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FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED EDUCATION

INVESTIGATING THE EFFECTS OF STREAMING THE GRADE SIX PUPILS ACCORDING TO THEIR ABILITY AT DUMEZWENI PRIMARY SCHOOL IN KHAMBI DISTRICT.

BY

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R14101R

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this document to my family the Moni Moyo clan, my fiancée, my friends and to all the people who worked behind the scenes to make it possible for me to come up with this dissertation.

ABSTRACT

This document presents the findings on the perceptions of pupils and teachers of Dumezweni Primary school on the effects of the streaming of the grade 6 pupils according to their ability at Dumezweni Primary School in Khami District.

The study used a combination of the qualitative and quantitative research approach. A descriptive and explanatory research design was used in this study because people sometimes fail to understand raw data. So the descriptive and the explanatory research design makes raw data understandable in this research. A sample of eighteen grade six pupils and seven grade six teachers was used. Judgemental sampling was used to select the pupils for this study; the researcher relied on her experience as a classroom practitioner to select the pupils who had a record of performing well, the mediocres and those who performed badly in class. As for the teachers, the researcher used convenience sampling whereby the researcher selected subjects who were easily accessible and willing to participate in the study.

Data is presented in the form of tables and bar graphs and different scores are interpreted using the Likert scale. The research findings were that the majority of teachers and pupils at Dumezweni Primary who were sampled for this study were in favour of the streaming of pupils according to their ability. They cited some very pertinent and valid reasons for that. The major reason they cited was that the streaming of pupils according to their ability was very beneficial to both the slow learners and the gifted learners. Those who were against streaming cited the fact that streaming dehumanises pupils, it causes stigmatisation and labelling of the slow learners.

The study strongly recommends that streaming should be adopted in schools since it has got some notable benefits. The problem of the dehumanisation of the slow learner through labelling should be thoroughly dealt with by the teachers and the heads of schools since they are the ones who are responsible for setting the tone of the school. The pupils and the parents must also be enlightened on the benefits of streaming pupils according to their ability. If streaming is done properly the problem cited above will be a thing of the past.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The main focus of this research was to investigate the effects of streaming the grade six pupils according to their ability at Dumezweni Primary School in Khami District. This chapter focused on the background to the study whereby the information that is pertinent to the statement of the problem was given. Moreover, the chapter includes the statement of the problem and the research questions which are clearly and categorically stated. It also includes the significance of the study. In addition to this, the delimitations and the limitations of the study were articulated. At the end of the chapter, a clear and comprehensive summary of the chapter was given.

1.1 Background to the study

The issue at hand is that the streaming of pupils according to their academic ability has proven to be very divisive among educational researchers with some in favour of mixed ability grouping, while others are in favour of grouping students according to their academic ability. Mixed ability grouping is championed by scholars like Green (2002) and Mann (2002) and enjoys the backing of the highly influential groupings like the National Association of School Psychologists (2002). Streaming or the grouping of students according to academic ability enjoys the support of scholars like Mafa (2008).

Those who are against streaming and are in favour of mixed ability grouping vehemently argue that mixed-ability grouping gives students of varying academic

abilities the chance to have access to the same educational opportunities regardless of gender, race and social class. On the other hand they say that streaming does not provide students with all that. Scholars like Loveless (2008) however, argue that mixed ability classes are detrimental to the gifted learners as they are said to languish in mixed ability classes as they are not challenged by the content on offer in a mixed ability class.

The issue of streaming pupils is a cause for concern here in Zimbabwe as well as globally. There are varying and contentious views about the streaming of pupils worldwide amongst the stakeholders in the education system. In some countries, including our own country Zimbabwe, streaming is embraced with both hands in some of the schools and it is seen as being very beneficial to both the educators and the learners. On the other hand in some of the schools it is shunned and seen as being a segregational system which creates problems amongst pupils. It was against this backdrop that thorough consultations with various educators and learners were made so as to assess whether streaming impacts positively or negatively to pupils.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The issue of streaming pupils in schools is a thorn in the flesh for teachers, parents, pupils and other stakeholders in the education system. It is viewed by some of the stakeholders in the education system as pure disaster while some view it as a way of arresting the problem of low achievers in the school. This research seeks to find out the effects of streaming pupils at Dumezweni Primary School in Khami District.

1.3 Research questions

- (i) Do pupils benefit from being placed in a stream?
- (ii) Does streaming positively affect the socio-characteristics of pupils?
- (iv) How do slow learners benefit from streaming?
- (v) What should be done about streaming?

1.4 Significance of the study

The research findings would be of great significance to the researcher herself as a classroom practitioner, to the other teachers, to parents, pupils, the responsible authority and the other stakeholders who might be interested in the research findings. The study would also provide an insight as to whether pupils benefit from being placed in a stream or not. The Hyde Park South cluster where this study is being carried out will also benefit from the study through staff development programmes on the effects of streaming pupils. Khami district and the whole of Bulawayo will also benefit from the study as the information gathered from this research will be shared through cluster, district and provincial staff development programmes .

1.5 Delimitations

The study focuses on Dumezweni primary school, a school which is in Hyde Park South cluster, Khami District in Bulawayo. The school is located in Pumula South high density suburb which is in ward 27. It is the researcher's intension to gather information from the teachers, head of the school, pupils and parents who are the main stakeholders of this research.

1.6 Limitations

The researcher faced conditions beyond her control that hindered consistent data collection or placed restrictions on the conclusions. The researcher is a working individual, a part time student and parent and as such, time to undertake this research was very limited. Juggling between work commitments, university assignments, library and internet research may not be an easy task. Resistance, suspicion, stereotyped and premeditated responses were expected although the researcher attempted to work cordially with all respondents in order to get their cooperation. Due to the fact that the employer, the Public Service Commission wants teachers to be always in their stations during working hours, the researcher was confined to one school in her research. Some of the respondents may failed to comprehend the purpose of the study and hence draw adverse insinuations on its very purpose.

To mitigate the above challenges the researcher;

- ❖ Tried as much as possible to work cordially with all respondents during the research process.
- ❖ Ensured that the questionnaires were easy to follow.
- ❖ Assisted by providing definitions and explanations to respondents where necessary.
- ❖ Maintained good rapport between the researcher and the respondents.

Definition of terms

Streaming is the grouping of pupils according to their academic performance (Boaler, 1997)

Effects means the consequences of an action or a change that is produced in one person or thing by another (English Dictionary)

1.7 Summary

This chapter gave the overview of the background to the study in which the researcher vividly explained the problems that compelled her to embark on this research, that is, to find out the effects of the streaming of the grade 6 pupils at school. The chapter also spelt out the significance of the study in which the researcher showed how the research could be of help to pupils, teachers, school authorities and the public at large. It also highlighted the statement of the problem. Moreover the chapter also stated the delimitations whereby the area under study was defined and it also articulated the limitations of the study, in which the researcher explained the problems faced in carrying out the research. In short, chapter one comprises of the statement of the problem, research questions , the significance of the study ,the delimitations and the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter's main thrust was to look at what different scholars say about the issue of streaming pupils in schools so as to get a deeper understanding of the problem. Through literature review the researcher found out how other researchers came up with their line of inquiry into this problem and the researcher found out their recommendations for further research. The researcher examined streaming in comparison with mixed ability grouping. In addition to this the researcher looked at the advantages and the disadvantages of streaming pupils as pronounced by different scholars.

2.1 Examination of streaming in comparison with mixed ability grouping

Various scholars hold different views about streaming and mixed ability grouping. Most of them advocate for the streaming of pupils because of the many advantages it presents as compared to mixed ability grouping. Amongst them is Naker who laments over mixed ability grouping by clearly pointing out its shortcomings and pointing out the strength of streaming. Naker (2002) pointed out that retaining the attention of all students in a mixed ability classroom is a particular challenge. The academically gifted learners may not be adequately challenged in a mixed ability class and so they get bored. The intelligent learners may be a distraction to the less academically gifted students and compromise any chances of them catching up with their academically gifted counterparts by preventing them from fully engaging in the course content through noise and other distractive behaviour. This manifests itself in, among other things, finishing a given exercise

earlier than other students. Having completed an exercise quickly, these students, with nothing to do will start to distract their slower counterparts, who are still busy tackling the exercise, and ruin their chances of catching up with them. Mixed ability classes, if not properly managed, lead to classroom management problems.

Kulik (2002) went as far as to say that the gifted pupils “languish” in mixed ability classes. In an effort to allow the slower learners to catch up with the fast learners, educators will plan lessons at a pace that allows slow learners to grasp concepts but a pace that is detrimental to the quicker students. The fast learners, not being challenged enough will grow accustomed to the slow pace and may, eventually find more challenging learning environment tough for them.

Mixed ability environments also pose a challenge in classroom participation. Classroom participation entails participating in class or group discussions and raising hands to give answers. While the intelligent learners may consistently be participating in class and group discussions the slow learners may not say a word in the entire lesson. The fast learners’ academic superiority manifests itself in being more confident in class while the slow learners become idle and uninterested in what would be taking place in class. Those who participate less by raising hands and attempting to give answers grow increasingly less confident in their abilities. This may be because the poorer performing students feel intimidated by the faster ones and therefore lack confidence to offer their voice in classroom discussions and raise hands and give answers. (Naker 2002)

Most textbooks are written for an ideal single ability classroom environment and not a mixed ability class (Salli-Copur, 2005). This means that teachers always have to deal with the problem of students reacting differently to the textbook due to their different abilities. Some students may find the textbook boring and hard to appreciate and fail to engage with the learning materials so much so that their

academic prospects are compromised. Others, on the other hand will find the textbook interesting. It is situations like this when streaming comes in handy.

Salli-Copur (2005) also cited differing interests in the subject being taught as a challenge in the mixed abilities class. Students have differing attitudes towards different subjects which are affected by, among other things, knowledge of the subject, factors at home and even their personality. Some students may find lessons boring, as the topic is not relevant to their life or interests. Other students lose interest if they are not given an opportunity to express their ideas and in a mixed ability class room, where different students have different needs, there may not be time to give a particular student such an opportunity. Mixed ability classrooms present teachers with the extra challenge of always gauging the different interest levels of their students and meeting those interests might be a problem to the teachers.

It is these challenges that have led people to believe that streaming is the best way forward. With streaming, teachers only have to cater for the needs of a homogenous set of students. Lesson planning only has to cater for the needs and abilities of a homogenous set of students and the educator is spared of all the challenges of designing lesson plans that vary according to the needs of students with different ability levels.

It is because of these problems that some scholars and educators prefer streaming or ability grouping. Marcus and Johnson (2008) provide that streaming allows instruction to be given at the level of students thereby enabling them to master the content and to develop a positive, success-oriented self-image. It is an efficient model for teachers and it reduces student anxiety as it is devoid of all the complications that come with designing a lesson plan for a mixed ability classroom and challenges in classroom management that are characteristic of mixed ability classrooms. Lastly, students have always shown that they are more

comfortable when learning alongside others with whom they share similar abilities. Be that as it may, the global trend is in favour of mixed ability classroom as it is more beneficial to more students. Educators should also consider these to be challenges and not problems (Mafa, 2003).

2.1.2 Advantages of streaming pupils, according to different scholars

Several scholars point out the advantages of streaming. Farmer (1996) says that the needs of the academically gifted pupils cannot be effectively addressed in a mixed classroom set up but they can be fully addressed where pupils are streamed according to their ability. Dean (1997) concurs with Farmer by saying that that mixed ability is very detrimental to the gifted pupils. He says that pupils must be removed from mediocre streams and be afforded a chance to excel. Moreover he says that if they do not get that chance they cannot achieve up to their maximum potential. Streaming can intrinsically motivate pupils to attain better grades so as to be removed from a lower stream to a stream of high performing pupils. Streaming is also said to help pupils work at the pace of those who move at the same pace as themselves. Some scholars say that streaming helps the teacher to meet the needs of the individuals.

2.1.3 The disadvantages of streaming pupils, according to different scholars

Amongst the scholars who castigate streaming is Chisaka (1996) who says that it causes labelling and stigmatisation. He goes on to say that it puts pupils into social groups and it impacts negatively to their future. Moreover Slavin (1988) says that streaming does not recognise the heterogeneity of pupils in a stream since all the pupils are seen as being homogeneous. Furthermore, streaming is said to not result in the streaming of the pupils only but also the teachers and the resources. Some studies show that some high achievers in certain schools refuse to be taught by the teachers who teach pupils who are in the stream of the low achievers.

Boaler (1997) even says that instruction given to the low achievers is of inferior quality as compared to the education given to the high achievers.

Some scholars say that streaming dehumanizes pupils and teachers. The teachers who teach slow learners are looked down upon as people think that they are low achievers by virtue of teaching the low achieving streams. On the other hand some nasty and derogative adjectives like dull, less gifted ,slow learner , 'dofu' in Shona and 'impumputhe' in Ndebele are used to label the low achievers. Gamoron (1992) says that rigid streaming does to benefit pupils but it is detrimental as far as equity is concerned. Freeman (1999) and Rodgers (2002) say that the high achievers are the ones who benefit a lot from ability grouping. They usually hide their talents in mixed ability classroom set ups but they show their talents when they compete amongst themselves in streamed classes.

According to Hamer (2000) lower streams negatively impact on the pupils self-esteem, self-worth or self image and more so on their dreams for the future. Studies done so far do not show evidence that streaming produces higher performance as compared to mixed ability grouping. Another disadvantage of streaming according to Boaler (1997) is that some mediocre learners sometimes want to be moved to lower streams because the teaching pace is lower and the teaching style is less demanding. Watyoka (1999) says that streaming promotes the Marxist system of the 'haves' and the 'have knots' .Gamora (2000) concurs with Watyoka by saying that the disadvantaged pupils are usually the ones who go to lower-level streams. Smith (2005) says that those pupils become friendless and they also become social misfits because of the labelling they get from different people.

2.1.4 Findings from the review of related literature in relation to the research question

Judging from the views of different scholars on the issue of the streaming of pupils, it is clear that the streaming of pupils has got its strengths and weaknesses. It has got some benefits and some shortcomings. So this issue of streaming pupils is dependent upon one's preference, some scholars who are in favour of streaming see it as a system that benefits both the slow learner and the fast learner. They vehemently argue that it is beneficial to both the teacher and the learner in the sense that it lessens the teacher's burden of planning work for a heterogeneous class and it caters for the needs of both the slow learner and the fast learner. They also claim that streaming spares the slow learners the embarrassment of failure to participate in class for fear of being ridiculed by the gifted learners if they give out wrong answers. Moreover those who advocate for the streaming of pupils also cite the fact that if pupils are not streamed according to their ability, the fast learners may hide their talents and they may sometimes become passive thinking that it is quite normal to behave like the slow learners.

Those who are taking an adverse angle in the issue of streaming argue that the streaming of pupils according to their ability causes stigmatisation and labelling of the slow learners. They also say that it causes superiority and inferiority complex amongst the pupils and they say that it causes inequality amongst the learners.

Having looked at the views of various scholars the researcher would like to believe that streaming is a system which is not one hundred percent perfect but it has got its own strengths which are very vital in the teaching and learning environment.

2.3 Summary

Chapter two reviewed related literature in order to get different opinions from various scholars on the issue of streaming pupils in schools. Some scholars had a positive attitude towards the streaming of pupils according to their ability while some had negative views about the streaming of pupils. Streaming was analysed in comparison with mixed-ability grouping, its advantages and disadvantages were also looked at. Moreover the findings from the review of related literature were analysed in relation to the research question. The next chapter looks at the research methodology which is one of the most paramount aspect of a research.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter clearly spells out the road map of the study in an attempt to find out the effects of streaming the grade 6 pupils at Dumezweni primary school in Khami District in Bulawayo. The areas under focus include the research design, population & sample, data gathering tools, ethical considerations, data collection procedures and data presentation and analysis. The procedures which were adopted to ensure reliability and validity of the study were fulfilled. The study used description as a tool to organize data in order to investigate the effects of streaming grade six pupils at Dumezweni primary school in Khami District.

On the other hand explanatory research focuses on the “why” questions of research. The way in which researchers develop research designs is fundamentally affected by whether the research question is descriptive or explanatory. The reason why this study adopted an explanatory research is because the study aims at explaining why streaming grade six pupils has an effect on grade six pupils at Dumezweni primary school.

In this study the researcher deliberately adopted a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. (Brammar 2002 p .61) says that “in qualitative research the questions often ask not only for information and opinions but also allow the interviewer to probe the richness of emotions and motivations related to the topic.” The same author adds that “researchers often use qualitative data to help clarify hypotheses, beliefs, opinions, attitudes and motivations... qualitative work is often a first step because it enables a researcher to fine-tune the language that will be used in quantitative tools” (Brammar, 2002 p.61).

On the other hand Shields and Twycross (2003) say quantitative research methods are used when something needs to be measured, while qualitative

methods are used when a question needs to be described and investigated in some depth. Qualitative research is however, sometimes subjective in nature and calls for examining reactions and perceptions in order to gain understanding of social and human activities (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001).

3.1 Research Design

According to (Kothari, 2004 p.34) a research design is “the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure.” In fact, research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (Leedy and Ormond, 2001). As such research design includes an outline of what the researcher did from formulating the research question, its operational implications to the final analysis of data Kothari (2004). Therefore research design is the planning of any social research from the first to the last step.

This study adopted a descriptive and explanatory research design. Kothari (2004) points out that descriptive study is primarily concerned with finding out "what is." Put differently descriptive research involves gathering data that describe events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collection process. In (Glass and Hopkins ', 2004 p .23) view “because the human mind cannot extract the full import of a large mass of raw data, descriptive statistics are very important in reducing the data to manageable form.” When in-depth, narrative descriptions of small numbers of cases are involved, the research uses description as a tool to organise data in order to investigate the effects of streaming pupils according to their ability at Dumezweni Primary School in Khami District. Those patterns aid the mind in comprehending a quantitative study and its implications (Kothari, 2004).

On the other hand explanatory research focuses on the “why” questions of research. The way in which researchers develop research designs is

fundamentally by whether the research question is descriptive or explanatory. The reason why the study also adopted an explanatory research is because the study will explain why the streaming of the grade six pupils has an effect on grade six pupils at Dumezweni Primary School.

3.1.2 Research Approach

In this study the research deliberately adopted a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. (Brammar 2002 p . 61) says that “in qualitative research the questions often ask not only for information and opinions but also allow the interviewer to probe the richness of emotions and motivations related to the topic.” The same author adds that “ researchers often use qualitative data to help clarify hypothesis, beliefs, opinions, attitudes and motivations... qualitative work is often a first step because it enables a researcher to fine tune the language that would be used in quantitative tools” (Brammar , 2002 p.61)

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3.2 Population and Sample

(McMillan and Schumacher 2001 p.108) observe that “when conducting research, the first step is to define the population to be studied in terms of its geographical, demographic and other boundaries to decide whether it should be fully or partially covered.” A study population or target population therefore refers to “the group about which the researcher wants to gain information and draw conclusions” (Tuckman, 2001 p.5). In this study the target population comprised of 180 pupils, 4 teachers and from Dumezweni primary school as depicted on Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 showing categories, target population and sample size

| Category | Target population | Sample size | Research instrument |
|----------|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Pupils | 180 | 18 | Questionnaires |
| Teachers | 7 | 7 | Questionnaires |
| Total | 187 | 25 | |

Sampling is “the act or process of selecting a suitable representative part of a population for the purpose of determining the characteristics of the whole population” (Tuckman, 2001 p .7). Put differently it is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole population. In this study it was impossible to collect or analyze all the data available in the population due to restrictions of time, money and often access. For this reason therefore a small group of elements were chosen from the population and this formed the sample. Tuckman (2001) argues that it is legitimate to generalize conclusions derived from responses obtained during field experiments provided the sample reflects the subject from the target population and for whom results are to be generalized in the wider population. The crucial question they argue is not much whether sample respondents` particular characteristics differ from those of other people but rather whether such differences matter.

In the selection of pupils in this study the researcher used judgmental sampling in order to select the participants in this study. According to (Kumar 2009 p.162) “the primary consideration in judgmental sampling is the judgment of the researcher as to who can provide the best information to achieve the objectives of the study.” In this study the researcher relied on her experience as a Classroom Practitioner to select units that had a record of performing well, fairly and poorly in both streamed and non-streamed class. In other words the researcher chose to administer a questionnaire to those subjects who in her opinion were likely to supply her with the required information and who were willing to share it.

As for the participants in the teachers’ categories respectively the researcher used convenience sampling to single out whom to interview. In the words of (Castillo, 2005 p.2) a convenience sample is “either a collection of subjects that are accessible or a self-selection of individuals willing to participate which is exemplified by your volunteers.” In this type of sampling the subjects were selected just because they were easiest to recruit for the study and the researcher did not consider just selecting subjects that were representative of the entire population” Castillo (2005).The convenience sampling technique became ideal because the research occurred round about the time when schools were operational and lessons were running, hence teachers were busy attending to their daily chores in their classes as the research was being conducted.

The sample size is the number of respondents who are required to participate in the survey in order to ensure statistically valid conclusions (Saunders et al, 2003). The researcher determined the sample size for pupils based on a 10% minimum sample size threshold as suggested Creswell (2004). In the current study a sample size of 180 pupils was selected as depicted on Table 3.1 above.

3.3 Data gathering tools or Instrumentation

In the words of (Leedy and Ormond, 2001 p 52) a data gathering tool is “a device used by the researcher to collect data, to answer the research question as well as

an instrument designated to measure knowledge, attitude and skills of a study population.” They can be questionnaires, interviews, observations, document analysis, desk research or field research. In this study the data gathering tools that were found to be ideal were questions and face to face interviews.

3.3.1 Justification on the use of research instruments

Questionnaire

A questionnaire ‘is a research instrument consisting of a list of questions that a number of people are asked so that information can be collected about something’ (Leedy and Ormond, 2001 p.36). Most often this method of data collection is used to gain statistical data that can serve as the basis for scientific research. (Castillo, 2005 p. 138) adds also that a questionnaire is a method of obtaining specific information about a defined problem so that after analysis and interpretation, results in a better appreciation of the problem. The questionnaire was used in this study as it provided large and varied amounts of appropriate and easily comparable data at a low cost per respondent. Secondly the questionnaire provided a reliable, practical and effective way of collecting data from a large sample size, that was easily managed by the researcher, especially in instances where the respondents were busy it was just easy to drop the questionnaire and pick it up at a later date after it had been completed by the respondent. Thirdly the questionnaire made it easy for the respondents to have the freedom of private response to more personal questions as they were provided with enough time to answer the data gathering instrument.

Questionnaires were found to work best with standardized questions that would be interpreted the same way by all respondents (Leedy and Ormond, 2001). Among some notable disadvantages of using questionnaires were the following:- some respondents could not be found in their classes on the questionnaire administering day while others had misplaced the questionnaires on the questionnaire collection day and that marginally reduced the response rate

especially among some teachers. Other respondents simply rushed to fill in the questionnaires upon collection by the researcher while a very small minority could have had their questionnaires filled by respondent's colleagues making for premeditated responses. However the majority of respondents took the survey seriously and completed the questionnaire on the day when the researcher administered it. On collecting the completed questionnaires the researcher observed that some respondents had left some questions unanswered as they could have failed to get clarification on a few questions. However as soon as they got the requisite clarification from the researcher they quickly completed the questionnaire and returned it to the researcher.

3.4 Data collection procedures

(i) Ethical considerations

Ethics basically refers to “moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or the conducting of an activity” (Tuckman, 2001:2). Ethics imply preferences that influence behaviour in human relations. Quite often ethics go hand in hand with values which deal with issues pertaining to what is right or wrong and what is good and desirable (Babbie & Mouton 2001:470).

Ethical aspects addressed by the researcher included first obtaining authority before embarking on the research, respect for a person's freedom, the right for self-determination, autonomy, volunteerism, confidentiality, consent and respect for person's freedom. All subjects were politely asked to participate by the researcher prior to the study. Subjects were adequately informed about the nature of the study and they were free to withdraw anytime during the period of study.

(ii) Seeking permission to carry out the research

Literature indicates that the process of gaining access to enter into a research site and getting permission to select subjects is viewed as a vital aspect of research. In this study, preparations to seek permission to conduct the study were dealt with well ahead of the date for the commencement of the actual study. A letter to the

Provincial Education Director of Bulawayo was written and presented to his Office requesting authority to conduct this research well in advance. After obtaining permission from the Provincial Education Director, this was taken to the School Head at Dumezweni primary school. The third stage involved talking to the individual teachers in order to alert them of the pending research. Saunders et al (2003) support the importance of paying careful attention to sensitive topics when seeking permission for conducting a study.

(iii) Right to self-determination

The right to self-determination was fully observed by the researcher and this was demonstrated by requesting the subjects to volunteer to participate in the study at their free will (Saunders et al (2003)).

Principles of anonymity involved separating subjects from the information they were giving by requesting them not to write their names on any of the papers they handled. All respondents were advised not to disclose their identity. The researcher assured them that the information gathered was for the purpose of the research only and it was not going to be used against them in whatsoever way.

3.5 Data Analysis and Plan

Hindle (2004) identifies data analysis techniques as methods used to analyse data irrespective of either the methodical cluster within which the technique is applied or the methods used to collect the data. Data collected will be coded and analyzed using the Statistical Packages in Social Sciences (Version 16). The descriptive method of data analysis will be used; tables will be used to present data (mean and standard deviation). Regression analysis will also be used to round off the analysis. The following scale will be used to interpret the scores

Table 3.1: shows the interpretation of Scores.

| Likert Scale | Response | Scale interval |
|--------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 5 | Strongly agree | 4.50-5.00 |
| 4 | Agree | 3.51-4.50 |
| 3 | Not sure | 2.51-3.50 |
| 2 | Disagree | |
| | Strongly disagree | 1.00-1.50 |

3.6 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the methodology used to conduct this study on the streaming of pupils at Dumezweni primary school. A descriptive and explanatory research design was used. As for the sampling technique the researcher used judgmental sampling for pupils and convenience sampling on teachers. The chapter also discussed the data collections instruments used which were the questionnaires. These instruments measured the variables, pupils' opinions, teachers' opinions on the impact of streaming pupils at Dumezweni Primary school. The validity and the reliability of the measurements, findings and ethical considerations were also discussed in the chapter, followed by a presentation of plans for analysis of data. The next chapter covers data presentation and analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the results of the study from the questionnaires which were circulated by the researcher. Two sets of questionnaires were constructed for teachers and learners. A total of 25 questionnaires were administered to the two categories of respondents that is; 18 pupils and 7 teachers. The teachers' questionnaire had a total of 15 Likert rated scale questions and 4 closed ended

questions, while the pupils' questionnaires had 8 closed ended questions. The data was then collated and tabulated into the statistical program SPSS following which the results were presented on tables and bar graphs. Furthermore cross tabulations were employed to search for different relationships between the various variables.

4.1 Presentation and analysis of the findings

With a questionnaire as the principal research tool to gather data from the respondents, the first section (of the questionnaire) was intended to gather personal details on the background of the respondents. Frequency tables were used in analyzing the data gathered from the respondents. Secondly the researcher was also trying to establish the respondents 'categories and the response rate per category as well as the overall response rate for the whole target population. Thirdly it was also the researcher's view that the personal details of the respondents would be important to establish so as to make sure she was gathering data from the correct respondents, this would help to enhance the reliability of the data and the research project as the correct respondents would have the most appropriate answers for this study. Table 4.1 below gives a summary of the categories to which the questionnaires were distributed, the

response rate attained for each sector or category of respondents and the overall response rate for all respondents.

Table 4.1 Response rate

| | Distributed questionnaires | Received questionnaires | Response rate Per category |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Category | Freq. | Freq. | % |

| | | | |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Pupils | 18 | 18 | 100 |
| Teachers | 7 | 7 | 100 |
| Total | 25 | 25 | 100 |

According to Table 4.1 above, of the 25 subjects on the distribution list 18 (72%) were from pupils and 7 (28%) were from teachers, which shows that more pupils participated in the survey than teachers. An analysis of Table 4.1 revealed that there was a 100% response rate from both categories of respondents. This is obviously a very high response rate and it showed that the respondents were all very keen to participate in the survey.

4.2 Analysis of pupils' gender

Table 4.2 gender

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|--------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Male | 9 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Valid Female | 9 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 18 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

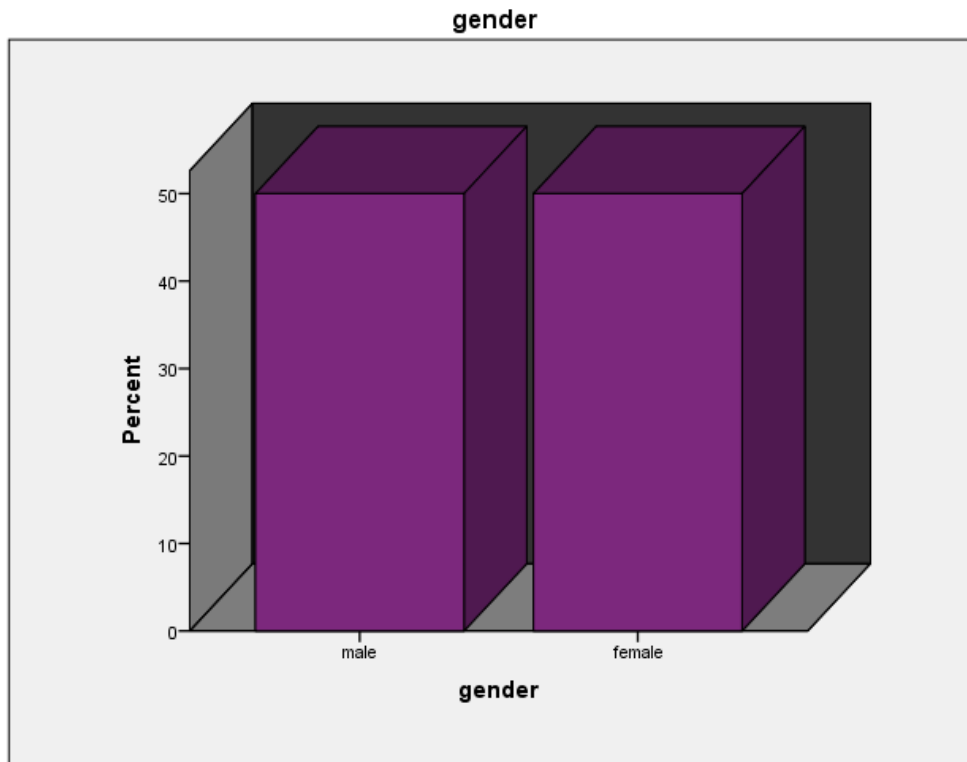


Figure 4.1 Gender

The study then sought to establish the gender profile of pupils. Findings on Table 4.2 above revealed that 50% of pupils were female while the other 50% were male. This shows that there was an equal representation of both genders among the respondents.

Teachers' distribution according to gender

Table 4.3 gender

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|--------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid Male | 1 | 14.3 | 14.3 | 14.3 |
| Valid Female | 6 | 85.7 | 85.7 | 100.0 |
| Valid Total | 7 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The teachers' gender profile was also sought, and the analysis on Table 4.2 above revealed that while 85.7% of respondents were female, 14.3% of the teachers

were male. The above table showed that there are generally more female than male teachers at Dumezweni Primary School.

Pupils’ distribution of pupils according to age

Table 4.4 age

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| 10-11 | 6 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 33.3 |
| Valid 12-13 | 10 | 55.6 | 55.6 | 88.9 |
| d 14-15 | 2 | 11.1 | 11.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 18 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

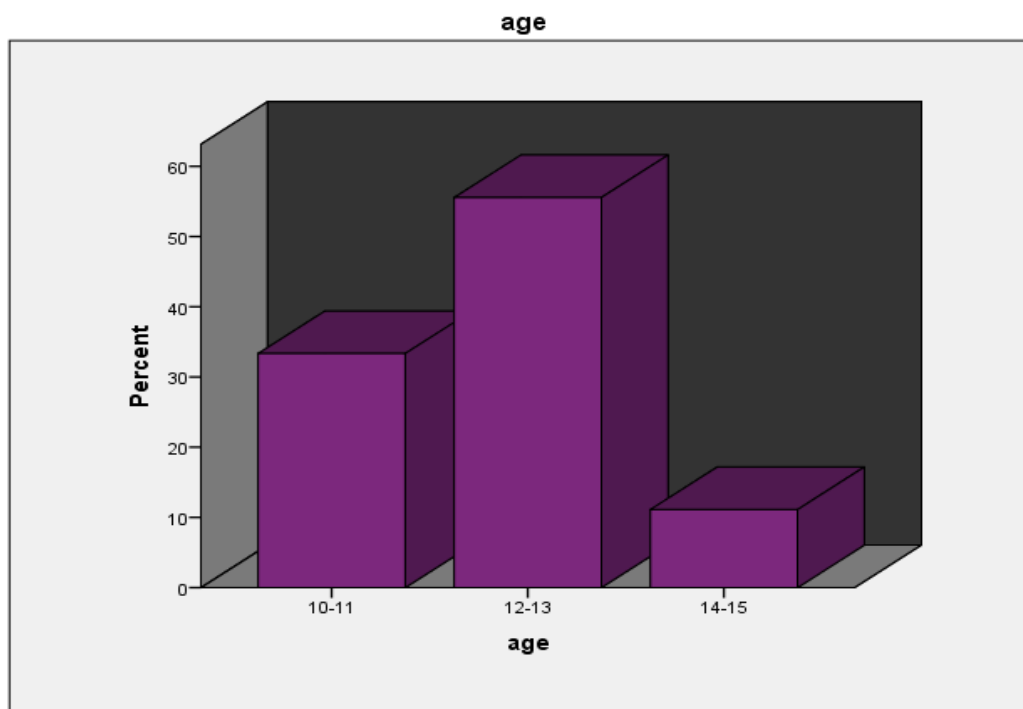


Figure 4.2 Ages of pupils

The study took an interest on the age profile of pupils. A cross tabulation of Table 4.4 above revealed that 88.9% of respondents in the pupil categories were aged

between 12 and 13 years of age. This was followed by those pupils who were aged between 10 and 11 years of age, who constituted 33.3% of the respondents pupils. Only 11.1% of pupils were aged between 14 and 15 years of age.

4.5 Respondents level of education

Pupils' grade

Table 4.5 grade 6

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid 6 | 18 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

All respondents in the learner category were in grade six.

Teachers' professional qualification

Table 4.6 professional qualification

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| CE | 1 | 14.3 | 14.3 | 14.3 |
| Valid DE | 4 | 57.1 | 57.1 | 71.4 |
| d DEGREE | 2 | 28.6 | 28.6 | 100.0 |
| Total | 7 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Teachers teaching experience

Table 4.7 teaching experience

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulati ve Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|------------------|---------------------------|
| 6-10 | 1 | 14.3 | 14.3 | 14.3 |
| 11-15 | 3 | 42.9 | 42.9 | 57.1 |
| 16-20 | 1 | 14.3 | 14.3 | 71.4 |
| 21+ | 2 | 28.6 | 28.6 | 100.0 |
| Total | 7 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The study took an interest in the experience of teachers at Dumezweni primary school, findings on Table 4.7 revealed that the highest number of respondents amongst the teachers had between 11 and 15 years of experience as teachers and they are 42.9% of the total number of teachers. This was followed by 28.6% of teachers who had over 21 years experience in their profession and those teachers who had the least experience (under ten years) at Dumezweni primary school, made up 14.3% of respondents. The above table shows that all teachers at Dumezweni were adequately prepared to answer the questionnaire.

DO PUPILS BENEFIT FROM BEING PLACED IN A STREAM?

Whether the school places pupils in different classes according to their ability. (Pupils' questionnaire)

Table 4.8 Whether school place pupils in different classes according to their ability

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid Agree | 18 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

All (100%) learners confirmed that their school places pupils according to their ability.

Whether school places pupils in different classes according to their ability (Teachers' questionnaire)

Table 4.9 Whether school places pupils in different classes according to their ability

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid strongly agree | 6 | 85.7 | 85.7 | 85.7 |
| Valid Agree | 1 | 14.3 | 14.3 | 100.0 |
| Valid Total | 7 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

All (100%) teachers confirmed that their school places pupils according to their ability. The next section looks at student's attitudes may affect their performance.

Pupils' views on benefits of ability grouping (Pupils)

Table 4.10

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| strongly agree | 7 | 38.9 | 38.9 | 38.9 |
| Disagree | 5 | 27.8 | 27.8 | 66.7 |
| Agree | 4 | 22.2 | 22.2 | 88.9 |
| strongly disagree | 1 | 5.6 | 5.6 | 94.4 |
| not sure | 1 | 5.6 | 5.6 | 100.0 |
| Total | 18 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

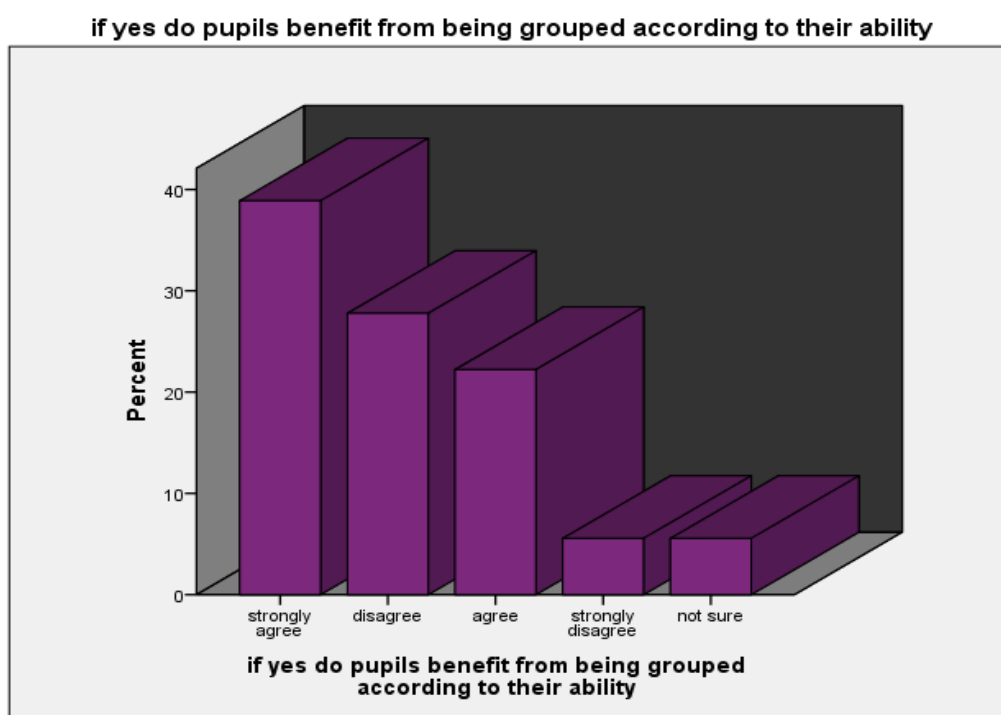


Figure 4.3 whether pupils benefit from being grouped according to their ability

When asked if pupils benefit from ability grouping 61.1% of the respondents had views which ranged from agree to strongly agree. Conversely 33.4% of the respondents actually thought there were no benefits in ability grouping. Only 5.6% of respondents were undecided whether there benefits that accrued to pupils

from ability. The above therefore meant that the majority of pupils thought that there no benefits that accrued to the pupils as a results of ability grouping.

Teachers’ views on whether pupils benefit from ability grouping

Teachers

Table 4.11 if yes, do pupils benefit from streaming

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| strongly agree | 3 | 42.9 | 42.9 | 42.9 |
| Disagree | 1 | 14.3 | 14.3 | 57.2 |
| Agree | 2 | 28.6 | 28.6 | 85.8 |
| not sure | 1 | 14.3 | 14.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 7 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The question of whether pupils benefited from ability grouping was posed to the teachers and their responses were as follows, 71.5% of respondents in the teacher category had views which ranged from agree to strongly agree on whether pupils benefited from ability grouping.

Those who believed that pupils did not benefit from ability grouping represented 14.3% of the respondents and only 14.3% of respondents were not sure whether there were any benefits that accrued to pupils from ability grouping. From the above it was clear that both teachers and pupils think that there are some benefits that accrued to pupils from ability grouping.

Pupils’ perceptions on how slow learners gain from ability grouping?

This section sought to establish the pupils' average response mean and standard deviation values to questions on **how slow learners gain from ability grouping**. In this section, respondents' views were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In other words in the Likert scales the respondents were asked to rate the strength of their perception towards a given set of statements, the implication being that, the higher the category chosen, the greater the strength of the agreement (Bell, 2005).

The following Likert scales were to be rated under the “how slow learners gain from ability grouping theme:-

They have a chance of being taught individually

The teacher moves according to their speed when teaching

They have got high chances of participating in class

They get a lot of learning aids that are of their ability level

Table 4.12 Average on how slow learners gain from ability grouping

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|-----------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. They have a chance of being taught individually | 18 | 4.11 | 1.079 |
| 2. The teacher moves according to their speed when teaching | 18 | 3.78 | 1.060 |
| 3. They have got high chances of participating in class | 18 | 2.72 | 1.127 |
| 4. They get a lot of learning aids that are of their ability level | 18 | 4.22 | .878 |
| Average | 18 | 3.708 | .43933 |

Table 4.12 above indicates the pupils' perception on how slow learners gain from ability grouping. An analysis of Table 4.12 above revealed that the average

response mean value of pupils' perceptions on how learners gain from ability grouping is 3.7083, showing that the pupils were actually in agreement that there were aspects within the grouping ability arrangement where pupils gained in their learning. This could be resulting from the fact that pupils get a lot of learning aids that are of their ability level and also that the teacher moves according to their speed when teaching.

Further analysis of Table 4.12 above revealed that the average standard deviation is 0.43933 showing that the respondents were homogenous in response to **how slow learners gain from ability grouping**.

Question 4 on the one hand had the highest mean of 4.22 indicating that the respondents agreed with the sentiments that some **slow learners gained from ability grouping as the teacher moves according to their speed when teaching** and they have got high chances of participating in class.

Teachers' perceptions on how slow learners gain from ability grouping

This section sought to establish the teachers' average response mean value and standard deviation value to questions on **how slow learners gain from ability grouping**. In this section teachers' views were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In other words in the Likert scales the respondents were asked to rate the strength of their perception towards a given set of statements, the implication being that, the higher the category chosen, the greater the strength of the agreement (Bell, 2005).

The following Likert scales were to be rated under the "teachers' views on how slow learners gain from ability grouping theme:-

Matter to be taught is lowered to their cognitive level

They are taught at their own pace of grasping matter

They have chances of participating fully in class

The homogeneity of the class boosts their confidence

Table 4.13 Average on how slow learners gain from ability grouping

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|----------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. Matter to be taught is lowered to their cognitive level | 7 | 4.43 | .535 |
| 2. They are taught at their own pace of grasping matter | 7 | 4.14 | .900 |
| 3. They have chances of participating fully in class | 7 | 3.14 | .900 |
| 4. The homogeneity of the class boots their confidence | 7 | 4.71 | .488 |
| Average | 7 | 4.107 | .31810 |

Table 4.13 above indicates the teachers' perception on how slow learners gain from ability grouping. An analysis of Table 4.13 above revealed that the average response mean value of teachers' perceptions on how learners gain from ability grouping is 4.107, showing that the teachers were also in agreement that there were extrinsic aspects within the grouping ability arrangement where pupils gained in their learning. This could be resulting from the fact that the homogeneity of the class boots their confidence and there are some matters that are to be taught that are lowered to their cognitive level.

Further analysis of Table 4.13 above revealed that the average standard deviation is 0.31810 showing that the respondents were homogenous in responses to **how slow learners gain from ability grouping**.

Question 4 on the one hand had the highest mean of 4.71 indicating that the teachers agreed with the sentiments that some **slow learners gained from ability grouping as** the homogeneity of the class boots their confidence and matter to be taught is lowered to their cognitive level.

SECTION C: DOES STREAMING POSITIVELY AFFECT THE SOCIO CHARACTERISTICS OF PUPILS?

This section sought to establish the teachers' average response mean value and standard deviation value to questions on whether streaming positively affects the socio characteristics of pupils. In this section teachers' views were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In other words in the Likert scales the respondents were asked to rate the strength of their perception towards a given set of statements, the implication being that, the higher the category chosen, the greater the strength of the agreement (Bell, 2005).

The following Likert scales were used to rate the teachers' views on the effects of streaming on socio characteristics of pupils, they:-

Motivates pupils to work hard to get merits in their particular classes

Streaming of pupils according to their ability helps to boost the child's self esteem

Homogeneity reduces discrimination in a streamed class

Merit awards in streamed classes help the low achievers to be recognized by other pupils

Table 4.14 Average for effect of streaming on socio characteristics of pupils

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|---|------|----------------|
| 1. Motivates pupils to work hard to get merits in their particular classes | 7 | 4.14 | .900 |
| 2. Streaming helps to boost the child's self esteem | 7 | 3.86 | .690 |

| | | | |
|---|----------|--------------|---------------|
| 3. Homogeneity reduces discrimination in a streamed class | 7 | 3.71 | .951 |
| 4. Merit awards in streamed classes help the low achievers to be recognized by other pupils | 7 | 1.86 | .690 |
| Average | 7 | 3.892 | .59261 |
| | | 9 | |

Table 4.14 above indicates the teachers' perception on whether streaming positively affects the socio characteristics of pupils. An analysis of Table 4.14 above revealed that the average response mean value of teachers' perceptions on whether streaming positively affects the socio characteristics of pupils is 3.8929, showing that overall the teachers strongly agreed with the assertion that streaming positively affects the socio-characteristics of pupils. This could be resulting from the fact that streaming motivates pupils to work hard to get merits in their particular classes and homogeneity reduces discrimination in a streamed class.

Another analysis on the standard deviation value revealed that it was .59261, less than 1.00, meaning the respondents' response were homogeneous.

DOES STREAMING HELP INCREASE PASS RATE?

Teachers

Table 4.15 does streaming of pupils increase the pass rate

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
|--|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|

| | | | | | |
|-------|----------------|---|-------|-------|-------|
| | strongly agree | 3 | 42.9 | 42.9 | 42.9 |
| Valid | Disagree | 1 | 14.3 | 14.3 | 57.1 |
| d | Agree | 3 | 42.9 | 42.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 7 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The study also sought to establish if streaming of pupils increased the pass rate and findings revealed the following, 42.9% of respondents in teacher category strongly agreed with the assertion that streaming increases the pass rate. Another 42.9% of teachers concurred with those who strongly agreed. However, only 14.3% of the teachers had negative perceptions about streaming. The above results therefore show that the majority of teachers have a favourable impression of streaming.

Table 4.16 the school has received merit awards over the introduction of streaming

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Agree | 1 | 14.3 | 14.3 | 14.3 |
| d | strongly disagree | 6 | 85.7 | 85.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 7 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The teachers were also asked whether it was a fact that the school had received merit awards after the introduction of streaming, with 14.3% of the teachers agreeing and 85.7% of their counterparts strongly agreeing, it meant that 100% of teachers agreed to the sentiment that the school had received that the school had received merit awards after the introduction.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE ABOUT STREAMING?

Should the grouping of pupils according to their ability be done in schools?

Table 4.17 should the grouping of pupils according to their ability be done in schools

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| strongly agree | 7 | 38.9 | 38.9 | 33.3 |
| Disagree | 6 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 72.2 |
| Agree | 5 | 27.8 | 27.8 | 100.0 |
| Total | 18 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

On being asked whether the ability grouping of pupils should be done in schools, the respondents gave the following responses; while 66.7% of respondents had views which ranged from agree to strongly agree. Those who agree were (27.8%) and those who strongly agree were (38.9%) of the total number of the respondents, only 33.3% of respondents had negative ratings for the streaming of pupils according to their ability in schools.

4.2 Discussion

About 66.7% of the respondents supported ability grouping and they were of the opinion that ability grouping will help those who cannot write or read to do so. Ability grouping will also help intelligent pupils to be able to catch concepts faster than when they learn together with the slow learners. Ability streaming will also enable teachers to concentrate on slow as fast will be busy exploring new

areas of their learning. Some were of the view that slow learners disturb fast learners.

Those who were against ability grouping were merely saying the down side of the exercise is the labelling which the slow learners, end up getting. Labelling would be bad as this would stigmatize the learners so that they end up losing self-esteem.

Teachers in support of ability had the following points in support of their views that, pupils are taught at their pace of understanding, such that those who grasp faster get more challenging work. Those who are behind benefit as the learning starts from their level and moves at their own pace until they reach a set target.

It was also another point that teachers raised that teachers will be able to plan lessons according to the class ability and pupils will move according to their pace of grasping matters, certainly it improves the quality of results.

The down side of ability grouping was said to be the fact that low achievers label themselves as unable hence they tend to relax and underperform. Some educators tend to have a negative attitude towards the slow learners and tend to relax when teaching them. Discipline standards are said to go down and performance become complacent as the high achievers look down on the lower streams.

4 . 3 Summary

Chapter four is one of the most indispensable chapters of the research which comprises of the presentation and analysis of the research findings, the discussion of the findings and the summary of the chapter. It is in this chapter that tables and bar graphs were used to present raw data which was explained and analysed in order to be understood by almost everyone. This chapter paved way for chapter five which drew its conclusions from it.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter brings to a close the research study entitled; Investigating the effects of streaming pupils according to their ability at Dumezweni Primary in Khami District. That was done by giving a summary of the research and the conclusions

drawn out from the research findings. The recommendations were derived from the conclusions arrived at from the responses of the respondents.

5.1 Summary

This study was divided into five chapters. Chapter One set tone of the research by giving the background to the study, articulated the problem, and spelt out the significance of the study, the delimitations and the limitations of the study. The research questions of the study were as follows; How do pupils benefit from being placed in a stream? How does streaming affect the socio characteristics of pupils? How does streaming help increase pass rate? What can be done about streaming? Chapter two reviewed literature on streaming, looking at the advantages and the disadvantages of streaming pupils. Chapter three focused on research methodology, research design, the target population, sampling methods, research instruments and how data was going to be analysed. A descriptive research design was used for this study focusing mainly on the quantitative aspect of the survey. The research instrument used in this research was a questionnaire with which data was extracted from the targeted 25 participants. The sample size comprised of 7 teachers and 18 pupils at Dumezweni primary school in Bulawayo's Khami district.

Chapter four covered data presentation and analysis of the findings .The researcher started off with the introduction of the chapter. A question by question analysis of the raw data was done after making tabulation from the teachers' questionnaires and the pupils' questionnaires. After that the researcher discussed the responses of the teachers and the pupils, giving a clear picture of how the respondents responded to various questions. The chapter ended by giving a vivid summary of all the proceedings under this chapter .Chapter five marked the end of the research entitled; Investigating the effects of streaming pupils according to their ability at Dumezweni Primary School in Khami District .This chapter's main

thrust was to give a summary of each of the five chapters highlighting the key points of each and every chapter. Moreover, it is in this chapter that conclusions were drawn from the research findings arrived at in chapter four. The chapter also articulated the recommendations of the study. The reference page showing a list of scholars who were consulted during this research marks the end of the whole project.

5.2 Conclusions

The study revealed that the majority of the teachers were in favour of the streaming of pupils according to their ability. Moreover the majority of the pupils also thought that there were benefits that accrued to the pupils as a result of ability grouping. Only a few pupils and teachers were against the streaming of pupils according to their ability. The average mean response value of pupils' perceptions on how learners gain from ability grouping is 3.7083, showing that the pupils were actually in agreement that there were aspects of the grouping of the pupils by ability where pupils gained in their learning. This could be resulting from the fact that pupils get a lot of learning aids that are of their ability level and also that the teachers moves according to the pupils' speed when teaching.

It was established that both teachers and learners strongly agreed with the assertion that streaming positively affects the socio-characteristics of pupils. This could be resulting from the fact that streaming motivates pupils to work hard to get merits in their particular classes and homogeneity reduces discrimination in a streamed class. Those who were in support of ability grouping were said that pupils should be grouped according to their ability since they have a chance of

being taught individually. Those who supported ability grouping were saying ability grouping will help those who cannot write or read to do so. Ability grouping will also help intelligent pupils to be able to catch concepts faster than slow learners. Streaming will also enable teachers to concentrate on slow learners as the fast learners would be busy exploring new areas of their learning. Some were of the view that slow learners disturb fast learners.

Those who were against ability grouping were merely saying the down side of the exercise is the labelling which the slow learners, end up getting. Labelling would be bad as this would stigmatize the learners so that they end up losing self-esteem. Teachers in support of ability grouping had the following points in support of their views that, pupils are taught at their pace of understanding, such that those who grasp concepts faster get more challenging work. Those who are behind benefit as the learning starts from their level and moves at their own pace until they reach a set target. Teachers said that they will be able to plan lessons according to the class ability and pupils will move according to their pace of grasping matter, certainly it improves the quality of the results.

The down side of ability grouping was said to be the fact that low achievers label themselves as unable hence relax and underperform. Some educators who have negative attitude towards the slow learners tend to relax when teaching them. Discipline standards go down, performance become complacent there look down on lower stream.

In short the respondents want schools to practise the streaming of pupils according to their ability as it has got some positive effects on the streamed classes in the sense that:

- ❖ It motivates the streamed pupils to work hard so as to get merit awards in their particular classes.

- ❖ Pupils are able to move at their own same pace as there are no major disparities within a streamed class.
- ❖ Pupils grow to have so much confidence in themselves since there is no one to make them feel inferior or stupid among their friends, in fact there is friendly competition which is motivational to the pupils.
- ❖ Merit awards in streamed classes helps the low achievers to be recognised as well as the fast learners unlike in a mixed ability set up.
- ❖ Homogeneity reduces discrimination within particular classes.
- ❖ Streaming motivates pupils to work harder in order to be moved from a low achieving stream to a better one

5.3 Recommendations

If the streaming of pupils according to their ability is to be practised in schools, the researcher strongly recommends that;

- ❖ Teachers and heads of schools must see to it that there is no dehumanisation of the slow learners through labelling and giving them some derogative names which are associated with dullness.
- ❖ The slow learners must be given equal treatment with the gifted pupils.
- ❖ The teachers must teach the slow learners with the equal zeal they have when teaching the gifted learners; they must not relax when teaching them.
- ❖ Learning aids that are designed to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities must be used when teaching.
- ❖ Learners who are showing great signs of improvement must be moved to better performing streams so that they learn more challenging matter.
- ❖ Teachers should have a record of a child study, so that they may know the background of the child for them to know how to assist that particular child.

- ❖ The learning aids should be specific and clear for the child to grasp the concepts that are being taught.
- ❖ The teacher should start teaching from simple to complex matter when teaching pupils.

➤ **Recommendations for further study on streaming**

For purposes of future studies it is recommended that an investigation be conducted on how best to use the streaming process as an avenue to help less gifted students attain higher grades.

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Appendix 1

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Dear prospective participant

I am Jane Moyo a final year student at the Midlands State University (MSU), Registration Number R14101R currently doing a Bachelor of Education Degree in English A. As part of my course, I am required to do a research project and I therefore request your assistance to this end.

May you kindly assist by answering the following questions? The research is purely for academic purposes and therefore the information provided will be treated with high level of confidentiality.

Thank you in anticipation

A. GENDER: MALE FEMALE

B. My age is between 20-20years
26-30years
31-40years
41+years

C. What is your academic qualification

SDT 6 'O' Level 'A' Level

D. What is your professional qualification?

P T H P T L C E D E DEGREE

E. What is your teaching experience?

0-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years 16-20years

21 years and about

1. Does your school place pupils into academic streams

Strongly agree disagree agree

Strongly disagree not sure

2. If yes, do pupils benefits from stream?

Strongly agree disagree agree

Strongly disagree not sure

3. How do low achievers benefit from streaming?

I. Matter to be taught is lowered to the slow learners' cognitive level

Strongly agree disagree agree

Strongly disagree not sure

II. Slow learners are taught at their own pace of grasping matter.

Strongly agree disagree agree

Strongly disagree not sure

III. Slow learners have a chance of participating fully in class

Strongly agree disagree agree

Strongly disagree not sure

IV. The homogeneity of the streamed classes boosts the learner's confidence.

Strongly agree disagree agree

Strongly disagree not sure

4. Does streaming positively affect the socio characteristics of pupils?

i. It motivates pupils to work hard to get merits in their classes.

Strongly agree disagree agree

Strongly disagree not sure

ii. Streaming help to boost the child's self esteem

Strongly agree disagree agree

Strongly disagree not sure

iii. Streaming reduces discrimination in a streamed class.

Strongly agree disagree agree

Strongly disagree not sure

iv. Merit awards in streamed classes help the low achiever to be recognised by other pupils.

Strongly agree disagree agree

Strongly disagree not sure

5. Does the streaming of pupils help increase pass rate?

Strongly agree disagree agree

Strongly disagree not sure

6. Should streaming be done in schools?

Strongly agree disagree agree

Strongly disagree not sure

Explain your answer.....

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Appendix 2

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS

Dear prospective participant

I am Jane Moyo a final year student at the Midlands State University (MSU), Registration Number R14101R currently doing a Bachelor of Education Degree in English A. As part of my course, I am required to do a research project and I therefore request your assistance to this end.

May you kindly assist by answering the following questions? The research is purely for academic purposes and therefore the information provided will be treated with high level of confidentiality.

Thank you in anticipation

F. GENDER: MALE FEMALE

G. My age is between 10-11years
12-13years
14-15years

H. What is your grade?

5 6 7

7. Does your school place pupils in different classes according to their ability

agree disagree

8. If yes, do pupils benefit from being grouped according to their ability?

Strongly agree disagree agree

Strongly disagree not sure

9. How do slow learners gain from ability grouping?

They have a chance of being taught individually

The teacher moves according to their speed in teaching

They have got high chances of participating in class

They get a lot of learning aids that are of their ability level

10. Does streaming affect the pupil's character?

Strongly agree disagree agree

Strongly disagree not sure

11. Should the grouping of pupils according to their ability be done in schools?

Strongly agree disagree agree

Strongly disagree not sure

Explain your answer.....

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12. What should be done about streaming?.....

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