PUPIL BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN GRADE NINE: A CASE OF SELECTED SCHOOLS IN LUFWANYAMA DISTRICT IN THE COPPERBELT PROVINCE OF ZAMBIA

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

LUSAKA

2009

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DECLARATION

I, Mabvuto Longwe, hereby declare that this dissertation, submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Educational Administration, is original. It is entirely my own work except where reference to other sources has been indicated. I further certify that the script has not previously been presented for a degree to this or any other university/faculty.

Mabvuto Longwe

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, my late father Mr. Sekanitole Longwe and my mother Mrs. Tamanyauli Zimba - Longwe for bringing me up and shaping my future. My Wife, Susan Banda-Longwe, (Ama S), for her support and taking care of our children, while I was pursuing my studies and my beloved children, Nelly, Peter and Boyd for enduring long days of longing for my presence at home and giving me the much needed emotional support.

PROVERBS 22- 6

"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it". [NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION]

APPROVAL

This dissertation by Mabvuto Longwe is approved as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Educational Administration of the University of Zambia

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to the following people for their invaluable contribution towards the success of this study. My Supervisor, Dr. Sophie Kasonde-Ng'andu, without whom this piece of work would have been impossible to complete. I shall always live to treasure her patience and encouragement. My wife, Ama S, for her support and encouragement and sacrifices she made for me to achieve what I have accomplished. Her caring, understanding and support encouraged me to continue with my degree work under circumstances very difficult to endure. My study colleagues and friends for their encouragement and inspiration. A special mention is to a colleague, Mr. Jean Bosco Ntahontuye who provided me with accommodation during my whole period of doing this masters programme. I also appreciate all respondents in the sampled schools who contributed much in making this research possible. Finally, I thank 'Almighty Jehovah God' for giving me strength to complete this investigation.

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ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECZ	Examinations Council of Zambia
EFA	Education For All
HIV	Human Immune-Deficiency Virus
MoE	Ministry of Education
PTA	Parent and Teacher Association
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of pupil background characteristics on academic performance among upper basic school pupils in Lufwanyama district in the Copper belt Province of Zambia. The main concern that prompted this study in this district was the poor pass-rate recorded among grade nine pupils since its formation as a district in 1997.

The study was also prompted by the need for improved pupil performance at grade nine level in Lufwanyama district. Given increasing pressures on the Government of the Republic of Zambia's spending on education, there was need to implement strategies focusing on improving pupil learning. The contribution of the household learning environment was often ignored in studies of pupil performance in Sub-Saharan Africa. Pupils spent significant time at home doing homework, preparing for class and studying for tests so their experiences at home should be related to their performance in school.

Although much research has been done in industrialised societies such as the United States of America, Europe and Asia to determine how pupil background characteristics affect academic achievement, few researchers have directly studied developing countries such as Zambia. In addition, researchers have shown variations in findings of the effect of pupil background characteristics on academic performance. Thus, it is not easy to generalize these findings to the Zambian situations due to differences in social, historical, cultural and economic settings.

The study used the 2008 Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) public examination data collected from Lufwanyama District Education Board Secretary (DEBS). A representative sample of seventy-six grade nine pupils from four upper basic schools was used. The main instruments used to collect data in the study were the pupils' questionnaire and the teachers' questionnaire.

A survey method was used with seventy-six pupil respondents comprising forty males and thirty-six females. These were drawn from two peri- urban basic schools and two rural basic schools making a total of four randomly selected upper basic schools.

Data analysis was done using two methods. These were Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The information collected through interviews was analysed by coding it into themes, while the information from the questionnaires was analysed through the SPSS- generated tables, diagrams and percentages.

The findings of the study suggest considerable variation in pupil performance. The study revealed that there were positive relationships between number of books at home, the language spoken at home (combination of English and Vernacular) and pupil's performance. Further, the analysis of the quantitative data revealed that there was a negative relationship between pupil's age, distance of pupil's home from school, and family size and pupils' teachers' rating scores.

The study also revealed that other pupil background characteristics associated with higher pupils' academic performance were the presence of electricity or reliable lighting at home, regular school attendance, and parental interest. These characteristics were found to lead to the extension of learning time in one way or the other a factor somewhat associated with higher pupil performance.

In view of the research findings, the researcher made recommendations among which were in tandem with enforcement of automatic promotion, it may be necessary to administer regular tests and homework that would identify pupils' weaknesses, and address them through remedial teaching to ensure acquisition of the desired levels of competency. The government decision to have books and supplementary reading materials in the hands of pupils is a move in the right direction. The challenge is the need to train teachers on effective use of textbooks. Furthermore, parents and educators need to be equipped with skills that would enable them appreciate the values of learning through Parent-Teacher Association- initiated workshops and seminars.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Education in Zambia is intended to serve individual's, social and economic well-being and to enhance the quality of life for all. The Ministry of Education (MoE), under its educational policy *Educating Our Future* of 1996, emphasizes that the child is at the centre of the entire education process which exists solely for the sake of the learner. It also recognizes that each child is unique, with his or her own individuality and personality, fashioned in family and community backgrounds that are themselves unique.

Zambia, as a member of the United Nations (UN) is a signatory to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human rights. All the nations of the world declared that education, as an instrument of change, is a right for everyone. Individual member nations appear to have put in place various measures in regard to this human right (Bishop, 1989). However this right has not yet been enjoyed by all in Zambia despite frantic efforts that have been put in place.

The UNESCO (2006:1) report acknowledges that despite notable efforts by countries around the globe to ensure the right to education for all, the following realities persisted more than 40 years (1990) after that declaration:

- More than 100 million children, including at least 60 million girls, have no access to primary schooling;
- More than 960 million adults two-thirds of whom are women, are illiterate, and functional illiteracy is a significant problem in all countries, industrialized and developing;
- More than one-third of the world's adults have no access to the printed knowledge, new skills and technologies that could improve the quality of their lives and help them shape, and adapt to, social and cultural changes; and

- More than 100 million children and countless adults fail to complete basic education programs; millions more satisfy the attendance requirements but not acquire essential knowledge and skill (UNESCO, 2006).

The 1990 World Conferences on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand, was organized in response to this gloomy picture. As stated above there was wide spread concern over the inadequacy and deterioration of the education system, as shown by the figures above. All in attendance at this conference agreed to take the necessary steps to universalize primary education and massively reduce illiteracy by 2000, as well as to:

- Expand early childhood education
- Improve learning achievement
- Reduce the male-female literacy gap
- Expand basic education opportunities for youths and adults
- Use all available communication channels to promote knowledge, skills and values for better living.

In 2000, ten years after the Jomtien conference, Oxfam (2000:4) considered it a "lost decade" because there were still 125 million children who had never attended school and another 150 million who would start school but drop out before they could read or write. The Dakar conference shifted the year of achieving EFA goals to 2015 and put more emphasis on some issues like girls education. This is reflected in the six EFA goals that the conference adopted to the reaffirm the 1990 Jomtien conference.

The six EFA goals:

1. To expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
2. To ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory, good quality primary education;
3. To ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;

4. To achieve a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
5. To eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and to achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality; and
6. To improve all aspects of the equality of education and to ensure excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. (MoE, 2005; UNESCO, 2007).

The contentious issue about these goals is that they are expected to be achieved by all member states before 2015. Zambia like many developing counties, has failed to achieve these EFA goals (Oxfam, 2000) as reflected in various UNESCO annual reports since 2000. This has created a need to look for alternative ways of tackling the same problem of giving meaningful education for all. It is for this reason that this research tries to find out if pupil background characteristics could supplement school education to improve pupils' performance.

After the 1990 Jomtien conference, the Zambian government formed a National Task Force to initiate and monitor EFA activities and programmes. The Task Force comprised Government Ministries, Non Governmental organization (NGOs), bilateral and multilateral donor agencies and the University of Zambia. Different committee organs carried out EFA decision-making processes. The following are some of the committees formed:-

1. National Steering Committee for the Programme for the Advancement of Girls Education (PAGE) at Ministry of Education Headquarters has been managing all activities, related to PAGE.
2. The Department of Child Affairs in the Ministry of Sports, Youth and Child Development to co-ordinate activities related to policy on early childhood care, education and development.

3. The Ministry of Education had established the Basic Education Sub-sector Investment Programme (BESSIP) in which it worked with co-operating partners.
4. Educational Broadcasting Services (EBS) in the Ministry of Education carried out educational broadcasting.
5. Zambia Community Schools Secretariat (ZCSS) co-ordinated policy and activities of NGOs involved in running community schools.
6. Zambia Pre-school Association Closely Co-ordinated Early Childhood Care Department activities (UNESCO, 2000).

These efforts stated above had a great impact especially on enrolment. A positive impact on girls' education was felt as well. The MoE (2005:24) report has shown the enrolment of girls in schools has improved to the point where there seems to be very little disparity on enrolment between boys and girls in primary schools. It is the retention rate which is very low. The education system currently in practice in Zambia is 7-5-4. This means that the system has seven years of primary school education, five years of secondary school education, and four years of university education. This is slowly being replaced with 9-3-4 system.

The new system has nine years of Basic education, three years of High school education and four years of University education. These three stages of education have promotion examinations. Those who do not "pass" the grade seven examinations do not proceed further with their education unless they repeat grade seven and "pass". The majority of the so called "failures" are just pushed out of the education system (Kelly 1999). For such ones, their basic education has been reduced to seven years only. The few who proceed to grade eight are again 'sieved' at grade nine, implying that currently there are two types of basic education- for seven and nine years (Serpell, 1993; Kelly 1999). This throw- away- education system has created a pyramidal structure of education which is not compatible with EFA as the majority of these 'push out' eventually become part of statistics for the illiterates. Such scenarios could have made many Zambians lose hope in education. This in turn affects not just the enrolment of pupils into school but also the progression of those in school. It may be said that the

loss of confidence in education as a tool to solving one's social and economic problems could affect EFA's enrolment, progression and completion rates.

Out of the 189 599 pupils who sat for the Examinations Council of Zambia's Grade nine public examinations in 2007, only 96 024 pupils "passed" and 93 575 pupils were pushed out of the education system. When we add the numbers of those who left school and those 'pushed out', we come up with a total of 122 712 pupils who are thrown away into the community. These statistics are shown below:

Table1: Grade 9 Examination results for 2007

Province	Pupils entered for Grade 9 examinations	Pupils sat for Grade 9 examinations	Pupils selected for Grade 10	Pupils not selected ("push out or squeezed out")	Pupils who left school before examinations
Northern	20 534	18 641	7 788	10 853	1 893
Luapula	12 975	11 673	6 826	4 847	1 302
Southern	28 493	24 488	13 003	11 485	4 005
Eastern	18 647	15 749	8 403	7 346	2 898
Copper belt	49 754	42 595	21 071	21 524	7 159
North Western	12 013	10 366	5 101	5 265	1 647
Central	23 850	20 809	10 232	10 577	3 041
Western	11 992	10 392	4 736	5 656	1 600
Lusaka	40 478	34 886	18 864	16 022	5 592
Total Zambia	218 736	189 599	96 024	93 575	29 137

Source: Examinations Council of Zambia (2008)

These statistics led a catholic priest Father Derrick Muwima to make this comment in The Post Newspaper (2007):

> I think that the Ministry of Education and indeed all Zambians should question the trend by which we throw away half of our young people who sit for examinations every year citing failure to reach the cut off point. I have never seen a country in the West or Global North that throws out its young people out of school like this. Education is a universal human right and we in Zambia are denying our young people that right, sad and shameful indeed!

In order to contribute to the provision of quality education to all children in Zambia and work towards achieving the EFA goals, the Ministry of Education has been liberalized and decentralized in accordance with the democratic principles of local governance. The Ministry of Education's principal thrust is to give community participation in education towards meeting three objectives:

1. Education provision;
2. School improvement; and
3. Strengthening school-community linkages (MoE , 1996: 135)

The last two objectives form the basis of this research. School improvement and strengthening school-community linkages involve several objectives. The most important ones to which parents and guardians should be directed are raising the learning achievements of pupils, increasing the levels of access, participation, retention and completion rates. The establishment of Education Boards by the ministry of education serves to strengthen the bonds between school and parents / guardians of school pupils.

The closer the parent is to the education of the child, the greater the impact on child development and educational achievement. The family is the starting point of educating a child before the school. Commenting on the importance of family in the implementation of education for all beyond Jomtien, Little (2006: 233) say:

> Learning begins at birth. This calls for early childhood care and initial education. These can be provided through arrangements involving families, communities or institutional programs, as appropriate. The main delivery system for the basic education of children outside the family is primary schooling. Primary education must be universal, ensure that the basic learning needs and opportunities of all children are satisfied, and taken into account the culture, needs, and opportunities of the community.

The focus of family as a starting point of a child's education is in line with the above point. School teachers, school managers and education officers at district, provincial and national levels, as well as other interested parties need to understand the importance of pupil background characteristics in order to contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) goals in Zambia. The Jomtien World Conference on EFA acknowledges the importance of family participation in the learning of their children (UNESCO, 2004). Bennett (1993:14) supports the above view on family being the focal point in the education of child:

> Parents should give their children the 'inner engines' of learning: that is personal and social skills such as confidence, motivation, caring, common sense, perseverance and a sense of team work, which enable children to learn and achieve in the school context.

Statement of the Problem

Since the formation of Lufwanyama District in 1997 in the Copper belt Province of Zambia, concern has been expressed about the performance of learners in Upper Basic Schools in public examinations. For instance, in 2007 only 408 pupils were selected to grade 10 out of 913 pupils who sat for Grade nine examinations (see appendix I). Despite the concern, few studies have been undertaken to critically evaluate the experiences of these learners in their home and school backgrounds. Consequently, we cannot predict whether or not the pupil background variables do hinder learners in Lufwanyama district from reaching the level of educational achievement of which they are capable. This study, therefore, was set out to examine pupils' background characteristics and academic performance in selected upper basic schools in Lufwanyama District.

Purpose of the study

The study sought to find out the effect of the pupil home background characteristics on academic performance of grade nine pupils.

Objectives of the study

1. To investigate the effect of socio-economic status of parents/caregivers on grade nine pupils' academic performance.
2. To establish the link between family size and grade nine pupils' academic performance.
3. To determine the effect of gender roles on grade nine pupils' academic performance.

Research questions

1. What is the effect of socio-economic status of parents/ caregivers on grade nine pupils' academic performance?
2. What is the link between family size and grade nine pupils' academic performance?
3. What is the effect of gender roles on grade nine pupils' academic performance?

Significance of the study

The findings of the study may enlighten policy makers, development planners, education planners and managers at national, provincial and district levels, school managers, teachers, supporters of children's education and parents understand the importance of pupils' background characteristics in order to contribute to achieving the EFA goals in Zambia and improve pupils' academic performance. It is hoped that the study will provide additional information on the improvement of academic achievement of learners.

Limitations of the study

Due to financial constraints and limited time, the study was limited to four upper basic schools in Lufwanyama District. This means that the findings may not be generalized to the entire country but could only apply to the sampled schools. Furthermore, the researcher could not collect additional data about parental variables like parental income and parenting styles besides the educational levels

and parental occupation. Educational level and parental occupation are a good substitute to the measurement of socio-economic status. According to the 1999/2000 Human Development Report for Zambia, there is a high correlation between socio-economic group and level of education and occupation. Therefore, by establishing the educational level and occupation of parents it is most likely that they will be closely associated with a particular socio-economic group.

Definition of terms

In this study the concepts below have the following operational meanings:

Academic performance: Ability to attain certain competences or skills in school subjects usually measured by the test scores or by marks assigned by teachers in certain class exercises.

Home background: the socio-cultural and socio-economic aspects of a pupil's family.

Socio-economic background: the level indicative of the social and economic position of the pupil's family in terms of parents/guardians' occupation, income and education.

Parental/ Guardians' education: the level of formal education attained by pupils' parents/ guardians.

Parental/ Guardians' income: the amount of money parents/guardians realise out of their employment, business monthly (an approximation).

Family size: a count of the total number of members in a family, including the number of siblings and other adults present in the household.

Cultural capital: refers to knowledge of certain cultural forms, such as traditional music, traditional games, drama, literature, history, fine arts and language.

Gender: a socially and culturally constructed element of relationships based on perceived differences between men and women.

Theoretical Framework

Two theoretical perspectives guided the work for conceptualizing optimal relations between home and school: Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory and

Vygotsky's (1978) socio–cultural theory. Bronfenbrenner suggests that development occurs in an ecological context consisting of several layers of embedded systems or settings. He theorized that development is facilitated when there are linkages between the settings, such as the home and the school, that "encourage the development of mutual trust, a positive orientation, good consensus between settings, and an evolving balance of power responsive to action on behalf of the developing person" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979: 216). Further, he states that development is facilitated when there is a two-way communication between the settings, and when "valid information, advice, and experience relevant to one setting are made available, on a continuing basis, to the other" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:217).

The second perspective is that of Vygotsky (1978), who states that knowledge and understanding are socially constructed, influenced by the social, historical and cultural contexts of the participants as they interact. Vygotsky (1978) assumes that social interaction and children's direct participation in authentic cultural activities that is necessary for their optimum development. Learning in social settings is responsible for many of the abilities we have. According to Vygotsky (1978), the way children think about the world around them and the issue of causation can be influenced by the religious and scientific beliefs of a culture.

Vygotsky's (1978) social cultural theory asserts that culture is a prime determinant of individual development and every human develops in the context of a culture including the culture of the home environment in which he or she is enmeshed. He also says that since much of what a child learns comes from the culture around him or her and much of the child's problem solving is mediated through adult's help, it is thus wrong to focus on a child in isolation. Interactions with surrounding culture and social agents such as parents (school teachers) and more competent peers contribute significantly to a child's intellectual development (Luangala, 2005).

Organization of the Study

Chapter one has given a synopsis of the background to the present study. Further, an attempt has been made to explain certain concepts that are used in the study in order to make them clear to the reader.

The second chapter reviews related literature on the effects of home background characteristics on pupils' academic performance. It has attempted to analyse some of the existing literature on the subject of factors influencing learning achievement in grade nine.

Chapter three discusses the methods of data collection used in the study. The chapter is divided into ten sections under the following headings: the research design, study population, sample and sampling procedure, characteristics of the sample, data collection procedures, research instruments, the pilot study, the main study, data analysis and limitations of the study.

Chapter four presents the findings of the study, while chapter five discusses the findings. The sixth chapter deals with the summary, conclusion and recommendations. The chapter ends with suggestions for further research. The subsequent pages consist of bibliography and appendices.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Pupil performance in school is an area which has been investigated by many researchers. The subject has been tackled from different perspectives and people have come up with different findings depending on the areas they have studied. In this study, the researcher was interested in investigating the extent to which the pupil background characteristics influence academic performance.

Pupils' performance in schools is a source of concern the world over (MoE, 1996:54). In Zambia for instance, the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2003) carried out a study in Choma district of Southern Province to determine the factors contributing to poor school performance. There were complaints in some schools that pupils were not performing effectively due to a number of factors. Pupil background characteristics were among the factors identified.

Family background

Pupils are different from one another and are likely to respond differently to different approaches and treatment. They can be active learners, passive attendees or disruptive trouble makers. The school deals with the intellectual abilities of learners while, in contrast, the family deals with the whole child. Learning lies at the heart of school leadership and improvement. The focus of school managers is the examination of pupils' learning outcomes (Davies, 2005:87). This is done through using data collected by the school or others, through observation and through encouraging the pupils to talk about their learning experiences. Such insights can increase pupils' understanding of themselves as learners. Furthermore, the focus of pupil learning includes multiple perspectives – pu pils, parents, t eachers, school managers and other educators (Davies, 2005).

The children's position in school and in society may be determined in large part by their family background. Children succeed in large part because of their family background and what parents do to support them in their education. Parents in low income brackets may be unable to provide the material and physiological needs and the cultural stimulation like others in the high income brackets (Esptein, 1991).

The desire for sustained human development and improved human skills are the strongest factors that motivate human behaviour. Human beings are driven to achieve their maximum potential and will always do so unless obstacles are placed in their way (Garbarino, 1992). These obstacles include hunger, thirst, financial problems, safety issues or anything else that takes an individual's focus away from maximum psychological growth. Children from high income background are strongly influenced by their parents' provision of 'cultural capital' which is strongly determined by their socio-economic status. These 'cultural capital' can help in stimulating and broadening the experiences of a pupil and hence improve their scholastic abilities.

It is recognized that pupils spend 91 percent of their time from birth to age 18 outside of school (Ooms & Hara, 1991). Similarly, once pupils have entered school, 70 percent of their working hours occur outside of school hours (Clark, 1990). From a shared responsibility perspective, the product of education, which is learning, is not produced by schools alone, but by pupils, with the help of parents, educators and peers who support learning. Thus, pupils learn because of what they do. It is the individual's perception and the meaning of a given situation that exerts the most influence on development. The distinctive characteristics of the environment that support development, for example, characteristics of the person with whom the child interacts, must be understood.

Home circumstances can predispose pupils to misbehavior. Pupils who have just experienced or are experiencing parental divorce can often become withdrawn or disruptive in school (Kounin, 1970). A further problem may be that the values pupils are exposed to in the home may not be the same as those that are encouraged at school. Some parents have themselves found schooling to be a negative experience

from which they have not benefited, and are therefore unlikely to take a strong interest in their children's performance at school. There is a clear relationship between pupils' school achievement and their behaviour in school, low achievement often leading to misbehavior as pupils become disenchanted with school (Kounin, 1970; Furtwengler, 1996).

Parents' involvement in the educational process differs by social class. A great deal of research has focused on what might be called 'social address' variables and involve "cultural capital" that children bring to school from their family life (Kalmijn and Kraaykamp, 1996). Some types of cultural capital facilitate academic achievement; some do not (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). In fact, the social class position can become a form of "cultural capital" leading to different schooling experiences. The cultural capital of middle- and upper-class children, for instance, those with educated mothers provide useful resources for educational experiences whereas that of lower classes provides resources not valued by dominant social institutions such as education (Lareau, 1989; Rosenweig, 1994).

Most learners in schools in rural and peri-urban areas constitute a large population of parents with low income. Garbarino (1992) indicates that reduced family income affects learners. Unfortunately for the girls in Zambia, family income affects them more than boys (Kelly, 1994). Families with limited economic resources tend to direct them first to the males of the family because it is believed that a girl will find a man to marry her. Also, some parents especially those in rural areas or those from lower income in urban areas may hold values that place the female-gender in the homemaker's role. Given this disposition, it is understandable that the self-efficacy of girls with respect to the learning opportunities is limited to the economic support they expect to receive from parents (De Ridder, 1990: 4).

Children's learning achievements in school and society are determined in large part by their family background. Coleman *et al.,* (1966:320) in his study argued that:

> Schools bring little influence to bear on a child's achievement that is independent of his (or her) background and general social context, and that this very lack of independent effect means that the

> inequalities imposed on children by their home, neighbourhood, and peer environment are carried along to become the inequalities with which they confront adult life at the end of school.

In supporting the assertion of school impotency contained in the Coleman's (1966) study in changing from deprived homes, Jencks (1972), found that one- half to two thirds of student achievement variance is directly related to home variables such as socio-economic level (Greenwood and Hickman, 1991:287).

In understanding how schools meet every child's needs, Rosenweig (1994) says that, schools use social constructs, with organization and language that are more familiar to middle- and upper-class children. These children are more likely to have home experiences supporting the values, attitudes, and training in cognitive skills that will help them adapt to school demands. During the early formative years, children learn languages, values, and an orientation toward the world. The early home learning environment of children is crucial.

Family Aspiration

Family and pupil aspirations for the future are another aspect of the influence of home background. Parents who set high standards and have high aspirations for their children are more likely to have high-achieving children. Coleman *et al.* (1966), found that African American and white seniors had comparable aspirations; the difference was in taking the necessary steps to carry out their goals. It has therefore been argued that the subcultures, the distinctive norms and values of social classes and ethnic groups influence performance in educational systems. For example, African American pupils believed that they had less control over their environment and left their fate to luck and chance (Coleman *et al.*1966), though many lower–class African American mothers find multiple strategies to encourage their children's school achievement (Rosier, 1993).

Parents affect children's educational achievement and aspirations in several major ways. Boys and girls are strongly influenced by the 'defining' behaviour of parents through which expectations of appropriate behaviour are established (Cohen, 1987).

Also important, especially for girls, is "modeling" or emulation of parents. Family influence is strong across social class, but mothers with higher educational status are more involved in school activities, have more contact with teachers, and choose college-preparatory courses for their children. Children of parents who are involved in school have higher school performance levels (Stevenson and Baker, 1987). This includes children from minority families whose parents are involved in their children's education (Keith and Lichtman, 1994). Children from homes and neighbourhoods considered "socially deprived", however, experience negative effects on their educational attainment (Garner and Raudenbush, 1991).

In discussing the broader question of what kind of adult does the young person want to be and eventually become, Wober (1975: 119) says, "Most likely the amount and kind of education received will have had the major influence on the state of people's abilities." Wober (1975) further illustrates that together with abilities; at least three other factors determine what kind of people the next adults are. The factors include economic development and opportunities, social facilitation or the operation of the network of friends and relatives that help a person's aspirations or ambitions.

Single- Parent Homes

The relationships between changing family structures and pupils' school-related outcomes, has tended to show that in relation to two-parent families, children in single-parent families have lower academic achievement, and are more susceptible to greater social and psychological problems. Mulkey *et al.*'s (1992) suggests a 'no-impact' perspective, where the association between changing family structures and children's academic outcomes can be attributed to a combination of family background factors such as parents' education and incomes and the ethnicity/race of the family. Much of family structure research is inconclusive because it has failed to differentiate among various types of single parent families such as whether they result from marital disruption (divorce or separation), parental death, or a never-married parent. In addition, many studies fail to take into account the timing in a

child's life of a family disruption, the duration of the effects of that disruption and whether the lone parent is the father, mother, or a guardian.

Mulky *et al.*'s (1992) second perspective is the economic deprivation theory which says that economic hardship in single-parent families is likely to require adolescents to work long hours and to take great responsibility for young brothers and/or sisters. As a result these time-consuming activities are likely to be related to lower school achievement.

The third postulation is a family socialization perspective. Mulkey *et al.* (1992), propose that the absence of a parent is probably associated with a decrease in total parental involvement, which in turn, is related to poorer school outcomes. The absence of fathers has particularly negative socialization influences which may be especially detrimental for boys. The differences in the academic achievement of children from single- and two-parent families can be related to changes in the economic circumstances of families, and to variations in the quality of parent-child interactions in the different family structures.

Family processes

One perspective of home background variable that influence learners' academic performance is that given by De Ridder (1990: 3). He says that "family processes" viewed in relation to life roles, offer additional insight into the influence of the parents. The processes of home interaction and communication may influence what the child learns about the world and learning experiences. Parental attitudes about school, educational aspirations and ambitions and values have strong impact on children's academic attainments. Thus, Children's aspirations and ambitions should be examined from an interaction's perspective if teachers, school managers are to understand why children behave and perform the way they do (De Ridder, 1990).

Family processes have a direct influence on cognitive development by exposing children to the joys and adventures of reading and writing, and an indirect influence through the facilitation of self-regulation (Lareau, 1989). Families function in a way

that promote children's ability to plan, persist in, and attend to learning–related activities, the children may experience the enjoyment associated with scholastic achievement. The financial resources available to the family to support all members of the household would positively impact on the parents' psychological well-being. De Ridder (1990) says that parents' psychological well-being mediates the relationship between financial resources and childrearing practices which later affect child development and scholastic abilities.

Family functions

Families throughout the world bear primary responsibility for meeting children's needs, nurturing children and socializing them (Goldsmith, 1996). Family members have long-term attachments to children, providing links to their past as well as visions for their future (Gonzalez-Mena, 1998). Parents and sometimes caregivers are children's first teachers. They provide children with their earliest social relationships, models for behaviours and roles, framework of values and beliefs, and intellectual stimulation (Bishop, 1989). The initial attitudes toward other people, education, work, and society that children encounter are in the family. These functions take place through direct and indirect teaching, in constructive and sometimes destructive ways, more or less successfully.

In addition, most environmental influences are channeled through the family. For instance, it is through their families that children gain access to economic resources and learn the customs of their cultural groups. Family members arrange for out- of-home care and make the initial entry into a school for their children. Parents and other caregivers also serve as social mediators when they organize informal peer contacts and enroll their children in activities involving peers (Dornbusch and Ritter, 1992). Thus, family members promote or inhibit opportunities for contact with peers and the greater community at large. Therefore, families play the leading role in transmitting to children the manners, views, beliefs, and ideas held and accepted by the society in which they live (Garbarino, 1992). Thus, family values may inhibit or enhance child development and academic achievement.

Another aspect of the relevant social context within which cognitive skills develop is the relationship between a parent and child. The construct of attachment describes the emotional bond between two people, typically a child and his or her parents. Children who are securely attached are thought to have the emotional energy and resources to devote themselves to exploring their world and solving problems (Matas *et al.*, 1978; Waters *et al.*, 1979). For example, reading with a parent or another adult provides the child with an opportunity to have a warm, positive interaction often with comforting physical contact. Children who have a better, more secure relationship with parents benefit emotionally and perhaps also in terms of academic attainment (Wigfield and Asher, 1984). Bus and Van Ijzendoorn (1988) found that children who were classified as securely attached at 2 years were more interested in written materials when they were 5 years old than were children classified as insecurely attached. However, there was no relation between security of attachment and the children's knowledge and academic achievement. Thus, there was evidence that caregiver well-being and relationships among family members affect academic performance both directly and indirectly. The socio-emotional context of the home and family processes are important dimensions of influence that have not been studied sufficiently.

A child's home environment plays a vital role in exposing a child to cognitive stimulations and thinking practices that can foster an interest in and knowledge about learning. When parents or others read to their child, they provide an emotionally supportive environment in which children can learn. Both the social and emotional aspects of parent-child interaction as well as the cognitive components can spark an interest in the child and foster further motivation to become a successful academic achiever. Any experiences a child may have with either written or oral language that extend the immediate context can promote cognitive development. For instance, engaging in storytelling, pretend play, or making up word games are all forms of oral language usage that relate to learning achievement.

n a comparative study of primary Schooling in Zambia and in New York, USA, Leacock (1976) traced some of the history of Western Education progress in Africa

and gave some of the fallacies, problems and successes of their operations. In the study, she compared the Zambian educational progress observed in Lusaka the capital city of Zambia and Chipata, in the Eastern Province and the New York City Schools. The study explored both the nature of contemporary Western influences on educational practices, and what the bases, are for African alternatives. Leacock's (1976: 242-5) study revealed that:

- The predominantly socializing function of schools, as they operated within the framework of western social economic institution, acted to the detriment of children's education.
- Strongly prescribed styles of behaving and communicating, that link success in school with the acquisition of the so-called middle-class white-patterns, take precedence over training for thinking.
- The nations of Africa, like Zambia, did state their strong intentions of borrowing selectively as they framed their designs for contemporary living. They wished to adapt education to their particular circumstances, their present needs and their cultural traditions but were often at odds with lack of full economic independence from neo-colonial bonds with which they had to contend.
- Recognition of the need for alternatives to western-style education conflicted both with institutionalization of nineteenth- century patterns of western schooling introduced to Africa by the missions and with the tendency to see western- style education as the avenue for achieving material success. Important experiments with alternative forms were underway, but at this writing, they were not yet widely influenced.
- Most children have diverse abilities and coping skills. They are eager to learn and their parents are eager for them to learn. It is school, in effect, that destroys children's interest and that plays an active part in socializing them for outsiders.

These findings though based on a study which was done more than three decades ago, seem to suggest that the challenges facing formal schooling education have complexities. The second and last points seem to suggest that the cultivation of

children's development is a multi-faceted enterprise that takes various forms in different societies. In many parts of Africa, indigenous socialization practices coexist somewhat uneasily with the systematic approaches of formal education.

Serpell (1993) in his write-up on Zambia has acknowledged that educational programs have, in practice, consistently fallen short of an ideal synthesis. In summary Serpell (1993: 3) holds that:

> In contemporary African societies-as in many other parts of the Third World- the economic and cultural agendas of schooling often come into conflict. The conclusion is that the greater the degree of alienation between the culture of a child's socialization at home and the culture of schooling, the greater the resulting discrepancy between their goals. The pedagogic agenda of schooling is lost once the school curriculum is designed in a manner alien to cultural assumptions informing other socialization practices to which its students have been exposed.

Since the economic constraints on opportunities for secondary and tertiary education ensure that the majority of students do not proceed beyond the basic tier of the school system, the result of this ideological orientation is that most students are by definition denied the possibility of considering their years of basic schooling as valuable learning opportunities. The pedagogic agenda of schooling is lost when the cultural assumptions of the child are ignored. Children in such situations feel lost and somewhat withdraw from school. Most of those who do so, but make it in the village through, say farming and cattle rearing, do not regret their decision. Their decision appears justified when they see that those who finished school have no jobs and no cattle at the same time. Commenting on parents who assign other duties to their children like fishing or farming rather than encouraging them to continue with schooling, Serpell (1993: 12) says:

> My contention, however, is that parents who assign such responsibilities to their children are not delinquent or abusive parents who do not care about their children: they are reacting to the situation where they see the local school as being in the business of producing failures. They ask themselves, 'what is the benefit to my child of going to school? And some of them ask themselves the (perhaps higher-order) question, 'what is the benefit to the nation of my child going to school?'

In his case study analysis, Serpell (1993) uses the metaphor of journey. He treats schooling as a life-journey in his research work. There are various interpretations of schooling in various individual's life journeys. While some focus on the intrinsic value of this life journey, others focus on arriving at a particular destination (finding a job). Once this is not achieved, then school has lost value.

The project of universal primary education has captured the imagination of politicians and social planners as a major contribution to national development in many if not all nations of the Third World in the twentieth century. Yet the project is confronted with a moral trap. Stated in its simplest form, the trap is for the school to find itself in the business of producing failures.

Serpell (1993:22) offers a suggestion that could help schools come out of this trap. He suggests that:

> We need to 'unpackage' the concepts of schooling, education, and children's development and to recognize the historical context from which the present patterns of institutionalization of schooling in Zambia have evolved. We need to acknowledge, on the one hand, the intrinsic coherence of evaluative principles guiding the socialization practices of families... On the other hand, we need to understand the logic of the pedagogical principles informing the school curriculum and to acknowledge certain distortions and inconsistencies in the way those principles are currently instantiated.

The recognition of the role of family in early childhood education seems to have been surrendered to formal schooling alone and this could be one of the distortions referred to in the quotation above. Pupils already have the knowledge learned informally. All that they need to do is use it, build on it and integrate it with classroom knowledge where possible. Curriculum inquiry and indigenous knowledge brings ideas that are aimed at encouraging curriculum developers to rethink about education and schooling and begin a new path which departs from foreign interpretations of what is important to be included in the curriculum at local level. The objective of the curriculum inquiry is to examine the kinds of information, which form the body of knowledge that becomes the source of learning and teaching. Hawkins and Pea (1987: 249), suggest that:

> Knowledge develops as a result of interaction between an individual and his/her environment in much the same way that biological organisms are biologically adapted to their ecological space. The child is surrounded by a rich cultural setting called objects and events. These objects and events are crucial in the construction of knowledge that the subject brings into the classroom.

The above quotation calls for more pupils' involvement in their learning, where both receptive and self-directed learning should be encouraged. Through such encouragement, external problems can foster the stimulation of internal negotiation, reflection and meta-cognition (Rathus, 1990). Pupils are the mediators in their own learning (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988). The knowledge base of the learner is crucial. This determines the degree of pupils' sustained involvement. Perret-Clermont and Bell (1995) also referred to the process of meta-reflection in the developing child. Pupils and teachers coming to the learning situation have a conceptual referential and contractual framework. In the same vein, Kasonde- Ng'andu (2001) considers student- teacher interaction as a factor in gender differences in academic performance. She says this interaction is of relevance in that it takes into account teachers' behaviour as being of influence to the learning situation.

Gender issues in education

In Zambia the image of girl child has for a long time been that of a passive, submissive person who remains quietly in the background, the first to serve, the last to speak (Kelly, 1994). This image is reflected both in the community where she lives as well as her school environment. In school, this image is strongly reflected in textbooks, the treatment she would get from teachers and boys in class (Tembo, 1994). In the community, she is faced with a situation where women are treated as second class citizens, whose place is in the kitchen and whose jobs among many minor ones are to cry in funerals-a job they seem to accomplish very well as they sometimes cry even before they find out who has died.

The 1996 policy document on education and gender (Kelly, 1994) has brought some interventions that seem to change this gloomy picture on girls' education and women development in general. The gender policy document (MoE, 1996:65) states that:

> The MoE is committed to achieving gender balance in educational institutions and within the educational systems by eliminating factors that hinder the access, progression, and accomplishment of girls in schools and colleges.

As a way of implementing the policy, an advocacy stance was adopted by the MoE to promote deserving women to decision- making positions. A Programmme for the Advancement of Girls' Education (PAGE) was launched and it brought many changes such as formation of Familypac (MoE, 2005), allowing pregnant girls to continue with their school (Kelly, 1994; 1999). MoE (2005:49) shows that Zambia's provision of access to basic education has significantly improved since 2002. The key factors that have contributed to the increase in enrolment are the abolishment of tuition fees for grades 1- 7, a re-entry policy for pregnant girls and community awareness and advocacy campaigns. While access to education is showing improvement, quality of education remains a serious concern. It is challenging that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to achieve the six EFA goals already alluded to in chapter one.

The poor rating of the girls' performance in school work compared with their male counterparts was also not surprising. It is a fact in Zambia that girls generally perform poorly in the terminal examinations at Grades 7, 9 and 12 (MoE, 1996). The concern over the progression of girls to higher grades prompted the Government to introduce different cut-off scores for admitting boys and girls to Grade 8 and 10. This decision was reached partly because girls did not perform as well as boys generally (Maimbolwa- Sinyangwe, 1987). The poor performance of girls in academic subjects was also reported in other parts of Africa. Eshiwani (1985), for example, described the performance of Kenyan girls compared to that of boys as poor.

Parent involvement in schools

The question of parent and community involvement in schools has been a subject of educators for years now. The national policy on education wants the local communities and families to work with schools in educating children. In order to establish strong links between the school and community, the Ministry of Education

through PAGE established programmes such as Familypac as a way to bring teachers, parents and members of the community together to help children learn better at school and at home (MoE, 2005). In order to establish these links, it is important that teachers, school managers as well as parents understand their respective roles. One of the reasons that the role of parents is so confusing is that what is meant by involvement is often not specifically defined, nor is it linked to particular outcomes.

Dekker and Lemmer (1993: 153) describe the various functions and roles parents can play in the school:

- Spectator (observing what the school does with the children),
- Accessory volunteer (to be involved at a particular time and specific task),
- Resources or workers in the classroom (helping in developing resource materials and curriculum ideas or sharing their experiences),
- Policy makers (participators whose decisions affect the schools their children attend),
- Teachers (assisting as teacher aids depending on their qualifications and availability),
- Collaborators and problem solvers (reinforcing the school's efforts with their child),
- Audience (attending and appreciating the school's and their child's performance and productions).

The document on the links between school and community (MoE, 2001) and the Familypac guidelines for parents and guardians (MoE, 2005) do not explain the nature of involvement required on the part of parents and other members in school.

Summary

The "African child" has all the qualities essential to a good product. The environmental deficits that may have marred some of his/her qualities are superseded by his/her positive qualities. Once provided with an appropriate environment both at home and at school, and if teachers use all their professional skills and knowledge, the African child can learn, wants to learn, and needs to learn. The African child, like other children of the world, is almost infinitely teachable (Wober, 1975).

From the literature presented herein, it is evident that researchers in the developed Western societies almost agree that home background factors have a bearing on the academic performance of learners. However, the cultural differences between the Western countries and Africa and the contradictory nature of results on studies done in Africa can not warrant generalization of these findings. One may attribute the low correlation found between socio-economic factors and academic performance in most African studies to the time the studies were conducted. Most of these studies were conducted during the first two decades of independence and most newly independent countries adopted socialist state ideologies and education provision was almost free. Considering the current paradigm shift in state ideologies coupled with the liberalization of almost all sectors of the economy, the rich families are likely to be advantaged. It is therefore important to identify and describe the home background characteristics of pupils in order to provide for an explanation for variations in learning achievements. Furthermore, knowledge of the type of pupil coming into the school system enables education policy planners, curriculum specialists, school managers and the teachers to deliver education that is appropriate to the needs of the learner. The strength of this study is based on its attempt to find the effects of these home background factors on pupils' academic performance.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter gives a description of the research design, target population, sample size, sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection procedures and methods of data analysis employed in the study.

Research design

A survey was chosen as an appropriate method of collecting data due to the nature and purpose of the study. As suggested by Gay (1996: 251), 'A survey is an attempt to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables.' The survey design was a descriptive survey design enabling the researcher to focus on describing the characteristics of a population. The study involved descriptions and explanations of pupil background characteristics and pupils' performance in Lufwanyama District.

Target Population

The study population comprised all upper basic school learners who were in Grade nine in Lufwanyama district. The study population also included all teachers of grade nine and the school guidance teachers.

Study Sample

From a population of about 1200 pupils, a sample of seventy-six (n = 76) learners in grade nine in four upper basic schools in Lufwanyama district in the Copper belt Province of Zambia was drawn. The school samples were selected for the following reasons. Firstly, it would be easily accessible. Secondly, the cost would be fairly low and thirdly, less time would be spent in conducting fieldwork. Four grade nine class of learners of two peri-urban and two rural schools (76 learners), 40 males and 36 females participated in the study. The schools and pupils were randomly selected. A simple random sampling technique was used to avail every sample of the population

an equal probability of being selected. The researcher copied names from the class registers and wrote them on separate slips of paper. The slips were folded and put in an open box. Grade teachers were asked to select slips from the box until the desired numbers of individuals were selected.

Research Instruments

In this section, the aim is to discuss research instruments that were employed in this study to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. Three data collection instruments namely documentary analysis, questionnaire and interview were used.

- **Documentary analysis**

Weiss (1998:260) holds that documents are "a good place to search for answers. They provide a useful check on information gathered in an interview." He further adds that when "other techniques fail to resolve a question, documentary evidence can provide a convincing answer." Another view shared by Gay (1996: 221) about documentary evidence is that "a document may be any written or non-written record which exists and which may enhance the researcher's overall understanding of the situation under study." In this study, the documents included minutes of PTA meetings, attendance records, school policy statements, and memoranda. Weiss (1998) has also noted that documentary analysis also allows the analyst to become thoroughly familiar with the materials and helps to save on time. The usefulness of documents as research tools is that they help corroborate and strengthen the evidence gathered using other tools.

- **The questionnaire**

A questionnaire is described by Gay (1996:255) as a measurement procedure that usually contains questions aimed at getting specific information on a variety of topics. Anderson (1990: 209) agrees and maintains that a questionnaire, if well structured, permits the collection of reliable and reasonably valid data relatively simply, cheaply and in short space of time.

- **Interviews**

Anderson (1990: 222) states that, an interview is a specialized form of communication between people for specific purpose associated with some agreed subject-matter. He argues that, when used with care and skill, interviews are an incomparably rich source of data. One of its advantages is that the interviewer can clarify questions and probe the answers of the respondent, providing more complete information than would be available in written form.

Ethical issues

Ethical concerns are a very important component to any social research. Cohen et al., (2000: 347) hold that:

> Ethical concerns encountered in educational research in particular can be extremely complex and subtle and can frequently place researchers in a moral predicament, which may appear quite irresolvable.

When conducting research there are ethical issues to consider. These aim at protecting those involved in the research some of who may not be able to represent themselves in the event that they are misrepresented. This is particularly important for this study since it dealt with vulnerable pupils most of whom come from vulnerable women and men in a rural setting. When using document analysis, it was considered imperative that ethical considerations were put into consideration and followed.

Pilot Study

Prior to the main study, a pilot study was conducted based on eight pupils to pre-test the instruments. The pre-testing of research instruments was done at Libala Basic School in Lusaka. Eight grade 9 pupils comprising 3 females and 5 males were involved. The essence of testing the instruments was to establish the internal consistency. It was aimed at determining whether the research instruments were measuring what was intended to be captured in the research. The pre-testing of instruments provided an opportunity to clarify some test items (statements) which were not clear to the respondents or that may tend to measure what was not

intended. Following the pre-testing of the research instruments, corrections were made in the rephrasing of ambiguous statements and sequencing the questions.

Data Collection Procedures

During data collection respondents were assured that the information they gave would be treated with confidentiality. This assurance made them feel safe and were able to fill the questionnaire freely and effectively participate in the interviews.

The first step was to hold a meeting with the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) Lufwanyama District to explain the study that was to be conducted in the district. The DEBS's office authorized the researcher to go ahead with the study. The researcher was then availed with a list of schools in the district from which the researcher sampled.

After printing the instruments, the researcher grouped the instruments according to schools and clearly marked the envelopes. The researcher was given an introductory letter to take to the school managers of the sampled schools. The researcher then administered the questionnaire to the pupils and teachers in each school. The researcher clarified some questions in the local language to the pupil respondents as they filled in the questionnaire in his presence.

Triangulation

One reason of using both qualitative and quantitative approaches in data collection was to ensure that the data collected would be trustworthy and dependable. One of the means of accomplishing this trustworthiness is through the use of the process of triangulation.

According to Gay *et al.* (2006:405), triangulation is the process of using multiple methods, data collection strategies, and data sources to obtain a more complete picture of what is being studied and to cross-check information. Mathison (1988) recommend the use of triangulation and maintain that once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more independent measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced. They also argued that there are serious risks in

making recommendations based on single criterion which fails to consider the whole outcome of an educational process.

In this research triangulation was employed by the researcher by using different data collection methods namely questionnaires, interviews, documentary analysis and naturalistic observations. Supporting naturalistic observations, Gay (1996:265) argues that "certain kinds of behaviour can only be (or best be) observed as they occur naturally." In such situations the observer purposely controls or manipulates nothing, and in fact works very hard at not affecting the observed situation in any way. The intent is to record and study behaviour as it normally occurs. This is what Mathison (1988) refers to as methodological triangulation, describing it as involving the use of more than one method in order to overcome the weakness of intrinsic biases.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Frequencies and percentages were used in describing distributions of variables. Cross tabulations and correlations were used in presenting relationships between variables. Correlation analysis between pupil background characteristics and academic performance was done using the 2008 ECZ Grade 9 examination result scores.

One of the main objectives of using 2008 ECZ Grade 9 examination result listing is to identify correlates of pupil performance. Admission to Grade ten (10) is based on performance in the terminal examination that pupils take at the end of Grade 9. On the basis of performance in this examination pupils are selected to proceed to Grade 10.

For qualitative data, categories and thematic areas were considered and interpreted.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents findings of the study. It provides descriptive statistics on pupil's bio-data, that is, age, gender, home and family life, including parental education and occupation, number of books at home, language spoken at home, and number of people in pupil's home, based on the data from the field. Information on pupils' performance in the November/ December 2008 Grade 9 examinations conducted by the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) is also presented.

Distribution of the Sample by School Location and Gender

There were 76 pupils from four upper basic schools, two from peri-urban and two from rural area of Lufwanyama district, that were exposed to questionnaires for the purpose of collecting data. Of these 76, 40 (52.6%) were boys and 36 (47.4%) were girls. These are shown in table 2 below. Table 2 below shows the distribution of pupils by location and by gender. This variable considered the location of basic school attended by pupils in terms of rural or peri-urban differentials by gender.

Table 2: Distribution of pupils by school location and gender

School	Location				Total
	Peri-Urban		Rural		
	Chembe	Nkana	Chapula	Saint Joseph	
Girls	7(41%)	10(50%)	10(50%)	9(41%)	36 (47.4%)
Boys	10(59%)	10(50%)	10(50%)	10(53%)	40 (52.6%)
Total	17	20	20	19	76

Pupils are awarded the following grades by the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) in the grade 9 examinations. Table 3a below shows the grading system at grade 9 by the ECZ.

Table 3a: Description of grade nine grades by ECZ.

Percent Mark	Grade
75 - 100	1
60 - 74	2
50 - 59	3
40 - 49	4
0 - 39	Fail

The 2008 results listing of pupils' performance in the ECZ grade nine examinations were classified by the researcher based on the ECZ grading. Table 3b shows the researchers' grading based on pupils' selection totals in the 2008 examinations.

Table 3b: Researchers' grading based on pupils' selection total

Pupils' Selection Total Points.	Researchers' remark
360 – 600	Above average
240 – 359	Average
0 – 239	Below average

(See Appendix II for the 2008 ECZ results listing for the sampled respondents not in rank order. Mean percentages score are included for each subject recorded).

Pupil's performance in the 2008 ECZ Grade 9 examinations by location of school.

Table 3c: Distribution of pupils' performance in the ECZ 2008 Grade 9 examinations by location of school

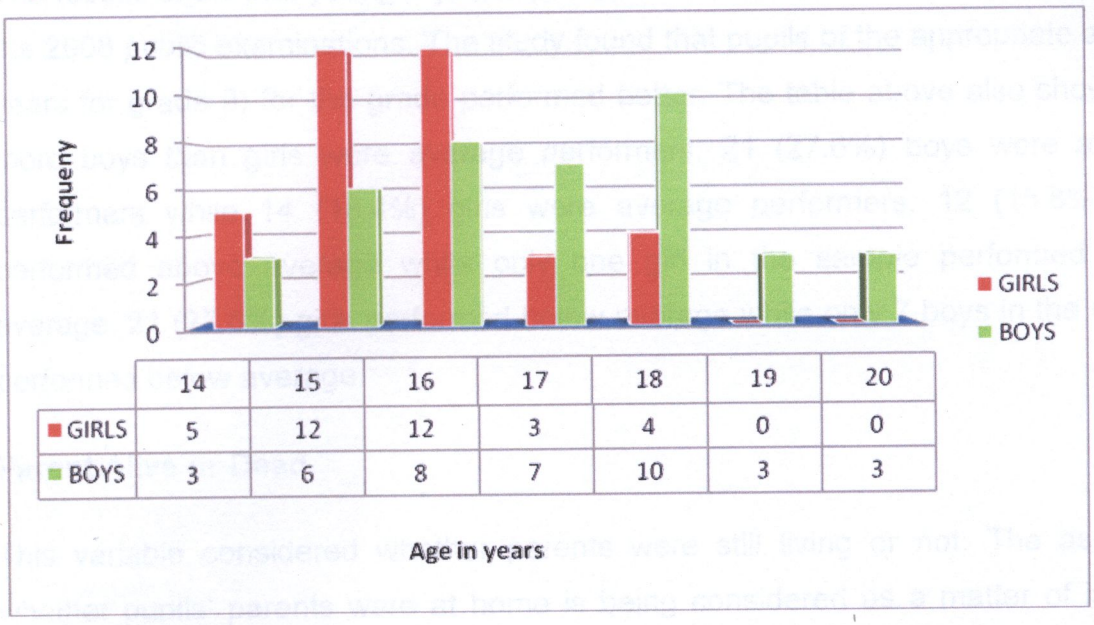
Pupil's Performance	Frequency	
	Peri-Urban	Rural
Below Average	9 (11.8%)	19 (25.0%)
Average	20 (26.3%)	16 (21.1%)
Above Average	8 (10.5%)	4 (5.3%)
Total	37 (100.0%)	39 (100.0%)

From the sample, 20 (26.3%) pupils from the peri-urban schools were average performers in the 2008 ECZ grade nine examinations while 16 (21.1%) pupils from the rural schools were average performers. 19 (25.0%) of the sampled pupils in rural areas were below average performers while 9 pupil respondents in the peri-urban schools performed below average. 8 pupil respondents from the peri-urban schools performed above average while only 4 pupil respondents from the rural schools were above average in the examinations held in 2008.

Distribution of Pupils by Age by Gender

The pupil questionnaire asked for the pupils' age. Analysis of results found that the mean age was 16.3 years with the minimum at 14 years for both girls and boys and maximum 18 years and 20 years for girls and boys respectively. Figure 1 indicates that most pupils were in the age range of 16-18 years for boys and 15-16 years for girls.

Figure 1: Distribution of pupil's age by gender



	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
GIRLS	5	12	12	3	4	0	0
BOYS	3	6	8	7	10	3	3

A cross tabulation was done to know whether there was any significant difference in pupils' performance in the November/ December 2008 Grade 9 examinations and their age.

Table3d: Distribution of pupils' performance in 2008 ECZ examinations by age by gender

Age in years	Pupils' performance						Total	
	Below average		Average		Above average			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
14	1	2	0	2	3	0	4	4
15	1	7	3	4	3	0	7	11
16	0	8	6	4	1	1	7	13
17	2	0	3	4	1	0	6	4
18	3	4	5	1	2	0	10	6
19	0	0	1	0	2	0	3	0
20	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	0
Total	7	21	21	14	12	1	40	36

The results show that younger pupils performed relatively better than older pupils in the 2008 public examinations. The study found that pupils of the appropriate age (16 years for grade 9) for the grade performed better. The table above also shows that more boys than girls were average performers. 21 (27.6%) boys were average performers while 14 (18.4%) girls were average performers. 12 (15.8%) boys performed above average while only one girl in the sample performed above average. 21 (27.6%) girls performed below average while only 7 boys in the sample performed below average.

Parent Alive or Dead

This variable considered whether parents were still living or not. The aspect of whether pupils' parents were at home is being considered as a matter of interest, especially in regard to the raising single parents and orphans due to the pandemic of HIV/AIDS. Table 4a shows whether pupils' parents were alive or not.

Table 4a: Distribution of whether pupil's parents are alive or not.

Response	Frequency
Both Alive	49 (64.5%)
Both Dead	4 (5.3%)
Father Dead	17 (22.4%)
Mother Dead	6 (7.9%)
Total	76 (100.0%)

The majority of respondents 49 (64.5%) had both parents alive while those having a single parent dead were 23 (30.3%); 17(22.4%) respondents had father dead while 6 had mother dead. 4 respondents had lost both parents.

A cross tabulation was done to find out whether there was any significant difference in pupil performance and pupil status. It was found that the performance in the 2008 ECZ examinations of pupils who did not lose any parent was significantly better than

the performance of the pupils who had lost one or both parents. 29 pupils who performed relatively better had both parents alive compared to 18 pupils who had lost one or both parents as shown in table 4b below.

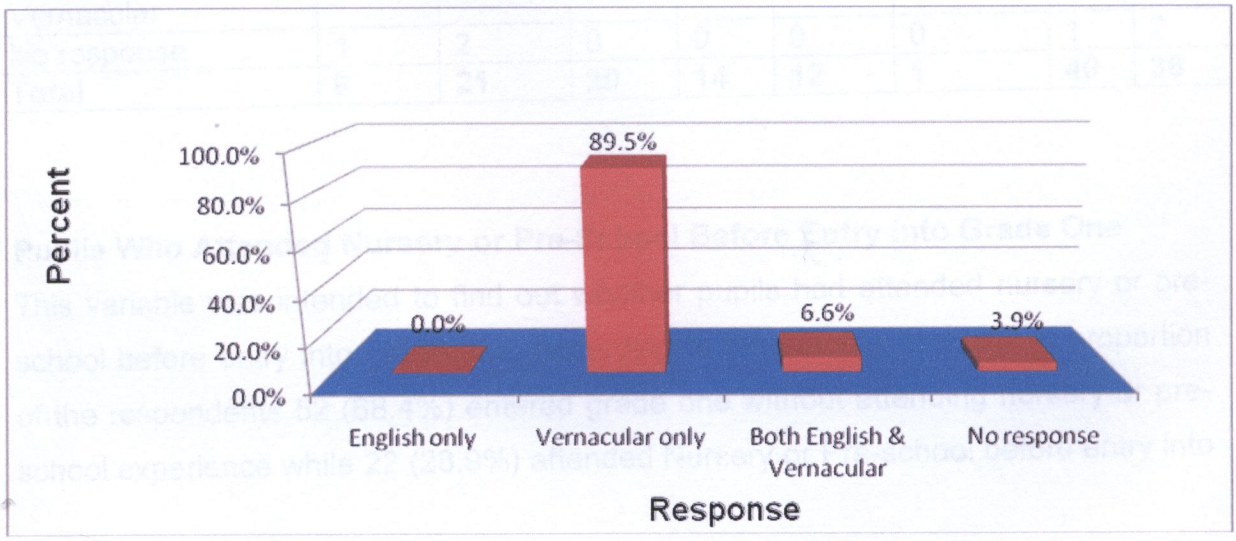
Table4b : Distribution of pupils' performance in 2008 ECZ examinations by pupils' status

Pupils status	Pupil performance						Total	
	Below average		average		Above average			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Both parents alive	5	15	12	9	7	1	24	25
Both parents dead	0	1	1	1	1	0	2	1
Mother dead	2	0	4	0	0	0	6	0
Father dead	1	5	3	4	4	0	8	9
Total	**8**	**21**	**20**	**14**	**12**	**1**	**40**	**35**

Language spoken at home

Pupils were asked what language they spoke at home most of the time. Options for answers were: (1) "English only"; (2) "Vernacular only"; (3) "Both English and Vernacular." Figure 2 shows responses to the question.

Figure 2: Responses to language spoken at home



Out of the sampled pupils who responded to this question, 68 (89.5%) spoke vernacular at home, 5 respondents spoke both English and vernacular at home while there were no pupils who came from homes speaking English only at home. 3 pupil respondents did not provide any response to the question.

Pupil performance and home language

According to the findings of the study, language spoken at home had an effect of pupil performance. From the study, 25 of the pupils who came from homes were only local language was used performed below average while only one pupil performed below average among those that came from homes where both English and a local language were used as shown in table 5 below.

Table 5: Distribution of pupils' performance in 2008 ECZ examinations and home language

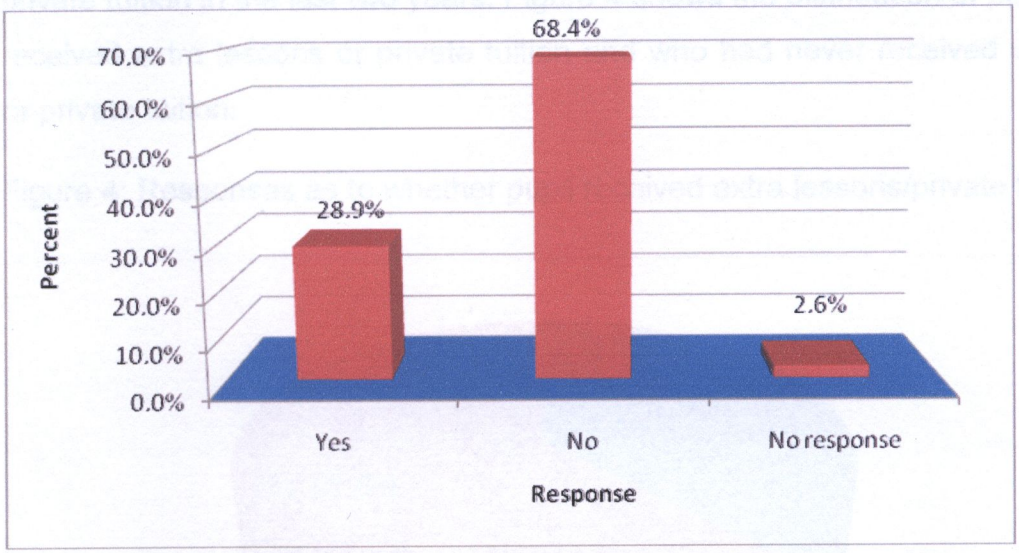
Home Language	Pupil performance						Total	
	Below average		average		Above average			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
English only	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vernacular only	7	18	18	14	10	1	35	33
Both English and Vernacular	0	1	2	0	2	0	4	1
No response	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2
Total	**8**	**21**	**20**	**14**	**12**	**1**	**40**	**36**

Pupils Who Attended Nursery or Pre-School Before Entry into Grade One

This variable was intended to find out whether pupils had attended nursery or pre-school before entry into grade one. According to the sample, the largest proportion of the respondents 52 (68.4%) entered grade one without attending nursery or pre-school experience while 22 (28.9%) attended Nursery or Pre-school before entry into

grade one. 2 pupils did not respond to the question. Figure 3 below shows the distribution of pupils who attended nursery or pre-school before entry into grade one.

Figure 3: Responses to whether pupil had attended nursery/ pre-school.



Pupil performance in relation to having attended Nursery/Pre-school

Table 6: Distribution of pupils' performance in 2008 ECZ examinations in relation to having attended Nursery/Pre-school before entry into Grade one

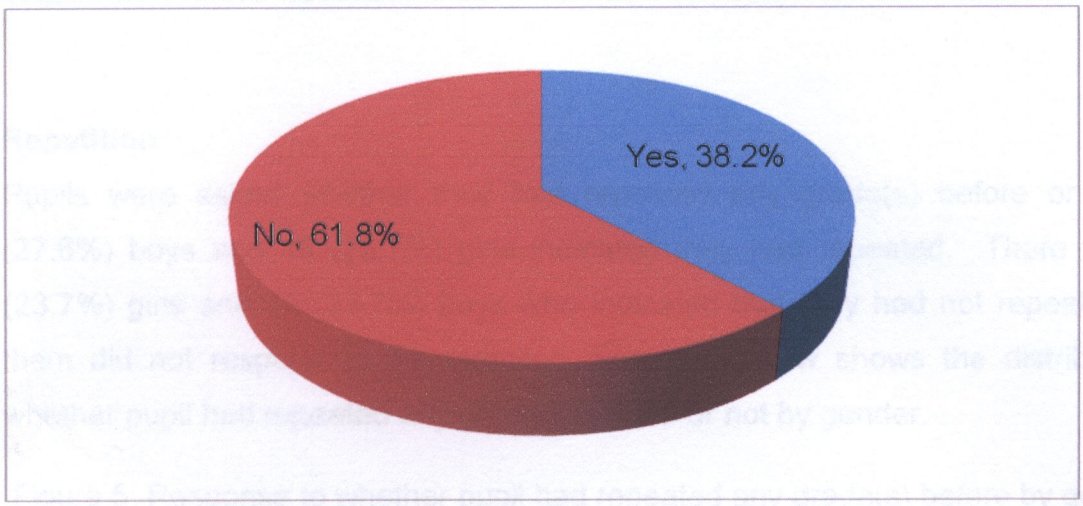
Attended Nursery/Pre-school	Pupil performance						Total	
	Below average		average		Above average			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Yes	3	8	7	2	2	0	12	10
No	5	12	13	12	10	0	28	24
No response	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Total	**8**	**21**	**20**	**14**	**12**	**1**	**40**	**36**

Table 6 above shows a cross tabulation of the relationship between pupil performance in the 2008 ECZ examinations and attending Nursery/Pre-school before entry into Grade one. 11 (14.5%) pupils who performed below average indicated they had attended Nursery/Pre-school compared to 17 (22.4%) pupils who said had not attended Nursery/Pre-school.

Pupils who received extra lessons or private tuition in the last two years

This variable considered the number of pupils who had received extra lessons or private tuition in the last two years. Figure 4 shows the distribution of pupils who had received extra lessons or private tuition and who had never received extra lessons or private tuition.

Figure 4: Responses as to whether pupil received extra lessons/private tuition



Out of the 76 sampled pupils who responded to this question, 47(61.8%) of the respondents had never received extra lessons or private tuition while only 29 (38.2%) had received extra lessons or private tuition during the previous two years arranged by their parents/guardians

Pupil performance and receiving Extra lessons/Private tuition.

From table 7 below, 30 (39.7%) of the pupils who did not receive extra lessons/private tuition performed significantly better compared to 17 (22.4%) of the pupils who had received extra lessons/private tuition. 17 (22.4%) of the pupils who had not received extra lessons/private tuition performed below average compared to 12 (15.8%) of the pupils who performed below average despite receiving extra lessons/private tuition as shown in table 7 below.

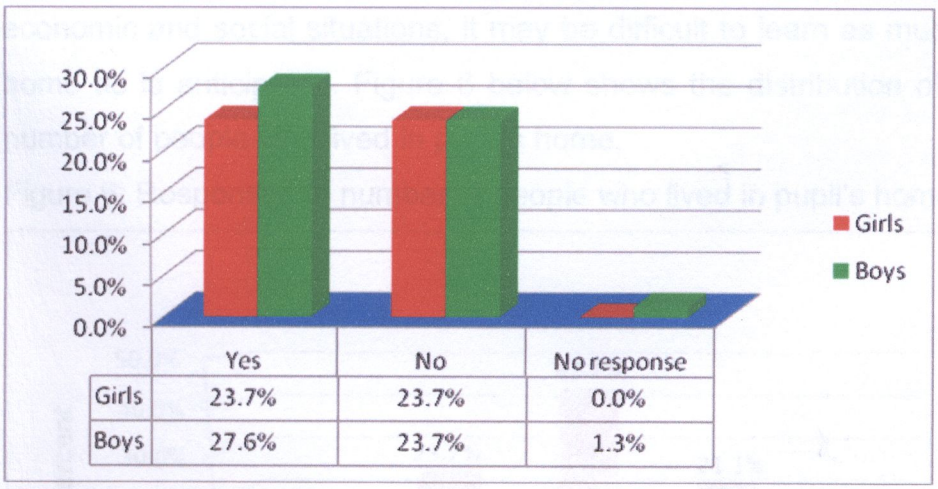
Table 7: Distribution of pupils' performance in 2008 ECZ examinations in relation to receiving extra lessons/private tuition

Received Extra lessons/Private tuitions	Pupil performance						Total	
	Below average		average		Above average			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Yes	3	9	8	4	4	1	15	14
No	5	12	12	10	8	0	25	22
Total	**8**	**21**	**20**	**14**	**12**	**1**	**40**	**36**

Repetition

Pupils were asked whether they had repeated any grade(s) before or not. 21 (27.6%) boys and 18 (23.7%) girls indicated they had repeated. There were 18 (23.7%) girls and 18 (23.7%) boys who indicated that they had not repeated. 1 of them did not respond to the question. Figure 5 below shows the distribution of whether pupil had repeated any grade(s) before or not by gender.

Figure 5: Response to whether pupil had repeated any grade(s) before by gender.



Pupil performance and Grade repetition

According to the findings of the study, repeating a grade was not helpful at all. 15 (19.7%) pupils who indicated that they had repeated a grade performed below average in the 2008 ECZ Grade 9 examinations compared to those who had not. Furthermore,

only 4 pupils who had repeated a grade performed above average while 9 pupils who had not repeated were above average. Table 8 below shows the relationship between pupils' performance and grade repetition.

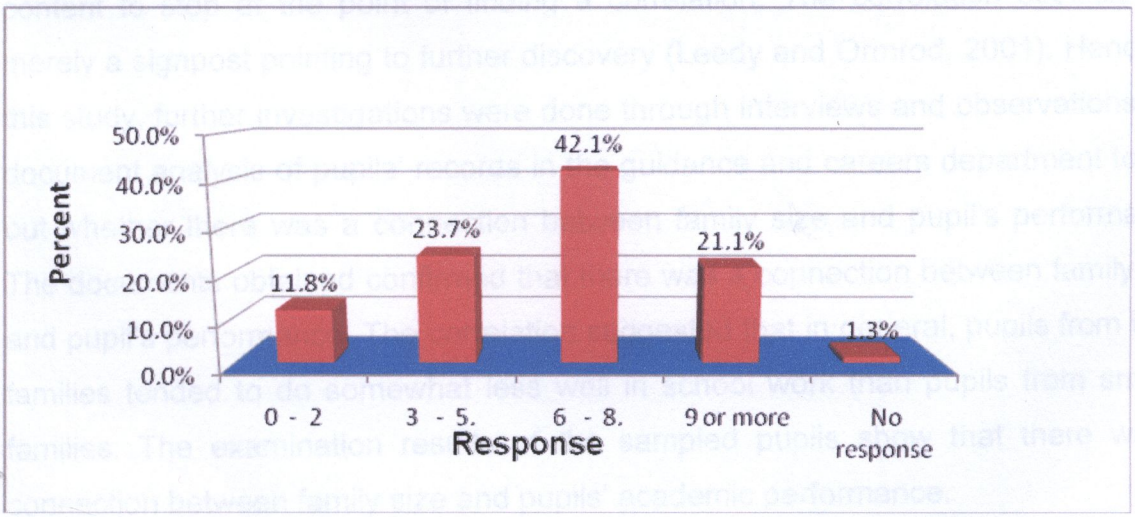
Table 8: Distribution of pupils' performance in 2008 ECZ examinations in relation to grade repetition

Grade repetition	Pupil performance						Total	
	Below average		average		Above average			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Yes	4	11	11	6	3	1	18	18
No	4	10	8	8	9	0	21	18
No response	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Total	**8**	**21**	**20**	**14**	**13**	**1**	**40**	**36**

Family Size

Pupils were asked: "altogether how many people live in your home, including yourself?" The number of people in the family ranged from 2 to more than ten. It is widely held that large families and poverty tend to go together. In depressed economic and social situations, it may be difficult to learn as much from a crowded home as is anticipated. Figure 6 below shows the distribution of responses to the number of people who lived in pupil's home.

Figure 6: Responses to number of people who lived in pupil's home



Pupils' Performance in the 2008 ECZ Grade 9 examinations and Family Size

An examination of the relationship between family size and pupils' performance in the 2008 ECZ grade nine examinations for the sampled pupils was undertaken. Table 9 shows the results from this study indicating that pupils with smaller families had higher test scores. The correlation results show that there is a significant negative correlation (-0.124; $\alpha = 0.05$) between pupils' selection total in the grade nine public examinations and the pupils' family size. The correlation suggests that in general, pupils from large families tend to do somewhat less well than pupils from smaller families in school work.

Table 9: Correlation of pupils' performance in the ECZ examinations by family size

		Pupils' test scores	Family size
Pupils' performance	Pearson correlation Sig (2- tailed) N	1 76	-.124 .287 76
Family size	Pearson correlation Sig (2-tailed) N	-.124 .287 76	1 76

The results suggested that the pupils' performance decrease with an increase in the number of people living at home. However, Leedy and Ormrod, (2001) cautions that, correlation does not, in and of itself, indicate causation. A good researcher is never content to stop at the point of finding a correlation. The correlation coefficient is merely a signpost pointing to further discovery (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001). Hence, in this study, further investigations were done through interviews and observations and document analysis of pupils' records in the guidance and careers department to find out whether there was a connection between family size and pupil's performance. The documents obtained confirmed that there was a connection between family size and pupil's performance. The correlation suggested that in general, pupils from large families tended to do somewhat less well in school work than pupils from smaller families. The examination results of the sampled pupils show that there was a connection between family size and pupils' academic performance.

Items or Facilities Found in the Home

This variable assessed the living conditions of pupils' homes in terms of availability of items or facilities. It is widely held that the experiences provided by the environment before children enter school may well influence their development of learning in school, a cause of many scholastic failures among pupils. Table 10 below shows the items or facilities found in the pupils' homes from highest frequency to lowest.

Table 10: Items or facilities in pupils' home

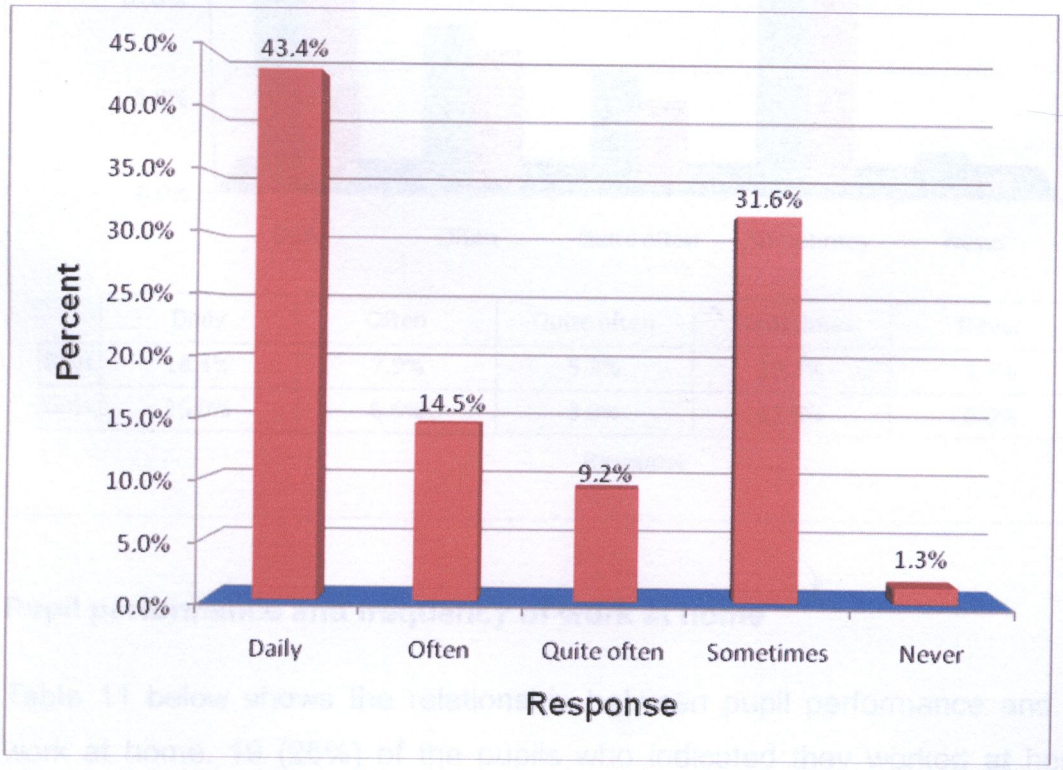
Items or Facilities in the home	Pupils' response		
	Yes	No	No response
Radio	62 (81.6%)	13 (17.1%)	1 (1.3%)
Bicycle	59 (77.6%)	16 (21.1%)	1 (1.3%)
Television set	44 (57.0%)	31 (40.8%)	1 (1.3%)
Electricity	21 (27.6%)	53 (69.7%)	1 (1.3%)
Video	17 (22.4%)	58 (76.3%)	1 (1.3%)
Pressing iron	17 (22.4%)	58 (76.3%)	1 (1.3%)
Running water	13 (17.1%)	62 (81.6%)	1 (1.3%)
Electric cooker	10 (13.2%)	65 (85.5%)	1 (1.3%)
Refrigerators	6 (7.9%)	69 (90.8%)	1 (1.3%)
Digital satellite receiver	3 (3.9%)	72 (94.7%)	1 (1.3%)
Car/vehicles	2 (2.6%)	73 (96.1%)	1 (1.3%)
Motorcycle/Honda	1 (1.3%)	74 (97.4%)	1 (1.3%)
Personal computer	0 (0.0%)	75 (98.7%)	1 (1.3%)
Library/ Reading room	0 (0.0%)	75 (98.7%)	1 (1.3%)
Sporting/Recreational Room	0 (0.0%)	75 (98.7%)	1 (1.3%)
Washing machine	0 (0.0%)	75 (98.7%)	1 (1.3%)

Table 10 above indicates that 62 (81.6%) came from homes that had a Radio; 59 (77.6%) had bicycles; 44 (57.9%) owned Television sets; 21(27.6%) came from electrified homes; 13(17.1%) came from homes with running water. From the sampled pupils none came from homes with a personal computer, or with library/reading rooms or with sporting/recreational facilities. The table also shows that 17 (22.4%) came from homes that had Video cassette recorders; 17 (22.4%) had pressing irons; 10(13.2%) owned electric cookers; 6 of them had refrigerators; 3 had homes with digital satellite receiver; 2 owned cars/vehicles and 1 pupil respondent came from a home with a motorcycle/Honda.

Work at Home

This variable investigated how often the child helped with house hold chores. Figure 7(a) shows the pupils' responses on how often pupils were given work at home.

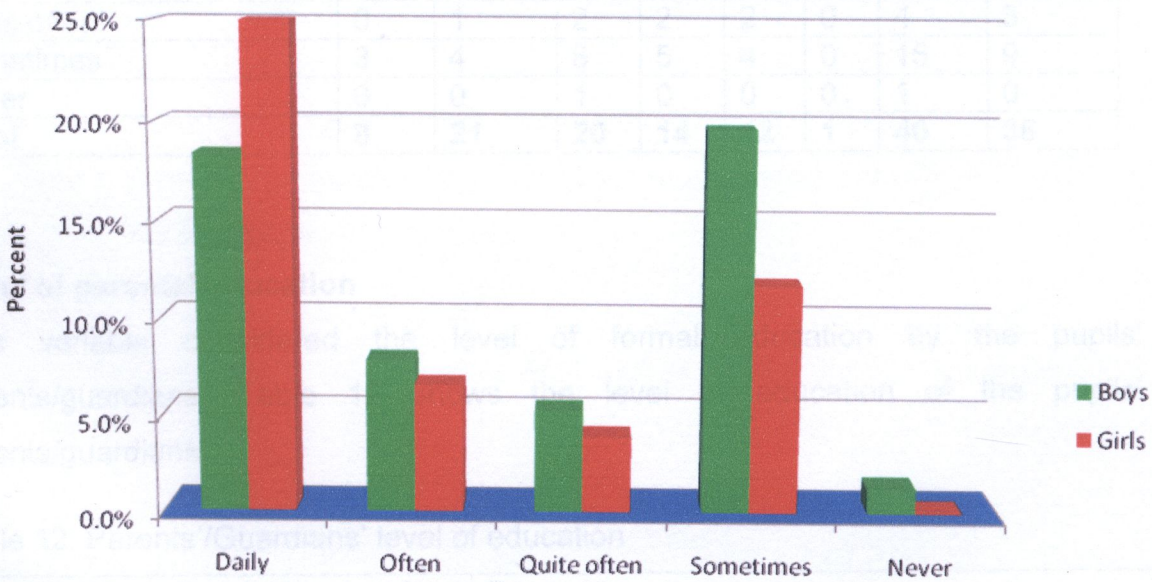
Figure 7a: Responses to how often pupil help with household chores



A large proportion of pupils 33(43.4 %) were involved in household chores "daily" while 24 (31.6%) did household chores 'sometimes"; 11 (14.5%) did household chores "often" and 7 of them did household chores "quite often". Only 1 respondent indicated that he never did house hold chores.

Oral interviews with pupils showed that the girl child was engaged at home everyday with work. 25% girls were engaged in household chores compared to 18.4% boys as figure 7b below shows.

Figure7b: Response as to whether pupil helps with household chores by gender



	Daily	Often	Quite often	Sometimes	Never
Boys	18.4%	7.9%	5.3%	19.7%	1.3%
Girls	25.0%	6.6%	3.9%	11.8%	0.0%

Response

Pupil performance and frequency of work at home

Table 11 below shows the relationship between pupil performance and frequency of work at home. 19 (25%) of the pupils who indicated they worked at home everyday performed below average compared to only 4 (5.3%) pupils who performed above average despite doing household chores every day. This may imply that doing

household chores may affect learning achievement. This can be attributed to the nature of work given to the child.

Table 11: Distribution of pupils' performance in 2008 ECZ examinations in relation to frequency of work at home

Frequency of Work at Home	Pupil performance						Total	
	Below average		average		Above average			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Daily	5	14	6	4	3	1	14	19
Often	0	2	3	3	3	0	6	5
Quite often	0	1	2	2	2	0	4	3
Sometimes	3	4	8	5	4	0	15	9
Never	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Total	**8**	**21**	**20**	**14**	**12**	**1**	**40**	**36**

Level of parental education

This variable considered the level of formal education by the pupils' parents/guardians. Table 12 shows the level of education of the pupils' parents/guardians.

Table 12: Parents'/Guardians' level of education

Parents'/Guardians' level of education	Frequency	
	Father/male guardian	Mother/Female guardian
Never been to school	4 (5.3%)	2 (2.6%))
Primary education	19 (25.0%))	34 (47.7%))
Secondary education	22 (28.9%))	23 (30.3%))
College education	16 (21.1%))	8 (10.5%))
University education	3 (3.9%))	0 (0.0%))
Other	2 (2.6%))	0 (0.0%))
No response	10 (13.2%))	9 (11.8%))
Total	76 (100.0%))	76 (100.0%))

Pupils' parental education showed a slight difference between education attained by mothers/female guardians and fathers/male guardians. 22(28.9%) of the pupils' fathers/male guardians had secondary education; 19(25.0%) had attained primary education, 16 (21.1%) had college education; 4 (5.3%) had never been to school; 3 (3.9%) had university education while 2 (2.6%) had other levels of education not listed above. 10(13.2%) pupils did not respond to the question.

On the mothers'/female guardians' level of education, the study found that 34(47.7%) of the pupils had mothers/female guardians who had attained primary education while 23 (30.3%) had attained secondary education, and 8 (10.5%) respondents had mothers/female guardians who had college education, none of the pupils had mothers who had attained university education and 2 (2.6%) respondents had mothers/female guardians who had never been to school. 9 (11.8%) respondents did not respond to the question.

Pupils' selection totals in the 2008 ECZ Grade 9 examinations by parental education

The parents and guardians of most pupils in the sample had attained sufficiently good levels of education. 43 (56.6%) of the fathers'/male guardians' and 31 (40.8%) of the mothers' /female guardians' had attained secondary education and/or higher education. The relationship of parents' /guardians' educational levels is shown in table 9 above. The table shows that the higher the level of education of the parent/guardian the better the pupil's performance. 29 (38.2%) pupils with father/male guardian who had attained secondary education and/or higher education performed averagely or above average compared to 12 (15.8%) pupils who performed below average in the 2008 ECZ grade 9 examinations as shown in table 13 below.

Table 13: Distribution of pupils' performance in 2008 ECZ examinations by parent's level of education

Level of Parental Education	Pupil performance						Total	
Fathers'/male Guardians' educational attainment	Below average		Average		Above average			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Never been to school	1	2	0	1	0	0	1	3
Primary education	2	6	6	2	2	1	10	9
Secondary education	2	4	8	5	3	0	13	9
College education	3	3	2	4	4	0	9	7
University education	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	2
Other	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
No response	0	4	3	1	2	0	5	5
Total	**8**	**21**	**20**	**14**	**12**	**1**	**40**	**36**
Mothers'/ female guardians' educational attainment								
Never been to school	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
Primary education	2	9	9	8	5	1	16	18
Secondary education	4	5	6	3	5	0	15	8
College education	1	2	1	2	2	0	4	4
University education	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No response	0	5	4	0	0	0	4	5
Total	**8**	**21**	**20**	**14**	**12**	**1**	**40**	**36**

Parental Occupation

The pupil questionnaire asked for the specific type of parents'/guardians occupation even if not working. Occupation can have both positive and negative effects on pupil achievement. For instance, mothers who work full-time, whether single or married, often have less time to spend with their children, a condition that may affect the child's academic performance. At the same time parents who work teach their children coping strategies that limit the impact of financial hardship, low parent involvement and other risk factors. Some parents employ house maids or have extended family members to lessen a number of risk factors.

Table 14: Distribution of pupils' parents'/guardians' occupation

Occupation	Father/Male guardian	Mother/ Female guardian
Subsistence farmer	17 (22.4%)	5 (6.6%)
Cleaner	10 (13.2%)	3 (3.9%)
Basic/Secondary School Teacher	8 (10.5%)	5 (6.6%)
Miner	6 (7.9%)	0 (0.0%))
Auto mechanic	5 (6.6%)	0 (0.0%))
Bus driver	4 (5.3%)	0 (0.0%))
Guard	4 (5.3%)	0 (0.0%))
Charcoal burner	2 (2.6%)	0 (0.0%))
Bricklayer	2 (2.6%)	0 (0.0%))
Medical Doctor	1 (1.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Paramedical Staff	1 (1.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Police officer	1 (1.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Nurse	0 (0.0%)	2 (2.6%)
Vendor/Marketer	0 (0.0%)	12 (15.8%)
Homemaker	0 (0.0%)	30 (39.5%)
No response	15 (19.7%)	19 (25.0%)
Total	76 (100.0%)	76 (100.0%)

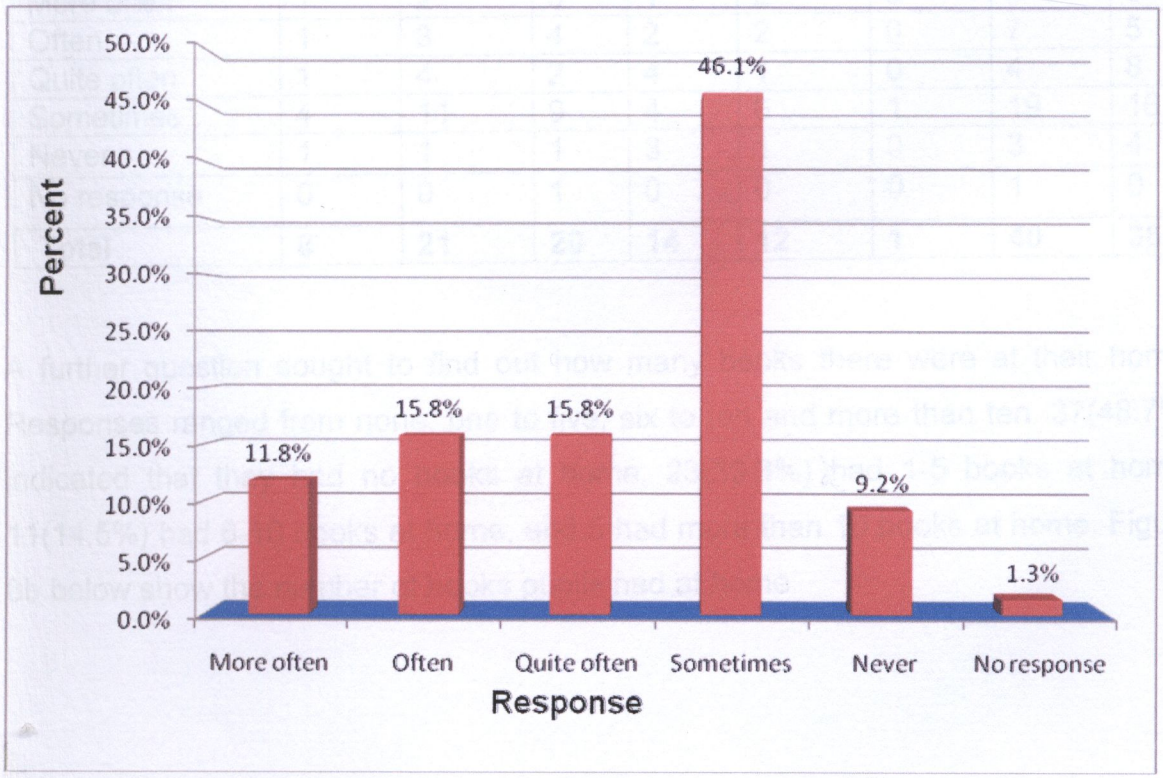
From table 14 above, the largest group 30 (39.5%) represented homemakers for mothers/female guardians while 17 (22.4%) were subsistence farmers for fathers/male guardians, 12 (15.8%) were small scale entrepreneurs as vendors/marketers for mothers/female guardians and 10 (13.2%) cleaners for fathers/male guardians. 8 (10.5%) represented basic/secondary school teachers for fathers/male guardians while 5 (6.6%) were mothers/female guardians in the same category. In the field of manual working, 6 (7.9%) were miners and 5 (6.6%) were auto mechanic while 4 (5.3%) were Bus drivers for fathers/male guardians. 5 (6.6%) represented subsistence farmers for mothers/female guardians. Other occupations for fathers/male guardians reported were

4(5.3%) guards, 2 (2.6%) were charcoal burners and 2 (2.6%) were bricklayers while only 3 (3.9%) represented mothers/female guardians who were cleaners and 2 (2.6%) mothers/female guardians were nurses. 1(1.3%) represented paramedical staff and also 1 (1.3%) represented police officer for fathers/male guardians. 15(19.7%) did not state their fathers'/male guardians' occupation and 19(25.0%) did not indicate their mothers'/female guardians' occupation.

How Often Pupils Read Books

This variable was intended to find out how often pupils read books other than school text books. The ability to read is widely held as basic to all education to which the home may make a contribution. It is held that the home should provide the opportunity for the child to show his/her interest and ability by providing an environment that is intellectually stimulating to the child. Figure 8a shows how often pupils read books. The scale for average reading days per week were: 0 (never); 1-2 days (sometimes); 3-4 days (Quite often); 5-6 days (often); 7days (More often)

Figure 8a: Response to how often pupils read books



Responses to the question were (1) "More often," (2) "Often," (3) "Quite often," (4) "Sometimes," (5) "Never". Analysis of responses to this question indicated that 35 (46.1%) read books "sometimes"; 12 (15.8%) read books "often" and 12 (15.8%) read books "quite often"; 9 (11.8%) read books "more often" while 7 said they never read books. 1 pupil did not respond to the question.

Pupil performance and frequency of reading books

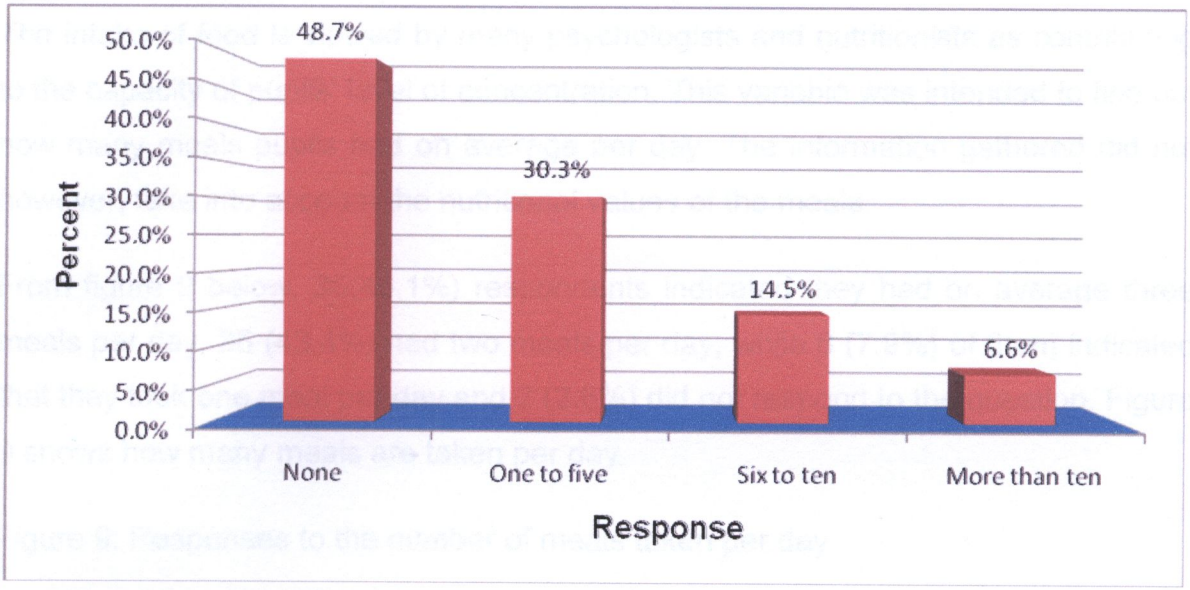
As can be seen from table 15 below, 21 (27.6%) of the pupils who indicated that they read books "more often/ often/ quite often" performed averagely and/or above average compared to 15 (19.7%) of the pupils who indicated that they read books "sometimes".

Table 15: Distribution of pupils' performance in 2008 ECZ examinations in relation to frequency of reading books

Frequency of Reading books	Pupil performance						Total	
	Below average		Average		Above average			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
More often	1	2	3	1	2	0	6	3
Often	1	3	4	2	2	0	7	5
Quite often	1	4	2	4	1	0	4	8
Sometimes	4	11	9	4	6	1	19	16
Never	1	1	1	3	1	0	3	4
No response	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Total	**8**	**21**	**20**	**14**	**12**	**1**	**40**	**36**

A further question sought to find out how many books there were at their home. Responses ranged from none, one to five, six to ten and more than ten. 37(48.7%) indicated that they had no books at home, 23(30.3%) had 1-5 books at home, 11(14.5%) had 6-10 books at home, and 5 had more than 10 books at home. Figure 8b below show the number of books pupils had at home.

Figure 8b: Responses to the number of books at home



Description of pupil performance and number of books at home

An examination of the relationship between the number of books at home and pupils' performance was done. The results showed that pupils who had more than ten books at home had a higher selection total in the 2008 Grade 9 ECZ examinations compared to those who had 6-10 books at home, 1-5 books at home, and no books at home. Table 16 below shows the number of books at home and pupils' performance in the 2008 ECZ Grade 9 examinations.

Table 16: Cross tabulation of pupils' performance in the 2008 ECZ Grade 9 examinations and number of books at home

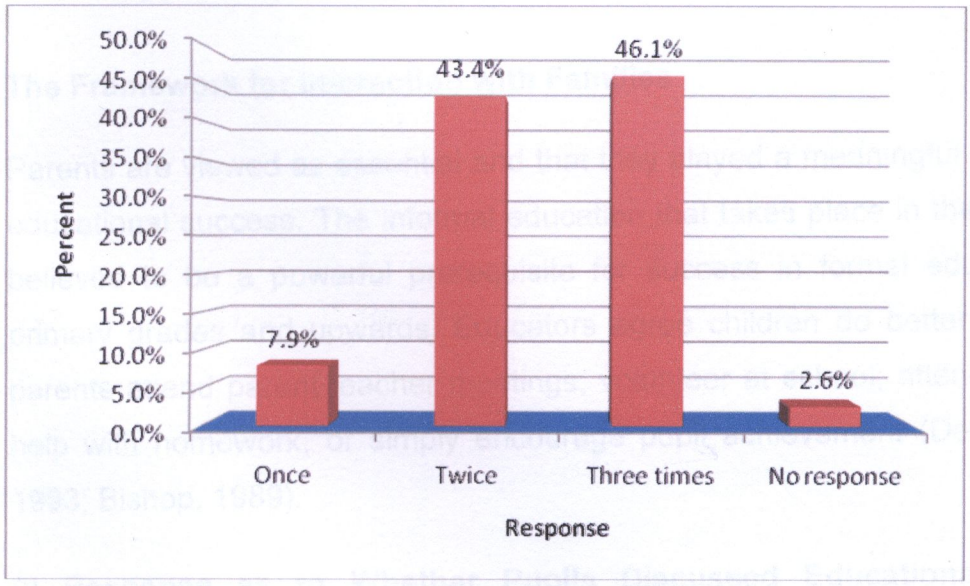
Number of book at home	Pupils' performance			Total
	Below average	Average	Above average	
None	10	19	8	37
One to Five	7	14	2	23
Six to Ten	0	7	4	11
More than Ten	0	3	2	5
Total	16	43	16	76

Number of Meals per Day

The intake of food is viewed by many psychologists and nutritionists as contributing to the capacity of pupils' level of concentration. This variable was intended to find out how many meals pupils had on average per day. The information gathered did not however, take into account the nutritional values of the meals.

From figure 9 below, 35(46.1%) respondents indicated they had on average three meals per day, 35 (43.4%) had two meals per day, while 6 (7.9%) of them indicated that they took one meal per day and 2 (2.6%) did not respond to the question. Figure 9 shows how many meals are taken per day.

Figure 9: Responses to the number of meals taken per day



Pupil performance and frequency of meals

As can be seen from table 17, there were more better performing pupils in the 2008 ECZ grade 9 examinations that had an average of two to three meals a day than those that had only one meal a day. 26(34.2%) of the pupils that had an average of two to three meals per day performed averagely and/or above average compared to only 5

(6.6%) pupils who indicated they had an average of one meal per day. The frequency of meals in a way may be related to the socio-economic background of the pupil.

Table 17: Distribution of pupils' performance in 2008 ECZ examinations in relation to frequency of meals per day

Meals per day	Pupil performance						Total	
	Below average		Average		Above average			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Once	0	1	4	0	1	0	5	1
Twice	3	10	8	5	7	0	18	15
Three times	5	9	7	9	4	1	16	19
No response	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
Total	**8**	**21**	**20**	**14**	**12**	**1**	**40**	**36**

The Framework for Interaction with Families

Parents are viewed as essential and that they played a meaningful role in children's educational success. The informal education that takes place in the family is widely believed to be a powerful prerequisite for success in formal education from the primary grades and upwards. Educators agree children do better in school when parents attend parent-teacher meetings; volunteer at school; attend school events; help with homework, or simply encourage pupil achievement (Dekker & Lemmer, 1993; Bishop, 1989).

(i) **Response as to Whether Pupils Discussed Educational Matters with Parents/ Guardians**

This variable intended to assess whether parents/guardians discussed educational matters with pupils. Table 18(a) below shows the distribution of responses to the question. The scale were tabulated as follows per week: 7 days (More often); 5 - 6 days (Often); 3 - 4 days (Quite often); 1-2 days (sometimes); 0 (Never).

Table 18(a): Whether pupils discussed educational matters with parents/guardians

Discussed educational matters	Frequency	
	Father/male parent	Mother/female parent
More often	39 (51.3%)	46 (60.5%)
Often	7 (9.2%)	6 (7.9%)
Quite often	6 (7.9%)	4 (5.3%)
Sometime	19 (25.0%)	13 (17.1%)
Never	4 (5.3%)	7 (9.2%)
No response	1 (1.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Total	76 (100.0%)	76 (100.0%)

The majority 46 (60.5%) said they discussed educational matters "more often" with their mothers/female guardians, followed by 39 (51.5%) who said they did so with their fathers/male guardians. 19 (25.0%) said they discussed "sometimes" with their father/male parent while 13 (17.1%) indicated that they discussed "sometimes" with their mothers/female guardians. 7 (9.2%) of them said they discussed "often" with their fathers/male guardians and 7 (9.2%) said they never discussed educational matters with their mother/female guardians. 6 (7.9%) respondents indicated that they discussed "often" with their mothers/female guardians and 6 (7.9%) said they discussed "quite often" with their fathers/ male guardians. 4 (5.3%) respondents said they "quite often" discussed with their mothers/female guardians while 4 (5.3%) indicated they never discussed educational matters with their fathers/male guardians.

(ii) Pupils Who Received Encouragement in School Work

This variable intended to investigate whether parents/guardians encouraged their pupils in school work. It is viewed that parental involvement in schooling is positively associated with many benefits for learners and that when parents are involved;

learners show improvement in school grades. Table 18(b) shows the number of pupils who received encouragement from their parents/guardians in school work against those who never received any encouragement from their parents/guardians.

Table 18(b): Whether pupils received encouragement from parents/guardians

Response	Frequency	
	Father/male guardian	Mother/female guardian
Yes	65 (85.5%)	67 (88.2%)
No	6 (7.9%)	7 (9.2%)
No response	5 (6.6%)	2 (2.6%)
Total	76 (100.0%)	76 (100.0%)

The results shown in table 18(b) indicate that most of the respondents 67 (88.2%) got encouragement from their mothers/female guardians while 65 (85.5%) had fathers/male guardians who encouraged them, 7 (9.2%) had no encouragement from their mothers/female guardians while 6 (7.9%) had no encouragement from their fathers/male guardians. 5 (6.6%) of the respondents did not indicate whether or not they got any encouragement from their fathers/male guardians while 2 (2.6%) respondents did not indicate whether or not they got encouraged by their mothers/female guardians.

(iii) Parents'/guardians' Participation in PTA Meetings

This variable considered whether or not parents/guardians participated in PTA meetings in the previous two years. Table 18(c) shows whether or not parents/guardians participated in PTA meetings. The results shown in table 18(c) indicate the responses of pupils as to whether or not parents/guardians participated in PTA meetings. 55(72.4%) respondents had fathers/ male guardians who attended PTA meetings while 38 (50.0%) respondents said their mothers/female guardians attended PTA meetings. 35 (46.1%) respondents indicated that their mothers/female guardians did not attend PTA meetings while 20 (26.3%) respondents said their fathers/male guardians did not attend PTA meetings. 4 respondents did not respond to the question.

Table 18(c): Whether parents/guardians participated in PTA meetings.

Response	Frequency	
	Father/male guardian	Mother/female guardian
Yes	55 (72.4%)	38 (50%)
No	20 (26.3%)	35 (46.1%)
No response	1 (1.3%)	3 (3.9%)
Total	76 (100.0%)	76 (100.0%)

(vi) **Parents'/guardians' Attendance of 'Open Days' and 'Exhibitions' at School**

This variable intended to find out whether parents/guardians attended 'open days' and 'exhibitions' at school. Table 18(d) shows the distribution of responses according to whether or not parents/guardians attended 'open days' and 'exhibitions' at school.

Table 18(d): Whether or not parents/guardians attend 'open days' and exhibitions

Response	Frequency	
	Father/male guardian	Mother/female guardian
Yes	52 (68.4%)	39 (51.3%)
No	23 (30.3%)	36 (47.4%)
No response	1 (1.3%)	1 (1.3%)
Total	76 (100.0%)	76 (100.0%)

The results shown in Table 18(d) indicate that 52 (68.4%) respondents had fathers/male guardians who attended 'open days' and exhibitions while 39 (51.3%) respondents said their mothers/female guardians attended 'open days' and exhibitions. 7 (9.2%) respondents indicated that their mothers/female guardians did not attend 'open days' and exhibitions whereas 5 (6.6%) respondents said their

fathers/male guardians did not attend 'open days' and exhibitions. 7 respondents did not respond to the question.

(vii) Whether Pupils' Parents/Guardians Provided Reading Materials

This variable intended to find out whether parents/guardians provided reading materials. The responses are presented in table 18(e) below.

Table 18(e): Whether pupils' parents/guardians provided reading materials

Response	Frequency	
	Father/male guardian	Mother/female guardian
Yes	38 (50.0%)	39 (51.3%)
No	37 (48.7%)	35 (46.1%)
No response	1 (1.3%)	2 (2.6%)
Total	76 (100.0%)	76 (100.0%)

The results in table 18(e) shows that 39 (51.3%) respondents said their mothers/female guardians provided reading materials while 38 (50.0%) respondents indicated that their fathers/male guardians provided reading materials. 37 (48.7%) respondents said they were not provided with reading materials by their fathers/male guardians while 35 (46.1%) respondents said their mothers/female guardians did not provide reading materials. 3 respondents did not respond to the question.

Pupil performance in relation to interaction with family

An analysis of family interaction shows that parent involvement in pupils' educational success could be considered average. In terms of pupil performance, 21(27.6%) of the pupils who discussed 'more often' with mother/female guardian performed below average and 18 (23.7%) of the pupils who discussed 'more often' with father/male guardian also performed below average. 6 (7.9%) pupils who discussed 'more often' with mother/female guardian performed above average and 5 (6.6%) pupils who discussed 'more often' with father/male guardian also performed above average in the

2008 ECZ Grade 9 examinations. Table 19 and table 20 below also show similar trends in the relationship of the performance of pupils and interactions involving parents'/guardians' participation in PTA meeting, attending 'open days' and 'exhibition' at school and whether pupils received encouragement in school work.

Table 19: Distribution of pupils' performance in 2008 ECZ Grade 9 examinations in relation to interactions with father/male guardian

Interactions with Father/male Guardian	Pupil performance						Total	
	Below average		average		Above average			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Discussed educational matters								
More often	5	13	10	6	5	0	20	19
Often	0	2	4	0	1	0	6	2
Quite often	1	1	2	0	2	0	5	1
Sometimes	2	4	3	6	3	1	8	11
Never	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	3
No response	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Total	**8**	**21**	**20**	**14**	**12**	**1**	**40**	**36**
Received encouragement in school work								
Yes	7	20	16	11	10	0	33	31
No	0	1	1	2	1	0	2	3
No response	1	0	2	1	0	1	3	2
Total	**8**	**21**	**19**	**14**	**11**	**1**	**38**	**30**
Participation in PTA meetings								
Yes	5	15	14	10	11	0	30	25
No	3	6	6	3	1	1	10	10
No response	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	**8**	**21**	**20**	**14**	**12**	**1**	**40**	**36**
Attended 'open days' and 'exhibition' at school								
Yes	6	16	14	8	8	0	28	24
No	2	5	6	5	4	1	12	11
No response	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	**8**	**21**	**20**	**14**	**12**	**1**	**40**	**36**

Table 20 : Distribution of pupils' performance in 2008 ECZ examinations in relation to interactions with mother/female guardian

Interactions with Mother/female Guardian.	Pupil performance						Total	
	Below average		average		Above average			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Discussed educational matters								
More often	4	17	11	8	5	1	20	26
Often	0	0	3	0	3	0	6	0
Quite often	1	0	1	1	1	0	3	1
Sometimes	3	2	3	2	3	0	9	4
Never	0	2	2	3	0	0	2	5
Total	**8**	**21**	**20**	**14**	**12**	**1**	**40**	**36**
Received encouragement in school work								
Yes	6	19	16	13	12	1	34	33
No	1	2	3	1	0	0	4	3
No response	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0
Total	**8**	**21**	**20**	**14**	**12**	**1**	**40**	**36**
Participation in PTA meetings								
Yes	4	10	9	9	5	1	18	20
No	3	10	10	5	7	0	20	15
No response	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	1
Total	**8**	**21**	**20**	**14**	**12**	**1**	**40**	**36**
Attended 'open days' and 'exhibition' at school								
Yes	7	9	11	6	6	0	24	15
No	1	11	9	8	6	1	16	20
No response	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	**8**	**21**	**20**	**14**	**12**	**1**	**40**	**36**

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings that have been presented in chapter four based on the same order of key variables.

The study investigated the effects of pupil's background characteristics on academic performance taking into account factors such as the pupils' parents'/guardians' level of education, place of residence, family size and type of basic school attended by the pupil.

Parental education and occupation

In this study pupil socio-economic background was measured by the composite index of parental education and occupation. It was not possible to obtain data on estimated parental income due to inconsistencies in the responses to the question on estimated monthly income for parents /guardians. The respondents said parents/ guardians did not reveal how much they earned per month. The researcher could not estimate from the oral responses as most pupils indicated that their parents were poor and depended on small-scale farming.

Despite the inconsistencies in the respondents' responses, this study found that children in Lufwanyama district belonged to families with very low socio-economic status. These children were at greater risk than children in other socio-economic status families. Even when they had the same academic abilities, children in Lufwanyama district came from the poor and were somewhat more likely to drop out of school. Because they were the primary and frequently sole source of financial support for the family, parents of children in Lufwanyama district had a low socio-economic status and had less time to help children with home work, had less parental control, and all of these conditions might lead to lower academic achievement.

This study found that parents'/guardians' level of education could be a potent factor in determining a child's academic achievement in school. In most cases, children were not rewarded favourably in school work because children lacked verbal skills in English language and mathematical skills that schools should build on. A number of pupils in this study showed little in terms of mathematical skills and verbal skills in English which is the official medium of instruction in schools in Zambia. The study's finding conforms to a number of other studies conducted in the developing and developed countries such as Nannyonjo (2007) and Esptein (1991) which conclude that pupils with families where parents have less education tend to systematically perform worse than pupils whose parents have more education.

As regards whether pupils received help from their parents/guardians in school work during the previous two years, quite a considerable number of respondents indicated having received help from their parents/guardians. 67 (88.2%) indicated they received help in their school work from their mothers/female guardians while 65 (85.5%) received help in their school work from fathers/male guardians compared to 7 (9.2%) of them who did not receive help in their school work from their mothers/female guardians and also 6 (7.9%) who said they never got help from their fathers/male guardians. The study found that the kind of help received by the respondents may be said to be non-instructional forms of parental involvement. These may not have a direct benefit to pupil learning.

These results possibly reflect the ability of parents to support the pupil's schoolwork and likely interaction of literate parents with their children in school-related or literacy–nurturing activities, as well as their ability to support their children with homework. Furthermore, as Coombs (1985) rightly observes, an obstacle to achieving universal participation in education is that all educational systems have a built-in bias favouring children whose parents attach high value to education and who instill in their offspring a strong motivation for education.

Typically, parents who are relatively well educated and well-off economically enjoy reading books, magazines and newspapers in the home and they provide their children with a good vocabulary and syntax before they even enter school. Once the children

enter school, this combination of motivation and vocabulary and verbal skills becomes a crucial asset for winning good grades in any educational system. This study found that this was lacking among the sampled pupils as most of them came from the poor. The former's advantage over their classmates with poorer motivation and inadequate verbal skills and perhaps also with less self confidence, tends to increase over the years, thus enabling those with a more favourable home background to proceed further in education.

A child's home environment plays an influential role in exposing the child to literacy practices that foster an interest in and knowledge about school learning. For the home to provide the educational facilities anticipated, certain material and social conditions have to be assumed. It is only to the extent that the home is able to provide the necessities of life and an atmosphere conducive to learning that the child can be expected to learn. The value system of the educated parents is more likely to inculcate values of good education to their offspring than the uneducated ones.

Family Size

This study found that pupils' performance in the 2008 ECZ Grade 9 examination results decrease with an increase in the number of people living at home. A large number of people at home may not provide a favourable environment for pupils to study. Besides, attention is likely to be divided among many people. The structure of the home environment is vital to pupil achievement. When homes are conducive to learning, it sends the message that education is important. When families are large enough, attention is likely to be divided among people. All respondents indicated that there was no designated space in the home for school work (homework) and all pupils reported that their homes were not equipped with resources suitable for learning; such as dictionaries, pencils, paper and computers as shown in table 10 above. Further, based on the analysis of the household survey data (CSO, 2004) large family sizes are more likely to be with lower levels of education, in which case it would not be surprising, because such families might be less able to support their children's academic work.

In this study 32(42.1%) indicated they were 6- 8 people living in one household; 18 (23.7%) said they were 3-5 people living at home while 16 (21.1%) said they were either 9 or more living in one home. Only 9 (11.8%) said that they were either two at home as shown in figure 6. Large families and poverty have tended to go together. This is not to deny that at times large families can be a more favourable setting for satisfactory development of children than small ones depending on the equality of things like social interaction. This finding concurs with some researches done outside Africa such as Fuller and Chantavanich's (1976); Townsend (1997) which argue that a large number of people at home do not provide a conducive environment for pupils to study at home because of children's competition for parent's time, which reduces attention required for practice.

Age of Pupils

In Zambia the official age of entry into grade one is seven years. This study's finding is that pupils of the appropriate age (16 years and/or 17 years for grade nine) performed better in the 2008 Grade 9 examinations conducted by the Examinations Council of Zambia. In the interviews with teachers, they stated that older pupils were mostly repeaters and that they were more likely to be irregular in attendance due to the need to participate in other household activities or work for economic gains.

Repetition

Pupils were asked whether they had repeated any grade(s) before and the response to this question indicates that out of 75 pupils who responded to this question, 36 (47.4%) had repeated a class while 39 (51.3%) had not. The findings of this study are consistent with those of earlier studies for example (MoE,2002), Nannyonjo's (2007) study of primary school pupils in Uganda. Repetition parallels age, possibly reflecting the fact that older pupils are likely to have repeated a grade. The study also found that children who repeat do less well than children who do not repeat. Older pupils are likely to be repeaters, are more likely to be working, and therefore had less time to devote to out-of-school study. They are also more likely to be irregular in attendance due to the need to participate in other household activities.

Clearly, enrolling children at the appropriate age and promoting them each year is a good policy.

It is clear from this study that repetition has significant cost implications and is therefore an inefficient way of managing parental and national resources since it does not lead to improved performance. However, remedial teaching may have a positive and significant influence on academic performance. This study therefore notes that regular test (at least monthly) and regular homework (at least daily) may be related to higher scholastic achievement. Teachers' ratings of pupil's performance also showed that despite repeating more girls did not perform well as compared with the boys.

Importance of availability of books at home

Figure 8b shows that 37(48.7%) respondents had no reading books at home while only 5 (6.6%) respondents had more than ten books at home. Books make the learning environment more attractive and interesting. They provide a lively stimulus in various ways ranging from the visual experience of sharing well-illustrated picture books to vocal experience of sharing storytelling or reading aloud of well-written texts. By sharing books with children, parents show them a positive attitude towards books and that reading is an important skill, which is essential to everyday life. Sharing books and stories with children is the most positive and interesting way to encourage them to want to read for themselves. The time spent sharing books and stories is also a special time, creating a positive bond between parents and children. Unfortunately, in this study a substantial number of parents who fell in the low socio-economic group were not literate and hence, could not afford the purchase of books and were likely not to see the value of books.

Items/Facilities found at home

With regard to the availability of items/facilities found in the pupils' parents'/guardians' home, quite a number of pupils came from households with a variety of facilities such as television sets, radio, bicycles, etc. As already alluded to, most of the pupils' came from underprivileged families with parents/guardians working as manual or unskilled workers

or subsistence farmers making it difficult to posses most of the items/facilities indicated in table 10 above. Children raised in conditions of poverty are exposed to fewer stimuli conducive to cognitive development, they mostly arrive at school without the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that lay the groundwork for the acquisition of literacy, and they receive inadequate support from home for their learning during school years.

The researcher believes that if children from culturally diverse backgrounds in communities are to develop into scholastic achievers, both cognitively and affectively, they must be shown how reading beyond required school textbooks adds to the fullness of their lives and enhances opportunities for achieving personal goals. A first step for promoting pleasure in reading is to provide reading materials in the home that are culturally conscious and of interest to the age groups and genders of children. Supporting this researcher's view, Thompson *et al.* (1993), adds that parents of school children appear willing to do all they could to promote their children's reading achievement. This suggests that helping parents develop strategies to promote children's reading for pleasure would be received with eagerness, which in turn would increase children's chances of developing a literate lifestyle.

Language spoken at home

Pupils were asked what language they spoke at home most of the time. Figure 2 in chapter four, shows that the majority of pupils, 68 (89.5%) spoke vernacular at home while only 5 (6.6%) respondents spoke both English and vernacular at home. This study found that no pupil in the sample spoke English only at home. Hence, opportunities for practicing English, which is the medium of instruction in Zambian schools, do not exist in most homes. As indicated by the teachers interviewed, perhaps speaking English and vernacular at home may provide opportunities for pupils to practice English, the official medium of instruction, and vernacular helps them to relate what they learn in English into their real life context, which the ministry of education is currently encouraging.

In order for pupils to participate fully in all aspects of education they need to successfully develop a wide range of language and communication skills. However, some children may not reach the same level of language development as their peers or they may lack effective communication skills. Some children grow up within

environmental and social circumstances which may restrict their opportunities to explore the environment and to develop language and communication skills through positive and stimulating interactions with others due to a number of factors such as poverty, ethnicity and culture, parental background and/or low expectations. This study just like others, for example, National Commission on Education (1993) indicates that poverty and related problems such as poor housing, does affect pupils' educational success. One of the reasons for this lack of success is due to problems involving language and communication; without appropriate language and communication skills, it is impossible to access and process the information that is essential to learning.

The findings of this study seem to suggest that the level of home environment surpasses that of the school teachers. There are a number of factors that could stand to explain why pupil background was a major factor, and the Zambian cultural background maybe singled out as one major factor.

Family processes

The socio-psychological environment and intellectual stimulation in the home are prominent in influencing academic ability and achievement. Children's academic achievement may be affected by varying family processes. The family processes provide a network of factors which affect the pupil's learning. The family's level of encouragement, expectations and educational activities in the home are mainly related to socio-economic status. Families from different socio-economic groups create different learning environments that affect the child's academic achievement. Schneider (1993) suggested that parental involvement can counteract the negative effects of low socio-economic background and significantly improve pupils' performance.

Parental involvement concerns the utilization of numerous family processes which in turn create opportunities for learning (De Ridder, 1990). This study found that despite most of the pupils' parents/guardians belonging to the low socio-economic group, as shown in table 14, they somehow got involved in the educational process of the pupils. However, parents with lower socio-economic status may not be involved in their children's schooling in ways that enhance performance although their involvement may

communicate their expectations for their children's future success. The low socio-economic status of families disadvantages the children as families have no financial capital to purchase intellectual resources that can promote their children's education.

Gender roles

The analysis aimed at determining the effect of gender roles on academic performance of pupils in the sample revealed that there was a significant difference in pupils' selection totals in the 2008 ECZ Grade 9 examinations with girls performing poorly. 21 (27.6%) boys were average performers compared with 14 (18.4%) girls whose performance was average. 12 (15.8%) boys performed above average while only one girl respondent performed above average. 21 (27.6%) girls' performance was below average compared to only 7 (9.2%) boys whose performance was below average. This is not surprising considering the disparities indicated in the pupils' responses concerning their upbringing. Despite the fact that developmental psychologists report few differences in the behaviour of infant girls and boys, parents begin early to interact with them differently. The origins of these perceived differences between boys and girls can be difficult to work out because social conditioning begins from birth, especially the expectations for female and male behaviour. These expectations are reinforced throughout childhood by parents, siblings, other family members as well as by other adults. For example, as children grow, mothers tend to talk more to female toddlers and encourage them to stay near them when they play. On the other hand, males are allowed to explore and generally be independent. Gender stereotyping is damaging to the self-image and identity of girls because it may lessen their confidence and lower their self-esteem which usually lead to poor academic achievement.

The researcher feels that willingness of parents to have their girls go to school will not be enough to achieve equity if girls do not benefit from schooling as much as boys. Girls are not passing the examinations at grade nine at the same rate as boys mainly due to observed gender disparities. The study's findings indicate that parental expectations and parent-child interactions may be contributing factors of girls not achieving high grades as boys. In a study by Maimbolwa-Sinyangwe and Chilangwa (1995), designed to measure teacher attitudes and confirmed by Kasonde-Ng'andu *et al.*, (1999)

observations showed differential teacher-pupil interaction. The current study findings indicate that girls were more involved in household chores than boys. Out of 33 respondents who said they were involved in daily household chores, 19 (57.6%) were girls compared to 14 (42.4%) boys. A number of factors were brought out as hindering the full participation of girls in education such as the risks connected with letting girls out of the parents' control during part of the day; fear of unwanted sexual relations of the girls; and helping parents with household chores. All these factors are in line with those identified by other researchers (e.g. Kelly, 1994; Maimbolwa-Sinyagwe, 1994; Munachonga, 1995).

Single parent families

Differences between girls and boys from single-parent mother and single-parent father households in achievement may represent differences in family processes in these two types of single parent families. Achievement differences between girls from single-parent homes may be transmitted through different gender roles adopted by single-father or single-mother parents. Traditional role expectations of women, whether single or living with a partner, may result in them spending more time with children doing homework, speaking with teachers, and engaging in other activities that are related to academic development and achievement. This is not to imply that fathers cannot provide achievement support in the ways in which mothers do, but it may be that fathers do so less typically or perhaps less intensely.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents a conclusion and recommendations drawn from the findings of the study.

The study was conducted to investigate the effects of pupil background characteristics on academic performance. The results discussed in chapter five have established that pupils' background has influence on the academic achievements of learners.

Conclusion

The study's findings have confirmed reviewed literature. The home environment of the pupil is multi-dimensional in nature as a number of factors come into play in affecting the intellectual development of pupils. The factors that correlated significantly were between academic achievement for basic school pupils and a summary index of socio-economic status consisting of paternal education, maternal education, parental occupation and a number of household possessions. This study found a positive relationship between the number of books at home, language spoken at home, and pupils' performance as rated by the teachers. On the other hand, there was a weak relationship between pupils' ages and academic performance.

The study's findings show that pupil background is a major factor in influencing learning probably because of the socio-cultural character of the African society. The study's findings is consistent with those of earlier studies such as (De Ridder,1990) that concluded that pupil background characteristics exert strong influence on pupil performance. This socio-cultural character as suggested by Vygotsky in Zambia's case subscribes to the collectivist orientation. In this instance, the collectivist socio-cultural orientation is char acterised by co-operativeness, mutual reciprocity and groupness. These characteristics to an extent are influenced by how children are brought up to learn, in the homes and traditional settings. Children are expected to observe, be attentive, concentrate and practice what they have observed. Adults are models for

children in all aspects of development, including how to learn. Children listen to folklores and learn morals and traditional philosophies. As they grow up they learn to represent these visually as they are not allowed to ask questions or verbally reflect on what they have heard. "They are to be seen not heard". People place more emphasis on cultural tradition and shared practices, and give less value to promoting a unique self-concept. In contrast, individualist cultures tend to promote the drive for personal control, independence and individual achievement. People from individualistic cultures show more concern for establishing a career and gaining achievement than they do for establishing relationships and maintaining family ties.

Teachers also reported that pupils who are not the right age for the class do badly, pointing to the importance of enrolling children on time and implementing automatic promotion. According to the findings of this study, repeating a grade is not helpful at all. The pupils who indicated that they had repeated a grade performed lower compared to those who had not.

The findings of the study also indicate that from pupils' responses, the home influence alone is not adequate as far as the learning and intellectual development of pupils is concerned. As a result, just as this study and that of many other scholars have suggested, there is need for the school and family to collaborate with each other in several ways especially those exposed by this study to help Zambia attain the EFA goals.

Recommendations

Current MoE policies include automatic promotion from grade 1 to grade 7 and appropriate age entry. However, neither of these policies is enforced adequately. Clearly enrolling children at the appropriate age is a good policy measure for Zambia. However, in tandem with enforcement of automatic promotion, it may be necessary to administer regular tests, and homework that would identify pupils' weaknesses, and address them through remedial teaching to ensure acquisition of the desired levels of competency.

The limited influence of reading materials in the home may be attributed to limited financial resources of pupils' parents/guardians because of their low socio-economic status making them unable to purchase books. This study may also point to the need for training of teachers on effective use of textbooks. In addition, early intervention programmes that bring parents and educators together to find out how pupils may experience greater academic success need to be put in place.

Suggestion for further research

It is evident that other factors besides pupil's background characteristics influence academic performance. Research into other factors like school and classroom processes may help to enhance understanding of factors that influence learning.

It is also suggested that a study be designed to investigate the academic achievement of school pupils which relate home environment and self-efficacy.

Furthermore, a study to investigate the effects of home environment and its relationship with self-concept, attitude toward school, educational aspirations and achievement of school pupils should be undertaken.

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http://www.unesco.org/education/efa

http://www.unicef.org/girlseducation

Appendix I

Lufwanyama District Education Board

2007 Grade 9 Examination Analysis

school	N0. Entered	N0. Sat	No. Absent	No. Failed	No. Passed	No. Selected	Progression Rate %			
							2007	2006	2005	2004
Kalumbwa High	73	71	02	36	35	14	19.7	7.8	10.1	11
St. Mary's Day	144	92	22	105	17	02	2.2	57	5.3	36
St. Joseph's Deaf	11	11	00	06	05	05	45.5	67	88.8	15
Lumanto	65	80	05	42	38	09	11.3	41	37	02
Shimukunami	198	181	17	50	131	67	33.8	06	40.9	36
Lumpuma	92	78	14	29	51	27	34.6	45	60.5	45
Nkana Basic	120	101	19	48	53	17	16.8	05	6.1	25
St. Joseph's Basic	109	99	10	35	64	47	47.5	19	18.7	02
Kambilombilo	60	52	08	26	26	09	17.3	08	31.9	10
Mibenge	98	86	12	47	39	13	15.1	12	3.2	16
Chimoto	38	35	03	24	11	02	05.7	09	25.4	03
Fungulwe	30	27	03	05	19	20	74.1	03	08	10
Total	1058	913	115	453	489	232	25.4	18	24	19

Source: MoE, Lufwanyama District, 2008

Appendix II

2008 ECZ Grade 9 examination results listing for sampled pupils in selected upper basic schools0f Lufwanyama district in the Copper belt Province.

S/N	Gender	Subject										Selection Total
		English	Mathematics	Env/ Science	Civics	Geography	History	R/Education	O/Practice	H/Economics	Icibemba	
1	M	47	42	49	50	47	41	19	57	-	-	292
2	M	22	18	18	17	54	13	06	28	-	-	-
3	F	37	34	35	42	30	11	15	29	-	-	-
4	F	25	16	18	14	23	15	07	21	-	-	-
5	F	56	40	43	44	46	11	46	50	-	-	291
6	F	51	23	46	16	44	49	19	49	-	-	-
7	F	43	43	14	19	23	19	15	40	-	-	-
8	M	22	43	29	41	42	06	09	45	-	-	370
9	M	75	59	62	59	50	51	52	63	-	-	306
10	M	57	19	49	54	47	60	19	49	-	-	-
11	F	09	16	15	18	20	05	10	21	-	-	299
12	F	53	36	42	46	47	49	09	60	-	-	309
13	M	61	46	37	53	48	44	18	57	-	-	-
14	F	50	36	46	59	38	50	18	57	-	-	340
15	M	61	33	51	57	62	52	43	57	-	-	-
16	F	37	17	43	40	41	40	05	53	-	-	303
17	M	51	42	46	60	44	53	19	49	-	-	-
18	F	36	43	39	18	39	46	14	49	-	-	399
19	M	65	57	64	68	63	70	58	67	-	-	308
20	M	53	45	50	44	57	42	47	56	-	-	391
21	M	67	72	54	49	56	51	66	-	58	73	302
22	F	24	38	52	46	44	42	42	-	48	79	426
23	M	53	70	74	68	57	70	81	63	56	-	315
24	M	31	23	63	58	41	49	45	52	49	-	-
25	F	26	22	60	09	12	18	10	41	-	-	284
26	M	34	44	44	41	38	11	53	14	-	-	-
27	M	24	21	53	07	08	02	07	-	42	-	-
28	M	35	29	61	12	35	15	11	-	50	-	309
29	M	37	54	44	47	44	42	45	-	-	77	-
30	M	28	21	18	10	21	14	11	-	-	29	353

31	M	44	50	58	60	43	50	58	-	51	76	353
32	F	49	35	52	14	43	14	48	-	52	72	316
33	F	31	24	21	42	21	11	19	-	44	40	-
34	F	41	04	54	15	38	41	-	-	51	-	-
35	F	37	33	56	17	42	16	19	-	19	42	-
36	F	32	24	58	43	36	17	18	29	46	-	-
37	F	38	20	58	44	41	19	44	-	50	60	297
38	F	48	33	63	68	43	46	14	-	58	46	325
39	F	35	23	27	16	43	17	17	46	48	-	
40	M	33	56	60	45	37	51	49	52	-	-	313
41	F	33	40	66	64	66	54	44	50	-	59	359
42	F	44	48	58	58	61	46	61	61	-	68	367
43	F	26	34	17	13	54	11	07	18	-	14	-
44	F	33	51	52	57	51	50	17	5o	-	54	315
45	M	67	20	46	57	40	44	45	52	-	-	311
46	M	40	48	60	68	62	51	53	65	-	36	359
47	M	28	47	54	63	62	50	40	-	-	60	336
48	M	31	38	53	69	64	45	49	63	-	39	343
49	M	38	40	44	63	56	48	58	54	-	-	323
50	M	58	48	46	74	69	61	65	53	-	-	380
51	M	28	44	52	60	59	46	47	60	-	-	324
52	F	36	45	59	58	60	18	51	54	36	-	327
53	F	47	45	52	55	56	41	03	68	-	-	323
54	M	24	54	58	50	63	57	49	-	-	58	333
55	M	31	67	62	66	67	60	44	60	47	-	-
56	M	51	-	-	83	72	57	60	-	-	67	390
57	F	09	21	43	42	29	16	17	19	-	14	-
58	F	08	44	27	10	48	15	12	30	-	24	-
59	F	44	49	50	59	57	51	44	61	-	38	327
60	M	33	56	55	50	57	58	51	52	-	-	329

61	F	42	36	45	44	27	61	19	30	-	-	-
62	F	24	16	31	08	27	08	06	22	-	-	-
63	F	35	34	41	46	54	60	54	55	60	-	329
64	M	53	80	71	61	73	78	62	77	-	-	441
65	F	51	37	40	50	48	18	04	53	52	-	299
66	M	57	37	52	-	64	61	65	52	-	-	351
67	M	59	40	55	66	63	79	61	63	-	-	391
68	M	49	47	57	61	57	73	52	49	-	-	349
69	M	48	01	19	14	25	41	15	40	-	-	-
70	M	59	40	55	66	63	79	61	63	-	-	391
71	F	46	19	55	42	54	50	43	47	51	-	302
72	F	41	34	45	13	42	17	14	34	22	-	-
73	M	33	18	43	16	44	47	43	19	-	-	-
74	M	71	81	76	80	88	82	68	72	-	-	479
75	M	63	50	51	60	59	64	50	66	-	-	363
76	F	47	39	52	40	59	54	51	47	57	-	320
Mean performance		41.4	30.0	47.6	44.2	47.5	40.5	35.0	46.3	30.4	48.8	

APPENDIX III

Basic School Pupil's Questionnaire.

Introduction

Dear respondent,

I am a student at the University of Zambia doing a research on pupil background characteristics and academic performance in grade nine. You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire.

This research is purely academic and the information will be strictly confidential.

Your co-operation would be highly appreciated.

1. Your name: .....
2. Name of school: .....
3. Gender : [ ] Female [ ] Male
4. Age:
5. Place of birth: .....
6. Ethnic group.
   Nationality: [ ] Zambian [ ] Non Zambian
   Indicate language mostly spoken at home: [ ] English [ ] vernacular only
   [ ] both English and vernacular

7. If father/ mother are not alive, please indicate date (year) of death.
   Father: .....
   Mother: .....
8. (a).Father's name: .....(b). Mother's name: .....
   (c). Home address: .....
   (d). Is your home in town or in a rural area: .....
9. Indicate by ticking all the items or facilities found in your home from the list below:

   [ ] Running water [ ] Electricity [ ] Washing machine [ ] Television set

   [ ] Video [ ] Radio [ ] Car/vehicles [ ] Refrigerator

   [ ] Electric cooker [ ] Pressing iron [ ] Bicycle [ ] Motorcycle (Honda)

   [ ] Personal computers [ ] Library/reading room [ ] Digital satellite facilities

   [ ] Sporting and recreational facilities (e.g. Table tennis, chess etc.)

10. Indicate on average how often you help with household chores, (e.g. running errands, cooking, sweeping, nursing children etc.)
    [ ] Daily [ ] Often [ ] Quite often [ ] Sometimes [ ] Never

11. On average how many meals do you have per day?
[ ] Once [ ] Twice [ ] Three times

12. On average what time do you take your meals?
(a). Breakfast ..... (b). Lunch.....
(c). Super: ..... (d). Any time [ ]

13. (a). Do you do any piece work out of school for payments? [ ] Yes [ ] No
(b). If yes, is it regular work? [ ] Yes [ ] No

14. Do you have enough time to do home studies? [ ] Yes [ ] No

15. Indicate your birth order in the space below (i.e. whether you are 1st born, 2nd born, etc)
.....

16. Did you attend Nursery school/Pre-school before starting grade 1?
[ ] Yes [ ] No

17. Have you had extra lessons or private tuitions in the last 2 years?
[ ] Yes [ ] No

18. Has your male parent/ guardian purchased/provided you with supplementary reading materials for use in the last 2 years?
[ ] Yes [ ] No

19. Has your female parent/ guardian purchased/provided you with supplementary reading materials for use in the last 2 years?
[ ] Yes [ ] No

20. How many members of your family have attained:
a) University education: .....
b) College education: .....
c) Secondary school education: .....
d) Primary school education: .....
e) Never been to school: .....

21. (a). Is father/guardian married to one wife? [ ] Yes [ ] No

(b). If no to question 23(a) above, indicate number of wives father is married to:
.....

22. Indicate by ticking the level of education of your parent/guardian in the table below :

Father/ guardian* (delete applicable)	Mother/ guardian* (delete applicable)
a. Never been to school	a. Never been to school
b. Primary school	b. Primary school
c. Secondary school	c. Secondary school
d. College	d. College
e. University	e. University
f. Other (specify).....	f. Other (specify).....
.....	.....

23. If you are supported by your guardian, please state the relationship: .....

24. Please indicate specific type of parent's occupation even if not working (Basic school teacher, auto mechanic, tailor, homemaker, nurse, vendor/marketer etc) below:
(a). Father's occupation : .....
(b). Mother's occupation: .....
(c). Guardian's occupation: .....

25. Please indicate the estimate of your father's/guardian's monthly income: .....

26. Please indicate the estimate of your mother's/guardian's monthly income: .....

27. On the average, how often do you discuss educational matters with your male parent/ guardian per week in the last 2 years?
[ ] More often [ ] Often [ ] Quite often [ ] Sometime [ ] Never

28. On the average, how often do you discuss educational matters with your female parent/ guardian per week in the last 2 years?
[ ] More often [ ] Often [ ] Quite often [ ] Sometime [ ] Never

29. (a)Does your male parent/ guardian encourage you in school work?
[ ] Yes [ ] No
(b). If yes to question 31(a), state briefly the kind of encouragement rendered
.....

30. Does your male parent/guardian participate in the parent and teacher association (PTA) meetings in the last 2 years? [ ] Yes [ ] NO

31. Does your male parent/ guardian attend 'open days' and 'exhibitions' at school?
[ ] Yes [ ] No

32. (a). Does your female parent/ guardian encourage you in school work?
[ ] Yes [ ] No
(b). If yes to question 34(a) above, state briefly the kind of encouragement rendered
.....

33. Does your female parent/guardian participate in the parent and teacher association (PTA) meetings in the last 2 years? [ ] Yes [ ] NO

34. Does your female parent/ guardian attend 'open days' and 'exhibitions' at school?
[ ] Yes [ ] No

35. (a). Have you ever travelled far from home during school holidays in the last 2 years?
[ ] Yes [ ] No
(b). If yes, what were your reasons for travelling?
.....

36. List the co-curricular activities (such as clubs, societies, teams or organizations etc) that you take part in at school:
.....

37. (a). On average how many books (other than textbooks) do you have at home
[ ] none [ ] one to five [ ] six to ten [ ] more than ten
(b). How often do you books (other than school textbooks), magazines, newspapers per week?
[ ] More often [ ] Often [ ] Quite often [ ] Sometime [ ] Never

38. About how many close friends (do not include your relatives) do you have?
.....

39. (a). Have you repeated any grades before? [ ] Yes [ ] No
(b). If yes to question 41(a) above, what were the reasons for repeating the grade(s)
.....
.....

40. What would you like your parents to do in order for your performance to improve in school?
.....
.....
.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION AND COOPERATION

APPENDIX IV

TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

Dear respondent,

I am a student at the University of Zambia doing a research on pupil background characteristics and academic performance in grade nine. You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire.

This research is purely academic and the information will be strictly confidential.

Your co-operation would be highly appreciated.

1. Your name: .....
2. Your Gender: .....
3. Education level attained (Please tick appropriate)
   [ ] Grade 12 [ ] Certificate primary [ ] Diploma primary
   [ ] Diploma secondary [ ] Degree

4. Your role at school
   [ ] Classroom teacher [ ] Counsellor [ ] Administrator
   [ ] other (Specify): .....

5. Pupil's full names: .....
6. Pupil's gender: .....
7. How many months have you know this pupil: .....
8. Pupils' grade in school: .....
9. How well do you know this pupil?
   [ ] Not well [ ] Moderately well [ ] Very well
10. (a).Has the child ever been away from school for considerable periods , or has he ever been irregular in his attendance [ ] Yes [ ] No
    (b). If Yes, what was/were the reasons?
    .....

11. (a). Is the child particularly weak in any subject or group of subjects?
    [ ] Yes [ ] No
    (b). If Yes, has he/she been given extra help? .....
12 Please indicate the child's recreational pastimes such as games, athletics etc
    .....
13. Please indicate any club, organization or society that the child belongs to: .....
    .....

14. Does the child read a great deal of books (other the textbooks) magazines, newspapers? [ ] Yes [ ] No

15. Does the hold any positions of responsibilities at school?
    [ ] Yes [ ] No
16. List the academic subjects and indicate pupil's performance for each subject by ticking the appropriate performance level as reflected in the 2008 Examinations Council of Zambia's grade 9 results listing.

Serial #	Academic subject	Mark	Pupil's performance		
			Below average	Average	Above average
1	English				
2	Mathematics				
3	E/ Science				
4	History				
5	Geography				
6	Civics				
7	Religious education				
8					
9					

17. Any other comments about the child.

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION AND COOPERATION