



## AN EXAMINATION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF PRIVATE COLLEGES TO EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE: A CASE STUDY OF TEN PRIVATE COLLEGES IN HARARE PROVINCE

Robson Mhandu<sup>1</sup>, Ignatius Isaac Dambudzo<sup>2i</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Zimbabwe Open University, Harare, Zimbabwe

### Abstract:

The research sought to examine the contribution made by private colleges to education in Zimbabwe using a case study of ten private colleges in Harare Province, Zimbabwe. The study was motivated by the discovery that while the private colleges are an important phenomenon in Zimbabwe, some are failing to adhere to the requisite education standards of the education system in Zimbabwe. The researcher made use of a case study research design with a total sample of 609 respondents. Stratified random sampling was used to select 3 principals, 3 expert educationists, 18 administration staff, 90 academic staff, 450 learners and 45 parents/guardians. The results are based on data that was collected using questionnaires, observations and interviews as the research instruments. Tables, charts, graphs and qualitative descriptions were used to analyse, present and interpret the collected data. The research findings revealed that some private colleges are located within areas that are not conducive for effective and efficient teaching and learning. Aspects of culture, heritage and national history of Zimbabwe were not being taught in private colleges. The majority of teachers employed by private colleges are unqualified for the teaching profession. The author made significant recommendations, including that education planners should consider the location of private colleges in areas that are conducive for effective and efficient teaching and learning, educational authorities must ensure conformity to the approved national education curriculum being offered by all schools, including private colleges, in Zimbabwe and private colleges must realize that investment in teacher development is a pre-requisite for effective and efficient teaching and learning.

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<sup>i</sup> Corresponding author: Ignatius Isaac Dambudzo, [idambudzo@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:idambudzo@yahoo.co.uk)

**Keywords:** private college, contribution, education, Zimbabwe, access, policy makers, educational planners, teachers

## 1. Introduction

There is a serious need for the government, educational planners, policy-makers and policy implementers to be alert and knowledgeable about the existence of private colleges for prudent educational planning. The Education Ministry should be clear on the operations of private colleges to give direction and guidance. Tooley and Dixon (2005), postulate that many observers in the field of education believe that private education is concerned only with serving the elite or middle classes, not the poor in society. There is a strong perception that unregistered and unrecognized private colleges produce the lowest quality of education, which demands detailed regulation or even closure, by governmental authorities. The findings of Tooley and Dixon (2005) from a two-year in-depth study in India, Ghana, Nigeria, and Kenya suggest that private education is not all about negative impact. They argue that private education institutions have played and indeed, are playing an important role in significantly reaching the poor and satisfying their educational needs. Ncube and Tshabalala (2014) argue that due to financial constraints, governments especially in the developing world are sometimes unable to meet the educational demands of their populations. This has given rise to the establishment of private educational institutions to help augment the efforts of the governments. Zimbabwe is no exception.

Mafa (2013) argues that during the past fifteen years, numerous private colleges have sprung up throughout Zimbabwe. Both negative and positive perceptions exist to this new phenomenon within the education field. Against the private colleges comes the multipronged stigma that claims that firstly, some of these institutions operate in unsuitable sites for educational business. Secondly, some allegedly use unqualified personnel for teaching and learning purposes. Dube (2009) argues that child rights activists in Zimbabwe are accusing private colleges of profiteering as desperate parents lose patience with disgruntled government teachers and the plummeting standards in mainstream state-run educational institutions. Social scientists like Gaidzanwa and Mhloyi (2012) have revealed the claim that students who learn in some of these private colleges possess some characteristics which are negatively associated with education. This is because some of the students who come from private colleges portray lower levels of motivation towards learning than those who come from public schools,

Shumba (2008) however, applauds private colleges for offering education services to a number of children who could not be accommodated in the government

and council run schools because of overcrowding. In addition to broadening access to education, private colleges have also introduced an element of diversification. This involves having high levels of flexibility in terms of learning timetables and the amount of subjects per student. This enables students to specialise in their areas of interest.

Harare Province, Zimbabwe's largest and the fastest growing urban settlement provides the most fertile ground for a thorough investigation into the contribution, both negative and positive, of private colleges to education. Harare has a high concentration of both the old private colleges and the newly established institutions. While the city centre hosts most of the old private colleges, residential areas have become the main attraction for the newly established private colleges.

**Table 1.1:** List of Private Colleges in Harare

<b>Names of Private Colleges</b>
Speciss College
Herentals College
B & P College
Central African Correspondence College
Ranch House College
Zimbabwe Distance Education College
PACE College
People's College
Trust Academy
Maranatha Private College

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

As demand for education is continuously rising, mainstream schools are no longer able to accommodate all the children who want to pursue education in Zimbabwe. This has resulted in the increase in the number of private colleges in order to curb for the increasing demand for education. While some of the private colleges are fully furnished in terms of equipment, teaching and learning materials and better paid and qualified personnel, some private colleges are not up to the same standard. Hence there is need to answer the research question: What is the role played by private colleges in the provision of education in Zimbabwe?

## **3. Research Objectives**

- To find out if the location of the private colleges are conducive for effective learning.

- To investigate whether the curriculum being taught at the colleges is the one prescribed by education authorities.
- To determine whether the private colleges have adequate resources for effective and efficient learning.
- To establish whether the teachers at private colleges are qualified for effective and efficient teaching and learning.
- To determine the impact of private colleges on secondary school education.

#### **4. Research Questions**

The study sought to provide answers to the following research questions;

- Is the location of the private colleges conducive for effective teaching and learning?
- Is the curriculum offered by private colleges comparable to that offered by mainstream schools?
- Do the private colleges avail adequate resources to students for effective and efficient teaching and learning?
- Do the private colleges employ properly qualified teachers for all the various subjects?
- Are the private colleges making a positive or negative impact to education in Zimbabwe?

#### **5. Significance of the Study**

In the challenging economic environment in which Zimbabwe finds itself presently, this study seeks to clarify whether parents' hard earned income is being put to effective and efficient use by sending their children to private colleges. Are the children missing out on any educational gains by not enrolling at mainstream formal secondary schools? The study will highlight the advantages and disadvantages to parents and the children themselves in attending the private colleges. The study will highlight the extent to which Zimbabwe stands to benefit in terms of broadened access to education through private colleges as they complement the traditional formal schools. The study will also highlight how the Ministry of Education in Zimbabwe will benefit in terms of revising its policy and practices through addressing the challenges being experienced in private colleges which need redressing will also be.

## **6. Limitations**

Targeting only ten private colleges, is a serious threat to the validity of the research as only ten private colleges may not give a clear representation of the general scenario obtaining in Zimbabwe. The ten colleges chosen represent the typical private college types found in Zimbabwe ranging from those that were established more years ago to the new ones, established inside the last decade with some real young ones with barely enough classrooms from which to operate.

## **7. Delimitations of the Study**

Due to time limitations, ten colleges were chosen from the Harare area only. The examination catered for the views of the college principals and students through questionnaires and interviews. However, the total contribution of the parents' views was not addressed by this research because of time constraints. The research was confined to the period July 2015 to October 2015.

## **8. Literature Review**

### **8.1 Education in Zimbabwe and Private Colleges**

The hallmark of education policy in Zimbabwe is enshrined in the supreme law of the land. Article 75 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, focuses on the right to education. It explains that "Every citizen and permanent resident of Zimbabwe has a right to a basic state-funded education, including adult basic education; and further education, which the State, through reasonable legislative and other measures, must make progressively available and accessible." The education system in Zimbabwe now consists of two distinct categories. First is Primary and Secondary Education. Second is Higher and Tertiary Education.

Primary education is now nine years in Zimbabwe. This includes two years of early childhood development known as ECD "A" and ECD "B" and then seven years from Grade One to Grade Seven. A national examination under the auspices of the Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council [ZIMSEC] is conducted in the final year of primary, which is Grade Seven. The Grade Seven Certificate determines entry into secondary education.

Secondary education in Zimbabwe is six years. The first four years end with students sitting for Ordinary Level national examinations, also managed locally by the Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council. An Ordinary Level pass of at least five

subjects at Grade C or better determines entry into Advanced Level which has Lower Sixth Form and Upper Sixth Form or entry into a college for diploma courses or university for degree programmes. The Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council also manages the national examinations at Upper Sixth Level, which determines entry into colleges for diploma courses or universities to take up degree programmes.

Higher and tertiary education is done at colleges and universities. Teacher training colleges, polytechnics and agricultural colleges offer mainly certificates and diploma courses ranging from one to four years, combining theory and practical work. Universities offer degree programmes ranging from three to four years at Bachelors' level. Two to two and a half years for Masters' Degree programmes and three to five years for Doctoral programmes.

Mandaza (1995), argues that at independence in 1980, the new Zimbabwe Government adopted a human capital development model, driven by an expansionist and socialist ideology. This approach was aimed at addressing colonial imbalances which favoured the minority white population discriminating against the black majority. Zvobgo (1986) says the bulwark of this expansionist and socialist policy was free primary education under-pinned by the policy of education for all.

Primary schools increased by 200 percent by 1990 and secondary schools more than doubled, increasing from one thousand five hundred to three thousand and forty-eight as demand for education rose astronomically. The government also introduced Adult Literacy to provide opportunities for Zimbabweans especially those who were disadvantaged by the liberation struggle to take up both primary and secondary education. The first 10 years of independence recorded remarkable success in terms of broadening access to education and increased infrastructure development, for both primary and secondary education.

However, after the year 2000, Zimbabwe experienced an economic meltdown, that witnessed a serious negative impact on the education system. Schools, colleges and universities lost teachers and lecturers while students dropped out of the schools because of lack of financial and material resources.

Chetsanga (2011) reveals that Botswana, South Africa, Britain, the United States of America, Australia and Canada were major destinations during this exodus. According to Hapanyengwi (2010) during the country's socio-economic crisis, service provision in education suffered severely in Zimbabwe, especially in 2007 and part of the 2008, as teachers and lecturers concentrated on meeting basic survival needs through alternative means, leaving core academic business unattended. Besides the economic crisis, there were problems of localization of examinations which led to corruption and

cheating through the opening and selling of exam papers, deterioration of learning, teaching and examination standards.

A new wave of private colleges mushroomed in Zimbabwe, driven by the objectives of making money, especially outside government employment. The majority are run by indigenous black Zimbabweans in high-density, middle density, low density and the central business districts in cities and towns, with varied and diverse features and characteristics.

This new phenomenon of private colleges is significantly evident within the country's urban areas, where proprietors seek to make quick financial gains at the expense of high demand for education services particularly secondary education. Nziramasanga (2009), says establishing private colleges has become part of business ingenuity for Zimbabweans who have made substantial savings and are willing to invest for the future.

Mafa (2012) argues that there are rising fears that private colleges, once frequented by those who had initially failed their public examinations especially at Ordinary and Advanced Levels, are compromising education standards. Ncube and Tshabalala (2012), point out that private colleges have come in to help the situation where government is finding it difficult to finance education services under the ever rising demand. Therefore private colleges have aided in meeting the rising demand of education in Zimbabwe. However, due to improper management of the institutions in some cases, the private colleges are negatively affecting educational standards in Zimbabwe.

Thus, a combination of pre-colonial educational enterprises, post-independence era educational enterprises and modern era enterprises born in the midst and aftermath of the economic challenges, make the whole cast of private colleges in Zimbabwe. In modern era, some started offering primary education and have grown to offer secondary education; some began offering secondary education and professional courses partnering other colleges and universities. Some started as church-run institutions that have grown to become universities.

## **8.2 Private Colleges**

Makura (2011) postulates that private colleges, also known as independent schools or non-state schools, are not administered by local government authorities or national state government. Hein (2004) reveals that although there are statutory rules and regulations governing the establishment and final approval for running private colleges, these educational enterprises, retain the right to select their students, run their

operations independently and are funded in whole or in part by charging their students tuition fees, rather than relying on mandatory taxation through public funding.

According to Kaitev (1999) private colleges are all formal schools that are *not* public, and may be founded, owned, managed and financed by individuals or organisations other than the state, even in cases where the state provides most of the funding and has considerable control over these schools (teachers, curriculum, accreditation, approval and quality assurance).

Mandaza (2001) argues that private colleges are not a new phenomenon in Zimbabwe. They date back to pre-independence era, where correspondence educational enterprises helped the marginalized African majority who were eager to pursue their studies despite having been pushed out of the formal system by the colonial discriminatory policies of the white racist political regime. Central African Correspondence College, Ranche House College and People’s College were prominent in offering academic programmes as well as professional courses like bookkeeping, clerical, typing and secretarial, and salesmanship. These were established and owned by white proprietors, as business entities.

The modern era has seen the birth of private colleges established, wholly-owned and run by indigenous Zimbabweans, the majority of them former education employees with some of them being business persons who partner with educationists. The founding of private colleges by indigenous Zimbabweans was through Zimbabwe Distance Education College, ZDECO, founded and run by the late national hero, Dr Sikhanyiso Ndlovu. Then comes Speciss College, Herentals College, Ezekiel Guti College and a wide range of indigenous-owned private educational enterprises now in existence nationwide.

The table below shows the classification of private schools or colleges:

**Table 2.1:** Classification of Private Colleges

Type	Origin	Context
Community	The majority emerged when communities wished to complement insufficient provision of public education, while some developed from missionary institutions.	These colleges are normally registered by public authorities. They are regulated under public legislation and receiving public subsidies.
Religious	Developed for historical reasons, often appearing before the arrival of public education.	These colleges are normally registered by public authorities. They are also regulated under public legislation and receiving public subsidies.

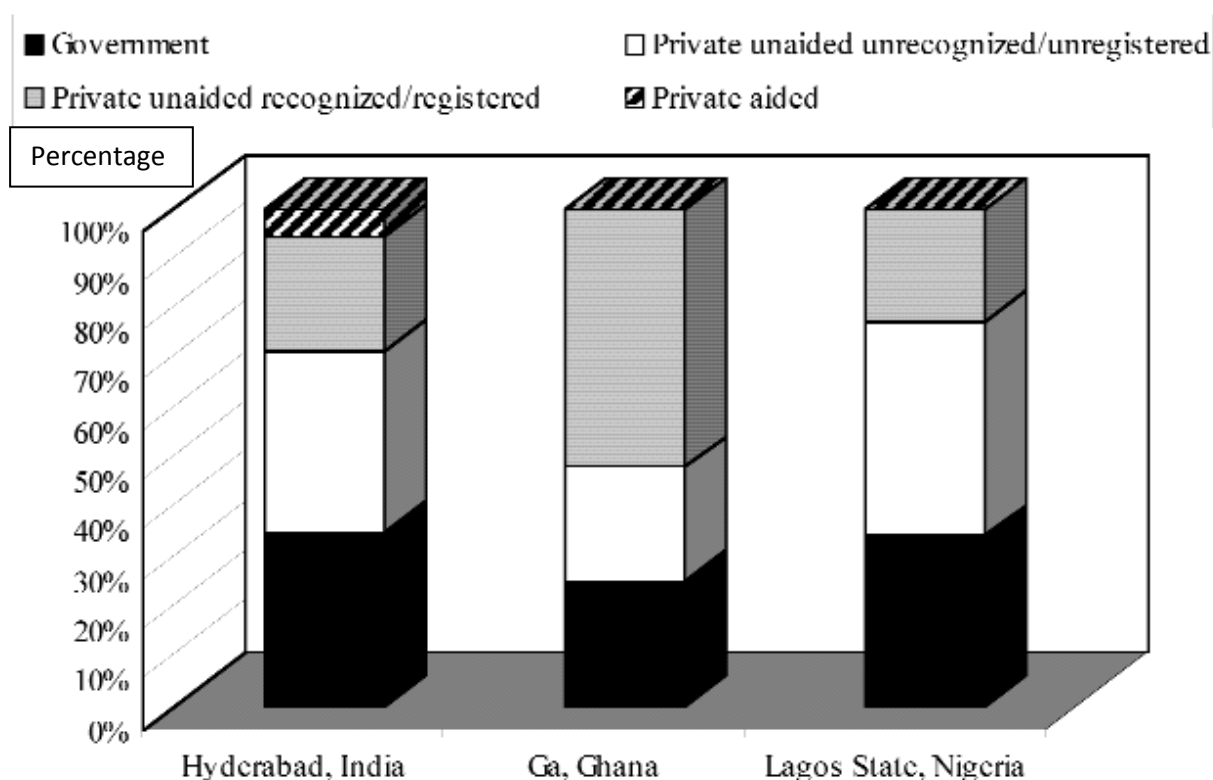


Spontaneous	Arose in specific learning conditions to meet particular demands of the rural and urban poor.	Normally not approved or registered and they do not receive public funding. Funds accrued from minimal fees levied by the community.
Profit Making	Arose as a result of diversification /unmet rising demand for education. Usually, but not always, urban based and serving the middle and upper class in society. Volume of the fee payment varies considerably from class to class.	Conformity to registration process varies. The well-established colleges are the most likely enterprises for adherence to the system. The less established evade rules and regulations set by state authorities.

Source: Adapted from Kitaev (1999)

### 8.3 Private Education in a low-Income Country

Figure 2.1: The proportion of schools by type



Source: Tooley, J., Dixon, P., 2005. Private Education Is Good For The Poor: A Study Of Private Schools Serving The Poor In Low-Income Countries. Cato Institute

Figure 2.1 above shows the proportion (in percentage) of government schools and different types of private schools in three low income countries. The low income countries are India, Ghana and Nigeria. There are three types of private schools that is,

private unaided recognized/registered, private unaided unrecognized/unregistered and private aided schools. As shown, in the three countries government schools constitute less than forty percent (40%) of the total number of schools while the remainder are different types of private schools.

According to Tooley and Dixon (2005) the notion that private schools are servicing the needs of a small minority of wealthy parents is misplaced. Zimbabwe, being one of the low-income countries in Africa, is also characterized by private schools that service the needs of more than the small minority of wealthy parents.

## **9. Empirical evidence**

### **9.1 Positive Contribution**

According to Nziramasanga (2011) one of the positive contributions that are brought about by private colleges to education in Zimbabwe is the broadening of access to education. This is because private colleges are able to provide education to those who may not be able to go into the formal system.

Another positive contribution of private colleges is that they help in reducing the percentage of school dropouts in Zimbabwe while increasing literacy levels. Therefore private colleges promote the need for all individuals to be educated. This is supported by the Education Management System Report (2013) which revealed that the level of school dropouts was at 43 percent by end of 2013. Additionally, Private Colleges have significantly contributed to the 92 percent literacy rate.

Furthermore, private colleges provide a new and fresh form of approach to the education system in Zimbabwe. This is because private colleges help in teaching practical life skills and diversity in language skills locally and internationally. In addition, some private colleges operate manageable class sizes and moderate teacher-student ratio, all aimed at enhancing effective and efficient teaching and learning.

Maponga (2015) says that one of the important positive contributions by private colleges to education in Zimbabwe is that they are flexible and convenient for those different individuals who do not suit or are no longer eligible for the formal school especially in terms of age, number of subjects, learning timetable and fee payment structures. This means that private colleges can help those who need to supplement different subjects at different levels.

In addition, Maponga (2015) states that private colleges help to reduce unemployment in the country. This is because private colleges provide employment for teachers failing to get employment in the formal system, especially those returning from the diaspora. Furthermore, Maponga 2015 states that private colleges are evidence and

practical examples of entrepreneurship in line with indigenization policies and the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET). This is because some of the private colleges are owned by local individuals which are a benefit to the country.

Furthermore, Ncube and Tshabalala (2012) point out that one of the positive contributions by private colleges is easing the Government's budget problems in handling the critical field of education allowing it to allocate financial resources to other critical areas. UNICEF (2010) argues that the Government of Zimbabwe allocates about 12 percent of its national budget to primary and secondary education, with enrolment standing well over 90 percent at primary school level.

Private colleges have also helped the government in supporting the education for all policy, promoting human rights, reducing the spread of HIV and AIDS and promoting public health through education (Ncube and Tshabalala, 2012).

## **9.2 Negative Contribution**

Nziramasa (2011) reveals that there are several negative factors brought about by private colleges within education in Zimbabwe. Private colleges lack a formal school culture in terms of norms and values. This is supported by Ahmed (2013) who states that some private colleges are located near sites that negatively affect pupil behaviour. Therefore the choice of non-conducive sites for private colleges is one way in which the rise of private colleges has negatively affected education; for example, conducting lessons under high tension cables, near market places or beer gardens.

In addition, the infrastructure for some private colleges does not support practical subjects as well as conducive environment for effective and efficient teaching and learning. For example, high-storey buildings in the central business district, in the middle of residential areas, where there are no playing grounds and adequate water and sanitary facilities.

Nziramasa (2011) also states that private colleges create class distinctions based on fee structures. This means that some private colleges end up creating a discriminatory environment through fees structures that are not affordable to all members of the public.

In addition, private colleges teach their own curriculum which is not in line with approved government curriculum. Private colleges exclude culture issues in their curriculum and this is because they offer non-local curricula such as Cambridge Syllabus discarding ZIMSEC Syllabus. Therefore this leads to private colleges impounding and injecting foreign ideologies and cultural beliefs. Bowora (2013) argues that one of the reasons why private colleges bring about negative factors is because they

do not enjoy formal government benefits as public schools such as School Improvement Grants (SIG) presently sponsored by UNICEF in Zimbabwe, Basic Education Assistance Module, presently sponsored by the Swedish Development Aid. Therefore in the end private colleges refuse to align with centralized curriculum and this negatively affects the national strategic economic and development programmes such as ZIMASSET.

In addition, Bowora (2013) states that private colleges do not address vital aspects of modern development such as sport in schools. This does not align with the requirement for schools in Zimbabwe to offer physical education for all children which involves sporting activities.

Private colleges also fail to offer practical subjects like agriculture, metalwork, woodwork, fashion and fabrics, food and nutrition (Bowora, 2013). This also does not align to Zimbabwean education standards that require school children to do practical subjects.

Private colleges employ and use unqualified personnel (both in teaching and administration) resulting in ineffectiveness and inefficiency. Unqualified personnel are not equipped with the knowledge of using school resources and the proper teaching methods. This leads to misuse of school resources, ineffectiveness and inefficiency.

Dube (2009) argues that private colleges focus too much on making profit hence they are accused of profiteering by hiring untrained and unqualified teachers who lack the basic competencies of the teaching profession. In addition, they do not follow good corporate governance practices in terms of being formally transparent and accountable. This is because some of the private colleges are not even registered as required by the Education Act (1987) in Zimbabwe.

Dyanda and Mavhuna (2004) point out that private colleges lack administration personnel, administration and finance systems required to run educational institutions for effective teaching and learning. This means that private colleges promote corruption by evading rules and regulations, sometimes bribing education authorities not penalize them for lack of requisite materials and infrastructure, even for lack of proper registration.

Hapanyengwi (2012) reveals that one of the significant grey areas about private colleges is that the teachers at private colleges are not aware of the rights of the child. This means that they are not aware of their rights under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

Mhandu (2010) raises concerns about the health of students and everyone at private colleges. Private colleges, particularly in the high density areas subject students to overcrowded conditions, without provision of health services, adequate water and sanitation facilities or staff with knowledge of public health.

### **9.3 Location of Private Colleges**

Kuenne (2010) in "Private Education and Entrepreneurship in East Africa." A Case Study of private schools in Kibera, argues that the ideal location for private colleges for effective teaching and learning, should be away from heavy industrial sites to ensure safety and security of learners.

Peterson (2006) in "Quality Education, the Role of the Teacher" reveals local government regulations and by-laws designate areas for land use in urban areas and there is land allocated for educational institutions in line with local government plans and regulations.

Freire (2009) in "Ideal Private Colleges and the Right Environment" says private colleges must not be isolated from key social and economic facilities like health care centres, business and shopping complexes and efficient water, sanitary and electricity supplies.

Boateng (2012) in "Private Schools and Conducive Environment for Education", emphasizes the importance of effective transport network, water, power and energy networks and internet connectivity in establishing a private college conducive for effective teaching and learning. Schaenen (2014) says this has a direct impact on the time allocated to every subject, every day, every week and every month and year.

### **9.4 Curricula offered**

Oxford Royale Academy (2012) argues that in the modern world both academic and co-curricula activities are important in preparing learners practically for the future. Life survival skills in line with the interests and passion of the learners lay a strong basis for a strong and more meaningful future.

Andrews (2013) in "Production of Learners of Integrity and Innovation", says learners should be given the best opportunities to shape their future. Schaenen (2013) argues that technical and vocational subjects like woodwork, food and nutrition, art and agriculture are vital for producing learners who will not be slaves of the formal employment system. Ann-Barge (2015) argues that co-curricula activities in the form of clubs, debate, technology and web-designing, all other subject clubs, ensure the teaching of practical life survival skills. These include time management as well as developing talents, interests and passions for the learners.

### **9.5 Provision of Resources**

Nziramasa (2001), argues that time is an important resource in the field of education. Time must be well managed through clear-cut time-tables that are used with strict discipline and effective and efficient supervision, to ensure every subject is

allocated adequate time to the maximum benefit of the learner. Every subject. Swartz (2013) argues that learning media, instruments, ideal infrastructure including classrooms, laboratories, libraries, computers, health, water and sanitary facilities as well as qualified teachers are vital resources that must be adequately availed to learners for effective teaching and learning. Mabodile (2001) emphasizes the importance of investing in teacher development as a pre-requisite for effective teaching and learning.

UNICEF (2013) has highlighted the importance of having qualified teachers, instructional materials like textbooks, inspection and supervision personnel and the right techniques for inspection, supervision and conducive working conditions. Koper (1998) argues that the human resources aspect in terms of well-trained teachers is the key to effective teaching and learning.

Lewis (2007) while safety and security are paramount at private colleges, supervision of instruction through ideal methods and techniques, helps to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning. Ideal resources for planning, scheming, report writing and staff development programmes are the key for successful teaching and learning.

It is against this background that UNICEF (2013) injected millions of dollars in teacher training in Zimbabwe. They argue that investing in the teacher is the best strategy for ensuring quality education through effective and efficient teaching and learning. On the other hand, hundred percent (100%) of principals reported that limited financial resources hindered all efforts to get the best teachers for all subjects even though the will power and plans are in place.

## **10. Research Methodology**

The study employed qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. This enabled detailed description of private colleges and their contributions to the education in Zimbabwe. The qualitative allowed expression of feelings and perceptions of different stakeholders about the contributions private colleges made to the education in Zimbabwe. The combination of the two methodologies enabled a detailed examination of private colleges as learning institutions. The mixed approach also enabled triangulation thereby increase validity and reliability of the outcomes of the study.

The research was a case study focusing on ten private colleges in Harare Province of Zimbabwe.

Questionnaires, interviews and observations were employed as the data collection instruments.

## **10.1 Research Design**

### **10.1.1 Case Study**

According to George and Bennett (2004), a case study refers to a research that is characterized by process tracing. Yin (2003) categorises case studies into three i.e. explanatory, exploratory or descriptive. Explanatory case studies were used to explore and explain the presumed causal links between private colleges and education in Zimbabwe. Descriptive case study was used to describe interventions or phenomena in this case experiences of private education offering. This research adopted the explanatory case study in order to examine the contribution of private colleges to education in Zimbabwe using ten private colleges in Harare Province.

### **10.1.2 Target Population**

Ten private colleges were the unit of analysis. This research target ten private colleges, ten principals, sixty members of the administrative staff, three hundred members of the academic staff, one thousand five hundred students and six eminent educationists (Education Officers, Directors etc).

### **10.1.3 Sample Size**

In this study a sample size of 30% of the targeted population was used. This research targeted a sample size of three principals, eighteen members of the administrative staff, ninety members of the academic staff, four hundred and fifty students and 2 eminent educationists.

### **10.1.4 Sampling Technique**

In this research stratified random sampling technique was used because the population from which the sample was drawn did not comprise a homogeneous group. This means that there were different categories of respondents within the population that is principals, academic staff, administrative staff and students. A total of six hundred and nine (609) participants took part as shown in table 3.1.

**Table 3.1** Population and Sample Structure

	<b>Population</b>	<b>Sample</b>
<b>Principals</b>	10	3
<b>Eminent Educationists</b>	9	3
<b>Administrative staff</b>	60	18
<b>Academic staff</b>	300	90
<b>Students</b>	1500	450
<b>Parents/Guardians</b>	150	45
<b>Total</b>	2029	609

### 10.1.5 Research Instruments

The researcher used interviews, questionnaires and observations to gather data.

### 10.1.6 Questionnaires

In this research both open ended and close ended questions were used because they ensured confidentiality of the respondents. They also encouraged honesty from the respondents due to anonymity involved particularly for biographical data. However, using questionnaires posed some problems. For example, some of the respondents forgot to complete the questionnaires. Reminders were sent to the participants and completed questionnaires were returned. In this study questionnaires were used to gather data from students and academic staff only.

### 10.1.7 Interviews

Interviews were used in this research because they allowed prompt responses. They also helped the researcher to have a personal contact with the respondents to enable observation of emotional expressions and other non-verbal communication forms. However, using interview involved some challenges. The interviewees may have given information just for the sake of talking therefore the researcher explained clearly the importance of the study to ensure seriousness of the respondents. In this study interviews were used to gather data from principals, administrative staff, expert educationists, teachers and learners. Focus of the questions was on the positive and negative contributions of private colleges to education. The questions and answers were meant to provide rich data on the research question.

### 10.1.8 Observations

Observations took place during interviews, group discussions, participation and planned inspections of physical infrastructure and documentation. In this research



study observations were used to gather data from teachers during instructional processes, principals, expert educationists, teachers and learners during interviews. Critical documents such as record books, registers, scheme books, exercise books, plan books, reports and inspection forms were also examined to get insight into the operations of private colleges/schools.

### **10.1.9 Data Collection Procedures**

- The researcher contacted the appropriate authorities to obtain permission to enter the ten private colleges where the research was conducted. This helped to clearly identify the respondents to receive questionnaires and to be interviewed.
- A pilot test was carried out to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the questionnaires. This involved running a mini survey to ensure validity and reliability of research instruments.
- After the pilot study necessary corrections were made before the actual administration of the research instruments.

## **10.2 Reliability and Validity**

### **10.2.1 Reliability**

A pilot study was carried out to identify some problems in relation to the questionnaire. The questionnaire was piloted first in randomly selected colleges in Harare. The pilot study re-assured that the instrument to be used by the researcher would yield consistent results. The researcher used both questionnaires and interviews as means to obtain consistent results. The questionnaire was designed to guarantee reliability because there was anonymity of the respondents as well as the institutions.

### **10.2.2 Validity**

Validity is to ascertain exactly what was expected or intended. The pilot study gave the researcher an overview of how the participants would understand the questions, the format to answer them as well as the relevance of the questions to the study. Results of the pilot study enabled the researcher to make some changes, thus clarity of the questions and the type of feedback received enabled re-visiting the questionnaire. Through the pilot study, content and face validity of the questions were addressed.

### **10.2.3 Ethical Issues**

According to Saunders (2003) ethics refers to the appropriateness of one's behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become participants of one's work or are affected by it. In this research the researcher observed four ethical rights of participants which are

the right to confidentiality, informed concern, anonymity, freedom from harm and invasion of privacy.

#### **10.2.4 Informed Consent**

Cornmark (2000) explains that informed consent is a legal procedure to ensure that a patient, client and research participants are aware of all the potential risks and costs involved in a treatment or procedure. Therefore in this research the researcher informed the participants about what would happen during the research so that they decide to participate or not from an informed point of view.

#### **10.2.5 Confidentiality**

The right to confidentiality - the researcher gave assurance that information they gave would not be divulged to third parties.

#### **10.2.6 Privacy**

Privacy is an issue that is of importance to participants. According to Smith (2005), experts say that researchers need to device ways to ask whether participants are willing to talk about sensitive topics without putting them in awkward situations. In this research, the researcher explained the reasons that help secure permission, enable private behaviour to be recorded, enable potential participants to volunteer to give themselves willingly.

### **11. Data Analysis, Presentation and Interpretation**

Data was collected to answer the following research questions:

- Is the location of the private colleges conducive for effective teaching and learning?
- Is the curriculum offered by private colleges comparable to that offered by mainstream schools?
- Do the private colleges avail adequate resources to students for effective and efficient teaching and learning?
- Do the private colleges employ properly qualified teachers for all the various subjects?
- Are the private colleges making a positive or negative impact to education in Zimbabwe?

Data collected through questionnaires and interviews were presented. All categories of participants responded to questionnaires and /or interviews as shown in Table 1.

## 11.1 Questionnaire Responses

**Table 4.1: Questionnaire Response Rate**

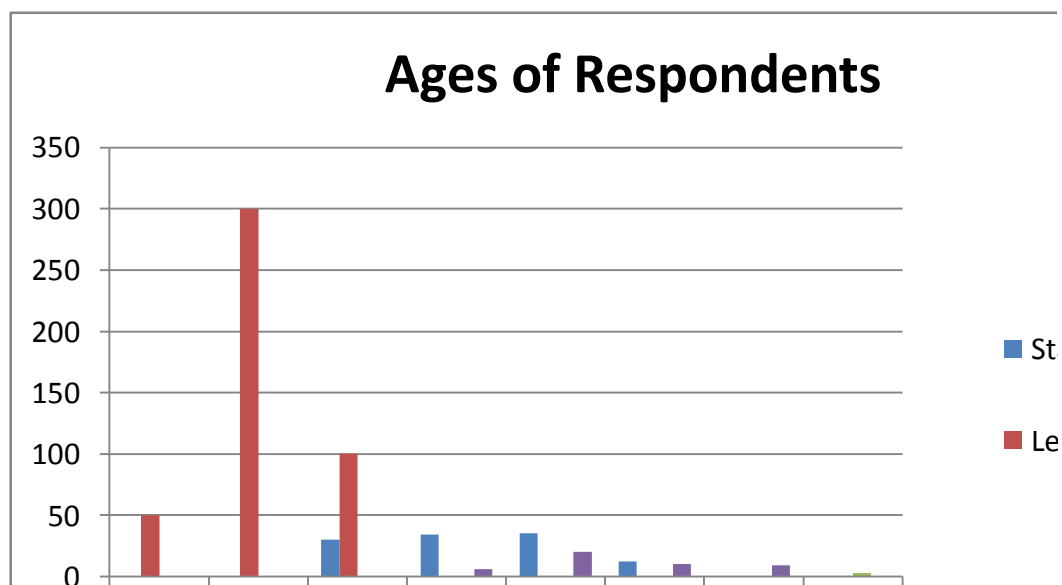
	Questionnaires distributed	Usable returns	Unusable returns	Response Rate (%)
<b>Principals</b>	3	3	-	100%
<b>Expert Educationists</b>	3	3	-	100%
<b>Administrative staff</b>	18	18	-	100%
<b>Academic staff</b>	90	90	-	100%
<b>Learners</b>	450	450	-	100%
<b>Parents/Guardians</b>	45	45	-	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>609</b>	-	<b>100%</b>

Source: Primary Data 2015

The above table shows that all the 609 (100%) respondents returned completed questionnaires. There was a high response rate which is important because it ensured that the results were representative of the total population. Furthermore, the high questionnaire response rate also helped to enhance the validity of the conclusions made about the study and supports the recommendations from the study.

## 11.2 Ages of Respondents

**Figure 4.1: Ages of all Respondents**

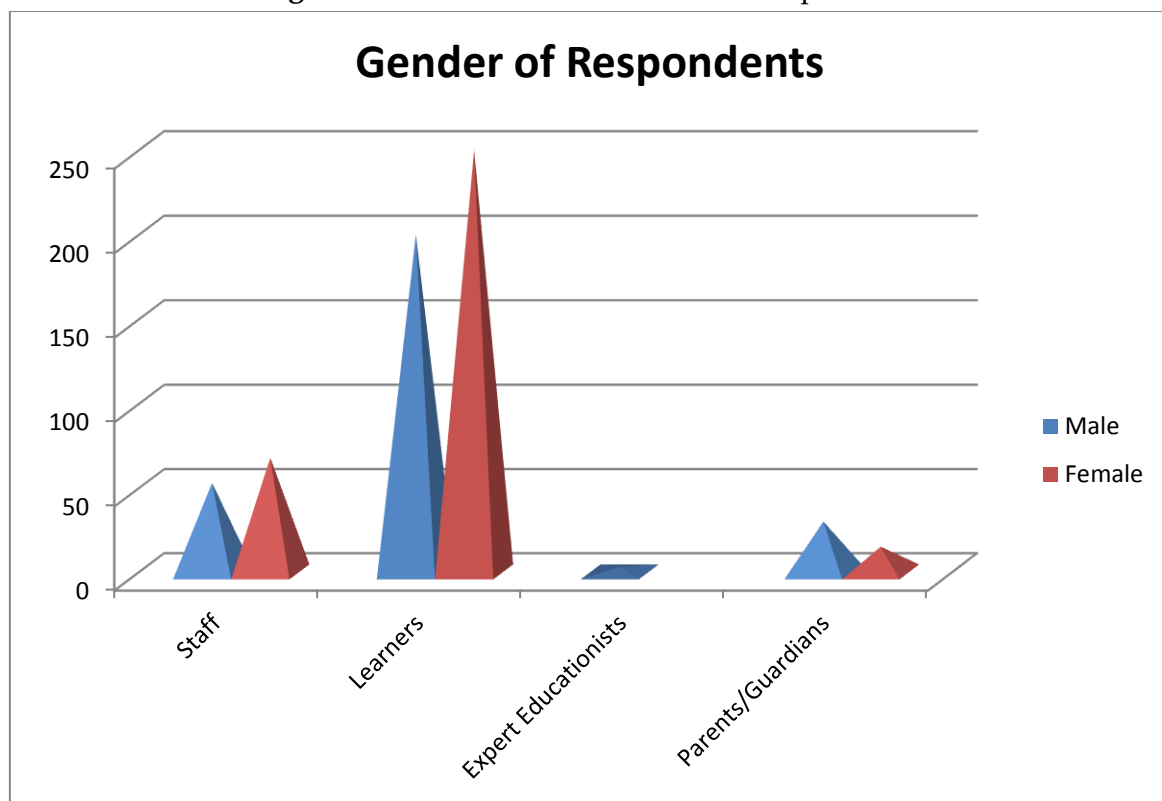


Source: Primary Data

As shown in Figure 4.1, the majority of the respondents were 49.26% consisting of learner aged between 16 and 20 years. The age range with the second highest number of respondents was 16.42% consisting of learners aged 21 to 25 years. The third highest was 8.21% consisting of learners aged 10 to 15 years. 5.75% of the respondent consisted of staff members aged 31 to 35 years, 5.58% were staff members aged 26 to 30 years, 4.93% were staff members aged 21 to 25 years, 1.97% were staff members aged 36 to 40 years. 3.28% of the respondents were parents/guardians aged 31 to 35 years, 1.64% was parents/guardians aged 36 to 40 years, 1.48% was parents/guardians aged 41 to 45 years and 0.99% was parents/guardians aged 26 to 30 years. 0.49% of the respondents were education experts aged 45 to 50 years.

### 11.3 Gender

**Figure 4.2: Statistics on the Gender of Respondents**

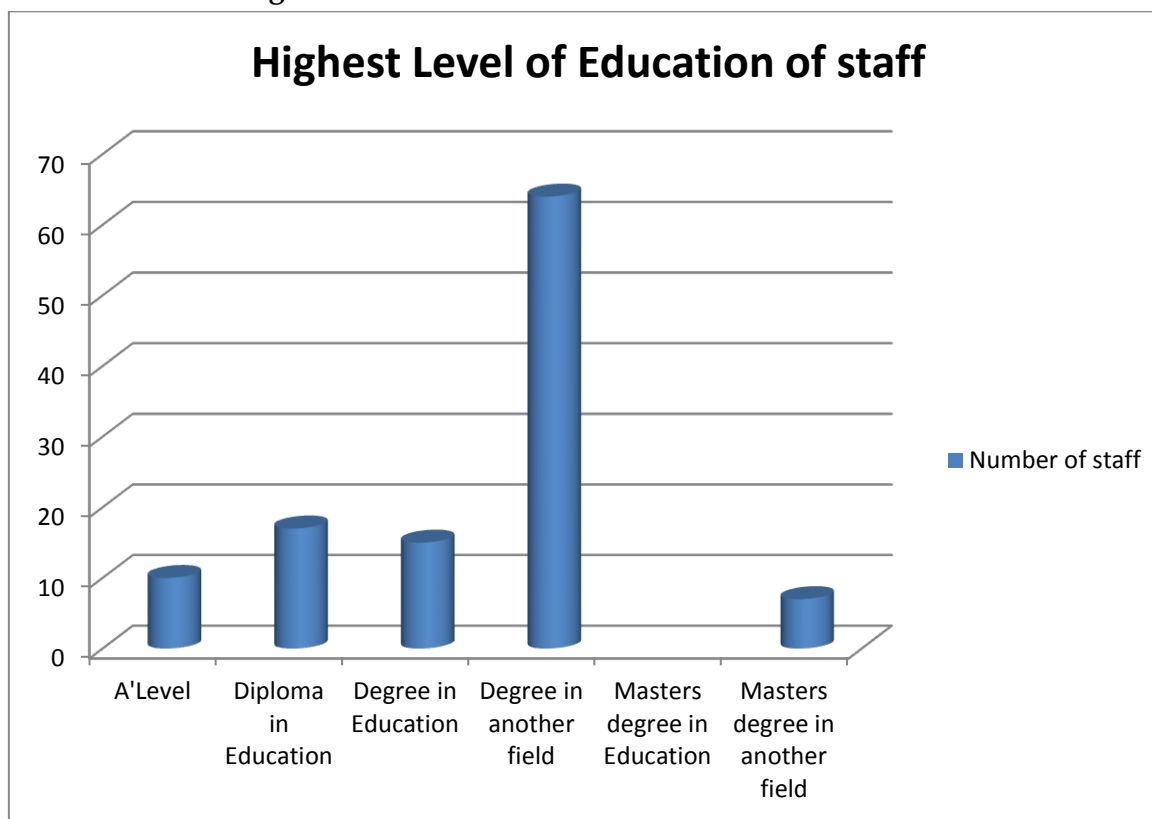


Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.2 shows that the majority of the respondents were females, comprising 68 members of staff, 250 learners and 15 parents/guardians. On the other hand, the males constituted of 53 members of staff, 200 learners and 30 parents/guardians.

## 11.4 Highest Level of Education of Staff

**Figure 4.3: Level of Education of the members of Staff**

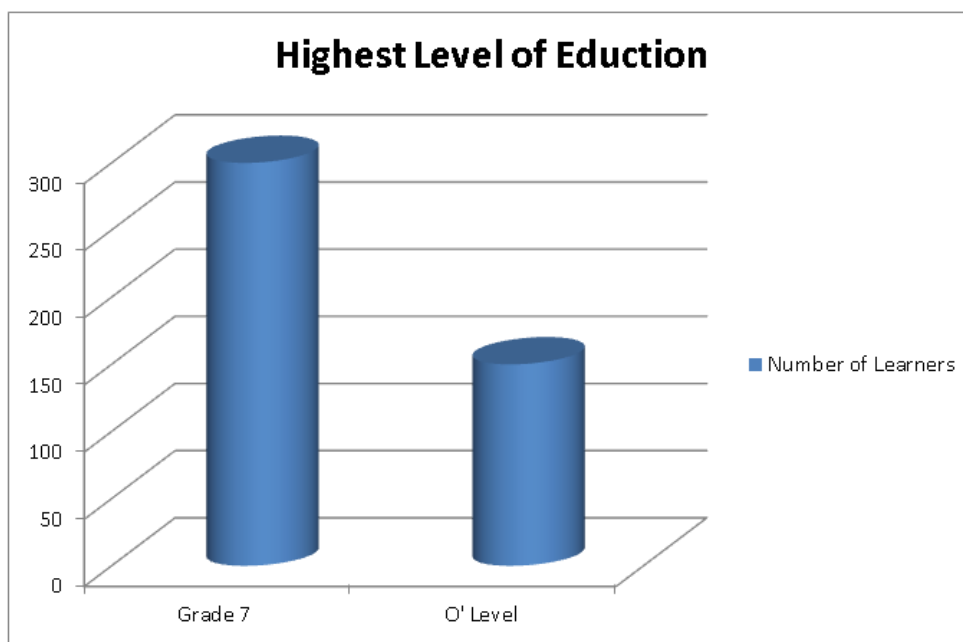


Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.3 shows that the majority's highest level of education is a degree in another field which is not education. 56.64% of staff members' highest level of education was a degree in another field. 15% of the staff members' highest level of education was a diploma in Education, followed by 13.27% of the staff members who had a degree in Education. In addition, 8.85% of the staff members' highest level of education was 'A' level while 6.19% of the staff members' highest level of education was a master's degree in another field.

## 11.5 Highest Level of Education of Learners

**Figure 4.4:** Highest Level of Education of Learners who responded

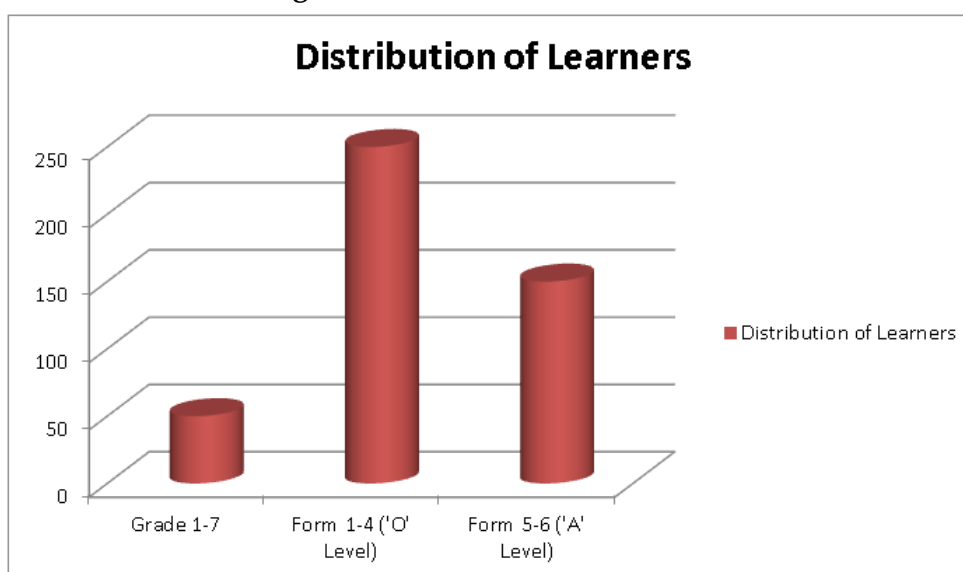


Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.4 above shows that amongst all the learners who participated in the research, there were 41% of the respondents whose highest level of education was Grade 7 while there were 24.63% respondents whose highest level of education was 'O' level. This means that 250 of all the learners who participated in the research 300 respondents are doing forms 1, 2, 3 or 4 while 150 are doing forms 5 or 6.

## 11.6 Distribution of Learners

**Figure 4.5:** Distribution of Learners

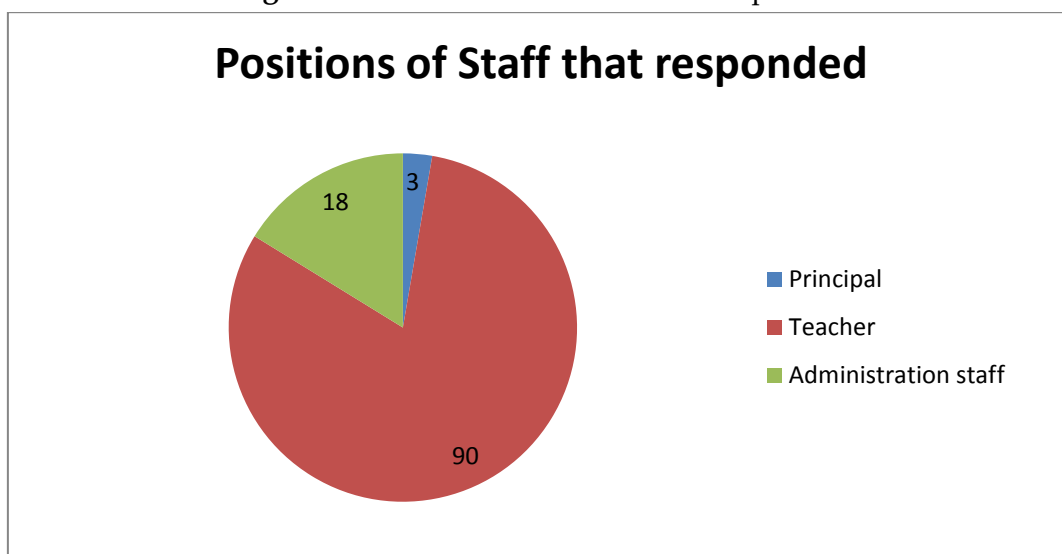


Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.5 above shows that there were 450 learners who participated in the research. 11.11% of them in Grade 1 to 7, 55.56% in forms 1 to 4 while 33.33% were in forms 5 to 6.

### 11.7 Positions of the Staff that responded

Figure 4.6: Positions of the Staff that responded

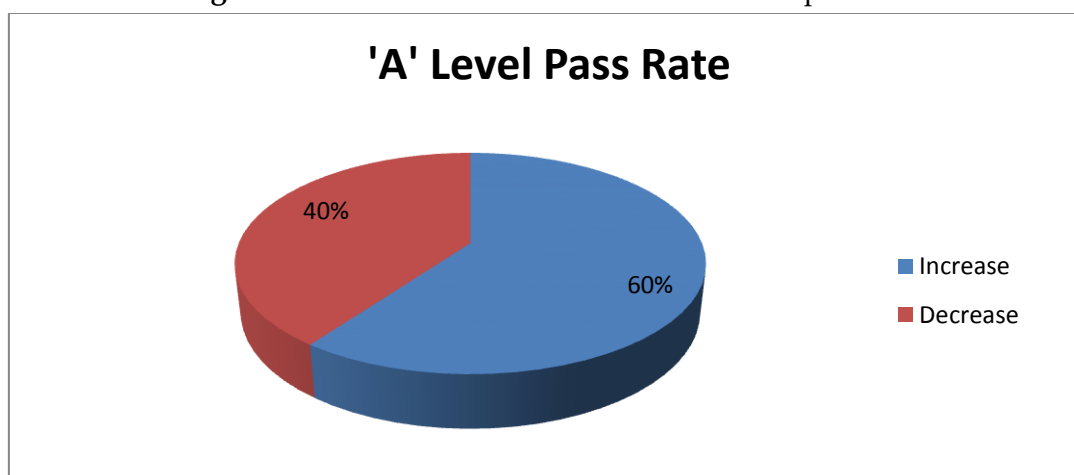


Source: Primary data

As shown in Figure 4.6 above, there are 111 members of staff who participated. Amongst the 111 members of staff who participated in the research, 3 of them were principals, while 18 were administrators and 90 members were teachers. This implies that the majority of the members of staff that participated were the teachers.

### 11.8 Increase or decrease in the 'A' Level pass rate of the private colleges

Figure 4.7: Increase or decrease in the 'A' Level pass rate

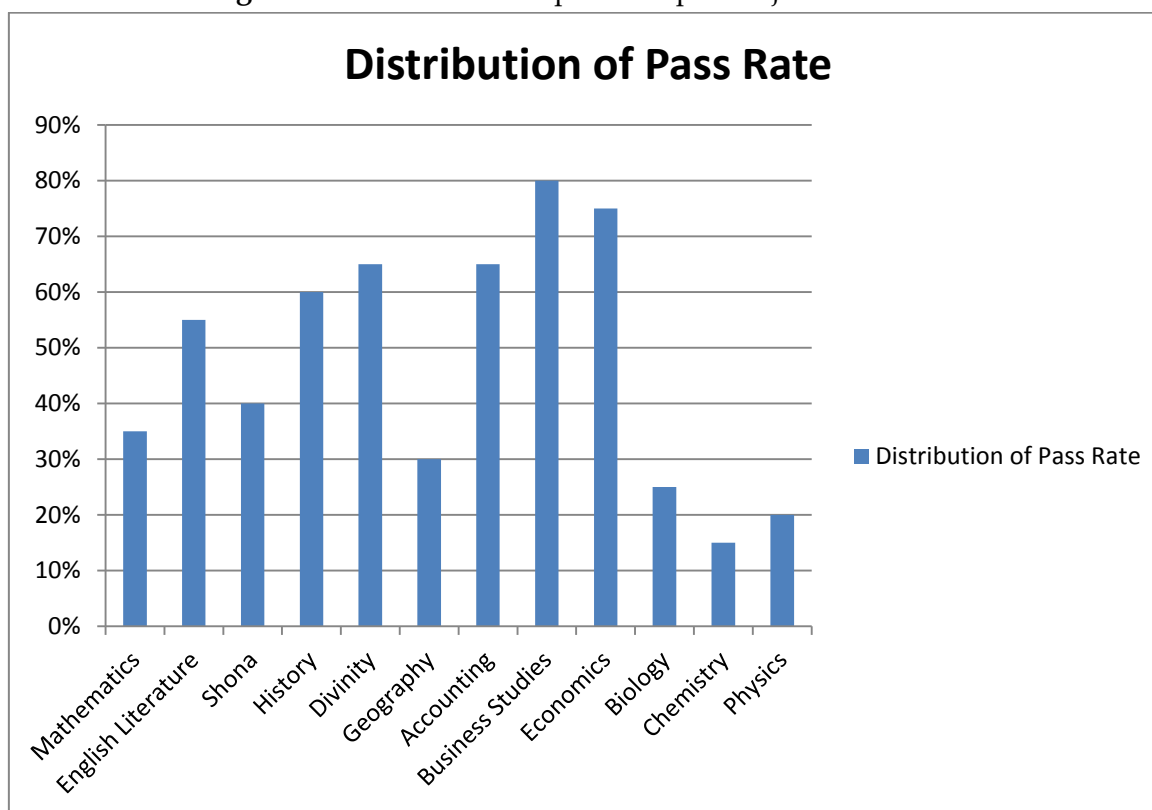


Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.7 clearly shows that 60% of the respondents indicated that their private colleges managed to record an increase in 'A' level pass rates in the year 2014. On the other hand 40% of the respondents indicated that their private colleges recorded a decrease in the 'A' level pass rate in the same year. This implies that out of the ten private colleges that participated in the research, six of them recorded an increase in their 'A' Level pass rate while four private colleges recorded a decrease in the pass rate of 'A' Level learners.

### 11.9 Distribution of pass rate per subject at 'A' Level

**Figure 4.8:** Distribution of pass rate per subject at 'A' Level



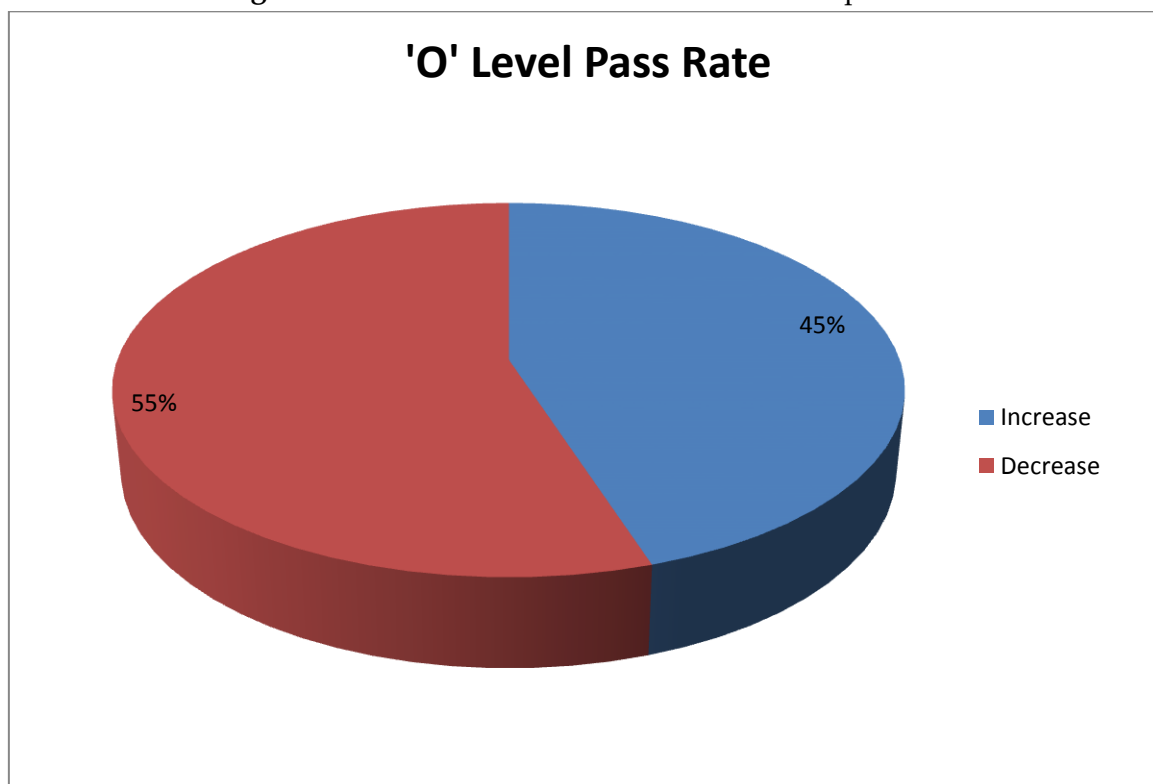
Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.8 indicates that the subjects that are popularly known to be passed by learners at 'A' Level in private colleges are Business Studies, Economics, Accounting, Divinity, History and English Literature. On the other hand the subjects that usually have low pass rates at 'A' Level in private colleges are Chemistry (15%), Physics (20%), Biology (25%), Geography (30%), Shona (40%) and Mathematics (35%).



### 11.10 Increase or decrease in the 'O' Level pass rate of the private colleges

Figure 4.9: Increase or decrease in the 'O' Level pass rate

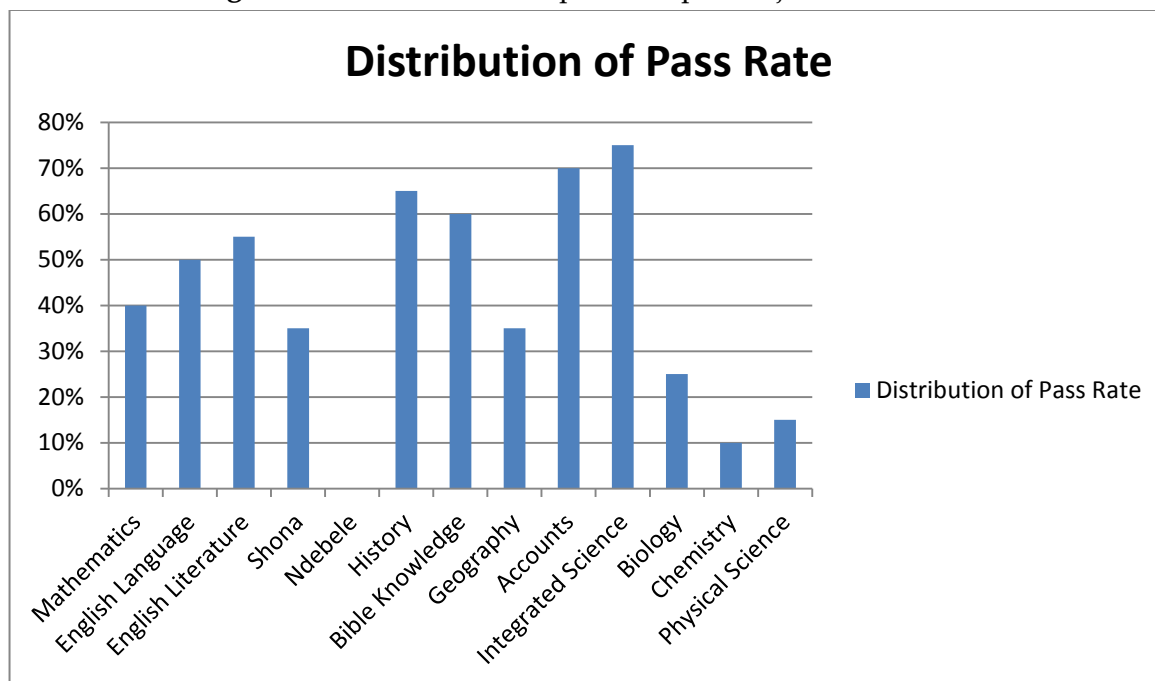


Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.9 clearly shows that 45% of the members of staff indicated that their private colleges managed to record an increase in 'O' level pass rate in the year 2014. On the other hand 55% of the respondents indicated that their private colleges recorded a decrease in the 'O' level pass rates in the same year. This implies that out of the ten private colleges that participated in the study, six of them recorded a decrease in their 'O' level pass rate while four private colleges recorded an increase in the pass rate for 'O' level learners.

### 11.11 Distribution of pass rate per subject at 'O' Level

**Figure 4.10:** Distribution of pass rate per subject at 'O' Level

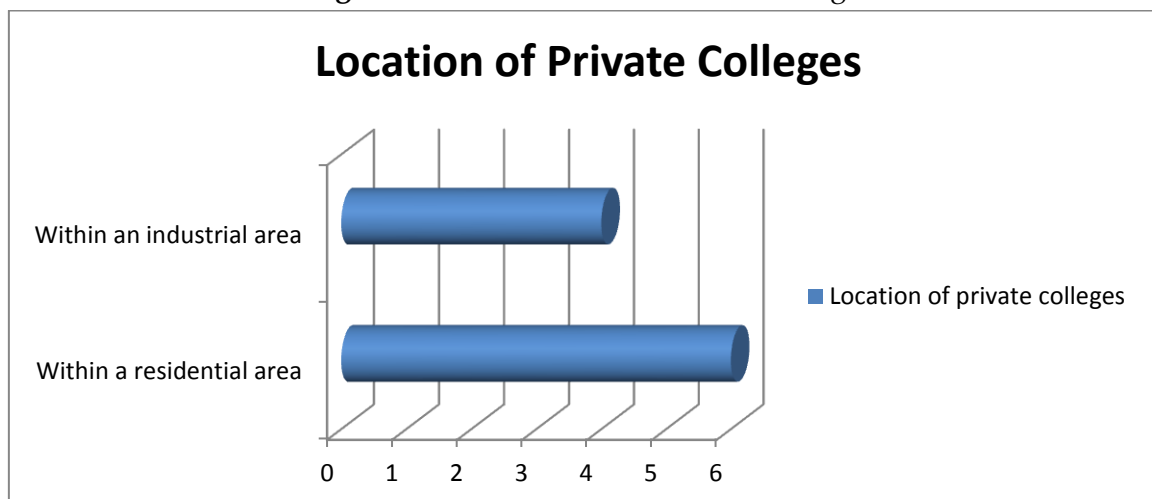


Source: Primary data

Figure 4.10 indicates that the subjects that are popularly known to be passed by learners at 'O' Level in private colleges are Integrated Science (75%), Accounts (70%), History (65%), Bible knowledge (60%), English Literature (55%) and English Language (50%). On the other hand the subjects that usually have low pass rates at 'O' Level in private colleges are Chemistry (10%), Physical Science (15%), Biology (25%), Geography (35%), Shona (35%) and Mathematics (40%).

### 11.12 Location of Private Colleges

**Figure 4.11:** Location of the Private colleges

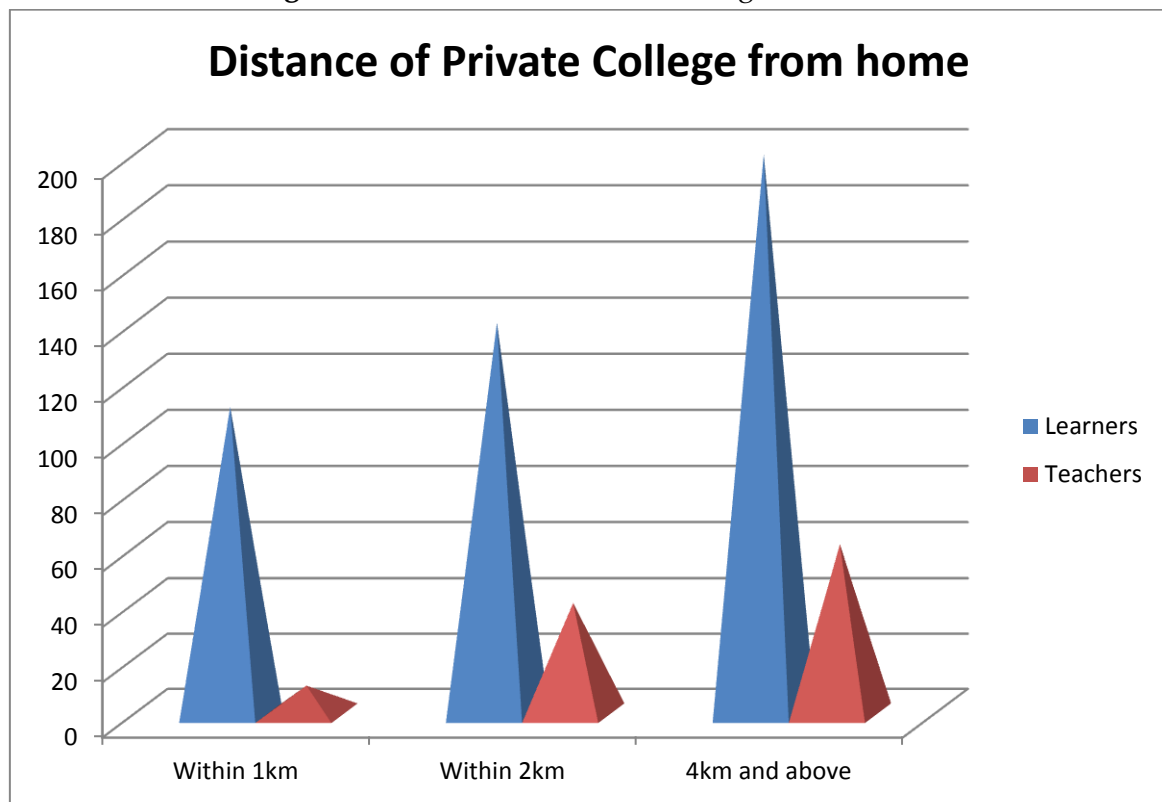


Source: Primary Data

As shown in Figure 4.11 there are six private colleges that are located near a residential area while the rest were located within an industrial area. This implies that 40% of the private colleges under study are operating within an industrial area while 60% of the schools are operating within a residential area.

### 11.13 Distance of Private College from Home

**Figure 4.12: Distance of Private College from Home**

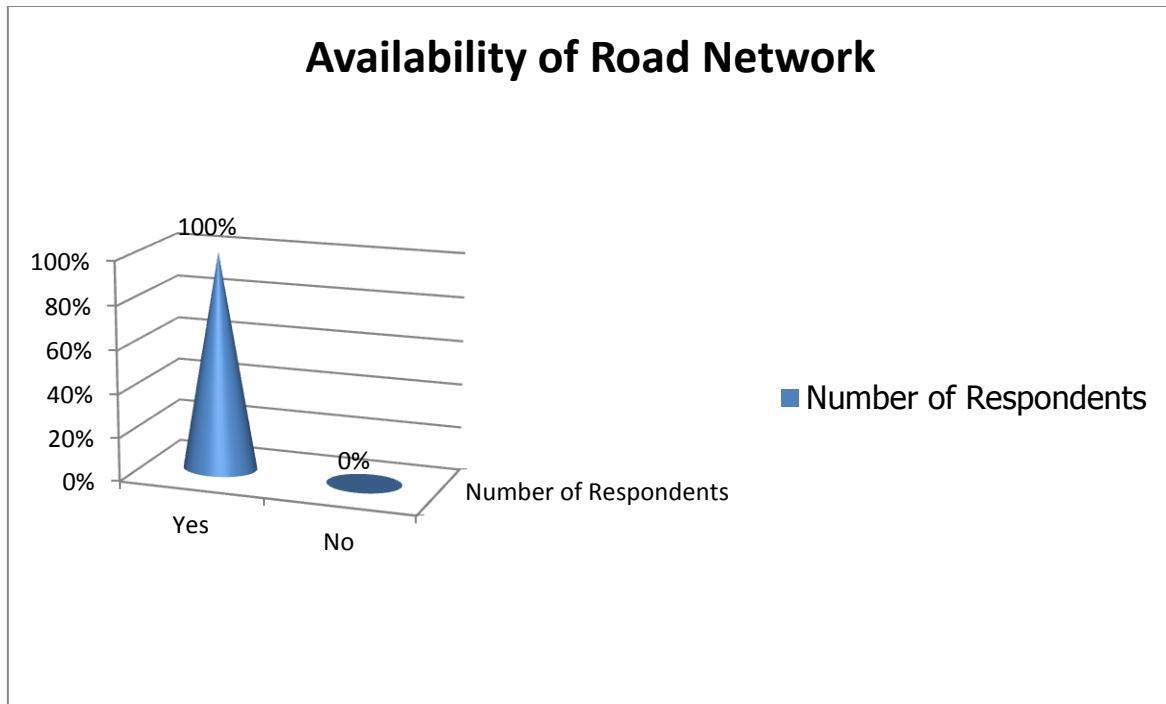


Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.12 shows that 110 learners and 10 teachers confirmed that their homes were within a distance of 1 km from their private college. 190 learners and 66 teachers indicated that the distance that they travelled from their homes to their private college is within the 2 kilometers. On the other hand, 200 learners and 61 teachers confirmed that they travelled a distance of at least 4 kilometres and above from their homes to their private college.

### 11.14 Availability of Road Network

Figure 4.13: The availability of a Road Network

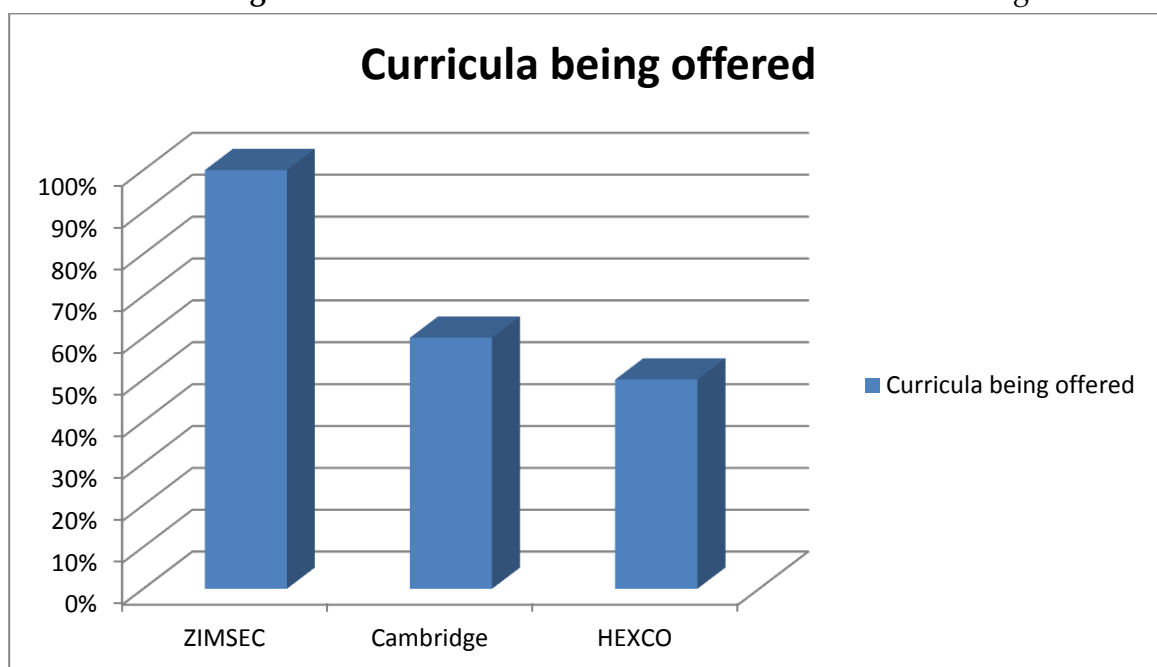


Source: Primary Data

As shown in Figure 13, 100% of the respondents confirmed that their private colleges were located where a road network is available nearby.

### 11.15 Curricula being offered

Figure 4.14: The Curricula that is Offered at the Private College



Source: Primary data

Figure 14 shows that all ten private colleges under study offer ZIMSEC curriculum. 60% of the private colleges under study also offer Cambridge while 50% of the private colleges also offer HEXCO curriculum

### 11.16 Academic Subject offered per curriculum

**Table 4.2: Academic Subject Offered per Curriculum**

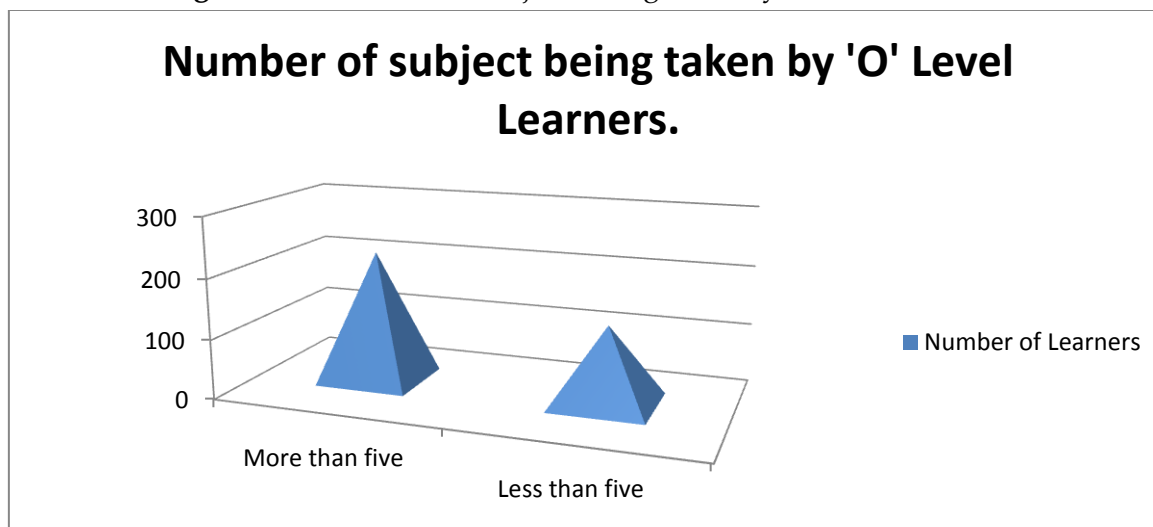
ZIIMSEC		Cambridge		HEXCO
'O' Level	'A' Level	'O' Level	'A' Level	
Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics	Secretarial Studies
English Language	Accounting	English Language	Accounting	Technical Drawing
English Literature	Business Studies	English Literature	Business Studies	Dress Making
Shona	Economics	History	Economics	Metal Work
Ndebele	Divinity	Bible Knowledge	Divinity	
History	English Literature	Accounts	English Literature	
Bible Knowledge	Biology	Geography	Biology	
Accounts	Chemistry	Integrated Science	Chemistry	
Geography	Geography	Biology	Geography	
Integrated Science	Shona	Chemistry		
Biology		Physical Science		
Chemistry				
Physical Science				

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.2 shows that ZIMSEC and Cambridge curricula offer similar subjects. However, the two curricula differ in that ZIMSEC also offers, at 'O' Level, Shona and Ndebele which is not offered by Cambridge. In addition ZIMSEC also offers Shona at 'A' Level which is not offered by Cambridge. On the other hand, HEXCO offers different subjects from ZIMSEC and Cambridge. HEXCO offers technical subjects that include Secretarial Studies, Technical Drawing, Dressmaking and metalwork among others.

### 11.17 Number of Subjects Taken by Learners at 'O' Level

**Figure 4.15:** Number of subjects being taken by 'O' Level learners

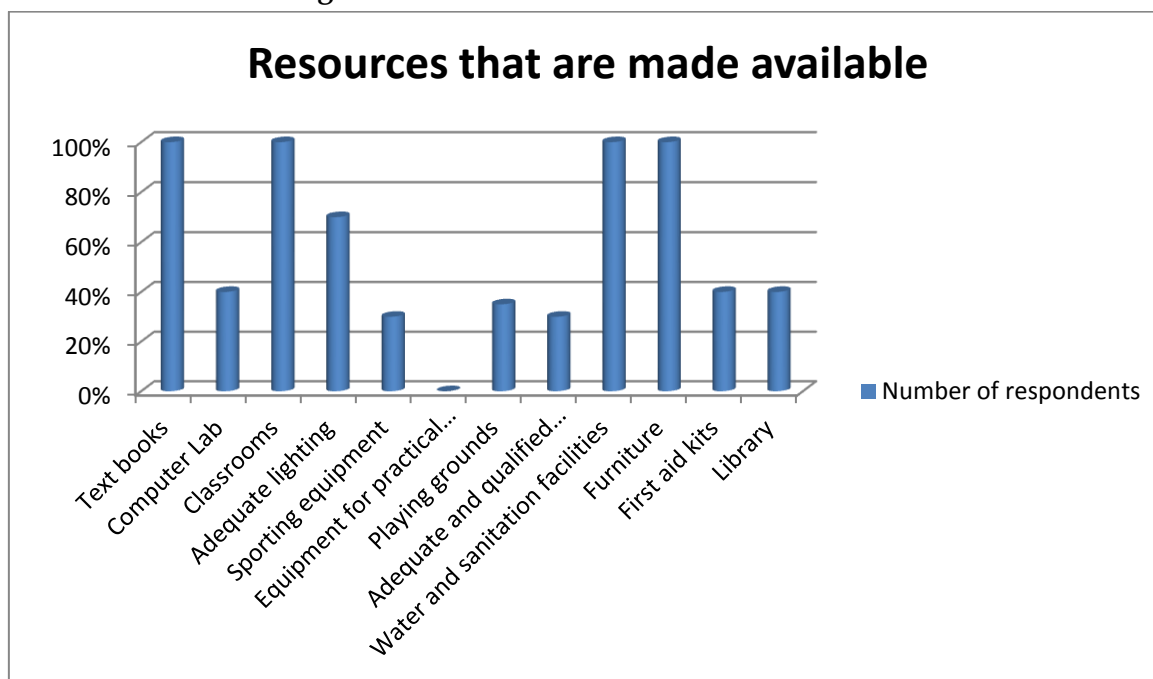


Source: Primary Data

Figure 15 shows that 220 out of 350 students doing forms 1 to 4 are taking five or more subjects while the remaining 130 students are taking less than five subjects. This implies that at least 220 learners within form 1 and 4 are full time learners while 130 were part-time supplementing failed subjects.

### 11.18 Resources that are availed for effective teaching and learning process in private colleges

**Figure 4.16:** Resources that are made available



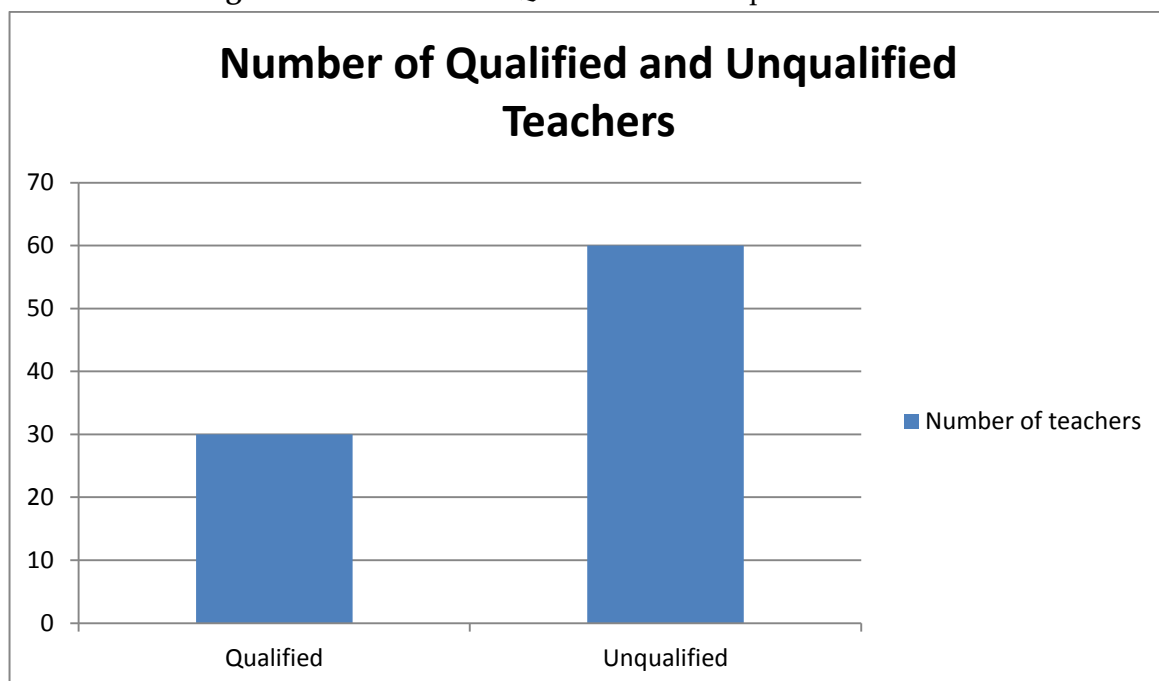
Source: Primary Data

As illustrated in Figure 16, 100% of the respondents confirmed the availability of text books, classrooms, water and sanitary facilities and furniture, 70% agreed that they have adequate lighting, 40% had computer labs, first aid kits and the library, 30% sporting equipment and adequate and qualified teachers, and 35% have playing grounds. There was no response about equipment for practical subjects.

The findings of the primary data therefore show that in all private colleges, text books, classrooms, water and sanitary facilities and furniture were made available. In most private colleges there is adequate lighting. However, the findings show that computer labs and first aid kits are available in a few colleges. In addition, evidence from the data gathered also shows that most private colleges are still facing challenges in availing sporting equipment, adequate and qualified teachers as well as equipment for practical subjects.

### 11.19 Statistics of Qualified and Unqualified Teachers

Figure 4.17: Statistics of Qualified and Unqualified Teachers

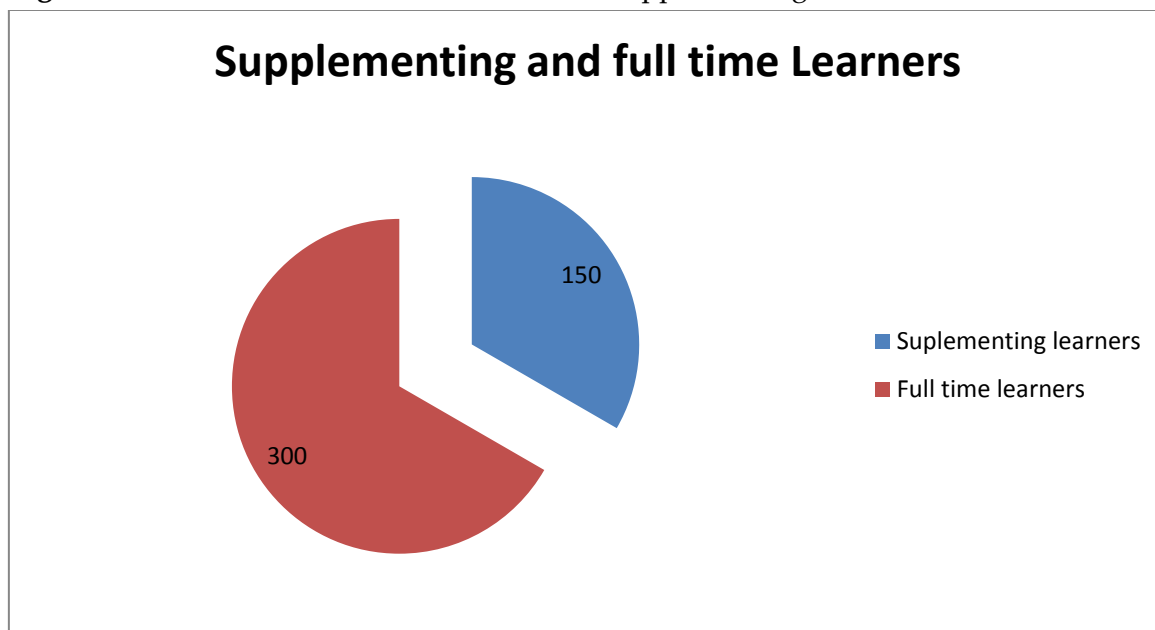


Source: Primary Data

As shown in Figure 17 out of 90 teachers there were 30 qualified teachers while the remaining 60 teachers were not qualified for the teaching profession.

### 11.20 Statistics of supplementing and full time Learners

**Figure 4.18:** The statistics of Learners who are supplementing and those who are full time

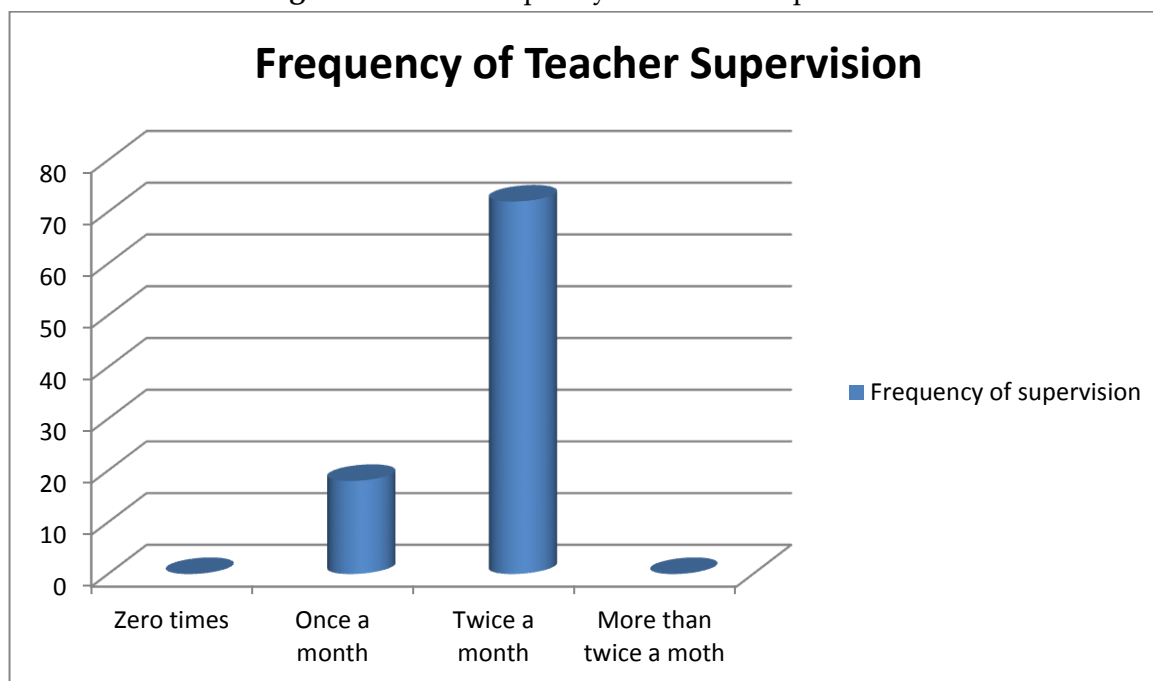


Source: Primary Data

Figure 18 show that out of the 450 learners who participated in the research, 300 learners were full time learners while the remaining 150 learners were supplementing.

### 11.21 Frequency of Teacher Supervision

**Figure 4.19:** The frequency of Teacher Supervision



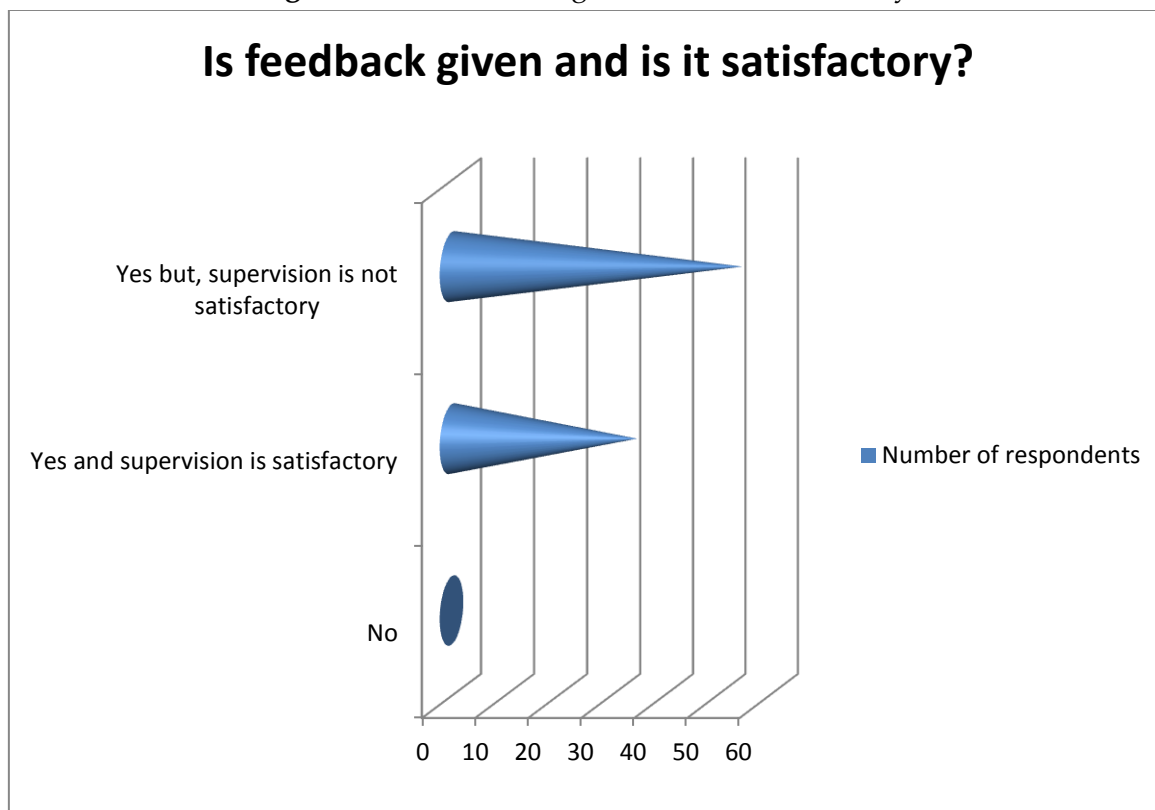
Source: Primary Data



As shown in Figure 19, 72 (80%) teachers highlighted that they were supervised twice a month while 18 (20%) teachers indicated that they were supervised only once in a month.

### 11.22 After supervision, is feedback given and is the feedback satisfactory?

Figure 4.20: Is feedback given and is it satisfactory?

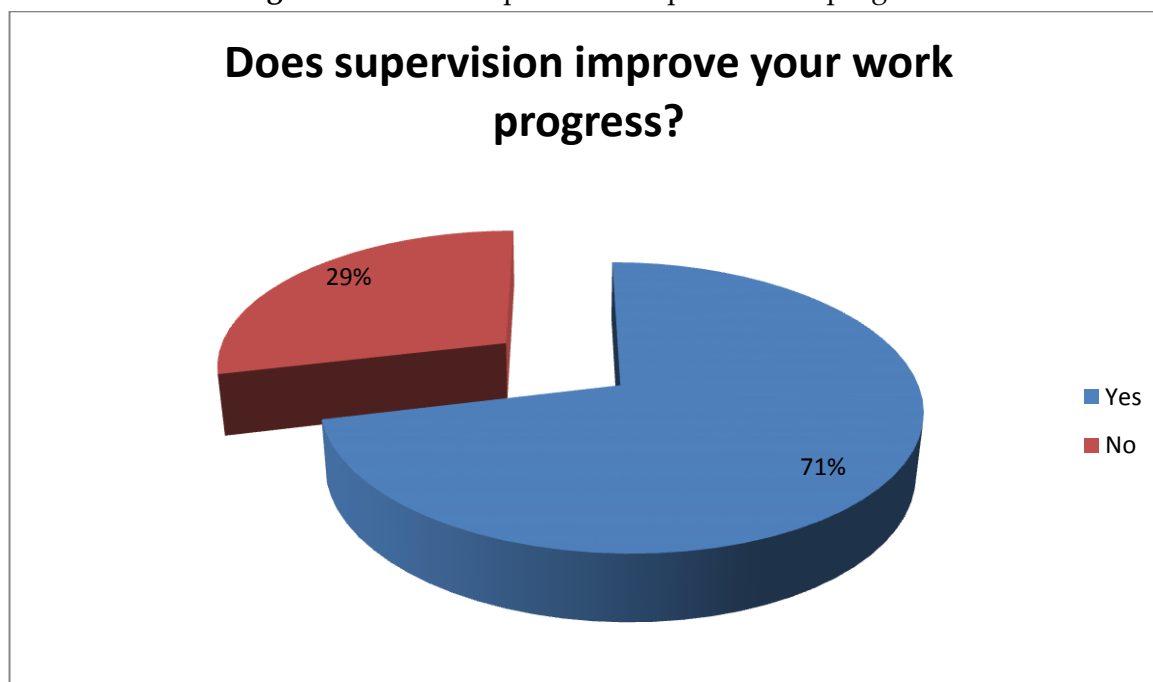


Source: Primary Data

As shown in Figure 20, all teachers were supervised. However, 55 (61%) out of 90 teachers indicated that they get supervised but feedback for the supervision is not satisfactory. On the other hand, 35 (39%) out of 90 teachers indicated that they get supervised and the feedback is satisfactory.

### 11.23 Does Supervision Improve Your Work Progress?

Figure 4.21: Does supervision improve work progress



Source: Primary Data

Figure 21 shows that 64 (71%) of the teachers supported the view that supervision improved their work while 26 (29%) of the teachers were against the view that supervision improved their work. This implies that 64 responded 'yes' while 26 responded 'no'.

## 12. Qualitative evidence

### 12.1 Pull factors to the Private Colleges

#### 12.1.1 Flexible Conditions

The section presents responses on why private colleges have increased in popularity in recent years. Responses were gathered from college principals and administrators, education experts, parents, teachers and learners.

#### 12.1.2 Principals

Principal "A" said most learners are attracted to private colleges by flexible conditions. There is a one tier fee system at private as opposed to formal government schools where there is a multiple fee structure broken down into levies, general purpose and tuition fees. In most cases, the fees for government schools are paid at different banks.

Principal “B” said there are too many rules and regulations as well as other stringent conditions at government schools which parents do not want. Some parents have gained confidence in private colleges because of the effort by private colleges to recruit and retain the best qualified and best performing teachers for every subject.

The environment at private colleges is more relaxed as compared to the formal education system. For example, learners are allowed to bring in their mobile phones to the private colleges while at formal schools mobile phones are strictly forbidden. 100% of the learners interviewed agree that authorities at private colleges are not as strict as authorities at formal government schools. They revealed that principals, administrative staff and teachers all focus largely on academic work. Responsible authorities at private colleges are not against learners bringing mobile phones and using them to research at the educational institutions.

Principal “C” said learners who fail to get places at formal schools find a safe haven in private schools. Those learners who want to study for less than 5 subjects at secondary school level are readily accepted at private colleges, where there is the flexibility of paying only for the number of subjects a learner is studying.

### **12.1.3 Education Experts**

100% of the education experts believe private colleges have over the years managed to provide a unique style and form of education offering longer time per subject and flexibility of studying the number of subjects a learner can afford at any given time. The education experts believe this attracts learners and their parents/guardians to private colleges.

In addition, 100% of the education experts agree that private colleges exist to provide a chance for education advancement for learners who will have failed to get places in the formal school system. This is usually the case with those learners seeking for places for Form One to begin secondary education and those learners who will have completed Ordinary level and seeking places for Advanced Level. Formal schools are not enough to absorb all the learners coming out of Grade 7 wanting to register for Form One and all learners completing Ordinary Level wanting to study Advanced Level.

100% of the education experts interviewed agreed that a major pull factor at private colleges is that learners are allowed to enroll for any number of subjects they want to study as well as paying specifically for the subjects they want to study.

#### **12.1.4 Teachers**

80% of the teachers interviewed agreed that learners were attracted by teachers who give them maximum attention at private colleges. The teachers revealed that the remuneration systems at private colleges are reliable and consistent compared to the current government system and this motivates them to give 100% concentration to the work and the learners.

Private colleges are making a deliberate effort to identify, recruit and retain the best teachers for every subject, in order to attract learners to their education institutions. 100% of the education experts also agreed that authorities at private colleges have adopted a business-oriented approach to all their operations and parents are attracted to enroll their children at these private colleges.

#### **12.1.5 Parents**

More than 90% of the of the parents/guardians interviewed agreed that private colleges are making a serious effort to identify and recruit the best performing teachers for each category either Early Childhood Development or Infants at primary school level and every subject at secondary school level both Ordinary Level and Advanced Level.

The parents/guardians agreed that due to the provision of the best qualified teachers, it positively contributed to high pass rates of more than 90% at Grade Seven and at secondary schools for both Ordinary Level and Advanced levels. Parents/guardians agreed that assurance of passes for the learners is paramount.

#### **12.1.6 Academic Performance/High Pass Rate**

All the principals interviewed agreed that high pass rates of more than 90%, mainly for learners who were studying less than five subjects at Ordinary level and learners studying at least two subjects at Advanced level were major pull factors for learners to private colleges.

All the learners reported satisfaction and confidence with the high pass rates of more than 90%, recorded at private colleges especially for learners studying for less than five subjects at Ordinary Level and those studying at least two subjects at Advanced Level.

#### **12.1.7 Prompt Attention to Customers**

All administrative staff interviewed revealed that learners were attracted by prompt attention and customer service at private colleges as opposed to formal schools where it is difficult and cumbersome to see responsible authorities. The administrative staff members agreed that parents/guardians and learners hated waiting for long hours at

educational institutions' reception areas without anyone attending to them. At private colleges, parents/guardians and learners are treated as kings because of the business approaches adopted at private colleges.

#### **12.1.8 Low Teacher-Learner Ratio**

More than 90% of the teachers agreed that the teacher-learner ratio obtaining at private colleges usually 1: 30 on average are less stressful than the ratios in formal schools where one teacher can be in charge of 60 learners. They argued that the government does not take this situation into consideration with regards to remuneration. 20% said the general flexible conditions at private colleges where the main focus is on academic work, attracted learners to these colleges. Flexibility is in terms of rules and regulations including strict conditions about uniform at formal government schools.

All the learners also agreed that teachers gave maximum attention to the learners and time spent on academic work per subject is at least one hour per day, between Monday and Friday. Learners expressed satisfaction with exercises given by teachers and the timely marking of the exercises in every subject as well as corrective feedback received from the teachers.

The teachers agreed that every learner was given maximum attention regarding the issue of discipline and they encouraged working together with parents/guardians to ensure the highest levels of discipline for all learners.

#### **12.1.9 The Cambridge Curriculum Attraction**

All the education experts also revealed that some well up parents/guardians were attracted to enroll their children at private colleges which have continued to offer Cambridge Curriculum and examinations, which they believe are recognized internationally more than the localized examinations run by the Zimbabwe School Examinations Council.

More than 80% of the learners agreed that it is beneficial in terms of acquiring knowledge to study both local ZIMSEC and Cambridge curricula usually offered at private colleges as the examinations can be written at different times.

#### **12.1.10 Extra curricula activities**

Extra curricula activities are not given prominence at private colleges. More than 90% of the learners expressed happiness with the new wave of up-market uniforms introduced by authorities at private colleges which they argue was a source of inspiration for academic work.

### **12.1.11 Provision of Transport**

The majority of learners agreed that the provision of transport with designated pick-up and drop-off points especially in the high density areas of Harare is a major pull factor to private colleges. They revealed that provision of convenient transport is an effective and efficient strategy for managing time as well as ensuring safety and security for the learners.

### **12.1.12 One-tier Fees Structure**

80% of the parents/guardians agreed that a one tier fee structure is convenient at private colleges as compared to the formal system where fees is separated into tuition, general purpose levy and in some instances boarding fees. The parents/guardians also agreed that provision of convenient transport facilities even at a cost is a major pull factor to private colleges as the move helps to ensure accountability, safety and security for the learners. They say it is also an important factor influencing effective and efficient time management for effective and efficient teaching and learning.

## **12.2 Private Colleges' Contribution to the Education System in Zimbabwe**

### **12.2.1 Literacy and Numeracy Rate**

All the principals and teachers interviewed agreed that private colleges were contributing significantly to the more than 90 % high literacy and numeracy rates recorded by Zimbabwe over the years.

### **12.2.2 Broadening Access to Education Services/Education for All**

The principals all agreed that private colleges have contributed positively and significantly to the policies of compulsory primary education, adult education and education for all adopted by the black majority government in 1980. These policies witnessed a quadrupled demand for education in Zimbabwe between 1980 and 2000. However, owing to budgetary constraints, government failed to provide adequate school infrastructure to accommodate the increasing numbers. Private colleges have played a critical and significant positive contribution to absorb the increasing numbers of learners willing to pursue education at all levels in Zimbabwe.

The principals also revealed that private colleges have helped accommodate all those willing learners who were disadvantaged by the war of liberation. Private colleges provided this critical group of learners with a chance to fulfill their dreams and access meaningful educational services in independent Zimbabwe. All the learners interviewed agreed that private colleges have contributed greatly to the education system in Zimbabwe through broadening access to education services especially at

secondary school level, where the government is constrained by limited resources to provide adequate schools to meet the ever increasing demand.

### **12.2.3 Full Localisation of O-Level and A-Level Examinations**

The administrative staff members also said that private colleges contributed meaningfully to the success of full localization of examinations at Ordinary Level in Zimbabwe in 1995 and the full localization of Advanced Level examinations in 2003. The private colleges embraced the ZIMSEC curriculum in full and are practically implementing it with 100% being examination centres for ZIMSEC examinations. The administrative staff revealed that private colleges have adopted a typical business approach to education in Zimbabwe, battling to provide quality education services as well as creating employment.

### **12.2.4 Education for Liberation Struggle Stalwarts**

100% of the education experts interviewed went down memory lane, back to the pre-independence era and revealed that private education contributed greatly to the education of liberation struggle stalwarts like eminent political and civic leaders and many others who were forced to pursue their studies in custody under the bondage of the racist Ian Smith colonial regime.

Church missionary educationists like Father Emmanuel Ribeiro helped many liberation war heroes, acquire vital education while in prison, risking his life to link up with private colleges to influence access to education materials. This group of liberation war stalwarts form the basis and foundation of what is to date the highest levels of political leadership in Zimbabwe. The education experts say that after independence private colleges provided access to adult education especially for those learners who were disadvantaged by the liberation struggle.

### **12.2.5 Employment Creation for Teachers**

90% of teachers interviewed said private colleges contribute to meaningful employment for teachers as well as providing a new form of education in Zimbabwe. The issue of flexibility was topical as teachers said private colleges were always agreeable to be used only for examination purposes by parents /guardians who cannot afford fees at formal government schools. Private colleges have a strict business approach, they chase away learners who fail to pay school fees ensuring that parents/guardians were responsible to fully support the learners. Only paid up learners are allowed to have access to education services at private colleges.

### **12.2.6 Healthy Competition to Formal Schools**

Majority of parents/guardians interviewed agreed that private colleges offer an important and refreshing alternative in terms of access to education services. They say private colleges offer healthy competition to the formal schools which are jacked off their slumber to be motivated to perform better and achieve positive results.

### **12.2.7 Improvement in education standards**

If private colleges did not exist in the education system, formal schools would be enjoying a monopoly without motivation to improve on their standards. Critical personnel like teachers can make choices and benchmark for the improvement of standards and quality in education. There is room for comparison between the two forms of education, which helps to improve on pass rates, standards and quality. 90 % of the parents/guardians agreed that the new STEAM/STEM-driven education curriculum crafted for primary and secondary education under Minister Dr Lazarus Dokora, can witness wider practical implementation with the involvement of private colleges.

### **12.2.8 More Examination Centres**

Private colleges operate as examination centres allowing even learners who are not enrolled with them to sit for national examinations usually in June and/or in November and December every year.

### **12.2.9 Support for Gender Equality**

The majority of learners agreed and commended private colleges for being gender sensitive by taking on board both female and male learners as they come and providing the ideal infrastructure for co-educational teaching and learning.

## **12.3 Challenges faced by the private colleges**

### **12.3.1 Lack of Financial Resources**

100% of the principals interviewed agreed that private colleges are negatively affected by lack of human, financial and material resources in the effort to achieve effectiveness and efficiency in teaching and learning.

The majority of teachers interviewed agreed that private colleges were mostly consistent in paying teachers to ensure continuous attendance to duty, but were not very consistent in providing requisite material resources for effective and efficient teaching and learning processes.



### **12.3.2 Lack of Material Resources**

Key resources like textbooks, library facilities, computers, internet connectivity, printing and photocopying machinery, high flying teachers for every subject including technical subjects and land for expansion purposes are major challenges to private colleges. Inadequate water and electricity supplies are also major challenges negatively affecting teaching and learning processes. The majority of these challenges are requisite factors and conditions for approval to set up and operate private colleges in Zimbabwe.

100% of administrative staff interviewed agreed that private colleges were negatively affected by lack of adequate resources, human, financial and material. Stakeholders' expectations were high that private colleges must have the best classrooms, furniture, computers, adequate and latest textbooks, educational infrastructure in terms of buildings, well stocked libraries and generally teaching and learning environments.

### **12.3.3 Lack of Qualified/Trained Human Resources**

80% of the principals agreed that they sometimes resort to using personnel without requisite qualifications because some qualified teachers prefer to be engaged on part-time basis to allow them to keep their permanent jobs in the formal sector.

### **12.3.4 Lack of Loyalty**

Part-time work at private colleges works as added income to the qualified teachers. Teachers employed on part-time basis cause problems of failing to report for duty regularly and on time, negatively affecting time for the core business of teaching and learning. Degreed university products with non-teaching degrees have become an important asset to private schools but they can abandon ship as soon as they get employment related for their field of study especially if they are recruited on short-term contract basis.

### **12.3.5 Infrastructure Ownership**

Owners of the private colleges sometimes do not own the infrastructure used by the private colleges. When they fail to pay rentals, when owners of the infrastructure raise rentals or when the owners feel they need to change use of the infrastructure for business reasons, the core business of teaching and learning is heavily and negatively affected. To make matters worse learners' parents/guardians will have paid the requisite fees for a particular month or term and it becomes difficult to manage the situation. The owners of the private college may not even bother to come and explain the situation to the valued stakeholders (learners and parents/guardians). Lack of

adequate support from the government, in terms of human, financial and material resources, in an environment where the government is also seriously affected by financial limitations in the face of highly competing needs.

### **12.3.6 Electricity and Water Shortages**

Lack of adequate water and electricity supplies has hampered all efforts to fulfil stakeholders' expectations.

### **12.3.7 Criticism**

100% of the education experts interviewed agreed that private colleges are always operating under pressure to perform better than their counterparts in the formal system. Everything that happens in the private colleges is under serious scrutiny and always compared against the activities in the formal system. Teacher-learner ratio, pass rates, human and material resources, financial management systems, teaching and learning methodologies and standards, supervision, assessments, evaluation, measurement and staff development programmes are always measured against what obtains in the formal sector. The three teacher labour unions are also putting pressure on the personnel working in private colleges battling and jostling for membership, in some instances affecting teaching and learning processes.

### **12.3.8 Curriculum Challenges**

Implementation of the national curriculum developed under the auspices of the government vis-à-vis the demands of the owners and other stakeholders especially well to do parents/guardians always poses challenges for private colleges.

### **12.3.9 Lack of Education Management Expertise**

90% of the teachers interviewed agreed that most of the owners of private colleges are wealthy business persons who are not necessarily educationists. These business persons are driven by the idea to make money, profiteering sometimes at the expense of qualitative, effective and efficient teaching and learning processes.

Teachers revealed that some money unnecessarily gets misdirected to other business interests like farming with serious negative consequences on the quality of education. Sometimes there were no clear-cut policies, rules and regulations to guide operations. Lack of educational planning strategies and organizational development plans pose challenges to the delivery of quality education. Lack of proper school development committees means parents/guardians issues are haphazardly dealt with,

as a result uniform policies for strategic direction exist. Strict following of the dictates of the Education Act (1987) is heavily compromised.

#### **12.3.10 Profit-making/Business Approach**

100% of the parents/guardians interviewed agreed that private colleges lack the will power to provide adequate material resources for enhancing qualitative education. They get negatively affected by too much focus on profit making at the expense of the core business of teaching and learning processes, achieving high pass rates and producing high calibre products for industry and national development. Private colleges are negatively affected by the failure to create a typical school culture and environment, where lifelong survival skills are learnt and developed, embedded within the educational processes. Shoe-string budgets result in lack of adequate resources for effective and efficient teaching and learning processes.

#### **12.3.11 Less Attention to Extra-Curricula Activities**

100% of the learners interviewed agreed that private colleges lack the typical school environment where activities other than academic work obtain. Sporting activities, music, dance, debates, agricultural and cultural issues were not given prominence at private colleges. Owners of the private colleges view these activities as cost centres which interfere with the efforts of profit-making. Private colleges lack adequate space for playing and all other recreational activities, especially when infrastructure is rented for education purposes. This negatively affects the provision, teaching and learning of life skills to the learners.

### **12.4 What factors influence drop-outs in the private colleges?**

#### **12.4.1 Poor socio-economic status**

100% of the principals interviewed agreed that dropouts are caused by lack of adequate incomes for consistent payment of fees. Children of those parents/guardians who come from low income or poor socio-economic backgrounds have the highest drop-out rates because of failure to pay the requisite fees. Private college owners have adopted a profit-making/business approach and they do not accommodate the pleas from the low income groups. Parents/guardians who enroll their children while in sound employment but get negatively affected by the harsh economic challenges, fail to receive regular salaries or even get retrenched, will always be forced to have the learners dropping out of the private colleges.

#### **12.4.2 Teenage Pregnancies**

The majority of administrative staff interviewed agreed that lack of adequate money to pay school fees influences dropouts from private colleges. High unemployment situation in Zimbabwe is a major influencing factor on dropouts from private schools. However, efforts are being made to reduce cases of pregnancies through massive awareness campaigns by pro-women non-governmental organizations and their massive counseling messages. The National AIDS Council and Ministry of Health and Child Care are also carried out massive campaigns promoting contraceptives and public health.

#### **12.4.3 Unplanned Fee Hikes**

100% of the education experts revealed that when parents/guardians are frustrated at private colleges especially through unplanned fee hikes, they react by withdrawing their children, even going to the neighbouring private college or going back to the formal schools. Learners, especially those studying for one or two subjects easily drop-out when they fail national examinations.

#### **12.4.4 Poor Academic Performance/Examination Failure**

100% of the teachers interviewed agreed that lack of school fees and failure in national examinations influence drop-outs in private colleges. The economic environment fraught with high unemployment has influenced dropouts at private colleges, as parents/guardians fail to pay school fees.

#### **12.4.5 Loss of Best Performing Teacher**

The majority of learners interviewed said change of teachers in the subjects can influence dropouts in private colleges. Private colleges are notorious for identifying the best teachers and luring them to their colleges and where these high performers leave learners. Dropouts can occur if the losing college is not proactive in finding a replacement quickly. Mathematics and Science teachers tend to be the most nomadic. Most learners also agreed that failure to pay school fees by parents/guardians as well as failure in national examinations can influence learners to dropout of private colleges.

#### **12.4.6 Relationship between the Private Colleges and the Parents/Guardians**

100% of principals interviewed agreed that relations with parents/guardians were cordial because they are treated using a business oriented approach. They say the customer is king approach prevails. Parents/guardians however, are not usually represented by a group or committee like in formal government schools. The

parents/guardians come in their individual capacities but their concerns are promptly addressed. The majority of administrative staff interviewed agreed that relations with parents/guardians remain cordial when nothing bad happens. The slightest of mishaps like a breakdown of regular transport for the learners will always cause unpleasant outcry from parents/guardians, some of whom will be quick to throw accusations about misuse of funds or poor management.

100% of the education experts say lack of committee representation at private colleges causes problems of communication and poor management of information critical for the smooth running of the educational institutions. Some parents/guardians were forced to grievances or complaints because they lack adequate information about what is happening at the private colleges.

100% of the teachers interviewed agreed that relations with parents/guardians were good as they regularly interact with them on the progress or concerns about the learners.

### **13. Discussion of Findings**

#### **13.1 Is the location of the private colleges conducive for effective teaching and learning?**

The case study revealed that most private colleges are located in residential areas especially high and middle density suburbs of Zimbabwe's capital, Harare. However, there are some private colleges that are located in the central business district and outskirts of the city centre specifically in industrial areas. The premises for private colleges are normally approved by local government authorities and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education as conducive for the establishment and operation of private colleges. Kuenne (2010), in "Private Education and Entrepreneurship in East Africa." A Case Study of private schools in Kibera, argues that the ideal location for private colleges in order to achieve effectiveness in teaching and learning, should be away from heavy industrial sites to ensure safety and security of learners. The noise, chemical emission, industrial vehicles, heavy duty and multi-task machinery all have negative effects on environment for effective teaching and learning.

Private colleges should be located away from night clubs and beer halls, huge food storage tanks, electricity generation plants, water treatment and sewerage plants. Peterson (2006), in "Quality Education, the Role of the Teacher", reveals local government regulations and by-laws designate areas for land use in urban areas and there is land allocated for educational institutions in line with local government plans and regulations. Freire (2009), in "Ideal Private Colleges and the Right Environment", says private colleges must not be isolated from key social and economic facilities like

health care centres, business and shopping complexes and efficient water, sanitary and electricity supplies. Boateng (2012), in “Private Schools and Conducive Environment for Education”, emphasizes the important effective transport network, water, power and energy networks and internet connectivity in establishing a private college conducive for effective teaching and learning. Conducive location for effective teaching and learning also involves the buildings and all education infrastructure, as well as the distance which learners have to travel to and from the private colleges. Schaenen (2014), says this has a direct impact on the time allocated to every subject, every day, every week and every month and per annum.

### **13.2 Is the curriculum offered by private colleges comparable to that offered by mainstream schools?**

The case study revealed that private colleges followed the curriculum approved by the Government through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. However, 90 % of the private colleges under this study offer other curriculum aspects outside the national curriculum such as the University of Cambridge curriculum and Hexco curriculum. 100% of the colleges said they do not teach culture, heritage and national history. In addition, the study shows there is heavy concentration on academic subjects at private colleges. Learners pay per subject and they have more flexibility to choose the subjects they want to study.

Oxford Royale Academy (2012), argues that in the modern world both academic and co-curricular activities are important in preparing learners practically for the future. Life survival skills in line with the interests and passion of the learners lay a strong basis for a strong and more meaningful future. Andrews (2013) in “Production of Learners of Integrity and Innovation”, says learners should be given the best opportunities to shape their future.

Schaenen (2013), argues that technical and vocational subjects like woodwork, food and nutrition, art and agriculture are vital for producing learners who will not be slaves of the formal employment system. Ann-Barge (2015), argues that co-curricula activities in the form of clubs in debate, technology and web-designing, all other subject clubs, ensure the teaching of practical life survival skills like time management as well as developing talents, interests and passions for the learners. The study shows that most private colleges do not avail sporting equipment and they show low support to such activities. Furthermore, they do not support practical subjects. This indicates that private colleges in Harare province are less keen on co-curricular activities like clubs and academic competitions. Teaching of language, culture as well as sport and music are not given prominence.

### **13.3 Do the private colleges avail adequate resources to learners for effective and efficient teaching and learning?**

The study shows that private colleges are negatively affected by limited financial resources in the effort to avail adequate resources to learners for effective and efficient teaching and learning. Lack of adequate land and space are other impediments to the provision of adequate resources to learners for effective and efficient teaching and learning. However, private colleges under study show that they are able to allocate adequate time for all subjects per day, per week, per month and annually, to enhance effective and efficient teaching and learning. Nziramasanga (2001), argues that time is an important resource in the field of education. Time must be well managed through clear-cut time-tables that are used with strict discipline and effective and efficient supervision, to ensure every subject is allocated adequate time to the maximum benefit of the learner. Every subject Swartz (2013), argues that learning media, instruments, ideal infrastructure including classrooms, laboratories, libraries, computers, health, water and sanitary facilities as well as qualified teachers are vital resources that must be adequately availed to learners for effective teaching and learning. Mabodile (2001), emphasizes the importance of investing teacher development as a pre-requisite for effective teaching and learning.

UNICEF (2013), has highlighted the importance having qualified teachers, instructional materials like textbooks, inspection and supervision personnel and the right techniques for inspection and supervision and conducive working conditions. Koper (1998), argues that the human resources aspect in terms of well-trained teachers is key to effective teaching and learning. Lewis (2007), while safety and security are paramount at private colleges, supervision of instruction through ideal methods and techniques, helps to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning. Ideal resources for planning, scheming, report writing and staff development programmes are key for success in teaching and learning.

### **13.4 Do the private colleges employ properly qualified teachers for all the subjects?**

The study shows private colleges employ unqualified staff that includes those who recently finished their 'A' level and those who have a degree in another field that is not education. This can be attributed to Education entrepreneurs who are accused of taking purely business approach with a thrust of lowering costs, in their process disturbing plans to recruit qualified teachers for effective and efficient teaching and learning. This is against the view of UNICEF (2013). UNICEF (2013), which has injected millions of dollars in teacher training in Zimbabwe, says investing in the teacher is the best strategy

for ensuring quality education through effective and efficient teaching and learning. On the other hand, principals reported that limited financial resources hindered all efforts to get the best teachers for all subjects even though the will power and plans will be in place.

### **13.5 Are the private colleges making a positive or negative impact to education in Zimbabwe?**

#### **13.5.1 Positive Impact**

##### **A. Academic Performance**

Nziramasanga (2015) argues that private colleges employ low teacher-learner ratios and are able to give maximum attention to learners to maximize on effective and efficient teaching and learning. Provision of exercises, revision sessions, remedial lessons, supervision and feedback provision for both the learner and the teacher are made easier, to influence academic performance positively. Mandaza (1989) and Zvobgo (2001), point out that private colleges use the business approach to get the desired results. Low teacher-learner ratios and the highest concentration on academic work results in high pass rates on small learner numbers as compared to formal schools where there is high teacher-learner ratio and high learner numbers per class.

##### **B. New Form of Education**

Nziramasanga (2015), argues that private colleges have brought a new form of education into the Zimbabwean education system, bringing in more flexibility, purely business approaches and high level thrust on academic subjects. Private colleges accommodate more readily those learners who will have failed to get places in the formal system giving them a chance to fulfill dreams in education.

##### **C. Access to Education for Liberation War Leaders**

Ribeiro (2015) argues that private colleges gave the liberation war heroes and heroines vital education, with which to craft strategies and policies right from the war zones into independent Zimbabwe. The majority of the present top leadership of the President Robert Gabriel Mugabe administration are beneficiaries of private education, which they used fruitfully to address colonial imbalances in Zimbabwe at independence from 1980 to date.

##### **D. Filling the Gaps**

Ncube and Tshabalala (2012), argue that private colleges have come in to help broaden access to education, filling the gaps where the government is constrained by limited financial resources because of highly competing national demands at a time when demand for education is continuously increasing at fast pace. As more and more urban settlements get established, the need for more educational institutions becomes critical.



The government has turned to motivating private players to increase their investments in establishing private colleges to meet the growing demand. The study has shown that private colleges have now established new educational branches in critical high density areas where demand has significantly risen.

#### **E. Promoting Education for All**

Zvobgo (2001) and Mandaza (1989), argue that private colleges have also contributed significantly to enhancing the government policies of adult education, compulsory primary education and education for all. Private colleges have also immensely contributed to the country's status of attaining the highest literacy and numeracy rates in Africa. Thousands of people in Zimbabwe have been able to acquire the requisite five Ordinary Levels, for entry into Advanced Level as well as colleges and apprenticeship training, because of the flexibility of private colleges which allow learners to study for less than five subjects.

#### **F. Promoting Higher and Tertiary Education**

The same can be said for Advanced levels subjects which are a basic entry into universities and colleges as well as critical apprenticeship training in Zimbabwe. There are now 16 universities in Zimbabwe are now filled with learners from both private colleges and the formal schools.

### **13.5.2 Negative Impact**

#### **A. Failure to Promote National Curriculum**

Nziramasanga (2015), however, argues that private colleges have a negative contribution to the education system in Zimbabwe, through their teaching of foreign curriculum, failing to prioritise the national curriculum. Private colleges fail to give prominence to Zimbabwean culture, heritage and national history education. Mafa (2012), says private colleges are doing a dis-service to the country by failing to offer inclusive education, paying no attention to people with disabilities. Ncube and Tshabalala (2012), point out that private colleges have a tendency of focusing on profit-making and entrepreneurship at the expense of quality, effectiveness and efficiency in teaching and learning. Sometimes private colleges go for cost cutting measures that include employing unqualified teachers, in the process compromise education standards and quality.

Therefore, private colleges are making a positive contribution to the education system in Zimbabwe through reaching out to those areas which have great need of education sources specifically the high density areas. However, in their efforts to service the education needs of the population, they face challenges in matching to the

universally accepted standards of a normal school environment while some of the private colleges are motivated by profit.

## **14. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **14.1 Summary of findings**

1. It was discovered that some private colleges are located within sites that are not conducive including the city centres and industrial areas.
2. The findings showed that all private colleges follow the ZIMSEC curriculum, however aspects of culture, heritage and national history are not being taught. In addition, most of the colleges also consider foreign curriculum aspects such as the University of Cambridge in United Kingdom.
3. The research findings also revealed that the majority of teachers that are being employed by private colleges are unqualified for the teaching profession.
4. The findings of the research also show that private colleges do not have challenges in availing resources such as textbooks, water and sanitary facilities and furniture. However, private colleges are facing challenges in providing equipment for practical subjects, computer labs, first aid kits, sporting equipment, adequate and qualified teachers and playing grounds.
5. In addition the research revealed that private colleges are making a positive contribution to the Zimbabwean education system, however they are still facing various challenges in aligning to the required standards of the education system.

### **14.2 Conclusions**

The following conclusions were made from the research:

1. Most private colleges are located within residential areas; however other private colleges are located within industrial areas.
2. Majority of the teachers employed in private colleges are unqualified.
3. All private colleges follow the ZIMSEC curriculum, however aspects of culture, heritage and national history are not being taught
4. Resources that include textbooks, water and sanitary facilities and furniture are made available in all private colleges. However, in most private colleges equipment for practical subjects, computer labs, first aid kits, sporting equipment, adequate and qualified teachers and playing grounds are not being made available.

### 14.3 Recommendations

In consideration of the research conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

1. Education planners should consider ideal planning for conducive location of private colleges.
2. Educational authorities must ensure conformity to education curricula being offered by all schools, including private colleges, in Zimbabwe.
3. Private colleges must realize that investment in teacher development is a pre-requisite for efficient and effective teaching and learning. Therefore they need to make serious efforts to identify and retain the best qualified and the best teachers for every subject.
4. Adequate, regular and expert supervision by principals and school heads should be promoted in all private colleges. This will ensure effectiveness and also satisfactory feedback to be provided.
5. More time should be allocated to the core business of teaching and learning per subject.

### 14.4 Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher recommends that further research should be done on:

1. Contribution of private colleges to the poor in Zimbabwe.
2. Contribution of private colleges to people with disabilities to promote the policy of inclusion in Zimbabwe.

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