



The implementation of subject specialization in primary schools: An analysis of its benefits and challenges

Maurice Moono¹, Grant Mapoma Mwinsa², Mwanabayeke Boyd³, Edith Sikota⁴, Clare Mwiinga⁵, Mwizukanji Sinkala⁶, Chisha Mubanga⁷, Wanga Chakanika⁸

^{1,3-5} Chalimbana University, School Humanities and Social Sciences, Zambia

² Chalimbana University, School of Early Childhood Studies, Zambia

⁸ Chalimbana University, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Zambia

Abstract

The study aimed at establish the benefits and the challenges of implementing the subject specialization policy in primary schools in schools in Lusaka province. The objectives of the study were to determine the benefits and challenges of implementing the subject specialization policy in primary schools in schools in Lusaka province.

A descriptive survey was used in conducting this research. The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. the sample consisted 142 respondents: 111 female teachers and 31 male teachers, in selecting the participants, simple random sampling technique was used. The study employed the questionnaire and focus group discussion to ensure validity of the findings. The quantitative data was analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences computer software while the qualitative data was analyzed by coding and grouping the emerging themes. The study has revealed that the majority of the teachers (90%) said that subject specialization has enhanced their quality of learning. This is due to the fact that instead of teaching so many subjects, they now teach only two subjects. It has also emerged from the study that subject specialization has improved learner's performance. This is evident from 79.3% of teachers who indicated that subject specialization has improved academic performance of their learners.

It has also emerged from the study that subject specialization has brought about high level of subject mastery by the teachers. This is seen from 72.5% of teachers who indicated that they are now more competent in the subjects they teach.

The majority of the teachers (67.6%) indicated that subject specialization has reduced their work load giving them enough time to adequately prepare for their lessons. The study also showed that the majority of the teachers (75.3%) are now more effective in their teaching because of subject specialization. As regards to challenges of implementing specialization policy, 69% of the teachers indicated that some teachers are given subjects that they may not be good at. In a focus group discussion, teachers indicated that some teachers are given subjects where they may not be competent. Arising from the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made;

1. School managers must allow teachers to choose the subjects they want to specialize in.
2. School managers must promote continuous professional development to enhance quality teaching.

Keywords: Subject specialization, Competency, pedagogy and discipline knowledge

Introduction

The system of subject specialization has been a very common practice within secondary schools in the Zambian education system. In primary schools teachers were expected to teach all the subjects that are in the primary school curriculum. These include Mathematics, Environmental Science, English, Literacy and Zambian Languages, Social Studies, Creative and Technology Studies/ Expressive Arts and Home Economics. Literature has shown that having one teacher to teach all the subjects to one class has compromised the quality of education in primary schools. The Ministry of General Education Permanent Secretary Dr. Jobbicks Kalumba was quoted by Lusaka Times (2019) ^[15] stating that "It is not practical that a teacher should prepare lesson plans in nine subjects and because of this, teachers at primary level are presenting work plans which are not genuine because they have to do that in nine subjects.... this is just compromising the delivery of education in the country and we should reform the system." He further attributed poor learner performance

in primary schools to overburdening teacher with a lot of subjects (Martin, 2019) ^[15]. Furthermore, a study by Ndawi (2000) ^[19] has shown that the curricula for Teacher Training Institutions does not adequately equip trainee teachers with both content and methodology in all subjects. Therefore, these teachers are not expected to be competent in some of the subjects offered in the primary school. It is because of these reasons that the Ministry of General Education in May, 2019 introduced the Primary School Teacher Specialization Policy which requires primary school teachers to specialize in two subjects of their interest and area of strengths.

Stakeholders have since commended the Ministry of General Education for introducing the policy which aimed at promoting accessibility to quality education in primary schools. However, little is known about the benefits associated with the implementation of the Primary School Teacher Specialization Policy specialization in Zambia hence the need for this study.

Statement of the Problem

Since time immemorial, the system of subject specialization has been a very common phenomenon within secondary schools in the Zambian education system. In primary schools, the situation has been different. A teacher was supposed to be a generalist were he or she is compelled to teach over nine different subjects, from grade one to seven, which has created an overload, thereby making them ineffective and inefficient. In recent times however, there has been increasing concerns for quality primary education each day because primary schools play a pivotal role in building a strong education foundation for young people. There have been several reports expressing concern over the poor learner performance in primary schools during the 2018 examinations (Martin, 2019) ^[15]. It is against this background that the government of the republic of Zambia through the Ministry of General Education introduced the subject specialization policy in primary schools. Little however, is known about the benefits and challenges of subject specialization in primary schools. There is therefore, need to examine benefits and challenges of subject specialization in Zambian primary schools.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to establish benefits and challenges of implementing the Subject Specialization Policy in primary schools.

Objective

The objectives of this study were to:

- Establish benefits associated with the implementation of Subject Specialization Policy in primary schools
- Assess challenges primary school teachers face in implementing subject specialization policy in primary schools.

Research Question

- What are the benefits of implementing the Subject Specialization Policy in primary schools?
- What are the challenges of implementing the Subject Specialization Policy in primary schools?

Significance of the study

The results of this research may benefit school administrators and policy makers by giving them research based benefits and challenges of subject specialization which may help them formulate better policies. The study may also add on to the limited literature on the implementation of subject specialization policy in Zambia.

Literature Review

The concept of Subject Specialization

Specialization has been defined in many different ways but more significantly it has been used to indicate competence or expertise within the field. The problem of arriving at a suitable definition is a difficult one, but rather than becoming embroiled in a complex discussion of terminology, "subject specialisation" in this article will be used as a general term to include both concentration and expertise in terms of competency in the subject matter.

The concept of Subject specialisation is viewed as a model to reach every student with excellent teachers (Opportunityculture.org, 2012) ^[11]. In this case, teachers are allowed to teach their best subjects, whilst others cover

other duties which may be considered of lesser importance in the development of the student. A clear criterion on who takes the core subjects and who takes the lesser subjects is required otherwise the two scenarios are most likely to bring conflict within teachers. In any case there would be very few teachers who would be willing to teach subjects that are considered of lesser importance. This arrangement in a way may have a negative impact on organizational relations. Subject specialisation for a teacher is expected to provide a strong subject-matter in a particular subject.

The benefits of Subject Specialization

The establishment of voluntary specialisations within primary initial teacher education programmes is designed to support strengthened discipline knowledge and pedagogy in targeted learning areas and raise the profile of these learning areas. Specializations create groups of primary teachers who are recognised as having stronger discipline and pedagogical knowledge in particular learning areas and who are agents for enriched teaching practices in schools. These teachers may instill in primary school students a greater confidence, expertise and enthusiasm in the targeted learning areas.

Both well-performing and struggling schools can benefit from subject specialisation. Schools with a typical number of excellent teachers may be able to close small but persistent gaps completely, without diminishing results for other students. Struggling schools can produce catch-up gains on a deliberately planned schedule by helping the best available teachers reach designated students each year, again without diminishing outcomes for other students (Prasad, 2017) ^[22].

Schools may implement subject specialization in some grades or subjects or across the whole school. This approach may allow teachers who are excellent in one core subject pair (for example, math/science), but not the other (for example language arts/social studies) to produce excellent results by focusing on their areas of strength. Schools may choose to have all teachers specialize by subject regardless of their prior effectiveness, to allow all teachers to focus their efforts on a narrower range of content.

By specializing, teachers may reach more students while maintaining or gaining planning time. For example, primary teachers in most schools today spend about eight of their nearly 32 instructional hours weekly on math and science combined. Under the specialization approach, excellent math/science teachers can teach up to four classes. However, by limiting reach to three classes of students, these teachers may gain up to eight in-school planning hours weekly. A second set of excellent teachers could teach two classes of combined language arts and social studies, on which teachers now spend about 14 hours weekly, potentially gaining up to four planning hours weekly. Classroom specialists need to collaborate to monitor and ensure students' overall development, which includes their academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and time management skills. In addition, a study by Ardzewska, McMaugh & Coutts (2010) ^[3] showed that Subject specialization has its advantages. First, teachers tend to like it because it gives them the opportunity to concentrate on that which they are most capable of, instead of being "jacks of all trades". This in a way is self-serving in that this specialization in turn gives the teacher a sense of professionalism. Secondly, there is evidence that students perform much better in a subject specialization system than

in the system were a teacher is a generalist. Specialization tends to increase teacher efficiency and effectiveness.

Subject specialisation in developed countries

Teachers around the globe support the model of subject specialization at primary school level even though the research evidence is scant. In Australia (New South Wales [NSW]), a study done by Morgan and Hansen (2007) ^[18] found that 60% of their sample of NSW primary school teachers would prefer to have a specialist teacher in the subjects of Music, Creative and Practical Arts, Computers and Science and Technology. Much of the current research posits that specialist teachers bring a number of important dimensions to a subject. Hennessy, (2000) ^[9] for example, argues that specialist teachers bring greater confidence to the classroom, while Wilson Macdonald, Byrne, Ewing, and Sheridan (2008) contend that subject specialists use their specialized content knowledge to empower students to produce a higher quality of work. Emotional and values-based claims have also been made about the use of specialist primary teachers. Fromyhr (1995) ^[7] reported that these specialists show greater enthusiasm while others report that specialists value the subject more highly (DeCorby, Halas, Dixon, Wintrup & Janzen (2005) ^[5]. Meanwhile Gazette (2008) believes that teacher subject specialization leads to teacher isolation in two ways; first, the teacher becomes isolated from teachers other than those teaching the same subject as themselves; second, the teacher is distanced from other subjects since she now concentrates on her one subject. The result is a teacher who has a very narrow perspective of life. School subjects are social constructions; their construction involves a deliberate slicing off of a part of reality (the latter presenting itself to us as a whole) and as much as possible making it appear independent of other subjects but as a generalist teacher the relationship between children and their teachers tends to be closer in the primary school where they act as form tutor, specialist teacher and surrogate parent during the course of the day.

In a research carried out by Weiss, Baniower, McMahon, & Smith (2001) on elementary teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to teach various disciplines in self-contained classes, where the teacher is responsible for teaching multiple subjects, 76 percent of these teachers reported feeling very well qualified to teach reading/language arts; in contrast, only 18 percent indicated feeling very well qualified to teach physical science. Social studies – 52%, Mathematics – 60%, Life science – 29%, Earth science – 25%. Also Ardzejewska, McMaugh & Coutts (2010) ^[3] report that currently there is a great deal of discussion regarding the minimum standards required of pre-service primary teachers in Australia. It would appear underlying this, is an assumption that primary teachers are generalists who have an ability to provide instruction in all key subject areas. In contrast, there seems to be a parallel discourse increasingly promoting the need for specialist teachers in the primary school setting. It is unlikely however, that teachers approach all subjects with the same level of competence.

In England it has been argued that the idea of the generalist is outdated and does not reflect practice (Alexander, Rose & Wood head, 1992) ^[1] and as such, four types of primary specialist teachers were introduced (OFSTED, 1997) ^[21]. In his review into improving Literacy, Numeracy and Science Learning in Queensland, Australia, Masters (2009) ^[16]

claimed that —ideally, every primary school teacher would be an expert teacher of literacy, numeracy and science, thus explicitly prioritizing the development of teacher competencies in some subject areas over others. This review further recommended that teachers be offered the opportunity to develop specialized subject knowledge and also advocated the employment of specialist teachers. Williams (2009) further articulated this vision by suggesting that primary schools would emulate the practice of high schools, forming curriculum departments with specialist teachers, whereby the specialist teacher would hone their knowledge by teaching across year levels, and by delivering the same lessons to numerous classes within the same year level. Williams further claimed that curriculum and learning objectives would become truly standardized as specialists not only deliver deep knowledge but also uniformly plan and evaluate lessons. Support for this position was found in an OFSTED (2009) ^[20] survey which reported that when teachers were less secure about aspects of a lesson which required subject-specific knowledge, they were unable to provide students with opportunities for deep learning. Such discourses represent a shift from the ideologically valued position of the subject generalist to one which appears to value the deep knowledge of the subject specialist.

Another scholar, Thornton (1990) ^[24] in England, found that while the majority of teachers supported the use of specialists they did not want them to replace generalists. Instead, they saw them used as supernumerary consultants or "in *special* circumstances, for only some subjects and provided there was not too much of it" (original italics). This view is consistent with the research of Hargreaves (1992, p. 100) ^[8] who found that teachers preferred that their preparation-time was covered by "segregated cover arrangements, in which a colleague comes in and teaches a self-contained specialty for which he or she holds complete responsibility". In contrast, 'integrated cover' where programming is shared between the classroom and relieving teacher was seen less positively. Like teachers in Hargreaves' (1992) ^[8] study, principals in the current study reported that they believed teachers had less expertise in the "frill" subjects: Music and PE. This supports the view of teachers themselves where Morgan and Hansen (2007) ^[18] found a preference for specialist teachers in such subjects and is confirmed in a wider study by Angus *et al.* (2007) ^[2] who reported that only a minority of Australian teachers felt they had 'all the expertise needed' to teach either the Arts or Health and PE.

African perspective of subject specialisation

In Nigeria, Akintomide (2012) reviewed Odogwus' (2000) findings that reported that primary school teachers in most cases teach all the subjects in their classes. They have limited mathematical knowledge because they are not specialists. In that regard, they prefer to devote their time and effort to other subjects. Igboko (1975) described the foundation being laid for mathematics at the primary school as anything but strong and firm. He also observed that mathematics ranked high among those subjects which are poorly handled by teachers and greatly dreaded by the pupils. He emphasized that the status of mathematics in the primary school determines largely its status in the secondary school. This in turn determines the success or failure of it in the University. In other contexts it has been argued that the generalist primary teacher might be more appropriately

employed as an expert deliverer of prioritised key learning areas such as literacy, numeracy and science. Solo & Solon (2005) reported that teachers are of the opinion that the generalist teaching requirements of the curriculum reform especially for skills, attitudes and behaviours associated with making a living, subject places high demand on teacher's knowledge and skills of the strands and sub-strand teaching relationships.

In the Zimbabwe education system, the introduction of subject specialisation at primary school is a new development. At primary school, the trend in Zimbabwe has been specialisation in terms of the levels, rather than in specific subjects. These have been the infant level covering grades one up to three and the junior level covering grades four up to seven. At the end, the teacher was provided with department related specialisation, but remained a generalist in terms of subject coverage. The introduction of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) curriculum has created a third level at primary school, though in reality ECD covers ages 3-8 years. Specialisation in terms of the ECD level and the junior level (general primary) is now provided for in the training of teachers at teachers' colleges.

Still in Zimbabwe, an article by Ravinesh Prasad (2017) ^[22] showed the relationship between Subject Specialisation and Pupils' Performance. The findings from two selected schools were the school heads were asked to indicate their grade seven percentage pass rates; both the schools had embarked on subject specialisation from 2010. Their pass rates from 2009 to 2013 were given as 33%, 48%, 55%, 62%, and 62.5%, respectively, for the church-related primary school in Chegutu, and 45%, 50%, 55%, 62%, and 65%, respectively, for the government school in Mufakose (Samkange, 2015) ^[23]. The results for both primary schools show that there had been consistent improvements in the performance of grade seven pupils in public examinations. However, it is noted that there are many factors that contribute to improvements in performance at school levels. But the results are striking enough to indicate that a change from generalised teaching to subject specialisation could be a contributory factor to an improvement in educational output.

In Botswana, a journal article by Mokotedi (2013) ^[17] reviewed that a generalist approach wherein a teacher teaches all subjects is a key-contributing factor in the low quality of education in primary schools. This finding was in line with evidence presented in the literature review of that particular report, which suggested that subject specialization allows for efficiency, effectiveness and thoroughness in the teaching of subject matter. Languages are the foundation for all subjects taught in the curriculum and if not taught well, the learner's performance in all subject areas may suffer.

It is worth noting that the generalist approach has been widely used in Botswana. If it had been successful there would not be little concern from the general public about the unsatisfactory pass rate in Primary School Leaving Certificate (PSLE). Subject specialization allows teachers to teach subjects which they are most proficient in and if provided with learning and teaching resources, to produce better results. Pass rates at any level of education are an important test of national progress towards achieving quality in education. Achievements in learning in turn inform us of the impact our schools are making in terms of nationally desired knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Zambian perspective on subject Specialisation

Since time immemorial, the system of subject specialization has been a very common phenomenon within secondary schools in the Zambian education system. In primary schools, the situation has been different. A teacher was supposed to be a generalist were he or she is compelled to teach over nine different subjects, from grade one to seven, which has created an overload, thereby making them ineffective and inefficient. In recent times however, there has been increasing concerns for quality primary education each day because primary schools play a pivotal role in building a strong education foundation for young people. There has been several reports expressing concern over the poor learner performance in primary schools during the 2018 examinations (Martin, 2019) ^[15]. This fact has tempted government to give more attention to primary schools by making innovations and reforms in the education system hence the introduction of the Primary School Teacher Specialization Policy. The policy stipulated that the ministry had paired subjects such as Mathematics and Integrated Science, Social Studies and Expressive Arts etc therefore, the teachers were required to specialize in their areas of strength. The policy was expected to afford teachers enough time to prepare lessons, assess pupils and institute remedial measures to help learners having problems in a particular subject.

According to the Lusaka Times (2019) ^[15] Ministry of General Education Permanent Secretary Dr. Kalumba stated that "It is not practical that a teacher should prepare lesson plans in nine subjects and because of this teachers at primary level are presenting work plans which are not genuine because they have to do that in nine subjects.... this is just compromising the delivery of education in the country and we should reform the system". It has been observed that lack of specialization among teachers at primary school has impacted negatively on the delivery of services adding that it is difficult for teachers to identify their strength and weaknesses. The government has since been commended for introducing reforms that are aimed at promoting accessibility to quality education for all. Little however, is known concerning the benefits of the implementation of subject specialisation in primary schools of Zambia. There is therefore, need to investigate benefits associated with the implementation of subject specialization in Zambian primary schools.

Methodology

According to McCaig (2010) ^[14], a research design is an overarching strategy for unearthing useful answers to research problems. A descriptive survey design was used when conducting this research. Bless and Achola (1988) ^[4] define a descriptive survey design as a mode of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. Since the research sought to collect information about the respondents' opinions on the topic at hand, the descriptive research design was ideal. The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection.

Since no single method ever, adequately solves the problem of rival causal factors, multiple methods of observation must be employed; triangulation is now a final methodological rule that should be used in every investigation (Denzin,

1978)^[6]. The strategy of triangulation was used as a way of cross validation of research findings.

Target Population

The population for this study consist of all the in-service primary school teachers who were training at Chalimbana University from across the country.

Sample Size

The sample size was 142 respondents which constituted of 111 females and 31 males.

In selecting the respondents, Simple random sampling procedure was used to pick teachers who participated in this study. This was in order to provide each population element an equal probability of being included in the sample (Bless & Achola, 1988)^[4].

Research Instruments

In this research, structured questionnaires and focus group discussions were used to collect data.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher got permission from Chalimbana University in which the research was conducted.

The researcher distributed a consent form and questionnaires to the respondents who were sampled and willing to complete them. Enough time was given to the respondents so that they could complete the questionnaires, after which the researcher collected the questionnaires. After collecting the questionnaires, the researcher randomly selected two groups of teachers of which each group consisted of eight teachers so that they could take part in focus group discussions. During focus group discussions, the researcher moderated all discussions and used a voice recorder so that, the flow of the discussions could not be disturbed. The recorded discussions were later transcribed and analysed.

Data Analysis

McCaig (2010, P. 45) ^[14] describes data analysis as “a process that involves organising what you have seen, heard and read, so that you can make sense of what you have learnt.”

The data for this study was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative data was analysed using the statistical package for social Sciences (SPSS) computer software to generate tables of frequencies and percentages which were used in describing distributions of the variables. Qualitative data was analysed by coding and grouping the emerging themes.

Ethical Considerations

The study took into consideration ethical issues. The information that was collected was kept strictly confidentially. Consent was sought from all the respondents and their participation was voluntary. At the onset of data collection, the researcher sought permission from Chalimbana Universities’ administration who introduced the researcher to the teachers. In addition, each questionnaire contained an opening introductory letter requesting for the respondent’s cooperation in providing the required information for the study. The respondents were further assured of confidentiality of the information provided and that the study findings were to be used for academic purposes only. Respondents were further assured of their personal protection and that they had authority to refuse or accept to take part in the study.

Presentation of Findings

Benefits of Subject Specialisation

Whether subject specialization enhances the quality of teaching

Teachers were asked whether specialization enhances the quality of teaching. Figure 9 below displays their responses.

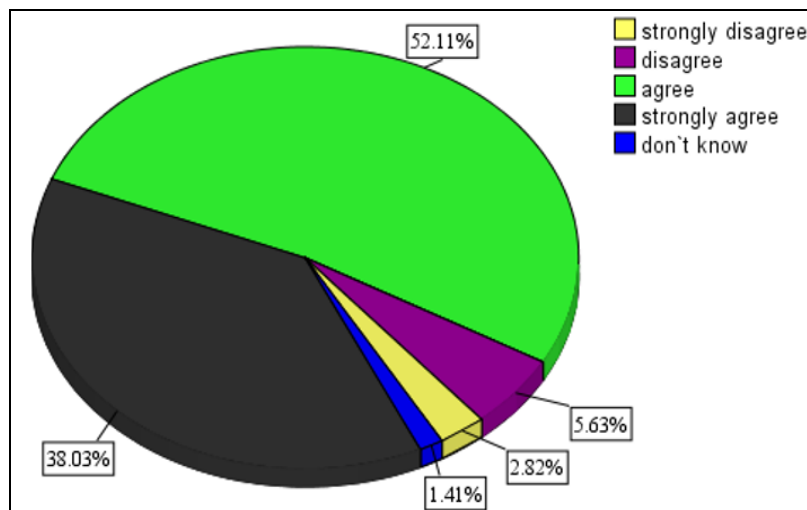


Fig 1: Specialization and the quality of teaching

Figure 1 above shows that (52.11%) respondents indicated that Specialization enhances the quality of teaching. Another category comprising (38.03%) strongly agreed while (5.63%) disagreed leaving only (1.41%) who indicated that they didn’t know whether specialization enhances the quality of teaching.

In a focus group discussion one teacher said, “With the

coming of subject specialization I can now well. My quality of teaching has really improved.”

The specialized teachers bring high level of subject knowledge to their teaching

Teachers were asked to indicate whether specialist teachers brought high level of subject knowledge to their teaching.

Their responses are presented in figure 1 below.

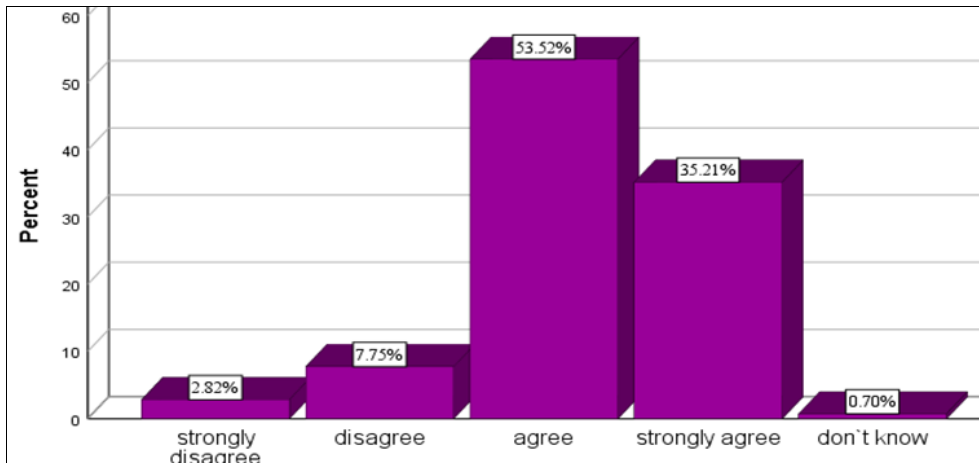


Fig 2: Whether the specialist teachers bring the high level of subject knowledge to their teaching.

Figure 2 above shows that the majority of the teachers (53.52 %) agreed that the specialist teacher brings the high level of subject knowledge to their teaching. Another group of (35.21%) strongly agreed while only (0.70%) indicated that they do not know whether specialist teacher brings the high level of subject knowledge to their teaching.

Whether specialist teacher’s teacher better than generalist teachers

Teachers were asked to indicate whether quality teaching is more likely to come from specialist than generalist teacher. Their responses are presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Whether quality teaching comes from a specialist than generalist teachers

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
strongly disagree	8	5.6
disagree	27	19.0
Agree	50	35.2
strongly agree	53	37.3
don't know	4	2.8
Total	142	100

Table 2 above shows that the majority of the teachers (35.2 %) agreed that quality teaching is more likely to come from specialist than generalist teacher. (37.3%) strongly agreed while only (2.8%) indicated that they do not know that subject specialization exist.

Whether Subject specialization enhances pupils’ performance

Teachers were questioned whether Subject specialization improved pupils’ performance. Figure 13 below shows their answers.

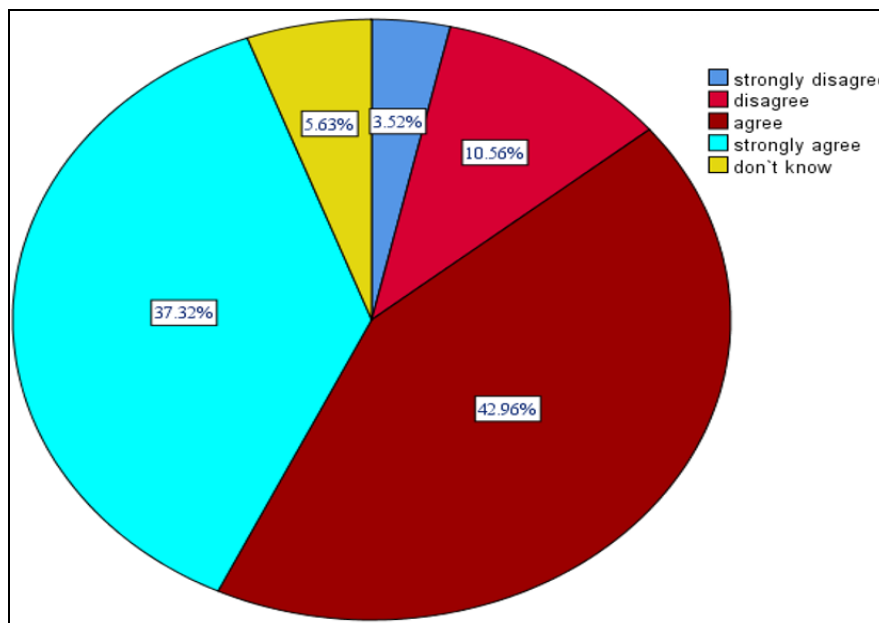


Fig 3: Subject specialization and pupils’ performance

Figure 3 above shows that (42.96%) of the teachers agreed that subject specialization improved pupils' performance while (10.56%) disagreed. 5.63% indicated that they didn't know if subject specialization improved pupils' performance. During a focus group discussion one teacher said, "So far I have seen a lot of improvement in my pupils due to subject

specialization, i love the subjects i teach and i teach them with passion."

Whether subject specialization reduces workload of teachers

The respondents were asked whether specialization reduced their workload. Table 15 below shows their views.

Table 3: Specialization reduces workload

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly disagree	18	12.7
Disagree	22	15.5
Agree	59	41.5
Strongly agree	37	26.1
Don't know	6	4.2
Total	142	100

Table 3 above shows that most of the teachers representing (41.5%) agreed that Specialization reduced their workload. (26.1%) strongly agreed while (15.5%) disagreed. Another group comprising (4.2%) stated that they did not know whether subject Specialization reduced their workload. During a focus group discussion one teacher said, "our work load has really been reduced because i now teach few subject. This gives me time to adequately prepare for my

lessons."

Whether Subject specialization has increased teacher's preparation time

Teachers were asked to show whether the introduction of subject specialization afforded them enough time to prepare lessons. Figure 16 below indicates their responses.

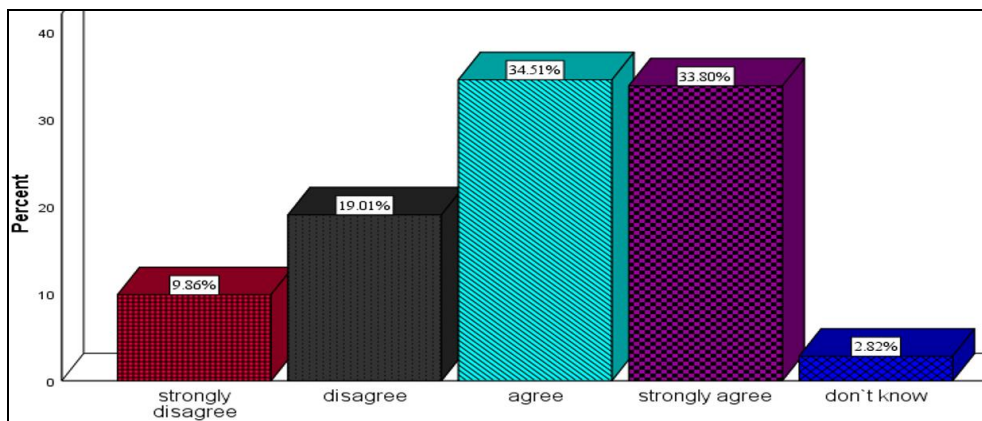


Fig 4: Subject specialization and preparation time

Figure 4 above shows that (34.51%) of the teachers indicated that subject specialization afforded them enough time to prepare lessons. (33.80%) strongly agreed while (19.01%) disagreed. Another category comprising (2.82%) indicated that they didn't know whether subject specialization afforded them enough time to prepare lessons.

Whether some teachers are given subjects that they may not be good at.

Teachers were asked to indicate whether they are given subjects that they may not be good at. Figure 8 shows their responses.

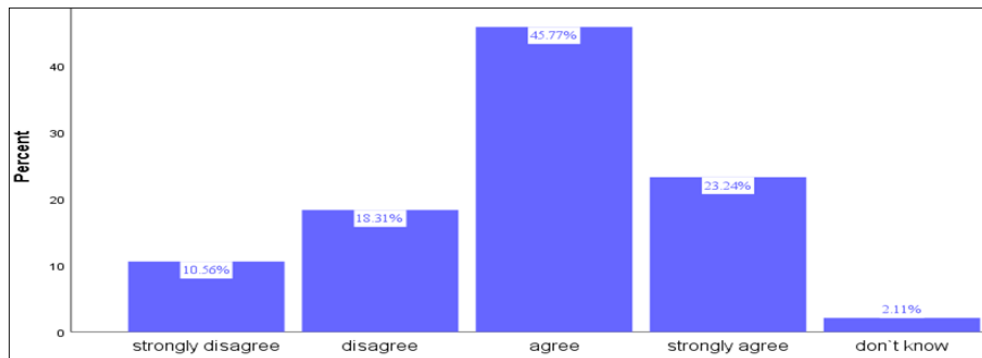


Fig 8: Whether some teachers are given subjects that they may not be good at.

Figure 8 above shows that (45.77%) indicated that some teachers are given subjects that they may not be good at. Another category comprising (23.24%) strongly agreed while 18.31% disagreed leaving only (10.56%) who strongly disagreed that some teachers are given subjects that they may not be good at.

One teacher said, *“our head teacher just imposed subjects on me i did not choice the subjects I am are good at. This violet the principle of specialization.”*

Discussion of findings

The study has revealed that the majority of the teachers (90%) said that subject specialization has enhanced their quality of learning. This is due to the fact that instead of teaching so many subjects, they now teach only two subjects. This finding is similar to that of Hennessy (2000)^[9] whose study showed that subject specialization improves the quality of teaching. It has also emerged from the study that subject specialization has improved learner's performance. This is evident from 79.3% of teachers who indicated that subject specialization has improved academic performance of their learners. This finding is similar to that of Ravnes (2017).

It has also emerged from the study that subject specialization has brought about high level of subject mastery by the teachers. This is seen from 72.5% of teachers who indicated that they are now more competent in the subjects they teach. These results are similar to the results obtained by Ewing and Sheridan (2008).

The majority of the teachers (67.6%) indicated that subject specialization has reduced their work load giving them enough time to adequately prepare for their lessons. The study also showed that the majority of the teachers (75.3%) are now more effective in their teaching because of subject specialization. As regards to challenges of implementing specialization policy, 69% of the teachers indicated that some teachers are given subjects that they may not be good at. In a focus group discussion, teachers indicated that some teachers are given subjects where they may not be competent.

Conclusion

The study has revealed that subject specialization has enhanced the quality of teaching and has also improved pupil's academic performance. As regards to the work load, the majority of the teachers indicated that subject specialization has reduced their work load giving them a lot of time for lesson preparation.

Recommendations

Arising from the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made;

3. School managers must allow teachers to choose the subjects they want to specialize in.
4. School managers must promote continuous professional development to enhance quality teaching.

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