

# An Investigation on The Relevance of Pre-Service Teacher Education Programmes to School Leadership and Management in Zambia



## Management

**KEYWORDS :** leadership, management, pre-service teacher education, relevance

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### ABSTRACT

*Education is no longer determined by mere access to it in institutions of learning at any level, but it's quality and value-addition. A type of education that includes critical thinking creativity, innovativeness, productivity, responsibility, and sustainability. For these elements to be achieved, quality leadership and effective management are crucial at school and tertiary levels. A study was conducted to investigate the relevance of pre-service teacher education programmes, that had been provided by colleges of education in Zambia, to school leadership and management. The survey method was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Findings of the study revealed that pre-service teacher education programmes in Zambia were relevant to school leadership and management as foundation. The programmes focused on providing adequate knowledge and skills about managing learning activities at classroom level. Comprehensive training on whole-school leadership and management was not provided at pre-service stage but in service.*

### INTRODUCTION

The evolution of teacher education in Zambia dates back to the early 1900s when Western missionaries introduced elementary teacher training programmes for teacher evangelists in their respective mission stations. The primary aim of those missionaries was to spread Christianity in Africa (Snelson, 1974 and Chuba, 2005). Education was considered as a better tool for speeding up the evangelisation process. Tiberondwa (1978), also points out, that when people talk about the spread of Christianity in colonial Africa, it normally means the spread of Christianity, because education was part and parcel of pastoral work. The trainee-teacher-evangelists received instruction on initial literacy (reading and writing), and Arithmetic, which were known as the three (3) r's. They were also taught class management, Christian leadership and community leadership at elementary level.

By 1927, several information, and practical subjects with more organized instruction, became part of the teacher education curricular. Mwanakatwe (1974:108) states: "A few years before independence, an efficient system of teacher training was built up." More improved teacher education programmes were introduced such as the Lower Primary (L<sub>2</sub>) Teacher's Course, and Upper Primary Teacher's Course (U<sub>2</sub>) which were offered as specialized and parallel programmes in colleges.

In 1966, two years after independence from the British rule, the first Education Act, was passed by parliament to empower the Zambian Government to take control of all educational affairs in the country. Influenced by that Act, the Zambia Primary Course (ZPC) was piloted. By mid 1970s it was scaled down to all primary schools in the country, replacing the L<sub>2</sub> and U<sub>2</sub> parallel programmes. In later years, other programmes were introduced one after the other, namely: Zambia Basic Education Course (ZBEC), Zambia Teacher Education Course (ZATEC), and Primary Teacher's Diploma Course (PTDC). Each of these courses provided basically the content of subjects that were taught in primary schools, methodology, and education studies. They also had components of teaching practice and school experience.

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study was undertaken to establish the relevance of pre-service teacher education programmes or courses provided by primary colleges of education, to school leadership and management in Zambia.

### METHODOLOGY

The survey methods was used to seek opinions from the respondents. This method was appropriate for the study because it enabled the researcher to interact with the respondents in various ways and collect their opinions. Upagade and Shende (2012) describe survey method as a fact-finding exercise for discovery of facts.

Questionnaires were administered to 221 trainee-teachers and 171 serving teachers to collect quantitative data. Using interview guides, qualitative data was collected by conducting focus group discussions to trainee-teachers, lecturers, and serving teachers, and face-to-face interviews to principals, school head-teachers and educational administrators. Relevant documents such as government policies, syllabi, teacher's guides, and training manuals were analysed.

Quantitative data was analysed by using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) and came up with tables of frequency and percentages while qualitative data was analysed by identifying common statements and opinions that were provided by the respondents, interpreted, and summarized them into themes in order to establish facts.

### FINDINGS

#### Quantitative Data from Trainee-teachers

Trainee-teachers were asked to provide their opinions on whether pre-service teacher education programmes were relevant to school leadership and management.

The table below shows the responses.

**Table 1**  
**Responses from Trainee-teachers**

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	194	88
No	8	4
Sometimes	8	4
Not sure	9	4
Total	221	100

Majority of the trainee-teachers (88%) agreed that pre-service teacher education programmes were relevant to school leadership and management.

Trainee-teachers were also asked whether the pre-service teacher education programmes had enough content on school leadership and management. Eight-eight (88) percent agreed, and 15% either disagreed, partially agreed, or were not sure.

The same respondents asked whether school leadership and management studies were emphasized during pre-service training at their colleges. Fifty-five (55) percent agreed, 15% disagreed, 24% partially agreed and 6% were not sure.

#### Quantitative Data from Serving Teachers

One hundred and seventy-one (171) serving teachers were also asked whether the pre-service teacher education programmes were relevant to school leadership and management. The table below shows their responses..

**Table 2**  
**Responses from serving teachers**

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	142	86
No	8	4.8
Sometimes	8	4.8
Not sure	7	4.2
Total	165	100

Almost all the respondents (86% of 171) agreed that the pre-service teacher education programmes were relevant to school leadership and management.

The same teachers were also asked whether the pre-service teacher education programmes had enough content on school leadership and management

Fifty-two (52) percent of 162 did not agree, 34% agreed, 8% partially agreed, and 6% were not sure.

The same teachers were further asked whether school leadership and management studies were emphasized during pre-service training at college

Majority of them (40% of 163), disagreed (28%) agreed, 25% partially agreed, and 4% were not sure.

### Qualitative Data

#### Findings from Focus Group Discussions and Face-to-Face Interviews

- (i) Almost all the participants observed that the pre-service teacher education programmes in Zambia were relevant to school leadership and management.
- (ii) Instruction on class management and leadership, at pre-service stage of teacher education was considered as a foundation for more advanced knowledge, skills and responsibility about school leadership and management in the professional growth of teachers.
- (iii) The content on school leadership and management at pre-service stage was described as limited in scope.
- (iv) Majority of the respondents mentioned that the concepts about school leadership and management were not emphasized at pre-service stage of teacher education. However, class management, and leadership styles such as authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire were reported as being taught though not in details.
- (v) A popular suggestion emerged from most of the respondents that school leadership and management should be established as a full-time course at pre-service stage in colleges of education.

### DISCUSSION

#### The discussion is based on the following themes:

#### Relevance of pre-service Teacher Education Programmes to School Leadership and Management

The findings of this study revealed that the pre-service teacher education programmes were relevant to school leadership and management as a foundation for advanced knowledge and skills in the near future. This was in line with the views of some scholars such as Donald, Lazarus, and Lolwana (1997), who describe the teacher as a leader, director, guide, supporter, organiser, and responsible officer, who creates a conducive learning environment in the classroom.

The pre-service teacher education programmes also produced cadres of teachers from where school managers, educational administrators and other responsible officers in the management

of education systems were drawn. At one of the education offices, a senior administrator said, "Despite the higher positions, we are holding, we are all class teachers by origin in education."

Comprehensive training in school leadership and management was frequently described as crucial if performance in schools and the whole education system was to improve in the country. It was suggested by more than 80% of the respondents that school leadership and management should be established as a full course at pre-service level of teacher education to enhance development of leadership and management skills in the teachers at the earliest stage of their professional growth. Moorosi and Bush (2001) suggest that there should be leadership preparation of leaders rather than development. Many studies and training programmes on educational school leadership and management had been focusing on school managers and educational administrators without paying attention to the rest of the teachers.

#### Content on School Leadership and Management

Quantitative data shows that 40% of 221 trainee-teachers and 34% of 162 serving teachers agreed that the pre-service teacher education programme had enough content on school leadership and management, but the focus group discussions and interviews revealed that there was not enough content.

The trainee-teachers, lecturers and principals in colleges of education emphasized that the pre-service teacher education programmes focused on providing instruction on those aspects of leadership and management which were directly associated with classroom practices. Instruction on whole-school leadership and management was limited to such aspects as school organisational structure, channels of communication, functions of key stakeholders in the school hierarchy, organisation of co-curricular activities and school community linkages or partnerships. School-community partnership refers to the union between schools and communities where visions, responsibilities, and risks being undertaken are shared for the common goal or purpose (Ministry of Education, 2007).

#### Emphasis on Teaching School Leadership and Management

While 55% of 221 trainee-teachers agreed that school leadership and management studies were emphasized during pre-service training, only 28% of 163 serving teachers supported the same opinion. Focus group discussions and interviews also indicated that school leadership and management were not emphasized in pre-service primary colleges of education. The reason is similar to what is already stated above that the pre-service teacher education programmes focused on providing enough knowledge and skills required of a class teacher with limited attention to leadership and management activities of the school as whole-organisation.

Therefore, the study established that school leadership and management were not emphasized during pre-service training in primary colleges of education.

However, the Primary Teacher's Diploma Course which was introduced in 2009, included some components namely: Educational Administration; History and Philosophy of Education; Special Education; Guidance and Counselling; Entrepreneurship Education; and Information and Communication Technology Education (Curriculum Development Centre, 2011). Such components might contribute to development of comprehensive knowledge and skills about school leadership and management. This could not be determined by this study because at the time of data collection the course was still being piloted.

### CONCLUSION

The study established that the pre-service teacher education

programmes in Zambia were relevant to school leadership and management because they provided the foundation for comprehensive and more advanced studies in leadership and management. The same programmes produced cadres of teachers from where leaders and managers of various units in the education sector were drawn. For instance, it was clear that all school managers, district education board secretaries, provincial education officers, chief education officers, directors, permanent secretaries, and other leaders in-between the ranks of the education sector were once class teachers.

Comprehensive training in school leadership and management at pre-service stage in primary colleges of education was not available but provided enough knowledge and skills for managing learning activities at classroom level and organization of co-curricular activities at school level. The concepts of 'leadership' and 'management' were not much emphasized.

Therefore, there would be need for school leadership and management to be established as a full course, with enough material, financial, and human resources for successful implementation. Such initiative might develop the functional and instructional leadership skills in all teachers and improve learner performance including other areas in schools and higher institutions of learning.

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