAP was introduced in schools the pass rate began to improve for the better for example Manicaland Province.

Muzawazi and Nkoma (2011) are of the opinion that pupils are first assessed within their classrooms and assigned to different grade levels within class groups for instructional purposes and learning. That was consistent with my finding that Wide Range Assessment Test (WRAT) were being used in all schools at the beginning of first term each year to place children in their correct grade according to their last point of success. Teachers identify the student's area of weaknesses and find corrective measures so that those affected catch up with the rest of the class (Moyo, 2013 cited in Chimhenga, 2017). Masomera and Ganga (2015) are of the opinion that PLAP teaching and learning would be able to reveal their strengths within two schools terms if the exercise is carried out effectively. In addition schools heads are having class visits and exercise books inspection on monthly and weekly basis writing reports and send them to district offices. Each term the district offices are moving out to schools inspecting and writing narrative reports.

4.2.3   What measures can be taken to improve the effectiveness of PLAP?.

Muzawazi and Nkoma (2011) are of the opinion that teachers need training to acquire the needed skills, positive attitudes and sacrifice their time to help students. That was consistent with my findings which showed that 45% needed training, adequate time to PLAP pupils, encourage positive attitude to teachers and pupils, staff developments, material, resources and teacher pupil ratio to be reduced.

Assessment should be an ongoing process and continuous activity where teachers compile information about their pupils during class and out of class (Kizlik, 2012).

Mukoko and Mdlongwa (2014) are of the opinion that more assessment was needed for the child to see his or her success. That was going hand in hand with my findings which showed that assessment was taking place every week, month and term because learners were given tests regularly by teachers at grade level. PLAP was a programme aimed to help the learners achieve better pass rate from the effects of the worst economic meltdown of 2008 (Nkoma, 2014). That was the same with my observation that school heads were trying to buy chalks, markers, pens, manila and exercise books so that teachers can use. UNICEF, Global Partnership for Education and the government of Zimbabwe were encouraging more workshops on how to PLAP and teach PLAP in both primary and secondary schools because MOPSE managed to give PLAP manuals to all teachers in all schools in 2016.

4.3 SUMMARY

Chapter four was based on the presentation data which was done on tables and graphs as well as pie charts for analysis. A reflection on the research findings was also done giving a critical discussion related these findings to other authorities and researchers. Coming up next was the last chapter to give a summary of the whole research study, conclusions reached and also recommendations.

<center>**CHAPTER FIVE**</center>

<center>**SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**</center>

5.0 Introduction

This chapter first gives a summary of the whole research done. The summary includes the activities done from chapter 1 to 4. The areas to be focused on are the research problem, review of related literature, methodologies and data presentation, analysis and discussion. It is going to list conclusions drawn by the researcher from the study as well as suggesting recommendations that may be adopted to improve the challenges and opportunities of implementing PLAP in primary schools.

5.1 Summary of findings

Chapter one highlighted the research problem. It explained and highlighted the back ground to the study, the statement of the problem, key objectives to be achieved and the research questions. It also outlined the limitations that affected the study and the delimitations of the study that the research would focus on four schools in Makoni district in Rusape.

Chapter two discussed the literature that was related to the study. It focused on three sub-research questions which the research was grounded. The literature only talked and tackled on the challenges of effective assessment which was just a part of Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP), effectiveness of PLAP in schools and measures to improve the effectiveness of PLAP in schools. Also the chapter revealed the possible areas that could be researched and explored in the study.

Chapter three discussed the research methodology used in the research. It provided the research design, population, sampling techniques, data collection tools, data presentation, analysis methods and discussion of the findings. The issues of validity, reliability, pilot study and ethics were also discussed. Questionnaires, interviews and observations were research instruments used to collect data and then discussed. Also permission on carrying out the study in Zimbabwean schools from the gate keepers was explained and discussed in details.

Chapter four was based on the response rate, characteristics of respondents, data presentations, analysis of the findings and discussion which were done on tables, graphs and pie charts. Data presentation focused on challenges of implementing PLAP, effectiveness of PLAP and measures to improve PLAP in the schools based on the interviews, questionnaires and observations. A reflection of the research findings was also done giving a critical discussion relating the findings to other authorities and researchers.

5.2 Conclusions

In view of the findings, the study concluded that there was inadequate training, lack of resources, materials, high teacher-pupil ratio, negative attitude of teachers and learners, lack of knowledge by teachers, shortage of time and too much work load to PLAP teaching and learning. Orientation of teachers and heads on the introduction of PLAP in schools was also lacking. Teachers, parents and pupils had negative attitudes to PLAP. It was concluded that teachers viewed PLAP negatively because it had brought more work load that did not lead to increased remunerations and allowances. Teacher- pupil ratio was too high which reduced all efforts to effectively implement PLAP. Among challenges, the critical shortage of resources and materials

for PLAP was delaying the achievement better results. The study concluded that PLAP had challenges and benefits to the children' learning but the benefits out weight the challenges.

5.3   Recommendations

The study recommends that schools should train teachers on PLAP issues. Schools should hold cluster and district workshops. In order to impart positive attitudes to teachers, awareness programs on PLAP, schools should give incentives and encouragement to its teachers that teaching was a calling and not means to earn a living. Schools had to do monthly staff developments on PLAP teaching and learning. Schools should not depend much on policies but make teachers became participants in rural areas improvements. Government and schools should remunerate teachers adequately so that the teachers would be more professionally and more attitudinally to do their work. Schools and Government should introduce specialization on Mathematics and English in the Primary school in order to reduce work load on teachers. Schools should employ more teachers paid by the school development committee to reduce high teacher pupil ratio. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should create a team of expert teachers in the area of assessment who may go to all schools to in-service train teachers on PLAP.

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APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

BACKGROUND TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Medzayi Margolis Student number R161162T. I am currently studying Bachelor of Education Management and Leadership at Midlands State University. In partial fulfillment of the requirements of my degree program, I am conducting a study on the challenges and opportunities of implementing PLAP in teaching and learning in Primary schools. I will be grateful for your assistance by answering the questions below.

Please note that the name of the respondent will not be revealed to anyone as all information obtained will be treated as confidential and only used for academic purposes. Your responses will help in enhancing about how Primary teachers can improve on learners' performance using PLAP resources and materials. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

PART A: Bio-data

$\begin{matrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{matrix}$ **1.GENDER**:   Male   Female

2. In which age group do you belong?

(a) 21-30 (b) 31-40 (c) 41-50 (d) above 50

3. What is your highest Academic Qualification below?

(a) Grade 7 (b) Zimbabwe Junior Certificate (c) Ordinary levels (d) Advanced Levels

4. What is your Professional Qualification?

(a) Certificate (b) Diploma (c) Degree (d) Masters (e) Doctorate

5. How many years have you served as a primary teacher?

(a) 0-5 (b) 6-10 (c) 11-15 (d) 16-20 (e) above 21

Part B: PLAP programme in primary schools.

6. Are you PLAP literate?

   (a) Yes   (b) No

7. If yes, how did you learn to PLAP?

   (a) At PLAP workshop (b) During staff development programmes

   (c)Through self-learning

   (d) Others………………………………………………………………………….

   ………………………………………………………………………………….

8. Please tick PLAP resources you have at this school

   (a) Text books (b) Stationery (c) Wall charts (d) Time table

C. EFFECTIVENESS OF PLAP IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

9. Which of these does PLAP benefits teaching and learning at your school?

   (a) Pass rate increase

   (b) Knowledge gap

   (c) Helps in the identification of week areas

   (d) Find corrective measures by the teacher

   (e) It helps the learner to self actualize

      If others specify…………………………………………………………..

10. Which factors do you think can limit the teaching and learning of PLAP in Primary school pupils?

    (a) Lack of time.   (b) Lack of resources

    (c) Lack of training   (d) High teacher pupil ratio

D. MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PLAP.

11. Which factors do you think can improve the teaching and learning of PLAP in Primary pupils?

    (a) Training of teachers (b) resources and materials

    (c) Adequate provision of time (d) Reduction of teacher pupil ratio

12. Do you have staff development programs on teaching and learning of PLAP?

    (a) Yes   (b) No

13. Do you need PLAP training?

    (a) Yes   (b) No

    If Yes is your answer, specify areas you need training……………………………..

    ……………………………………………………………………………………

14. What challenges do you experience with the teaching and learning of PLAP in the Primary schools?

    ………………………………………………………………………………………

    ………………………………………………………………………………..

15. Suggest possible solutions to challenges raised above………………………………….

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………..

    Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL HEADS

Background to the interviews

My name is Medzayi Margolis. Student number R161162T. I am a student of the Midlands State University doing a degree in Educational Leadership and Management. I am carrying out a research on the challenges and opportunities of implementing Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP) in Makoni district, Nyadimba zone schools. I am kindly asking you to participate in this research by responding to the following questions. All information is treated with strict confidentiality. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

Please may you kindly respond to these interview questions.

1. How many years have you served as the head of this school?

2. How many teachers and pupils do you have at this school?

3. Which PLAP resources or materials do you have at this school?

4. Which PLAP resources or materials do you wish to have at this school?

5. What proportion of teachers at your school is PLAP knowledgeable?

6. Do you have programmes that improve knowledge and use of PLAP?

7. How is the attitude of Primary teachers and learners towards the implementation of PLAP?

8. What efforts have been made to ensure access and effective use of PLAP resources for teaching and learning?

9. Which challenges impede implementation of PLAP in Primary schools?

10. In you view, what should be done to improve the implementation of PLAP for Primary School teaching and learning?

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX 3

OBSERVATION GUIDE

During visits to the schools, the following observations will be made.

- To trigger questions which help check whether the teachers really implement PLAP during the teaching and learning in that school.

- Does the school have resources and materials for PLAP teaching and learning?

- To observe PLAP lessons implemented per week.

- To observe teacher pupil ratio at a school.

- Are the pupils happy with PLAP lessons?

- Is the teacher pupil ratio conducive?

- Any other teaching and learning aids?

APPENDIX 4

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Study Title: Challenges and opportunities of implementing PLAP in teaching and

learning at primary level.

Researcher: Medzayi Margolis: R161162T: Bachelor of Educational Leadership and

Management.

   Cell 0718577250 or 0776030521.

Supervisor: MsMatope N, Midlands State University.

Preamble: You are kindly invited to participate in the attached research study.

The study aims at finding out from teachers the challenges and opportunities of implementing

PLAP in teaching and learning at primary level in Nyadimba zone in Makoni District. The

researcher is a student for the Bachelor of Educational Leadership and Management degree

which is offered by the Midlands State University.

Information: Individuals are invited to read through the survey questions and provideanswers.

Benefits: Participation in this study helps the respondents teachers to interrogate and

share their experiences in PLAP teaching and improving learning outcomes

in Nyadimba zone schools.

Risks: It appears to be no risks involved in completing the survey.

Confidentiality: After participating in this study, no identifying information will be released in

the publication of this research. Therefore participation in this researchwill be

anonymous. The socio-demographic information in this study will belimited to

information that is important for purposes of data analysis.

Participation: Your taking part in this study is voluntary and you may decline to take part

without any penalty.

Contact: If you have any questions about this study, or if you experience any adverse

effects as a result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher

using the following numbers: +263718577250 or +263776030521 or the

supervisor, Ms Matope, N. Cell 0773594046 or 0718578881.

Consent: I have read and understand the attached information. I agree to participate in

          this study.

Participant's Signature………………………….Date…………………………………….

Researcher's Signature………………………….Date…………………………………….

APPENDIX 5

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FROM UNIVERSITY

APPENDIX 6

LETTER FROM MINISTRY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCAT

APPENDIX 7

LETTER TO THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

LIST OF FIGURES