LEARNERS` VIEW ON QUALITY EDUCATION IN EMERGING PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOLS IN MABELREIGN/WARREN PARK DISTRICT, HARARE OF ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT: The study aimed to assess learners` view on quality of education in emerging private high schools in Mabelreign/Warren Park district in Harare Metropolitan Province of Zimbabwe. It is important to mention that the study was unique as it assessed the quality of education in emerging private high schools in an education set-up where the population of these schools increased at an alarming level. The study was guided by the systems theory. Systems theory view a system as an entity with interrelated elements which can then view a boundary around the organisation. The study adopted a quantitative research approach, positivism paradigm, and a descriptive design. More so, the sample for the study was 215 learners who were selected using simple random sampling technique. The major findings are that colour on the classroom walls, textbook-pupil ratio, and safe learning environment have positive contribution on quality education. The study concluded that colour on the classroom walls, low textbook-pupil ratio, and a safe learning environment have positive contribution to quality education in emerging private high schools. The study recommended that Entrepreneurs in emerging private high schools should purchase current Cambridge recommended textbooks for each learner such that they leave by their message to the target market as per their ads.

Key terms: Quality education, emerging private high schools, traditional private high schools, global north countries and global south countries.

Global North and Global South countries and private education

United States of America is one of the global north countries that have high level of quality education and advanced in technology, and well-developed infrastructure (Shotte, 2019; Kowalski, 2020). It is important to note that global north countries are those countries that are developed and are located to the northern hemisphere (Shotte, 2019). According to US Department of Education (2005), private secondary educational institutions were the original academic organisations in the United States of America (USA). National Centre for Educational Statistics (2006) reveals that the population of private schools in the United States of America has increased to 28 384 from 26 093 for the period 1993 to 2003. Again, Snyder et al. (2008) observe that in 2007, 1 377 000 students were attending private secondary schools. In addition, Powell (2012) and Davis (2001) claims that in USA approximately 10% of students

are enrolled in private schools. Again, the research by Braun, et al. (2006) cements the notion that was unearthed by Davis (2011) that private school education in USA is more superior in comparison to education that is offered by public schools.

South Africa is an agglomeration of four polities which were amalgamated in 1910 and consists of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, and the Orange Free State (Pretorious, 2019). Again, public schools in South Africa were providing poor quality of education to the black South Africans and as such private schools mainly owned by churches such as The Catholic Church bridged the gap that existed in terms of poor quality of education. Abraham (1984) and Allen (2007) posit that around 1953, approximately 800 000 children were enrolled in church owned private schools. In addition, 662 private schools were owned by The Catholic Church where approximately 111 361 children were enrolled. Hofmeyr & Lee (2004) observe that post-1994, there was notable increase in the population of private schools in South Africa. According to Du Toit (2003), the South African government registered approximately 61% private schools in 2003 alone. It is also important to note that Bernstein (2015) asserts that from 2000 to 2006, 256 283 to 504 395 learners were enrolled in private schools in South Africa.

Odeh (2010) and Kowalski (2020) claim that global south are mainly African, Asian, and Latin American countries that are less developed and mainly characterised by poor quality of education, low-income levels, and high levels of poverty. Turkey is a nation that is perfectly situated in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East with an estimated population of 67.8 million as of 2002 census (Cinoglu, 2006). Law of Private Educational Institutions No.5580 states that private schools in Turkey are run by entrepreneurs who are private individuals or private organisations. Basically, there are four categories of private schools in Turkey which are: Private Turkish Schools which are owned and founded by Turkish nationals, Private Minority Schools which are owned and founded by Greek, Armenian and Jewish minorities, Private Foreign Schools which are owned and founded by entrepreneurs from Global North countries such as America, France, and Italy and Private International Schools which cater for international students only (Dag, 2015). Dag (2015) claims that the major reason for mushrooming of private high schools in Turkey is the quest for high quality of education by parents because of poor-quality education provided by public schools. It is interesting to note that parents` paradigm shift to private education have created business opportunity to entrepreneurs in Turkey who are investing heavily in the construction of private secondary schools (Bulut & Aydogan, 2021; Tinsley & Agaptova, 2018). Bulut and Aydogan (2021)

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conducted research in Turkey entitled, "Service Quality in Private Secondary Schools: Extension to EduQUAL with a case from Turkey" which reveals that there are more than twenty thousand (20 000) private schools with a total population of approximately 3.4 million students. It is also worthy to mention that there are approximately ten thousand (10 000) private high schools in Turkey`s education sector (Ministry of Education (Turkey), 2019). This is a clear indicator that there is mushrooming of private schools in Turkey.

Historically, Zimbabwe is a former British colony which was under its rule for almost a century from 1890-1980 when it attained Her Independence (Shizha & Kariwo, 2012; Garira et al., 2019). It is also important to note that The NewsDay dated July 22, 2022, reports that in Zimbabwe, there are more than 10 000 schools with a total enrolment of more than four million learners under the guidance of over 135 000 educators. Nherera (1994) observes that the first school for black Africans was opened in 1859 at Inyati by Robert Moffat of the London Society, more than 30 years before the first European settlers arrived in Zimbabwe. Atkinson (1972); Dorsey (1975); Zvobgo (1986) and Nherera (1994) observe that the missionaries established schools in Zimbabwe the then Rhodesia with the aim of educating the black Africans. However, the Rhodesian government crafted raft laws to stifle the quality of education to be provided to the black Africans (Zvobgo, 1986; Nherera, 1994; Nherera, 2000; Kanyongo, 2005; Shizha & Kariwo, 2012). It is also important to note that these policies were in the form of Ordinances that were meant to suppress the quality of education offered by missionaries to the black Africans (Zvobgo, 1986; Nherera, 1994; Nherera, 2000; Kanyongo, 2005; Shizha & Kariwo, 2012).

1.4.4.1 The Education system in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe Education system is divided as follows: primary education, secondary education, and tertiary education (Shizha & Kariwo, 2012; ZIMSTAT, 2017; Zimbabwe Education Report, 2017). The education structure follows the recommendations made by the 1999 Presidential Commission Inquiry into Education (Nziramasanga, 1999). This is clearly shown by the diagram below:

The structure of the Zimbabwean education system
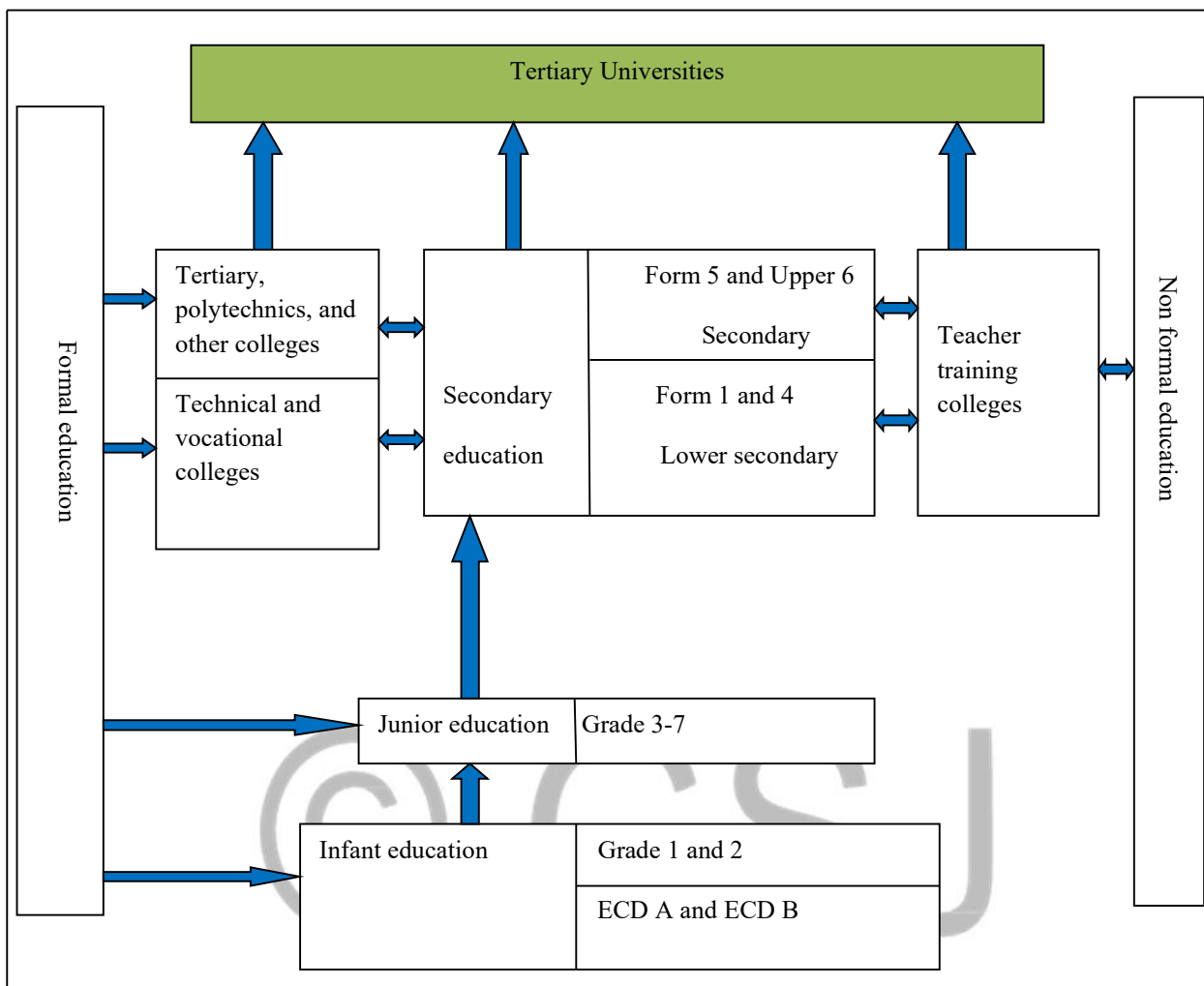
Source: Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (2017).

Upon attaining independence in 1980, the new government of Zimbabwe brought radical reforms in the education sector to redress the colonial imbalance and inequalities in the provision of education (Zvobgo, 1986; Nherera, 2000; Shizha & Kariwo, 2012). Consequently, the Government of Zimbabwe under the visionary leadership of the former Head of State and Government, Commander-In-Chief of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces and Chancellor of all State Universities, Comrade Robert Gabriel Mugabe embarked on massive construction of state-owned academic institutions (Nherera, 2000; Kanyongo, 2005; Shizha & Kariwo, 2012). However, Zimbabwe experienced economic meltdown which was characterised by hyperinflation which entered Guinness World of Records by surpassing Germany (Shizha & Kariwo, 2012). At its peak in 2008, Zimbabwe`s hyperinflation hits approximately 500 billion percent, the highest ever in the world (Shizha & Kariwo, 2012). As such, state-owned schools were now providing poor quality of education to its citizens. Meanwhile, the traditional private

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high schools were charging tuition fees that were beyond the reach of many parents especially middle income earners. In addition, the traditional private high schools were providing good quality of education to its target market. Consequently, entrepreneurs discovered this lucrative niche market, and eventually seized it by constructing private high schools that are cheaper than the traditional private high schools. Evidently, this led to mushrooming of private schools (Tichagwa, 2010) across the country. Mapfumo (2010) reveals that the Zimbabwean education sector attracted entrepreneurs interested in quick, easy money, which many people in the society raised fears that such emerging private high schools may reduce the hard-earned reputation of high educational standards. It is also important to note that several research on quality education were conducted in Zimbabwe (Machingura et al., 2012; Mafa & Tarusikirwa, 2013; Mapuranga & Nyakudzuka, 2014; Garira et al., 2019; Bush et al., 2019). Despite these studies, there is dearth of literature on quality education for emerging private high schools in Mabelreign/Warren Park district, Harare of Zimbabwe. As such, it is worth mentioning that these emerging private high schools emphasise on the buss word of quality education.

1.6 Statement of the problem

In recent years, Zimbabwe has experienced the unprecedented mushrooming of emerging private high schools across the country (Mapfumo, 2010). In Mabelreign/Warren Park district, which is in Harare, these emerging private high schools are providing education to children whose parents are shunning government schools, and also appear not affording fees being charged by the traditional private high schools. Again, these emerging private high schools are charging low and affordable fees in comparison with the traditional private high schools. However, the state of affairs in emerging private high schools does not seem to be what owners advertise to the target market. As such, quality education has become a lip service in emerging private high schools in Zimbabwe. Thus, the need to find an answer to the key question, "To what extent is quality education being practiced in emerging private high schools in Mabelreign/Warren Park district, Harare of Zimbabwe?"

Main research question

- ✓ How is quality education being practiced in emerging private high schools?

Research sub-questions

- ✓ What influence do the educational inputs have on quality education in emerging private high schools?
- ✓ How does the physical environment of emerging private high schools influence quality education?
- ✓ What influence does safe learning environment have on quality education in emerging private high schools?
- ✓ How can quality education be improved in emerging private high schools?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Dimensions of quality

According to Frick (2012), quality can be viewed in a holistic approach by looking into the four dimensions which are content, context, process, and outcomes. As such, this study employed these four dimensions of educational quality.

2.5.1 Content

Frick (2012) asserts that content as a dimension of quality focuses on the goals and objectives of learning that is earmarked for students in emerging private high schools. It further looks on the design of teaching-learning activities that are lined up for the students in these emerging private high schools. It is also important to note that school administrators in emerging private high school should provide teaching and learning resources that will adequately support the learning activities so that the set goals and objectives can be accomplished. According to Frick (2012), the first dimension of educational quality also looks at the resources that teachers and students use in the teaching and learning process. It is also important to look at the quality of resources such as the textbooks, even the quality of educational media and technology that the teachers use to enhance modern teaching and learning.

Teacher-pupil ratios and class sizes

ILO/UNESCO (2019:86) asserts that "class size should be such as to permit the teacher to give the pupils individual attention". Individual attention helps the teacher to assist individual learner to reach their full potential. Research that was conducted by Shabbir et al. (2014) in

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Pakistan reveals that the pupil-teacher ratio increased in public schools, the parents react to transfer their children in private schools. It is also important to note that a research that was conducted in Zambia by Kalemba and Mulauzi (2020) on the effect of High pupil-teacher ratio on the quality of learning process of Mathematics in selected public secondary schools of Lusaka district, Zambia reveals that there is high pupil-teacher ratio in majority of the state owned high schools in Lusaka district which in turn has a negative effect on the learner`s academic performance. In addition, Kalemba and Mulauzi (2020) reveal that at one of the schools in Lusaka district in Zambia, the teacher-pupil ratio is 1:40 which is way too high at secondary level. This is also in line with the findings from research that was conducted by Ajani and Akinyele (2014) entitled, "Effects of Student-Teacher Ratio on Academic Achievement of Selected Secondary School Students in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Nigeria" which reveals that high pupil-teacher ratio has the effect on failure to provide individual attention to the learners. It is also interesting to note that The NewsDay dated July 22, 2022, reports that Kwekwe town clerk has raised a red flag in terms of very high teacher-pupils ratio in some of the best schools in Kwekwe, a city that is in the Midlands Province of the Republic of Zimbabwe. In this vein, the teacher-pupil ratio is reported to be at 1:60 which has negative effects in terms of the provision of quality education.

2.5.1.1.7 Pupil-textbook ratio

From Information Scientist point of view, Doctor R.S Ranganathan (1931) promulgated five laws of the library of which one of the laws touches on 1:1 textbook: pupil ratio (Kaushika, 2006; Chisita, 2016). These laws are: books are for use, books are for all, every book its reader, save the time of the reader, and library is a growing organism (Kaushika, 2006; Chisita, 2016). According to Ranganathan`s third law of the library, textbook: pupil ratio should be 1:1 in emerging private high schools. Clearly, 'every book its reader' denotes that textbook: pupil ratio should be 1:1 in emerging private high schools. Apparently, each learner at secondary level for each subject should have their book to achieve the fruits of quality education. Chisita (2016) further affirms that Ranganathan`s third law places emphasis on the user with the pretext to change the society through literacy concept achieved via reading for sustainable development. Clearly, many nations and educators world over want each student to be allocated their own textbooks in each subject that they are studying especially core subjects such as English, Mathematics and Science at a textbook: pupil ratio of 1:1 (Fredriksen et al., 2015) which is in line with Ranganathan`s third law of the library.

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UNESCO (2007) observes that in 1992, the average student-book ratio in Zimbabwe was found to be 5:1 in rural areas and 2:1 in urban areas. However, this situation deteriorated from around 2003 to 2008. In some schools, pupil-textbook ratio was 10:1. The worst scenarios were noted in schools where the teacher is the one with the textbook. During the inclusive government in Zimbabwe, the situation improved since the then Minister of Education, Arts, Sports and Culture, Senator David Coltart embarked on education transition fund (Shizha & Kariwo, 2012). Private schools in Zimbabwe offer mainly Cambridge syllabi and henceforth Cambridge has its own recommended textbooks for its product portfolio for a given period of time.

2.5.1.2 Context

Frick (2012) observes that context is another important dimension of educational quality. According to Frick (2012), context dimension zero-in on the teaching and learning environment. Teaching and learning environment touches on the infrastructure, safe learning environment, classroom lighting, and classroom colour, the school fields, and the boundary wall. The school environment is expected to be free from school violence, and at the same time it should promote peace, tranquillity and friendly between and amongst the school stakeholders. Frick (2012) further observes that the learning environment that the school stakeholders' interface should be safe from all forms of harm such as deterring thieves that may enter the school premises with dangerous weapons like knives, firearms, among others. Frick (2012) also claims that the school environment should be safe such that stakeholders are note exposed to harsh weather. In this context, the school buildings should not suppose to have broken windows which may expose occupants to wind, dust entering the room through the broken windows. Again, roofs of buildings should not have some leaks which may affect the occupants during the rainy season. In addition, Frick (2012) laments that one cannot talk of the provision of good quality education if we have such situations as internet accessibility is a challenge in the school considering that we are in the technology era.

Physical learning environment

First and foremost, it is very important to note that a quality physical learning environment can be achieved if the infrastructure is erected in accordance with international and local standards where the school is to be situated (Puteh et al. (2015). Several studies such as Malik and Rizvi (2018); Frazer (1991); Ranchlor (1992); Kiatkawsin, Kim and Hong (2017); Cheng (1994); Romanina (2014); The Design Council (2005); Steve and Richard (1990) and Puteh et al.

(2015) have been conducted on physical learning environment world over. In this regard, physical learning environment refers to the entire classroom design and layout and other physical components in the classroom, including the classroom itself (Han et al., 2017; OECD, 2011; Woolfolk, 2007). Interestingly, Puteh et al. (2018) puts it simple: physical learning environment is the space provided for learning in the school. In addition, Malik and Rizvi (2018) assert that a classroom is sub-divided into two components, viz: physical components (blackboards, furniture, lighting, wall colour and projector) and human components (teacher and the learners).

2.5.1.2.4 Temperature and air quality

In India, it is a requisite that when a school is being built, there is need for the provision of adequate ventilators and windows in each classroom to promote classroom airy and fresh thus learners feel fresh and energetic which will enable them to actively take part in the learning process (National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, 2017). Again, in Nepal, all classrooms should have windows such that learners and other users can open to outer side (Mishra, 2012). This design can allow proper ventilation of air in the classroom. In addition, student achievement is also influenced by classroom temperature as well as air quality that learners breathe (Earthman, 2004). Nevertheless, Fisher (2001) and Schneider (2002) observe that classroom temperature and air quality have great influence in terms of learners` behaviour and test scores. This is also in support of the findings from the research conducted by Sanoff (2000) in the UK and Arzi (2005) in the Netherlands the findings from these two studies reveal that temperature indoor in the classroom have direct relationship with learner`s performance in different assessments. As such, temperature affects learners to the extent that they can lose concentration span in their lessons. For instance, in Zimbabwe, schools that are in low valley, learners may be heavily affected by high temperatures. Contrary to schools that are in low valley, schools that are located in areas that are very cold such as in Gweru and Marondera, learners are affected with low temperatures despite the fact that there is dearth of literature in this regard. Indeed, schools that are in areas or countries that record very low temperature needs classrooms temperatures to be warm. This can be achieved through installation of air conditioning facility. More so, a classroom can be fitted with curtains or blinders which can make room temperature a bit favourable. Again, Mishra (2012) argues that learners normally spend approximately seven hours a day at school doing academic activities as well as co-curricular activities thus the need for good physical environment for quality education purposes. Several studies on physical environment (Puteh et al., 2015; Woolfolk, 2007; Moos,

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1979; Strange & Banning, 2001) point out that air quality is one of the classroom determinants that affects learners` outcome as well as influencing their behaviour.

Temperature and air quality are some of the basic human needs (Nyamubarwa, 2013) as propounded by motivation theorists such as Abraham Maslow`s five hierarchy of needs, Herzberg`s two-factor theory. Indeed, Maslow`s first level of five hierarchy of needs states that temperature and air are important basic human needs, thus, physical environment should provide temperature that suits the learners such that they can be motivated to learn.

Colour

Engelbrecht (2003) observes that human beings have a basic biological reaction to colour which may eventually affect learners in their academic life. The Design Council (2005) posits that the type of colour that is transmitted through the learner`s eye affect the mood, mental clarity as well as the energy levels of learners in the classroom. In addition, bright colours are argued to be the most attractive colours (Camgoz et al., 2003) on the part of the human being. Mishra (2012) claims that in Nepal, all classroom walls should be painted in white. This is the standard colour for all classroom walls. As such, Engelbrecht (2003) argues that adolescents in high schools prefer more subdued colours to surround them. In line with Engelbrecht (2003), The Design Council (2005) observes that the colour that surrounds the learner especially in the classroom might have a positive or negative influence on their mood and behaviour as well. Accordingly, colour of paint on the classroom walls, indeed have influence on the learner`s productivity and accuracy (Engelbrecht, 2003) and on the other hand, cool colours on the walls trigger high level of concentration (Brubaker, 1998) on the part of the learner. In terms of academic infrastructure, a study that was conducted by Maxwell (2000) points out that learners suggest that colour was very important in their school life, thus colour of the walls in their schools was dull and unattractive, thus boring. In addition, Burk and Grosvenor (2003) posit that learners, indeed want colours and this influence their academic performance in one way or the other. Several studies on colour in the classroom (Pile, 1997; Brubaker, 1998; Burk & Grosvenor, 2003; Engelbrecht, 2003) reveal that the colour behind the teacher in a classroom should be different from the colour on the other walls in the same classroom. In addition, Pile (1997) and Brubaker (1998) further note that the colour for the other walls in the same classroom should be a neutral colour. As such, type of colour on the walls of a classroom plays a pivotal role on the academic performance of learners hence has a bearing on quality education.

Safe learning environment

SIDA (2015) alludes that learning environment shall be safe and healthy. This is also in line with the Constitution of Zimbabwe S81(1)(e) which spells out that, "every child, that is to say every boy or girl under the age of eighteen years has the right to be protected from economic and sexual exploitation, from child labour, and from maltreatment, neglect or any form of abuse". Learners are not supposed to be subject to any form of abuse at school, including corporal punishment. It is also interesting to note that the UN Convention on the rights of the child, Article 28 spells out that discipline in schools should respect children`s human dignity.

School violence is a major problem in all schools across the world (Volokh & Snell, 1998). Statistically, approximately 246 million children are succumbed to school violence in all the schools every year in the world (UNESCO, 2017). In line with UNESCO (2017), Bolton (2017) cements that violence is very common in schools. As such, the right to education for these learners who are victims of school violence is grossly violated in schools, thus quality of education is negatively affected in such school climates. Furthermore, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (2012) reports that approximately one billion children are enrolled in the schools in all countries in the world. However, majority of these learners are not enjoying schooling since their right to education is being infringed by perpetrators of school violence (UNESCO, 2017). Again, UNESCO (2017) asserts that learners` fundamental right to education is impeded by school violence which eventually retards quality education in schools.

Physical violence

UNESCO (2017) notes that physical violence includes any type of human aggression: corporal punishment and physical bullying towards somebody which is done with the objective of hurting or inflicting pain. It is also interesting to note that many studies on school violence (Bolton, 2017; UNICEF, 2016; UNESCO, 2017; Mangope et al., 2012) have found that physical violence is more common in boys than in girls. Similarly, UNESCO (2019) asserts that boys are the main actors of physical violence in school's world over as compared to girls. Probably, this is because boys are muscular in nature, thus, demand physical contact as the case of sport discipline such as rugby.

In addition, UNESCO (2016) observes that the UN study on violence against children unearthed four main forms of violence in school setting namely, sexual and gender-based violence, physical and psychological violence, and violence that includes dimension external

to school violence associated with gang culture, weapons and fighting. It is also interesting to note that school physical violence has decreased in six countries which are Eswatinic, Italy, Jamaica, Lebanon, Republic of Korea, and Uruguay (UNESCO, 2019).

Bullying

Bullying in schools is an old phenomenon (Oliveus, 1993) and existed in schools world over since time immemorial (Mangope et al., 2012). As such, bullying is everywhere and victims of bullying are also dotted in all schools, but bullying differs in the degree of bullying (Monks & Smith, 2006; Adam & Lawrence, 2010). UNESCO (2017) posits that bullying comprises of a repeated behaviour against a learner because of imbalance power between the bully and the victim, and the victim in turn is vulnerable and in majority of the cases can fail to defend him or herself. According to UNESCO (2019, p.14), "bullying is characterised by aggressive behaviour that involves unwanted, negative actions, is repeated over time, and an imbalance of power or strength between the perpetrator or perpetrators and the victim". Furthermore, bullying includes hitting, kicking, and destruction of property, teasing, insulting, and threatening someone in the school environment (UNESCO, 2017). Statistically, bullying constitutes 22.8% in Central America, 30.2% in South America, 42.7% in North Africa, 48,2% in Sub-Saharan Africa; 25% in Caribbean; 31.7% in North America; 25% in Europe and 41.1% in the Middle East (UNESCO, 2019). These statistics leaves a lot to be desired in schools across the world. Governments and school authorities need to combat the phenomenon of bullying in schools to promote safe learning environments which are ingredients of quality education. Monks and Smith (2006) identify physical bullying, psychological bullying, sexual bullying, and cyber bullying as the main forms of bullying in secondary schools across the world. National Centre for Injury Prevention and the US Department of Education (2014) reports that verbal insults, name calling and nicknames, hitting, theft, threats, spreading of rumours and isolation are the most common forms of bullying in the United States of America.

Corporal punishment

UNESCO (2017) defines corporal punishment as any punishment which involves physical force with the objective of inflicting pain or cause discomfort mainly to those learners who perform poorly in their subjects or those who violate school rules and regulations. In addition, corporal punishment is a form of school punishment where physical force is applied with the objective of causing pain or discomfort to the learner (UNESCO, 2019). Furthermore, corporal punishment in schools takes the form of hitting learners with bare hands (slapping and fist),

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stick or sjambok, kicking, shaking, or scratching learners (UNESCO, 2019). Empirically, research that was conducted in South Africa by Ncontsa (2013) found out that teachers in schools are the major perpetrators of corporal punishment which leaves a lot to be desired. Similarly, UNESCO (2017) asserts that school violence is also perpetrated by educators who are said to be the *loco parentis* to the learners. UNESCO (2019) reports that corporal punishment is illegal in schools in 132 countries in the world, but sadly, it is legal in schools in 68 countries globally. UNESCO (2017) observes that corporal punishment may lead to fatal or some minor injuries to the learners in schools. In line with UNESCO (2017), The Herald, one of Zimbabwe`s leading newspapers, dated 18 October 2021, in a case State versus Chingwaru, reports that the State were waiting for medical affidavit to ascertain the degree of injury sustained by a student at Einstein Tuition Centre in Harare. The teacher in this case was seen on social media hitting the learner with a belt and open hands as well as head-buttering him. However, the current Constitution of Zimbabwe that was adopted in 2013, S51, S53, and S81 clearly prohibits corporal punishment on any child in both home and school because it violates children`s rights. There are landmark rulings on corporal punishments in Zimbabwe. Two notable cases are on administering corporal punishment on children are: *S v Chokuramba*; and *Pfungwa & Anor V Headmistress of Belvedere Junior Primary School & Others.*

At last, the Zimbabwean courts handed down a judgement that corporal punishment in schools is unconstitutional because it violates S51; S53; and S81 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe. It is also important to note that the Constitutional Court of Zimbabwe upheld Justices Muremba & Mangota`s judgement on 3 April 2019 courtesy of Chief Justice Luke Malaba (Constitutional Court of Zimbabwe, 2019). In addition, The Herald, dated 18 October 2021, reports that Chief Justice of Zimbabwe, sitting with eight other judges, ruled that corporal punishment is inhumane hence has no space in a democratic society.

2.2 Theoretical framework

This research was grounded on the systems theory.

2.2.1 Systems theory

Mele et al. (2010) observe that systems theory is an interdisciplinary theory about every system in an economy be it educational system, political system, natural system, ecological system, among others which endeavours to investigate phenomena from a holistic approach. Again, the systems theory aims to analyse the relationship between a given organisation and its environment (Mele et al., 2010). As such, this study adopts the systems theory as a way of

studying the educational systems of emerging private high schools in Mabelreign/Warren Park district, Harare of Zimbabwe, and their environments. Von Bertalanffy is the proponent of the systems theory in all disciplines to find general principles that are valid to all systems. Von Bertalanffy (1956) asserts that the major aim of the general systems theory is to pay particular attention to interactions in a system. Systems theory also looks at closed and open systems. Samson and Daft (2012, p.69) assert that, "open systems must interact with the environment to survive; closed system need not". It is also important to note that there are two important models under the open system that have express implications for improving service quality in emerging private high schools. These models are Total Quality Management (TQM) model, and the Supply Chain/ Synergy Model.

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research paradigm

This study used the lens of positivism paradigm. Positivism paradigm is guided by the ontology of single reality (Harrison et al., 2017) under the auspices of quantitative research (Bhatta, 2018). It is also important to note that positivism worldview enabled the this study to develop knowledge through careful observation and measurement of quality education that existed in emerging private high schools in Mabelreign/Warren Park district in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Research Approach

As such, given the nature of the phenomenon under study, quantitative approach is found suitable because it focused on carefully measuring a set of variables that were meant to answer the research questions for the phenomenon under study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Quantitative research is a tool that this study used to establish empirical associations between indicators of quality education and quality education in emerging private high schools (Stockemer, 2019). As Johnson and Christensen (2008) and Creswell and Creswell (2018) assert, quantitative research`s major strength is that of generalisability of findings to other population. It is worth noting that quantitative approach had been found useful and appropriate since it required the reduction of phenomenon under study to numerical values which calls for statistical analysis of data (Apuke, 2017).

Research design

A cross sectional descriptive survey was chosen to assess quality education in emerging private high schools in Mabelreign/Warren Park district, in Zimbabwe. More so, Shockemer (2019, p.31) posits that, "cross-sectional is a survey that is used to gather information about

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individuals at a single point in time". Again, descriptive survey allowed this study to collect quantifiable data from the sample.

Population and Sample

Consequently, the population for this study was one thousand (1000) learners from five (5) emerging private high schools in Mabelreign/Warren Park district. On the other hand, two hundred and fifteen (215) learners who participated in this study were chosen based on simple random sampling technique.

Instrumentation

This study used structured questionnaire to collect data from the learners in the selected emerging private high schools in Mabelreign/Warren Park district, Harare of Zimbabwe. Again, the researcher personally distributed structured questionnaires to two hundred and fifteen (215) learners in three (3) emerging private high schools in Mabelreign/Warren Park district in Harare. The structured questionnaire used in this study contained closed ended questions based on Likert scale type of questions (strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree) that addressed the research sub-questions. The percentage return rate of questionnaires that were distributed to learners was 85.11% (183 learners out of 215 learners).

Data presentation and analysis procedure

This study employed descriptive statistical tools such as tables and bar graphs as tools to analyse data collected.

Ethical consideration

In this study, the researcher sought informed consent from parents and learners by giving them the consent forms to sign before issuing the questionnaires to the learners and permission was granted by signing the consent form. Again, this research used pseudo names in order to protect the harm that could have caused by disclosing respondents` names and institutions where these respondents are employed. In this study, the identity of the respondents were kept confidential by the researcher.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION, AND INTERPRETATION
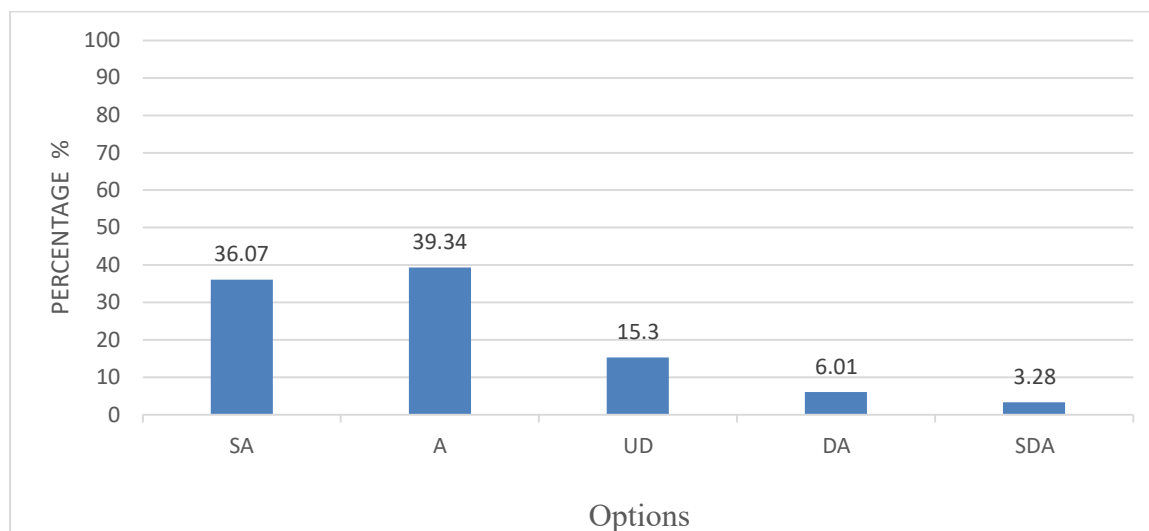

Figure 1: Low teacher: pupil ratio has positive influence on quality education.

Figure.1 above indicates that 36.07% (66 learners out of 183) strongly agreed that low teacher: pupil ratio has positive influence on quality education in emerging private high schools. In addition, 39.34% also agreed that low teacher: pupil ratio has positive influence on quality education in emerging private high schools. Hence, majority of the respondents` opinions reflect that low teacher: pupil ratio has positive influence on quality education in emerging private high schools.
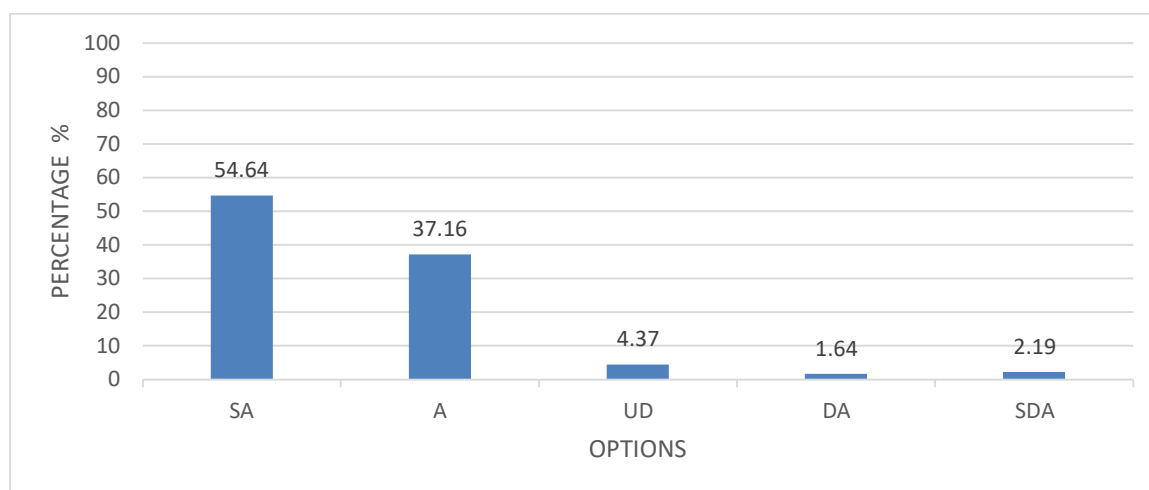

Figure 2: Textbook: pupil ratio of 1:1 has positive influence to quality education.

Figure.2 above depicts that 54.64% of the respondents are for the view that textbook: pupil ratio of 1:1 has positive influence on quality education. Again, 37.16% of the respondents do

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agree that textbook: pupil ratio of 1:1 has positive influence on quality education in emerging private high schools. Hence, majority of the respondents` opinions show that textbook: pupil ratio of 1:1 has positive influence on quality education.
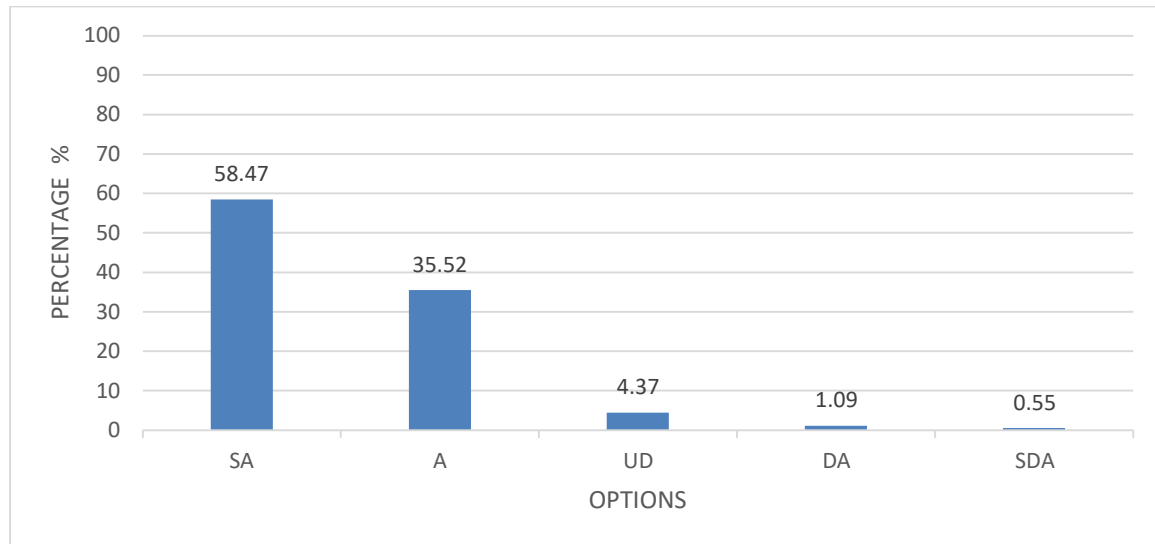

FIGURE 3: Relevant textbooks are key in the provision of quality education in emerging private high schools.

Figure. 3 above shows that 58.47% strongly agree that relevant textbooks are key in the provision of quality education in emerging private high schools. Furthermore, 35.52% agree to the effect that relevant textbooks are key in the provision of quality education in emerging private high schools. As such, 4.37% of the respondents were undecided, 1.09% of the respondents disagreed, and 0.55% strongly disagreed that relevant textbooks are key in the provision of quality education in emerging private high schools. As such, majority of the respondents` opinions show that relevant textbooks are key in the provision of quality education in emerging private high schools.
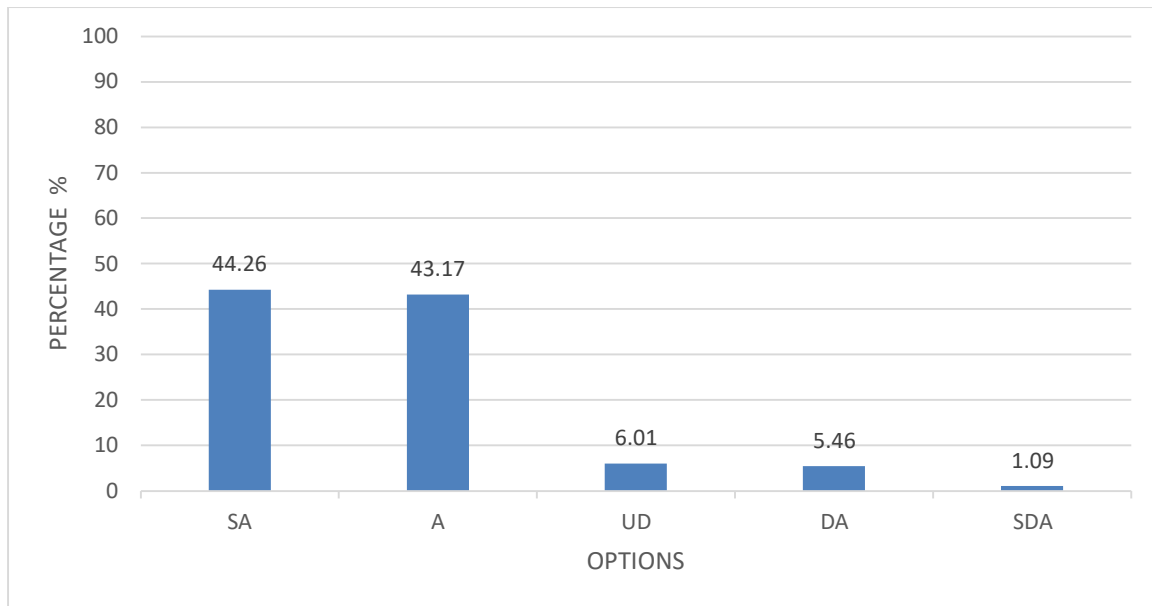
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FIGURE 4: A classroom with good lighting, good temperature and good air quality have positive influence on quality education in emerging private high schools.

Figure 4 above indicates that 44.26% of the respondents, and 43.17% of the respondents said that a classroom with good lighting, good temperature and good air quality have positive influence on quality education in emerging private high schools whereas 6.01% of the respondents were undecided, 5.46% disagreed, and 1.09% strongly disagreed that a classroom with good lighting, good temperature and good air quality have positive influence on quality education in emerging private high schools. As such, majority of the respondents` opinions show that a classroom with good lighting, good temperature and good air quality have positive influence on quality education in emerging private high schools.
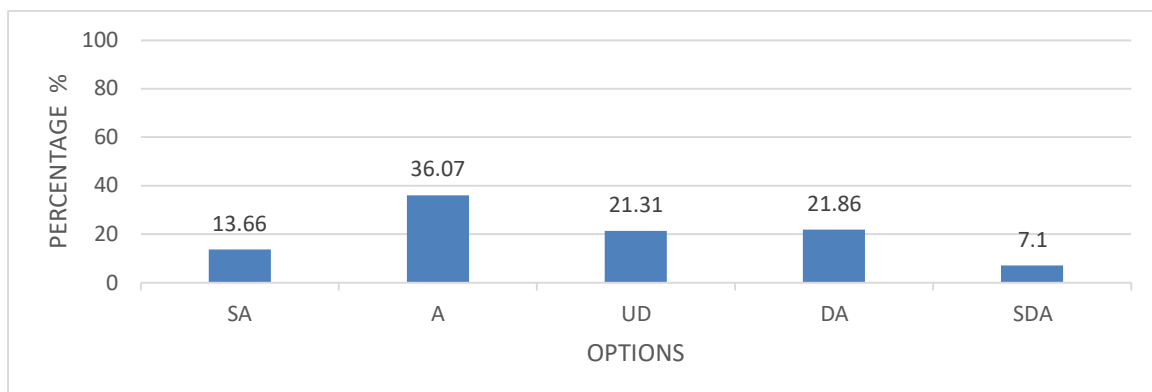

FIGURE 5: Colour that surrounds the learner in the classroom have influence on his/her mood and behaviour thus affects quality education.

Figure 5 depicts that 13.66% of the respondents strongly agree and 36.07% who agree that colour that surrounds the learner in the classroom have influence on their mood and behaviour thus affects quality education. Conversely, 21.31% were undecided, 21.86% disagree, and 7.1% of the respondents strongly disagree that colour that surrounds the learner in the classroom have influence on his/her mood and behaviour thus affects quality education. As such, majority of the respondents` opinions show that colour that surrounds the learner in the classroom have influence on his/her mood and behaviour thus affects quality education.
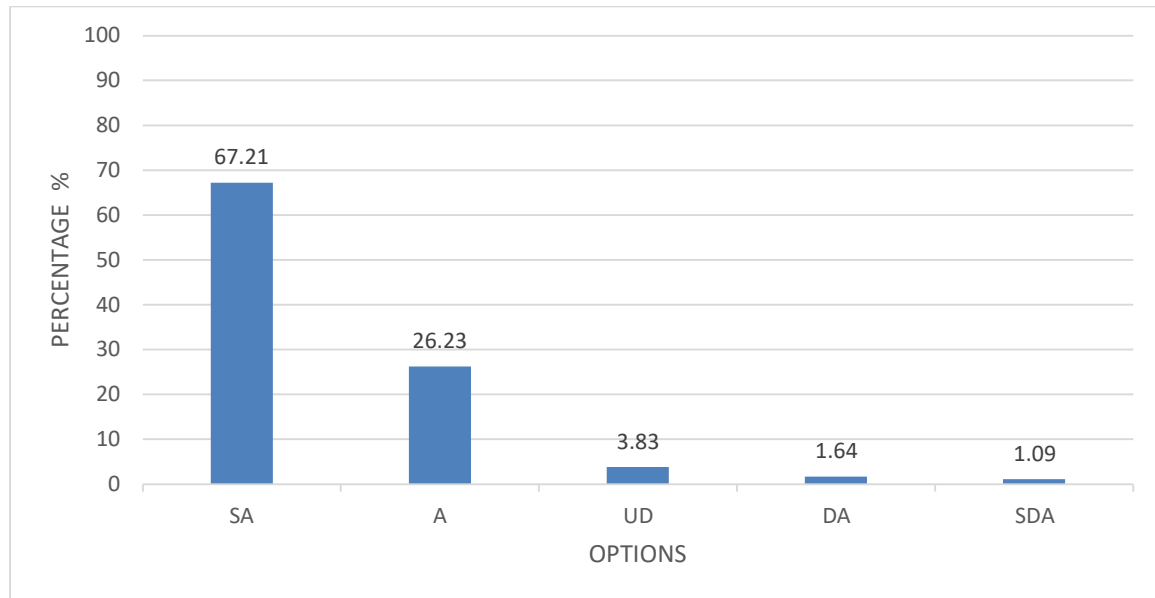

FIGURE 6: Safe learning environment, e.g., without violence, bullying, etc., have strong correlation with quality education.

Figure 6 depicts that majority of the respondents 67.21% strongly agree, and 26.23% agree to the effect that a safe learning environment, e.g., without violence, bullying, etc., have strong correlation with quality education. On the other hand, 3.83% of the respondents were undecided, 1.64% disagree, and 1.09% strongly disagree that safe learning environment, e.g., without violence, bullying, etc., have strong correlation with quality education. As such, majority of the respondents` opinions show that a safe learning environment, e.g., without violence, bullying, etc., have strong correlation with quality education.
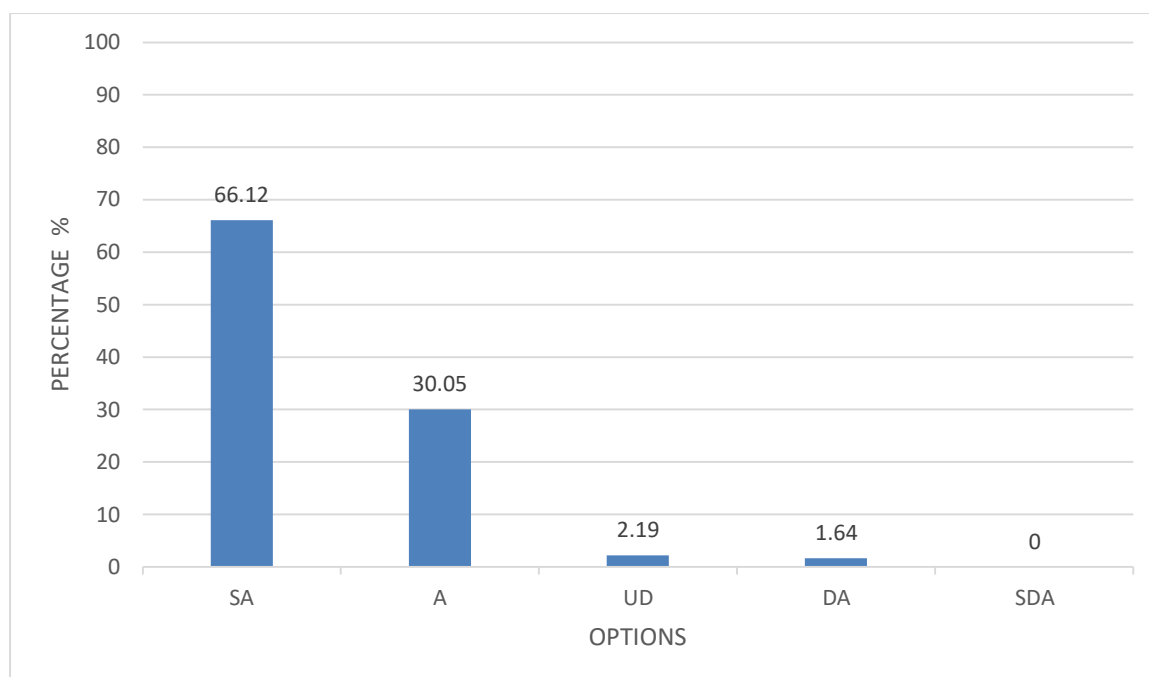
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FIGURE 7: School administrators should consider learners` concerns when making decisions such that quality education can be improved.

Figure 7 depicts that 66.12% of the respondents strongly, and 30.05% agree that school administrators should consider learners` concerns when making decisions such that quality education can be improved. On the other hand, 2.19% of the respondents were undecided, and 1.64% disagree to the fact that School Administrators should consider learners` concerns when making decisions such that quality education can be improved. As such, majority of the respondents` opinions show that administrators should consider learners` concerns when making decisions such that quality education can be improved.

Discussion

The results for the questionnaire item Textbook: pupil ratio of 1:1 has positive influence on quality education are in consistent with the research findings from research that was conducted in Pakistan by Shabbir et al. (2014) which reveals that the pupil-teacher ratio increased in public schools, the parents react to transfer their children in private schools. Furthermore, the results resonate well with research findings by Kennedy (2021) in Malaysia which reveals that parents favour private schools because of low teacher: pupil ratio. As such, one can comment that low teacher: pupil ratio in emerging private high schools will enable the teachers to have individualised attention to the weak learners (Kalemba & Mulauzi, 2020). Again, the results based on questionnaire item Textbook: pupil ratio of 1:1 has positive influence to quality

education resonate well with one of the five laws of a library that were propounded by one of the gurus in Information Science fraternity, Doctor R.S Ranganathan (1931) of which one of the laws touches on 1:1 textbook: pupil ratio which says 'every book its reader' (Kaushika, 2006; Chisita, 2016). As such, it can be commented that textbook: pupil ratio of 1:1 has positive influence on learners` academic performance.

The findings for the questionnaire item relevant textbooks are key in the provision of quality education in emerging private high schools are in consistent with Radic-Bojamic and Topaloz (2016) who argue that for teaching and learning to take place effectively and efficiently, a relevant textbook must be used for a given subject. In addition, Sabarwal et al. (2016) assert that many teachers feel secure and comfortable as they use relevant textbooks as a guide to their daily lesson plans. Apparently, one can say that for effective teaching and learning to take place, relevant textbooks must be used as stipulated by the syllabus for the subject in question. Furthermore, one can comment that emerging private high schools must use relevant textbooks as strongly recommended by Cambridge Assessment International Education since Cambridge textbooks change quite often. Again, one can say that relevant textbooks normally are in line with the current trends in that given subject hence are in line with the provision of quality education.

More so, the results for the questionnaire item 'A classroom with good lighting, good temperature and good air quality have positive influence on quality education in emerging private high schools' are in consistency with several studies that have been conducted globally (Malik & Rizvi, 2018; Puteh et al., 2015; Sanoff, 2000; Strange & Banning, 2001; Dalton, 1995; Frazer, 1981) which conclude that lighting in the classroom is another factor that influence learner`s academic achievement. Again, these findings are in line with Puteh et al. (2015) who argue that lighting in the classroom have direct relationship with the teaching and learning comfort level. These findings are also well supported by National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, India (2017) who assert that In India, it is a requisite that when a school is being built, there is need for the provision of adequate ventilators and windows in each classroom in order to promote classroom airy and fresh thus learners feel fresh and energetic which will enable them to actively take part in the learning process. Again, the findings are also well supported by Fisher (2001); Schneider (2002); Mishra (2012) and Puteh

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et al. (2015) who observe that classroom temperature and air quality have great influence in terms of learners` behaviour and test scores. Given this backdrop, one can comment that effective teaching and learning can take place in a classroom with appropriate room temperature and good aeration. Furthermore, one can say that a classroom with good aeration enables learners to breathe quality air hence quality education is promoted.

Additionally, the results from questionnaire item 'Colour that surrounds the learner in the classroom have influence on their mood and behaviour thus affects quality education' are well supported by Maxwell (2000) who points out that learners suggest that colour was very important in their school life, thus, colour of the walls in their schools was dull and unattractive, thus boring. Again, the results are in line with The Design Council (2005) who posits that the type of colour that is transmitted through the learner`s eye affect the mood, mental clarity as well as the energy levels of learners in the classroom. As such, one can comment that classroom wall colour positively contributes to quality of education in emerging high school. Furthermore, it can be commented that boys and girls are attracted by different colours, thus, the need to have a neutral colour on the walls of a classroom in emerging private high schools. In addition, one can also comment that bright colours are most attractive to private high school learners hence they are well motivated which then can contribute positively to the provision of quality education.

Again, the findings from questionnaire item 'Safe learning environment, e.g., without violence, bullying, etc., have strong correlation with quality education' resonate well with UNESCO (2017) who asserts that learners` fundamental right to education is impeded by school violence which eventually retards quality education in schools. Again, UNESCO (2017) argues that globally, there is no single country that can boast of attaining inclusive and equitable quality education if the school environment is not safe as a result of school violence. Contrary to this, UNESCO (2019) reports that corporal punishment is illegal in schools in 132 countries in the world, but sadly, it is legal in schools in 68 countries globally. In addition, the findings are supported by the current Constitution of Zimbabwe that was adopted in 2013, S51, S53, and S81 clearly prohibits corporal punishment on any child in both home and school because it violates children`s rights which makes a school setting being safe for learners thus quality education is promoted. It is also important to note that UNESCO (2017) observes that corporal punishment may lead to fatal or some minor injuries to the learners in schools which then makes the school environment very unsafe to the learners. In line with UNESCO (2017), The Herald, one of Zimbabwe`s leading newspapers, dated 18 October, 2021, in a case State versus

Chingwaru, reports that the State were waiting for medical affidavit to ascertain the degree of injury sustained by a student at Einstein Tuition Centre in Harare. As such, one can say that violence in schools retard the provision of quality education. In addition, one can comment that school environment that is safe enables learners to take responsibility of their academic lives. Furthermore, it can be commented that violence in schools is barbaric in nature and may lead to fatalities. More so, it can be commented that learners they spent more time in schools hence the need for a safe learning environment.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions of the study.

- ❖ It was concluded that low teacher: pupil ratio, textbook: pupil ratio of 1:1 has positive influence on quality education in emerging private high schools.
- ❖ The study further concluded that lighting in a classroom, colour that surrounds the learner in the classroom have influence on their mood and behaviour thus affects quality education in emerging private high schools.
- ❖ The study further concluded that a safe learning environment have influence on quality education in emerging private high schools.

Recommendations

The study made the following recommendations:

- ❖ School administrators in emerging private high schools should maintain low teacher: pupil ratio as per their ads to the target market to promote quality education.
- ❖ Furthermore, Entrepreneurs in emerging private high schools should purchase textbooks such that they leave by their message to the target market of textbook: pupil ratio of 1:1.
- ❖ It is also recommended that colours that surrounds the learner in the classroom should be attractive and cater for both boys and girls.

- ❖ School administrators in emerging private high schools should craft and enforce code of conducts to promote safe learning environment or school climate without forms of school violence such as bullying. They should also engage the Zimbabwe Republic Police to give lectures on bullying to the learners.

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