

## **INSTRUCTIONAL CHALLENGES IN BOTSWANA PUBLIC SCHOOLS: EXPRESSIONS OF TEACHERS IN FRANCISTOWN**

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### **ABSTRACT**

A descriptive survey was conducted on three public schools to investigate instructional challenges faced by teachers in Francistown. The purposively sampled schools were: Montsamaisa, Selepa and Selolwe Junior Secondary schools. The validity of the instrument was established, and then questionnaires were hand-delivered to the schools. This study comes at a time when the nation is concerned about the general decline of students' performance in both primary and secondary schools through out the country. Botswana's educational objective is to provide quality and accessible education at primary, secondary and tertiary levels to contribute to socio-economic advancement of the country. The study revealed that academic, social and discipline instructional challenges were prevalent in all the three public schools. These challenges, particularly the academic challenges were identified as the major ones which could adversely affect the national objectives of Vision 2016. It was concluded that teachers have to be capacitated to deal with instructional challenges to enhance their effectiveness in the schools and parents should be encouraged to take keen interest in educational issues to assist teachers deal effectively with their children to enhance performance and curtail acts of deviance within the schools. Further research was suggested to include a diversified sample in an attempt to gain more insights into instructional challenges in public schools nationally.

**KEYWORDS:** Instructional Challenges, Vision 2016, Academic Challenges

### **INTRODUCTION**

Provision of education for any nation in the world is the number one priority that governments should commit huge resources to provide it for its development. In Botswana the government has committed immense resources to provide education for its population. In the 2014 Budget Speech by the minister of Finance and Development Planning , the Ministry of Education and Skills Development has been allocated the largest share of P9.26 billion or 27.8% of the Ministerial budget ( Botswana Daily News February 2014) indicating the determination by government to develop its human resource. Botswana's educational objective is to provide quality and accessible education at primary, secondary and tertiary levels to contribute to socio-economic advancement of the country (NDP 10). Concomitantly, the country's National Vision 2016 also reflects an aspiration for an "educated and informed nation." Therefore, competent teachers at all levels of education are needed to drive Botswana's educational aspirations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In order for teachers to achieve the national objectives and aspirations for Botswana, it is crucial to focus on challenges within the instructional environment that could frustrate the educational goals that have been set in the National Development Plan 10.

This study would serve the School Heads, the Pastoral Care, the Regional Educational Officers, educational policy makers and all other stakeholders to identify the instructional challenges that teachers encounter in classrooms, so that suggested solutions to these problems could be identified and their effects be minimised for effective teacher participation and student achievement. Even though teachers have accumulated experience over the years they still face challenges that need urgent attention so that they could respond appropriately to achieve the desired national objectives. Teachers face multiple challenges which are behavioral, social and academic and some of these transcend the classroom and frustrate teachers, lowering their performance, leading to resignation from work in extreme circumstances. This study comes at a time when the nation is concerned about the general decline of students' performance in both primary and secondary schools through out the country (BEC 2011).

### Objectives

- To identify instructional challenges faced by teachers in Francistown public secondary schools that could impede the national objectives of Vision 2016 – “an informed and educated nation.”
- To suggest ways through which the challenges could be mitigated to achieve the national objectives of Vision 2016.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The provision of education is universally acknowledged as an essential element in human development. Botswana aspires to provide quality education reflected in its Vision 2016 pillar number one “an educated and informed nation”. In order to achieve this vital role teachers have to be trained and supported at all levels. Teaching students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is an intellectually challenging task for teachers and it is undeniable fact that in various teaching and learning environments they face challenges that are related to curriculum and instruction. Instructional challenges are imbedded in the methods and strategies that teachers use in the learning and teaching processes. Prevalent instructional challenges include the following: preparation of instructional materials (curriculum and development of relevant materials), lack of knowledge about specific content areas for multiple subjects, matters of indiscipline in the classrooms, obsolete materials and instructional technology adaptations. These challenges are common across the teaching spectrum for even in special education teachers struggle with them (Billingsley, Griffin, Smith, Kamman, Israel 2009).

Research that has been undertaken by various researchers about challenges that teachers face in their routine teaching activities reveal the reality of instructional challenges. In Botswana, teachers have to deal with a multiplicity of challenges like violence, vandalism, theft, truancy and reluctance to do homework (Garegae, 2008). Some of these challenges are related to deviant behaviours and may have to be solved by educational psychologists and school counselors. Instructional challenges in schools will always be present even though teachers have been trained at higher educational institutions because of the ever changing conditions that students and teachers encounter in their contexts. The training they have received may not always address the factors involved particularly if the factors are imbedded within the education system and may require changes from the Ministry of Education and Skills Development. Since 2011 to 2014 the Ministry of Education and Skills Development has been plagued by poor results from both primary to secondary schools which may have a bearing on instructional challenges in the teaching fraternity within the country (BEC Annual Report 2011). Subsequently it would be interesting to undertake research that would attempt to uncover some of the issues involved

nationally.

Garegae (2008) conducted a study on the Crisis of student discipline in Botswana schools. The study investigated teachers' day-to-day experiences and views with regard to student discipline. The study revealed that student misconduct is prevalent in schools. The findings were presented as themes. The first theme being that unless parents teach their children desirable conduct, schools would not be free from disruptive behaviour, which seemed to be fuelled by the media especially television and other technological gadgets. Teachers' exclusion and disempowerment emerged as the second theme. Teachers felt that they have been denied control and authority over the students, as evidenced by school regulations that restrict who should administer corporal punishment, suspend and expel students. This is unexpected as teachers have to be controlled by regulations and policy in schools to maintain authority within. The other theme was the violation of school head's rights. Teachers felt that the school head's rights are being violated, as he/she cannot suspend or expel students, but must recommend the suspension or expulsion to the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Education and Skills Development. This makes teachers feel that the Ministry of Education and Skills Development is not supportive enough especially in cases of suspensions and expulsions; hence this makes them hesitate to make such decisions to avoid embarrassment if the suspension or expulsion is not approved. The fourth theme was teachers experience on the implementation of school discipline. Teachers revealed that school discipline regulations in Botswana schools are problematic. The students know that teachers are not supposed to administer corporal punishment; hence they become difficult to control in the absence of school heads. This interrupts learning, as teachers spend a lot of time trying to settle disputes instead of teaching. Consequently, they fail to complete the syllabus in time leading to poor performance.

However, teachers should not focus only on corporal punishment, but on a variety of strategies to control students' behaviour within their schools. They should also realise that it may not be suitable in some instances. The last theme was the impact of school discipline on teacher's job. Teachers felt insecure in their jobs as students carry dangerous weapons like knives, and they also suspect they might carry guns which they could use against them or even against other students. The anticipation of violence by students inculcates fear to reprimand students who misbehave. Teachers also fear verbal abuse from students. These vulnerabilities may be justified because in American schools students have indeed used extreme violence against teachers and other students which resulted in deaths– the Columbine deaths (Time Magazine, 2001). Even though such violence has never occurred in Botswana schools, there are however schools where head teachers and teachers are fearful of "school gangs" that perpetuate abuse and violence against both teachers and students bring fear and horror into educational settings.

Boone & Boone (2007) conducted a study in West Virginia to investigate problems faced by high school agricultural education novice and veteran teachers. They identified the following as the problems in descending order: administrative support, classroom discipline, class preparation, time management, paper work, facilities and equipment. Perhaps this disparity could be attributed to the resourcefulness and innovativeness of the veteran teachers in their classes because of their accumulated years of experience which the novice teachers still have to accumulate and be at the same level. Novice teachers indicated problems in developing a course of instruction as well as self-confidence both of which were not mentioned among veteran teachers because they have extensive experience in the field.

In yet another research in schools involving teachers conducted by Giffing, Warnick, Tarpley & Williams (2010) to determine the perception of agriculture teachers attitudes towards including students with disabilities in their classes and laboratories and their perceived abilities to include students with disabilities revealed the following: a vast number of the teachers surveyed indicated that they understood the concept of inclusion, were in favour of including students with disabilities in their classrooms and laboratories and that they had a positive experience in teaching students with disabilities. The results also showed that the type of disability a student has, influences the teacher's willingness and perceived skill level in including these students. Almost all teachers agreed that classroom setting was best for students with a mild level of need. The majority of the teachers indicated that they did not receive adequate support regarding inclusion and teaching of students with disabilities. Teachers indicated that in class support; consultation with parents, special education teachers, and team teaching, would be beneficial for providing a successful experience for students with disabilities and teachers involved. Teachers showed their willingness to attend workshops so that they could be developed in this special field to improve their abilities. The perception of teachers is that education regarding inclusion is limited and showed willingness to learn more. It is significant that Agriculture education teachers are not trained in inclusive education particularly for those with disabilities (Botswana College of Agriculture Prospectus 2012/2013).

Research shows that novice teachers in special education face similar pedagogical problems as those encountered by general education counterparts. Some of these pedagogical challenges faced by special education novice teachers were identified as; preparation of instructional materials, lack of knowledge about specific content areas for multiple subjects, discipline problems in the class, out-dated materials and technology (Billingsley, Griffin, Smith, Kamman, Israel (2009). This research shows that instructional challenges are not unique in particular situations because of special education needs of the students concerned. In effect, teachers should not lose confidence when they have to teach a class that has students with disabilities as this research reflects.

Mixed ability teaching is perceived as a challenge by a majority of teachers, but research that has been conducted in this area reveal contrary results to this negative perception of lowering standards. The Department for Education and Employment in 1997 (in the U.K.) wanted schools to consider "setting" children by ability, but studies by Whiteburn, 2001, Ireson & Hallam, 2001, William & Bartholomew 2001 proved that ability grouping does not raise standards, but can lower them and may even have detrimental effects on the pupil's personal and social development (Ireson & Hallam, 2001, Hallam *et al*, 2002). Teachers have to accept academic diversity in their classes and not regard it as a hindrance to their teaching. They have to accept a shift from "single-size instruction" to "differentiated instruction" (Tomlinson 2001) to surmount the perceived problems of mixed ability teaching. Even students with exceptional academic abilities (exceptionally brilliant) could be handled well within differentiated instruction, but teachers have to be taught how this approach could be used in their classes so that they could change their attitudes and accept it.

It is undeniable that increasing enrolments in schools and teaching overcrowded classrooms is a critical challenge that teachers have to contend with. Increased enrolments elevate teachers challenges even though it ensures accessibility to education in developing countries like Botswana, where the national goal is universal primary education with 98% enrolments for those between seven (7) and thirteen (13) years in 2004 (NDP 10). When the enrolments are increased there is negative impact placed on teachers like; discipline problems where more time is now devoted to classroom management than instruction; more below average students would not receive much attention; more noise distractions

which makes it difficult to teach; teacher burn-out is also experienced by teachers and shortages of equipment like classrooms and labs (Meador, 2014).

Research on parental involvement in their children's education abounds and shows the critical role that parents should play to mitigate the negative impact felt by teachers in schools. A study conducted by Isaiah (2013) has shown that teachers get dissatisfied with their jobs with less parental involvement in their children's education because teachers feel that when parents are involved students would value their education and perform better. Isaiah (2013) maintains that schools must consider parents as equal partners in their children's education and must play an active role in that regard. In yet another research study by Pansiri and Bulawa (2013) conducted in public primary schools in Botswana has revealed that parents play a minimal support in their children's education particularly in rural areas in boarding schools. This minimal participation increases teachers' instructional challenges in schools. The study appropriately recommended that policy should be put in place to facilitate parent's involvement in their children's education and make their "voices" heard in educational matters affecting their children.

Parental involvement in their children's education has been shown to boost academic performance of the students in Tsodilo Secondary School in Botswana (Macheng Phinias-Bingana, 2014). It has also been shown that minimal participation by parents makes it difficult for teachers to achieve positive educational outcomes. It is significant to observe that this study observes that "teachers do not expect parents to implement the school curriculum, but total education requires that parents and teachers to work together to provide a total student who will be academically, socially and emotionally balanced" (Macheng Phinias-Bingana 2014, p 8).

The reviewed literature shows that instructional problems do exist in schools despite experienced quality teachers that have been provided. The issue of parental involvement still needs more research to determine what needs to be done to encourage positive parental involvement in educational matters. Other structural problems like enrolment issues remain the prerogative of the Ministry of Education and Skills Development to prioritise and provide adequate resources to engender a positive environment for the fulfillment of Vision 2016 - an educated and informed nation.

## **Methodology**

The population of the study comprised seven hundred teachers in Francistown public Secondary Schools of which the majority are degree holders. The study used the qualitative approach in the form of a case study. Purposive sampling was used to select teachers that would participate in the research, Ormrod & Leedy (2010), Christensen & Johnson (2004). To make the research more robust, snowball sampling was further employed so that each participant who volunteered in the research was requested to identify other "information rich" research potential participants (Campbell and Holland, 2005).

A sample of thirty (30) teachers from the three schools (Montsamaisa, Selepa and Selolwe Junior secondary Schools) in Francistown was selected. The sampling used does not intend to be representative, "but to maximize the range of information uncovered" (Guba 1981:86). Thirty questionnaires were administered, but only twenty-seven (27) of them from the three schools were returned which accounted for 90% of respondents.

### **Instrument Validity**

Validity according to Johnson & Christensen (2004) should measure what we intend to measure, for the particular people in a particular context and that the interpretations made on the basis of the test scores are correct. To check for validity of the instrument lecturers in the department of Agriculture Extension and Education were requested to help in establishing the face and content validity of the instrument.

Senior Teachers Guidance and Counseling were given the questionnaires to check for data reliability. The responses were coded and compared to the ones obtained from other teachers to compare if the results obtained yielded the same or gave a true picture of the situation prevailing in the school. The credibility of this research was therefore established through phenomenon recognition (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). Respondents were presented with questions that attempted to find out whether they understood the reality of their context regarding instructional challenges in government schools. There would also be comparison of responses from all the sites to find out whether they "... represent their common and shared experience" (Guba and Lincoln, 1981:186).

### **Ethical Considerations**

Creswell & Clark (2010) stated that ethical issues such as requesting participants to willingly provide data, handling sensitive information, and disclosing the purpose of the research, apply to both qualitative and quantitative research. The participants were assured of confidentiality. Tripp's (1998) guide lines were adapted to ensure confidentiality of the research subjects. Tripp's guide lines inform the participants of the research about confidentiality during the questionnaire response that they have to be anonymous and about the safe keeping of the questionnaire after the research.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data was collected using open ended questionnaire Christensen & Johnson (2004) state that the in-depth interview and open ended questions tend to be most popular in educational case studies. To collect data, the letter was written to the school heads introducing the researchers and requesting for permission to allow teachers to participate in the study. The letter was hand delivered, and seven days later the same letter content with additional instructions on how to complete the questionnaire was delivered together with the questionnaire. Each school received one envelope with all the letters and questionnaires for the respondents to answer the questionnaire.

### **Data Analysis**

As open ended questions were used for data collection, the researchers analysed the collected data by searching for the statements that reflect various commonalities or aspects of particular relevance to the study. The data from each school was first exposed to within case analysis, where data from each school is analysed separately. Then cross-case analysis was done by compiling the findings to come up with the final data that was coded into themes. Merriam (2009) stated that in multiple-case study, within case analysis of each study is first done as a comprehensive case, and then analysed. After that, cross-case analysis was done after within-case is completed. 3.0

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic data collected for the study covered respondent's gender, age, level of education and teaching experience. Most of these respondents were males (59.7%) and females 40.7%. The age of the respondents ranged from twenty five to above forty years, refer to table 1. The respondent's levels of education ranged from diploma (44.4%) and degree holders (55.6%) and none with a masters' degree. The teaching experience of the respondents ranged from those with less than five years (33.3%) to those with between five years to above sixteen years at (66.6%), refer to table 1.

**Table 1: Demographic Data**

Demographic Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>59.3</b>
	<b>Female</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>40.7</b>
Age (years)	25 and below	1	3.7
	26 – 30	5	18.5
	31 - 35	6	22.2
	36 – 40	8	29.6
	40 and above	7	25.9
Level of Education	Diploma	12	44.4
	Bachelor's	15	55.6
	Masters Degree	0	0
Teaching Experience (years)	Less than 5	9	33.3
	5 – 10	3	11.1
	11 – 15	11	40.7
	16 and above	4	14.8

Considering the ages of respondents, the majority of them ranked from 36 to 40 years constituting 29.6 % as the highest, followed by those who are above 40 years at 25.9%, then 31 to 35 years at 22.2%, then 26 to 40 years at 18.5% and finally, those aged 25 years and less at 3.7%. On the basis of teaching experience, most of the teachers ranges between 40.7% followed by those having less than 5 years teaching experience who constituted 33.3% , then those with 16 years and above in teaching experience constituting 14.8% and finally those whose experience ranges between 5 to 10 years constituted 11.1%.

The three themes that emerged: academic, social and discipline/behavioral are prevalent in all schools sampled and emerged in the order listed and discussed below. The frequent challenges in all the sampled schools are the academic challenges shown in the table 2. This is shown by the rank of the themes according to the given indicators shown in table 5 of the summary of themes. Some of the issues that appeared more frequently are: dyslexia- an abnormality that leads to failing to read and spell words correctly; student failure to comprehend and respond to high order questions. These special conditions are common in all schools. Some of the students even fail to hold the pens properly; hence the writing is not legible. Automatic progression from primary to secondary school, even from one level to another in secondary schools, has been highly indicated by teachers as bringing more difficulty in teaching rather than enhancing good education in the country. They indicated that it fuels poor performance in secondary schools. The congested curriculum or bulky syllabus,



mixed ability teaching, lack of motivation to work hard in school; lack of resources like stationary, textbooks, furniture and lack of parental involvement have also been shown to make classroom instruction difficult.

According to Olson & Platt (2004), students with special needs have problems in academic areas, social interactions, motivation and transition to adult roles. They have learning disabilities, mental disabilities, and emotional disabilities. Teachers in all the three schools show that they are having such students and it is a problem to help them as they have not been trained enough to teach students with special cases like these. It becomes stressful when teachers are faced with such situations in which they do not know how to assist such student because it is an area that needs specialisation. Consequently, they proceed with the syllabus to the detriment of such students because they do not want to lag behind with the syllabus. The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) cited in Decker & Decker, (2003) stated that the American public believe that “high parental involvement” is the best indicator that a school is providing a high quality education. The schools in Francistown have purposed to encourage parental involvement as one of the strategies to improve academic performance, however, some parents were observed to be reluctant to get involved in their children’s education. This parental attitude demotivates students and result in poor performance in schools. Indeed, research has shown that when parents are not involved in their children’s education there is a general decline in performance and teachers also feel stressed by such situations.

**Table 2: Academic Challenges**

	<b>Responses</b>
1	Mixed ability teaching which results in slow learners dragging the teacher hence the syllabus is not completed on time.
2	Lack of parental support regarding school work
3	Refused to do school work
4	Lack of resources like text books, stationary, furniture and books which are there are worn out
5	Loss of textbooks and exercise books
6	High student teacher ratio
7	Lack of interest in learning
8	Low esteem in academic ability
9	Congested curriculum or bulky syllabus
10	Poor performance: which could be due to lack of motivation in school work and also student failure to comprehend and respond to high order questions
11	Dyslexia: shown by failing to read, write and spell words correctly
12	Special conditions like hearing impairment
13	Automatic progression from primary to Secondary school, even from one level to another in secondary schools
14	Delay in replacing transferred teachers

Social challenges have been ranked as theme two that teachers face in the classroom (refer to tables 3 and 5). Curran & Renzetti, (1996) define social problems as “conditions caused by factors endemic to a particular society that systematically disadvantages or harms a specific segment or a significant number of the society’s population.” These social problems affect the learning and teaching process in secondary schools. The responses show that these problems are common in all schools and some of the frequently listed issues were: students walking long distances to school. This however, is a serious problem in rural schools because the Ministry of Education and Skills Development does not provide free transport to such schools and in such places there is inadequate transport available. In towns like Francistown



parents provide their children with money for transport. Lack of parental involvement in schools is an issue that the Minister of Education and Skills Development has experienced. When she called a Parents Teacher Association meeting in one of the schools only fourteen parents attended that meeting (Educational Dialogue, January 2014) to discuss poor results that are plaguing the schools. In frustration, she said about this situation “If only fourteen parents in this city attended the meeting, then maybe fourteen families had their children pass because maybe only families care about their education in this whole city with over 300 000 families.” Research has shown that parents in Botswana are reluctant to participate in their children’s education. However, some of the students are parenting at a younger age because their parents have died of HIV and AIDS pandemic that has left many children orphans without parental skills and as a result proper accommodation and poverty in those situations is experienced

The challenges listed in table 3 are supported by the study conducted by Fibkins (2003), who stated that many middle, junior high and high school students are at risk of personal and health problems and that teachers should be prepared and be aware of what goes on in student’s lives out side the classroom. Teaching should not be limited only to the interaction that occurs in the classroom if it has to effectively address the life of a student in a particular area. Teachers have to be sensitive to student’s social issues and realise that education involves the entire person. The author further said these social challenges that affect children like high divorce rates, and increase in single parents, has resulted in situations where children do not “have a consistently available adult that can talk about their daily stresses.” Many teenage students in schools need parental guidance to be able to handle life’s challenges and risks. Without the guidance of adults and teachers students become susceptible to deviant behaviours that present challenges in the school environment.

**Table 3: Social Challenges**

	<b>Responses</b>
1.	Students walking long distances to school
2.	Lack of parental involvement in school affairs
3.	Poverty in some families which covers not eating properly, lack of school uniform and lack of proper accommodation
4.	Orphanage hood shown by some students parenting at home, and lack of parental guidance at home
5.	Some students are struggling with health problems
6.	Teenage pregnancy and love relationships
7.	Dysfunctional families
8.	Students Bereavement which leads to students losing hope in life
9.	Some students bully others at school
10.	Illicit relationships with students
11.	Language barrier in some subjects like Setswana, English and French.

Behavioral / discipline challenge emerged as theme three (shown in tables 4 and 5). The students’ negative behavior is a problem despite school rules and regulations that are in place. They use of mobile phones and other electronic gadgets in class causing disruptions during lessons; some of the students make noise in class; they exhibit rude behaviors; they use vulgar language against the teachers and their peers as a consequence of negative peer influence. It was observed that alcohol and drug abuse was a common problem. The culprits are disruptive in classes, disturbing the teachers as well as other learners, and are never settled in class. Attention seekers never give up their behavior easily even if ignored. Theft is rampant in schools fuelled by those that bring mobile phones and other electronic gadgets like play stations.

These behaviours are to be expected because these students are teenagers and are susceptible to such behaviours because they are still trying to find out “who they are.” Even though teachers have the experience to deal with such behaviours it is proving difficult to control students (Holin *et al* 1995). Teachers and other stake holders should clearly articulate relevant strategies that could be used in such situations to modify students’ behaviour particularly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Tonry & Moore (1998) recognise that students will always be rebellious in schools and therefore suggest some strategies that could be used to assist schools. They suggest students should be taught full education in Safety and Citizenship. All students should attend classes that examine the challenge of finding productive, lives without drugs, gangs or guns. This approach could be beneficial in schools as students will be trained at a tender age, when they are still eager to listen before they get involved in deviant behaviors. Guidance and counseling sessions have been introduced in schools in recognition of this prevalent challenge. Tori and Moore (1998) recognised the social importance of social integration in the school’s safety and morale, fostering an atmosphere of inclusiveness, open communication and shared decision making on safety and other issues with students staff and parents. These researchers emphasise the importance of communication and involvement of parents or guardians in the schools so that they become part of the decisions taken in schools. This could help curtail deviancy problems.

**Table 4: Discipline / Behavioral Challenges**

	<b>Responses</b>
1.	Use of cellular phones and other electronic gadgets in class
2.	Unwelcoming behavior like making noise in class, rude behavior and use of vulgar language
3.	Peer influence or pressure
4.	Alcohol and drug abuse
5.	Disruptive learners who are never settled in class and attention seekers.
6.	Fast learners disturb after finishing the work
7.	Truancy or absenteeism
8.	Lack of concentration shown by: sleeping in class and asking for permission to go to the toilet frequently.
9.	Failure to take instructions: as shown by students not taking instructions and copying during tests.
10.	Vandalism and Theft

Table five provides a summary of the themes that emerged in the study and reveal that teachers in the schools sampled indicate that academic problems are more frequent and present serious challenges than social and behavioral challenges (refer to table 5).

**Table 5: Summary of Themes**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Indicator Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
Academic challenges	14	40.0	1
Social challenges	11	31.4	2
Behavioral / discipline challenges	10	28.6	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3</b>

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- All the three public schools have homogeneous instructional challenges.
- The significant themes that emerged were academic, social and behavioral, respectively.
- Teachers have identified academic problems as a major factor in all the schools sampled. Therefore, teachers need to be given the capacity to deal with these problems effectively to enhance their teaching capability and interaction with students.
- Even though social and discipline problems did not feature prominently in this study, teachers must also be provided with the capacity to deal with these problems so that they could teach more effectively.
- Further research should be conducted that include a diversified sample in an attempt to gain more insights into instructional challenges in public schools nationally.
- Parents have to be encouraged to be involved in educational issues to assist teachers deal more effectively with their children to enhance performance and curtail acts of deviance within the schools.

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