



Perspectives of School Managers and Teachers on the Implementation of the Eight-Hour Policy in Selected Schools of Ndola, Zambia

Kalisto Kalimaposo¹, Evelyn Phiri², Kaiko Mubita³, Inonge Milupi⁴, Chidongo Phiri⁵, Harrison Daka⁶, Magdalene Simalalo⁷

^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} University of Zambia, School of Education, Lusaka, Zambia.

ABSTRACT

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The standard working hours for civil service workers as stipulated by the International Labor Organization (ILO) in most countries is 8 hours. The eight hour work day policy has been enacted in the Labour Laws of Zambia as a guide for employers and employees. Recently, teachers were also mandated to follow this policy as they are part of the public service. However, this policy has been criticized by some teacher unions and the teachers themselves. The Zambia National Union of Teachers (ZNUT) called on the government to implement the eight hour policy for teachers to promote effective teaching. On the other hand, the National Union of Public and Private Educators (NUPPEZ) executive president said that the eight hour policy in its current form was retrogressive to teachers. He further urged the Ministry of General Education to seriously engage the teacher unions to help look into the effective handling of the policy by both administrators and teachers alike. Therefore, this clearly shows that the eight hour policy has been received with mixed feelings by the teaching fraternity.

A sample of 40 participants drawn from three public primary schools and three public secondary schools was purposively selected and interviewed. The sample comprised teachers and head teachers. The study was mainly qualitative in nature and used a descriptive design. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data. The study revealed that of the six schools that were sampled, only two schools strongly supported the introduction of the eight-hour policy. Two schools were against the policy while the other two schools expressed mixed feelings. Generally, a large number of teachers felt that the policy was inimical to the interests of teachers. The study recommended inter alia that the Ministry of Education should improve infrastructure in schools such as staffrooms where teachers can prepare their work and relax in a conducive environment for eight hours.

Keywords:

Eight-Hour Policy, Teacher Unions, School Administrators, Teachers, Education Standards Officers

INTRODUCTION

Every nation has its own conditions of service that spells out how workers are supposed to perform their duties. This is because each country aims at improving its economy. In line with this, workers are supposed to follow the stipulated

Corresponding Author: Kalisto Kalimaposo

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guidelines in order to achieve goals and objectives. One of the vital conditions that have been implemented is the required hours of work which should be equal to what the workers are supposed to be paid at the end of the month. This applies to both the public and the private sector.

In light of the economic growth that have been witnessed in many parts of the world in the twentieth century, the adoption of the eight-hour day and 48-hour week has now become a well-rooted reality. Some sections of the world supported the declaration as good news for international working time standards. The standard working hours for civil service workers

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as stipulated by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in most countries is eight hours.

In the second half of the 19th century, scholars were increasingly concerned about the issue of working time. The sources of and the potential policy responses to the high prevalence of unpaid overtime throughout the unfolding of the Industrial Revolution were widely discussed among scholars and policy makers of the time. The legal limitation of the working day to an eight-hour day was one of the most important demands of the early social democratic and labour movements in Europe. The eight-hour day or 40-hour week movement was an answer to dramatically changing working conditions in the period of transformation from agricultural production to a predominantly industrial market structure. Before the first labour regulations were enacted, working days had been often extended to twelve or fourteen hours for six days a week at the discretion of the employer. By the first decades of the 20th century, trade unions were organized and strict working time regulation was successfully enacted in most Western European countries.

ILO has been the locus of working time debates since its inception, especially with regard to the relationship between working time, health and safety, and job creation. These debates have developed, however, to incorporate additional policy goals, most notably those of ensuring that working hours allow workers adequate time to devote to their families and other elements of their lives. The role of the ILO, however, appears to have lost its momentum over the last two decades, with the most intense debates being conducted at the European level. However, it is believed that this study makes a case that the ILO should restore its traditional role in working time debates, and take coordinated action to ensure decent working time for workers around the world.

Zambia like any other country, has equally adapted the International Labour Organization (ILO) regulations concerning the eight-hour policy for the public service workers. According to the conditions of service, the maximum number of hours that a person can work under the law is 48 hours per week and 45 hours under the minimum wages and conditions of employment order. The eight-hour work day policy has been enacted in the Labour Laws of Zambia as a guide for every employer and employees. Recently, teachers were also mandated to follow this policy as they are equally part of the public service. This is due to the fact that teachers are supposed to work for eight hours as this equates the normal working hours for government salaried workers. "All teachers shall be in school for eight hours preparing lessons, teaching, doing CPD, supervising learning, supervising co-curricular activities, attending to special education needs and remedial

lessons and supervising study" (MoE, Standards and Evaluation Guidelines 2015). However, this policy has been criticized by some teacher unions and the teachers themselves. The Zambia National Union of Teachers (ZNUT) called on the government to implement the eight hour policy for teachers to promote effective teaching. On the other hand, the National Union of Public and Private Educators (NUPPEZ) executive president said that the eight hour policy in its current form was retrogressive to teachers. He further urged the Ministry of General Education to seriously engage the teacher unions to help look into the effective handling of the policy by both administrators and teachers alike.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Eight-Hour Policy has been enacted in the Labour Laws of Zambia through an Act of parliament for all public service workers. Despite being law, this policy has been criticized by teachers and other stakeholders. Therefore this study sought to investigate the perspectives of school managers and teachers on the implementation of the eight hour policy in selected schools of Ndola District in Zambia.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the implementation of the eight-hour policy in selected schools of Ndola Urban of the Copperbelt Province in Zambia.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The following objectives guided the study:

- 1) To establish the perceptions of school managers and teachers on the eight-hour policy in selected schools of Ndola Urban.
- 2) To determine contentious issues in the implementation of the eight-hour policy.
- 3) To explore measures put in place by schools to ensure compliance to the eight-hour policy.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) How do school managers and teachers perceive the eight hour policy in selected schools of Ndola District?
- 2) What are the contentious issues in the implementation of the eight hour policy in schools?
- 3) What measures have been put in place by schools to ensure compliance to the eight hour policy?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

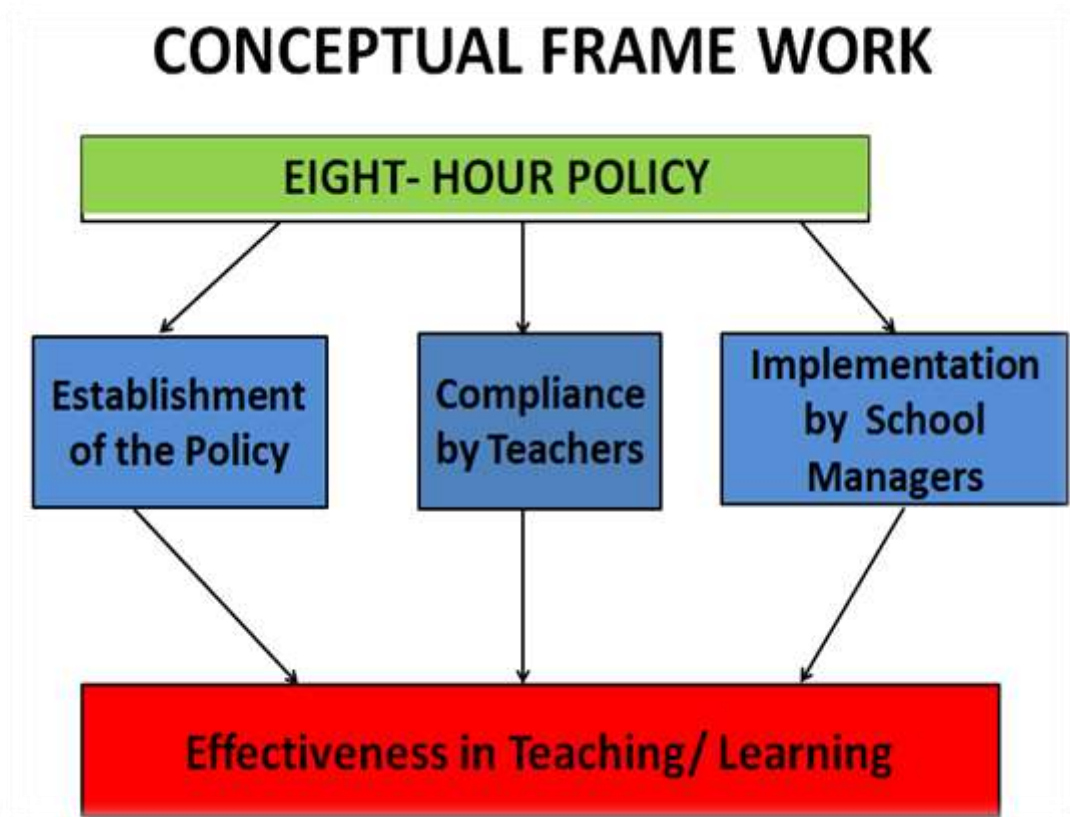
Resource Theory

Edwards and Rothbard (2000) using the resource theory argue that there could be benefits when using flexible working arrangements and disadvantages for fixed working hours like

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the eight hour policy. Since work-life balance deals with the resource drain (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000), problem of limited resources such as time and energy, which have to be distributed between different domains of life, fixed working hours may not help to manage these issues. According to resource theory, by transferring personal resources between competing roles and domains, it is easier to achieve work-life balance (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000). Teachers or employees who know that they can control their schedules according to their preferences are less worried and stressed. They know it is possible to take care of issues dealing with non-work since

work can be scheduled. Therefore, flexibility and flexible working hours are a valuable resource which help to transfer personal resources to meet the demands of different domains (Allen et al., 2012). But inflexibility of working hours are a danger to personal resource transfers. Other supporting resources can be workplace associated resources such as organizational segmentation support and supervisor instrumental support which help to achieve balance between work, family and personal life (Ferguson, Carlson and Kacmar, 2014).



Working hours in Zambia

Zambia has adhered to the International Labour Organization (ILO) regulations concerning the eight hour policy for the public service workers. According to the conditions of service, the maximum number of hours that a person can work under the law is 48 hours per week and 45 hours under the minimum wages and conditions of employment order. The eight hour work day policy has been enacted in the Labour Laws of Zambia as a guide for every employer and employees. The normal weekly working hours should not exceed 48 hours. Work that is performed in excess of 48 hours a week is to be paid overtime at one and- a-half times the worker’s hourly rate of pay. Work performed on paid public holidays or on a Sunday

(where Sunday is not part of the normal working week) should be paid at double the worker’s hourly rate of pay. Time off may be substituted for overtime. (ILO 2011). Therefore, the Zambian Employment Act has also implemented the recommended working hours by the International Labor Organization as follows: normal working hours is 40 hours per week for office workers and 45 hours per week for factory workers. Office hours are normally from 08:00 hours to 17:00 hours Mondays through Fridays and 08:00 hours to 13:00 hours on Saturdays (for most companies outside the retail sector). The normal weekly hours should not exceed 48 hours under the Minimum Wages and Conditions of Employment Act. Overtime work should be paid at one and half times the normal

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rate and twice the normal rate on weekends and public holidays. (Employment Special Provisions Act 2011).

The Zambian government has implemented the recommended eight-hour working policy for all the public service workers which includes the teaching fraternity especially those who serve in government schools as a way of fulfilling the mandated hours of work. The Ministry of Education released a secular in February 2015 which mandated all government learning institutions to adhere to eight-hour policy unlike in the past when teachers were knocking off immediately after teaching. In line with this, in October 2015, the Ministry of Education published the *Standards and Evaluation Guidelines* which contains a clause stating that “*all teachers shall be in school for eight-hours preparing lessons, teaching, doing CPD, supervising learning, supervising co-curricular activities, attending to special educational needs and remedial lessons and supervising individual study.*” Most government schools have implemented this policy and set necessary measures to compel teachers to follow the new policy as they were equally public service workers.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study employed a descriptive research design. Descriptive research design is a type of study that aims to systematically obtain information to describe a phenomenon, situation or population. Generally, it helps answer the *What, When, Where* and *How* questions regarding the research problem rather than the *Why*. It is important to note that in the descriptive research method, the researcher does not control or manipulate any variables, unlike in experimental research. Instead the variables are only identified, observed and measured. The descriptive design attempts to describe and interpret what exists in the form of conditions, practices, trends, attitudes and beliefs (Sidhu, 2013). Data were collected through interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). This design was preferred as the researcher intended to get detailed information using research instruments such as interview guides, FGDs which allows for in depth collection of data from participants.

Study Location

The study was carried out in Ndola District of the Copperbelt Province of Zambia. Ndola is the second largest city of Zambia.

Study Population

The target population for this study comprised teachers and head teachers of selected primary and secondary schools in Ndola Urban.

Sample and sampling procedures

The sample consisted of thirty-six participants, i.e., six head teachers and thirty teachers. The researchers employed purposive sampling procedure which entails that specific participants were targeted as opposed to a random selection. In

purposive sampling, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought.

Data Collection Instruments

Semi-structured interviews were utilized in getting information from participants. Hall (2017) posits that semi-structured interviews use an interview guide with some questions developed in advance and also allow the interviewer to stray from the interview guide, asking follow-up questions as the interview progresses. Interviews provide an opportunity to the researcher to interact with the participants thereby creating some level of trust between the two and maximizing on the information collection. This type of interview was chosen because it is easy and reliable as both persons see each other and if the participant does not understand the question, time and space allow the interviewer to rephrase the question without much ado. During the interviews, the researcher used a voice recorder with permission from participants. The recorded information was then transcribed into writing for easy interpretation of the data.

Data Analysis

Data analysis entails categorizing, summarizing and ordering the data and describing them in meaningful terms. Analysis of data generated from interviews was informed by interpretive analysis which considered participants’ subjective interpretation of their considered perception on the eight-hour policy. The narratives were thoroughly read through in order to get the general meaning and then sorted manually to identify the emerging and recurring themes which were then put together under sub-themes.

Ethical Consideration

The study ensured that the research ethics were taken into consideration throughout the research process. The researcher ensured that the participants were informed of the main purpose of the study. Participation was purely on voluntary basis and consent was sought from the participants. The researchers sought ethical clearance from the University of Zambia, Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Committee. Respondents were also guaranteed privacy and confidentiality of data. There was no recording of names or any personal identification during data collection and analysis.

Trustworthiness

In order to enhance validity and reliability of the study, a pre-test of the research instruments was conducted at one school. Based on recommendations from the pre-test, interview guides were amended accordingly. In order to enhance the trustworthiness of the data, the four constructs of credibility, dependability, conformability and transferability were taken into consideration. The researchers attempted to enhance

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credibility or plausibility of the study by providing a detailed theoretical framework , aligning the interview guides with the theoretical frame-work and by pre-testing the research tool. In order to enhance dependability or replicability of the study, the same instruments were employed by the researchers. Nonetheless, the use of a small, non-probability sample precluded transferability or generalization of the findings to the wider population.

Presentation of findings

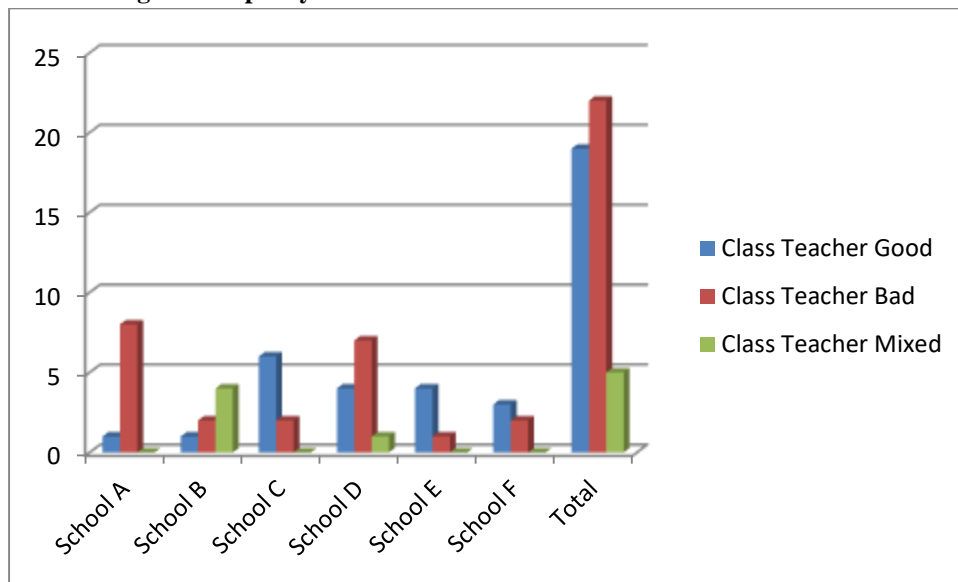
The findings of the study were presented in accordance with the research questions. The tables show findings from the

teachers and head-teachers. Findings from focus group discussions and one-to-one interviews with head teachers and teachers have also been presented in narrative. The research questions were as follows:

1. How do school managers and teachers perceive the eight hour policy?
2. What are the contentious issues in the implementation of the eight hour policy.
3. What measures have been put in place by schools to ensure compliance to the eight hour policy?

OBJECTIVE 1

Perceptions of teachers on the eight-hour policy.

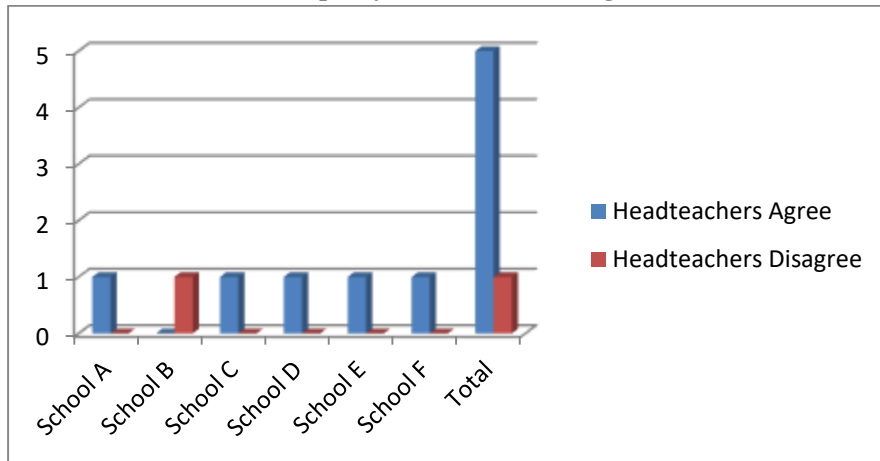


The researcher conducted interviews with some teachers on how they perceived the eight-hour policy in some selected schools of Ndola urban as shown in the bar-graph above. It was discovered that of the six schools that were visited, School C had a larger percentage of teachers who supported the introduction of the policy while school A had the highest percentage of teachers who did not support the introduction of the policy. Lastly, school B had the highest percentage of those

who had mixed feelings about whether the policy was brought in good or bad faith. However, no one in schools A, C, E and F had mixed feelings about whether the policy was brought in good or bad faith. Overall, there was a large number of teachers who believed that the policy was brought in bad faith. This was closely followed by the percentage of teachers who believed that the policy was brought in good faith. However, some teachers expressed mixed feelings.

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The number of head teachers who believed that the policy was introduced in good or bad faith`

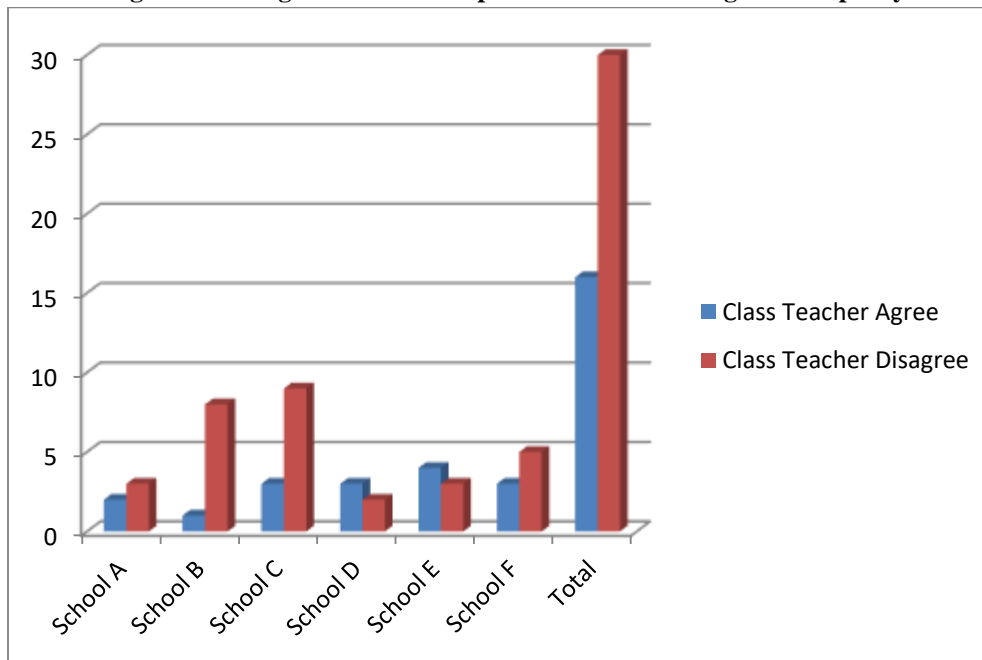


The researcher conducted interviews with some head teachers on how they perceived the eight-hour policy in some selected schools of Ndola as shown in the bar-graph above. It was

discovered that of the six schools that were visited, all schools except school B believed that the policy was brought in good faith.

OBJECTIVE 2

The number of teachers who agreed or disagreed with the implementation of the eight- hour policy

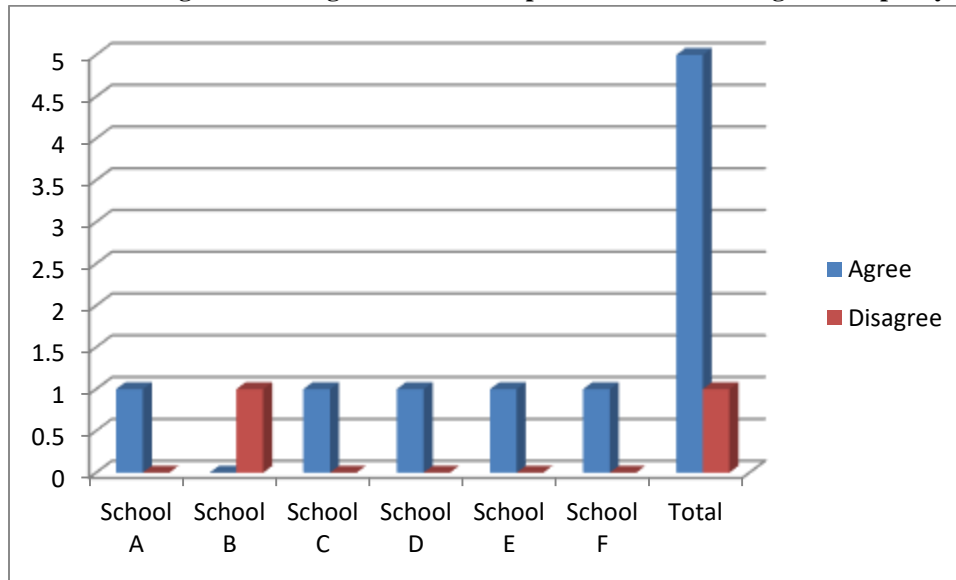


The researcher conducted interviews with some teachers on how they perceived the eight-hour policy in some selected schools of Ndola urban as shown in the bar-graph above. It was discovered that of the six schools that were visited, School E had the largest number of teachers who agreed with the

introduction of the policy while school C had the highest percentage of teachers who did not agree with the introduction of the policy. Generally, there was a large number of teachers who did not agree with the implementation of the eight-hour policy.

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The number of head-teachers who agreed or disagreed with the implementation of the eight-hour policy



The researcher conducted interviews with some head teachers on whether they agreed with the eight-hour policy in some selected schools of Ndola urban as shown in the bar-graph above. It was discovered that of the six schools that were visited, all schools except school B agreed with the implementation of the eight- hour policy, with most of them saying that the policy had really helped some unruly teachers who were fond of knocking off any time they felt like especially on the pay day. The other reason that was given was that most of the teachers were now able to prepare adequately unlike in

the past when they used to knock off immediately after teaching.

OBJECTIVE 3

Measures put in place by schools to ensure compliance to the eight-hour policy.

The study established that all schools implemented a **log-book** where teachers recorded the reporting and knocking off time. The table below shows the different measures that had been put in place by schools to show compliance of the eight-hour policy.

Schools	Measures put in place
A	Monitoring teacher’s preparation By allocating duties within the allocated time
B	The school has lessons in the afternoon, club and sports activities.
C	By allocating duties within the allocated time
D	Learning and teaching hours have been adjusted. The head teacher sits at the gate to make sure no one leaves before time. Introduced afternoon teaching lessons
E	Teachers are challenged to be in school though with less motivation. Scolding teachers who did not comply with the eight- hour policy Teachers are booked for not complying with the eight-hour policy and thereafter charged.
F	Reporting time observed fully as well as knocking off time. Teachers are booked for not complying with the eight-hour policy and thereafter charged.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to investigate the implementation of the eight-hour policy in selected schools of Ndola Urban of the Copperbelt Province of Zambia. The discussion is presented in accordance with research themes.

Perceptions of teachers and head teachers on the Eight-Hour Policy

The study revealed that of the six schools that were visited, two schools had the highest number of teachers who did not support the eight-hour working policy for teachers. The teachers argued

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that the policy was introduced in bad faith because it did not address the challenges that teachers were facing such as poor working conditions and run down infrastructure. This is supported by Rothbard (2000) who asserts that there could be benefits when using flexible working arrangements and disadvantages for fixed working hours like the eight-hour policy. Since work-life balance deals with the resource drain, the problem of limited resources such as time and energy especially for teachers, which have to be distributed between different domains of life, fixed working hours may not help to manage these issues. The study revealed that flexible working hours especially for teachers was very important if they were to deliver quality services to the learners and the community at large. Clark (2000) shares the same idea as he contends that in order to find balance, people should negotiate and shape the borders of work and home. He further adds that it might be challenging to achieve good work-life balance due to major changes in technology, increased flexibility, individual roles and responsibilities in multiple domains especially for teachers. In addition, the teachers also lamented that the nature of their work required adequate rest in order for them to teach effectively. This is also supported by Rajan (2017) who posits that rest, balanced diet and emotional stability was important for stressful occupations.

Mixed feelings regarding the Eight-Hour Policy

Furthermore, it was discovered that in the same six schools that were visited, only one school had respondents who expressed mixed feelings about the introduction of the eight-hour policy for teachers. This was evidenced by giving varied reasons as to why the policy was beneficial to the teaching fraternity. They contended that it enabled teachers to plan and teach effectively as well as giving attention to learners with special educational needs. This was supported by the Ministry of Education in the newly published standards guidelines which contains a clause stating that *'all teachers shall be in school for eight hours preparing lesson plans, teaching, doing CPDs, supervising learning, supervising co-curricular activities, attending to special educational needs and remedial lessons and supervising individual study.'*

On the other hand, they also expressed dissatisfaction with the policy especially for teachers though they are public service workers. They maintained that the policy was detrimental to the teachers as it restricted them to carry out their personal businesses such as conducting research for those who were pursuing further studies. The other challenge was that teachers were not well paid hence they were engaged in small businesses as a way of generating additional income for their families. Most participants felt that this policy had robbed them of opportunities to augment their meagre salaries. The National Union of Public and Private Educators (NUPPEZ) denounced

the eight-hour policy stating that in its current form the policy was retrogressive to teachers. He further urged the Ministry of Education to seriously engage the teacher unions to help look into effective handling of the policy by both administrators and teachers alike.

The study also observed that of the six schools that were visited, only one head teacher was against the eight-hour policy for teachers. The other five supported it saying it was done in good faith because it enabled the teachers to plan and teach effectively because they had enough time to do so.

Contentious issues in the implementation of the Eight-Hour Policy

This objective answers the research question which determines contentious issues in the implementation of the eight-hour policy for teachers. Of the six schools that were visited, two schools had a number of participants who were against the implementation of the policy citing the following reasons:

Limited space in the Staffrooms

It was reported that some schools did not have staff rooms where teachers could spend their time. Schools that had staff rooms could not accommodate all the teachers as the facilities were inadequate. Consequently, most of the teachers had to sit under trees as they waited to teach or prepared their lessons. This was very demoralising to most teachers as they were subjected to wait for longer hours in an open area school environment. Some teachers complained that they were uncomfortable to prepare lessons or mark learners books in such an environment.

Lack of Motivation

The other challenge that was observed was that of demotivation by the School Administration and the Ministry of Education at large. Teachers maintained that they needed to be motivated by school authorities or the Ministry of Education by way of giving them incentives in order to alleviate the challenges they were experiencing. One of which was to give them extra duty allowance as is obtaining in the Grant Aided Schools. They further argued that the policy was detrimental to their wellbeing as it prevented them from doing their own personal business to augment their merger salaries. They also maintained that the policy had restricted teachers who were pursuing further studies, especially teachers studying via distance learning did not have sufficient time to study given the eight-hour policy. Teachers complained that the implementation of the eight-hour policy was there to torture the teachers.

On the contrary, some teachers who supported the eight-hour policy argued that the policy enabled teachers to prepare adequately for their lessons. It was observed that learning had improved in the school because teachers were compelled to prepare their lessons within the school premises thereby improving learner performance (Muyabi et al., 2022). A

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participant at School B contended that in the past, teachers performed very well because they were not restricted with hours of work unlike now that the eight-hour policy had been implemented. One minor challenge that was pointed out was that lunch had become a challenge. Hence most participants argued that the hours should be reduced even though teachers were also public service workers.

Adequate Preparation

For those who supported the eight-hour policy, they maintained that it helped teachers to prepare adequately for the lessons as well as teaching effectively. They also said that it guided on the number of the teacher's hours of work. Apart from that, the teachers have the opportunity to interact with learners and also offer remedial work to learners with special educational needs thereby improving their performance (Mwanamwambwa et al., 2021). There was also a notable fact that teachers were doing most of the work that was related to teaching whilst at school and not leaving the work unattended to. This has resulted in quality education delivery.

Similarly, most Head teachers who were interviewed were in full support of the eight-hour policy for teachers giving reasons that most of the teachers were now able to prepare adequately by spending more hours at the station, unlike in the past when they used to knock off immediately after teaching. As a way of ensuring that teachers complied with the new policy, the Head teachers had put measures in place by engaging the Home Economics Department to prepare and sell foodstuffs at subsidised prices to enable teachers to have their meals within the school premises.

Measures put in place to ensure compliance to the Eight-Hour Policy

The following measures were put in place to ensure teachers' compliance with the eight-hour policy:

Log-in Book

It was reported that some schools had introduced Log Books. Teachers were required to log-in and log-out. Teachers recorded their reporting and knocking off time. The Log Book enabled school administrators to monitor the number of hours teachers spent in the school.

Duty Allocation

Other measures that were implemented in the six schools to supplement the log book was that of monitoring teachers work and allocating duties within the allocated time. Most teachers have been appointed as patrons for school clubs as one measure of keeping them in school. This gives adequate information on teachers who comply with the eight-hour policy.

Security Checks

In some schools, it was observed that the school administrators had instructed security guards at the gates to ensure that teachers did not leave the school without permission. Teachers

who left before time were easily noticed by the security guards at the school gates.

Electronic Log-in Machine

In some schools, electronic devices for logging-in and out were installed by the school management. Teachers log-in their reporting and knocking off time on the machine. This measure was necessitated to curb cheating by teachers who reported for work late and left the school early.

CONCLUSION

The study established that most teachers were against the implementation of the eight-hour policy in the teaching fraternity. The policy was perceived as inimical to the interest of teachers as it restricted free movement of teachers in and out of the school premises. Some teachers lamented that they were demoralised by the policy as the atmosphere in their schools did not have the requisite facilities such as staffrooms, libraries, furniture and wash rooms to enable them work in a conducive environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study made the following recommendations.

1. The Ministry of Education should dialogue with teacher unions and provide a conducive teaching environment in public primary and secondary schools by revisiting the newly introduced eight-hour policy for teachers.
2. The Ministry of General Education should improve infrastructure in most schools such as staffrooms where teachers can prepare their work and relax in a conducive environment for eight-hours.
3. Government should ensure that all contentious issues regarding the eight-hour policy are addressed in consultation with teacher unions and other stakeholders.
4. Education Standards Officers should collaborate with schools in monitoring the implementation of the eight-hour policy in schools.

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