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Demystifying Misconceptions on Key Tenets of Quality Basic Education in Chikomba District, Zimbabwe: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Educational stakeholders in Zimbabwe have been expressing sentiments on deteriorating basic quality education. Accordingly, this led to continuous updates of curriculum peculiarly over the past decade to embrace qualities of basic education. Thus, this research paper sought to: explore fundamental features of quality basic education, analyse challenges impeding it and propose strategies to overcome obstacles for quality basic education in Chikomba District, Zimbabwe. Research methodology adopted was Systematic Literature Review. A comprehensive 7 steps research design was crafted from formulation of review questions to interpretation of results. To enhance accuracy and consistency, a well detailed structured critical Systematic Review Chart was followed. Twenty-five sources were finally selected and reviewed from a total of 35. These were government publications, journals, books, articles, published research papers, newspapers and international organisations' reports. Validity and reliability were enhanced through utilisation of in-depth analysis of data collection methods, administration of check list and use of three experienced reviewers. The findings revealed that, basic quality education should encompass qualified teachers; competency-based curriculum; inclusivity; learner's engagement; innovativeness and creativity; practical surviving skills; digital infrastructure; abundant resources and quality assurance systems. 50% of sources reflected economic challenges, 20% technological hindrances, 10% unconducive educational policies, 15% socio-cultural barriers and 5% indicated geo-physical factors. The research proposes strategies which are linked to recommendations for attainment of quality basic education. These include: stakeholder engagement, digital infrastructure, resources mobilisation, training and employment of more teachers. Furthermore, regular competency curriculum review, quality assurance, supportive educational and inclusivity policies towards women and disabled. Conclusively, the research noted that qualities of basic education are multifaceted and Chikomba District will be used as a field for data collection to test the hypothesis.

Keywords: *demystifying; misconceptions; quality; basic education; Systematic Literature Review*

Introduction

The craving for eminent rudimentary education is a major area of concern across the globe. Thus, most countries worldwide have embarked on strenuous efforts to enhance quality basic education. At planetary level, highly acceptable elementary and secondary education particularly depict a quite number of aspects. These include relevant knowledge and skills development, inclusivity in terms of gender and those who are gifted differently. It is also defined by the availability of supportive school infrastructure (UNESCO, 2019). In the same vein, it posits that quality education encompasses teaching and learning aids and materials, other educational supportive resources, bursaries and well geared teaching staff (UNESCO, 2019). Furthermore, commendable elementary and high school

education should recognise the essentiality of valuing surroundings they exist in. This should be done taking into consideration national past, present and likely future events. Additionally, quality basic education should be envisaged taking into consideration textual matters and languages which are key in shaping the universe of the future (World Education Forum Final Report, 2015). It further reiterates that, well valued primary and secondary education should be comprehended from the views of many educational stakeholders such as community, parents, learners, teachers and citizens.

In Europe, Greece is highly commendable for CALA implementation in its basic education. Accordingly, research was conducted centred on defining what constitutes quality education within elementary and secondary schools in Greece. This study concluded some notable key tenets of quality basic education. They mostly evolved around a conducive environment and learner-centred methods of teaching and learning. Additionally, it stipulates a basic education system with well-articulated methods of assessment and supervision, students' involvement and competent teachers (Papanthymoul & Darral, 2023). However, since Greece is in Europe and being a developed nation, observations concluded may be different from Zimbabwe which is a developing nation hence the need for the research.

In Asia, some similar findings to that of Greece on the inherent features of quality basic education were noted. Thus, formative assessments are central in Pakistan's basic education systems. As a result, a study was conducted on the key features determining learners' success. Learners drawn were those situated within the vicinity of Northern Sindh Province of South eastern Pakistan (Hussain, 2018). Some of the primal qualities of basic education that were concluded include a basic education that incorporates conducive educational institutions, teaching and learning aids, motivated and well qualified teachers and administrators (Hussain, 2018). However, the findings from this study may not apply to Zimbabwe's education sector due to the differences in cultural, political and economic factors. This calls for the need to conduct a similar study in Zimbabwe.

In Africa, similar to the above and new additional observations of characteristics of quality basic education were noted in Nigeria. Nigeria is one of the leading countries on basic quality education. Research was done on fostering availability and affordability of quality of basic education in Nigeria via the stewardship of teachers in charge of leadership roles (Oni *et al.,* 2016). The authors concluded the key tenets of quality basic education to be the ones that produce students who are able to change themselves, their respective societies and curbing global challenges. Moreover, emphasis was exerted on an education system that produces students who can be quickly adaptable to suit economic necessity that the society needs. More to that, an education system that embraces culture, values, morals and attitudes of the society. Above all, basic quality education values attainment of better grades upon completion of the subjects that were taught during the study period (Oni *et al.,* 2016).

Another study with unique findings was conducted in Ghana. Thus, this study explored the impacts of leadership roles on education and its importance on quality basic education in rural and urban elementary schools (Donkoh *et al.,* 2023). The study added new tenets of quality basic education which included availability of internet in schools and supportive educational administrators. This study had recourse to a variety of research instruments unlike online surveys and ascertain whether similar findings will be generated with that of Donko *et al.,* (2023). The findings from Nigeria, Pakistan and Greece as presented are in tandem with Sumra and Katabaro (2014) who conducted research on declining quality of education in Tanzania. He concluded that quality basic education should embrace conducive facilities for learning. This incorporates appropriate infrastructure, motivated and enough teachers and supportive educational policy that cater for key tenets of quality basic education. This is also in line with the views of Jain and Prasad (2018) who suggest prevalence of two facets of prime basic education. Firstly, presence of teaching and learning processes in totality that encompass issues to do with fundamental society centred education. More to it, an education system with focus towards learning and teaching places, conducive schools, educational tactics, legislation and policies.

Secondly, the way in which teaching and learning are conducted in schools are important as methodologies are key measurements of quality basic education. Furthermore, continuous modernisation and regular review of the curriculum to be always competency based as well as the nature of mobilised educational resources (Jain & Prasad, 2018). Therefore, it could be noted that, at a global level, the qualities of basic education are multifaceted. However, there are generally certain integral minimum acceptable standards that quality basic education should inherently be based on (Jain and Prasad, 2018; UNESC0, 2019; Papanthymoul & Darral, 2023; World Education Forum Final report, 2015; Hussain, 2018; Oni *e tal.,* 2016, Donko *e tal.,* 2023 & Sumra & Katabaro, 2014).

In Zimbabwe, commendable exertions have been put in place to foster best quality education. This is in line with Hammond (2013) who posits traits of quality basic education to be the one that encompasses the following tenets: educational resources, digital infrastructure and learning areas taught. Furthermore, enrolled courses done, teaching methodology, apprenticeship and attachments, qualifications, extramural activities and performance awards. Accordingly, it should be noted that transformational educational policies adopted by the government of Zimbabwe from 2015 were a result of the Nziramasanga Commission. Old curriculum was criticised for being too much based on summative assessment which led to learners who were too theoretical rather than being able to solve real life problems (Nziramasanga Commission, 2018). Therefore, it partly advocated for an outcome-based curriculum.

To ensure this, Zimbabwe introduced a new curriculum in line with the National Development Strategy (NDS1) blue print policy document. It seeks to transform the country to a middle-class economy by 2030. This was set to be achieved through education for industrial development (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), 2015). To buttress further, as from 2015, MoPSE initiated a detailed national curriculum overhaul to foster quality basic education in Zimbabwe. Numerous creativities through competency-based curriculum were introduced with wide impacts for educational stakeholders at various stages (MoPSE, 2021). This competency-based curriculum was also hinged on Continuous Assessment Learning Activity (CALA) which was implemented practically in 2021 despite being launched in 2015 (MoPSE, 2021).

Thus, it can be noted from above that, there were several studies that have been steered on what constitutes basic quality education across the globe. However, this study is typical, at least, in Zimbabwe to focus on demystifying misconceptions on the tenets of quality basic education since the introduction of CALA in 2021. Despite all these efforts taken by the government for quality basic education, scholars noted some hindrances for this to be far-fetched. Zimbabwe has been battling to embrace key features of quality basic education with a lot of criticism from educational stakeholders and renowned educational intellectuals themselves. Thus, research was conducted to examine the calibre of education and its assessment in elementary schools (Garira *et al.,* 2023). Their research findings depict that there is a need for school self-evaluation, usage of standard instruments across the country and teachers to be actively involved in policy implementation as this constitutes part of quality basic education (Garira *et al.,* 2023). However, the conditions that existed in the schools in which this survey was based may not be similar to that of Chikomba District.

Apart from that, the upsurge of jobless people in Zimbabwe was primarily linked to too summative assessments which does not produce everlasting practical problem solving and industrial skills which are critical for sustainable development (Coltat, 2012). As a result, there was a need for the government to do an overhaul of the curriculum and to come up with transformative educational policies for quality basic education. Therefore, it introduced CALA in 2015 which it fully implemented in 2021 starting with examination classes namely grade 7, forms 4 and 6. It could be noted that, the question on what constitutes quality education has been worsened by lack of understanding from some educational stakeholders on whether this new educational policy CALA will foster quality basic education or not upon its implementation in 2021. In line with the above, the aims of CALA no longer produce any positive outcomes as the demands of the new learning areas were characterised with many implementation prerequisites that many of the key educational stakeholders such as learners, teachers and parents cannot accomplish (Nqobile, 2023).

This is also in tantamount with the views that, essential key stakeholders to include guardians, educators and pupils view CALA as an evil animal that is getting rid of the already existing excluded far remote, exposed, pathetic and those who are gifted differently, then it should be removed (Sibanda, 2023). This is also in line with UNESCO (2019) which laments that it is patent that schools that have no educators, educational aids and materials will not be able to produce the intended goals of producing fully baked students. This could be the case in Zimbabwe, mostly in rural areas.

In addition to that, the situation was worsened by retarded economic growth prevalence in the country, where there were a lot of problems. These consist of lack of digital infrastructure and general use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) gadgets such as phones with internet access. It further notes that, CALA for quality basic education was hindered by escalating price of data rates especially for the vulnerable and poor societies. Additionally, the report pointed the problems to shortage of laptops, computer network and software as well as conducive infrastructure in schools (Mpande, 2023). Thus, in perspective of these constitutive factors in gloomy sinister ways, CALA has been considered as bringing more evil than good hence its need to be dropped (Mpande, 2023). Thus, this study seeks to fill the gap and add to existing literature on the current state of quality basic education. Additionally, this study is of paramount significance as it unpacks key tenets thereby removing misconceptions of quality basic education which Zimbabwe should thrive to adhere to in line with international best practices. Furthermore, the study is vital since it unpacks challenges hindering quality education and proposes strategies as well as recommendations that can be adopted to attain it.

The key tenets of quality basic education can be unpacked by the lens of behaviourism theory. Behaviourism anticipates that basic cognitive processes involve a modification in code of conduct through interacting between stimuli from the surroundings and noticeable reaction of the person (Parkay & Hass, 2000). Therefore, a person chooses one outcome instead of another as a result of preceding conditioning and mental drives present at the time of the activity (Parkay & Hass, 2000). Elaborating further on Watson's stimuli-reactions model, B.F. Skinner suggested a better encompassing form of conditioning, including two types of conditioning "respondent" and "operant conditioning" (Skinner, 1968). "Respondent" conditioning incorporates a procedure where a person responds to an external stimulus while "operant" bears on the betterment. Furthermore, augmentation of a response through punitive or rewarding measures that make new learning occur and or stop past uncalled-for behaviour (Skinner, 1968). Behaviourism, learning is understood as the successive approximation of the intended partial behaviours using reward and punishment (Honig and Fetterman, 1992).

The Behaviourism school of thought also laments that pupils cannot conceptualise knowledge on their own. They added that, when learners do not have inner learning motivators, punitive and reward methods can alter the behaviour of a person. Thus, they argued that learning should happen at an area when noticeable response is altered through control and the use of punitive and reward methods. Additionally, they assert that

reiterative assignments, drill activities, mental retention, written tests and deductive methodologies help in altering students' behaviour. In this manner, learning is accomplished (Skinner, 1968). Hence, it can be deduced from this theory, that quality basic education is achieved due to extrinsic motivation, use of inducements, rewards and reprimand as well as learners being given more written work. Above all, it emphasised on a positive change in behaviour for observant of quality basic education.

The cognitive theory emerged in the 1950s and it provides an explanation for quality basic education (Gage & Berliner,1988). Cognitive psychologists utilise evident behaviours as a sign for deriving what is happening in an individual's brain (Gage & Berliner, 1988). They furnish speech patterns on multiple methods the brain functions in the process of mastering knowledge. process. As a result, cognitive psychologists provide to the pupil's intellectual capacity a changing and developmental duty and not an unchanging unitary (Reid, 2005). Cognitive theory usually refers to the function of information processing and that fresh information should be clearly articulated and thus easily sensed and kept in mental memory (Karatsiori, 2023).

The facets engaged in processing such as mental retentiveness, institutions and neurological links are perceived as cardinal in cognitive theories. This is so because they keep the pupil's attention and trigger his or her mental processes (Karatsiori, 2023). The same sentiments were echoed with Bruner (1996), who did a momentous endeavour to cognitive learning theory, initiating the conception of "scaffolding." It refers to the manner in which students build their cognition by comprehending the fresh knowledge they assume to former knowledge. As a result, this theory clearly indicates the need for motivation of the learners and fostering of problem-solving skills to the pupils. It also enables them to have the ability of being able to discover new ideas on their own and store that information for a long time and use it later. Thus, it could be noted that, to ensure quality basic education students must be treated differently taking into cognisance their mental capacity and those that are gifted differently.

Therefore, in light and respect of the aforementioned introduction and background, the study seeks to accomplish three core objectives:

1. To explore key tenets of quality basic education in line with international best practices.
2. To analyse constraints hindering the realisation of quality basic education in Zimbabwe.
3. To propose strategies to improve identified obstacles for the attainment of quality basic education in Zimbabwe.

Accordingly, the objectives would rationally respond to the research questions as to:

1. What are the key tenets of quality basic education in line with international best practices?
2. What are the constraints hindering the realisation of quality basic education in Zimbabwe?
3. What are the strategies that can be proposed to improve identified obstacles for the attainment of quality basic education in Zimbabwe?

Materials and Methods

The researcher explored the critical Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to analyse key tenets, challenges and strategies for attainment of basic quality education in Chikomba District, Zimbabwe.

Systematic Literature Review Defined

Systematic literature review refers to a organised, definitive, comprehensive and reproducible way for identifying, evaluating and synthesising the present body of finished and captured pieces of work produced by researchers, scholars and practitioners (Fink, 2005). Hence, it can be deduced that, by summarising, examining, and synthesising a set of connected previous written materials, one can test a particular hypothesis and or create new conceptions. Researchers can also assess the validity and quality of present pieces of work against a standard to uncover limitations, inconsistencies, and contradictions (Pare *et al.*, 2015).

Research Design

Research design encompasses entirely different constituent parts of a research, such variables, hypotheses, experiments, methodology and statistical analysis (Creswell *et al.*, 2018). Consequently, the standard process for developing, conducting and reporting a SLR is as follows: (a) Formulation of review question; (b) Definition regarding sources to include and exclude criteria; (c) Location of studies; (d) Selection of studies; (e) Assessment of study quality; (f) Extraction of data; (g) Analyses and presentation of results and (h) Interpretation of results (Egger *et al.*, 2008). To ascertain that the methods for steps 1 to 7 are taken on board in the prescript of SLR(s), a reporting guideline was constituted to assist much standardised SLR protocol writing (Moher et al., 2015). Thus, a reporting road map specifies what elements should come out in published reports of systematic reviews (Moher *et al.*, 2015). A emblematic component of these guidelines is the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) chart, which depicts number of studies that were analysed, from which sources of information, number of those that were excluded with specific rationale behind being outlined and those that were finally considered. This was religiously and strictly followed when conducting the research. These steps which constitute research design are shown in Figure 1.1.

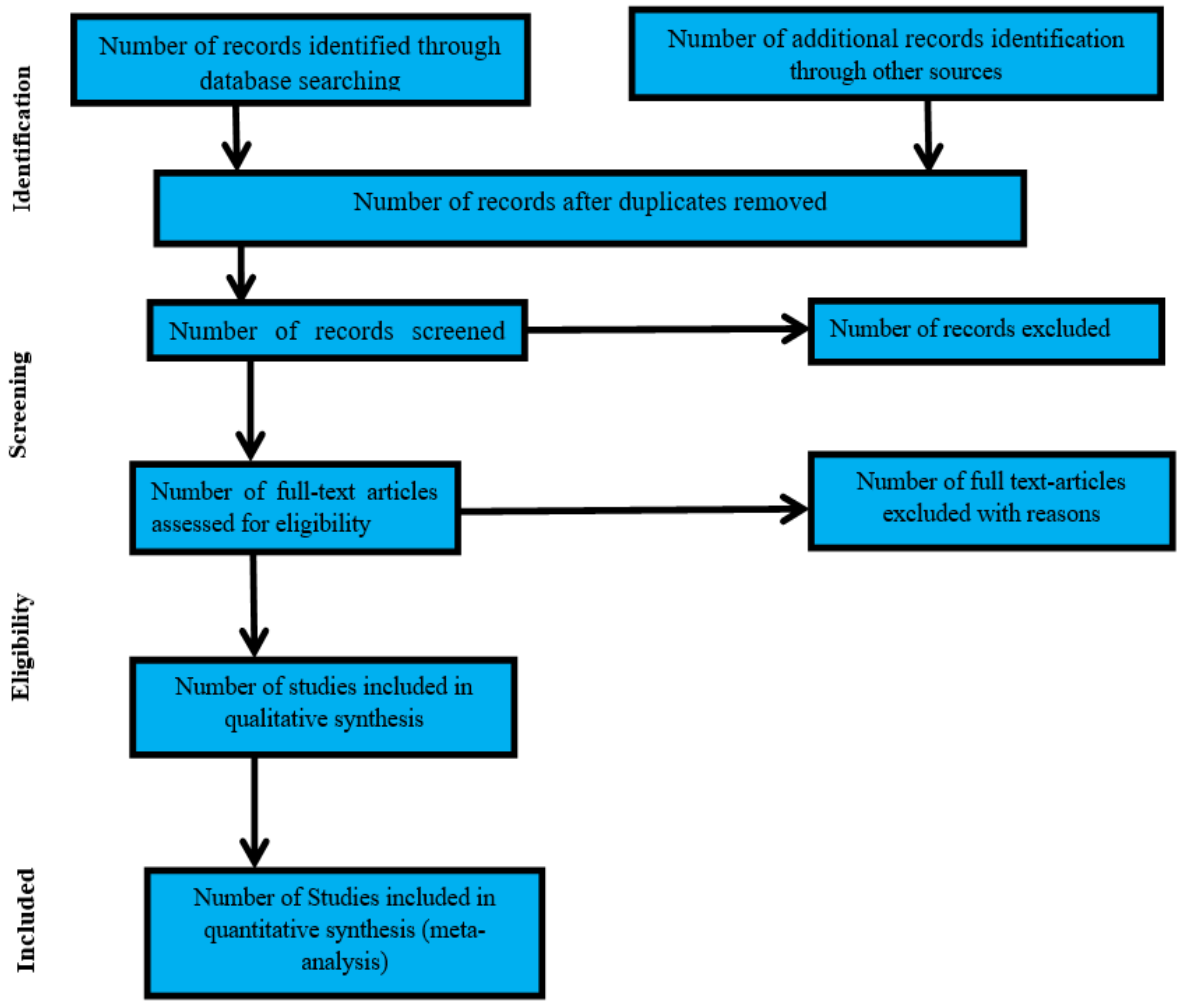

Figure 1.1: PRISMA chart of reporting Systematic Reviews
Source: (Moher *et al.,* 2009)

Pursuing closely the conceptualisation of the chart above, it will enhance the credibility and dependability of the results. Furthermore, it paves way for the recommendations that can be deduced outside the context of the critique to be followed back to first hand survey. However, the processes of review are subject to criticism as they are explicit (Moher *et al.,* 2009). It can be noted that, there is a high need to examine possible preconceptions at every stage of the research design during the review process. Great emphasis was therefore put by the researcher to the research design to foster validity and credibility of the research findings.

Merits and Demerits of Systematic Literature Review

When conducting the research, merits of the methodology were noted. These include its ability to facilitate the procedures of combining research findings through the magnified orbit of analysis, provides a sense of asperity, increases replicability of the review and openness of the review (Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012, p. 109). Disadvantages include that it could limit innovativeness and intuition, could neglect essential "grey literature" for example reports and be classified to the availability of sources (Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012, p. 109). Additionally, the systematic review process is exceedingly resource-intensive and utilising a fixed systematic review routine is an extremely exigent and time-consuming process (Mallett *et al.,* 2012). However, of importance to note is that, some of these drawbacks of Systematic Literature Review as the mode of this research were curbed by the researcher under data analysis and data quality control sections. This was done to foster validity and reliability of the results.

Data Collection Methods

Secondary data collection methods include published printed sources such as books, journals or periodicals, magazines or newspapers, web logs, published electronic sources, unpublished personal records, e-journals, general

websites, diaries, letters and government records or reports (Hamed, 2021). However, this research utilised confirmed government review reports or publications, renowned journals, books, articles, published research papers from academic institutions, well cited and documented newspapers and reputed international organisations' reports or publications. Table 1.1 summarises the total number of all sources before screening and after screening that were utilised by the researcher.

Category of source	Total before screening	Total after screening
Government reports	11	09
Journals	09	06
Books	02	02
Articles	06	03
International organisation's reports	04	03
Newspapers	03	02
Total	**35**	**25**

Table 1.1: Total number of sources before and after screening
Source: (Authors, 2024)

Data Analysis and Quality Control

Validity is about the truthfulness of the research findings (Simon, 2011 p.34). Therefore, the researcher adhered to certain set principles to obtain results for the three objectives. Firstly, and foremost, reviewers can decide the calibre of research by devising an in-depth investigation of the logic from the data collection method to the data analysis, results, and conclusions (Fink, 2005). Secondly, a checklist was commonly used for quality assessment. For example, Okoli and Schabram (2010) suggest ranking the studies based on the same methodological criteria used for inclusion or exclusion. As a result, the researcher has to "assess" the research qualitatively by placing studies into high, medium, and low groups (Petticrew and Roberts, 2006). This was also strictly implemented. Thirdly, it is preferred that at least two researchers participate in SLRs selection and for them to code the sources independently (Noordzij *et al.*, 2009). Fourthly, the inclusion and exclusion criteria should be clearly specified comprehensively (Templier and Pare, 2015). Fifthly, the draft of the review should be assessed by the entire review team for checks and balances (Andrews and Harlen, 2006). Above all, literature review should follow a crystal-clear composition that ties the studies together into key themes, characteristics or subgroups (Rowley and Slack, 2004). Consequently, the researcher adhered to the identified measures by the selected scholars to ensure that research findings are of "par excellence".

Ethical Considerations

Research ethics refers to the principles, code of conduct or guidelines and accepted standards that govern the ethics of research involving human beings, animals and the surroundings (Amer, 2023). These ethics include the right to voluntarily participate, informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, anonymity, self-determination, scientific and honest publication of the results and the right to withdraw from the study. In this study, the researcher ensured that all literature used was properly acknowledged, informed consent where necessary to those who extracted primary data, seeking of all necessary permissions from responsible affiliated institutions, self-determination and scientific honesty only to mention but a few.

Results and Discussions

This section of the results illuminates research findings and respective discussions in line with the three objectives as highlighted in the introduction.

Key Tenets of Quality Basic Education

Quality education embraces cultural aspects, affective, intellectual, physical, and cognitive development of each learner regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, wealth of a person and culture or where a person lives (Belgium Education International, 2024). On the other hand, Jain and Prasad (2018), have different views. They viewed quality education as the one that constitutes conducive teaching and learning environments, favourable educational strategies, legislation and policies. Additionally, it should incorporate quality assurance systems, digital infrastructure, continuous update of the competency-based curriculum and availability of educational resources (Jain and Prasad, 2018). Almost similar observations were made on the inherent qualities of basic education. Thus, the perspective should encompass the following traits: educational resources, use of e-learning or digital learning through embracing Information Communication Technology skills, learning areas taught, courses done and learner centred approaches. Furthermore, emphasis should be on formative assessments, qualifications and experience of teachers, extra mural activities and performance-based awards (Hammond, 2013). Thus in totality, quality education inherent certain key tenets. It is determined by all forms of supportive resources for teaching and learning processes (Hussain, 2018; Papanthymoul & Darral, 2023; Sumra and Katabaro, 2014). Apart from that, most researchers are in unison that teacher's involvement, his/her motivation, training and integrity as well as supportive administrators constitute fundamental qualities of basic education Hussain, (2018); Papanthymoul & Darral (2023),

Sumra & Katabaro, (2014), Donko *et al.,* (2023) and Garira *et al.,* (2023). Furthermore, learner-centred approaches constitute tenets of quality basic education as propounded by (Papanthymoul & Darral, 2023 and Hamza, 2008). However, cardinal characteristics of quality basic education identified by only one scholar of the same research include favourable educational policies (Hamza, 2008). Garira *et al.,* (2023) added availability of school policy and importance of digital infrastructure. Pakombwe, *et al.,* (2014) put emphasis on inclusivity education. In addition to that, Oni, *et al.,* (2016) elaborated on the vitality of education that is based on the people's culture, solving individual, societal and global challenges as well as attainment of better grades at the end of the course period. The same characteristics should be tested during collection of primary data in Chikomba District, Zimbabwe. Key tenets of quality basic education can be summarised by Fig 1.2.

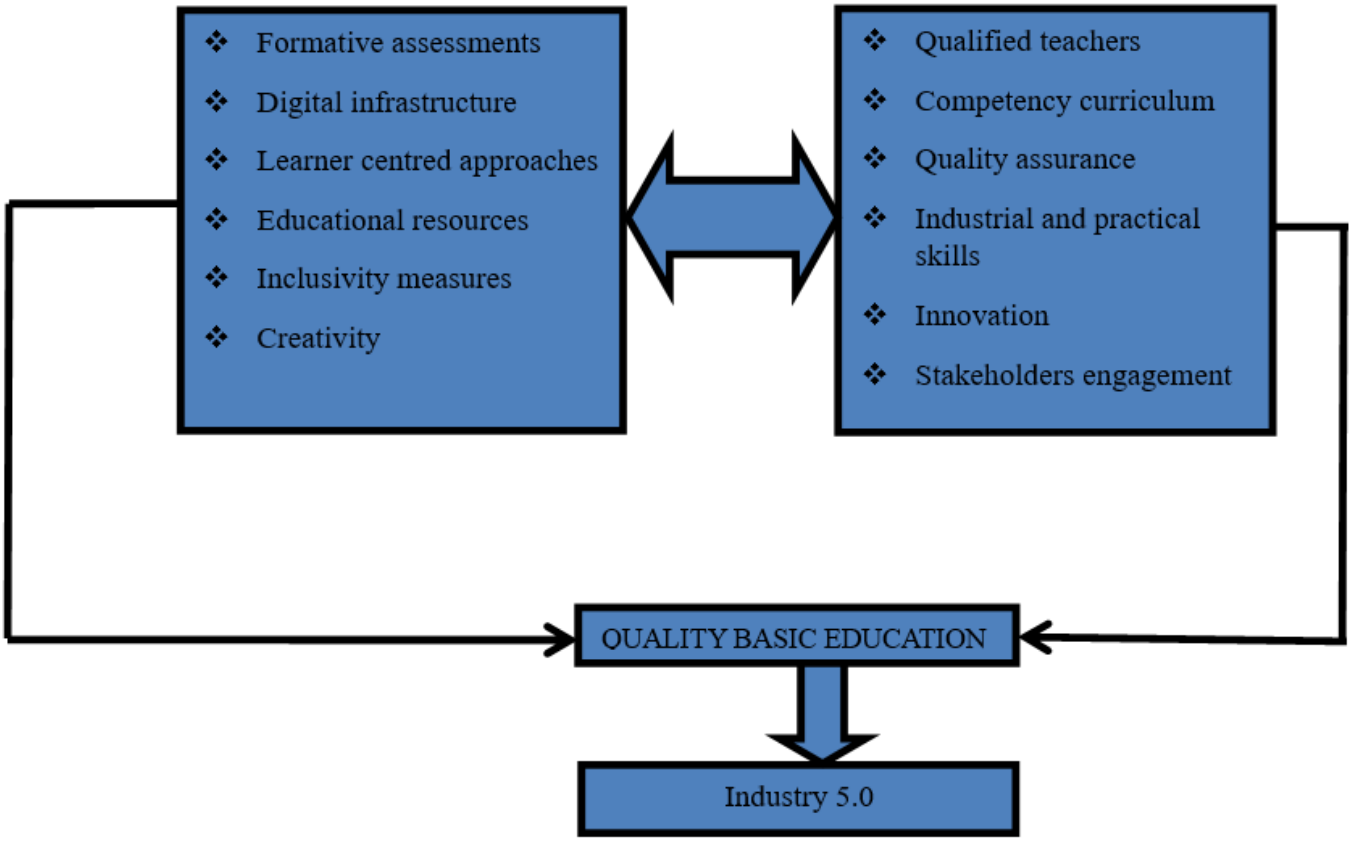

Figure 1.2: Qualities of basic education
Source: (Authors, 2024)

Challenges Hindering the Quality of Basic Education

Quality of basic education in Zimbabwe was compromised by shortages of educators, poor infrastructure and economic slump over the past decade (United Nations Development Program-UNDP, 2015). Additionally, the hot sitting method was found to be a method of accommodating a quiet number of learners in an area but creating a problem of giving learners less time to learn and little attention from the teachers (UNDP, 2015). Moreover, quality of education is also compromised by the shortage of qualified teachers in elementary and secondary schools (Moyo, 2014). He further asserts that, in some marginalised areas such as Shamva, quality education was compromised due to unbearable teacher's workload, uncooperative and adamant parents, shortage of resources and failure to use native languages (Gamuchirai and Langton, 2023). Above all, it is of paramount significance to note that ten selected scholars identified lack of proper skills and knowledge on CALA administration in schools as the main hindrance for effective quality basic education. Shortage of learning related resources were observed to be a critical limitation for CALA implementation for quality basic education (Kibuna, 2013 and Makuvire & Khosa, 2022). Heavy teacher's workloads and poor planning and preparation on the side of teachers due to short notice that they may be given by policy makers sometimes caused them to give learners poor activities (Chimbi & Jita, 2023; Makuvire *et al.,* 2023; and Makuvire & Khosa, 2022). In addition to that, lack of teacher's integrity and unclear

standardisation of the formative assessments were found to be major drawbacks (Gasva & Phiri, 2020; and Safarath and Kingtin, 2014). Furthermore, lack of teacher's engagement was another challenge that was identified by (Gasva & Phiri, 2020; Makuvire *et al.*, 2023; Makuvire & Khosa, 2022). Converging and diverging views on what constitutes qualities of basic education can be drawn. These challenges are going to be ascertained further during the collection of primary data in Chikomba District, Zimbabwe. However, common challenges in percentages as obtained from the various scholars were recorded in 6 main categories according to the frequency of repeated responses from the 25 sources and summarised below.

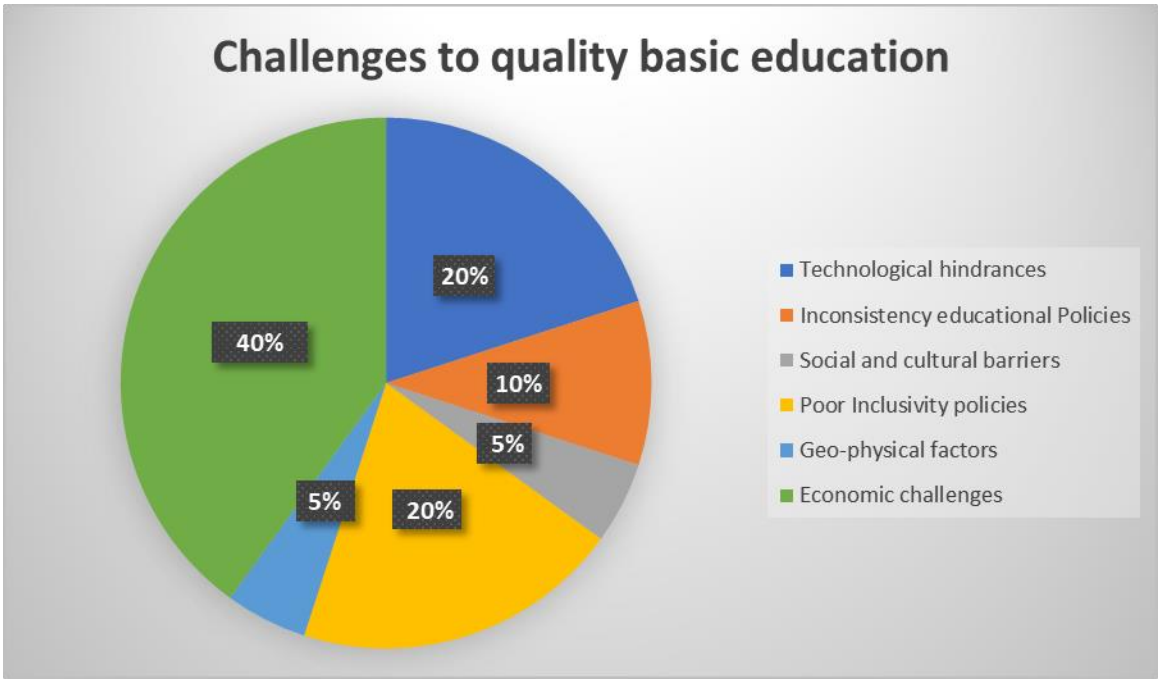

Figure 1.3: Challenges of quality basic education. Source: (Authors, 2024)

Strategies to achieve quality basic education

Based on the literature reviewed, a quite number of strategies can be adopted to achieve quality basic education. Accordingly, most of the scholars pinpointed staff development centred on CALA administration to bridge skills and knowledge gap (Chanda, 2022; Chiyenge, 2017; Gasva, Mutanana & Goronga, 2019; and Atsumbe & Raymond, 2012). Additionally, resources mobilisation for effective educational policies such as CALA was proposed by a quite number of scholars to include (Chanda, 2022; Chiyenge, 2017; Gasva, Mutanana & Goronga, 2019; Risiro, 2017; Kikwato, Neroh & Chanda, 2023 and Atsumbe & Raymond, 2012). Furthermore, increase of teachers' salaries to motivate teachers was also noted to be of critical importance by (Chanda, 2022; and Atsumbe & Raymond, 2012). In addition to that, inclusivity policies and close monitoring and evaluation of the CALA were found to be useful by certain authors to include (Chanda 2022; Chiyenge, 2017; and Atsumbe & Raymond, 2012).

Moreso, emphasis was also put on for teachers to be involved at each formulation phase of CALA (Gasva, Mutanana & Goronga, 2019; Mapendere & Masvimbo, 2023; and Kikwato, Neroh & Chanda, 2023). Moreover, digital infrastructure, competency-based curriculum and supportive legislation were noted to be useful in improving the quality of basic education (Kikwato, Neroh & Chanda, 2023, Atsumbe and Raymond, 2012). Of importance to note were employment of more teachers, infrastructural development, utilisation of a variety of formative strategies and the standardisation of formative activities given to learners as noted by (Kikwato, Nero & Chanda, 2023). As a result, Chikomba District shall be used as an area to test the strategies obtained from literature review. Thus, these strategies can be adopted in Chikomba District, Zimbabwe as some of the underlying conditions that exist or prevail in some parts of the country and other nations may be the same. Summary of the strategies for attainment of quality basic education can be summarised by Fig 1.4.

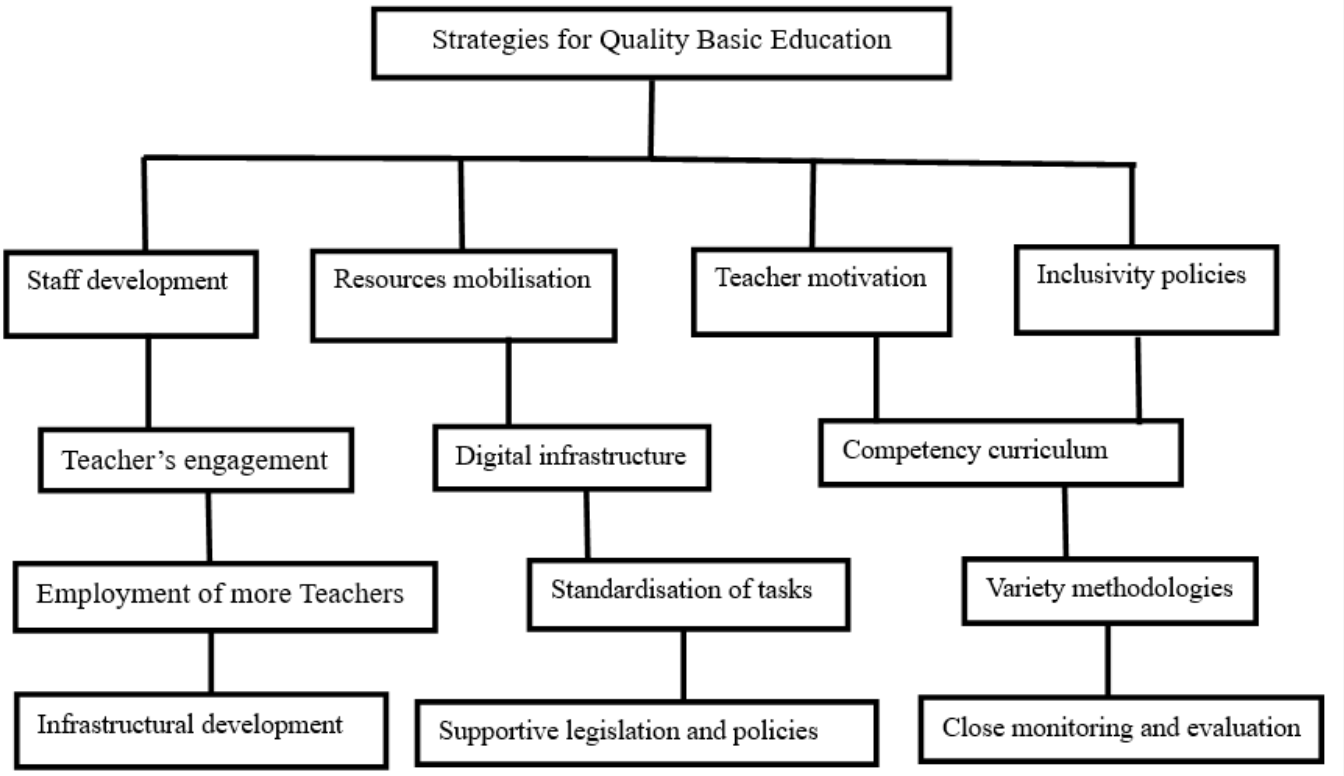

Figure 1.4: Strategies for attainment of quality basic education
Source: (Authors, 2024)

Conclusion

The study concluded that the integral characteristics of quality basic education are multidimensional. However, most of the scholars are of the view that quality education evolves around adequate resources, inclusivity, motivated teachers, teacher's engagement and digital infrastructure. Additionally, it encompasses competency-based curriculum, supportive legislation and policies, employment of more teachers, infrastructural development, variety methodologies and standardisation of formative assessments. Above all the education system should enable learners to solve real life situational problems. Furthermore, literature revealed that most of the countries were embedded with challenges for them to realise quality education. These challenges evolve around economic challenges, technological hindrances, inconsistencies of policy makers, social and cultural barriers and geo-physical factors. The study also discussed strategies that can be adopted for the attainment of quality basic education in Chikomba District, Zimbabwe. These strategies include competency-based curriculum, mobilisation of resources, stakeholder engagement, Information Communication Technology utilisation and conducive teaching and learning environment. Additionally, the findings call for society and problem-solving centred education, capacity development of teachers, teachers' motivation and digital infrastructure. Moreover, employment of more teachers, supportive legislation and policies, standardisation of tasks, learner centred approaches, quality assurance and educational policies towards women inclusivity and those gifted differently.

Recommendations

Based on the literature reviewed, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education of Zimbabwe as the key educational policy maker may consider the following measures for realisation of quality basic education in Chikomba District and the country at large:

I. Enough vote or budget allocation for mobilisation of educational resources in schools.
II. Enactment of favourable legislative and policy frameworks towards the integration of summative and formative assessments for certification of grade 7, form 4 and 6.
III. Modernisation and refurbishments of schools in a digital infrastructure fashion.
IV. Encouraging and facilitating exhibitions competitions in schools to foster creativity and innovation in learners.
V. Set up of robust quality assurance systems and general standardisation of formative assignments in line with key competencies. Regular funding of workshops or seminars to keep teachers abreast of new learning demands such as administration of CALA for certification.

VI. Establishment of supportive mechanisms for learners who are disabled such as ramps in schools.
VII. Routine curriculum review to ensure that it is in line with current trends and international best practices.

Recommendations for Further Research

During the course of the study, the following domains were ascertained to be essential for emerging research. An exploration on the implications of native languages as an official medium of instruction in all learning areas for quality basic education. Furthermore, more research on inclusivity to those who are gifted differently and gender issues as effective tools for quality basic education should be further interrogated.

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Declaration

I, Muroiwa Marshal Kudakwashe, declare that this work is my own original work, that it has not been plagiarised nor submitted for a similar degree in any other university. All the sources that were used have been indicated and acknowledged.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare. All co-authors have seen and agree with the contents of the manuscript and there is no financial interest to report. We certify that the submission is original work and is not under review at any other publication.

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