CHAPTER 6 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This book explored the quality of education in satellite primary schools, focusing on the pedagogical and management processes specific to this school type, which represent a knowledge gap in the existing literature. Chapter 1 outlined the research problem and context, articulating the main research question, sub-questions, definitions of key terms, and the structure of the book. Chapters 2 and 3 reviewed the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of quality education, and the specific challenges faced by small rural schools, respectively. Chapter 4 justified the use of the interpretive research paradigm, qualitative research, and multiple case study design as the methodology underpinning the book's findings. Finally, Chapter 5 presented an analysis and discussion of the main findings. Chapter 6 offers a summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations, and areas for further research.

The book identified several factors affecting the quality of pedagogical processes in satellite primary schools, including MGT, the multiple roles of TICs, large class sizes, and Double-Sessioning (DS).

Multi-grade classes pose complexities to the provision of quality education in satellite primary schools. These classes increased significantly following the severe understaffing in the schools caused by the TRF implemented by the PSC in 2015. Regardless of the prevalence of multi-grade classes in satellite primary schools, no teachers and TICs staffing the schools are trained in multi-grade pedagogy. The pre-service, in-service, and continuing teacher development programmes in the country do not equip teachers with the theoretical and practical skills of MGT. The teacher development programmes are ‘multi-grade blind’. They are ‘blind’ to the urgent need for a multi-grade school curriculum, policies, curriculum materials, teachers, and school supervisors in the country.

Zimbabwe's national primary school curriculum framework, policies, and curriculum materials are premised on mono-grade pedagogy. There is a taken-for-granted assumption that mono-grade teachers can adapt to multi-grade pedagogy without professional training (Taole & Mncube, 2012). This assumption is refuted by the findings presented in this book. Even teachers and TICs with more than 10 years of teaching experience in multi-grade settings, experience challenges in adapting to MGT. For mono-grade teachers to teach multi-grade classes effectively, they should be professionally trained in multi-grade pedagogy (Brown, 2010).

The teachers and TICs experience challenges in adapting the national mono-grade curriculum to multi-grade settings without pre-service or in-service training in multi-grade pedagogy. The challenges they confront include timetabling, content integration and differentiation, scheme-cum planning, teaching methods, class management, and learner assessment. They cope with these challenges by treating multi-grade classes as mono-grade classes in terms of curriculum content. The teachers and TICs focus on teaching the curriculum content of senior grades in multi-grade classes. They also base learner assessment tasks on the curriculum content of the senior grades. Consequently, the curriculum content of the junior grade is not covered. Zimbabwe's primary school curriculum is spiral. Henceforth, the learners in the junior grades of multi-grade classes experience gaps in content coverage that impact negatively on their academic progress and achievement.

The teachers hold negative attitudes towards multi-grade classes because they regard them as more demanding to teach than mono-grade classes. As a result, they are reluctant to be allocated to multi-grade classes. The negative attitudes that mono-grade teachers take to the multi-grade classroom, affect the quality of education they provide. The underlying factor influencing the negative teacher

attitudes towards multi-grade classes is the lack of professional training in MGT.

Large class sizes also pose complexities to the provision of quality education in satellite primary schools. The problem of large class size is a recent phenomenon linked to the TRF implemented by the PSC of Zimbabwe in 2015. All the teachers and TICs in the selected schools teach either large mono-grade classes or large multi-grade classes. Due to the large class sizes, the non-standard classrooms in the schools become so congested that teachers cannot display instructional media or establish learning centres. A bare classroom environment in terms of instructional media denies learners opportunities for independent learning and the consolidation of learnt concepts. A classroom ambience of this nature is not conducive to the provision of quality education.

The limited space in the overcrowded classrooms compels the teachers and TICs to employ rote pedagogical approaches, particularly the lecture method. Rote pedagogy does not promote active learner participation that is associated with the provision of quality education. Large multi-grade classes further complicate the provision of quality education in satellite primary schools. The teachers manning the large multi-grade classes focus on teaching the curriculum content of senior grades. This creates content coverage gaps among learners in the junior grades, which affect their mastery of concepts and academic achievement.

Large mono-grade and multi-grade classes overburden teachers and TICs with heavy marking loads. Due to the large class sizes, it is difficult for the teachers and TICs to review learners' assignments thoroughly. The errors that the teachers and TICs overlook militate against the learners' progress and academic achievement. The teachers and TICs cope with the heavy marking loads by assigning

learners very few assignment items that are of the low order type. The poor quality and low quantity of the assignment items deny learners adequate opportunities to practise and master new concepts and skills.

The acute shortage of new curriculum textbooks in satellite primary schools is also complicating the provision of quality education in large classes. The textbook-learner ratio is so high that cases of over 40 learners sharing one textbook are very common. Learners do not have the opportunity to read textbooks individually, making the teaching of reading for fluency and comprehension problematic. The learners cannot take textbooks home to do homework or home study, effectively leaving the teacher as their only source of knowledge. The dire shortage of textbooks is contributing to the high prevalence of learners who are non-readers in satellite primary schools.

In the large classes, the teachers and TICs are overwhelmed by learners who require individualised support. The large class sizes compel the teachers to concentrate on teaching fast learners, neglecting learners with learning challenges. Hence, learners with learning difficulties are excluded rather than included. This is against the inclusive education policy that Zimbabwe ratified and adopted. The learners with learning difficulties move to higher grades without mastering lower-grade concepts, a set-up that militates against their academic progress and achievement. From the perspective of the Equity Model of quality education reviewed in Chapter 2, an educational context that is insensitive to the diverse needs of learners is of low quality.

The problem of large class sizes has culminated in overcrowded classrooms characterised by disruptive learner behaviours. Learner indiscipline makes the classroom environment chaotic,

unmanageable, and unfavourable for effective teaching and learning. The learners who want to learn in the large classes can hardly concentrate because of noise and other disruptive behaviours. The teachers and TICs manning the large classes spend more time addressing disruptive learner behaviours than teaching. Consequently, curriculum coverage is compromised and the academic achievement of the learners is affected negatively. The combination of large class sizes, multi-grade classes, cramped classrooms, and unruly learner behaviours make the provision of quality education in satellite primary schools a daunting challenge.

TICs of satellite primary schools perform multiple administrative roles simultaneously with full teaching loads. Unlike teaching heads in registered schools, they do not have bursars or secretaries to delegate some tasks. Henceforth they are overwhelmed by administrative responsibilities. The multiple administrative responsibilities leave the TICs with limited time to teach their classes, assign adequate assignment tasks, and offer individualised support to the learners. The learners in the TIC's class are disadvantaged in terms of instructional time, curriculum coverage, the number of assignment tasks, and individual support. The stress, strain, and burnout from performing multiple administrative responsibilities that TICs take to their classes, affect the quality of education they provide. When the TICs are away on school business, their classes are further disadvantaged. Large multi-grade and mono-grade classes already overwhelm the teachers who are assigned to attend the classes. The teachers merely occupy the learners without meaningful teaching and learning taking place, a practice colloquially referred to as 'babysitting' the TIC's class in satellite primary schools.

The DS schooling system is another pedagogical practice that is complicating the provision of quality education in satellite primary

schools. The phenomenon of DS emerged in satellite schools as a stopgap measure to the problem of inadequate teaching and learning space. Lessons for classes on DS are held under the shade of trees before and after the classes get the opportunity to use classrooms. Four reasons make the shade of trees unfavourable contexts for the provision of quality education. Firstly, the learners' concentration on learning is continuously distracted by people, vehicles or animals passing by. Secondly, there are no proper sitting places for learners. The pain from sitting on the ground, stones, timber logs, and bricks diverts learners' attention from concentrating on learning. Thirdly, there are no tables or desks for learners to do written assignments. Hence, the classes on DS do fewer written assignments per day than classes that are not on DS. Lastly, the unavailability of mobile chalkboards or whiteboards under the shade of trees for teachers to explain and demonstrate new concepts compromises the mastery of concepts by the learners.

Classes on DS have less instructional time compared to those that do not share classrooms. This limited time compels teachers to concentrate on examinable subjects, resulting in a narrowed curriculum that hinders learners' holistic development and life opportunities (Linden, 2001). Additionally, instructional time is further reduced during transition periods, as a whole lesson may be lost while students pack their belongings and clean the room. The combination of limited instructional time and large class sizes makes it challenging for teachers to address the diverse needs of all learners. Consequently, educators often prioritise fast learners, neglecting those with learning challenges. This exclusion contradicts the principles of Inclusive Education, which emphasise leaving no learner behind, regardless of their individual needs.

The DS schooling system is often disrupted by rains, especially during the rainy season. On rainy school days, all learners, that is,

those in the morning and afternoon sessions find shelter in the available classrooms. The classrooms become so congested that it is impractical for teachers to conduct lessons. The instructional time that is lost during the rainy season compromises curriculum coverage and the provision of quality education in satellite primary schools with DS.

Quality education, among other factors, is influenced by the level of management support a school receives. Satellite primary schools benefit from support provided by SDCs, TICs, Heads of 'mother schools', Cluster Heads, and School Inspectors.

Satellite primary schools are unregistered institutions that do not receive per capita grants from the government. They rely on their SDCs for financial and pedagogical resources. Parents are the primary financiers of their children's education in these schools; however, many parents are poor peasants unable to afford school fees. As a result, financial support from SDCs is limited, leading to inadequate facilities and a severe shortage of classrooms and instructional materials. These challenges significantly hinder the provision of quality education in the schools.

TICs occasionally miss important meetings due to the SDCs' inability to provide travel and subsistence allowances. This lack of support contributes to the professional and social isolation of TICs and their teachers, negatively impacting the quality of education offered. Additionally, poor working and living conditions lead to high teacher turnover, with some classes experiencing three different teachers within a single academic year. This turnover disrupts the continuity of teaching and learning, curriculum coverage, and overall educational quality.

Due to limited financial support from the SDC, there are no

computers for teaching the ICT curriculum learning area in the schools. Consequently, teachers and TICs can only expose learners to theoretical aspects of ICT, neglecting practical skills. This approach is inconsistent with the CBC which emphasises the development of practical and entrepreneurial skills.

The MoPSE expects TICs to support teachers through staff development workshops, meetings, and classroom visits. However, the dual responsibilities of teaching and managing the school leave TICs with limited time to supervise and provide adequate support to teachers. This insufficient supervision results in a lack of preparedness and a decline in teaching quality among many teachers. Additionally, TICs struggle to offer management support to mono-grade teachers in multi-grade settings, as they are mono-grade teachers without professional training in multi-grade pedagogy. This situation denies learners in multi-grade environments their inalienable right to a quality education.

Satellite primary schools receive management support from their 'mother schools''. Some mother schools assist their satellite schools by donating updated curriculum textbooks, which help alleviate the acute shortage of resources. Heads of 'mother schools' also provide support by inducting new TICs in school leadership and management, as well as facilitating the online registration of Grade 7 candidates. However, like the TICs, the Heads of mother schools are unable to provide effective management support to mono-grade teachers in multi-grade settings due to a lack of professional training in multi-grade pedagogy. Consequently, the quality of education in multi-grade classes is poor because the teachers, TICs, and Heads of 'mother schools' lack the necessary training in this area.

Satellite schools also receive management support from Cluster Heads under the BSPZ quality education initiative. The Cluster Heads assist teachers and TICs through on-site supervision visits, which include lesson observations, record-keeping, assessment of school infrastructure and resources, financial management, production units, and maintenance of school grounds. However, due to financial constraints, satellite schools struggle to regularly pay the BSPZ affiliation fees, which fund cluster supervisions and other related activities. As a result, Cluster Heads cannot provide consistent supervision to satellite primary schools, contributing to poor teaching quality and low Grade 7 pass rates. Similar to the Heads of mother schools, all Cluster Heads are mono-grade teachers, which limits their ability to offer management support to TICs and teachers working in multi-grade classes. This situation further complicates the provision of quality education in multi-grade settings.

The MoPSE also expects School Inspectors to provide management support to TICs and teachers through on-site supervision visits and workshops. This support includes aspects such as scheme, planning, lesson delivery, classroom management, learner assessment, and record-keeping. It also addresses curriculum-related issues, including the availability of infrastructure and resources, financial management, and maintenance of school grounds. However, School Inspectors are unable to supervise satellite schools regularly due to inadequate vehicles, financial constraints, and inaccessible roads. The infrequent visits negatively impact the quality of education in these schools. Additionally, School Inspectors are mono-grade teachers who have not received pre-service or in-service training in multi-grade pedagogy, limiting their ability to provide effective management support to teachers and TICs in multi-grade settings. The teachers and TICs struggle with multi-grade pedagogy without

adequate guidance, leading to poor instruction and educational outcomes in multi-grade classes.

The teachers and TICs who participated in the study informing this book shared various strategies to enhance the quality of pedagogical and management processes in their schools. One approach involves school-based workshops focused on MGT. However, these workshops often prove ineffective due to a lack of facilitators with expertise in this area. SDCs attempt to address issues like understaffing and large class sizes, exacerbated by the Teacher Retention Fund (TRF), by hiring additional teachers. While this strategy can be effective in the short term, it is ultimately unsustainable due to the financial constraints SDCs face, limiting their ability to hire teachers for short periods.

The lack of financial support from the government exacerbates challenges such as makeshift infrastructure, double shifts, inadequate curriculum materials, and high teacher turnover, complicating the delivery of quality education in satellite primary schools. SDCs utilise funding from the SIG for infrastructure development and to acquire pedagogical resources, but this funding remains insufficient. To supplement these efforts, SDCs and TICs organize parents to contribute free labour and building materials for constructing essential teaching and learning facilities. Some satellite schools cope with the shortage of new curriculum textbooks by using old curriculum textbooks in some learning areas. Despite strategies like multi-tasking and compensating for instructional time, TICs find themselves overwhelmed by their many responsibilities, which leaves the classes they teach at a disadvantage.

Based on the findings, the book offers recommendations for improving the quality of pedagogical and management processes in satellite primary schools to enhance the provision of quality education.

One of the significant challenges in implementing MGT is that the national primary school curriculum, policies, syllabuses, and textbooks are primarily designed for mono-grade pedagogy. There is a pressing need for a national MGT primary school curriculum to better guide and support teachers in multi-grade settings. The CDU could structure the multi-grade curriculum in phases: ECD A and B; Grades 1 and 2; Grades 3 and 4; Grades 5 and 6; and Grade 7. Syllabuses and textbooks aligned with this national MGT curriculum need to be developed.

There is a clear need for the MoPSE and the CDU to create a handbook for MGT. This handbook would serve as a valuable resource for teachers, guiding effective strategies for managing multi-grade classrooms. It would also support pre-service, in-service, and ongoing teacher development programs in MGT.

Many teachers face challenges in multi-grade classrooms due to a lack of pre-service or in-service training in multi-grade pedagogy. Colleges and universities should integrate a MGT module into their pre-service and continuing teacher development programmes. This module should address key issues such as grade combinations, timetabling, planning, and various pedagogical approaches. Topics should also include lesson presentation, classroom organisation, class management, learner assessment, record-keeping, and teaching practice. Furthermore, student teachers should be placed in both mono-grade and multi-grade settings during their teaching practice to ensure they acquire the necessary theoretical and practical skills to effectively teach in diverse classroom environments.

Teachers and TICs in satellite primary schools are predominantly mono-grade practitioners who lack professional training in multi-grade pedagogy. There is a strong call for the MoPSE to organise in-service training workshops focused on MGT. These workshops should address key pedagogical issues such as grade combinations,

timetabling, planning, teaching methods, lesson presentation, classroom organisation, class management, learner assessment, and record-keeping. Such training would equip teachers and TICs with the practical and theoretical skills necessary to tackle the challenges they face in multi-grade classrooms.

The absence of professional training in multi-grade pedagogy has led some teachers and TICs to teach senior-grade content in multi-grade settings. To address this, it is recommended that the MoPSE appoint national, provincial, district, and cluster MGT Coordinators. These coordinators would be responsible for coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating the implementation of MGT in schools. They would also provide ongoing support and guidance to teachers and TICs through demonstration lessons and workshops, ultimately enhancing the quality of education in multi-grade classrooms.

School Inspectors, Cluster Heads, and Heads of 'mother schools' are not adequately supporting TICs and teachers in MGT due to a lack of professional training. The MoPSE needs to organise in-service training workshops for the School Inspectors and School Administrators. This training would empower them to conduct MGT workshops for TICs and teachers, enabling them to effectively address the specific challenges faced in MGT.

Many mono-grade teachers in multi-grade settings view these classes as more demanding than mono-grade classes, which negatively impacts their quality of instruction. To address these attitudes, an incentive scheme, such as a multi-grade teaching allowance, could be beneficial. This approach has been successfully implemented in the Republic of Vietnam and may be worth considering for satellite primary schools where mono-grade teachers are managing large multi-grade classes.

Although the administrative roles of TICs and NTSHs are similar, TICs also have full-time teaching responsibilities. The multiple leadership and management tasks assigned to TICs can limit their time for teaching and supervising other teachers. Appointing NTSHs to lead satellite primary schools would ensure that each class has a dedicated teacher, thereby enhancing the quality of school leadership, management, and overall education.

The administrative duties assigned to TICs can be overwhelming, particularly in the absence of clerks or bursars to help manage these responsibilities. If funding for NTSHs is not available, appointing Administrative Clerks as a temporary measure could alleviate some of this burden. By reducing the administrative workload for TICs, these clerks would allow them more time to focus on teaching and supervising their classes effectively.

The large, overcrowded, and unmanageable mono-grade and multi-grade classes in satellite primary schools are largely due to the TRF. This situation has resulted in a significant number of unemployed teacher graduates while satellite schools continue to struggle with severe understaffing. There is a strong need for the PSC to lift the TRF to address this issue.

Some satellite schools have adopted a DS system due to financial constraints faced by their SDCs in constructing adequate classrooms. The DS system reduces instructional time, compromising curriculum coverage and the overall quality of education. Historical successes in Zimbabwe's education sector during the early 1980s were attributed to government intervention in providing essential infrastructure. Therefore, the government must establish an Infrastructural Development Fund dedicated to the construction of teaching and learning facilities in satellite schools. This fund would also help improve poor living and working conditions that contribute to high teacher turnover.

The critical shortage of CBC materials, particularly textbooks and computers, is hindering the provision of quality education in satellite primary schools. Many schools do not meet the MSFS required for registration with the MoPSE to receive per capita grants for procuring these materials. The government needs to register all satellite schools and provide them with per capita grants. These grants would ensure that the schools have sufficient teaching and learning materials, that are vital for delivering quality education.

The findings on which this book is premised highlight several areas within pedagogical and management processes in satellite primary schools that warrant further investigation. Future research should focus on the nature and quality of MGT in these schools, the impact of the TIC role on the provision of quality education, and the effects of large class sizes on educational outcomes. Additionally, exploring the perceptions of TICs, teachers, parents, and learners regarding the double-shift system (DS) is recommended. There is also a need to examine the overall quality of pedagogical and management processes in satellite schools. Given that this book was limited to four satellite primary schools, including four TICs and 16 teachers, a comprehensive study at the district, provincial, or national level involving School Inspectors, TICs, teachers, parents, and learners is recommended. Investigating the pedagogical and management processes in satellite secondary schools is equally important for a holistic understanding of education quality in these contexts.

This book illuminates key challenges in delivering quality education in satellite primary schools, primarily stemming from pedagogical and management deficiencies. The lack of multi-grade pedagogy in both primary and teacher education curricula complicates effective teaching in multi-grade classrooms. Mono-grade teachers often focus on senior-grade content, neglecting junior grades and creating significant content gaps. TICs, Heads of 'mother schools', and School Inspectors also lack

training in multi-grade teaching, limiting their ability to support teachers in these settings. This deficiency is perpetuated by a "multi-grade blind" curriculum framework, highlighting the urgent need for a national multi-grade curriculum and teacher development programme.

Further complicating the situation are challenges posed by large class sizes and a shortage of CBC textbooks, which hinder effective teaching and lead to rote pedagogy. Teachers often find themselves overwhelmed with classroom management issues, resulting in lost instructional time and diminished educational quality. The dual role of TICs as both administrators and teachers adds another layer of complexity, restricting their capacity to provide individualised support and adequate supervision of curriculum implementation.

The DS model, implemented due to inadequate teaching space, adversely impacts teaching and learning conditions. Teaching under the shade of trees, amidst numerous distractions and a lack of essential resources, diminishes learners' motivation and academic outcomes. Financial constraints and infrequent supervision visits exacerbate these challenges, as many satellite schools struggle with limited resources, leading to poor infrastructure and high teacher turnover, which disrupts continuity in education.

Overall, the book concludes that a combination of pedagogical and management deficiencies, exacerbated by systemic challenges such as the absence of a multi-grade curriculum framework, large class sizes, administrative burdens, funding constraints, and ineffective supervision, collectively undermine the provision of quality education in satellite primary schools. A concerted effort from stakeholders at all levels is essential to implement comprehensive reforms that support both teachers and learners, ensuring that quality education is accessible to all students in these challenging environments.