



## Organisation of Instructional Guidance in Zimbabwe: the case of Vocational and Technical subjects in Grade three secondary schools within Masvingo District

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### ABSTRACT

To be successful, educational reforms place a great premium on effective leadership and management of schools. In Zimbabwe, vocationalising the curriculum has proved to be a great challenge in need of well organised instructional guidance systems and practices. This article explores the nature and function of organisational leadership that exists in Zimbabwean schools for the improvement of instruction in the vocational and technical subjects. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the question: How is instructional guidance for vocational and technical subjects organised within the schools in the Masvingo District? The study was carried out in three small schools where vocational subjects are offered. These schools are also known as the Grade three schools. The principals, vocational subjects Heads of Department (HoDs) and all the vocational subject teachers at the schools participated in the study. The study adopted a multiple-case study design and used semi-structured interviews, observations and an analysis of documents to collect qualitative data on the organisational structure and activities of instructional leadership in the purposively selected schools. Three focus group discussions were also held with all the vocational and technical subject teachers. Our results show that there is no national policy to delineate the roles and responsibilities of HoDs as middle managers. The policy on teacher-pupil ratios did not allow for recruitment of more teachers, thereby resulting in the clustering of multiple practical subjects under one HoD. The absence of a national policy to guide the work of HoDs in vocational education leads to variations in the organisation of leadership structures and functions in the different schools. The leadership capacity of the HoDs is diminished by the clustering of multiple subjects, for which no single individual could have the required divergent expertise in. The paper concludes by making recommendations on how the HoD position for vocational and technical subjects can be enhanced in the Grade three schools. We also suggest the need for Principals to be supportive of the HoDs in their activities of providing guidance, resources and professional support to the teachers

**Key words:** Instructional guidance, vocational and technical subjects, Heads of schools, Heads of department (HoDs).

### INTRODUCTION

Various country-specific studies indicate that governments are giving full attention to making vocational and technical subjects robust in their countries because of the value attached to these subjects. (Agrawal, 2013). Researchers have also become interested in exploring the implementation of these vocational and technical subjects but mostly centring on their role in

the development of the countries' economies and individuals, (Gazi, 2007; Mupinga et al, 2005). Vocational and technical subjects are being used as a weapon to help young people to cope with challenges of the changing times and uncertain future by developing them into productive, responsible citizens equipped for life and work in today's technological-based society, (UNESCO, 2005). Some researchers also looked at the constraints associated with the implementation of these subjects' curricula. (Mandiudza, 2012; Ojimba, 2013; Puyate , 2008). Some of the identified constraints include the lack of resources, too old equipment in schools and lack of appropriately trained personnel. Researchers who explored the instruction of these subjects concentrated on how they are to be taught, (Lucas et al, 2012) but not on who facilitates that instruction, let alone the organisation of the instructional guidance practices which are employed hence the need to explore that area, as it also contributes to the successful implementation of these subjects. Studies have ignored the area of instructional leadership, leadership which is important for educational and organizational change, (Hallinger, 2012).

Vocational and technical subjects' implementation has been a great challenge even when good policies have been formulated, and resources mobilized to guide their implementation and therefore there is a need to investigate how their instructional guidance is organised in schools, an area not extensively researched on.

Leadership, especially instructional leadership, is an essential factor for the success of reforms especially in education where implementation hinges on the support and guidance provided by those entrusted with curriculum leadership, (Boateng, 2012; Loeb and Horng, 2010). It is therefore important for researchers to understand how leadership is organised for the successful implementation of vocational and technical subjects. The organisational structures of that leadership, the practices and the resources that are used become important factors that have the potential to shape effective curriculum implementation. This paper looks at the question of how the structures, practices and resources for vocational and technical education are organised among a group of secondary school in the Grade three category, schools that offer these subjects in Zimbabwe's Masvingo district.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Vocational and Technical Education in Zimbabwe**

From an international perspective, the provision of vocational and technical education in the school curricula has been a contentious issue since the introduction of formal systems of education. The problem can even be traced back from early Greek philosophers whose conceptions of valid knowledge separated mental from manual activities reflecting the academic/vocational and technical dichotomy, (Munowenyu,1999) Although the divide has been contested by many influential scholars, it is still widely supported and continues to influence vocational and technical education provision in Zimbabwe, (Munowenyu 1999).

All the same, the imperatives to provide an education that responds to the needs of industry and the country's economic sector is overwhelming hence the need for the educationists as a whole to see to its success. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe embarked on efforts to strengthen and effectively vocationalise the education system through the issuing of various Policy circulars, (Nziramasa, 1999) policies which did not see the light of the day. This prompted researchers to investigate the causes of the absence of the effective implementation strategies for the vocational programme with special reference to Grade three schools in the Masvingo district.

This research paper emanates from a qualitative case study on the instructional guidance practices for vocational and technical subjects in Masvingo district, a study that was prompted

by the lack of effective implementation (Mavhunga 2002; Nziramasanga 1999). It was during this larger investigation that researchers noted the need to investigate the organisation of instructional guidance in Grade three schools, schools that have low teacher establishments and yet are offering three or more vocational and technical subjects. The motivation to carry out this research paper was, therefore, derived from the researcher's curiosity to establish how the instructional guidance practices are organised and practiced in the small schools. From the given background and other researches, no known study concentrated on the instructional guidance system specifically, especially as it applies to vocational education in Zimbabwe, hence the importance of our study.

### **LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Our goal is to describe the organisation of instructional guidance practices for vocational and technical subjects in the Grade three schools of Masvingo District. We organise our discussion around some popular concepts that pervade the literature on organisation of leadership structures and vocational education instructional guidance practices.

The rationale behind the creation of well organised instructional guidance practices is the creation of effective leadership, leadership which endeavours to ensure effective implementation and management of curriculum reforms (Taole 2013). We therefore would want to anchor our study on two concepts, that is organisational theory and the instructional leadership, especially the Distributed leadership, in order to make sense of the leadership structures that exist in schools and the guidance practices that exists for the effective implementation of vocational and technical subjects

Whilst the organization of instructional guidance is seen as important to the development of conducive learning atmosphere, how they influence these conditions must be established. Angelle, (2010) posits that the organisational structures are responsible for the identification of positions in top offices and determines who is to manage the departments, thereby defining the individual job roles. The question, however, is whether it is possible all the time to appoint people into offices, people who are supportive of the vocational education, in the same way as they may support academic education. This is where the Distributed Leadership frame comes in to inform us on how, those in top offices and are not vocational or technical subjects specialists, can utilise the expertise in their subordinates to ensure the creation of conducive environments for teaching and learning and the subsequent success of educational reforms (vocalionalising the curriculum)

While the modes of operation, performance and allocation of responsibilities for the different functions are determined by the organisational structure adopted by the school, are all schools capable of or are they in a position to create these leadership structures? With the low teacher establishments in the Grade three schools, can effective organisational structures be managed? Obadara (2013) asserts that wrong ineffective organisational structures may hamper cooperation and therefore hinder completion of tasks within the set time and within the limits of the available resources. With the assigned low teacher establishments in most Grade three schools, is it possible to create organisational structures that will enable proper implementation of vocalionalisation programmes?

Raymond et al 1992 and Phillips 2012 argue that organisational structures (how people in the school are grouped and to whom they report to) was traditionally by function which led to operational efficiency because people will be working within their own fields of expertise. While it is good to work in your area of expertise, whether that can be effectively organised in

small schools is the question. The paper wishes to establish how instructional guidance is structured in the Grade three schools which have low teacher establishments.

Well organised school structures will not necessarily ensure the success of instructional reforms as their (reforms) success also depends on how the leadership practices are undertaken (Spillane, Halverson and Diamond, 2004). This then brings us to the question of how leaders perform their assigned roles, roles determined by the organisational structures in place at the school level. The Heads, being the people who occupy the highest offices at the particular schools, should be able to select and assign duties to the teachers who should man the different departments (HODs), (Seashore, Dretzke and Wahlstrom, 2010). How they select and assign these roles may be affected by their own educational orientation and how they perceive the task of leading the vocational and technical subjects departments. Taole (2013) asserts that, to be able to do their duties well, the Heads must have an in-depth knowledge on how to do their work and also how to guide the teachers with the implementation process thereby assisting every teacher to improve. Do the heads in the Grade three schools have the capacity to assist the teachers who are experts in their own right? How they (Heads) lead in areas where they are not experts will be established. On another note, Wright (2008) suggests that the principals be given some specific training that focuses on instructional issues and curriculum reforms to make them conversant with the changes. The question then to establish is whether there is such in-service training given to the grade three school Heads who may not be familiar with the vocational and technical subjects reforms and subjects' curricula. If not, how are they managing to give the professional leadership guidance as expected of them? This might then be the reason why some heads take themselves not as instructional leaders but as managers, (Alger, 2005). Yes, the Heads may be justified because, realistically, it is not possible for these Heads to be experts in all subjects and hence the need for them to distribute leadership. (Spillane et al, 2004; Taole, 2013). Spillane et al (2003) also echo these sentiments by stressing that leaders who cannot engage others in leading will not be very successful. As leaders, Heads need to be able to spread and mobilise expertise that is necessary for instructional improvement. This paper sought to explore how the Grade three school Heads go about their business of leading and guiding the instruction of the vocational and technical subjects. There is a need on their part to see the urgency of redistributing power when allocating tasks so that they are given to those with the greatest expertise.

The division of schools into subjects units (departments) is a welcome move towards the distribution of leadership as change efforts that directly impact curricula reforms are anchored there, (Gemechis and Ayalew,2012). These departments are manned by designated academic leaders,(HoDs) who are given the authority to ensure that department subjects are effectively taught, (File and Shibesh,2012; Odera, 2011). With the Heads on top of them administratively, do the HoDs have the autonomy to run their departments independently, representing the departments to the school administrators well in order to get the required assistance? The study wished to explore how the HoDs give instructional guidance to their subordinates and also how the Heads also assist them so as to enhance the teaching and learning of the vocational subjects in schools. Whilst researchers are quick to give what the HoDs' responsibilities are, (Feeney, 2009; Odera, 2011; Print, (2008), this study endeavoured to establish how the duties are enacted in the Grade three schools.

The Heads of schools and the HoDs do impact students' success but indirectly if they do not effectively lead instruction. Educational improvements at school level also involve the teachers, and students' learning was, is and will always depend on them, (Harrison and Killion, 2007). Our study looked at how the teachers do offer guidance in the vocational and technical subjects towards the implementation of the subjects. As noted by York-Barr and Duke, (2005), are the

organisational structures of the schools supportive or they impede the teachers from being instructional leaders thereby affecting the success of reforms? It is the object of this paper to establish how the Heads of schools, HoDs and the teachers are organising the instructional guidance practices in the Grade three schools for the success of vocational education reforms.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study was undertaken in Masvingo district in Zimbabwe. Data collection involved three Heads of schools, three Heads of Departments (HoDs) for vocational education and ten vocational and technical subject teachers. The district has 61 secondary schools but our study focused only on three (3) Grade three schools whose Heads, HODs and vocational education teachers were then involved. The study employed a qualitative approach to analyse the nature and function of instructional guidance prevalent in the selected schools. We chose the qualitative approach to enable us to have an in-depth study of the instructional guidance practices in their natural settings (the schools) (Maree, 2007; McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). A multiple-case study of three schools in Masvingo district was used. The use of the case study design allowed us to get an inside picture of the organisation of leadership activities in the schools, their natural settings, (Yin 2003). The purposive sampling of the schools was based on the number of vocational and technical subjects offered by the school. The three schools sampled enabled a comparative analysis of the data and gave a clearer understanding of the instructional guidance practices as we focused on a few cases and also on particular groups of participants, (Cohen, Mannion and Morrison, 2008). Triangulation of data was possible as data from the school Heads was compared with that from the HODs on the nature of the instructional guidance they provide as formal leaders. The data from the teachers was also compared with that of the formal leaders (Heads and HoDs). (Maree, 2012).

We used four different approaches to collect data on the Heads', HODs' and teachers' instructional guidance practices and its organisation. Semi-structured interviews with the Heads and HODs facilitated the extensive exploration of the instructional guidance practices and how they are organised. The focus group discussions with the teachers, the documents analysis and observations supplemented the interviews thereby ensuring credibility and trustworthiness of the research and minimising researcher bias, (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010).

#### **Heads' Interviews**

The first sets of data are responses from the structured interviews of the Heads. All the three Heads responded to structured questions from a prepared interviews guide administered by the researchers. We considered the fact that most people favour talking than writing (Best and Khan, 1993) although, as researchers, we also noted that talking may limit the participants revelation of information, (McMillan and Schumacher 2010). The interviews were held in the Heads' offices and they lasted between one and one and half hours. The questions asked were on the activities the Heads engaged in at their schools and who will be leading the activity if it is not them. This revealed to the researchers, how the school's instructional guidance activities are organised and who will be leading in each case thereby also determining the structure of the organisation's instructional guidance practices. Challenges the Heads experiences were also determined. The Heads were also asked about their schools' enrolments, teacher establishments and their curricula. Their perceptions on what their roles as Heads entails was also established together with their qualifications, experience as teachers and as administrators and their knowledge on the implementation of vocational and technical subjects.

### **Heads of Departments' (HoDs) Interviews**

We also employed data collected from the HODs using interviews. The three HODS responded to questions from prepared interview guides. The variables used included qualifications/training received, experience as a teacher and as HOD, their terms of appointments as HODs and who appointed them. How they monitor and improve instruction of the vocational education was inquired of from them and also the challenges they face in the execution of their duties and what their perceptions about their supervisors (Heads) are.

### **Teachers' Focus Group Discussions**

Data was collected from the focus group discussions held with the teachers. These were questions from interview guides prepared to solicit data on how the teachers led their classes thereby offering instructional guidance for the successful implementation of the vocational subjects. Variables used included teacher qualifications, years of experience teaching, subjects being taught, challenges being met and their perceptions of their supervisors (the HODs and Heads). The focus group discussions were held in the chosen specialist rooms (subject workshop) in each school. These lasted for almost two hours each as all teachers wished to express their views.

All interviews were transcribed and presented using narrative descriptions. These were first transcribed verbatim and returned to the interviewees to check for data accuracy before analysis (McMillan and Schumacher 2010). The interviews were transcribed in full by the researchers thereby bringing us closer to the data and it made us recall incidents from the interview days. The interview data was then coded until themes emerged. The research categories that emerged reflected the participants' roles and perceptions on the nature and structure of the instructional guidance practices for vocational and technical subjects in schools. The categories that emerged from the data were structure and organisation of the instructional guidance practices, roles of the instructional leaders, policies guiding instruction and the challenges being faced.

Permission to carry out the research in the schools was sought from the Secretary of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe and it was granted. The participants showed their willingness to participate by filling in consent forms. Ethical clearance protocols were observed and the clearance was granted.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The interviews, focus group discussions and the analysis of documents yielded themes that contributed to the literature on how best schools and Education Ministries can structure the instructional guidance for vocational and technical subjects in schools in order to ensure their effective implementation. Data are presented in themes but first we present the biographical data of the participants.

### **Biographical Data of Participants**

#### **Heads of Schools**

##### ***School A***

The Head of School A is a holder of a Certificate in Education (Primary), Bachelor of Arts degree in English and a Master of Education degree in the Languages. He has 26 years teaching experience, twenty-three of those years having been spent teaching and leading in the Primary section. He was transferred to the Secondary section on attainment of a Masters degree in 2011. He is currently teaching History and Commerce and has been Head for the past five years of which one was in the primary sector. The school has a staff establishment of 27 and of these five are the vocational and technical subject teachers including the HOD. The vocational and

technical subjects offered at the school are Agriculture, Woodwork, Fashion and Fabrics, Music, Building studies and Computer studies.

### **School B**

The Head of school B is a holder of a Bachelor of Science Honours degree in Economics, A Graduate certificate in Education in Economics and Commerce and a Masters in Business Administration (MBA). He has got 22 years teaching experience in the Secondary section and eight years experience as a Head. The school has a staff establishment of 15 and of these five are vocational and technical subjects teachers including the HOD. Subject offered are Agriculture, Fashion and Fabrics, Music and Computer Studies.

### **School C**

The Head of this very small school holds a Secondary Teacher Certificate in Home Economics and a Bachelor of Education degree in Administration (Bed Admin). She has got twenty five (25) years experience as a teacher and of these only two as an administrator. The school has a staff complement of ten teachers and three are the vocational education teachers including the HoD. Vocational and technical subjects on offer are Agriculture, Fashion and fabrics and Music.

### **Roles of the Heads**

The three Heads concurred that they were the highest leaders at their schools only reporting to the District Education Officer (DEO). In their case, they are all professionally senior and occupy the highest formal leadership position at school level. Head of school A remarked saying, *'I am the leader here and all the teachers know it. Nothing is done without my approval and they comply because they know I have the power to even have them transferred to another school. I am accountable for all that which takes place here. (Interview, May 2017).'* The situation of the Head is vindicated by literature which shows that the Heads/Principals occupy a central position in the schools (Taole 2013).

Again, all the Heads, when asked about their role in the school and the particular activities they engage in, gave the following as their major roles:

Supervision which comprises lesson observations, exercise books inspection, sites visits and arranging for feedback meetings.

Provision of resources and motivating the staff to work hard and the maintenance of the school infrastructure.

When asked about the supervision of vocational and technical subjects, the Head for school B said that they relied on the HOD to know what takes place in the department. *Not being a vocational and technical subject specialist. I visit the department to have site of what they are doing but as far as their (teachers) effectiveness and knowledge of their work is concerned I rely on the HODs who are to man their departments well. (Interview May 2017).*

The Head for School C, being a vocational and technical subject specialist, confirmed that she attends all departmental meetings held for the vocational subjects. In fact she said she belongs to the department and was part and parcel of all the activities undertaken in that department although it would be the HOD supervising and leading.

The Head for School A expressed the same sentiment with those of School B Head.

*"Being an English teacher, I only supervise the administrative duties of the HOD and rely on her for the smooth running of the department on instructional issues and the curricula of the subjects.(Interview May 2017)*

As far as supervising the vocational and technical subjects by the Heads is concerned, only one Head (School C) was found to be an effective instructional leader, the other two just act as administrators to these departments, a role that excludes teaching duties (Rogers 2009). If Heads are to spearhead activities that facilitate the successful implementation of vocational education reforms, they must have an in-depth knowledge on how to guide the teachers through the implementation process, ( Seashore, Dretzke and Wahlstrom, 2010; Taole, 2013). As portrayed by the literature, Schools A and B Heads do not see themselves as instructional leaders who should offer instructional guidance because they are not experts in the subjects hence the need to, at least, know how to distribute leadership to those who are experts.

### **Heads of Departments**

School A HOD has got a Teacher's Certificate in Home Economics obtained in 1994 and Bachelor of Education degree in Home Economics. She has got a teaching experience of 20 years. She was appointed HOD by the Head of the School. She teaches Fashion and Fabrics. She is Head of Department for all the vocational and technical subjects taught at the school with the major duties of supervising staff by:

- Holding departmental meetings
- Observing lessons
- Inspecting schemes of work and record books
- Drafting the school syllabus

School A, being a small school with a staff compliment of 17 teachers, the HOD for the technical and vocational subjects is also in charge of the monitoring of the general cleanliness of the school over and above her teaching duties and HoD responsibilities.

The HOD for School B is a holder of a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture and also other qualifications in line with his work. These are a Diploma in Education (Dip Ed) Certificate in Agriculture (C.E). Further Education Teacher's Certificate (FETC). The HOD has got 19 years experience teaching Agriculture. He was chosen to be HOD by the Head on the basis of his experience and qualifications. He is HOD for all the vocational and technical subjects offered by the school and the major duties are:

- Supervision of the Department by conducting departmental meetings.
- Monitoring the teaching of practical activities of the subjects
- Assessing student's work
- Observing lessons
- Inspecting exercise books

Being in a small school, the HOD is also in charge of External Examination registration of all Á' and Ó' Level students. He is also a member of the Disciplinary committee of the school. He is in charge of six (6) teachers which include 1 who is not a vocational or technical subject teacher but teaches Business English.

In School C the HOD holds a Certificate in Agriculture, Bachelor of Arts degree and a Masters degree in Educational Administration. He also has a Further Education Teacher's Diploma (FETD) and an HIV and AIDS diploma offered at one of the country's Centre for Development Studies. He was appointed to the post of HOD by the Head on the basis of his qualification and experience. This HOD teaches English and Science on top of Agriculture. He is HOD for all the vocational and technical subjects offered in the school. He has been teaching for the past twenty-two (22) years. According to him, his supervisory duties include:

- Lesson observations



- Scheme books, Record books and Exercise book inspection
- Holding departmental meetings
- Assisting new members

### Vocational and Technical Subject Teachers

#### School B (Focus Group)

Teacher	Qualifications	Years of Experience	Subjects being taught now
A	Certificate in Education in Home Economics can teach Food and Nutrition, Fashion and Fabrics and Home Management	16 years	Fashion and Fabrics
B	Diploma in Education	14 years	Agriculture and Horticulture
C	Diploma in Clothing and Textile, and Design Technology Certificate in Further Training in Education in Fashion and Fabrics, Pattern making and Garment construction	4 years	Fashion and Fabrics, Pattern making and Garment Construction

#### School A Focus Group 2

Teacher	Qualifications	Years of Experience	Subjects being taught
D	Bachelor of Arts degree in Shona and Music	5 years	Music and Shona
E	National Certificate in Carpentry and Joinery and Woodwork	6 years	Woodwork
F	Certificate in Education (CE) Bachelor of Education in English ICL (Computers)	14 years	English and Computer Studies
G	Joined the group briefly but went out to answer a phone call and never came back.		

#### School C Focus Group 3

Teacher	Qualifications	Experience	Subject being taught
H	Diploma in Education in History and Food and Nutrition Bachelor of Education in Home Economics	14 years	Fashion and Fabrics
I	Bachelor of Education National Foundation Certificate in Technical Graphics	16 years	Technical Graphics
J	Diploma in Education in Building Studies	7 years	Building Studies

## **Heads of Departments:**

### **Qualifications**

All the HODs do qualify to teach the vocational subjects they are teaching but one also teaches other academic subjects. Asked which subject department he would prefer to belong to permanently, the HOD for School C said *"I would prefer to teach Science and English. How can you be an HOD for a department not fully funded? People do not take these subjects seriously (Interview May 2017)*. All the HODs confirmed that they do report to the Heads of the schools whom they said were also their supervisors together with the senior woman and senior master of the school. Feeney (2009) also posits that the HOD position is a middle management position as they stand between the teachers and administration in the school's organisational leadership hierarchy. They are expected to teach alongside their colleagues and also do a variety of administrative duties on behalf of the Head.

### **Heads of Department's Roles:**

As evidenced by the collected and presented data, all the HODs do supervise their colleagues by:

- Observing lessons
- Inspecting instructional documents
- Holding departmental meetings.

These concur with what Odera (2011) gave as the HODs' duties. The number of inspections varies from once a term to twice. All confirmed that they hold departmental meeting twice a term, at the beginning and at the end. Literature also confirms that the HODs are the designated academic leaders who are to ensure their department's subjects are well taught. (File and Shibesh, 2012: Odera 2011). This role is however not well performed as the HODs also give attention to other subjects that they teach which do not belong to their departments and neither are they experts in them. Their departmental members are also specialists of diverse subjects and the HODs' capacity is diminished by this clustering of multiple subjects into one department. One of the teachers remarked saying, *'Our HoD is an Agriculture specialist and yet he is expected to monitor my music lessons which he knows nothing about.'* (Interview ,May 2017)

### **Documents Guiding Instruction**

All HODs in the schools keep Departmental Files which can be accessed by all members of the department. These contain:

- Timetables for all departmental members which facilitate the planning of class visits by supervisors.
- Policy documents which guide instruction.

The HOD for school A did not have any policy documents in the file. The policy documents seen in the other two files were mainly departmental policies drawn by the HODs. These are on:

- Written work requirements for each subject
- Department Action plans (activities to be done throughout the term)
- Records of Text Books borrowed or given out to students

Lessons observed also revealed what the participants had confirmed as a major challenge to the implementation of vocational and technical subjects and that is, "Lack of resources." All the three schools, for example, have a total of only nine sawing machines between them. The Agriculture teacher was also complaining that he teaches 170 Form one students and 142 Form twos who are sharing only 10 hoes for Agriculture.

Literature from the studies carried out also confirmed that vocational subjects are expensive as they demand a lot of resources which, neither the governments nor schools can afford, (Chakamba et al, 2013).

### CHALLENGES

The heads of the three schools cited the following as some of the challenges they experience in the execution of their duties:

- Staff turnover
- Lack of resources
- Changing policy statements causing confusion
- No funds to undertake the required projects making the subjects expensive
- Negative attitudes of the pupils
- No farming space for subjects like Agriculture

The HODs agreed with the Heads in all the challenges mentioned except that they also alleged that the Heads themselves had also negative attitudes toward these subjects. School A HoD had this to say;

*Whenever people complain of the curriculum being overcrowded, they will always suggest that one of the vocational or technical subjects be removed and the Head will accept (Interview May 2017).*

The teachers concurred as far as the lack of funding is concerned but thought the Heads and HODs did not provide the needed resources just because they preferred other subjects as students do not pay a fee for these practical subjects. The teachers also bemoaned the low teacher establishments which made them to teach two subjects which, in most cases, made the practical subject to suffer.

*As one teacher in School C explicitly put it, "I teach English and Music and I am compelled to favour English as resources are readily available whilst we have inadequate resources in Music, neither do we have a workshop for it, (Interview May 2017).*

### Observations and Documents Analysis

One lesson observation was done at each school and this helped in having an idea of what resources the teachers use. The condition of the school's specialist rooms (workshops) was found to be pathetic. Most of them do not have the required equipment. They are just ordinary classrooms called workshops.

Policy documents, both from the ministry and departments were scrutinised. Departmental files contents, mission statements and school vision statements were analysed as well. It was noted that the schools are not in possession of any policy document from the Ministry except one on the amounts of work to be given as written work which is for all subjects and not for vocational subjects only.

### CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing discussion demonstrated how literature complement the collected data on the organisational structure of instructional guidance and instructional leadership practices in an endeavour to highlight what goes on in the grade three schools as far as instruction for the effective implementation of vocational education reforms is concerned. Instructional leadership has to be well organised as bad structures hinder the development of good instructional leaders who are able to create supportive environments for the effective implementation of educational reforms.

It is a fact that the organisational structure of the instructional guidance in Grade three schools is hierarchical with the Heads having the autonomy to appoint other leaders without any policy document to guide them. We recommend that heads should create structures that encourage collaboration. The HoDs are all overburdened when all the vocational and technical subjects are clustered under one departmental leader thereby diminishing their capacity. It was better if all vocational and technical subject teachers could be allowed to lead where they are experts. Heads need to engage the teachers' professional knowledge so as not to create a school that is too dependent on one person's vision and leadership.

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