



An Outcomes Evaluation of The Catch-Up Strategy Learning During the Covid Era in Glenview/Mufakose District- Harare in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

The research was an outcomes evaluation of the executed catch-up strategy, by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education from 2020 to date. The research study assessed the outcomes of the catch-up strategy looking at the impact, relevancy, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the intervention. The study incorporated a mixed methodology approach. This was done to capture the quantity and the feelings of the learners using the catch-up strategy. Questionnaires and Semi structured interviews were used to gather data from respondents. A total of 5 interviewees were interviewed and 50 questionnaires were administered to participants of the 10 primary schools in Glenview/Mufakose district in Harare Metropolitan Province. Purposive and random samplings were used. Document analysis was used too. The results of the study revealed that the intervention was of importance though it had some weaknesses. The findings showed that the major drawbacks to the achievement of desired objectives was lack of resources, lack of time to listen to radio lessons, lack of participation, lack of expertise and ignorance were found to be impediments to the sustainability of the project. The study proposed that communities should be empowered. Monitoring and evaluation should be in cahoots if the goals are to be recognised. Facilitators should be trained and equipped for skill enhancement. Resource mobilisation is for the proper and successful implementation. Awareness campaigns should be done to inform and educate various stakeholders. Laboratories should be equipped with the appropriate resources for practical lessons to be achieved. There is need to synchronize knowledge and practical assessment competencies. Radio lessons should be done at a convenient time to cater for learners after school lessons. Lessons are supposed to be learner centered. This calls for the reviewers to review the implementation strategies of the catch-up learning intervention.

Introduction

This research was an outcomes evaluation of the catch-up learning strategy employed in 2020 to date by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MOPSE). This comes as a panacea to the problems encountered due to the pandemic of covid-19. Several lockdowns hindered the learners from attending school. The SDG number 4 of quality education was set back hence the vision 2030 was downplayed. The government of Zimbabwe in collaboration with the UNICEF, propounded the catch-up strategy as a remedy to the learning time lost during the pandemic. This research evaluated the goals' impact, relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency as well as sustainability of the intervention.

Background

The covid-19 pandemic brought about numerous challenges other than spreading of the disease and death. Due to the spreading of the disease there were measures that were set to minimise the infection rate. Banning of movement and some lockdowns were set. This spared not the education system. The learners were forced to forgo schooling and resort to lockdown rules. Some of the schools were used as quarantine centres. Learning was no longer taking place for all ages and all schools even the private sector. One of the crucial rights of the child is right to education as stipulated in the Education Act 2000. Saini et al (2022:1) has it that, "One of the most prominent goals of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is to provide with high quality education". In order to fulfill the sustainable development goal number 4 of quality education by the year 2030 the MoPSE came up with interventions to make learners learn during the crisis. When learners are educated this will eradicate poverty hence sustainable development goal number 1 will be achieved.

The evaluation follows the government initiatives during covid-19 era where they embarked on strategies to catch-up the lost time in schools. Due to lockdown the schools were closed for longer time than before in the history of Zimbabwean education system. To cover up the wasted and disrupted time the government came up with strategies to help the learners. The catch-up strategy learning was done through the use of e-learning platforms, radio lessons, television lessons and whatsapp platforms created by teachers per grade level. The major issue was to make learners to complete their syllabuses despite the pandemic. The resources and activities were developed for Zimbabwean school learner. The activities were developed in consultation with Zimbabwean school teachers and community educators and have been used extensively by more than three thousand teachers and community educators. In promoting Catch-up and blended learning in schools, the heads of the stations were asked to do a number of things like encouraging staff to see that good literacy and numeracy increase percentage pass rate.

The main objective was to assess the outcome of the catch-up strategy during the covid-19 era in Glenview-Mufakose district primary schools. The evaluation looked at the extent to which the outcome achieved the syllabus completion. The assessment focused on checking if learners achieved anything during the intervention because it was a new challenge with a new strategy. The sustainability of the catch-up strategy was assessed. While checking the outcome, the evaluator checked if the project was implemented as planned for and identified if there are any grey areas which need improvement.

Pilot Testing

The evaluator checked the catch-up strategy employed at one of the schools and found out that some of the strategies worked while some faced challenges. This was noted in a small survey done at Budiriro 2 Primary school with a total enrolment of 2441 learners. Therefore, there is need to check the extent to which the catch-up strategy helped the learners during the lock down.

Evaluation questions.

- To what extent did the catch-up strategy helped the learners in Glenview/Mufakose district?
- How much time was devoted to the catch-up strategy?
- Is the impact of the intervention likely to sustain the learning system?

Evaluation objectives

The main objective of this evaluation is to measure project impact in relation to project objectives, design and its intervention. Specific objectives of the evaluation are:

- To identify the impact of Catch-up Learning Strategy in education system
- To evaluate time given to the program
- To assess if the intervention is likely to sustain in the future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nature of catch-up strategy

The SDGs need to be fulfilled for sustainable development to be there. One of the goals to be accomplished is goal number 4 which stipulates quality education for all. During the pandemic this goal suffered due to lockdowns. The exam writing classes were affected as well as other grades across the board. For learners to acquire quality education, they need to accomplish the syllabus content so that they move to the next level. The Narrative report (2015) say that, the aim of education was to come up with a balanced and broad based curriculum that promoted intellectual and physical development, the learners' spiritual, moral, cultural and expressive attributes, at school and in the world of work. The curriculum has to play a transformative role by bringing about the country's socio-economic development. Therefore, the MoPSE came up with a catch-up strategy for all learners to acquire quality education despite the lockdowns due to covid-19 pandemic. The catch-up strategy was coined in different forms such as radio lessons, television lessons and e-learning platforms. Many kids around the world are out of school, in fact, kids from the poorest households are four times more likely to be out of school than those of the richest households, (Ferguson et al, 2017). This implies that the nature of catch-up strategy could be segregative due to learners' different backgrounds.

Kaseke (2013) says that electricity is an important service in the economy. The nature of catch-up strategy revolves around the use of electricity. When there is no electricity it means learners were unable to tune and listen from the radio lessons as well as watching television lessons. Ferguson et al (2017) argues that, "Children from low income families often start school already behind their peers who come from more affluent families as shown in the measure of school readiness." Ferguson et al (2017) further alludes that, poverty remains a stubborn fact. Due to poverty equity and equality to education was not fairly addressed. Chisaka (2015) alludes that, poverty is a major drawback when it comes to educational attainment. Since it was a lockdown era those with televisions could lock in their children in fear of contacting Covid-19.

The nature of the catch-up strategy involved the use of computers for e-learning like Ruzivo platform, Profuturo and Learning passport. Khasawaneh (2021) has it that learners tend to avoid use of new technologies online class. Most learners have technophobia, they are afraid of technology. Rosen and Michele (2016) lament that, many measurement tools have been developed to measure computer phobia: computer fear and anxiety and they are high. This may mean that very few learners engage them in use of e-learning platforms. When the lessons were played, there was no digital library to allow students to access these radio lessons later, Mutsiwegota (2021)

Time given to the catch-up strategy

Curriculum Framework (2015) stipulates the time frame rendered to each of the learning area from Early Childhood Development Syllabus A (ECDA) to Early Childhood Development Syllabus B (ECDB), grades 1 to grade 7 and form 1 to form 6. Hours to be given to each learning area were given. It is against this background that there is need to find out the time given to the catch-up strategy learning during the lockdown era. The learner is supposed to spend 8 hours at school, break time and lunch included. Mukute et al (2020) say Several COVID-19 related challenges emerged from the interviews that

require significant adaptation by all teachers, learners and their parents. These include adapting to lessons periods for online learning and learning via radio and television programmes, the continuity of education from home, facilitated community-based learning, as well as the new costs of learning.

Sustainability of catch-up strategy

Every project should produce some results and after the donor funding the sustainability of each intervention need to be guaranteed. All programs which do not sustain will bear no impact to the community. The greatest levels of effectiveness can only be obtained if incorporated men direct the organisation towards the true sustainability, transforming the organisational culture, (Tariq et al 2021). Therefore, for a project to be effective it must continue to run in the absence of covid-19 and donor funding. Curriculum framework (2015) emphasises developing competence skills in learners so as to sustain communities towards achieving sustainable goals for 2030. Frey et al (2011) asserts that, skills are a requisite for a complete human being. The programme therefore, fails to address the skills to be equipped in learners. The skills are vital for socio-economic development. When these learners fail to get jobs after tertiary education, they can use the skills acquired to earn a living. Without skills learners will not be useful in their communities, (Krefting, 2011), therefore the program was supposed to cater for skills in learners. According to Education development Fund (2021:1), "Learners of every age will struggle in all their school learning areas if they do not have strong foundations in literacy and numeracy." This was also done to improve the literacy and numeracy rate in the country. In order to have a developed country people need to be literate.

Mutsiwegota (2021) avers that, despite the digital divide in Zimbabwe that is caused by various factors, chief among them, the cost of bandwidth, the platform has connectivity settings that are access friendly. With the Learning Passport, a learner has the ability to access hundreds of prerecorded radio lessons. These lessons can be downloaded on the dedicated Android Mobile application and then be played later offline in areas in communities or settings where there is less or no connectivity at all. However, a learner must have an android phone, laptop and bundles to access materials from the online platform. Those who lack data bundles and gadgets fail to learn during the catch-up strategy. The education Act amendment 2000 stipulates the cruciality of access to education. Zimbabwe constitution Act (2013) hammers the right to education of each child in the country. This makes the project suffer to sustain. Mutswigota (2021) avers that, the Learning Passport is trying to increase the availability of learning in areas where there is less connectivity; UNICEF is currently working to install offline versions of the Learning Passport, using a local server in a selected pool of 50 schools. Each of the selected schools has a computer laboratory that is already connected to a Local area network. Where there is no network, UNICEF is working to establish connectivity. This was done as an amendment when a lot of children have lost the learning chance. It was supposed to be done on the initial stage. Mukute et al (2020) posits that home learning has made the home a place for continued education and learning. But not all homes in southern Africa are suitable for student and adult learning. At a very basic level, many families do not have the space for both parents and students to work from home, which leads to competition for the use of limited home space for teaching, learning and work hence time given became limited.

Theoretical framework

Evaluation theories describe and prescribe what evaluators do or should do when conducting evaluations, (Chisaka, 2013). They specify such things as evaluation purposes, users, and uses, who participate in the evaluation process and to what extent, general activities or strategies, method choices, and roles and responsibilities of the evaluator, among others. (Coryn et al, 2011). Theoretical framework will help one to consider other possible frameworks and to reduce biases that may sway one's interpretation. In this evaluation the theoretical framework used was the experimental tradition which incorporate the quasi-experimental tradition and classical experimental design. It is also important to note that the quasi-experimental tradition because of its emphasis on the logic of experimentation (cause and effects) – automatically ended up focusing exclusively on outcome or impact evaluations with little regard for process and implementation evaluation questions. Therefore it suits well in the outcomes evaluation to be evaluated on the catch-up strategy. The theory allows the use of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies hence suitable for this project.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Methodology and justification of the chosen research methods.

The evaluation method follows a mixed method which uses qualitative and quantitative method. In this evaluation study, a mixed-method approach is used to collect and analyze data to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon. According to Shorten and Smith (2016) and the Food Risk Research Center (2016), the rationale for using a mixed methods approach is based on the idea that using both quantitative and qualitative method provides a better understanding of the research problems than one method. The short coming of one method is outweighed by the strengths of the other, and it helps to obtain information that is difficult to obtain with a single approach. In addition, this particular research strategy allows for data triangulation. According to Grand and Staff (1996), triangulation is very important to ensure validity and to check the accuracy of the results. Cohen and Manion (1994) also emphasized that the use of multi-methods helps explain the richness and complexity of human behavior more fully by examining it from more than one perspective. (Cohen and Manion, 2002; Altrichter et al., 2008) to get a clearer view of the relationships between the different variables. Applying the mixed methods approach means using more than one method of data collection to better explain the richness and complexity of the project results, thereby improving the validity and reliability of the data. This is further supported by Johnson et al. (2007) who found that the mixed-method approach improves data validity and reliability because it combines research results from two different approaches.

Target group

Since the catch-up strategy was done in all the 10 provinces in the country, it is difficult to carry out an outcomes evaluation in all the 10 provinces and all schools in Zimbabwe. It is however practical if a sample is to be taken for practical results to be produced. Sampling is the process of taking samples

of something for analysis. Charles and Fen (2012) define sampling as a process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population. Sampling is a process used in statistical analysis in which a predetermined number of observations is taken from a larger population. Sampling is done mostly for reasons of cost, time, accessibility, utility and speed. The methodology used to sample from a larger population depend on the type of analysis being performed which include simple random sampling, systematic sampling and cluster sampling. In this evaluation a sample of Glenview/Mufakose district primary school will be taken to represent the whole country's catch-up strategy. Since the evaluation is going to use the mixed methods the sampling procedure is going to follow the mixed approach. Purposive sampling, convenience sampling and simple random sampling. These sampling fit well when using mixed method approach.

Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling saves time since the evaluator chooses members of the population to participate in the program evaluation. For purposive evaluation the evaluator will deal with the 5 cluster heads in the district to answer interview questions on catch-up strategy intervention strategies.

Simple random sampling

Requires that each element of the population have an equal chance of being selected. A simple random sample is selected by assigning a number to each element in the population list and then using a random number table to draw out the elements of the sample. The element with the number drawn out makes it into the sample. Each member of the population is selected one at a time, independent of one another. However, it is noted that all elements of the study population are either physically present or listed. Also, regardless of the process used for this method, the process can be laborious especially when the list of the population is long or it is completed manually without the aid of a computer. A simple random sample can be got using calculator by use of the random key, a computer using excel function .In this method, every set of n elements in the population has an equal chance of being selected as the sample unit. It eliminates bias due to the personal judgement or discretion of the researcher. More representative of the population and its estimates are more accurate. Numbering of the elements in a population may be time consuming for example, large populations. Simple random sampling will be done for the number of learners who are going to respond to the questionnaires on how the catch-up strategy was **Convenient sampling**

This is a sampling method which is based on the proximity of the population elements to the decision maker, Boyatzis, 2014). Being at the right place at the right time. Elements nearby are selected and those not in close physical or communication range are not considered. The method is also called availability sampling method. Convenience sampling will be done on documents to be analysed on catch-up strategy. The available documents will be analysed. These documents will include the minutes for e-learning trainings, Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) radio and television lessons and compressed syllabuses. Number of sessions will be analysed.

Data collecting methods

Data collection is a systemic way of gathering information relevant to the research purpose or questions (Cohen and Manion, 2002). Both primary and secondary methods of data collection were used in this research. The triangulation of data collection tools were used to complement weaknesses of each method. The data collection tools to be used in this evaluation are document analysis, interviews and questionnaires.

Document analysis

There are three types of documents. Christine (2017) lists the three as, Public Records: The official, ongoing records of an organization's activities. Examples include student transcripts, mission statements, annual reports, policy manuals, student handbooks, strategic plans, and syllabi. Personal Documents: First-person accounts of an individual's actions, experiences, and beliefs. Examples include calendars, e-mails, scrapbooks, blogs, Facebook posts, duty logs, incident reports, reflections/journals, and newspapers. Physical Evidence: Physical objects found within the study setting (often called artifacts). Examples include flyers, posters, agendas, handbooks, and training materials. The documents in catch-up strategy will be analysed in all the 3 types. Documents such as radio, television schedules, workshops done, compressed syllabuses among others will be analysed. The analysis of data does not disturb the operational sequence, (Bascorn, 2009). The time needed to analyse documents is less than field observation. Since the catch-up strategy was already done and is still in the process, it will be plausible to analyse documents at hand to access the relevance of the intervention.

Interviews

McNamara (1999) alludes that, an interview is a conversation for gathering information. A research interview involves an interviewer, who coordinates the process of the conversation and asks questions, and an interviewee, who responds to those questions. Interviews can be conducted face-to-face or over the telephone. The internet is also emerging as a tool for interviewing. The interview in this evaluation will be done over zoom in order to see the facial expression as well as recording them for future use. Interviews help in qualitative research since the gestures and feelings can be easily seen in a discussion. One type of interview will be done. MacNamara (1999) says interviews are an appropriate method when there is a need to collect in-depth information on people's opinions, thoughts, experiences, and feelings. Semi-structured interviews will be used in this evaluation. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer uses a set of predetermined questions and the respondents answer in their own words. Some interviewers use a topic guide that serves as a checklist to ensure that all respondents provide information on the same topics. Cohen and Manion (2002) say that, the interviewer can probe areas based on the respondent's answers or ask supplementary questions for clarification. Chikomo (2006) says that, semi-structured interviews are useful when there is a need to collect in-depth information in a systematic manner from a number of respondents or interviewees. Individual interviews will be conducted on 5 cluster heads. Interviews help to see the reaction of the people about the catch-up strategy. The gestures like sorrowness and happiness can be easily seen.

Questionnaires

Data can also be collected using questionnaires and surveys which, at the same time, can become part of more extensive interviews, (Babbie, 2010). Masats (2017) denotes that, in interviews and other similar methods, the type of questions we include in questionnaires should make the participants feel comfortable. They should also be posed in a non-intrusive way so participants do not get the feeling we are judging their lifestyle, beliefs about different languages or linguistic behavior. Given that questions about attitudes towards catch-up strategy are usually quite sensitive issues, it is advisable to pose them indirectly or include them in more extensive conversations such as in questionnaires. In addition to data on attitudes, there are all kinds of other information such as age, educational level, family situation, country of origin, place of residence, school attended and many other additional details that might be relevant when it comes to the data analysis. This can be particularly important in defining the context of the research with a group of speakers or learners in a questionnaire method. Learners will be given questionnaires of how they viewed the catch-up strategy during the Covid era. Questionnaires can be given in numbers and learners can complete them during their own spare time hence flexible.

Ethical Considerations.

There are ten ethical questions to consider when conducting an evaluation, (Bryan and Bell, 2007). According to the ethical principles in the assessment, the evaluator will take several ethical aspects into account. With the letter (enclosure) provided by the university, the evaluator will ask the project implementers (MOPSE) for permission to conduct the study. In addition, the evaluator will obtain the informed consent of the concerned participants prior to the evaluation. The respondents will be informed in advance about the purpose of the study and give their consent. The evaluator will also consider the issue of anonymity, where respondents will be assured that their identification will not be required; this will also be done to prevent respondents from harm. Silverman (2002) indicates that, the issue of protecting participants' private data in research projects is very important, especially when working with children and young people in disadvantaged or socioeconomically complex situations. Provision needs to be made to obtain consent from all the participants and their legal guardians. This can be done by sending an explanatory letter outlining the objectives of the evaluation project and the type of data that will be collected from the participants. The evaluator will write letter explaining the purpose of study before collection of data. It is also important to explain how the data will be processed and the scope of their public disclosure (Dooly et al, 2017). The information that will be gathered as part of this evaluation will be primarily for academic purposes and will be treated with due confidentiality.

Challenges and Limitations.

The researcher encountered several challenges and limitations in conducting this evaluation. These were mostly monetary and time-dependent. The fact that this evaluation was not funded means that it is not a budgeted for, so the evaluator opted for a much cheaper method of data collection. Strass and Corbin (2010) avers that, some research collection tools are time consuming. In addition, the evaluator is unable to conduct an observation and instead opted for document analysis and interviews since observations are more expensive and time-consuming than previous methods.

Key results

The following section focuses on evaluation of findings and discussion. The section will look at responses from interview, questionnaires and document analysis. Results from this evaluation were presented using charts and graphs. It starts by providing demographic information of the participants. Finally, this section provides conclusions and recommendations. Findings were presented using the OECD evaluation criteria showing the outcomes evaluation regarding relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the catch-up strategy.

Demographic and social characteristics

55 participants were taken for evaluation, 50 learners using a questionnaire and 5 heads using interview. 50 learners were from different schools, 5 from each school to improve accuracy of outcomes and reducing bias. The participants comprised of females and males for gender balance. 25 female students and 25 male students. The cluster heads comprised of 2 females and 3 males. The table below summarises the demographic trends of participants in the study. Schools demographic characteristics for learners.

Demographic characteristics

| SCHOOL | FEMALES | MALES | TOTAL |
|--------|---------|-------|-------|
| A | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| B | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| C | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| D | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| E | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| F | 2 | 3 | 5 |

| | | | |
|------------|----|----|----|
| G | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| H | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| I | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| J | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| 10 SCHOOLS | 25 | 25 | 50 |

There was equal distribution of both girls and boys who participated in the survey. There was gender equity and equality of 50% on both sides.

Graph for demographic characteristics

The graph shows girls and boys who responded to the questionnaire on catch-up strategy.

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Age of Participants

| AGE | NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS |
|-----|------------------------|
| 8 | 4 |
| 9 | 5 |
| 10 | 4 |
| 11 | 9 |
| 12 | 6 |
| 13 | 5 |
| 14 | 17 |

The age of respondents included infant and junior school learners since both do catch-up strategy. This will help to capture infant and junior activities.

Graph on age for respondents

Number of subjects learnt at school

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Infant | Junior |
| Indigenous language | English |
| English | Indigenous language |
| Maths and science | Mathematics |
| Physical education | Fareme |
| Mass display | Heritage |
| Information communicationTechnology | Physical education |
| Heritage and Social studies | Visual and Performing arts |
| - | Information communicationTechnology |
| - | Agriculture |
| 7 | 9 |

The above table shows number of learning areas (Subjects) offered at both infant and junior level. Infant school does 7 subjects excluding Agriculture and Visual and performing arts. It has been noted that infant school do mass display and physical education separately. The infant school does not do Fareme which deals with religion. Indigenous language differs with community, so they are many but the questionnaire was given to those doing ChiShona Language.

Number of sessions done

From the study the learners showed that they do not know the number of sessions done. Some said they were not given the timetable for catch-up strategy. One respondent indicated on the questionnaire like:

Sometimes there is no electricity so when electricity is available I saw part of the lesson so I don't know. one said, "My father supports Arsenal so I tune onto ZTV when he is not in, so I don't know".

Impact of catch-up strategy on learning

| | |
|-----|----|
| Yes | No |
| 11 | 39 |

Out of 50 learners only 11 said the catch-up strategy has got an impact on learning whilst 39 said it has no impact on learning.

Pie chart on impact of catch-up Learning

The pie chart shows that only less than a quarter said catch-up strategy have impact on learning put 3/4 has it that it never impacted learning.

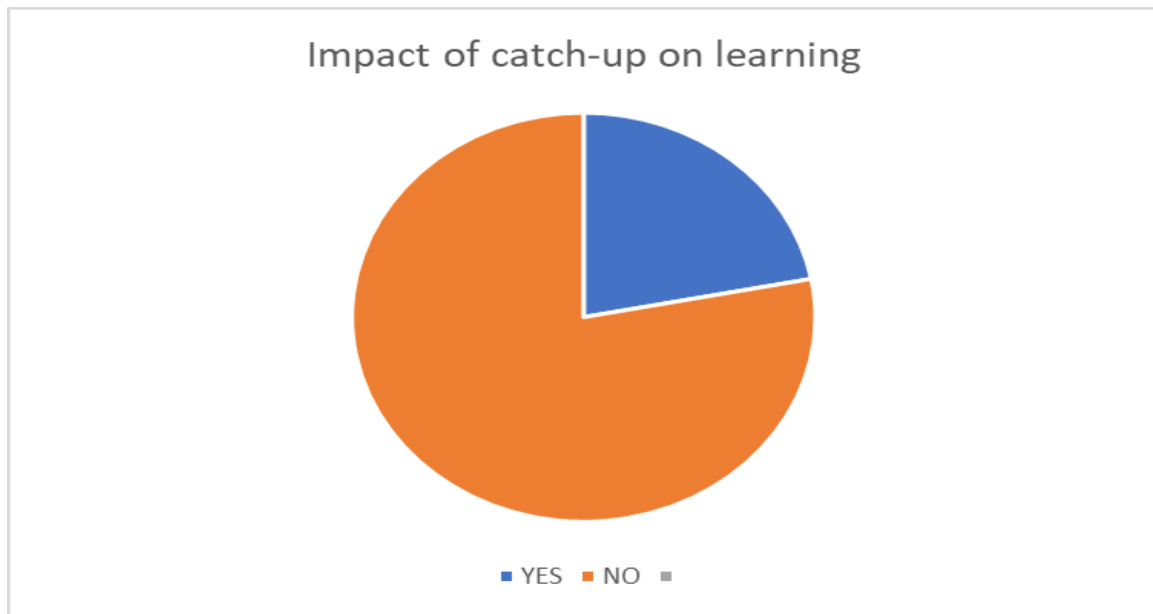


Table on Resource to implement catch-up strategy

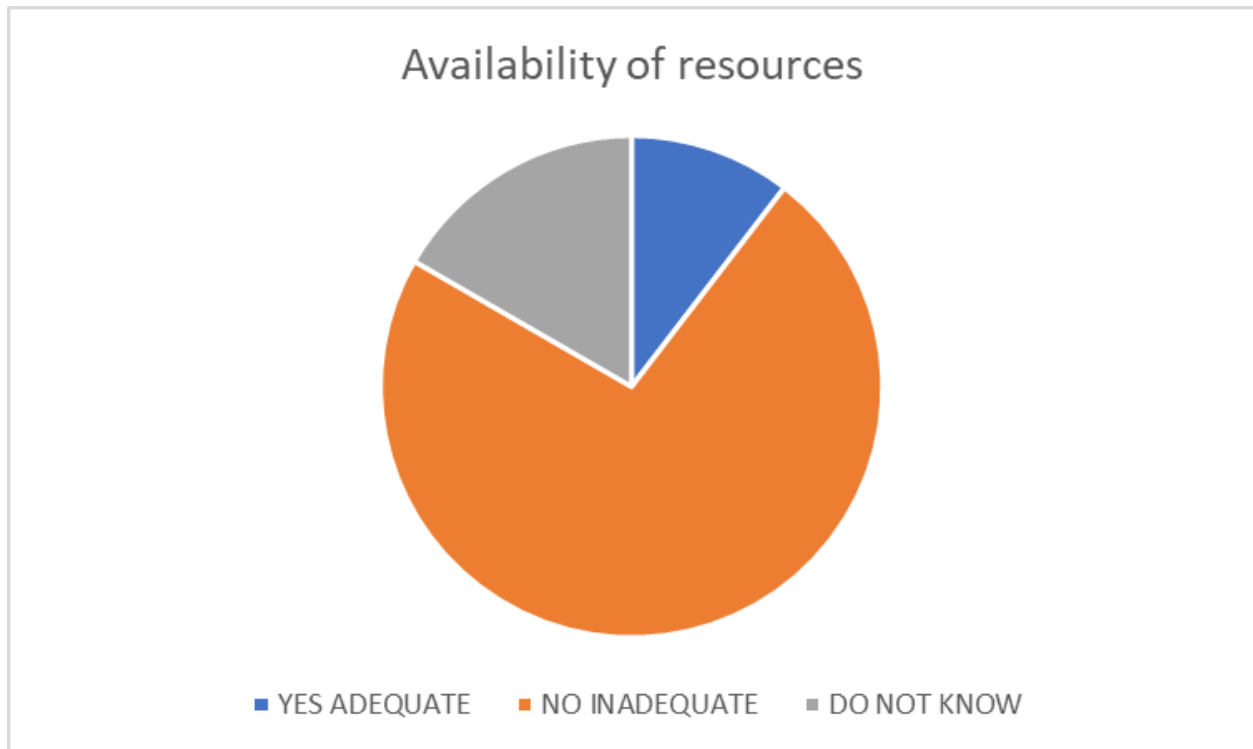
| | | |
|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| yes adequate | no inadequate | Do not know |
| 7 | 35 | 8 |

From the most learners are in agreement that the resources are inadequate. Some indicated on questionnaire that they do not have radios and television. Some said they have the laptops but do not have wifi to connect for e-learning. Some said they need trained personnel to teach them how to navigate the e-learning platform. Some said they do not have electricity .8 do not know if the resources are there meaning they cannot understand the question.

4.1.4 Availability of resources

Pass rate 2020

Most school had % pass rate which was more than 50%. The highest had 83.4% and the least had 65%



Pass rate 2021

Most school had % pass rate which was more than 50%. The highest had 93.4% and the least had 61%

From the above percentage pass rate it shows the 10 schools had percentage pass rate of more than 50%

Table 4.6 Competences from Catch-up strategy

| Competences | No of participants |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| problem solving | 1 |
| critical thinking | 1 |
| leadership skills | 0 |
| communication skills | 3 |
| technological skills | 25 |
| enterprise skills | 0 |
| self-management skills | 1 |
| management skills | 0 |
| innovation skills | 0 |
| life long and continuous learning | 19 |

Most of the learners got the 50% technological skills from the catch-up strategy. No one gained the skills like leadership, enterprise, management and innovation skills. 2% goes for the following skills problem-solving, critical thinking and self-management skills. 6% goes to communication skills. 38% was for lifelong and continuous learning. Learners are supposed to gain skills as they learn for future use even in the community and industry world.

Number of participants on skills



Interview responses

Demographic table for cluster heads

| CLUSTER | FEMALES | MALES | TOTAL |
|---------|---------|-------|-------|
| 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

Only 5 cluster heads participated in the interview questions which were done individually over a zoom meeting. That included 2 females and 3 males.

Graph for cluster heads

The graph showed the number of cluster heads who participated in the evaluation research. There were only 5 clusters each represented by one head.

Reaction on catch-up strategy

Most of them showed that it was hurriedly done. They said it really needs re-adjustment. One cluster head said, “A good programme which lacked planning, how can you broadcast on ZBC, when the targeted person do not have a radio, whom are you teaching”

The other head laughed saying, “Is the catch-up strategy meant for Zimbabweans? E-learning is failing at schools how can it be done at home, where the whole community does not even have a single laptop? Who is going to distribute the data bundles?”

The responses showed that the reaction was negative due to improper planning of the programme.

Chances brought about catch-up strategy

The responses showed that it brought some changes to those with resources; they were kept occupied there by reducing unwanted pregnancies and drug abuse.

Relevancy of catch-up strategy one head said, “This programme was very relevant given the fact that learners were on lockdown and learning was rampant”. It helps the learners to revise other concepts. Learners were occupied with TV and radio lessons. “It only lacked resources but very relevant

in the covid-19 era”

Major challenges noticed by the community

The 5 heads narrated the challenges noticed by the community in the catch-up strategy. Lack of resources was one of the challenges. From the interview it showed that most of the families do not have radios to tune in the radio lessons. Some people do have the radios but are affected by the load shedding of electricity. Those who use solar system conserve power for lights. Some families do not have televisions. Those with TVs sometimes elders have their programs to watch thereby shunning the kids the opportunity to watch. On e-learning most families do not have both laptops and data to run the e-learning platform. Profuturo e-learning was too heavy for laptops below core i5 hence the core i7 once were very expensive to buy. Profuturo also work with Linux which is not under friendly with many learners. The phone memory was challenge to many e-learning platforms. Most learners revealed that the lessons were repetitive in nature some students will then go for cartoons. Another challenge was that the broadcasted lessons were teacher centred, and the learner is only a listener.

Improvements that can be done

The 5 heads suggested that there is need for proper planning in terms of resources and time. They said some lessons run while learners were at school. Radios must be donated first as well as televisions. The communities must be empowered to find ways of mobilising resources for such good programs. Learners need to be taught on how to navigate some of the e-learning platforms. Lessons should be interactive in nature so that they are learner centred not to only hear the teacher which is a traditional way of learning.

Document analysis on catch-up strategy

The evaluator also looked at various documents in line with the catch up strategy. Among them were the compressed syllabuses, ZBC timetables, school schedule programs and workshops held.

Compressed syllabuses

The evaluator noted that the MOPSE came up with compressed syllabuses to cover up the time lost in the covid-19 era. Primary education was compressed into 3 syllabuses divided into lower, medium and upper primary. This was meant to cover up the syllabi. The teachers had to use summarised syllabi, but the exam was not summarised. The exam followed the national syllabus. Therefore the teachers ended up using both the national syllabuses as well as compressed one.

Timetables

MINISTRY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

ZBC Radio Lessons Programme Fifth Schedule

ECD TO ZJC (Competence Based Curriculum)

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in conjunction with ZBC, UNICEF, and FACT Zimbabwe will be rolling out the Fifth Phase of radio lessons as part of alternative learning platform. Lessons for this Fifth Schedule for 2022 will be aired from 16 May to 29 May 2022. Thereafter, another schedule will be released. Parents/guardians and teachers are advised to familiarise themselves with the schedule so that they may assist learners` as much as possible.

Week 9 (16 to 22 May 2022)

| Day | ECD | Grade 1 | Grade 6 | Form 1 | Form 2 |
|------------------------|--|--|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Monday 16 May | 1:15-1:30pm Maths and Science Radio Zim | | 3:05-3:30pm IsiNdebele Classic 263 | 2:05-2:30pm English NFM | 3:30-4:00pm Heritage Studies NFM |
| Wednesday 18 May | | 2:15-2:30pm Maths and Science Radio Zim | 3:05-3:30pm Shona NFM | 2:05-2:30pm FRS NFM | 3:30-4:00pm Business Studies NFM |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---|--|-------------------------------|
| Thursday 19 May | 1:15-1:30pm Maths and Science Radio Zim | | 3:05-3:30pm English NFM | 2:05-2:30pm Shona NFM | 3:30-4:00pm English NFM |
| Saturday 21 May | | 2:15-2:30pm English Radio Zim | 3:05-3:30pm Heritage Studies NFM | 2:05-2:30pm Business Studies NFM | 3:30-4:00pm Shona NFM |
| Sunday 22 May | 1:15-1:30pm English Radio Zim | | 3:05-3:30pm Science and Technology NFM | 2:05-2:30pm Heritage Studies NFM | 3:30-4:00pm FRS NFM |

Week 10 (23 to 29 May 2022)

| Day | ECD | Grade 1 | Grade 7 | Form 1 | Form 2 |
|------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Monday 23 May | 1:15-1:30pm Maths and Science Radio Zim | | 3:05-3:30pm IsiNdebele Classic 263 | 2:05-2:30pm English NFM | 3:30-4:00pm Heritage Studies NFM |
| Wednesday 25 May | | 2:15-2:30pm Maths and Science Radio Zim | 3:05-3:30pm Shona NFM | 2:05-2:30pm FRS NFM | 3:30-4:00pm Business Studies NFM |
| Thursday 26 May | 1:15-1:30pm English Radio Zim | | 3:05-3:30pm English NFM | 2:05-2:30pm Shona NFM | 3:30-4:00pm English NFM |
| Saturday 28 May | | 2:15- 2:30pmEnglis h Radio Zim | 3:05-3:30pm Heritage Studies NFM | 2:05-2:30pm Business Studies NFM | 3:30-4:00pm Shona NFM |
| Sunday 29 May | 1:15-1:30pm Maths and Science Radio Zim | | 3:05-3:30pm Maths NFM | 2:05-2:30pm Heritage Studies NFM | 3:30-4:00pm FRS NFM |

The above 5th schedule shows that only 4 lessons were aired per day from ECD to form 6. From the questionnaire it showed that the infant learners had 7 subjects and juniors 9 subjects respectively. The system showed a lot of loopholes than solutions. Mathematics according to the syllabus should be done daily yet in the broadcasting can be done once a week per grade. Coverage was not adequately done.

School schedule programs. The timetable interchange the grade yet learning was supposed to be done by all learners. The timetable lessons time was done in the afternoon when learners were still at school thereby losing lessons. The broadcasting was also done at different stations and at the same time. For example 18 May Grade 1 2:15 to 2:30pm Radio Zimbabwe and Form 1 2:05 to 2:30 at National FM, if a family have a form1 and a grade 1 one will lose a lesson

Workshops held- In consultation with MOPSE officials several workshops were on radio, television, e-learning and syllabus compression. Profuturo donated some laptops in some parts of Zimbabwe in Matabeleland South and North province. However other schools were instructed to buy. A school could buy only one laptop to cover for a bigger enrolment of about 1800 learners which was not practical. The workshops done were meant for broadcasters, few teachers to cascade the programme. There was nothing to equip the learners and the community.

Conclusions

Main Findings 1: Resource availability for catch-up strategy

The interviews and questionnaire responses showed that the implementation of the catch-up strategy was hindered by lack of resources like laptops, televisions, and radios. Lack of proper training for learners on e-learning affected the success in the intervention process. Some participants also cited that resources are a problem since learners their parents do not have radios nor televisions. Lack of government support in providing basic resources for the normal implementation process to reach the target. Resources were grouped into financial and material resources. Learners also lamented time as a scarce resource in implementing the catch-up strategy. They lamented that it's done when they are at school. The implementation of e-learning was a major concern, since some of the learners that they need data and computers for implementing the programme. Shortage of electricity was also a setback to smooth running of the catch-up strategy. Lack of resources need to be addressed in order for intervention to take off smoothly.

Main Findings 2: Impact of the catch-up strategy

Results of the catch-up strategy could be seen from the change in behaviour and change in pass rate. The pass rate in 2020 and 2021 was not all that different so it shows some positive impact. Impact of the catch-up strategy was seen from the skills developed by learners. Learners zeroed on listening on radio lessons and shun drugs and other behaviours like getting unwanted pregnancies. Learners appreciated that learning is not only done at school but can be done at home in time of crisis. Different skills are developed as learners are involved in practical applications of knowledge. The impact is seen as ever changing individual is transformed time and again. There was promotion of Open Distance Learning (ODL). Long term effects of education are seen in the use of knowledge practically. The outcome evaluation shows that catch-up strategy provides a permanent impact and reinforces the skills.

Main Findings 3 Skills and competencies

It can be concluded that the participants developed different skills during the implementation of the catch-up strategy. It was noted that technological skill was achieved more than any other skill followed by lifelong and continuous learning. The programme can be improved to cater for other crucial skills. The outcome evaluation showed that different learners developed different skills due to the introduction of the catch-up strategy

Main Findings 4: Relevancy

The responds from the interview showed that more than 85% indicated that the catch-up strategy fits very well to the changing world events. One of the participants cited that catch-up strategy is very relevant and makes learners access and acquire quality education .However; most respondents showed that there was poor planning and the catch-up strategy should be interactive in nature. The outcome evaluation reflected that participants were satisfied that the catch-up strategy is quite relevant to technological changes and in other emerging issues such as covid-19 and other natural disasters like cyclones...

Main Findings 5: Sustainability

The people were worried about resources; hence they feel if the resources are channeled towards the catch-up strategy it can sustain. The sustainability of the program will make it possible for facilitators to cover up for other concepts. The school heads have a view that the program can sustain if the communities are empowered to get resources for their children. 50% of the participants indicated that the initiative or the intervention is very sustainable in the future as the process improves individual skills and help learners to learn online. Given the Zimbabwean situation whereby some learners drop out of school due to several reasons, they can also learn using the catch-up strategy. As the catch-up strategy spearhead the learning during the covid-19 storm, it is the only way to go since it is relevant, effective, efficiency and sustainable.

Potential policy implications

The following recommendations were made based on the conclusions presented above:

Resources should be mobilised by the government, community and the schools for the proper and successful implementation of the catch-up strategy. Laboratories should be equipped with the right resources in order for practical deliveries to be successful.

Therefore, the government should source resources to help communities to catch-up during natural and pandemic disasters.

Learners should be equipped with skills on how to navigate through some other e-learning platforms.

E-learning platforms should be designed in such a way to work without data bundles. The government can also partner with other stakeholders for provision of data bundles.

Resources to be broadcasted should be learner centred to avoid boredom. Learner centredness activities help to foster numerous skills in learners. Learning areas should focus on building competency skills in learners like self-management skills, leadership skills, innovative among others

Coverage of syllabus should be seen in catch-up strategy not to offer one learning area session per week.

Teachers need refresher and in-house training to revive their operational assessment language and concepts, Teachers need re-tooling on day-to-day practical assessment competencies, MoPSE may need to accelerate teacher professional standards among teachers.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

MOPSE –Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

SDG-The Sustainable Development Goals

UNICEF-United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

USAID-United States Agency for International Development.

ZBC- Zimbabwe Broadcasting co-operation

TV- Television

ZTV -Zimbabwe Television

OECD-Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

ECD-Early Childhood Development