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The effects of economic instability on teachers in decentralized secondary school in Zimbabwe: A Case of Mashonaland Central Province

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Abstract: The purpose of the study was to analyse the effects of economic instability on teachers in decentralized secondary schools in Mashonaland Central Province, Zimbabwe between 2000 and 2017. This study used habitus and social capital as a conceptual framework. This was a qualitative study, which made use of a multi-case research design. Data was collected using focus group discussions, interviews and document analysis. Eight research sites in the form of secondary schools in four districts were used. Data analysis was done using theoretical prepositions guided by research objectives and research questions. Data presentation was characterised by quotes of participants. The study revealed that economic instability had negative results in the field of secondary schools. Economic instability negatively affected teaching and learning. In addition, economic instability affected individual secondary school teachers psychologically as their social status was battered. Economic instability affected relations between teachers and other secondary school actors by aggravating already existing contestations. Economic instability forced teachers to resort to other activities in order to survive the economic situation, which negatively affected teaching and learning. The study has shown that decentralized secondary schools found it difficult to solve the problems brought about by economic instability especially when the instabilities occurred within the difficulties of the broader Zimbabwean context. It is recommended that decentralized secondary schools should be assisted financially and with resources to withstand economic challenges. Further similar research is recommended for other provinces in the country.

Key words: economic instability, effects, habitus, social capital, field, decentralized secondary schools.

I. INTRODUCTION

The economy of Zimbabwe recorded a growth between 1980 and 1990 as pointed out by Mazingi and Kambidzi (2011:328) who said that the “first decade of independence witnessed an average growth rate of about 11%.” However, as the first decade was coming to an end the country began to experience some economic problems, which resulted in the government resorting to the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) as prescribed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) (Ncube, 2000, Murisa, 2010). The results of ESAP were negative especially for provision of social services like education and health, as citizens were now required to pay for these in full without the state subsidizing (Murisa, 2010). The economic situation was worsened by worker retrenchments in both the public sector

and private sector because of ESAP (Ncube, 2000, Murisa, 2010). The second decade of independence also experienced other problems that exacerbated the economic situation: droughts, the land reform program, the involvement of the Zimbabwe army in the civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and unbudgeted gratuities for the war veterans. (AfDB/OECD 2003, Murisa, 2010).

The Zimbabwean government in the 1990s introduced measures based on structural adjustment programmes as advised by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). The measures led to far reaching consequences on how government institutions were governed. One such measure introduced in education was decentralisation. One measure taken by the government was to cut costs in the provision of social services such as education. The government moved from a highly centralized school system (Reynolds cited in Chikoko, 2006) to a decentralized education system epitomized by giving power to School Development Committees (SDC) in non-government schools and to School Development Associations (SDA) in government schools. Thus by a legal instrument, Statutory Instrument 87 of 1992, each primary and secondary school ran its own financial and other governance issues. The main government roles in schools that remained were the payment of teachers’ salaries and standards control. The Zimbabwean government hoped that a decentralized school system would also reduce costs, improve pass rates, help develop schools and improve the quality of education.

The importance of a conducive environment for the provision of education is well known (Hussein, 2011 et al, Smith & Vaux, 2003). Nevertheless, even in unstable situations governments have been urged to protect schools and ensure that learning continues (Smith & Vaux, 2003). Teaching and learning thrive better in situations of stability. Nir and Bhojray (2013:1) believe that economic stability helps to create ‘essential infrastructure’ in schools. Although Zimbabwe enjoyed economic development after independence, economic problems began to be experienced after 1990 (Murisa, 2010) which became acute after 2000 (AfDB and OECD, 2003). After 2000, economic problems became major issues which affected citizens and institutions (Gwenhamo, et al 2012; Chavhunduka and Bromley, 2010; Moss and Patrick, 2006).

While literature in Zimbabwe and elsewhere has shown that teachers in secondary schools were affected by economic instabilities (Conyers 2003; Mendoza-Botelho, 2013), there is a necessity for a study, which analyses how teachers were affected by economic instability using the concepts of social capital and habitus. The study adds a new dimension to the field of sociology of education by revealing the dynamics of how teachers in secondary schools are confronted with economic situations that unstable in Zimbabwe. Findings from the study will help to fill gaps in literature using habitus and social capital as tools of analysis. Usually the discourse of the sociology of education which student teachers are exposed to is that of stable environments or normal relations among stakeholders responsible for running schools. The new literature to emerge from this study will assist in understanding teachers in secondary schools in situations of economic instability, which are common, especially in developing countries like Zimbabwe.

The role of teachers in the social capital matrix is central to the relationships, which exist in schools and surrounding communities (Healey, 2011). Teachers work with pupils, heads of schools and parents in the execution of their duties. Without teachers, learning becomes difficult as they facilitate what goes on in the classroom. Teachers were affected by the economic problems experienced in the country. This means that teachers had to battle with many issues as they did their work. It is therefore important to study how teachers were affected by the economic instabilities since their habitus and social capital is central in the teaching and learning process.

Mashonaland Central Province is a one of the smallest provinces in the country but it is a microcosm of the whole country in terms of characteristics. The characteristics include those of having rural area, urban and farming regions as seen in other parts of the country. Even in terms of education, the province has urban schools, boarding schools and rural schools. In terms of ownership, there are government schools, local council schools, church schools and private schools. In carrying out this study, it is important to take cognisance of these characteristics as each may be affected differently by economic instabilities. In view of the above the study included participants from urban schools and rural schools. Then schools in terms of ownership it included government, church school and local authority.

Elliot et al (2013:461) refer to economic instability as income shocks, asset shocks, home loss and asset poverty. Economic instability is characterised with macro-economic instability, reform that is slow, weak institutions, domestic and international burdens, dominant informal sector and crime (Dimitrov, 1999). Absence of rule of law, absence of checks, balances, and competition, and of a social safety net worsened economic instability (ibid). The results of all these aspects of economic instability are loss of value for assets, low life expectancy, tension in society, insecurity and loss of will to reform (ibid).

Okpala and Jonsson (2011:88-91) identify corruption, crime, misuse of official power, urbanization and literacy rates as some of the causes of economic instability. Possible consequences of economic instability on families include “risk of marital dissolution, family disorganization, physical abuse, child neglect, family breakdowns, frustration, anger, general demoralisation and health problems” (Conger et al, 1992:526). Elliot (2013:469) discovered that “early economic hardships in a child’s life, especially before eleven years, can have a negative effect on a child’s academic achievement.”

The economic history of countries is characterised by economic instability indicated by depressions and booms, unemployment, major depressions and minor slumps and inflation (Claessens and Kose, 2013). The history of the countries in the world is characterised by “crises and collapse” (Grinin, 2012:126). Grinin goes to add that instability in countries is inevitable and is a result of systems and evolution. Zimbabwe had its share of economic challenges since independence but the challenges from about 2000 have been acute and long standing leading to the country having the highest inflation in the world in 2008. Another disturbing feature of the economic problems in the country is the unwillingness of the outside world to assist because of governance issues, issues to do with the land reform or failure to service loans. Hence, the economic instability has dragged on for a long period that had an impact on the main actors in the education system.

Conceptual framework

The study used the concepts of habitus and social capital as a guide. Habitus is the process whereby individuals have acquired particular dispositions, which influence how they behave, or act in particular encounters (Reay et al 2009:1105). Action of human beings is strategic and practical to them, not just subjective or objective (Bourdieu cited in Swartz, (2002:62S). How human beings act is based on “past experiences and opportunities and constraints offered by present situations” (Ngarachu, 2014:59). So Swartz (2002:63S) argues that habitus leads to “practices of a particular manner of style.” For example, habitus influences a person to refuse or attempt to avoid those situations that he/she is not familiar with to suit prevailing circumstances.

A field is a social space that is relatively autonomous from its environment (Buchholz 2016; Warde, 2004). Habitus is formed in a field, which can be “social, political or economic” (Gennrich, 2015:5). For Pickel (2005:16), habitus is found in “concrete social systems like a family, firm, school or organisation.” Education is an example of a social field, which means a school is a form of field. A field is a “dynamic social arena” (Gennrich, 2015:5) which may bring about changes to the actors within. For example, Warde (2004:12) argues that a field is “an arena of constant struggle for stakes.” Indeed, Ngarachu (2014:11) see fields as “power arenas” and regard the field of education as such an arena where there is a “constant power struggle among actors striving to maintain the positions they have.” Education within a particular country

is a field, which has sub-fields in different provincial education departments and further sub-fields at individual schools. As such, schools are sites or fields of struggle between heads, teachers, pupils, parents and other stakeholders. These are “agents who negotiate their activities and positions according to how they perceive their roles in the objective reality of the school as a field” (Gennrich, 2015:5). As noted by Warde (2004:12) the way the agents negotiate their activities depends on the capital that they possess: a “field has structured positions whose occupants typically have different resources and dispositions.” The resources and dispositions constitute the capital that people possess. For Bourdieu, there are three main types of capital, namely economic, cultural, social (Bourdieu, 1986; Nicolaescu and Contemir, 2010).

Social capital refers to affiliation to a group (Bourdieu, 1986; Nicolaescu and Contemir, 2010). Capital embodies the resources (possessions) that an individual has at her/his disposal that are valued in the game (Gaddis, 2012). Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) use the word ‘game’ in a colloquial way to try to explain what happens in a social field characterised by different players. For Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:62), a “feel for the game” enables some players who possess similar capital in the field to become effective and succeed. This is further elaborated by Martina (2006) who says a feel for the game means knowing the rules of the game that implies an understanding of how a game is played. This knowledge is then used to benefit one’s own trajectories or life using relationships with those with similar status. If one is a part of a field it would mean one has a liking for the game (Larson, et al, no date) or if a person is disadvantaged, he/she may not have a liking for the game. When one has a “liking for the game it will lead to the acquisition of routines” (McKinnon, 2016:535). Darmondy (2012:533) summarizes the importance of feel for the game, which has become routinized: it enables members to act without labouring much on what to do; it helps members to develop new behaviours, skills and tastes when an individual confronts uncomfortable situations; and be able to overcome discomfort by retreating to one’s comfort zone. In terms of this research, teachers in secondary schools knew what was expected of them so they had a feel for the game. However, since 2000 teachers in secondary schools have been confronted with uncomfortable situations that did not allow them to play the game as usual. The uncomfortable situations were the economic instabilities experienced in the country since 2000. How did the instabilities change the feel for the game? How were teachers’ routines affected?

Habitus expresses an individual’s disposition that stems from her/his position in the game or her/his feel for the game (Gaddis, 2012). For example, in the education field students are one set of actors whose goal is to meet the standards in order to move to the next level of the game (ibid). Teachers are another set of actors whose goal in the game is to ensure that students meet the standards of the game by assisting them to learn.

The study used the concept of habitus as a lens to analyse how secondary school teachers as actors in social fields were affected by economic instability. The habitus lens has been found to be useful because of characteristics that it possesses: First habitus influences actors to do certain things (Mills, 2008). This is what Bourdieu says of habitus as ‘structuring.’ Secondly, habitus is not fixed or permanent but “changes as a result of unexpected situations” (Maggioli, 2014:190). This is similar to what Schaeider and Lang (2014) refer to as habitus transformation. Third is that the habitus of different actors in a field is different. This means the habitus of teachers, students, parents and teachers is not the same. As observed by Darmondy (2012:533), “habitus refers to the essence of being a person.” Thus Darmondy (2012:533) explains that each of the stakeholders in the school has own “opinions and outlooks.” McKinnon (2016:538) identifies the habitus of teachers in the school as “helping children to learn and change, to mark and grade the work of students, exercising authority and dominant habitus.” Fourth is that habitus is a strategy generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations (Mills, 2008). Last is that habitus has capacity for improvisation (Czerniewicz and Brown, 2014). This means habitus has capacity to be innovative.

In social capital, there is investment in relations with others. Thus as an arena of social relations schools are characterized by social capital. One of the objectives of the study is to analyse the effects of economic instability on the relations between teachers and other school actors. Bourdieu (cited by Gudmundsson and Mikiewiwz (2012) adds that social capital is a resource which assists the individual to have quality relationships with others. The parent-teacher relationship is a form of social capital, which is useful for schools to develop (Gudmundsson and Mikiewiwz, 2012). Schools benefit from such relationships by getting financial support, interdependence, democratic practices, responsibility and mutual support. From such relations members involved gain skills in civic affairs, social and professional support, or volunteering. The teacher-pupil relationship is another important form of social capital in the field of education. This is an example of school-based social capital which Gudmundsson and Mikiewiwz (2012) assert has a positive effect on academic achievement.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Economic instability is a result of many factors. In Zimbabwe, Kairiza (2012) identifies a string of factors, which led to the collapse of the economy starting from 1997. Kairiza’s analysis shows that Zimbabwe’s economic problems stemmed from “populist decisions” by the government. The problems included paying 60 000 war veterans as a way of appeasing them (each received 50 000 Zim \$, equivalent to 3000 USD in 1997); compulsory acquisition of white owned farms; and the sending of troops to the Democratic Republic of Congo which proved to be a costly venture. Kairiza (2012) shows that these actions were followed by other factors which worsened the

already volatile situation: imposition of sanctions by western countries for human rights abuses; the freezing of financial support by the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) for failure to service loans; and price controls which led to shortages of basic goods.

Studies indicate that economic instability affects various activities such as education. Education International (2010:2-4) found that in Africa economic crisis slows progress in education as it induced teacher shortage and less expenditure on education. Economic hard times can have severe consequences for families (Conger et al, 1992:526). The effects of economic instability are many and varied but this study is limited to how economic instability affected secondary school teachers.

The World Health Organisation (2011:7) said, “Economic crisis negatively affected mental health.” Botou et al (2017) add that economic crisis worsens the stress of teachers as indicated by feeling insecure, frustration, resentful and anger and negative mood. Wahlbeck & Awolin (2009:1) found out that economic instability caused psychological stress leading to depression, anxiety disorders and even suicides as parents struggled to take care of families. Botou et al. (2017:137) also conclude that economic crises “intensify problems of mental disorders within families.” The study by WHO is from a public health point of view, which uses previous literature for its presentation and analysis, so it is not a primary source. The study by Botou et al (2017) is a quantitative study that used questionnaires to collect data in a survey design. They used resilience as the guiding theory from a psychology perspective. Wahlbeck and Awolin’s (2009) study is based on a literature search from a mental health paradigm. The present study is a qualitative study, which used a case study design and collected data using interviews, focus group discussion and documents.

Studies indicate that economic challenges had a negative effect on the standard of living of teachers. Botou et al. (2017:136) revealed that economic crisis changes the lifestyle of teachers as the value of their low salaries is reduced. In addition, Wahlbeck & Awolin (2009:1) said that in Europe the economic crisis led to unemployment levels to rise leading to changes in standards of living. Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Unit (2011:37) said, “Collection and administration of levies in some cases strained teacher-parent relationships.” Research by Kneale, et al. (2014:5) indicated that in times of economic crisis, relationships with others is affected. For example, their study revealed that recession in Europe caused arguments over money, which affected relationships. In addition, Kneale et al. (2014) pointed that financial problems and unemployment reduces the quality of relationships by increasing conflict among the different social classes. The studies show that relations in schools are negatively affected by economic instability. The study by Kneale et al (2014) is from a relational perspective, which differs from this present study, which is using habitus as a tool of analysis.

Further studies show that economic problems affected teachers’ attendance at schools. A study by Chene (2015) in Zimbabwe showed that there was a budget cut to education, which resulted in shortages in schools that affected teachers’ capacity to do school work. The author goes on to say there was a lot of absenteeism by teachers, which resulted in reduced schoolwork for students. Manguvo et al (2011) found out that there was a breakdown of discipline in Zimbabwean secondary schools, such as skipping lessons, drug abuse or vandalism due to economic problems as teachers no longer cared about disciplining students.

Studies also reveal that economic challenges have affected the way of life of people. For example, a study carried out in Zimbabwe by Chagonda (2012:11) revealed that teachers had become the “laughing stock of society” because of their low salaries. In addition, Chagonda (2010:4) found out that “hyperinflation led to an increase in poverty among the general populace.” Such changes in the way people lived affected teachers.

When people are in an economic crisis they find other means to survive (Wahlbeck & Awolin, 2009, Chagonda, 2012, Villiers et al., 2017, Filippa et al, 2013). Beats and Willekens (2009:10) also aptly point this out when they say “...periods of economic crisis offer opportunities for innovation and productivity...” In reference to migration as a coping mechanism to economic problems, the former Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon said “... human mobility can be a tool to help lift us out of this economic crisis” (ibid). Chagonda (2012:1) says that hyperinflation which “eroded teachers’ salaries forced teachers to go into the diaspora.” In addition, McGregor (2006:4) asserts that the economic crisis in Zimbabwe since 2000 resulted in a “new migration order for professional workers to ensure basic survival.” Chagonda (2012) pointed that economic challenges caused teachers to be involved in the informal economy. Similarly, a study by Chingombe (2013) in Masvingo Province revealed that teachers were involved in other activities after work or in the afternoon to supplement their income. Thus, Chene (2015) argues that economic hardships caused poorly paid teachers to develop coping strategies to survive to the detriment of their professional integrity. Other studies (Dreschler, 2001; Arthur et al 2016) have indicated that countries suffering from economic problems caused professionals, such as teachers, to be involved in gold panning or selling gold to supplement their incomes.

When faced with economic challenges some teachers became involved in cross-border trading to supplement their incomes. Masinjila (2009) in the East Africa Community found that teachers were involved in cross-border trading. A similar study in Mozambique and South Africa by Chikanda & Tawodzera (2017) revealed that teachers became involved in cross-border trade because of economic problems in what they termed “necessity –driven survival strategy to generate income.” In Zimbabwe, Tichagwa (2012) said teachers with

passports resorted to cross-border trading and spent a lot of time on buses and in the streets at the expense of the students.

III. METHODS

This study was qualitative. This study is best suited to use qualitative methods in order to have a deeper understanding of how teachers were affected by economic instability. The features of qualitative study, which were fulfilled by this study, were having contact with those in secondary schools, finding perceptions of participants, verification of data by participants in order to give them an opportunity to account for their actions (Miles and Huberman cited in Gray 2009). For this study the above features were fulfilled by visiting secondary schools to have contact with participants, interviews with various stakeholders in the schools so that I had a holistic overview of what happened, and verified themes that emerged with the participants.

A case study strategy was used. The case for this study is the secondary school as an educational institution. Gray (2009:258) supports the use of multiple-case design as it helps in reaching “data saturation.” This study used multiple-case design in order to study teachers in eight secondary schools in four districts.

Mashonaland Central has nine administrative districts and the problem was which ones to select for cases of secondary schools to study. Four districts were selected based on their “accessibility” (Creswell, 2013:100) to the researcher. The districts were named using letters to protect their identity: District A is the central district; District B neighbouring district to the east of A; District C neighbouring district to the west of A; District D to the north of district B.

Particular schools for the study were selected using purposive sampling based on the types of a typical secondary school and on differences between the schools in Zimbabwe. The sites for the study were selected based on discussions held by education officials who suggested possible schools, which would provide the necessary data. From each of the four districts two secondary schools were selected as research sites.

The selection of the teachers from the cases was done using active recruitment (Fleming et al, 2015:2) as the researcher identifies and contacts possible participants who have particular traits or interests in relation to the topic being studied: long serving members of staff, and those with less experience. The teacher sample had seven male teachers and seven female teachers. The expected number of teachers from the eight secondary schools was sixteen (16) but at one of the rural council school, no teacher was willing to be interviewed due to fear of possible reprisals by locals who they perceived to be hostile to teaching staff. In addition to the teachers at each school, the head of the school or deputy also took part in the research. I interviewed seven heads of schools: two females and five males.

From among pupils, the selection was based on the information provided by the head of the school using the criteria of their ability to “articulate issues and being open minded” (Palinkas et al, 2015:534). The pupils were those in the upper classes, which is from Form 4 to Form 6. The number of pupil participants for each secondary school needed to be enough to form a Focus Group as suggested by Giddens and Sutton (2013:48) who said one can have “between four and ten,” so for this study at each school the focus groups had eight participants made up of four males and four female pupils. The study included parent participants. From each school a member of the SDC or SDA was selected, depending on their accessibility. Interviews were carried out with five parents instead of the expected eight because they were not all available when the study was carried out.

The study also included five key informants who were recruited by request. The key informants included two retired education officers and three teachers who were known to have been affected by economic instability.

In case study design a number of data collection instruments have been suggested such as interviews, documents, focus group discussions, observation or archival records (Gray, 2009, Creswell, 2013, Crowe et al, 2011). This study used interviews, focus group discussions and documents to collect data. The use of multiple sources of data assists to increase internal validity of the study (Crowe et al, 2011).

A series of procedures were followed in order to collect data. This involved the idea of “gatekeeping which is about getting permission from those in authority so that there is access to places where the research needs to be carried out” (Farber, 2008:369). Permission was obtained from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education from headquarters level to school level. Then lastly, permission was obtained from individuals.

In order to analyse data obtained in this qualitative case study, “theoretical propositions” (Yin in Gray, 2009:264) method were used. The analysis was guided by research questions and objectives. The analysis had the following: thorough reading and understanding of the fieldwork, coding of the work, themes related to questions and objectives of the study and made conclusions. In data presentation, many authors of qualitative research have suggested the use of quotes. Clark et al (cited in Suter 2006: 327) argue that for the story to be told clearly “the words and voices of the people involved” should be included in the report of the study. In qualitative research, the voices of the respondents were important as they indicated their thoughts and feelings.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section examines how teachers in secondary schools in Mashonaland Central in Zimbabwe were affected by economic instability. This is based on the lived experiences and narratives of teachers, heads of schools, students and parents. The first decade of Zimbabwe’s independence from

1980 to 1990, the economy showed a growth (Mazingi and Kamidza, 2011:238). From 1990, the economy began to experience some economic problems that necessitated the introduction of Economic Structural Adjustment Programme as prescribed by IMF and World Bank (Ncube, 2000, Murisa, 2010). ESAP did not produce the desired results especially in the provision of social services like education and health. The economic situation of the country became worse towards the end of the millennium because of a combination of factors: droughts, the land reform program, the involvement of the Zimbabwe National Army in the civil war of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the unbudgeted gratuities for war veterans in 1997 and political conflicts (AfDB/OECD, 2003; Murisa, 2010). Despite efforts by the government to solve the economic problems since 2000 the economy continued on a decline trajectory with the climax in 2008 when the country recorded the highest hyperinflation of up to 231 million percent. The problems were temporarily solved by the dollarization of the economy (Sikwila, 2013) when the government dumped the local currency and introduced multi-currency in the country. The United States Dollar and the South African Rand were the common currencies adopted and helped to stabilize the financial system.

Since 2000, Zimbabwe has been experiencing a host of economic challenges such as food shortages, fuel shortage, unemployment, fluctuating prices, cash shortages, poverty and low salaries. This study examines how economic instability between 2000 and 2018 affected secondary school teachers using the lens of habitus and social capital.

The following themes were identified: teaching and learning effects; psychological effects; social status of teachers; social relationships, responses to economic instability and supervision and management.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are core activities of any secondary school. Students' success at school depends on their ability to do work assigned to them by their teachers. Teachers, referred to as institutional agents, play an important role of guiding students to understand how the school system works (Martina, 2006). Teachers' obligations are centred on attending lessons, assigning work and marking. This study has revealed that work of teachers was negatively affected by weak economic capital caused by economic instability as indicated by the experiences given below.

Teacher absenteeism became common mainly due to cash shortages especially from 2016 onward. A student at an urban council secondary school (G) was worried: "Teachers were spending a lot of time queuing for cash in banks. This meant they missed some of their lessons so failed to cover all the work" (FGD 7/17). A student at a rural government secondary school (H) expressed the same sentiments: "Teachers were affected by cash shortage as they spent a lot of time queuing in banks to withdraw money. Sometimes they got nothing. A teacher did not teach between 4 to 6 days per month" (FGD

8/17). A teacher at a rural secondary school (D) acknowledged: "Due to shortage of cash, teachers spent a lot of time queuing for money. This meant we lost teaching and learning time. A teacher lost between five and six days trying to get cash" (Teacher interview 7/17). A head of an urban government secondary school (A) lamented: "I was always checking on teachers as they had developed a tendency to sneak out to try and get cash from banks" (Head interview 7/17). The presence of a teacher is important to facilitate teaching and learning which helps students to acquire cultural capital. This study has revealed that teachers were forced to be absent by cash shortage which meant that students were left alone with no one to guide them for many days a month. Teacher absenteeism negatively affected the acquisition of concepts by students. Teacher absenteeism disturbed continuity of teaching and learning which are crucial for developing confidence and self-image in individual students.

The acquisition of concepts was also affected by poor teaching as some schools relied on too many unqualified teachers. For example, a head of a rural secondary school (D) pointed out what happened between 2000 and 2009: "Many schools were manned by untrained teachers with no experience or passion to teach" (Head Interview 5/17). He went on: "Form 6 graduates were not able to communicate in English because they were not properly taught in the lower grades as teachers were disgruntled and did not teach well." A student at a rural secondary school (F) remembered: "Teachers changed frequently and some struggled to teach as they had no experience" (FGD 6/17). A parent at a rural government secondary school (E) added: "Qualified teachers were difficult to get as they preferred urban schools where conditions were better" (Parent interview 4/17). These citations indicate that schools were affected by being manned by untrained institutionalized agents who did not have the capacity to impart skills as expected.

Psychological effects

Behaviour is a form of habitus (Pickel, 2005:6). This is derived from the idea that the habitus of a person is characterised by "patterns of thinking, feeling, wanting, doing and interacting" (ibid). These characteristics constitute the behaviour of a person. Patterns of thinking relate to the psychology of a person. This section analyses how economic instability affected secondary school teachers psychologically.

Teachers are important players in the field of education in general and in particular in the field of schools. As institutionalized agents, teachers are the core players of the school system so their stability in behaviour is crucial for the normal functions to take place. This study, as revealed below, indicates that economic problems affected teachers psychologically.

A teacher at an urban government secondary school (A) recalled what happened during the hyperinflation period: "I lost weight as a result of stress and inadequate food" (Teacher Interview 1/17). A female teacher at a boarding secondary

school (C) reminisced: “It was really embarrassing that I would beg to survive.” Then she added on the current problem (in 2017): “I had to queue for a long time to get cash which was tiresome and boring. This affected my concentration to teach. I was no longer motivated to teach” (Teacher Interview 5/17). Economic problems caused stress for the teachers because what they were experiencing was abnormal. The energy to teach was no longer there because of inadequate food. In the words of McKinnon (2016:537), it can be said that economic problems caused “discomfort or insecurity” which led to teachers to suffer from stress. The worst experiences of discomfort came at the height of hyperinflation in 2008 as detailed in the next paragraph.

A female teacher at a rural secondary school (E) noted how inflation affected her between 2006 and 2008: “I stopped caring about teaching during the hyperinflation period. I did not get my salary for almost five months as the pay was useless due to inflation” (Teacher Interview 7/17). A male teacher at an urban secondary school (G) explained: “The motivation to teach was low due to economic problems. For example, during the hyperinflation period, I lost weight which affected my passion to teach” (Teacher Interview 13/17). A teacher who had taught at many schools testified: “The stress I suffered in 2008 led to a mild stroke as you can see on my face” (Teacher interview 5/17).

Other respondents supported the teachers’ views about how they were affected psychologically. For example, a student at an urban boarding government secondary (A) pointed out: “Teachers were stressed as sometimes they skipped lessons” (FGD 1/17). A student at a rural secondary school (F) said: “Teachers were demoralized so they no longer taught wholeheartedly. They easily got irritated with students and punished them for minor offences” (FGD 6/17). Even parents spoke about the stress teachers experienced: “They were no longer motivated to work hard. Our teachers seemed to be affected by low salaries they got. Concentration on school work was reduced as they were involved in other activities to survive” (Parent interview 2/17). A head of a rural secondary school (B) pointed out: “Teachers’ salaries were too low which had a negative effect on their motivation to teach and help students to pass” (Head Interview 1/17).

The quotes from various respondents show that teachers were psychologically affected by economic instability. The stress they experienced affected their work in schools as interaction with students became weak, so that they became what Coleman and Hoffer (cited in Martina, 2006:2) refer to as “functionally deficient.” This suggests that the transfer of embodied cultural capital from the teacher to students was weakened. Students’ academic success became difficult. These results are similar to what was found by other authors. For example, the World Health Organisation (2011:7) said that economic crisis negatively affects mental health. Botou et al (2017) add that economic crisis worsens the stress of teachers as indicated by feeling insecure, frustration, resentful and anger and negative mood. Such psychological effects

made it difficult for teachers to give sufficient attention to students but such a relationship is important in schools as it enables them to learn. This is supported by Schuchart (2013) who asserts that the teacher and student relationship is important for social capital in the form of emotional support and encouragement. The results seem to suggest that economic problems experienced by teachers made it difficult for them to have ‘a feel for the game’ as expected in the field of education due to stress.

Social status of teachers

The teaching profession is still considered relatively prestigious (OECD cited in IBF 2013:212) especially in developing countries like Zimbabwe. Even in developed countries like Germany, Greece or France, teaching is still popular (ibid) but in this study, results suggest that economic instability negatively affected the social status of teachers.

At an urban boarding secondary school (A), a teacher bemoaned what happened in the hyperinflation period before 2009: “We became beggars as we sometimes survived on groceries given to us by parents” (Teacher interview 1/17). At a rural secondary school (B) a teacher pointed out: “I struggled to get bus fare to go to town to get my salary. So I used to walk for fifteen kilometres to the bank” (Teacher interview 2/17). A teacher at rural secondary school (D) felt: “Teachers were regarded as inferior in society as our salaries were among the lowest” (Teacher interview 6/17).

In normal situations, it is rare for teachers to be involved in manual work for survival. But at the height of economic problems around 2006 to 2008 some teachers were forced to do manual duties in order to get food. A teacher at a rural government secondary school (E) revealed: “I worked at the irrigation scheme in order to get food in 2008” (Teacher interview 6/17). A teacher at a rural government school (H): “We totally lost our dignity as teachers’ salaries became a mockery of society (Teacher interview 12/17). A student at an urban secondary school (G) added: “Teachers lost their social status due to low wages they earned. They become a laughing stock of society” (FGD 7/17). A retired education officer explained the despicable situation of teachers:

Economic problems have affected the morale of teachers due to the erosion of their status in society. They have become the laughing stock of communities. For example, during the inflation period they were mocked by such statements by vendors or bus conductors, ‘I did not make much today but at least it is more than what teachers earn (Retired education officer interview 2/17).

A teacher lamented, “Teachers were no longer presentable as they could no longer afford to buy clothes. Some ended up picking cotton, fishing or gold panning.” (Teacher interview 1/17). Economic instability worsened teachers’ social status as testified by a head of a rural secondary school (B), “The dignity of teachers was eroded due to low salaries” (Head

interview 1/17). Another head of a rural government secondary (F) added, “Teachers’ salaries have become a mockery as society joked about how bad their salaries were. We lost respect in society” (Head Interview 3/17). A parent at a rural government secondary school (H) complained, “Our teachers became vendors in order to supplement their low salaries. This resulted in less concentration on school work” (Parent interview 2/17).

Respondents noted that the social status of teachers improved during the GNU period between 2009 and 2013. A retired education officer said, “Teachers’ standard of living improved when they were earning USD. Most teachers were now having decent way of life with some affording to buy cars and build houses for themselves.” (A retired officer interview 1/17). A teacher who taught at many schools supported this, “I managed to build a better house after 2009 because of the money we earned in USD. This was also the time when we received incentives from parents.” (Teacher interview 5/17).

Economic instability negatively affected the social status of teachers in Zimbabwean society. The results concur with the findings of other authors. For example, Botou et al. (2017:136), said that economic crisis “changes the lifestyle of teachers” as the value of their low salaries is reduced. In a study carried out in Zimbabwe by Chagonda (2012:11), revealed that teachers had become the “laughing stock of society” because of their low salaries. Secondary school teachers, as institutional agents, are supposed to assist students to decode the cultural capital of the dominant class (Bourdieu cited in Martina, 2006) but with such a battering of their social class, it became difficult as students had less respect for them. Teachers’ symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986) was negatively affected by economic problems making it difficult to be effective teachers. The teachers’ reduced social status made it difficult for them to operate within the field of secondary schools as their authority as teachers was negatively affected by economic problems.

Social relationships

Relationships are important in schools as they “assist in forging commitment to others” (Field cited in Allan & Catts, 2014:218). In addition, Allan & Catts (2014:218) argue that social capital “enhances community and social solidarity.” Schools are characterised by three types of social capital namely bonding, bridging and linking (ibid). Bonding social capital is found in relationships between people with similar characteristics. Bridging social capital occurs when different groups come together such different school classes. Linking social capital refers to relationships between individuals who have different amounts or forms of power that connect with each other. This study revealed that social relationships in secondary schools were affected by economic instability as revealed by the lived experiences of respondents.

Teachers and parents

“Parental involvement in the education of their children is regarded as crucial” (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011:37). Hornby

and Lafaele go on to identify the involvement of parents as conceptualised in two ways: home-based and school-based. Home-based involves parents assisting children doing their homework such as helping them to read and assisting them with writing assignments while school-based involves being at school attending meetings or other activities. Such parental involvement leads to teachers and parents building social relationships as they interact. Such social relationships between teachers and parents build bridging social capital and linking social capital, which help to facilitate academic achievement. Woolcock (cited in Knowles 2005:5) defines bridging social capital “as ties with workmates or other acquaintances who are not close, while linking social capital are ties with those outside one’s immediate group of contacts.” The relationships between teachers and parents may be categorized as mainly linking social capital but may also be bridging if the parents have close contact with the school through participation in school activities. This study has revealed that the economic instability affected teachers’ relationships with parents in two different ways: positively and negatively as shown in the citations below.

A teacher at an urban government secondary school testified how parents assisted during the hyperinflation period: “I was given groceries by parents as I had nothing to eat (Teacher interview 1/17). Similarly, a retired education officer revealed: “I was asked to give food items like rice to the school for the children and teachers. It was really tough time” (Retired education officer interview 2/17). When parents realised that the government was not doing something about teachers’ salaries, they assisted as revealed by a teacher at a boarding secondary school (C): “Parents through the School Development Committee paid us incentives because our salaries were too low” (Teacher Interview 5/17). One of the experienced teachers said incentives helped from 2009 to 2015: “Soon after the dollarization the salaries we got were very low and parents paid incentives to assist. (Teacher informant interview 5/17).

The government even sanctioned the payment of the incentives by parents based on fees each school received. In order to control the practice, the government then directed that teachers should share 10% of the revenue received at a school (Mawere 2012:112). Whilst this cushioned teachers, an unforeseen problem arose with different schools paying different rates of incentives (ibid, 118). This then resulted in unforeseen consequence of teachers preferring to teach at secondary schools, which paid better incentives. Thus Mawere (2012:118) argues that incentives brought “division and demotivation among some teachers due to differences in incentives paid.” Better paying schools were boarding schools and those in urban areas who paid more. This means teachers in rural secondary school were paid less incentive because parents paid less fees and payment rate of fees was low. Therefore, there was an influx of teachers asking for transfers from rural schools. However, since 2015 the government banned the payment of incentives. A parent at an urban

secondary school was surprised with the government's ban of incentives:

The economic problems were affecting teachers as their salaries were too low. The minister who ordered schools to stop payment of incentives worsened this. As a school, we had no problems in paying them incentives to encourage them to work hard (Parent interview 3/17).

Teacher-parent relationships were also negatively affected as the trust between them went down: parents were skeptical about teachers who were now dividing their attention to try to supplement their low income by either vending or offering extra lessons for payment; on the other hand, teachers felt that some parents were not doing enough to pay fees. For instance, a teacher at a rural government secondary school (H) noted that: "Teachers' relationship with the community was negatively affected as teachers were blamed for sending students home for fees payment while teachers blamed parents for not paying fees" (Teacher Interview 11/17). A parent at a government secondary school (H) pointed out another problem:

Parents accuse teachers of putting too much of their time on extra lessons and neglecting normal lessons. Not all parents could afford to pay for extra lessons so students from poor background were disadvantaged. This caused friction between parents and teachers (Parent interview 2/17).

A parent at a government secondary school (E) explained:

Relations between parents and teachers were not good at the height of economic problems around 2008 when parents and community in general mocked teachers about the economic problems they were having (Parent interview 4/17).

A teacher at a boarding school (C) said: "Teachers became targets of delusions and mockery by the community" (Teacher interview 5/17). A teacher at a government secondary school (H) noted: "Relationships between the school and parents were affected as teachers were blamed for the economic problems as sanctions were blamed on opposition parties which had been associated with teachers" (Teacher Interview 11/17).

The excerpts from various stakeholders in secondary schools indicate that economic instability resulted in both positive and negative relationships. The findings of this study relate to the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Unit's (2011:37) declaration that "Collection and administration of levies in some cases strained teacher-parent relationships." Research by Kneale, et al. (2014:5) indicates that in times of economic crisis relationships with others is affected. For example, their study revealed that during the recent recession in Europe arguments over money-affected relationships. The results above indicate that social capital in secondary schools was negatively affected by economic instability. Trust, norms

of cooperation, sense of belonging and networking with each other were now weak although parents were still willing to assist teachers so that they continued to provide their essential service in communities. These results concur with other studies cited by Botou et al. (2017:137) in his literature review on teachers' resilience, which show that "economic crises affect people's relationships with others". The studies reveal that interpersonal relationships were affected by economic problems as also shown in this study when teachers felt insecure, frustrated, and angry, stressed and negative, which had an adverse impact on how they related to parents. One of the features of a field is that actors are in constant struggle with each other (Mangez and Hilgers, 2012). The results of this study seem to suggest that economic instability intensifies the struggle between parents and teachers in secondary schools. Scarcity of resources seems to have worsened the struggles between teachers and parents in the field of secondary schools. Parents and teachers occupy different positions in the field of secondary schools and these are characterised by relations of opposition (Mangez and Hilgers, 2012). In addition, Bourdieu (cited in Swartz, 2016) argues that a field is about stratification and domination. Swartz (2016) goes on to elaborate that positions within a field donate places of competition as actors try to monopolize resources for their own benefit. Teachers and parents relations worsened as each side blamed the other for not doing enough for the success of schools. Although it appears as if teachers and parents had positive relationships, this was enforced as parents wanted teachers to continue teaching their children despite the challenges they experienced.

Teachers and students

Education is defined as the "transfer of survival skills and advancement of culture from one generation to another" (Fakoya, 2009:5). The teacher plays an important role in transferring cultural capital to the students at school in general and in the classroom in particular. Hence the definition of teaching by Farrell and Oliveira (cited in Fakoya 2009:5) which emphasizes the importance of interaction between teachers and students, "the logical and strategic acts denoting interaction between the teacher and the students as they operate on some kind of subject matter." This study has revealed that teachers and students relationships were negatively affected by economic instability as shown in the experiences below.

A teacher at a rural secondary school (D) said of the period between 2000 and 2009: "It was difficult to discipline students who had no respect for us" (Teacher Interview 6/17). A teacher at a boarding secondary school (D) lamented, "I stopped caring for students as I had nothing to eat in 2008 (Teacher Interview 5/17). A student at a rural secondary school (B) was disheartened: "Pupils were neglected by teachers who complained that they received nothing for their work. Due to frustration they would beat us for minor offences" (FGD 1/17). A student at rural government school (E) was also worried that, "The passion or zeal was no longer

there for teachers as they were worried about bread and butter issues. Sometimes this caused them to easily get angry with students and punished them for minor offences” (FGD 5/17). A student at a rural government secondary school (H) observed, “Because of frustrations in not getting their money teachers were easily irritated and were usually harsh with us” (FGD 8/17). A student at an urban secondary school (G) said, “Learners were usually afraid of their teachers which did not augur well for understanding of concepts” (FGD 7/17). In addition, a teacher at an urban secondary school (G) admitted that, “Sometimes teachers beat students due to frustrations as they were mocked” (Teacher interview 10/17). A teacher at a boarding secondary school (C) was worried, “There was lot of indiscipline in schools as both the learner and teacher were demoralized by the economic situation” (Teacher Interview 4/17).

The results above seem to indicate that students’ relations with teachers were negatively affected by economic instability. These results confirm Botou et al. (2017:137) claim that economic crisis worsens “rivalry and conflict” as people interact with each other in families and workplaces. In Zimbabwe, a study by Manguvo et al. (2011:159) revealed that socio-economic collapse in the country influenced the development and the occurrence of student misbehaviour in public schools as teachers’ capacity to curb indiscipline was negatively. The transfer of cultural capital from teachers to students was disturbed by the economic problems. This was because economic instability created an environment that was not conducive to positive interactions between teachers and students. As pointed out before, fields are characterised by struggle and oppositions even without economic instability. The results of this study indicate that economic instability worsened the struggle and opposition between teachers and students.

Teachers and the government

Although schools in Zimbabwe are decentralised, the government continues to play an important role in how schools operate, especially as the paymaster of teachers and standards control. This is in line with Slegers & Wesselingh (1993) contention that decentralisation does not mean government is excluded totally. The government “steps back but does not step out” (Slegers & Wesselingh, 1993:53). The relationship between teachers and government is still important in Zimbabwe as the government pays the teachers in public schools. This study has shown that economic instability affected the trust between teachers and the government as revealed in the quotations below.

A teacher at an urban government secondary school (D) noted: “The government, did nothing to assist teachers to alleviate the economic problems (Teacher Interview 1/17). A teacher at a rural secondary school (B) said: “I think the government do not like teachers because they stopped parents to pay us incentives yet it could not afford to increase our salaries” (Teacher interview 2/17). A parent at a government

secondary school (H) said about what the government did in 2015:

Schools are no longer paying incentives and this has caused teachers to have a negative attitude towards the current minister of education who discontinued the practice of incentive payment (Parent interview 2/17).

A teacher at an urban government secondary school blamed government: “We teach large classes because the government stopped recruitment of new teachers because of the struggling economy” (Teacher interview 1/17). A student at rural secondary school (B) also expressed this sentiment: “Classes are too large with at least 50 pupils per class” (FGD 2/17). A teacher at a rural government school (B) added, “The governments stopped to support infrastructure development at schools so the buildings are not enough and many are dilapidated” (Teacher interview 1/17).

Teachers do not seem to trust the government, their paymaster, who did virtually nothing to cushion them from economic problems. This was worsened by the government’s action of banning the payment of incentives to teachers in 2015. Trust in schools is important (Balyer, 2017) for the education system to succeed. The government plays an important role in paying teachers’ salaries which acts as an extrinsic motivation for them. The government expected teachers to work hard in schools, but was difficult due to low remuneration. This seems to suggest that the relationship between the government and teachers was characterised by negative reciprocity (Caliendo et al, 2010) as the two stakeholders were no longer cooperating. When teachers and the government fail to cooperate the students are negatively affected, and hence not benefitting from schools’ cultural capital. The strained relationship between teachers and government were worsened by economic instability.

Responses to economic instability

In an environment characterised by economic instability, secondary school agents, teachers and heads, devised ways to survive. This is consistent with the characteristics of habitus as conceptualized by Bourdieu and other authors. For Bourdieu (1990:53), habitus is “a system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures....” Houston (2002:157) expands on this, suggesting that habitus “acts as a very loose set of guidelines permitting us to strategize, adopt, improvise or innovate in response to situations as they arise.” In addition, Barker (2016:4) asserts that habitus “responds to the discrepancies between the demands of new conditions of existence and customary habits through creative reinvention.” From these descriptions of habitus, it can be inferred that habitus though permanent or difficult to change, has capacity to transform in “moments of discomfort or insecurity” (McKinnon 2016:537). The moments of discomfort or insecurity in this study were economic instabilities.

Teachers and heads of schools are essential and play significant roles in the school system. Teachers and heads of schools direct schools. Without teachers, no meaningful teaching and learning activities take place. This is why Fakoya (2009:6) declared that teaching as an occupation offers “definite and essential service to society.” Trained and experienced teachers and heads of schools are important in secondary schools as they provide the necessary cultural capital for students. Nevertheless, economic instability challenges faced by teachers caused teachers to respond in a variety of ways, which affected their normal teaching as revealed in the experiences below.

Migrating to other countries

Some teachers and heads of schools left Zimbabwe to look for employment in other countries. For example, a teacher at an urban secondary school (A) said: “Many teachers left for South Africa. For example, my husband went to South Africa but came back after the dollarization in 2009” (Teacher interview 1/17). A rural government secondary teacher (E) who testified also echoed this: “At this school more than five teachers left for the diaspora. Many did not come back” (Teacher Interview 8/17). A student at rural secondary school (B) also noted: “Many teachers left the country going into the diaspora. Few qualified teachers remained. Unqualified teachers were employed to take their place” (FGD 1/17). A head of a boarding secondary school (C) also testified what happened: “During the inflation period teachers had a hard time. Some absconded, some left the country” (Head Interview 2/17). A retired education officer elaborated:

Many teachers, especially for technical and science subjects, absconded and trekked to South Africa for employment. This became serious from around 2007 when the country experienced hyperinflation. Many teachers, including heads of schools, just left without proper resignation (Retired education officer interview 2/17).

The quotations reveal that many teachers left the country due to economic instability. The results are similar to studies by other authors. For example, Chagonda (2012:1) says that hyperinflation which had eroded teachers’ salaries forced teachers to go into the diaspora. In addition, McGregor (2006:4) asserts that the economic crisis in Zimbabwe, which unfolded since 2000, resulted in a new migration order for professional workers to ensure basic survival. Thus, many secondary schools lost qualified and experienced teachers, which negatively affected teaching and learning.

Vending

Some teachers who remained in schools began to supplement their salaries by selling various items. A teacher at a boarding secondary school (C) said: “Many teachers became vendors who sold goods at school or in the community” (Teacher Interview 4/17). A student at a rural secondary school (B) also noted: “Some teachers were involved in other economic

activities like selling drinks or chips. Usually they asked some trusted pupils to sell on their behalf during break time and lunch hour” (FGD 2/17). Other teachers sold petrol when it was in short supply. This ended badly: “One of the teachers was in the business of selling petrol. This resulted in a tragic end when the maid lit a candle to sell petrol. The whole house went on fire and the maid died” (Teacher Interview 12/17).

The citations above indicate that some teachers in secondary schools were involved in vending in order to supplement their low incomes. The findings of this study are consistent with Chagonda's (2012) finding that economic challenges caused teachers to be involved in the informal economy. This meant that teachers spent less time on teaching as they tried to make ends meet. Teachers’ concentration on their core business of teaching was negatively affected. The findings of this study are also similar to those made by Chingombe (2013) in Zimbabwe which revealed that teachers were involved in other activities after work or in the afternoon to supplement their income. For example, the teachers said they were involved in selling products like Aloe Vera or Angels. Vending affected teachers’ normal activities such as marking which should be done when teachers were free but now were using this time to be involved in vending.

Gold mining

Mashonaland Central Province, where this study was carried out, is rich in gold and many people survive through illegal gold panning. In normal circumstances, it was rare for teachers to be involved in such activities, as they would be against the laws of the country. However, economic instability resulted in some teachers being involved in gold mining and selling as a way of supplementing their incomes as revealed below.

A teacher at a rural secondary school (D) exposed what he did: “I became involved in gold panning in order to survive (Teacher interview 6/17). A teacher at an urban secondary school (1) testified: Some teachers joined gold panning in order to survive. I was a gold buyer at one of the mines near our school” (Teacher interview 1/17). A retired education officer added: “As this district is rich in gold, many teachers were involved in gold mining which affected their teaching” (Retired education officer interview 2/17).

The experiences expressed above show that some secondary school teachers were prepared to take risks by getting involved in gold mining and selling without any licence. They risked losing their jobs if they were arrested but the economic challenges they faced forced them to take risks. Secondary teachers’ involvement in illegal activities such as gold mining distracted them from their teaching activities that had negative effects on students’ learning. Teachers were no longer the model teachers expected in schools due to the economic challenges they experienced. Chene (2015) argues that economic hardships caused poorly paid teachers to develop coping strategies to survive to the detriment of their professional integrity. Other studies (Dreschler, 2001; Arthur,

et al 2016) have indicated that countries suffering from economic problems caused professionals, like teachers, to be involved in gold panning or selling gold to supplement incomes.

Cross border trading

Cross border trading is usually for those not involved in formal employment but when economic challenges affected the country many Zimbabweans, including teachers, took part. A female teacher at a rural government secondary school (E) said, “I was involved in cross border trading in order to raise fees during the hyperinflation period” (Teacher Interview 8/17). A teacher at an urban secondary school pointed out, “Many teachers were involved in cross-border trading to supplement their incomes” (Teacher interview 10/17). A parent at a rural government school (H) noted: “Some of the teachers were almost part-time as they spent part of the week involved in cross border trading” (Parent interview 2/17).

The results reveal that some teachers became involved in cross-border trading in order to supplement their incomes. This meant they spent less time teaching as they had to find time to go to neighbouring countries to buy goods to sell. It also affected their concentration on helping students to learn. Teaching is a fulltime job but when teachers became involved in cross border trading it meant a deviation from the norms of the profession. Erlwanger (2013:4) refers to this deviation from the teaching norms as “deprofessionalisation” which is a decrease in the occupation status due to a poor working environment. Teachers were no longer able to fulfill their obligations so it negatively affected students. Students no longer had enough time to interact with their teachers. The results echo studies by other authors. A study by Masinjila (2009) in the East Africa Community found out that teachers were among some professionals involved in cross-border trading. A similar study in Mozambique and South Africa by Chikanda & Tawodzera (2017) revealed that teachers became involved in cross-border trade because of economic problems in what they termed “necessity-driven survival strategy to generate income.” In Zimbabwe, Tichagwa (2012) points out those teachers with passports resorted to cross-border trading and spent a lot of time on buses and in the streets at the expense of the students.

Transferring children to cheaper schools

In a stable economy teacher could afford to send their children to boarding schools, which had better facilities and produced better results when compared to most day schools in Zimbabwe. Bass (2013:1) found that boarding was able to “increase students’ exposure to social, cultural and education capital.” Nevertheless, with economic instability it became increasingly difficult for some teachers to afford tuition and boarding fees charged at boarding schools. In the citations below teachers revealed how the economic challenges forced them to transfer their children from boarding schools especially between 2000 and 2009.

A teacher at a rural government secondary school (E) said, “I transferred my child from a boarding school because I could not afford it” (Teacher interview 9/17). A retired education officer confirmed this, “Parents with children in boarding schools had a hard time to pay fees and provide food. Many parents withdrew their children and placed them in day schools” (Retired education officer interview 2/17).

Thus, some teachers withdraw their children from boarding schools, as they could no longer afford it. Such decisions were hard to make as it affected their children. It affected their children’s morale and zeal to learn as it is more prestigious and advantageous to be educated at boarding schools than day schools. Teachers who were affected in this way may have felt disillusioned, as it was a sign of failure to look after their own children as expected. When a teacher is disillusioned teaching and learning may negatively be affected.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the study was to analyse how secondary school teachers in decentralised secondary schools in Mashonaland Central Province were affected by economic instability between 2000 and 2017. The study revealed effects, which were categorised into five themes namely teaching and learning, psychological effects, social status, actors’ responses and relations. The seven themes may further be categorized into three aspects showing what was affected namely: processes or school activities which encompasses teaching and learning, individual level which encompasses psychological effects, social status, and actors’ responses; relational effects indicating how relations between the various actors were affected. These effects suggest that the field of secondary schools’ norms and rules were affected making it difficult to function as expected.

The negative effects of economic instability have implications for secondary school education. Education for all will be difficult to achieve due to the effects of a weak economy on school attendance by pupils and teachers. The quality of education deteriorated due to loss of qualified and experienced teachers. Decentralised secondary schools had difficulties in solving problems brought about by economic instability. Although SDA/SDC tried to mitigate the financial problems of teachers by paying incentives, the payments brought other problems like differences in the amount of incentives according to schools. The state intervened by stopping payment of incentives without doing much to improve teachers’ conditions of service.

The findings of the study paint a bad scenario of the impact of economic instability on secondary school teachers in Mashonaland Central Province. The results suggest that the situation was allowed to deteriorate into a hopeless situation with very little assistance from the state that paid low salaries that were affected by hyperinflation. Economic instability has shown that progress made in education can easily be eroded as teachers had less motivation to teach. Their habitus as

teachers was altered which had a negative impact on their zeal to teach.

The study revealed that economic instability caused secondary school teachers to react using various survival strategies. The survival strategies adopted had both positive and negative connotations for the secondary school teachers and education in general. For example, teachers found ways to supplement their incomes, which improved their standard of living and hence restored their status as respected members of society. However, as they were involved in other activities it compromised their commitment to teaching because they did not devote adequate time and effort to assisting students. Some teachers migrated to other countries or quit teaching which caused shortage of experienced teachers in schools.

The study revealed that teachers' relationships with other actors in secondary schools were negatively affected by economic instability. This does not augur well for secondary schools and education in general as teaching and learning is premised on trusting each other and working with others for success. Fulfilment of teachers' obligations would not be possible if they do not have good relations with other actors in secondary schools.

Studies in Zimbabwe, other countries in Africa and other continents have revealed that economic has negative effects on teachers, schools and education in general. Most of the studies used surveys and documents analysis. Hardly any study collected primary data from all three actors in decentralised secondary schools on how they were affected by economic instability. The struggle among actors in the field of education exists even without economic instability but this study has clearly shown that instabilities tend to intensify the contestations in secondary schools. The contestations become open as the actors struggle to survive in an unstable environment. Secondary schools are social institutions dominated by teachers but this study suggests that in economic instability the dominance is challenged which makes it difficult for them to fulfill their normal duties and responsibilities. For example, the study revealed that economic instability made it difficult for teachers to dominate the field of secondary schools that made it difficult for secondary schools to function. Low salaries that made their economic status poor and unenviable weakened the teachers.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. The study revealed that teaching and learning in secondary schools was negatively affected by economic instability in the province studied. It is recommended that the government and the international community should assist teachers to alleviate economic challenges instead of leaving decentralised schools to find their own ways to overcome the problems. For example, teachers require special assistance so that they continue their work without too many disruptions due to the poor economy.

- ii. The results of the study indicated that secondary school teachers were psychologically affected by economic instability. It is recommended that counselling sessions be provided in order to reduce the negative effects on teachers. This may be done at school level, district and provincial levels by personnel specially trained to deal with stress related problems.
- iii. Economic instability caused divisions in secondary schools to widen and intensify. It is recommended that secondary school teachers should be assisted to understand that when a country experiences economic problems such divisions are bound to occur but should not lead to conflict that affect the smooth running of schools. This may be done through awareness programmes organized by the government with the support of non-governmental organisations.
- iv. Economic instability contributed to some teachers migrating to other countries. This affected secondary schools as they lost qualified and experienced teachers. This may be difficult to deal with as this is a major and worldwide problem which occurs even in times of stability as skilled labour always look for better remuneration and conditions in other countries. It is suggested that to reduce the tide of teachers migrating the government should improve conditions of service for teachers during times of economic stability and instability alike.

Areas for further research

- i. The effects of economic instability on primary schools in Zimbabwe: A case study of Mashonaland Central.
- ii. The effects of economic instability on universities in Zimbabwe between 2015 and 2020.

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