



Gate-keeping Manifest in Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

The study undertook to investigate the manifestation of gate-keeping particularly in secondary schools. Phenomenological research design which emphasises the participants' lived experiences was used. Face-to-face as well as focus group interviews were used to gather data. Forty-four (44) third year Bachelor of Education Sociology students constituted the population for this study. Purposive sampling was used to select a sample of 16 participants comprising two secondary school administrators, 12 secondary school teachers and two parents. It emerged from the study that gate-keeping in secondary schools manifests through enrolment cut off entry points, affordable fees, the cultural and sporting domains of the curriculum, learners' connection to influential figures, religious affiliation of the learner, school pass rate and distance. It was recommended that the stakeholders in education can target dealing with gate-keepers to secondary education.

Keywords:

gate-keeping, manifest, secondary school, content

INTRODUCTION

In the realm of education, gate-keeping is a perennial problem. In media circles, it describes how material must travel through a series of check points or gates before reaching the public (Schaefer, 2010). Privileged individuals who control the check points get the chance to manipulate important material before it is accessed. In connection to the view of gate-keeping as a form of manipulation, Harorimana (2013) uses the term gate-keeping to represent a class of individuals who collect information, knowledge and contextualise it before they can share with the rest of the members. Viewed in this light, it can be inferred that gate-keepers withhold, modify and release vital material as they deem fit. In relation to knowledge or learning content, gate-keeping may be conceptualised as “the systematic inclusion or exclusion of certain types of content” (Haralambos et al, 2008). In this sense, content is deliberately bracketed out of the school curriculum in a manner that propels some learners to achieve while others lag behind. Elaborating this view, UNICEF and World Bank (2013) see gate-keeping existing when there is a proportion of learners who are missing out on an aspect of education or in most general sense, a point along a process where there is a constriction or a limitation. Thus gate-keeping in education refers to a situation where a learner misses out or benefits because there is someone or something blocking or facilitating his or her learning. In this regard, gate-keepers make it possible for some learners to achieve as others underachieve. In this study, emphasis is placed on circumstances that stand in the learner's way. How does gate-keeping manifest?

It manifests at all levels of education that is, from early childhood to tertiary. In a study that accounts for gate-keeping at early childhood level, Rist found that kindergarten learners were streamed when they had stayed at the school for only eight days (Haralambos et al, 2008). The criterion that was used to rank the learners was dubious. It emerged from Rist's study that dubious ranking criterion disadvantaged learners who were lowly ranked since subsequent teachers evaluated them on the basis of the comments that were made in previous grades. The study proves that the dubious ranking was a gate-keeper in that it opened the doors to learners who were highly ranked while closing them to the unfortunate ones who were lowly ranked. As learners progress from early childhood to primary, secondary and tertiary levels, gate-keepers which vary in degree affect them. Critical entry points such as Grade 1, Form 1, Form 5 and First year tertiary level are affected by gate-keepers. It is at these aforementioned points where a learner's destiny is shaped.

Gate-keeping became apparent during the colonial era of education. Nherera (2006) argues that the bottleneck system of the formal education system developed for the African population during the colonial period was intended to create mental underachievers. Further, it is argued that the F1 and F2 schools for Africans on one hand were set up to create a pool of vocationally-trained but, semi-skilled

workforce, subservient to white industry (Nherera, 2006). On the other hand, government and elite private schools for the whites, Asians and Coloureds were designed to create an elite, superior class (Nhundu and Makoni, 1999; Zvobgo, 1999; Matsika, 2012). To tighten gate-keeping during the colonial education era, the Ministry of Education in Rhodesia had two secretaries for education under one Minister (Nhundu and Makoni, 1999). The secretary for African education was responsible for the Division of African education, while the Division of European, Asian and Coloured education came under secretary for education.

Statistics show that the serious gate-keepers manifested through the transition rate from primary to secondary education, which was fixed at the rate of not more than 12½% (NAP, 2005). Not more than 37½% of the primary school graduates was channelled to vocationally-oriented junior secondary schools while the remaining 50% were expected to fend for themselves (NAP, 2005). The colonial government was a gate-keeper in that apart from limiting the number of learners who progressed from one level to the next; it deliberately channelled Africans and non-Africans towards different career trajectories. While Africans were trained to play a servitude role (Matsika, 2012), non-Africans were prepared to become masters. In the processes of gate-keeping on racial grounds, the colonial education system fostered two distinct ideologies with respect to non-Africans and Africans. These ideologies are; supremacy for the former (Zvobgo, 1999) and servitude for the latter (Matsika, 2012). Upon attaining independence, it was anticipated that gate keeping would disappear with colonialism. Far from the expectation, gate-keeping did not vanish. It manifested in various forms and degrees just as colonialism continued to haunt the nation after independence was attained.

Gate-keeping in education is more pronounced at secondary school level. In the words of Draxler (1997) “secondary education today seems in many cases to act more as a filter for selecting young people for the further stages of education than as a bridge to adulthood and renewed opportunities”. Concomitantly, the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century identified what it calls; the four pillars of learning (UNESCO, 1997). These include: learning to do, learning to know, learning to be and learning to live together. These four pillars which are grounded in learning throughout a learner's life become crystallised during secondary education. The goals of education revolve around the four pillars of learning. At secondary level of education, careers are chosen (learning to do and to know). Apart from guiding learners towards careers, secondary schools socialise learners so that they fit into their society (learning to be and to live together). It may be inferred that a secondary school that plays a lip service to one of the crucial pillars of learning in a way, becomes a gate-keeper.

Imbued in the four pillars of learning are principles which secondary schools must consider in order to function not as gate-keepers but as bridges to

adulthood. These principles include inter alia: diversification of schooling, learning to respect for diversity, teacher competencies, access to internet connectivity and funding in education (UNESCO, 1997; Okine et al, 2013).

Diversification of schooling entails a more varied offering in terms of the curricula (UNESCO, 1997). It is argued that the means for each individual to find his/her way can be provided by diversifying the path through the formal and non-formal education (UNESCO, 1997). In tune with this twenty-first century principle, the Ministry of Education, Sport, Art and Culture (MOESAC) (2006) designed a two tiered system of education for Zimbabwe. There are two possible paths that secondary school leavers can walk that is, either the academic route or the technical-vocational one. In this light of this education strategy, secondary schools are expected to offer a diversified curriculum. Thus, technical-vocational subjects such as Art, Music, Food science, Technical Drawing, Metal work, Woodwork among others can be offered in conjunction with the academic ones. In the realm of sports, soccer, netball and volleyball which are common in Zimbabwean schools should be offered together with rugby, squash, tennis and hockey that are rare in most schools. The argument is that, a secondary school that excludes certain disciplines from its curriculum stifles the learners who have the potential to excel in the excluded areas. In fact, secondary schools that overlook certain curricula areas become gate-keepers of the areas that they omit.

A secondary school ceases to be a gate-keeper if it teaches learners to respect for diversity. It can be done through learning of the history of one's country and that of others (UNESCO, 1997), learning history of science, learning languages as well as exposure to a curriculum that has an international flavour. In Zimbabwe, policies were crafted to promote the value of respect for diversity. The history of Zimbabwe was declared compulsory at 'O' Level. In the sphere of language, the status of minority languages such as Shangani, Venda, Nambia and Tonga was elevated to an extent that they are examinable at Grade 7 (MoESAC, 2006) while the first two are offered at university level (GZU, 2012). In this light, secondary schools should offer diverse languages in order to inculcate in learners a culture of respect for diversity. With the topical look east policy in the government, the Chinese language could be brought on board so that Zimbabweans can comfortably communicate and trade in China and other eastern countries.

Teacher competencies in secondary schools largely determine the quality of the graduates that are churned out. UNESCO (1997) observes that secondary schools need excellent teachers in order to execute their mandate. By excellent teachers (UNESCO, 1997), it is referred to well trained, dedicated and respected staff. These could be teachers who are comfortable with modern technology who in their day to day duties orient learners towards inescapable modern technology. Level of teacher competency determines the success of learners. This

explains why learners at one secondary school out-perform their counterparts from another. A secondary school has to continually review the roles that teachers play in order to build a team of staff that bridges learners, preparing them for subsequent stages rather than hindering them.

Apart from teacher competencies, access to internet connectivity is regarded as the major bottleneck to the adoption of technology-enabled education which significantly propels learners' success (Okine et al, 2013). Why is lack of internet connectivity a major gatekeeper? The answer to this question is twofold. First, the world in which we are living is technological let alone computerised (Zhao, 2009). Second, access to internet connectivity is the life-blood of the world's knowledge economy (Okine et al, 2013). It is the mandate of secondary schools to assist young people not only to connect learners to the current source of knowledge (the internet) but also to prepare them to function in a technology-driven world. In other words, secondary schools that are not yet connected to the internet or that have no plans to do so are major gate-keepers in the education system of today because their graduates may not match their counterparts from technologically equipped school.

The necessity of funding in secondary schools cannot be over emphasised. Funds are needed to keep secondary schools in touch with new technologies and to reach the marginalised (UNESCO, 1997). What is suggested is that school management is obliged to be innovative. It is envisaged that secondary schools should link with local and international donors. External funding that secondary schools source may go a long way in; cushioning orphans and vulnerable learners, procuring equipment that helps a school to access internet connectivity and improving school infrastructure. A secondary school that lacks funding becomes a gate-keeper. For instance, orphans and vulnerable learners who fail to get educational funding are less likely to achieve in education and consequently in life. A secondary school can bridge learners by sourcing funds for their education.

Gate-keeping can be effectively minimised. UNICEF and the World Bank (2013) devised a model known as the Simulations for Equity in Education (SEE) which is designed to reduce exclusion through risk-group targeting and cost-effective interventions. Preliminary results and insights from Ghana (UNICEF and World Bank, 2013) revealed that targeting special services to the marginalised rather than the general learner population can greatly enhance the cost-effectiveness of interventions and improve equity at the same time. In an exploration of a kindergarten provision, it emerged that targeting interventions to reach the poorest learners resulted in fourfold improvement in results. The results from Ghana also affirmed that a pro-equity focus could lead to more improvements in learning and lower costs compared to business as usual (UNICEF and World Bank, 2013). It turned out that greater gains in attainment were made by focussing efforts more on remedial teaching with few remedial teachers for the lowest performers than with many pre-service trained teachers teaching

already performing general learner population (UNICEF and World Bank, 2013). Drawing from the insights from the SEE model piloted in Ghana, Gate-keepers to secondary education can be effectively minimised. Typical gate-keepers include: school entry, survival rates or gaps in quality and learning (UNICEF and UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2011; Lewin, 2007).

Statement of the problem

The study undertook to investigate the manifestation of gate keeping in secondary schools in Zimbabwe.

Research question

In an attempt to address the above problem the study sought to answer the following questions:

- In what way does gate-keeping manifest in secondary schools in Zimbabwe?
- How can gate-keeping be dealt with in secondary schools in Zimbabwe?

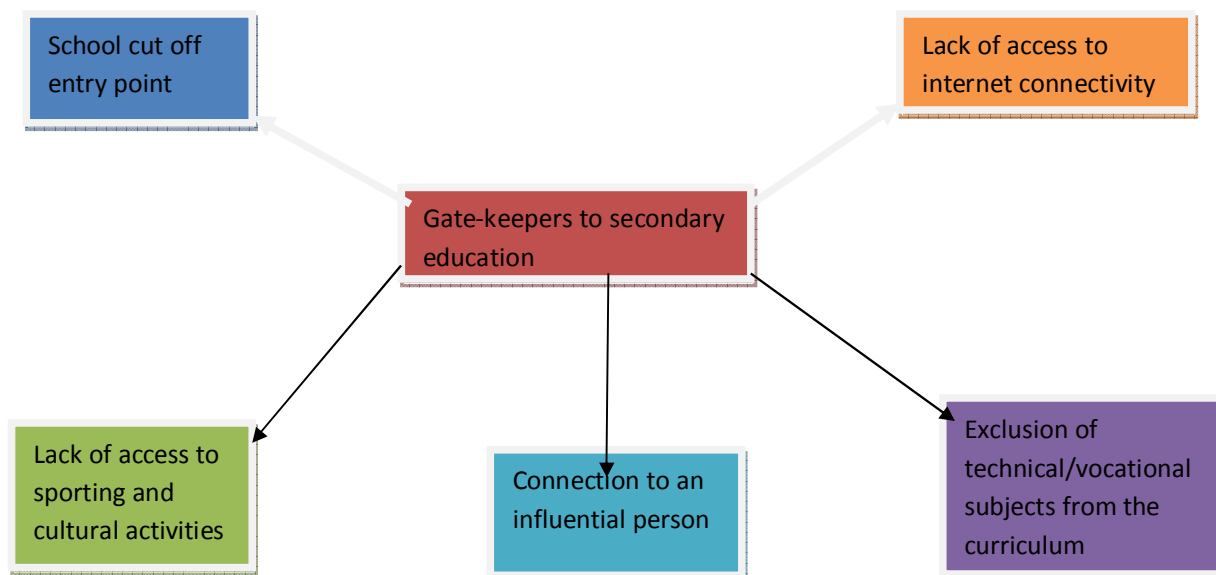
Conceptual framework on gate-keeping in education

The paper is underpinned in Charles Wright Mills' (1956, 2000b) power elite model. Mills describes the power elite as a small group of military, industrial and government leaders who controlled the fate of the masses by virtue of the command posts that they hold (Shaefer, 2010; Haralambos et al, 2008). At the top of the pyramid of the power elite model are corporate rich leaders of the executive branch of government and heads of military (Shaefer, 2010). Local opinion leaders, members of the legislative branch of government and leaders of the special-interest groups are found directly below the top power elites. At the bottom of the pyramid lie unorganised, exploited

masses (Shaefer, 2010). Mills observes that the wishes and interests of the power elite are followed by the individuals. The power elite control society's institutions where they act as gatekeepers. In the sphere of media they control what is being presented (Shaefer, 2010). In the realm of education, the power elite include or exclude certain types of content (Haralambos et al, 2008). In the area of research for example, the power elite decide whether or not researchers are able to carry out their research (Haralambos et al, 2008). Government can be hostile to researches that attack their policies or which advocate an agenda different from their own (Giddens, 2009). Many gatekeepers to research exist in countries. Researchers have to seek permission from the National, provincial, district education offices and finally from the school heads before they carry out their studies. Learners encounter gate-keeping as they enter strategic phases of secondary school education.

Gate-keeping is related to the concept 'social closure' which refers to a situation in which multiple deprivations prevent individuals from participating in important areas of society's activities (Haralambos et al, 2008). Viewed in this light the socially excluded may find it difficult to find work, attend reputable secondary schools or actively participate in society's politics. In essence, a secondary school that excludes certain subjects, sporting or cultural activities from their curriculum prevents learners from acquiring the necessary knowledge they deserve. Secondary schools that excel in sciences produce medical personnel while those that do not act as gatekeepers in that field. The essence of the power elite model is that a small group of individuals, who wield power in institutions of society, exercise it to open the gates to secondary to certain privileged learners while closing them to the unfortunate ones. The diagram below summarises some of the gate-keepers to secondary education.

Figure 1: Gate-keepers to secondary education



The schematic view of gate-keeping depicted in the diagram above shows that school cut off entry point, lack of access to internet connectivity, lack of access to sporting and cultural activities, connection to an influential person as well as exclusion of technical/vocational subjects from the curriculum inter alia; propel some learners to achieve highly while others struggle. Administrators, teachers and parents who interact with secondary schools encounter these gate-keepers to secondary education. There is need for school authorities among other things; to monitor these aforementioned gate-keepers to education.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study adopted a qualitative research design which is particularly phenomenological. Phenomenology is a study of the lived, human phenomena within everyday social contexts in which phenomena occur from the perspective of those who experience them (Denscombe, 2010; Gray, 2011; Cohen et al, 2011).

Participants' views are critical in phenomenological research since they constitute the data. The thrust of phenomenological research lies in its ability to tease out what the participants think and how they behave (David and Sutton, 2004). In the words of Gray (2011), "phenomenology becomes an exploration, via personal experience, of prevailing cultural understandings". Thus, the human experience of the life-world is examined. In the context of this study, the human experience of the manifestation of gate-keeping in secondary schools was explored from the point of view of school administrators, teachers and parents.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study consisted of 44 third year in-service students doing Bachelor of Education Sociology degree programme (B.Ed Soc) at one university in Zimbabwe. These students were drawn from various primary and secondary schools in Zimbabwe where they held varying portfolios as school administrators and teachers. The table below depicts the population and sample by primary and secondary sectors.

Table 1: Population and sample by primary and secondary sector

Participants in the secondary sector	Population	Sample	Participants in the primary sector	Population	Sample
Administrators	2	2	Administrators	0	0
Teachers	16	12	Teachers	24	0
Parents	0	0	Parents	2	2
Total	18	14	Total	26	2

Out of the 44 participants 18 were in the secondary sector while 26 were in the primary. Out of the 18 participants in the secondary sector, a sample of 14 comprising two administrators 12 teachers was purposively chosen. These were key sources of information pertaining to the manifestation of gate-keeping in secondary schools. Out of the remaining 26 participants in the primary sector, two participants who had children learning in secondary schools were conveniently chosen to participate as parents in this study. Thus a sample of 16 participants consisting of two administrators, 14 teachers and two parents was selected. It became convenient for the researcher to select a sample from such a diverse group. Participants registered their consent by affixing their signatures on consent forms. Their names were not disclosed. Thus anonymity was guaranteed. Assurance was given to the participants that the data they gave was going to be used only for research purposes. The researcher had a personal interest in this self-sponsored study.

Instrumentation

Interviews are "planned conversations between two parties during which questions are asked and answers are supplied" (Fielding, 2003). It must be noted that interviews can take various forms and the responses

are in oral form. For this study, the researcher used face-to-face interviews with two administrators and two parents while focus group interviews were done with 12 secondary school teachers. Interviews were preferred because they permitted the researcher to probe for detail and clarity of responses during the research process (Cohen et al, 2011). Furthermore, Interviews were effective since this research aroused feelings, actions, attitudes and emotions of the respondents with regards to the manifestation of gate keeping in secondary schools. Prior appointments were made before the participants were interviewed. To avoid interference with the lectures, the researcher conducted interviews when the participants were free.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Two administrators, twelve teachers and two parents who participated in this study had interesting views on manifestation of gate-keeping in secondary schools. They all agreed that the general enrolment criterion for Form 1 and Form 5 learners was their Grade 7 and 'O' level performance respectively. However, the differences in schools cut off points exclude some learners from secondary education. Regarding the cut off points for enrolment, 1(50%) administrator who was interviewed had this to say,

Our cut off entry requirement for this year is ten units or better at Grade 7 and at least five 'O' level passes in grade 'A' category. However, the cut off entry points depend on learners' performance in a particular year.

While another 1(50%) indicated that the cut off entry points for his school stood at 14 units or better and at least three 'O' level passes in Grade 'A' category for Forms 1 and 5 respectively. The result reveals that cut off entry points give schools justification for excluding some learners from school. Learners who pass with grades lower than the set cut off entry points are left out. In this case, an administrator stands as chief knowledge officer (type of a gate-keeper) who has the power to control the social distribution of knowledge (Harorimana, 2013). In that regard, learners who perform below the set cut off point are forced to opt for

schools with lower standards. During the colonial era, the cut off entry points were based on race. Only 121/2% of Africans was allowed to proceed to secondary level of education (NAP, 2005) while the rest were channelled towards inferior vocational schools which trained them to be servants (Matsika, 2012). The same bottleneck exists today in form of cut off entry points. Thus gate-keeping is manifest in secondary schools. The gate-keepers in education differ from the ones in business organisations in that while those in business organisations are human agents who bring about organisational efficiency by managing business knowledge (Harorimana, 2013), the gate-keepers in education are both human and non-human agents which tend to limit learners' endeavours to learn.

In investigating factors that influence the enrolment criteria, participants were interviewed had their responses summarised in the table below.

Table 1: Participants' responses on enrolment criteria

Possible criterion	Administrators		Teachers		Parents	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Which of the following criteria is used at your school?						
Learners mid-year Grade7/ 'O' level results	0	2	0	12	0	2
Learners end of year Grade7/ 'O' level results	2	0	12	0	2	0
Learners' sporting prowess	0	0	6	6	2	0
Parents' ability to pay fees	0	1	4	8	2	0
Learner's connection to an influential person	0	0	6	6	2	0
Learner's relationship to school staff	0	0	10	2	2	0

As depicted in table1 above, 6 (50%) teachers reported that learners who had sporting prowess or links with influential people were enrolled. Ten (10) (83.3%) teachers indicated that a learner's connection to a staff member increased his/her enrolment chances while 4 (33.3%) revealed that parents' ability to pay fees mattered in schools enrolment. When asked to indicate other enrolment criteria, 1 (50%) parent confirmed that church owned schools demanded baptismal certificates as an additional requirement for enrolment into secondary education. This result confirms the findings by Haralambos et al (2008) that a form of exclusion occurs in secondary schools where certain type of content or learners can be left out or included. It can be inferred from the above result that certain learners get excluded from secondary education on the basis of their religious affiliation or cut off grades. In essence, the learners are denied entry into secondary education due to factors other than academic performance. Thus the enrolment criteria applied by various secondary schools are gate-keepers that close the secondary

school gates for some learners while opening them to others.

All participants agreed that factors such as school pass rate, teacher competency, adequate learning facilities, affordable fees and accessibility attracted learners to various secondary schools. One (1) (50%) said, *as a parent, one would want to send his child to a school with competent staff, adequate facilities and good pass rate*. UNICEF and World Bank (2013) confirm that the aforementioned factors are typical gate-keepers to secondary education. These factors largely vary in schools resulting in severe scramble for secondary school places. The absence or inadequacy of the aforementioned factors limits school enrolment. Thus some learners never find their way into competent schools due the aforementioned gate-keepers.

In the realm of sports, administrators and teachers were asked indicate whether games that were associated by the non-Africans during the colonial era were now accessible to all learners. Their responses are summarised in table 2 below.

Table 2: Administrators and teachers responses on gate-keepers in sports

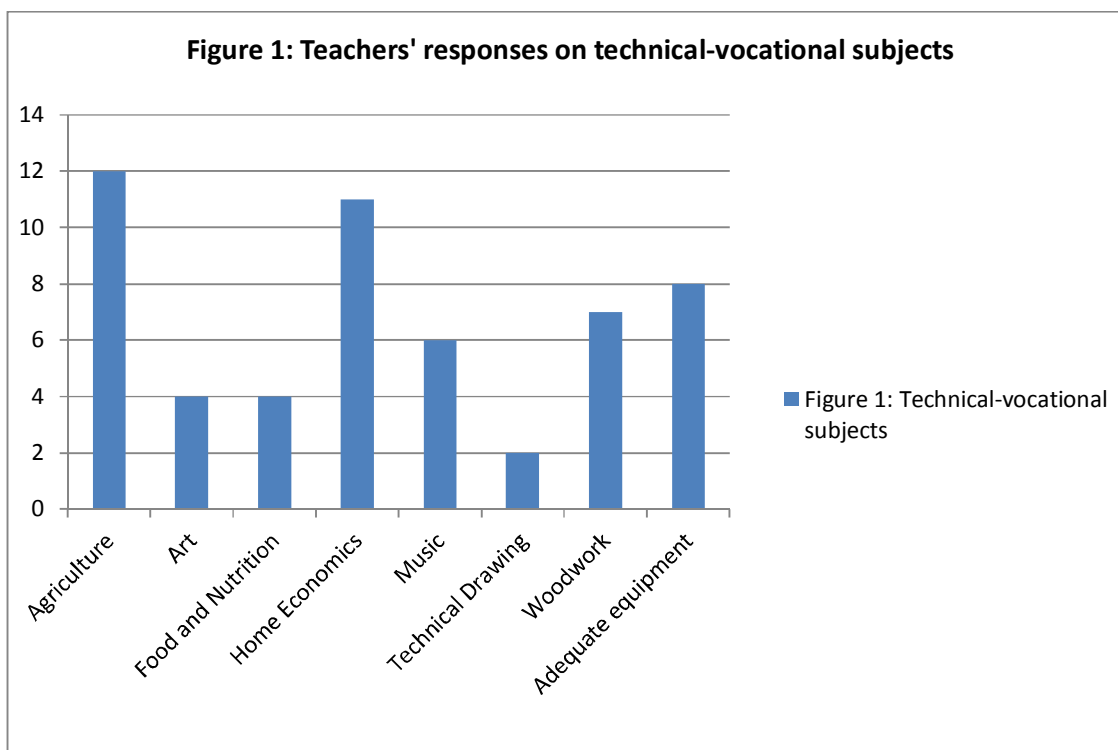
Games	Administrators		Teachers	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Which of the following games are offered at your school?				
Rugby	0	2	1	11
Swimming	0	2	2	10
Hockey	0	2	1	11
Cricket	0	2	1	11
Tennis	0	2	3	9

All the administrators 2 (100%) indicated that games such as rugby, tennis, swimming, hockey and cricket among others were not part of their curriculum. One (1) (0.08%) teacher indicated that his school offered rugby while the same number revealed that she offered cricket and hockey. Three (3) (25%) teachers confirmed that they offered tennis while 2 (16.7%) indicated that they offered swimming. The importance of sports to secondary education has been echoed by UNESCO's (1997) Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century which observed that sporting activities are one of the pillars of secondary school education where learners learn to do. In proposing his multiple intelligence theory, Gardner (2006) argues that learners show excellence in various areas which include: linguistic, spatial, musical, logico-mathematical, kinaesthetic, interpersonal or intrapersonal. Of necessity in secondary schools are all the domains identified by Gardener (2006). The curriculum needs to appeal to all areas of intelligence.

The point is that schools that do not offer some sporting activities restrict learners' kinaesthetic potential to execute them.

Turning to the cultural domain, 2 (100%) administrators indicated that drama, public speaking and poetry were popular in their schools. The same result was confirmed by 9 (75%) teachers. Five (5) (%) teachers confirmed that they did traditional dance in their schools. The result tallies with the government's emphasis on culture. The Ministry of Education, Sport, Art and Culture (MoESAC, 2004) crafted a culture policy which guides schools on how to provide for culture in schools. In connection, Great Zimbabwe University was established and mandated to preserve and impart cultural heritage (GZU, 2012). Secondary schools are expected to promote culture.

Regarding technical-vocational subjects, teachers indicated the ones offered at their respective secondary schools as shown in the figure 1 below.



Six (6) (50%) teachers revealed that they offered Music, 4 (33.3%) offered Art while the same number indicated that they offered Food and Nutrition. Eleven (11) (91.7%) offered Home Economics, 2 (16.7%) offered Technical Drawing while 7(58.3%) offered Woodwork. All the teachers 12 (100%) indicated that they offered Agriculture. Four (4) (33.3%) teachers revealed that their schools lacked adequate equipment for the technical/vocational subjects which they claimed to offer. This result dovetails with the findings by UNESCO (1997) that secondary education has four pillars (learning to do, learning to know, learning to be and learning to live together) which build it up. Gate-

keeping becomes pronounced where technical/vocational subjects are not at the full disposal of learners. Secondary schools that sideline technical/vocational subjects restrict learning. Thus they become gate-keepers.

All the administrators 2 (100%) and 4 (33.3%) teachers indicated that their schools did not have internet connectivity whatsoever. One (1) (0.08%) teacher emotionally said,

In my case, I teach at a school located at the back of beyond where network hardly reaches. The community is so poor that it struggles to

secure food let alone raise school fees. To talk about technology is a dream unless good Samaritans come to our rescue.

The teacher's sentiments revealed that there are learners who out of touch with the technology whatever form. Out of the eight teachers who had access to internet, 2 (16.7%) indicated that they personally had it through personal computers while 6 (50%) revealed that they had access to internet via personal smart phones. A study carried out by Okine et al (2013) revealed that access to a computer is the life-blood of the world's economy. The trend in the world is toward computerisation (Zhao, 2009). Schools are obliged to offer computer-related studies to all learners. In this regard, secondary schools that are far from using computers for learning are gate-keepers.

In the area of linguistic diversity, secondary schools are excluding some learners from the curriculum. Two (2) (100%) administrators and 11 (91.7%) teachers indicated that their schools exposed multicultural learners to one local language. Exposure of diverse learners to one local language contradicts the finding by UNESCO (1997) that one of the principles of education is the respect for diversity. It is a fact that Zimbabwe is linguistically diverse (COPAC, 2013). That being the case, learners should be exposed to diverse languages. In Zimbabwe, English is offered as an international and only official language. This should be altered to accommodate the Chinese and Indian languages where the current government economic policy is based.

All the participants agreed that gate-keeping can be effectively dealt with if the government closely monitors gate-keeping avenues. Two (2) (100%) parents felt that enrolment in secondary schools should not be based on factors other than performance. UNICEF and World Bank (2013) found that the Simulations for Equity in Education model can effectively reduce gate-keeping. Interventions that effectively reduce gate-keeping can be identified, implemented and evaluated. Viewed in this light, gate-keeping is a reality secondary schools are facing. It is calling for attention.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The study recommended that:

- Gate-keepers to secondary education should be urgently targeted and removed. These include: enrolment criteria, exclusion of content manifesting through technical/vocational subjects, games, cultural activities and access to internet. Enrolment criteria other than performance should be banned so as to ensure that all learners proceed to secondary education and beyond. The curriculum should be widened to include technical/vocational subjects, games, cultural activities and computer skill. If these recommendations are observed learners can fit into the twenty-first century.

- Stakeholders drawn from various fields should be lobbied to address the aforesaid gate-keepers to secondary education and other levels.
- Thorough research should be carried out on the severity of gate-keeping in secondary schools.

The study revealed that gate-keeping in secondary schools manifested through entry points, fees structure, links with the influential figures, school pass rates, learners' religious affiliation as well as the cultural and sporting domains of the school curriculum. The term gate-keeping is conceptualised as a proportion of learners who are missing out on an aspect of education or in most general sense, a point along a process where there is a constriction or a limitation (UNICEF and World Bank, 2013). Cut off entry points, exclusion of subjects or content, games, cultural activities and essential twenty-first century skills embedded in computer technology were found to be among other gate-keepers to education. Urgent measures need to be put in place to address gate-keeping.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR ADMINISTRATORS

This interview seeks to solicit information pertaining to the manifestation of gate-keeping in secondary schools. Your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality in compliance with the research ethics and no one will be identified or traced from this investigation. Please answer the questions as fully as possible. Thank you very much for your willingness to participate in this study.

Entry specifications for Form 1

1. Briefly highlight the selection criteria for Form 1 learners at your school
2. When do you enrol Form 1 learners?
3. What is your cut off entry point for Form 1 learners?
4. Which of the following factors matter when enrolling Form 1 learners?

- a) Learners' mid-year Grade 7 results.

- b) Learners' end of year Grade 7 results.
- c) Learners' sporting prowess.
- d) Parents' ability to pay fees
- e) Learners' connection to an influential person.
- f) Learners' relationship to school staff.
- g) Are there other factors? If so tell me more.

5. Which factors attract Form 1 learners to one school but not to another?

Entry specifications for Form 5

6. Briefly highlight the selection criteria for Form 5 learners
7. When do you enrol Form 5 learners?
8. What is the cut off entry point for Form 5 learners?
9. Which of the following factors matter when enrolling Form 5 learners?

- a) Learners' 'O' level results.
 - b) 'O' level school learners' went to
 - c) Learners' sporting prowess.
 - d) Parent's ability to pay fees
 - e) Learners' connection to an influential person.
 - f) Learners' relationship to school staff.
 - g) Combination of subjects learners pursue
 - h) Are there other factors. If so tell me more.
4. Which factors attract Form 5 learners to one school but not to another?
 5. a) Which sporting activities are offered at your school?
 - b) Do you offer any of the following sporting activities?

Rugby
Tennis (loan or table)
Swimming
Hockey
Cricket

6. Which of the following cultural activities are offered at your school?

Ballroom dance
Traditional Dance
Drama
Public speaking
Poetry

7. Which of the following tech/voc subjects do you offer at this school?
8. Does your school have adequate equipment for the technical/vocational subjects offered?
9. Do you internet connectivity through:
 - a) personal computer?
 - b) laptop?
 - c) smart phone?

10. Do you have external funding at this school? If so specify.
11. Which local and international languages are offered at this school?

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS

This interview seeks to solicit information pertaining to the manifestation of gate-keeping in secondary schools. Your responses will be treated with utmost

confidentiality in compliance with the research ethics and no one will be identified or traced from this investigation. Please answer the questions as fully as possible. Thank you very much for your willingness to participate in this study.

Entry requirements for secondary school learners

1. Which of the following factors determine a learner's entry into a secondary school?
 - a) Quality of a learner's Grade 7 results
 - b) Quality of a learner's 'O' Level results
 - c) Relationship to staff members
 - d) Recommendation by an influential figure
 - e) Parents' ability to pay school fees
2. What other factors account for a learner's entry into a secondary school?
3. In your opinion, what are the gate-keepers to secondary education?
4. Which among the following motivates you to opt for one secondary school instead of another?
 - a) Excellent staff
 - b) Access to internet connectivity
 - c) Adequate equipment for technical/ vocational subjects
 - d) Availability of external funding
 - e) School's excellence in sport
 - f) School's excellence in culture

Thank you

APPENDIX 3: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

This interview seeks to solicit information pertaining to the manifestation of gate-keeping in secondary schools. Your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality in compliance with the research ethics and no one will be identified or traced from this investigation. Please answer the questions as fully as possible. Thank you very much for your willingness to participate in this study.

1. What is the enrolment criterion for Form 1 and 2 learners?
2. Does your school have cut off entry point for Form 1 and 2 learners? If so tell me more.
3. Gate-keepers are persons or any other thing that restricts a learner's endeavour to learn. In your opinion, which the gate-keepers affect secondary education?
4. Which factors attract learners to one school and not to the other?
5. Do you offer any of the following sporting activities?

Rugby
Tennis (loan or table)
Swimming

Hockey
Cricket
If not tell me why.

7. Do you have access to internet through the mobile phone, personal computer or school office?

Thank you

6. Which sporting activities other than the ones mentioned above do you offer?