Why The Arts Are Not Part of The Examination Family: The Case of Botswana Primary Schools.

Author
Dr. Magdeline Chilalu Mannathoko
Senior Lecturer Department of Primary Education
Faculty of Education University of Botswana P/Bag 00702 Gaborone Botswana.
Email-mannathoko@mopipi.ub.bw

ABSTRACT
Botswana’s Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) curriculum comprises various disciplines which include: art and craft, music, physical education, design and technology, home economics, business studies, dance and drama. CAPA has not been part of the curriculum until 2001. Prior to its inclusion in 2002, disciplines within this curriculum were taught and assessed on voluntary bases. Like any other subject in the Botswana national curriculum, the requirements for the CAPA curriculum included assessment of pupils both formatively and summatively with examination items prepared by the Botswana Examination Council (BEC). Since its inception, CAPA has been excluded from the national examinations. This prompted this study which attempted to investigate the barriers to inclusion of the subject in the national examinations. The case study research design was adopted for the study and data was collected in the Capital City of Botswana (Gaborone) since the relevant population were based in that location. Thus, the study comprised the education directors, examination and testing head of department, internal school management team and the director for BEC. Data was collected through questionnaire and interview methods. The results revealed that although the officers studied were aware of the fact that CAPA was not part of the school curriculum, they stated that they were more factors accounting for the non-inclusion of CAPA in the school curriculum than they are aware of. Factors which contributed for exclusion of CAPA in the national curriculum included: uneven distribution of CAPA teachers to schools, lack of CAPA resources (both human and physical) in schools and lack of relevant knowledge and skills to address CAPA as an entity with different disciplines. The case study population concurred that there was no hope for the immediate action on assessment of CAPA at national level.

About the Author: Dr Magdeline Chilalu Mannathoko is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the University of Botswana. She is a teacher-trainer who trains student-teachers and education administrators to teach and administer art education in their respective schools and education centres. Her research interests include: curriculum development and evaluation, teacher education (teacher quality), education versus emerging issues and cultural versus contemporary arts education.

Keywords: Creative and Performing Arts, formative assessment, summative assessment, standardised tests, monitoring, Primary Leaving Examinations.
INTRODUCTION

Art educationists such as Chanda (1993), Dash (2006) and Merwe (2006) note that through the ages, African countries integrated and celebrated different aspects of life, politics, religion, personal beliefs through the arts. “In Botswana, during the pre-colonial era, art and craft activities were passed from one generation to another, through informal oral and practical education” (Mannathoko and Major 2013, p. 1). Despite its value, the arts have been largely ignored when their national educational priorities are being asserted. Arts education was seen as “an add-on—an elitist preserve for the artistically or, conversely, a holding room for those misfit kids who could not handle the regular curriculum—certainly not a “basic” not something for every student” (Walling, 2000, p. xi).

Although Batswana (Botswana citizens) greatly valued their arts, they are among those who viewed the arts as less important to the education system because the introduction of ‘modern’ education overlooked their importance and excluded them from the curriculum family. There was no guideline for teachers on what to teach. As a result, teachers have been giving Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) subject less comparative attention, treating it as a subject for the low achievers (Mannathoko & Major, 2013). This prompted the Report of the National Commission on Education (RNCE, 1993) to suggest that immediate initiatives should be taken to develop the Creative and Performing Arts curriculum in which the Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE, 1994) promptly responded to by advocating for the inclusion of “a wide range of practical subjects in the primary curriculum in order to help students develop an understanding and appreciation of technology, manipulative skills and familiarity with tools, equipment and materials” (Curriculum Development and Evaluation Division, 2002, p. 1). Thus, the Botswana Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) curriculum for lower primary (standard one to four) comprising of four subjects (art and craft, design and technology, music and physical education) was introduced in 2002. CAPA subjects were only introduced in the upper section of the primary school only in 2005. Upper primary comprises the four aforementioned subjects with the inclusion of business studies and home economics making them six (Curriculum Development and Evaluation Division, 2002/2005). The two CAPA programmes stipulate objectives to be achieved for each topic, attainment targets learners should attain at the end of each of these levels and assessment criteria during the process of teaching and learning (formative assessment) and at the end of the level (summative assessment). Thus, if effectively practised there would be feedback on the effectiveness of the implementation of the programme and hence growth of the CAPA disciplines.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Creative and Performing Arts like any other subject in the curriculum was designed to meet the requirements of the Revised National Policy on Education (1994) and attainment targets were included in the curriculum to guide teachers on what is expected of pupils when they complete both lower and upper primary levels. Thus, intentions of the syllabus in relation to practical subjects are clearly defined in both lower and upper primary CAPA syllabi hence there is need to monitor progress through assessment and evaluation tools to get feedback on the teaching and learning of the specific disciplines. Although the Curriculum Development and Evaluation Unit (2002/05) recommended that there should be formative and summative assessment of CAPA as a subject, this has not yet been implemented since its inception in 2002. The study therefore, attempted to investigate barriers to inclusion of Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) in the primary school national examination.

Research Questions

Three research questions were identified to help focus of the study.

What hinders the inclusion of CAPA in the national tests and examination?
How is CAPA monitored at national level?
How best is the effectiveness of teaching the arts quantified or qualified at national level without common assessment?

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**General Information on Assessment**

Assessment in education context refers to collection and interpretation of information about learning and instruction for the purpose of improving teaching and students’ learning and development. It is a continuous process and uses a variety of procedures established with the intention to understand and improve students’ learning. Assessment is categorised into two classifications which are Formative and Summative Assessment; each with a distinct purpose. Burtler and Winnie (1995) say that formative assessment “is commonly viewed as assessment for learning in which the focus is on monitoring student response to and progress with instruction” (p. 3). It provides immediate feedback to both the teacher and the learner regarding the learning process. On the other hand, summative assessment according to Black, Harrison, Lee and Marshall (2003) commonly refers to assessment of learning in which the focus is on determining what the student has learnt at the end of a unit of instruction or at the end of a grade level usually measured through standardised assessment.

Standardised tests refer to “exam composed administered and scored in the same for everyone taking them. Each test taker receives the same exam in the same format and is given the material and the amount of time to complete it with special exemption for disabilities” (Butler and Winnie, 1995, p. 57). Thus, summative assessment helps determine the extent to which the instructional and learning goals have been met. Botswana education system practices this type of testing but with the exclusion of CAPA subject at both lower and upper levels despite the fact that the Curriculum Development and Evaluation Unit (2002) within the CAPA syllabus, state that; the syllabus will be assessed in…formative assessment where teachers are required to construct tests and quizzes to assess learners performance throughout the course…summative assessment where teachers are required to construct termly tests for each standard to assess what learners have attained throughout the course. A national test based on the attainment targets will be conducted at the end of standard 4 by Examinations Research and Testing Division (p. 2.)

Moreover, Curriculum Development and Evaluation Unit (2005) within the upper primary CAPA syllabus, note that; “the assessment will be school based and an end of standard seven examination administered as per procedures set by Examination Research and Testing Division” (p.3). Despite the aforementioned recommendations, CAPA is excluded from neither the national standard four attainment tests nor standard seven Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE). In support of standardised testing, Popham (1999) argues that it is an effective model of assessment of learners’ achievement explaining that it accurately reflects state performance and an indication of how many students are achieving the established grade-level expectations. Thus, it is empirical to argue for the inclusion of CAPA subject in the national examination family. Although formative and summative assessment procedures serve different purposes, they have a common goal of giving feedback to the curriculum development, teaching and learning status, therefore; they should be part of the teaching and learning processes.

**Assessment Procedures in the Arts Disciplines**

Different arts educationists have acknowledged that the arts are basic to the acquisition of a well-rounded education. They provide meaning to the learning and serve as a vehicle for acquiring the skills advocated by educational reformers for example, problem solving skills, flexibility, creativity, critical thinking, self-reliance, persistence and confidence. Thus, the arts assessments measure the extent to which students know the content and what they can do in the arts disciplines. Arts assessment is designed to be an on-going part
of the learning process whereby both the process and the product are assessed (Preedy, 2001). Sharing the same sentiment, Bloomfield (2000) contends that critical understanding of the arts incorporates the critical understanding and on-going evaluative process that are inherent within the arts. As a result, scholars argue that assessment about output, process and problem solving stages is vital in formative and summative assessment and it is based on the way children progress and achieve. Assessment should be based on explicit objectives that clearly identify the knowledge and skills expected of students. Arguing for the assessment of the arts, Willian (2006) states that assessment in the arts is not only possible but necessary and urge every school or district to develop reliable valid and useful techniques for assessing students’ learning in the arts. Bloomfield (2000) also contributes to this discussion by lamenting that the quality of teaching means knowing what to expect from children and how to improve or maintain standards, teachers should observe the works of arts that are exhibited or performed by children, whether paintings, dances, dramatic presentations, musical compositions or presentations in the integrated mode, and will then form personal judgments about what they have seen. Making judgments about children’s work and any assessment of the arts is integral to the taught programme although the teacher is ultimately responsible for summative assessment (p. 129).

In this regard, a valid assessment of arts program not only would consider the extent to which the school provides all students with the opportunity to learn the arts, but also would reflect the variety of arts offerings and their success in achieving the diverse types of learning (Marsh, 2007). This was found lacking in Botswana primary education system as there are no standardised tests for CAPA from the Botswana Examination Council.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study used qualitative case study method to investigate factors that hindered the inclusion of CAPA subject in the national Primary School Leaving Examinations. Qualitative approach was adopted considering Gay, Mills and Airasian’s (2011) advice that “qualitative research seeks to probe deeply into the researcher’s setting to obtain in-depth understandings about the way things are and how the participants in the context perceive them” (p. 12) whereas; a case study was chosen as it answers the how and why questions (Yin, 2003) and hence allowed me to get a detailed and holistic account of the case at hand. Data was collected in the Southern District, in particular Gaborone City, since the main population was based in the area and data was gathered through questionnaire and semi-interview methods. The population comprised of the Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation Division officers, Botswana Examination Council (BEC) representative and internal school management team. The Curriculum Development and Evaluation (CDE) Division personnel took part in the study by virtue of their positions as curriculum developers and evaluators whereas; BEC was mandated to conduct school examinations and any other examinations for the Ministry of Education and Skills Development while internal school management team was involved because they are the curriculum implementers and direct supervisors for teachers’ instruction, pupils’ learning and assessment. A sample was chosen for easy management. This included: the Director (Curriculum Development and Evaluation Unit) and two Principal Education Officers (PEO) in the department and the Director (BEC) and two Principal Education officers in that department. In addition, three school heads and three practical subjects’ senior teachers from the three case study schools were part of the study making six representatives. Schools were seen to be vital to the study as they are responsible for making sure that examinations at school level take place whereas; the senior teachers for practical subjects monitors the learning progress of CAPA subject. The overall total of participants was twelve. The school management responded to the questionnaire while the rest of the stakeholders were engaged in semi-interview. Questionnaire was preferred to supplement interview data as it is known to be a relatively
economic method because it can be given to a large population within a short time (Kane and O’Reilly – De Brun, 2001). On the other hand, semi-structured interview was opted for as it allows the interviewer a chance to probe responses and investigate motives and feeling from the respondents (Johnson and Christensen, 2004). Questionnaire and interview data have been presented separately to avoid confusion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Questionnaire Data from Internal School Management Team

Questionnaire was administered to internal school management team (School Heads and Senior Teachers for Practical Subjects) to find out the extent to which schools assessed and monitored CAPA at school level, since it is not assessed at national level. It further sought to find out whether external education offices responsible for examinations and curriculum monitoring used the school records to evaluate CAPA progress nationally. The first section was in the form of Likert Scale while the second asked seven structured questions.

Five Likert Scale Questions
SA – Strongly agree
N – Neutral
SD – Strongly Disagree
D - Disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers in my school teach CAPA effectively despite it not being included in the national examination</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers in my school do not teach CAPA effectively because it is not examined at national level</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no need to examine CAPA at national level because it is less important</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPA cannot be assessed through standardised tests</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of examining CAPA impacts negatively on the teaching and learning of the subject</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching or learning a subject that is not examined is demotivating</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We examine and analyse CAPA results at school level</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have record of pupils’ CAPA progress, analysed and well filed at school level</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We submit record of pupils’ CAPA progress at regional level annually for analysis</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We submit pupils’ CAPA progress to the Ministry of Education and Skills Development annually for analysis</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We submit pupils’ CAPA progress to the Examination and Testing Unit for compilation termly for analysis</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We submit pupils’ CAPA progress to the Examination and Testing Unit for compilation annually for analysis</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite CAPA not being part of the national examination, 4 (67%) of the 6 school management team said their schools taught it effectively while 2 (33%) disagreed with the statement. All the 6 respondents viewed CAPA as an important subject and advocated for its inclusion in the PSLE. However 5 (83%) believed that the subject cannot be examined through standardised tests while the remaining participant was neutral. 5
(83%) of the management team were of the view that lack of examining CAPA can impact negatively on the teaching and learning of the subject and hence demotivate teachers and 1 (17%) disagreed. 3 (50%) which is half of the participants concurred that they examined and analysed CAPA results at school level and also kept records safely and the other 3 said they did not examine or keep record of the subject. 3 (50%) of the respondents who said they examined the subject and keep record said the record was submitted annually to the education region offices for analysis while the rest disagreed with the statement. All participants noted that CAPA progress record was never required by either the Ministry of Education and Skills Development or the Examination and Testing Department for analysis.

Structured Questions
Question 1 sought to find out what participants thought hindered the inclusion of CAPA in the national examination. Responses included: teachers’ limited knowledge and skills in CAPA disciplines, inadequacy of relevant resources including labs and equipment and the challenge of subject combination without specialists on the ground. The second question was to find out if the issue of CAPA examinations was ever one of the agendas in school management forums. This is what they noted: ‘no we never talk about it’, ‘we are only encouraged to assess the subject at school level’; ‘no one cares about it being in the PSLE” because of negative attitudes’; ‘no one bothers since we don’t know the subject’; ‘CAPA is a problem even to the ones who developed it and no one can dream of examining it because of lack of knowledge’, ‘no one can examine CAPA when they cannot even teach or supervise teachers on the subject because it is difficult’. The question which followed asked respondents when they think CAPA will be part of PSLE and the six participants’ notes showed that they had no idea of the implementation date. The question on how the case study schools monitored CAPA progress at school level produced very distinct responses which include: not monitoring the subject, giving termly theoretical tests and grading it like any other subject, every teacher does what they see best for them since no one knows what is expected, “I never bother myself with something I don’t know because the implementers also don’t examine it” “teachers assess it when they feel like because their supervisors have no say on what they don’t know”, “it is free style, teachers assess it the way they understand it because the combination of the discipline brought more confusion but we are expected to teach and assess the subject”. The question which followed sought the overall performance of CAPA in specific schools and 3 (50%) respondents mentioned ‘not sure’ while the remaining 3 said it was average. The next question asked what schools did with CAPA results after testing pupils and responses showed no proper analysis and profile of the results. They said; marks were recorded in the scheme books whenever there is a test written and kept by individual teachers. However, they all noted that they see it important for CAPA to be included in the national examinations to recognise pupils who excel in the area and encourage them to continue with it at higher education. The last question sought participants’ views on what they thought could be done to have CAPA included in the national PSLE. Extracts of responses include: teachers to be sent for further studies as some of the topic objectives need knowledgeable and skilled personnel, providing relevant materials, equipment and labs and separation of CAPA disciplines. The main inhibitors of inclusion of CAPA in the national examinations revealed by the internal school management are: lack of specialists CAPA teachers, lack of purpose-built facilities, lack of relevant materials and equipment and the confusion resulting from the combination of various arts disciplines as one subject under the umbrella CAPA. These according to 83% of the respondents could demotivate teachers and hence results in negligence of the subject. Despite CAPA’s exclusion in the PSLE, 4 (67%) of the 6 school management team said their schools taught it effectively. The exclusion of the subject in the PSLE seems not to be a concern to the school management team because the findings reveal that it has never been part of the issues discussed in their national forums. However, they all noted that they see it important for CAPA to be included in the national examinations to identify pupils’ talents and skills and encourage them
to continue with it at higher education. Data further shows that there was no proper monitoring of CAPA at school level in the case study schools hence individual teachers did what they saw suitable for their classes. Nevertheless, 3 (50%) respondents revealed that they kept CAPA records at school level and submitted them to their regional offices for analysis although there was no uniformity on the assessment procedures. In conclusion, the management team suggested that teachers should be sent for further studies considering that some of the topics were a big challenge and needed specialised personnel. This is in concurrence with Givens (2000) who emphasises that where there is curriculum development or curriculum change, there should be teacher development. Participants further advised that relevant resources such as labs and materials should be provided and CAPA disciplines separated.

**Interview Data for CDE and BEC Personnel**

Interview comprised questions for Directors and Principal Education Officers from the Curriculum Development and Evaluation Division and the Botswana Examination Council. The first question sought to find out reasons hindering the inclusion of CAPA in the Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE). There were inconsistencies in responses to this question as shown in extracts below:

**CDE Officers**

Inadequacy of resources (CAPA experts, materials & equipment), no purpose built facilities, poor distribution of teachers-practical subjects specialists are concentrated in one area, Teacher Training Institutions do not train CAPA teachers, CAPA not offered in some schools therefore; it was going to be unfair to examine the subject to all schools, new concept of combining subjects makes it difficult as to how it can be examined.

**BEC Officers**

Standard 4 attainment test was never meant to go into the skills areas; the assessment was basically designed to assess literacy and numeracy skills (Setswana, English and Mathematics), learners not equitably resourced resulting in them not taught uniformly, Inadequacy of CAPA experts as Teacher Training Institutions do not prepare teachers to teach a combination of CAPA disciplines, problem of Primary Education put under two ministries (Local Government and Central Government), waiting for the Ministry of Education and Skills Development to give a go ahead.

Several factors were identified as barriers to the inclusion of CAPA in the PSLE as shown in the responses for question 1 of the interview data. However, responses such as; inadequacy of resources, teachers’ unpreparedness to handle CAPA disciples and combination of the arts as one subject were mentioned by both the internal school management team and CDE and BEC personnel. Bloomfield (2000) argues that “in order to receive and provide high quality teaching, children and teachers need to be supplied by adequate resource base” (p. 137). In addition, Taylor (1992) cited in Mannathoko (2009) oppose a system which combines the arts disciplines as one subject, arguing in support of the differences between them. CDE officers also identified uneven distribution of CAPA specialist’s teachers and the problem of some schools not offering CAPA as some of the aspects which affected the introductory of CAPA in PSLE. On the other hand, BEC officers viewed the issue of two ministries attached to schools as one of the barriers. Findings in Mannathoko’s (2009) study shows that the issue of shortage of CAPA specialists and inefficiency of distribution of CAPA materials to schools due to confusion of the education system run by two ministries have been a serious concern far back. However, one of the BEC officers said they were ready to include CAPA in the national examinations but awaiting a go ahead from the Ministry of Education and Skills Development.

The second question was to find out who was responsible to see to it that CAPA was examined at national level. In response, all the respondents mentioned Botswana Examination Council. However, one of the BEC officers stated that both the Botswana Examination Council and all stakeholders (Ministry Of Education and
Skills Development, Curriculum Development and Evaluation Department and BEC) were responsible for examining the subject; while one officer from ECE listed two departments (Curriculum Development and Evaluation Unit as developers and BEC as the mother body of exams) and two ministries (Local Government and Education, Skills and Development specifically Teacher Training Department) as accountable for examining CAPA. Thus, responses to this question reveal that the responsibility of examinations mostly relied with BEC although two officers held both the Botswana Examination Council and all the education department stakeholders responsible for examining CAPA.

Moreover, the third question sought participants’ views concerning the exclusion of CAPA in the national examinations. Some of the direct responses are as follows:

**CDE Officers**

Practical subjects are enjoyed by learners so CAPA as a combination of them would require schools to be furbished so that there is access and equity by all learners.

Writing examinations is stakeholder based. All stakeholders should meet and come up with conclusion on how to go about with including writing the exam.

**BEC Personnel**

CAPA should wait in the assessment. The government should resource the schools with human and physical resources first. Assessment is not a problem as all the CAPA disciplines can be examined in one paper in various sections but the teaching methodologies for the subject is a big challenge.

The combination of the subject is nonsense-the testing of practical subjects would be expensive so it should be reviewed.

The responses to question 3 still shows emphasised of the combination of CAPA discipline and lack of both human and physical resources as the main challenges to can examine CAPA.

Following question 3, participants were asked if there were any plans to include CAPA in the national examinations. Below are some of the responses exactly as pronounced by participants:

**CDE Officers**

I do not know but the plan is there.

Whether the Curriculum Development and Evaluation Department is ready or not, this issue needs a number of stakeholders eg. Curriculum department plan the curriculum, teachers implement it through the primary education department’s supervision and BEC makes sure the exam is written.

Yes, as long as the Ministry of Education and Skills Development and the Department of CDE are ready.

**BEC Staff**

Still waiting for the Ministry of Education and Skills Development to confirm the availability of resources then we will start our procedures to examine the subject. A follow-up question was asked: ‘What if they say yes?’ and the respondent said; “we once gave the Ministry of Education and Skills Development a sample paper, that means it would take two years to sample the paper and train teachers on how to assess CAPA; once the ministry gives us feedback on the papers we gave them we will start.

Plans are always there, but it would not be worthy to examine a subject that is not uniformly taught. The government should provide materials and trained personnel.

Yes, because the curriculum is implemented in schools.

5 (83%) of the 6 participants’ responses show that plans were there as long as barriers mentioned earlier on were addressed while the remaining respondent did not come out clearly except emphasising that “whether the Curriculum Development and Evaluation Department is ready or not, this issue needs a number of stakeholders…”.
Question five required information on how the education offices evaluated and assessed the performance of CAPA since it was not examined at national level. These are some of the responses from CDE Officers: ‘we are relying on what is being taught at school’, It is difficult to evaluate because of lack of manpower and lack of support from other stakeholders like BEC, ‘CDE’ does not evaluate or assess pupils’ performances, we assess and monitor the progress of the programme itself. We look at the challenges and coming up with solutions to improve the programme’. BEC personnel responded as follows: ‘we depend on what is happening at school’, ‘obviously, since we are not conducting examination for CAPA, there is nothing to evaluate or assess at the moment’, ‘we assess through school visits and monitoring’. A follow-up question was asked to this question to find out how often they visited schools and the concerned respondent said they monitored implementation through PEOs as they were the ones visiting schools. I further asked if it was enough to only monitor implementation and the officer said ‘It is not enough but we don’t have sufficient funds to visit schools’.

It is evident from the responses that there was no proper monitoring of CAPA performance from the education offices just like at school level despite that the Curriculum Development and Evaluation Department (2002) emphasise in the CAPA syllabus that pupils’ results should be appropriately monitored and analysed annually. This could be because teaching and assessment of CAPA is not controlled and hence testing is not standardised or there is no assessment at all. Merwe, (2007) advises that standardised tests scores of students are one piece of information for school leaders to use to make judgement about teaching effectiveness and such scores can be part of an overall comprehensive evaluation. One therefore; would wonder how the CDE department can just be interested on whether the curriculum is implemented or not, without diagnosing its achievements so as to judge its effectiveness.

The final question was to find out from the interviewees what they think could be the impact of not examining CAPA at national level. Responses included: teachers not teaching CAPA effectively as opposed to examined subjects, it can stifle learners’ talents as teachers tend to ignore non-examinable subjects, teachers could use CAPA times to teach examinable subjects, it affects teachers’ morale, priority might shift from CAPA to other subjects because it is not examined, many pupils could not take it serious since it is not examined, teachers could focus on output than what the child is getting, learners could have an opportunity of developing skills as they won’t be any pressure of exams on the teacher. The findings from 5 (83%) respondents outline the negative impacts which could be a result of not examining the subject in contrast with 1(17%) participant who viewed the exclusion of CAPA from the PSLE as an opportunity for teachers and pupils; as the subject will be approached without pressure of the examination.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has established that the main hindrances of examining CAPA at national level include: lack of relevant resources (both human and physical), lack of relevant knowledge and skills from both teachers and education examination officers, uneven distribution of CAPA teacher specialists to schools and problem of limited skills to teaching and assessing CAPA as a subject with an entity with different disciplines. Thus, the subject was not effectively monitored at school level and at external education offices responsible for curriculum evaluation and those for PSLE. Nevertheless, 67% of the internal management team mentioned that the subject was taught effectively in their schools. (50%) of them revealed that they kept CAPA records at school level and submitted the results to their regional offices for analysis although there was no uniformity on the assessment procedures. CDE and BEC officers concurred that the main personnel responsible for examination was BEC although two emphasised that all the education department stakeholders should be held responsible. The study therefore; suggest that all the stakeholders meet including experts from various CAPA disciplines and discuss strategies schools and the examination
department could adopt for effective monitoring of the CAPA subject which include its inclusion in the national examinations.

REFERENCES