

**PARENTAL PARTICIPATION IN THE ACQUISITION OF INITIAL LITERACY  
SKILLS AMONG GRADE ONE LEARNERS IN SELECTED HOMES IN MONZE  
DISTRICT OF ZAMBIA**

**BY**

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Requirements for the Degree of  
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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that the work presented in this dissertation entitled “ Parental participation in the acquisition of initial literacy skills among grade one learners in selected homes in Monze District Southern Province” is to the best of my knowledge and belief my own work and that it is original. The dissertation contains no material that has been accepted for an award of degree or diploma by the University of Zambia or any other institution. All the works that are not mine have been acknowledged.

Signed.....

Date.....

## APPROVAL

This dissertation of JOHN HAZWELA is approved as fulfilling the requirement for the award of Degree of Master of Education in Literacy and Learning by the University of Zambia.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

**CDC** Curriculum development Centre

**FGD** Focused Group Discussion

**FLE** Family Literacy Environment

**MESVTEE** Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Childhood  
Education

**MOE** Ministry of Education

**NLF** National Literacy Framework

**NASRP** National Assessment Survey Report

**P I** Parental Involvement

**PRA** Parental Reading Attitude

**PTA** Parents and Teachers Association

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the extent to which parents were involved in the acquisition of literacy skills among grade one learners in Monze District. The study established the type of home literacy activities which support literacy development. The study further investigated what parents perceive as challenges to their involvement in their children's literacy skills development.

The study employed both the qualitative and quantitative research methodologies in order to triangulate data collection. A sample of 112 participants was drawn from three selected schools. This sample comprised 52 parents and 60 pupils. The schools and parents were selected purposefully while pupils were selected randomly. Data was collected using questionnaires, Focused Group Discussions, Home literacy checklist and practical test. The qualitative data was analysed thematically while quantitative data was analysed using figures in excel.

The findings of the study revealed that parents in the study were involved in the acquisition of literacy skills of their learners. The study found out that although parents said that they were involved in literacy activities, they were not aware that they were supposed to help their children in order to enhance their literacy skills through home literacy activities. It was further noted that folktales, playing games, storytelling at bedtime were not popular among both learners and their parents instead those who owned Television sets preferred watching television. The study also revealed that those parents who were unable to read and write could not help their children in reading and homework. In many homes there were no shelves where children could access reading materials. The study further showed that books were not available for children to read in many homes.

Furthermore, the study showed that although most of the parents indicated that they bought their children writing materials, and had calendars, Bibles, wall clocks and religious charts, they did not consider these as literacy related materials. The parents felt that it was the duty of schools to teach children academic work and their role was to provide uniforms and school fees. Parents also cited lack of financial resources, non-availability of library services as hindrances to their efforts to help the learners.

The following are the recommendations arising from the study: To share with parents on the need to take keen interest in the education of their children, teachers to engage parents and show them that they were partners in the education of their children; schools to create well established partnerships with parents. Schools to bridge the gap between home and school in order to work together to help learners, parents should be encouraged to check children's books regularly, parents should provide feedback to schools on pupils performance, work with publishing houses to produce more reading materials especially supplementary readers, build libraries in each district.

***Key Words: Parental Involvement, home literacy environment, literacy activities, reading***

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my dearest wife Cecilia Miyanda and to our children, Nicholas, John Jnr, Chipu, Karen, and Carol for their enduring love and care during all the years of my study.

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# **1.0 CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 OVERVIEW**

#### **BACKGROUND**

Literacy is defined by the Zambia National curriculum as the ability to read and write so as to understand and communicate effectively (MESVTEE, 2013). It is widely accepted that literacy is key to successful learning at school and it also gives capacity for individuals to participate actively in social, economic, cultural and political life (MESVTEE, 2013). Literacy is not only a basic tool for achieving an individual's aspirations in life, but it also benefits society. It is therefore in the best interest of individuals and society to provide support for developing literacy. It is a known fact that quality early learning is linked to positive school achievement and these achievements and outcomes are usually associated with later adult productivity (MESVTEE, 2013).

It is important that children learn to read and write within the first few years of schooling, once they learn functional skills, they can focus on more complex tasks. It is also said that children who fall behind in learning to read typically become entangled in a cycle of failure and children below a certain level by the end of grade one are more likely to stay behind, and the gap widens (MESVTTE, 2013).

For decades now, many individuals and interest groups have demanded that the education system in Zambia be reviewed to address the seemingly declining educational standards. The search for answers to questions about what is wrong and what needs to be done has pointed to, among other things, the need to employ research based educational practices, without limiting interventions to the four walls of the classroom or what happens in the school. Parental involvement has been highlighted as one best practice which should be strengthened to support improvement of children's educational achievement. The 1996 Education policy (Educating Our Future) states that involvement of parents in their children's education is significant because the first responsibility for education of children lies with the parents and

wider community (MOE, 1996). In 2013, lack of parental involvement (PI) in children's literacy learning was noted to be one of the key reasons for poor literacy of school going children in Zambia (MESVTEE, 2013).

Many education practitioners and policy makers widely recognize the importance of parental participation in the education of their children at various levels. Informal home parenting, like personal care given to children is a very important aspect as it builds the interaction between the child and parent or caregiver. Research has acknowledged the benefits which accrue to learners, parents and schools when parents play different roles in the education of children. For example, Henderson and Berla(1994) state that family practices which stimulate and support learning have significant impact on student learning at various levels. Research points out that education-friendly homes foster student achievement in education (Kellaghan et al., 1993). Further, studies have reported that supportive home processes such as valuing education, setting high education expectations, setting space for children to study, placing high premium on reading, modeling positive behaviours (Kellaghan et al., 1993), providing supplementary learning resources in the home (Clark, 1983) and controlled spending of after-school time (Becher, 1984) all support the widely held view that home environments are important aspects of parental participation which result into educational achievement and literacy development of learners.

With respect to how children learn, Vygotsky's (1979, 1989) socio-cultural theory to literacy states that the zone of proximal development, scaffolding, and guided participation are critical to parental participation in home literacy development. Vygotsky asserts that the zone of proximal development, as it relates to literacy development, is the gap between a child's ability to carry out a literacy task while being guided by a knowledgeable parent or care giver and the child's ability to solve a literacy problem without assistance (Vygotsky, 1978). Fully developed abilities exist at the level of independence whereas those skills which are on the verge of emerging and can be supported by an adult are within the zone of proximal development. As a child gains skills he moves from a level of dependence to independence. Additionally, in a home environment, parents or care givers ought to work with their children to complete tasks. Furthermore, as their participation is guided by a more knowledgeable other, children's acquisition of literacy skills is supported in the home.

Given this global knowledge base on parental participation in education, this study sought to establish the role parents play in enhancing literacy skills of learners in grade one and the type of home activities that support literacy. Additionally, the study sought to examine the extent to which parents were involved in the provision of literacy materials and a literacy rich home environment.

The evidence about the benefits of parents being involved in their children's education in general, and their children's literacy activities in particular, is unequivocal. For example, research shows that parental involvement in their children's learning positively affects the child's performance at school, both in primary and secondary school levels (Desforges and Abouchar, 2003). It is further noted that the impact is the same regardless of ethnic background, family income, maternal level of education, or child's gender. There are also numerous studies that have shown that children who grow up in a stimulating home environment, one which has a great emphasis on learning opportunities do better academically, regardless of socio-economic background (van Steensel (2006). According to Desforges and Abouchar (2003), parental involvement has a significant effect on children's achievement and adjustment even after all other factors (such as social class, maternal education and poverty) have been taken out of the equation between children's aptitudes and their achievement levels.

In addition to higher academic achievement and greater cognitive competence, parental involvement is said to lead to greater problem-solving skills, greater school enjoyment, better school attendance, fewer behavioral problems at school, and greater social and emotional development (Melhuish, Sylva, Sammons et al, 2000).

Research has shown that the most accurate predictor of a pupil's achievement is not parental income or social status but the extent to which parents are able to create a home environment that is supportive, has reasonable expectations for achievement and future careers, and where parents become directly involved in their children's education at the school and in the community. Literacy is one of the areas where parents can have simple things like books or other reading materials) to become involved and to make a difference. It is also noted that of all school subjects, reading has been found to be one of the most sensitive to parental influences (Senechal and LeFevre, 2002). It is said that success in reading is a gateway to

success in other academic areas as well (Jordan, Snow and Porsche, 2000). Children, who fall behind in reading find it difficult to learn as reading helps to learn other subjects as well.

Simple interactions, such as being read to, and exposure to books, magazines, newspapers and environmental print, impact children's progress in learning to read ( Whitehurst, 1998), and children who come from richer home literacy environments show higher levels of reading knowledge and skills at the start of kindergarten and throughout primary school. There is also sufficient evidence that parents who promote reading as a valuable and worthwhile activity have children who are motivated to read for pleasure. Involvement with reading activities at home has significant positive influences not only on reading achievement, language comprehension and expressive language skills, but also on pupils' interest in reading.

The earlier parents become involved in their children's literacy practices, the more profound the results and the longer lasting the effects. Although parental involvement has the greatest effect in the early years, its importance to children's educational and literacy outcomes continues into the teenage and even adult years (Desforges and Abouchar, 2003). For example, Feinstein and Symons (1999) found that parental interest in their child's education was the single greatest predictor of achievement at age 16. Parent's involvement outside of home, such as participation in extracurricular activities also impacts on their children's reading, general knowledge, and mathematics knowledge and skills.

In a recent study (Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins and Weiss, 2006) for the Harvard Family Research Project, found that family involvement in school matters most for children whose mothers have less education. More specifically, the authors found that increases in family involvement in the school predicted increases in literacy achievement for low income families and that family involvement in school matters most for children at greatest risk. More specifically, Dearing and colleagues found that if families who were initially uninvolved in the school became more involved, their children's literacy improved. Importantly, their results indicated that even one or two additional involvement activities per year were associated with meaningful improvements for children.

The recent parental involvement literature has been synthesized by Hoover-Dempsey and colleagues who used it to build, and later revise, a model of parental involvement that takes

into account three central questions: why do parents become involved in children's education?; what do they do when they're involved (i.e., what mechanisms of influence do they engage when they are involved)?; and how does their involvement, once engaged, influence student outcomes?

Although this model does not talk specifically about literacy outcomes, its general parental involvement processes are equally applicable to the present context. What is interesting about this model is that it takes into account both parent characteristics and circumstances as well as child characteristics. According to this model, parents are at the most fundamental level motivated to become involved by their sense of self-efficacy in helping their child succeed, their perceptions of being invited to become involved by the school, their child and teachers, by their knowledge and skills, and by the perceived input to be made in terms of time and energy. These perceptions and beliefs then contribute to involvement behaviours at home and at school, which can take the form of encouragement, modeling, reinforcement and instruction. The degree to which these parental behaviours influence the child's educational achievements depends on the child's attributes, such as his/her academic self-efficacy, motivation and strategy use, which in turn depend on the child's perception of the parental involvement behaviours.

Since the research evidence leaves no doubt about the benefits of parental involvement, researchers have begun to explore what types of involvement have the greatest benefit on children (Henderson and Mapp, 2002), and it should come as no surprise that parent and community involvement that is linked to student learning has a greater effect on achievement than more general forms of involvement (Henderson and Mapp, 2002).

However, the current study sought to examine the role of parents in their children's acquisition of initial literacy skills and the type of activities that they engaged the children in homes. The study further endeavored to explore parental perceptions to their involvement and what parents perceive as challenges to their involvement.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Research has shown that in efforts to develop learners' reading habits, reading achievement and learning experiences, motivation is a critical factor (Wilson, 1999). Morrow (1983) adds that learners who like reading do not begin to like reading overnight but they do so as a result

of the fact that their parents like reading. To this end, Morrow's study of kindergarten children's level of interest in literacy points to the assertion that the home exerts positive influence on learners. Findings of that study brought out home practices which could have positive outcomes in schools and indicated the role that families ought to play in children's literacy development. Although a number of studies have been conducted in line with emergent literacy among Preschoolers in Zambia, we do not know parental participation in the initial literacy acquisition of grade one children in Monze District of Zambia.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

Literacy is a skill highly valued in society. Those people that are literate in one way or another are able to command some kind of respect in society. Illiteracy has social and economic implications which impact such things as class level, job placement, and daily functioning. Literacy development begins prior to the age of five (5), therefore, research has been done exploring factors that impact literacy development in school aged children. Among the most important of factors that have been identified is the home environment. The home is typically the setting in which language and initial literacy is first encountered. The purpose of this study was to establish the role parents play in the acquisition of initial literacy skills of their grade one children.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The objectives of the study were to:

- 1 establish the role parents play in the acquisition of initial literacy skills among their grade one children in Monze District of Zambia.
- 2 establish the type of home literacy environment and activities found in parents' homes which support initial literacy development.
- 3 determine parents' perceptions of what constitutes a rich literacy home environment.
- 4 determine what parents perceive to be challenges to their involvement in initial literacy development of their children.
- 5 ascertain the levels literacy proficiency of grade one children.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- 1 What role parents play in the acquisition of initial literacy skills of their grade1 children?
- 2 What type of activities do parents carry out at home to develop their children's initial literacy?
- 3 Determine parents' perceptions of what constitutes a rich literacy home environment.
- 4 What do parents perceive to be challenges to their involvement in their children's initial literacy development?
- 5 What were the levels of literacy proficiency of grade one children?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

All children are entitled to the best preparation and experiences which have potential to put them on the path to learn how to read and write from an early age before they enroll into school. The best initial preparation before school is from homes children are brought up. Research has demonstrated the significance of emergent literacy in the process of learning to read and write. A key aspect of emergent literacy is the home literacy environment and literacy learning experiences which children are exposed to early in their lives.

To this end, it is hoped that the present study would highlight the role played by parents in the education of their children in general and how parents could contribute to achievement of initial literacy skills of learners in particular. It is also hoped that the study would inform teachers, administrators, and curriculum designers on how they could collaboratively engage parents in the education of their children. Furthermore, it is assumed, the study would provide insight on how to bridge the gap between the school and the home in the teaching and learning enterprise.

## **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

This study is framed within the social constructivist theory propagated by Vygotsky (1978, 1989) which views literacy as a social process where interaction and interpretation is determined by cultural and social factors. With respect to literacy development, this theoretical framework shares a position that children construct knowledge and language with more knowledgeable others through a process in which a learner initially requires hand-holding but gradually is able to function independently outside-regulation to self-regulation. Vygotsky (1978) refers to this relationship as inter and intra-psychological functioning. The child's capability to organise and track his own thinking occurs because of demonstrations in the process of social interaction with more knowledgeable others, in the case of home literacy development with parents or indeed care givers. Among others, major implications of Vygotsky's(1979, 1989) socio-cultural theory to literacy are zone of proximal development, scaffolding, and guided participation. The study intended to unveil the role of parents as partners playing a collaborative role with school to enhance literacy skills of learners.

## **1.8 Reflections on Ethical issues**

Taking into account that the subjects included minors, permission to investigate them was sought from their parents and teachers before administering research instruments. The parents or guardians who were also involved in the study were assured that the findings were going to be used for academic purposes only and that confidentiality would be maintained while their names would be withheld. All the parents were given the consent forms and only when they agreed to participate in the study, were they asked to sign the form. Parents or caregivers signed the consent forms on behalf of grade 1 children.

## **1.9.0 Definition of Terms**

The definitions of the terms below are intended to help readers understand the study:

**Alphabetic knowledge** – refers to the understanding that written letters systematically represent sounds.

**Dialogic reading** – the utilization of strategic questioning and well-thought out responses to children’s interest and initiations during shared book reading sessions

**Emergent Literacy** – refers to children’s earliest exhibition of literacy behaviors.

**Literacy** – An individual’s ability to read, write, and speak English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one’s goals, and develop one’s knowledge and potential.

**Home literacy environment** – the experiences, attitudes and materials pertaining to literacy which a child encounters and interacts with at home

**Parent** – any adult who takes care of a child promotes a child’s literacy outside school. Parent in this context includes caregivers and older siblings.

**Parental participation** – refers to support provided by parents and/or caregivers to children who are either in a formal education or are yet to enroll.

**Phonological awareness** – the understanding that oral language is made up of sounds or groups of sounds.

**Picture books** – refers to books with graphical representations or drawings which are used to teach early literacy skills.

**Print concept awareness** – Knowledge that printed words have meaning and that reading and writing are ways to get ideas and information.

**Print referencing** – refers to techniques used to increase emergent readers’ knowledge about and interest in print by highlighting the forms, functions and features of print during reading aloud.

**Reading** – the process of constructing meaning from written texts.

**Reading aloud** – refers to a situation where a parent or caregiver reads from a book and what is read is then used as a basis for literacy instruction.

**Shared book reading** – refers to the practice of reading alongside a learner aimed at fostering children’s language and literacy skills, and their appreciation of printed materials.

**Storytelling** – relating a tale to one or more listeners through voice. It is sometimes done through gestures.

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### **1.1.0 Limitations of the Study**

While all precautions were taken into account to ensure that the study results are credible, the study was limited by a number of factors.

All respondents were drawn from Monze District, so the results may not represent parental participation among all parents of grade ones in Zambia. Data was drawn from fifty-two parents who limit generalization. Parents were selected with the help of school administrators which might have influenced the study results. Emergent literacy is not part of popular discourse among parents of school going children in most rural parts of the country.

### **1.1.1 Assumptions**

This study made a number of assumptions. The first assumption being that the sample represented the population. Data collection instruments have validity and measured desired constructs.

In addition, the informants answered questions truthfully. Informants also viewed parental participation in education generally and specifically in literacy development as an important ingredient in education.

### **1.1.2 Summary of Chapter One**

Chapter one has given the background of the study. The chapter has provided the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research objectives and questions, significance of the study, theoretical framework within which the study is framed, reflection on ethical issues, definition of terms that have been used in this dissertation and limitations of the study. The next chapter presents the review of literature that is relevant to this study.

## **2.0 CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Overview**

This chapter presents literature review relevant to parental participation in promoting acquisition of initial literacy skills of learners. The review of related literature covers the benefits which accrue to learners when their parents participate in their education, a broader historical perspective of Literacy in general, an overview of parental involvement, the zone of proximal development, scaffolding, the home environment that promotes literacy development, parents' perceptions of rich home literacy environments, challenges to parental involvement and the Literacy in Zambia, Thus, although most of literature covered mostly countries outside Zambia, there are a lot of similarities that can be drawn with the Zambian situation.

#### **2.2 Literacy a historical perspective**

Literacy in the Literature has been traditionally viewed as a visual and perceptual process that involves a series of hierarchical skills. Reading in the past was seen as decoding what the child had to be taught, to respond to written symbols verbally while adding comprehension later(Hearn,1992). Consequently, reading instruction in the past followed a rigid two-step process involving first teaching children the alphabet. Children were taught through key words and practiced reading simple syllables for example C for cat.

Having the ability to identify letters and the sounds that each letter represents was valued. As a result it was believed that once children were equipped with these skills, they have the ability to life- long readers (Adams, 1990). By the 1970s, the concept “emergent Literacy” began to formally develop. Marie Clay coined the term “emergent Literacy”, (Britto and Brooks, 2001). Clay observed and recorded how children responded to literacy activities at school and at home up until they were five or six years old (Hearn, 1992).

Clay found that most of the children started school with different ranges of early concepts based on their pre-school experiences from books and writing (Hearn, 1992). From this, it was derived that reading is not an exact process of seeing and saying words but rather a perceptual and cognitive process. Emergent literacy therefore means children obtain literacy skills not only from direct instruction, but also from stimulating and responsive environment.

### **2.3 Parental involvement in literacy Development**

There are several forms of parental involvement in the education of learners. This involvement can be viewed as home based, school based and school-home based. In whatever form this involvement takes place, its significance cannot be over-emphasized. Studies have shown that informal home parenting like personal care, dressing and playing together with children have positive impact in the interaction between a child and parents or care givers. As outlined by Vygotsky, (1987) the scaffolding by parents or older peers is an important step in achieving literacy levels of learners. It has been generally agreed that parents, grandparents and siblings have significant role to play in children's education development and achievement and cultivating an enjoyment of learning. From the literature, it is also widely recognized that literacy is not merely a school agenda.

When children enter grade one, they are coming from homes under the care of parents or other caregivers. Studies have shown that when parents become participants in the learning of their children, literacy levels of such children are higher than in situations where parental participation is absent. Parental participation in children's learning has long been recognized as a key factor in promoting early literacy development and helping children to handle learning difficulties. Furthermore, research on early readers (Clark, 1976; Durkin, 1966) points to the importance of parental involvement in children's literacy learning. For example, Bouffard and Weiss (2008) posit that a systematic approach that intentionally integrates school and non-school support to promote educational success is one of the effective ways of enhancing learning and developmental experiences of children. Additionally, Desforges (2003) states that at primary school age, the home learning environment has greater influence on student achievement than variations on the quality of schools. It is undeniable, therefore, that parents have an important role to play in the development of their children's literacy levels.

It is therefore important that parents and care givers are aware of the significant contribution they can make to their children's learning by supporting at home the children's literacy agenda. Furthermore, parental activity around language, reading and writing that is parent/child driven and not primarily focused on raising school achievement must also be encouraged. It is also said that educating a child is a challenging endeavor which may intimidate some parents and care givers. Literacy is a complex skill that requires supportive environment and takes years to mature.

#### **2.4 Types of parental involvement**

In the literature, there are several types of parental involvement identified (Desforges and Abourchaar (2003), included; good parenting in the home, including the provision of a secure and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussion and good relation to personal fulfillment. The other notable type is that which involves contact with the school in order to share information between the parent or caregiver and the school and participation in school events like open day. Additionally, the parent's participation in the work of the school as well as governance of the school like PTA is equally of great importance.

There seems to be a broader consensus that the basis for educational success lies in the home. Parents are said to play a key role in enhancing literacy development in young children through the interaction they share with their child. Insight in key features of early literacy has led to quite well defined parent behaviours for promoting their children's literacy development. Sonnenschain and Backer (2005) have summarized parent's promotive activities in eight themes; Shared book reading, frequent oral language experiences, encourage self-initiated interaction with print, library visits, children's motivation for reading, demonstration of the values, foster sense of pride and communication with teachers.

#### **2.5 Zone of Proximal Development**

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is the gap between a learner's ability to carry out a task while being guided by a knowledgeable adult and the learner's ability to solve a problem without assistance (Vygotsky, 1978). Fully developed abilities exist at the level of

independence whereas those skills which are on the verge of emerging and can be supported by an adult are within the zone of proximal development. As a child gains skills he moves from a level of dependence to independence. For instance, if a child is unable to hold a book in the right way initially and only does it right with assistance, once he has mastered how to correctly hold the book that becomes his level of independence. Parental involvement in shared book reading, reading aloud, storytelling and use of picture books are useful especially when they move ahead of development of a child's emergent literacy development or indeed conventional literacy. When it moves ahead of actual development, it spurs a whole sequence of functions that in a stage of growth residing in the zone of proximal development, which is essentially the role that is played by parental participation.

## **2.6 Scaffolding**

Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976, p.90) described scaffolding as a process which *“enables a child or novice to solve a task or achieve a goal that would be beyond his unassisted efforts.”*

In a home environment, parents would work with their children to complete tasks such as reading a story that were beyond what the children could do without help. In this context, scaffolding entails that the parent would read with their children by providing extra support when a child encountered reading difficulty and then they would provide less support when the child was demonstrating ability to read without their help. A few principles of scaffolding are informed by careful observation of the learner so as to form the basis for decisions about the amount of help, what kind of help and when exactly help is needed in the reading process. Another important aspect in scaffolding is being aware that children learn at different paces and so help should be provided based on today's child (Wood, et al, 1976).

## **2.7 Guided participation**

Guided participation is of critical importance to literacy development in the home. Guided by Vygotsky's work, Antonacci (2000) names book introduction (taking a child through a story prior to reading while leaving problem solving to do), children's reading of the whole text by themselves (parent tasks child to read a story while he listens and provides help as needed; he

also observes and documents the child's strategy use as well as child's performance on other reading behaviors). In addition, selection and use of appropriate levels (parent selects books and texts which are in conformity with the child's reading level to support the beginner reader), and dynamic grouping procedures as essential elements of guided reading (change in the child's reading development is continuous and literacy concepts emerge at different times) (Vygotsky, 1986).

In this study, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory was, therefore, used in relation to emergent literacy as it pertains to the home literacy environment in Monze District. The central notion of emergent literacy is that children begin learning how to read and write much earlier than their enrolment into school (Clay, 1966 & 1979). Teal and Sulzby (1986; 1991) have added that a child acquires early literacy skills in language, reading and writing prior to school experiences. With its onset early in the lives of young children as opposed to the view that it starts when children begin formal education, literacy acquisition is best conceptualized as a developmental continuum (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

Indeed, this assertion lends credence to the importance of the home as a source of literacy knowledge children acquire and literacy experiences that they are exposed to in their interaction with the world and adults around them. In so doing, emergent literacy dispels the notion that learners come to school as empty slates. For purposes of this study, therefore, emergent literacy as it pertains to the areas of literacy experiences and areas of literacy knowledge were used to try to answer the research questions, collect and analyze data, and present the study findings. Areas of literacy experiences include storybook reading, home literacy experiences, communication patterns and practices while literacy knowledge includes letter knowledge, phonological awareness, comprehension of text structures, the relationship of print to speech and awareness of print (Mason & Allen, 1986; van Kleeck, 1990; Sulby&Teale, 1991; Weir, 1989).

## **2.8 Importance of parental participation in education**

Research evidence suggests that parental participation in children's education from an early age has positive effects on educational outcomes not only in early grades but throughout life (Henderson & Berla, 1997, Sylva et al., 2004). Henderson and Berla (1997) conclude that the

most accurate predictor of students' achievement in school is the extent to which families are able to create a home environment that supports learning, communicate high but reasonable expectations for their children's achievement, and become involved in their children's schools. The benefits of parental involvement in education are many. When parents participate in homework, children begin to hold positive views about homework and see it as a key contributor to their school success (Sharp et al., 2001).

One of the ways parents get involved in their children's schooling is through homework. Parents get involved in homework because they believe that it is important to participate in homework and they are of the view that their involvement makes positive contributions to their children's learning outcomes while others still get involved because they are invited to get involved (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997). It could be deduced, therefore, that parents get involved in homework owing to their expectations and beliefs about their roles in their children's education. Likewise, parental involvement reflects that parents have confidence in their capacity to help children. To this end, when parents get involved in homework, they model attitudes, knowledge and skills associated with learning, and reinforce what children learn and are able to do. Through their involvement, parents also provide children with interactions related to homework content and learning processes.

Research also indicates that parental involvement impacts reading. The frequency with which parents read to children is associated with high pre-reading scores and language development (Sammons, et al., 2000). They add that alphabet learning is also said to contribute to pre-reading skills gains as does the frequency of library visits.

## **2.9 Home literacy environment and literacy activities**

Early exposure to literacy both in the school and home environment plays a critical role in emergent literacy development. It is widely accepted by many that parents are children's first teachers and the home environment is said to positively affect emergent literacy development (Saracho, 1997). Through their parenting and caregiving roles, parents and care givers impart knowledge and skills associated with later formal education. As educators and researchers explore ways of promoting emergent literacy, they have turned to how home literacy environments could expose children to rich literacy experiences and activities (Bus, van

Ijzendoorn, & Pellegrini, 1995; Senechal, & LeFevren, 2002). It has been argued that children from home environments which provide rich literacy experiences have strong foundations for learning to read once they enter formal schooling. Among others, educators and researchers have pointed to educational practices like shared storybook reading, using picture books, reading aloud and storytelling as characteristic of rich home literacy environments. In spite of the fact these practices are also applicable in formal educational settings; their application is not limited to school settings as they could also be used by families in the home environment. Home Environment and Parental Involvement Research shows that there is an important role for parental involvement in children's learning. Parents' knowledge of storybooks predicts children's oral language skills (e.g., vocabulary; Frijters, Barron, and Brunello, 2000; Senechal, LeFevre, Thomas, and Daley, 1998) and parents' reports of teaching their children about reading and printing words is related to children's written language skills (Evans, Shaw, and Bell, 2000; Senechal et al., 1998). The connections between home experiences and early numeracy skills have been explored in only a few studies but some relations between learning and parental involvement have been found

### **2.1.0 Shared book reading**

Parents today, as in many years past have been encouraged to read with their children by many educationists and policy makers. The interactions between parents and their children during shared book reading have long been viewed as positive influence on children's reading development.(Bus, Van, IJzendonorn& Pelligrin,1995). Research has recognised shared book reading as a valuable education practice for early literacy development. In fact, while there are several experiences which are regarded to hugely contribute to early literacy, shared book reading has been touted as the most important experience between parents and children. Accordingly, shared book reading between parents and children has been found by many research studies to reflect a rich home literacy environment (Curenton & Justice, 2008; Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Senechal, LeFvre, Thomas and Daley, 1998). Research on shared book reading has indicated that it is an indicator of the nature of a home's literacy environment associated with emergent literacy development, vocabulary development and heightened motivation for reading (Deckner, Adamson & Bakeman, 2006; Senechal, 1996; Senechal & LeFevre, 2002; van Steensel, 2006). Shared book reading helps children to

recognise letters, associate print with the spoken word. It also teaches children to begin to learn how to hold books, turn pages and identify where to start from when reading from a book (Bus, et al, 1995; Whitehurst, 1998). Many researchers believe that shared book reading experiences are beneficial because the talk that accompanies them promotes vocabulary, comprehension and perhaps word recognition, contributing directly to reading achievement. The cultural theme of reading as a source of pleasure features in the implicit theory of literacy that pervades the education institutions in the modern world. One of the reasons parents are encouraged to read with their children is to promote positive views about reading through pleasurable social interactions. Such interactions may nurture children's motivation for reading, (Backere, Scher, & Mackle, 1997). In the current study shared book reading was activity where the researcher sought to find out whether parents had close contact with their children in motivating them to read and also the types of reading materials that were available in the homes.

In addition, reading need not be haphazard but conducted in a well-planned and organised manner. When using shared story book reading to promote early literacy knowledge, there is need to ensure that children take active roles in the reading activity and find the activity appealing. Thus, studies have identified dialogic reading and print referencing as effective strategies used to promote shared book reading (Whitehurst et al., 1988). Dialogic reading is the utilisation of strategic questioning and well-thought out responses to children's interest and initiations during shared book reading sessions. On the other hand, print referencing is the use of verbal and nonverbal cues to guide a child's attention to forms, features and functions of written language. Justice and Ezell (2004) provide examples of nonverbal reference cues as pointing to print and tracking print and verbal cues as questions about print (e.g. do you know this letter?), comments about print (e.g. that is the letter A) and requests about print (e.g. show me where the letter O is).

### **2.1.1 Picture books**

Shared book reading includes reading of books dominated by text, reading of books with a combination of pictures and text, and the reading of books dominated by pictures. Picture books support literacy development in many ways but not limited to providing children with rich vocabulary, opportunities for dialogue based on pictures and thus help children to learn

how to interpret images and knowledge of story sequence (Seplocha & Strasser, 2007). Experts in the use of picture books to support early literacy development argue that picture books develop skills such as identification of the front and the back of a book, top and bottom of a book, turning pages one at a time and develop sense of the fact that when one reads a book they begin from the left and move to the right of each page.

Picture books that are provided to children in homes to promote emergent literacy should not just be any books one comes across, it is suggested that they should have characteristics which include presenting the story line in a brief and straightforward manner, containing a limited number of concepts, including concepts which children can easily understand (Sutherland, 1997).

Indeed, to ensure that picture books add value to efforts to promote emergent literacy development, parents should ensure that picture books which are part of the home environment embody three stories with the first told by words, the second implied by pictures while the third one ought to result from the combination of the story told by words and the one implied by pictures. This means that using picture books to support early literacy development ought to be done purposefully and strategically for the process to achieve desired goals.

### **2.1.2 Reading aloud**

The practice of reading aloud is closely associated with literacy development strategies. It has been emphasized as an important activity for providing knowledge required for eventual success in reading and providing children who are not yet in school with opportunities to have experience with books (Anderson et al., 1985; Green et al., 2007). Research has shown a number of effects of reading aloud to children. Researchers have found out that parents view that reading aloud to children to be a crucial component of early literacy development (Roberts & Burchinal, 2002). In spite of the widespread recognition that reading aloud to children is important, plenty of children enter school without having had any such experience.

When children are exposed to reading aloud, it improves their vocabulary skills (Beck, McKeon & Kucan, 2002; De Temple & Snow, 2003; Wasik & Bond, 2001). The interaction which goes on through reading aloud and dialogue based on the read texts create fertile ground for children to learn what words used in specific contexts mean and how they are used. An added benefit to reading aloud to children is the development of children's patience, attention span and general listening comprehension (Morrow & Gambrel, 2002; Teale, 1986). For this reason, when children are read aloud to, they learn to make sense of what has been read to them, which is important for literacy development and later success in learning. When parents read aloud to their children, it also contributes to learn to manipulate minimal units of meaning called morphemes (Chomsky, 1972), increased interest and motivation for reading (Morrow, 1992). In order to ensure that it is undertaken in a manner which brings about desired positive effects, parents should conduct reading aloud by setting aside time for reading, selecting quality books, employing the right reading aloud techniques and establish a good fit between what is being read and what children ought to know (Teale, 2003). From this, it is clear that reading aloud need not be done for its sake but for its importance to emergent literacy development and contribution to later conventional literacy. Reading aloud to young children may be one of the most important home learning activities that parents provide. Reading aloud appears to make a significant contribution to oral language and emergent literacy, (Debarshe, D, B, 1995). Because language and reading abilities are at the core of school success, reading together before children enter school is one way that parents might influence their children's early academic adaptation.

### **2.1.3 Storytelling**

Many studies have reported that storytelling fosters literacy development, thereby keeping many young children away from the risk of reading failure later in their education (Glazer & Burke, 1994; Isbell, 1979; Raines & Isbell, 1994). Storytelling is associated with not only language development but also contributes to vocabulary development (Bellon, 1975; Farrell, 1991), improves listening and comprehension skills (Greene, 1991; Applebee, 1979). By engaging children as active listeners in dynamic and imaginative experiences, storytelling also improves creative thinking skills.

For shared book reading, reading aloud, picture book reading and storytelling to enrich the home literacy environment, there is need for parents and their children to have access to quality literacy materials. Where these materials are not in the home, parents should have access to information regarding where they could access literacy materials from in their communities because literacy materials are critical to development of emergent literacy skills phonological awareness, print concepts and alphabetic knowledge (Justice & Kaderavek, 2004).

#### **2.1.4 Emergent literacy development**

The development of emergent literacy consists of areas of literacy experiences on one hand and areas of literacy knowledge on the other hand. Both of these areas are important factors in the literacy development process.

Areas of literacy experiences stress the need for understanding of the contexts in which literacy is experienced and societal expectations (Mason & Allen, 1986). For this reason, it is important to note that variations in purposes for literacy have a bearing on literacy practices. Likewise, literacy experiences in children's environment do affect literacy development (Morrow, 1990) as do parents' perceptions of their roles in children's literacy experiences. Storybook reading and reading aloud also enrich literacy experiences children have before they enter school, yet they foster emergent literacy development.

A number of research has supported the assertion that literacy knowledge includes print awareness, knowledge of the relationship between speech and print, text structure, phonological awareness, and letter naming which develop side-by-side in a child's early years (van Kleeck, 1990; Adams, 1990; Durkin, 1993). Thus, understanding print, its purpose and function play an integral part of learning to read as does the ability to perceive spoken words as a sequence of sounds which are vital for reading of letters.

### **2.1.5 Parents' perceptions of emergent literacy**

Parents play important roles in their children's lives (Sonnenschein, 2002). A number of the roles played by parents are influenced by their beliefs and perceptions of various aspects of life. It has been argued that parental habits and abilities as well as socioeconomic status are associated with parental literacy beliefs (DeBaryshe, 1995).

The beliefs that parents have about skills which their children require in order to achieve success at school are said to influence whether or not they participate in literacy activities and what arrangements they put in place for their children to be involved in at home (Graue, 1992). Parents' attitudes and expectations for children's performance predict whether children will view learning in good light or not (Wigfield & Asher, 1994). For this reason, parents' perceptions influence what children later consider worthwhile and in homes where low premium is placed on literacy, children end up socialized to view literacy as such and internalise such attitudes. When parents believe that pre-school readiness skills are important, they provide a wide range of early learning experiences and materials to their children at home. Home literacy activities foster emergent literacy associated with children's success in early years. Parents' reading beliefs are strongly associated with the types of literacy activities parents engage in with their children (DeBaryshe, 1995) and there is a relationship between parents' beliefs about important learning activities for young children and the activities they provide at home for their children.

### **2.1.6 Challenges to parental involvement**

In spite of the fact that the participation of parents in education has been widely recognised as an important factor for student achievement, there are factors which still make it difficult for parents to be fully engaged in their children's education. These factors include teacher perceptions, poor teacher preparation, and poor parental attitudes.

Research indicates that one of the challenges to parental involvement in education is the attitude of teachers who think that it is not worthwhile for parents to participate in their children's education (Eccles & Harold, 1993; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Ramirez, 1999).

As a result of this attitude by educators, parents keep away from schools and educators see these parents as sources of conflicts that should be kept at a distance. In some cases, teachers fear that parental involvement will reduce their authority as reservoirs of knowledge. This argument is further supported by the work of Baker (2000a) which makes an assertion that many teachers feel that parents did not respect them and without any justification question their authority as educators. Thus, it is evident that rather than promote parental participation in education, educators in many cases exhibit behaviours which discourage parental involvement and weaken the much lauded school-home linkages. This also shows the extent to which in some cases the issue of consensus between teachers and parents on how parents ought to be involved is lacking. Williams and Stallworth (1983-1984), consequently, indicate that their study found while educators in general terms agree that there is need for greater parental involvement in education, the roles parents play should be limited to non-instructional activities such as PTA and fund-raising.

Another hindrance to parental participation in children's education is the inadequacy of teacher preparation especially as it related to empowering trainee teachers to promote parental participation (Baker, 2000b; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). Most designers of teacher training programmes assume that every graduate will figure out how to engage parents in education when they begin to practice as teachers. Because this poor teacher preparation, teachers end up relying upon limited traditional types of parental involvement focused more on PTA and not directly related to learning.

Thirdly, parents' perceptions of education limit their participation. Some parents view education to be the sole responsibility of the education system and, consequently, do not actively get involved. Some of these poor attitudes towards education stem from the bad experiences which these parents had during their school years which make them doubt their efficacy, knowledge and skills as partners in quality education delivery (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991).

## **2.17 Studies on Emergent Literacy and Parental involvement in Zambia**

There are several recent studies that have been carried out in Zambia to investigate emergent literacy behaviours of the young children before they enter school. However, most of these

studies concentrated on emergent literacy activities that the children were exposed to before they entered school. Musonda (2011) carried out a study on Literacy behaviours which Preschoolers Exhibit in Selected Households of Lusaka. Her study found out that the home literacy environment played an important role in preparing pre-Schoolers for literacy in school. The findings brought out valid points on the role of the rich literacy home environment in the acquisition of literacy skills. Her study established that a literate home environment supports development of literacy skills in children.

A notable study was conducted by Kabali (2014) in which she explored the role of family pathways to acquiring early reading skills in Lusaka's low income communities. Her study focused on assessing the continued effects of home environment variables on the children's gain scores. The variables used were the effect of family variables such as social economic status, the education levels of parents and continued influence of the home environment on reading skills. The study found out that the effects of home environment factors that Parental reading Attitude (PRA) and family Literacy Environment (FLE) on reading outcomes were assessed, at pre-testing; their impact was much larger than when they were assessed for gain score. Qualitative results that revealed different levels of involvement both at home and at school were noted for low achieving and high achieving learners. The implication of this finding is that home environment offers support learning especially at the beginning before the child is fully immersed in schooling activities (Kabali, 2014).

The review of literature on the benefits which accrue to learners when their parents participate in their education, emergent literacy development, the home environment's promotion of literacy development, parents' perceptions of rich home literacy environments and challenges to parental involvement has provided insight into what research has found on the international scene. However, while Zambia is part of the global village there is no published research on the subject which could inform educational practice in this country and guide development of policies and interventions. Over and above this, the review of literature did not find any indication that any research on parental participation in enhancing skills of literacy in grade one in Monze District. For this reason, this study could bring out valuable information which would not only be context specific but also spur further research in Monze.

### **2.1.8 Summary of Chapter two**

This chapter has provided a number of relevant literatures that have targeted parents as key interventionists in regard to exposing children to literacy experiences. It has highlighted different studies that show the importance of parental involvement in the early literacy skills acquisition of learners. Parents and caregivers to this end are therefore challenged to position themselves as first teachers in promoting literacy skills. The next chapter presents the methodology used in this study.

## **3.0 CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Overview**

This chapter presents the procedures and instruments that were used to gather data to answer the research study questions. The key areas in the chapter are the research design, participant sampling procedures, data collection and analysis methods. Kothari, (2005), states that methodology refers to the set of methods and principles used to perform a particular task. Research methods refer to various steps and techniques that are adopted by the researcher in studying the research problem logically (Kothari, 2005). The purpose of this study was to examine the role of parental participation in promoting the acquisition of literacy skills of learners in grade one in selected schools in Monze District of Southern Province of Zambia.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

Kombo & Tromp, (2006), state that research design is the conceptual structure within which a research is conducted. It shows the planned outline the researcher has opted to use to generate answers to research problem identified. . Research design is a blueprint for research, which seeks to address what questions to study, what data are relevant to the study, what data to collect and how to analyse the results.

The research design for this study provided the basis for determining the sources and type of information that were used to answer the research questions. For purposes of this study, qualitative and quantitative research methodologies were used. The study was largely a descriptive survey. The primary goal of descriptive research is to describe the nature of a situation as it exists at the time of the study and to explore the causes of a particular phenomenon. Consequently, it was considered appropriate for establishing the role parents play in enhancing literacy skills of their grade one children. . This study was also naturalistic in nature because there was no any systematic manipulation of any process of collecting data.

### **3.3 Population**

Best and Kahn,(2006) state that a population is a group of individuals with at least one or more characteristics which distinguish that group from the rest of individuals and the group should be of interest to the researcher. For purposes of this study, the population is defined as all children and parents of children who are in grade one in Monze District. This group was seen by the researcher as the main source of information.

### **3.4 Sample and Sampling procedure**

A sample is a portion of the elements in a population(White,2005).The sample for this study comprised sixty(60) grade one learners and fifty-two (52) parents who were selected through three schools so as to ascertain that their children were indeed enrolled at the three schools and help to contact the parents. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that only those parents with learners in grade 1 were involved in this study. 60 grade 1 learners were also involved in the study selected from the three schools.20 learners were randomly selected from each school. The schools were also selected purposefully to ensure that they were accessible by the researcher. In view of the sampling procedure, the results of this study may only be generalized to the sample excluding the whole population.

In this study, the researcher used both quantitative and qualitative surveys in order to collect data.

The sample comprised 36 females and 16 males. There were more females than males with 69% representing females and 31% representing males respectively. Hence, the majority of those who participated in this study were females. The sample also represented those parents coming from schools that were located in different areas. One school (X Primary School) is located in a high density area of Monze Town, another group of parents was drawn from a school (Y) Primary school) located in a peri-urban area of Chisekesi township about 15 Kilometers south of Monze town and the third group was from a rural school (Z) about 12 Kilometers south-west of Monze town. The sample also comprised parents of different age groups and different social and economic status there by giving a wide range of responses.

## **Educational Background**

27 out of the 52 respondents went up to Grade 9 in their education with 11 males and 16 females. Those who went up to grade 12 were only 4, thus 2 males and 2 females. There were 3 females who obtained GCE level of education. Out of the fifty two (52) parents who took part in the study, only 1 had obtained a Bachelor's Degree and that was a female. Those who obtained qualifications other than those stated above were 14 females and 3 males. This shows that majority of the respondents had at least attained a minimum of primary school education. There were more females than males also of those who attained grade 9 level of education and also those who had other qualifications. The educational background of respondents was of interest to the researcher because it provided insight into whether education level of parents was a predictor of their involvement.

There were (60) learners, 20 from each school. Out of these 23 were boys and 37 were girls. The learners were selected through the assistance of the three respective grade one teachers where the study was conducted. As earlier indicated, some parents represented two learners each. At Primary school Y, one parent represented two learners, while at Primary School X, two parents represented two learners each and one parent at Primary school Z represented two learners. This reduced the number of parents from sixty (60) to fifty two (52).

The class teachers helped the researcher to organize the learners .The selected learners helped to inform their parents about the study.

### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

The common means of data collection used in descriptive research are questionnaires and interview schedules. For this reason, this study used a survey questionnaire to collect data from parents of grade one children in Monze District. The data collected from the questionnaires helped the researcher to analyse demographic data which was important in understanding the roles played by parents with varying educational background. The instruments the researcher used to collect data were, the questionnaires, focused group discussions, home possessions checklist and practical tests administered to children. The

findings presented in the figures indicate the type of activities that parents were engaged in which promote the development of literacy skills among grade one learners. Participants in this report were fifty two (52) parents and sixty (60) learners all drawn from the three schools where the study was conducted in Monze district of Southern Province. The sixty learners who took part in the study were also drawn from the three schools and these helped to inform their parents. The parents willingly offered to participate in the study and 4 out of 52 parents were representing more than one child, therefore, limiting the number of parents to 52 only instead of 60.

### **3.6 Parents Questionnaires**

Questionnaires were distributed to 52 parents and care givers who attended the Focused Group Discussion. These questionnaires were filled in during the Focused Group Discussions at the three schools where data was collected.

### **3.7 Focused Group Discussion**

In order to triangulate the data collection, the researcher used the Focused Group Discussion to elicit data from parents with regards their involvement in their children's literacy development and also the home literacy environment. In the three schools where data was collected, the parents were divided into smaller groups of eight and then the researcher guided the groups into discussion.

### **3.8 Home Possessions Checklist**

The home Possession checklist was designed by the researcher to try and physically take stock of what was and was not available in the home to support the idea of rich literacy home environment.

### **3.9 Practical Test Sheet**

The practical tests were designed by the researcher and partly adopted from the Ministry of Education Science, Vocation Training and Early Education (MESVTEE) 2014 Grade 1 Literacy Assessment in Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary, Writing and Comprehension as well as in numeracy. The practical tests were administered with the help of grade 1 teachers in the 3 selected schools where the study was conducted. 60 learners were identified, 20 from each school and whose parents also took part in the study. The instrument that was used to assess learners' proficiency levels were assessed in four categories of below minimum, minimum, desirable and outstanding. The assessment was done with the help of grade one teachers in the three schools where data was collected. The aim was to ascertain the levels of proficiency in terms of literacy skills.

#### **3.1.0 Data Analysis**

Data analysis is a process of inspecting, cleaning and transforming data with a goal of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions and, supporting data interpretation and decision-making. For purposes of this study, data was analysed manually. Manual data analysis involves organizing and labeling data by hand. This method was considered appropriate for this study because of the manageable amount of data involved and the small amount of extra materials needed to analyse data. Quantitative data was analysed using figures in excel while qualitative data was analysed thematically using themes derived from the findings.

#### **3.1.1 Summary of Chapter three**

This chapter has presented a description of the methods, data collection techniques, sample size, delimitation that were used in the study. The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

## 4.0 CHAPTER FOUR

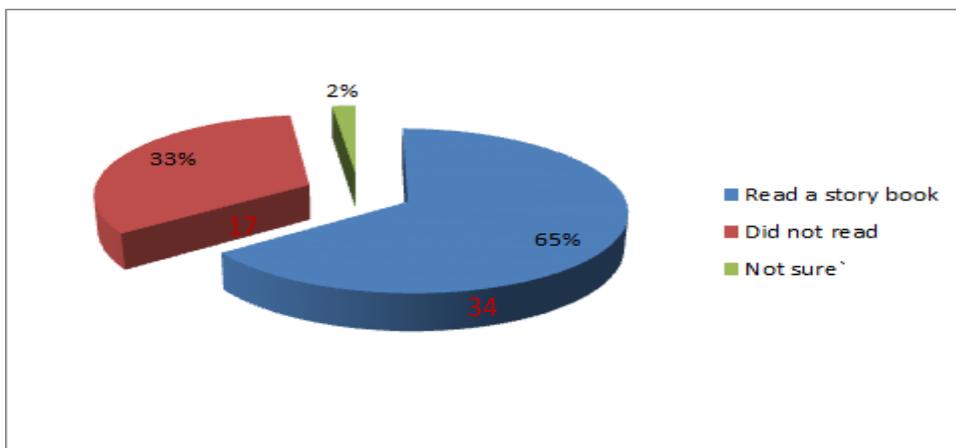
### PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Overview

This chapter presents findings of the study on parental involvement in the acquisition of literacy skills of grade 1 children. These findings have been presented according to themes that have been derived from the research questions. The research questions were as follows:

- (i.) To what extent are parents participating in the acquisition of literacy skills of learners?
- (ii) What type of activities do parents carry out in the home to enhance literacy skills?
- (iii) Determine parent's perception of what they consider a rich literacy home environment?
- (iv) What do parents perceive as challenges to their involvement in their children's literacy development?
- (v) What were the levels of literacy proficiency of grade one children?

#### 4.2 The extent to which parents were involved in the learners' acquisition of Literacy



**Figure 1: Reading a story book to a child at bed time.**

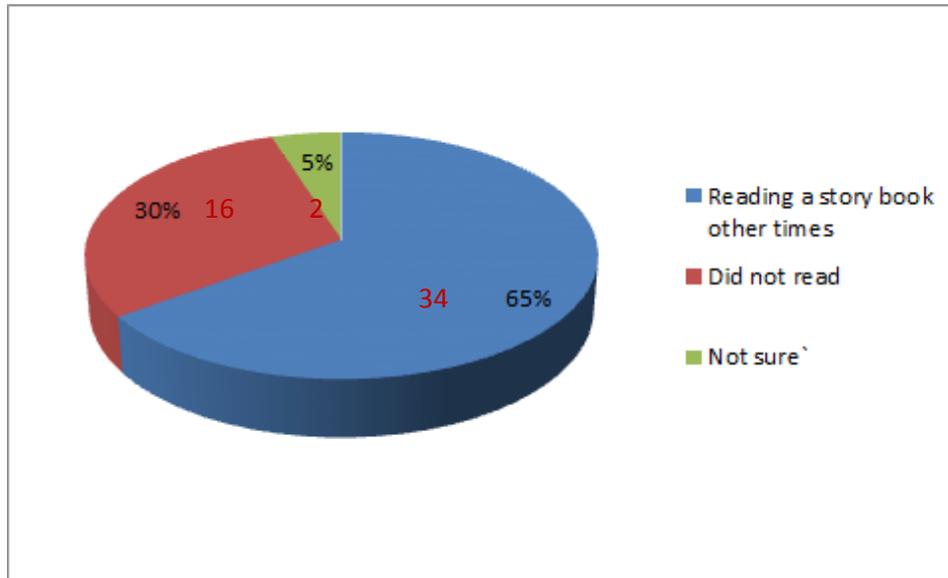
The figure above shows that 34 respondents out of 52 involved in this study representing 65% read a story book to their children at bed time and 17 out of 52 did not, representing 33% while 1 was not sure represented by 2%. This indicates that more than half of the respondents read a book to their children at bed time. Those parents who read story books

cited Chitonga books like Maanu Asulwe, Tulengwa Twa Batonga as books that were used during such reading sessions. The study also found out that parents who did not read a story book to the children cited lack of electricity in their homes and said it was not easy to read a story book to the child during the day since as parents they were busy with other household chores. Again in the night it was not possible due to lack of electricity. Another parent noted that reading materials were not just available for them to engage in such activities as it was costly for them to purchase books. Another hindrance that was highlighted was lack of library services in the area where parents could possibly borrow books. One parent had this to say:

*‘As you are aware, the economy has hit hard on some of us who are not in formal employment and it is hard to buy books for children to read in homes. As parents we would like to do what we can for our children but we are financially incapable. One would have expected the government to build libraries across the country so that people could have access to reading materials.*

As regards reading a story book other times other than at bed time, 34 out of 52 respondents said they read to the child representing again 65% , 16 said they did not representing 30% and 2 did not answer representing 5%.

## Reading a story book to a child at other times other than bed time



**Figure 2: Reading a story book at other times**

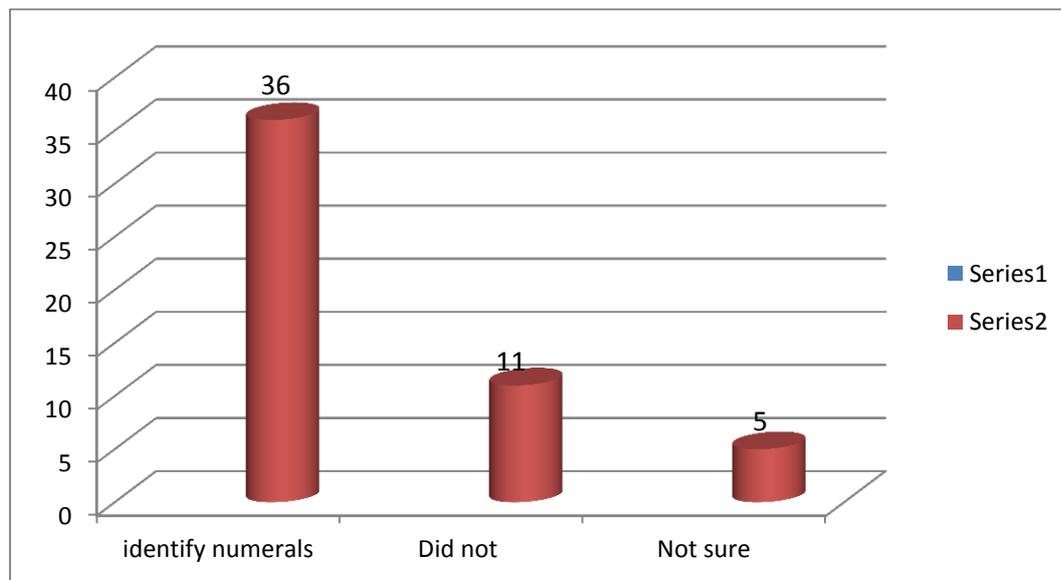
The figure above shows that 34 out of 52 respondents in this study read a story book to a child other times other than bed time representing 65% and 16 of them did not representing 30% and 2 were not sure whether they read or not representing 5%. The study revealed that parents were eager and willing to read story books to their children but during the day they were preoccupied with other economic related activities in order to put food on the table for their families. When asked to state the time they read a story book other than bed time, one participant stated that it was easy for her to read a story during weekends when learners were not very tired and the family was relaxing together especially on Sunday afternoon. On the contrary, one participant revealed that she could not do it herself since she was unable to read and write, instead she would encourage her two sons to read together. The general impression was that the participants felt it was necessary to read to the children in order to inculcate the much needed reading culture.

One participant had this to say:

*With the advent of cell phones and internet availability, young people today are no longer interested in reading books. They have been preoccupied with phones and exposed to all sorts of information at a tender age. They do not have time to read any books and even their writing skills have been affected by the use of cell phones where messages are written using abbreviations.*

It was also noted during the Focus Group Discussion that children as young as grade ones were always busy with phones such that to tell them to sit down and listen to a story was not easy.

The study also found out that 36 out of 52 respondents indicated that their children could identify numerals in a written text while 11 responded that their children did not and 5 said they were not sure.



**Figure 3: Identify numerals in a text**

The figure above is a presentation of the parents who indicated that their children could identify numerals in a text. Therefore, more than half 36 out of 52 of the respondents affirmed that their children could identify numerals in a text. 11 out of 52 said their children did not identify and 5 were not sure. The views of parents during discussions were that the children could identify numerals in a text as most of the children according to one parent were able to read numerals from one up to twenty.

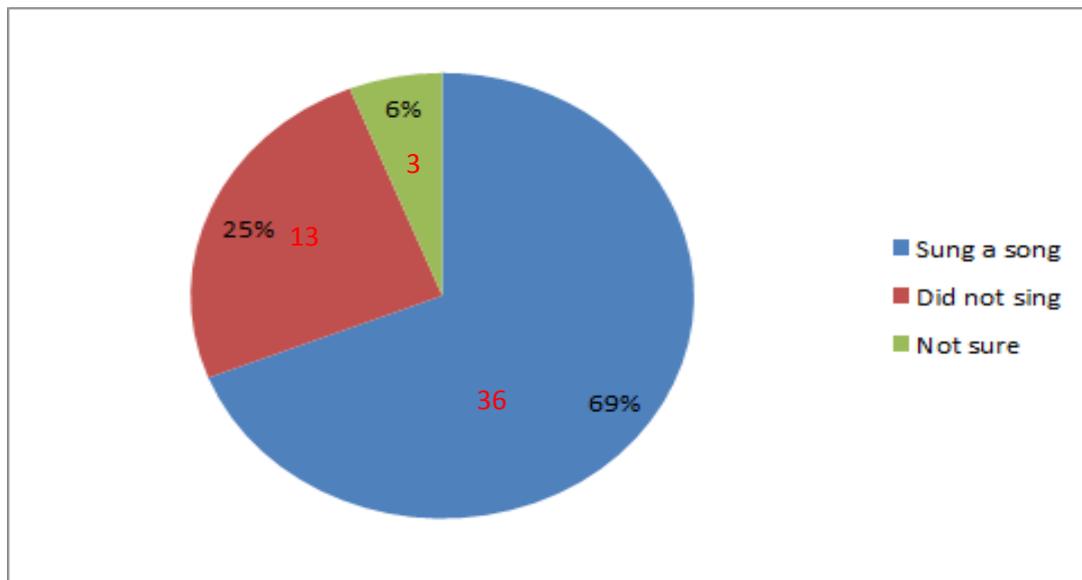
On the contrary, one parent had this to say:

*Children need to be encouraged to work hard in Mathematics at an early stage to help them develop interest in Mathematics. At the moment, in Zambia, we have a lot of grade 12 school leavers who are rewriting Mathematics.*

Another parent also observed that parents should take keen interest in their children's numeracy skills at an early age so that they help them develop both literacy and numeracy skills.

Furthermore, 36 participants who took part in the study indicated that they sang a song to the child representing 69% and 13 said they did not representing about 25% and 3 were not sure representing 6%.

### **Sang a song to the child**



**Figure 4: Sang a song to the child**

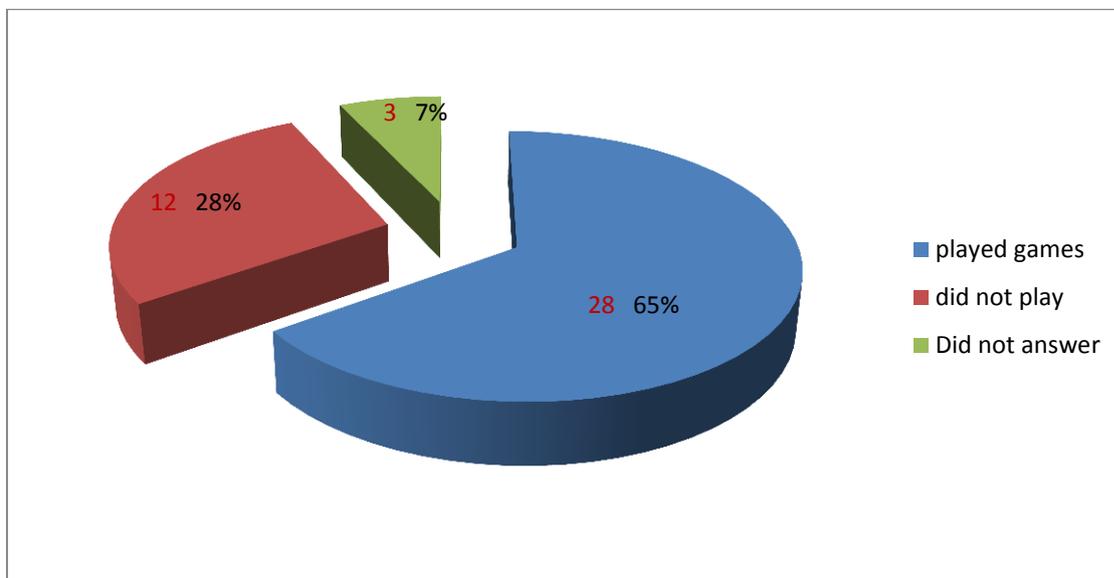
In this study, participants during the Focused Group Discussion were asked to mention activities they were involved in with the children that would promote the acquisition of literacy. Singing was one activity that was said to be prevalent in many households. The study found out that religious songs were frequently sang as opposed to social ones especially at weekends as people prepared to go for worship and also after worship in the evening. This means that more than half of the respondents sang a song to their children. One parent from Primary School (Y) said that songs have for a long time played a significant role in the learning of children. She cited an example of how during her time as a primary school pupil, teachers employed the use of songs as an integral part of learning to arouse pupils' interest in learning.

In addition, other parents indicated that songs were important as they tend bring families together as one unit and help people both young and old put away their troubles and join

hands in singing and praising God for what he had done for them. One parent from Primary School (Z) observed that songs would have a healing effect especially on emotional stress that a child may have and could be huge resource in the teaching of children how to read.

#### 4.3 Types of activities that parents carried out that promote acquisition of literacy skills

In as far as playing games with learners was concerned, 28 participants out of 52 indicated that they played games with learners and 23 said they did not.



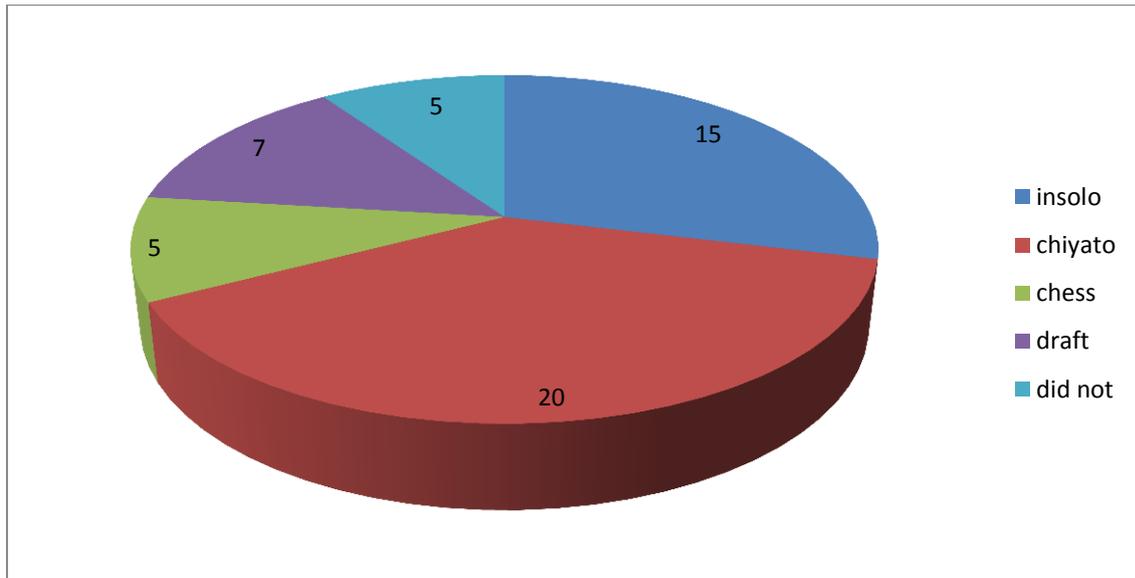
**Figure 5: Did you play games with the learner?**

The above figure shows the number of parents or care givers who indicated that they played games with their children. 28 parents out of 52 indicated that they played games with their children representing about 65%. On the contrary, 12 out of 52 said they did not play any games with children giving 28% and 3 of them did not answer this question representing 7%. During the Focused Group Discussion, it was noted that majority of the participants actually did not play games citing lack of time and interest. Those who did play indicated that they played games like, insolo, cards, chiyato, draft and chess. One male parent said during their spare time they play draft with his grade one child especially at weekends.

#### 4.4.1 Types of Games played

Those who did play indicated that they played games like, insolo, cards, chiyato, draft and chess. One male parent said during their spare time they play draft with his grade one child especially at weekends.

#### Types of Games played by both parent and learners

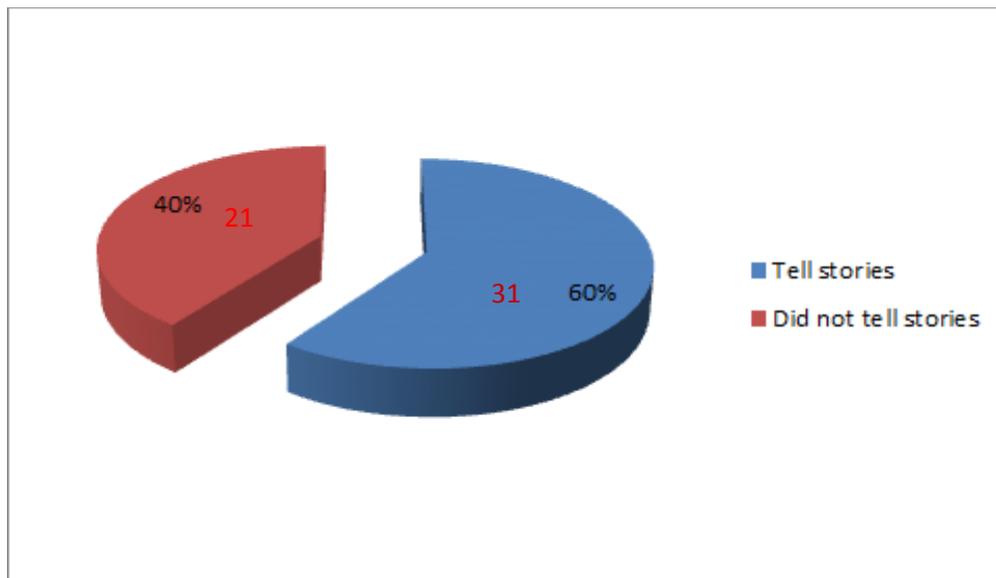


**Figure 6: Types of games played by both parent and learners**

The study revealed that 20 parents played Chiyato with their children. Out of the 20 parents who played Chiyato 12 were females and 8 were males. Those who played Insolo were 15, draft were 7, those who played Chess were 5 and those who did not play any of the games were 5 parents. Parents indicated that those games mentioned above were played mainly during weekends.

The researcher also found out that 31 participants out of 52 said that they told stories to their children representing about 60% ,21 said they did not representing about 40% of the participants.

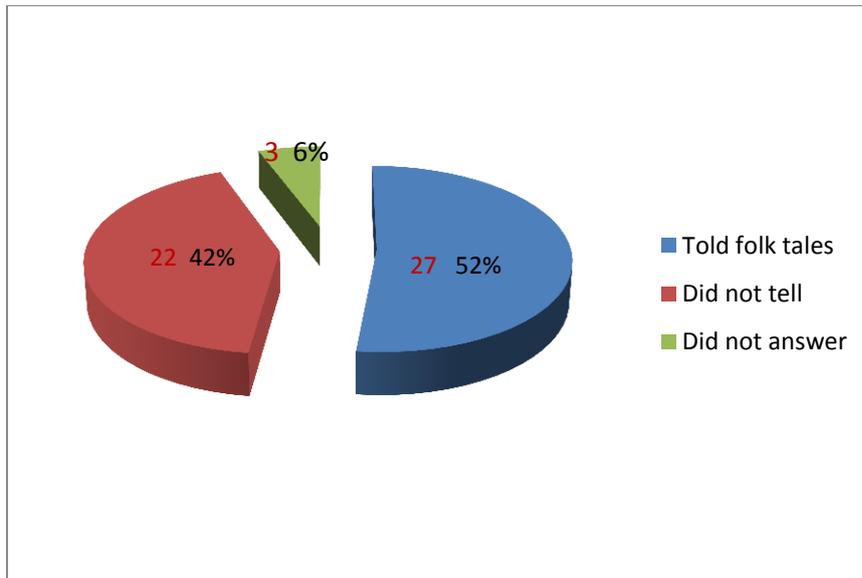
#### 4.4.2 Story Telling



**Figure 7: Told stories to their children**

The figure above indicates that 31 participants out of 52 who were involved in this study said that they told stories to their children representing about 60% and 21 said they did not representing about 40% of the participants. This means that more than half of the respondents told stories to their children. However, it was revealed that story telling was no longer given the attention it used to have in the past because both parents and their learners are slowly drifting away from the trend and are busy with other activities in the home. One parent also said television has robbed today's young generation the opportunity to hear and tell stories. She said times have changed such that both parents and children have lost touch of such activities as storytelling and riddles.

#### 4.4.3 Telling of folk stories to the child before bedtime?



**Figure 8: Telling folktales at bedtime**

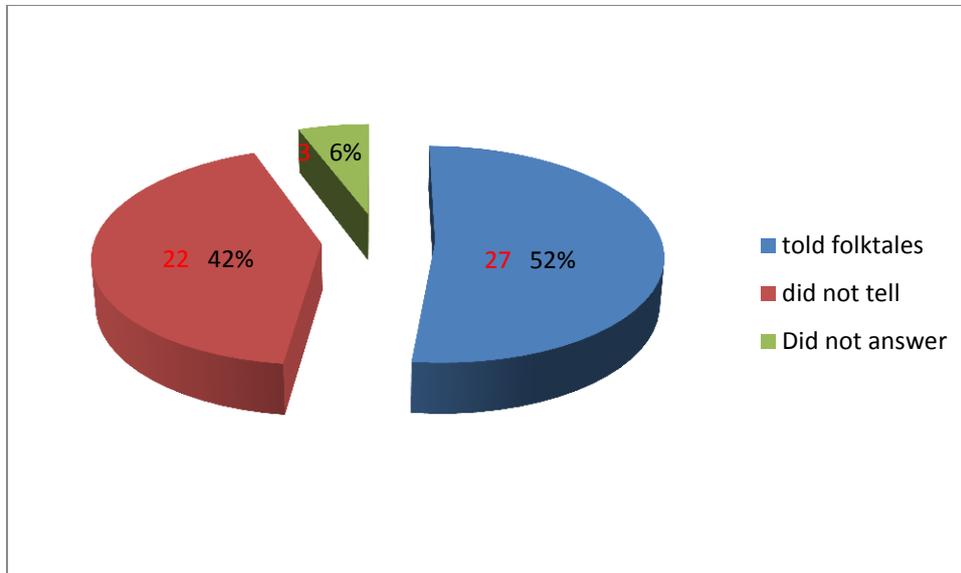
The figure above shows the distribution of respondents who told folk tales to the children and those who did not. As shown in the figure, just half the number 27 out of 52 respondents said they told folk tales and 22 out of 52 said they did not. The participants during the Focused Group Discussion bemoaned lack of interest by both parents and children especially in those households where they had television sets. It was revealed that children preferred watching television to listening to folktales. However, those who said they told folktales indicated that stories such as Kalulu and Hyena, Kalulu marries the King's Daughter, The old woman with Lice in her head, Tortoise challenges Kalulu to a racing contest were among the most loved tales by the children. It was further revealed that unless something is done and done soonest the rich traditional stories would soon disappear. Parents noted that even books that in the past contained such stories were no longer available in bookshops.

One parent from Primary School (X) had this to say:

*Schools should revamp story telling due to moral lessons learnt from such stories. As a nation we have done away with what used to be valued as important aspects of African Traditional stories in preference to Western stories told through television. It is only through these stories that we can transmit our beliefs and our culture as Zambians. Learners can enhance their literacy skills through such things as story -telling.*

The respondents were also asked whether they told folk tales to their children before bed time and 27 out of 52 said they did and 22 said they did not.

#### 4.4.4 Telling Folktales and riddles at other times



**Figure 9: Told folktales and riddles at other times**

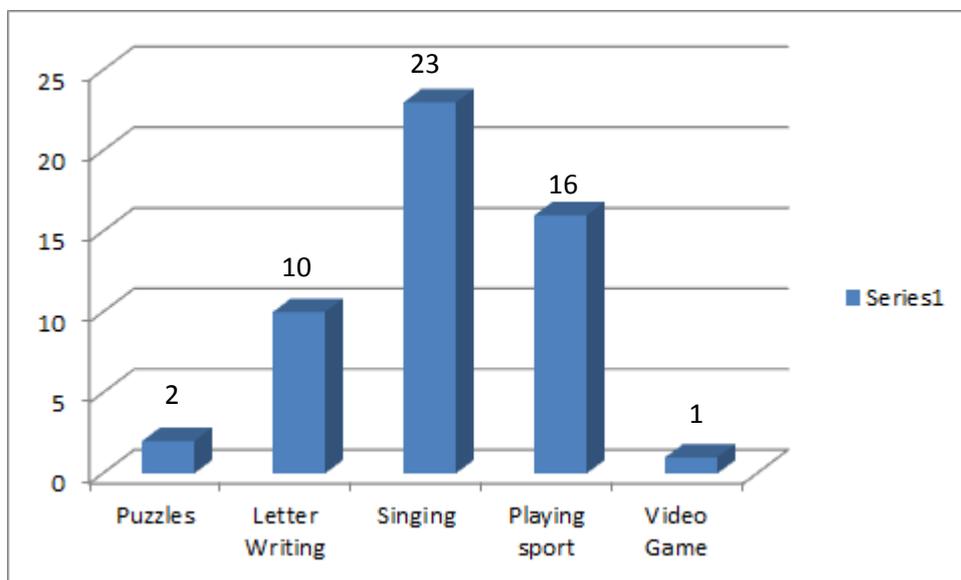
The above chart is a presentation of the findings with regards to telling folktales and riddles at other times to learners. The figure shows that (27) 52% of the respondents said they told folktales to their children while (22) 42% said they did not and (3) 6% did not respond to that question. From the Focused Group Discussions, the sample of the study revealed that folktales and riddles were slowly fading away in community where the research was conducted. One parent stated that folktales and riddles have been overtaken by watching television in people's homes. In the same discussion, one parent reported that she told folktales and riddles to her children. She said that children enjoyed riddles more than anything else. She gave examples such as

*-Ndayenda Anamuleyeleya-(Mubwa) I have travelled with one who diverts from the path very often-(dog), (Bbaamba takwe bula)-(Ni mbeli) That which has no stomach-(A razor blade), (Walampa mulundu nkalange Mweenzuma)- (Nkutwi) But for the high mountain, I would have visited my colleague on the other side-(is the ear), Kabota kashu kali akati kamamvwa-(muchizi)-What an appetizing vegetable entangled in thorns!,(One cannot have a love affair with a sister no matter how beautiful she may be). Yabota ng'anda inyina mulyango- (iji) (what a beautiful house without an entrance(is an egg).*

With regards folktales, and riddles, it was indicated by many parents that unless something is done by the Ministry of General Education, the rich cultural treasures and history would in due course be done away with and forgotten. The moral lessons derived from these tales would be a thing of the past. One parent reiterated the need for proper documentation of these riddles and folk tales so that generations to come would benefit from them.

On joint activities between the parent and the child the study showed that 2 participants said their children enjoyed puzzles, 10 letter writing, 23 singing, 16 playing sports and 1 video games.

#### 4.4.5 Joint activities between parents and Learners



**Figure 10: Joint activities between parents or care givers and children**

The study revealed that singing was the most common activity done jointly between parents and their children with 23 parents indicating that they sang a song with their children followed by playing sports 16, letter writing 10 and video games scoring only 1. It is clear from the information in the figure above that singing was widely done between the respondents and their children. The common component as revealed by the study was religious songs sung by families together at home and at church. On the contrary, video games scored the lowest with only one parent. As seen in the figure above, playing sport was also one such joint activity done by both parents and children with 16 parents. The research also found out from Focused Group Discussions that parents were generally engaged in joint activities with their learners. Arising from these discussions was the fact that these joint

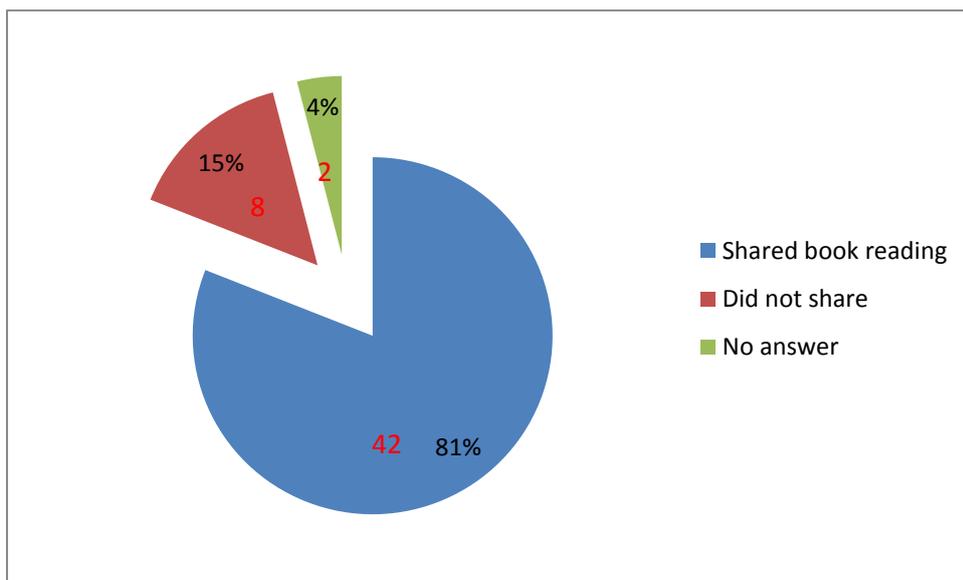
activities were usually spontaneous. It was further noted that because of their busy schedules, parents did not have adequate time to engage in these activities with children. Those who played sport cited playing football and netball as the most popular sports played.

Additionally, a male parent from (Z) Primary School stated the following:

*As a parent of a grade 1 child, much as I would like to engage in these joint activities with my children, I do not have the time to do so. To spare time to run around with the child is not just possible. The weekends are always preoccupied with church activities and other economic ventures just to supplement the small businesses we have in town.*

The study further noted that on shared book reading, 42 participants out of 52 said they shared book reading with their children while 8 said they did not and 2 did not respond.

#### 4.4.6 Shared Book Reading



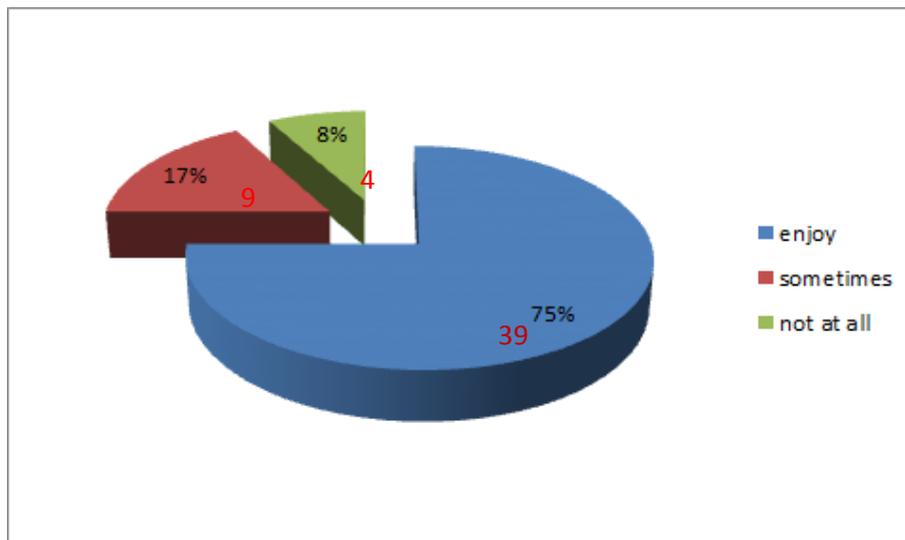
**Figure 11: Shared Book Reading**

The study revealed that most of the respondents that is (42) 81% of the respondents shared book reading with their grade 1 learners while (8)15% out of 52 said they did not and those who did not answer were 2 representing about 2%. The study therefore found out that most of the respondents had shared book reading with their children. The study also found out from the Focused Group Discussion that the Bible was the most used book by many parents in the shared book reading. One parent stated that she read with her child the especially on Saturday evening after attending church service. Another respondent stated that she read old books like

Mulenga and Jelita and was assisting the child where she had problems in identifying words and pronunciation of words. However, some of the parents said in most cases they could not engage in this activity citing lack of reading materials. They said reading materials such as small story books, magazines and newspapers were no longer affordable.

Does the child enjoy being read to-39 out of 52 said their children enjoyed being read to (75%) and 9 said sometimes (17%) 4 did not answer this question (8%).

#### 4.4.7 Child Enjoy Being Read to



**Figure 12: Does the child enjoy being read to?**

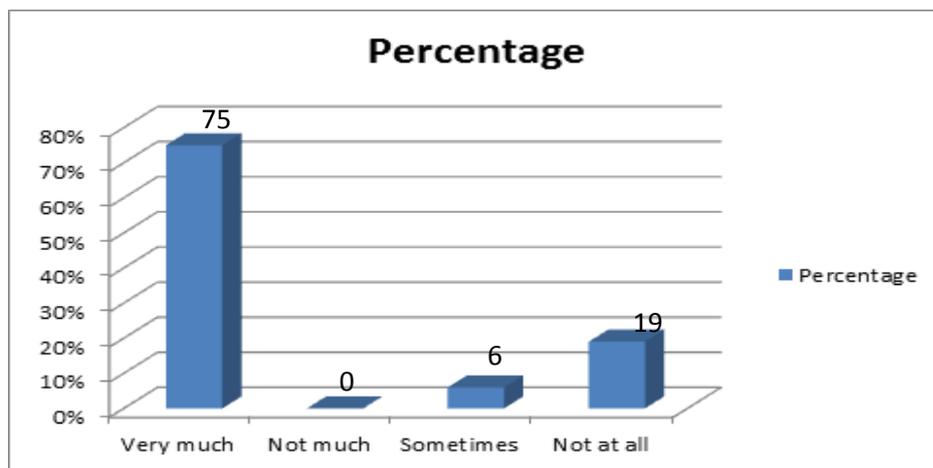
As can be seen from the figure above, 39 out of 52 parents who took part in this study (75%) said their children enjoyed being read to. This means that most of the parents who took part in this study said their learners enjoyed being read to. In the discussions that were held with the parents it became apparent that for those parents who read a book to the child, the child enjoyed being read to especially story books. The study revealed that some parents lacked reading materials and cited that as an impediment to their helping their children to read. On the other hand some parents indicated that they themselves could not read and others thought the whole issue of reading to their children was a new idea.

One parent said that they did not know that it was important for them to read to their children. She had this to say,

*“Some of us do not even know that we are supposed to read to the children. If children attend school that is what is important for us since teachers would know what to with them.”*

#### 4.4.8 The extent the child enjoyed being read to

1. Very much =75 2. Not much= 0 %3. Sometimes= 6% 4. Not at all =19



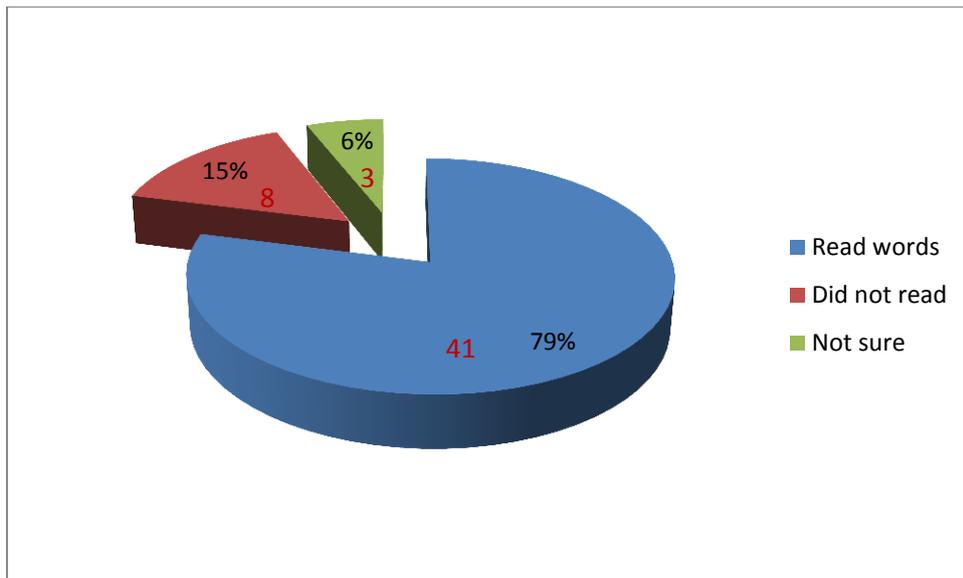
**Figure 13: To what extent does the child enjoy being read to**

The histogram above reflects the views of parents or care givers with regards to what extent the child enjoyed being read to. The study found out that 75% of the respondents said that the children enjoyed being read to very much, followed by not at all with 19%, sometimes with 6% and not much at 0%. This means that majority of the respondents said the children enjoyed being read to very much. During focused group discussions with parents, one parent observed that the type of reading materials provided had an impact on how much a child would enjoy being read to. He said adventure stories were more enjoyable than ordinary stories. Stories involving animal characters and encounters with nature were among the favourites for children.

One parent also stated that although she did not know how to read, she usually encouraged her grandchildren to read a lot of books. She observed that children were willing to learn but sometimes they were discouraged by lack of materials to use.

#### 4.4.9 Whether the child reads words with the help of parent or caregiver

Read words 41(79%) Did not 8 (15%) Not sure 3 (6%)



**Figure 14: Child read words with your help**

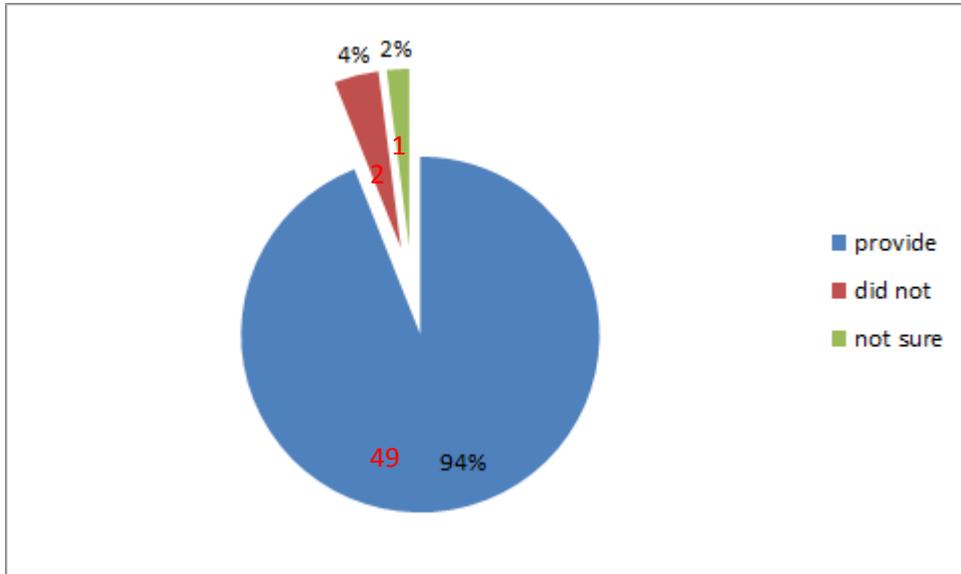
The figure shown above presents findings of the study with regards whether parents helped their children to read words. The study found out that (41) 79% of the respondents, more than three quarters said they helped their children read words, (8) 15% said they did not and (3) 6% did not respond to this question. This means most of the parents helped their children read words. Some of those who helped their children also indicated that they used the letters of the alphabet to teach their children before they word engage them in reading the whole word. A parent from Primary School (Z) had this to say:

*Teaching children to read words is not easy. We normally teach them the letters of the alphabet ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ. Children like this because at school they do the same things like letters of the alphabet. Sometimes we ask them to identify letters in a given word. The popular song among the children is the on they learn at school which involves the letters of the alphabet, ABCD, EFG, HIJKLM, NOPQRSTU, VWXYZ.*

#### 4.5.0 Parents' perceptions of what constitutes a rich Literacy Home Environment

Do you provide your children with writing materials?

[Yes] 49 [ No ] 2 [ Not sure] 1



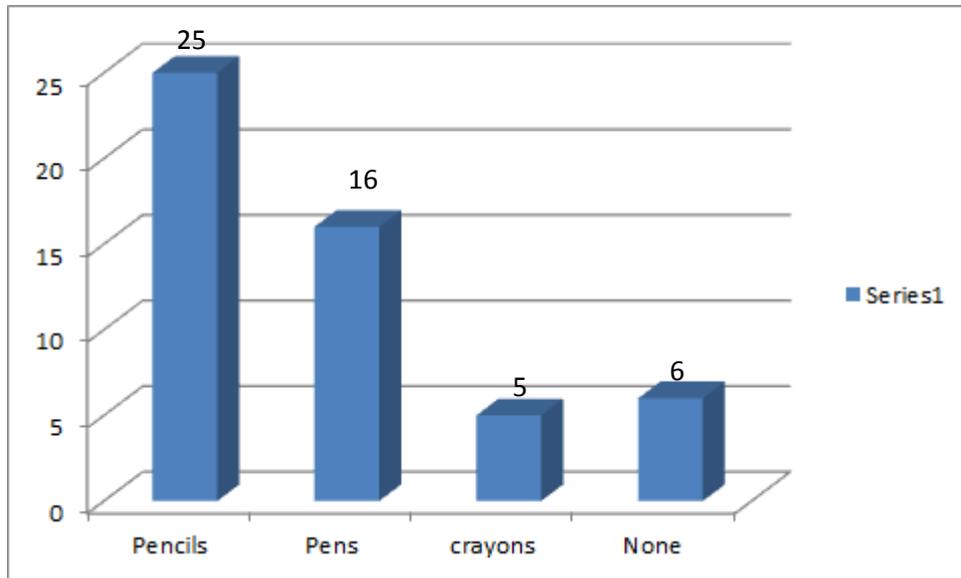
**Figure 15: Do you provide the child with writing material?**

As indicated in the chart above, most of the respondents sampled in this study indicated that they provided their children with writing materials with overwhelming majority 95% and only 4% who did not. This indicates that the parents were involved in ensuring that their children had writing materials to use at school. During discussions, it was realized that parents were willing to help their children although some indicated that economic hardships were a major constraint to their effort. One participant observed that the writing materials that they bought were not well looked after because children were losing them on a daily basis. Parents suggested that if there was a mechanism where schools could keep some of the equipment at school that would mitigate the losses and reduce on the expenses incurred by the parents.

When asked whether those writing materials were also used at home, a good number of parents said that the writing materials were only meant to be used at school and they were only used at home if at all there was homework given to children. One parent stated that children did not even have time to write at home; once they were back from school they set out to play with friends. She said children could only search for their books the following day when preparing to go to school and the routine continued.

#### 4.5.1 What writing materials did they provide?

Pencils 25                      Pens 16                      Crayons 5                      None 6

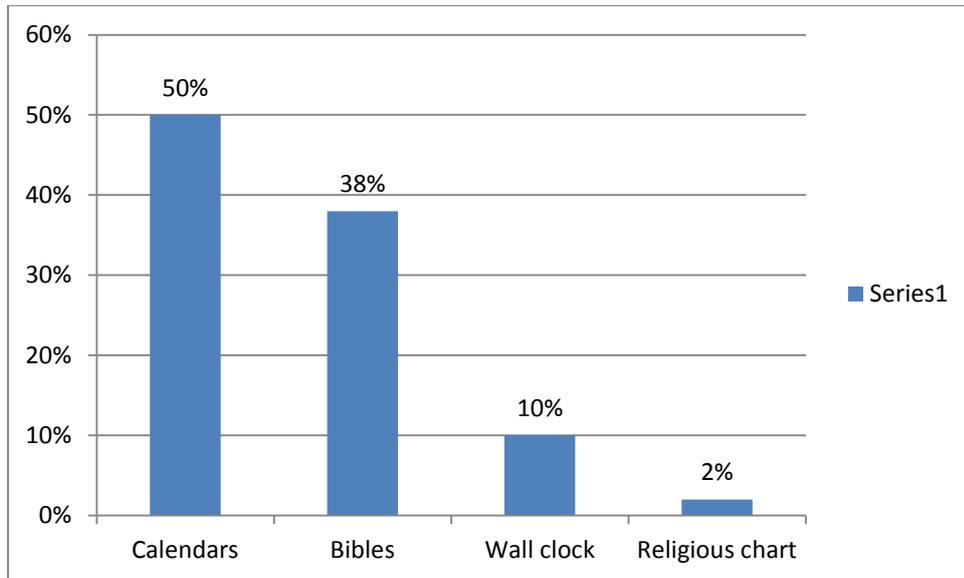


**Figure 16: Writing materials provided to the learners**

As indicated in the figure above, 25 parents provided pencils, 16 parents gave pens, 5 parents provided crayons and 6 did not provide anything to their children. This shows that pencils were the most provided writing materials by parents followed by pens and crayons. Participants in this study said that even though those writing materials were bought for their children, the rate at which they got lost at school was too high. One parent observed that children kept on losing those writing materials and felt that something should be done to address this situation. She stated that if there was a way, children would be leaving those writing materials at school to avoid losing them on a daily basis. However, some parents did not engage children at home to use the pencils, pens and crayons as they thought those were supposed to be used at school only. One parent from Primary (X) had this to say:

*The problem that we have as parents is to divide our time so that we can sit down at a table to teach our children some basic literacy skills like reading and writing. It is very rare that we would sit them down and teach them how to read. In most cases as parents we do not know that we are supposed to do that.*

#### 4.5.2 What print materials are available in the home?



**Calendar 26 Bible 20 Wall Clock 5 Religious Wall Charts 1.**

**Figure 17: What print materials were available in the home?**

The figure above depicts the type of print materials that were available in the homes. As can be seen from the figure above, calendars were the most available print material followed by the Bible, wall clock and religious charts. During the discussions that were conducted, parents cited the economic hardships for none availability of sufficient print materials in the home. One parent had this to say:

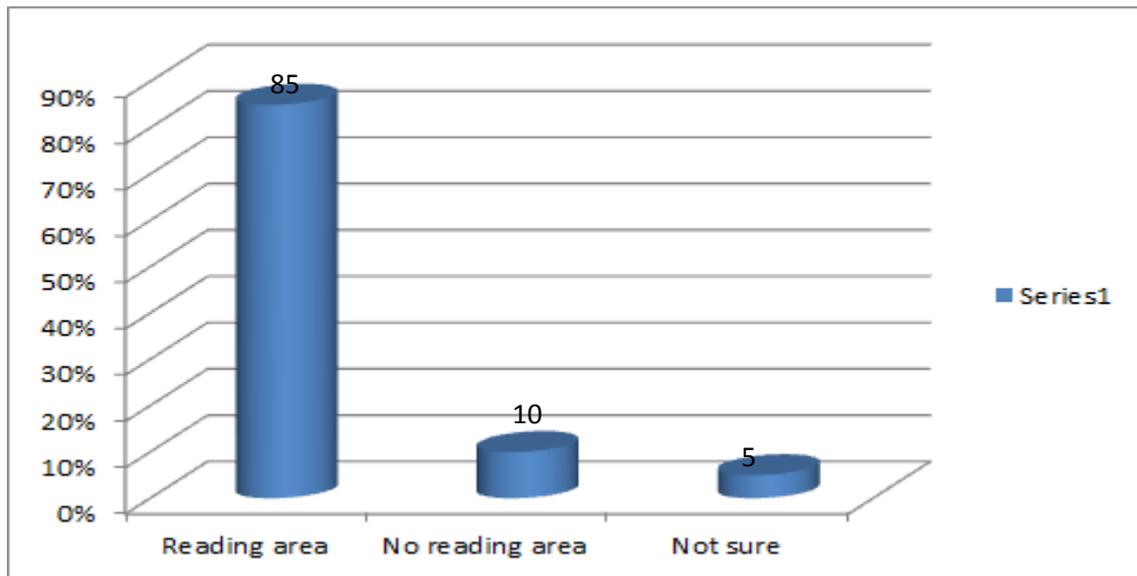
*Due to financial constraints, as parents we always concentrate on what I would term as needy areas such as uniforms, books, school fees, PTA funds, food and other school requirements for the child to attend school. These other supporting materials are not considered by many as necessary ingredients for effective learning by children.*

Another parent said that it was an eye opener because she was not aware that such materials as wall clocks, calendars would be used for literacy in the home. She mentioned that the only reading materials she knew were books which also very expensive to buy.

#### 4.6.0 What parents perceive as Challenges to their involvement in their children’s literacy development

85% of the participants said that they had a reading area or book shelf in their homes 10% said they did not have and 5% were not sure.

#### 4.6.1 Provision of a reading area or shelf



**Figure 18: Do you have a reading area or shelf in the home.**

The study also required respondents to indicate whether they had a reading area in the home or shelf for keeping books. The study found out that 85% of the respondents said they had a reading area or shelf for keeping books and 15% said they did not have while 5% said they were not sure. This entails that majority of the respondents have a reading area or a shelf for keeping books in their homes. The study during the Focused Group Discussion revealed that most of the participants had actually a shelf and not necessarily a reading area.

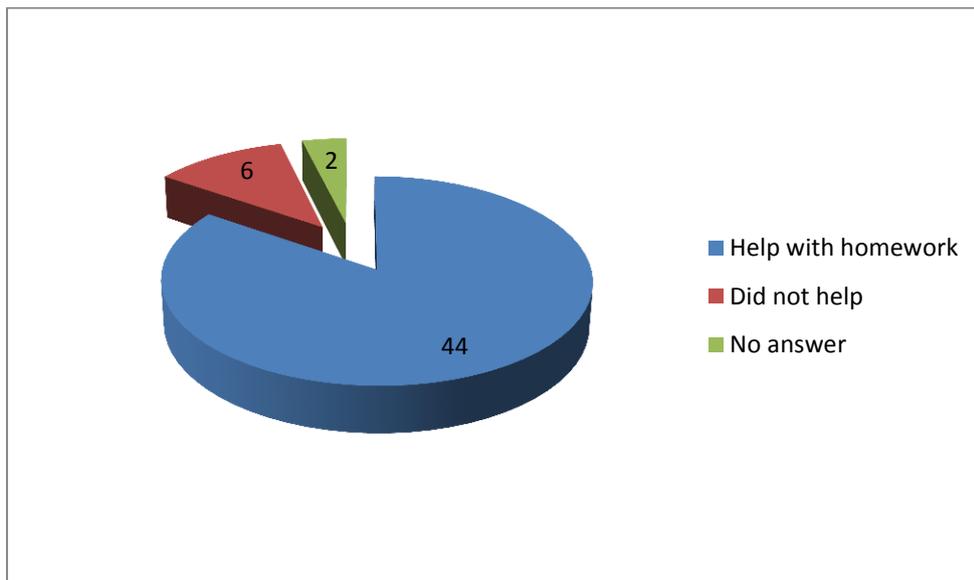
One parent from Primary School (Y) had this to say:

*“The house I am renting is just too small to designate an area for reading. Instead there is a small bookshelf where we keep a few books that are available in the home. Children usually use the dining table to do their homework or read from.”*

In the same vein, some parents said that the idea of securing a reading area was not possible considering the type of houses they owned especially those in the rural set up. The houses were too small to provide a reading area or library.

Another parent from Primary School (Z) stated that according to village standards, it was common for families not to have a specific reading area. Instead people kept their books in their suitcases and only get them out to read when need arises.

#### 4.6.2 Do you help your children with homework?

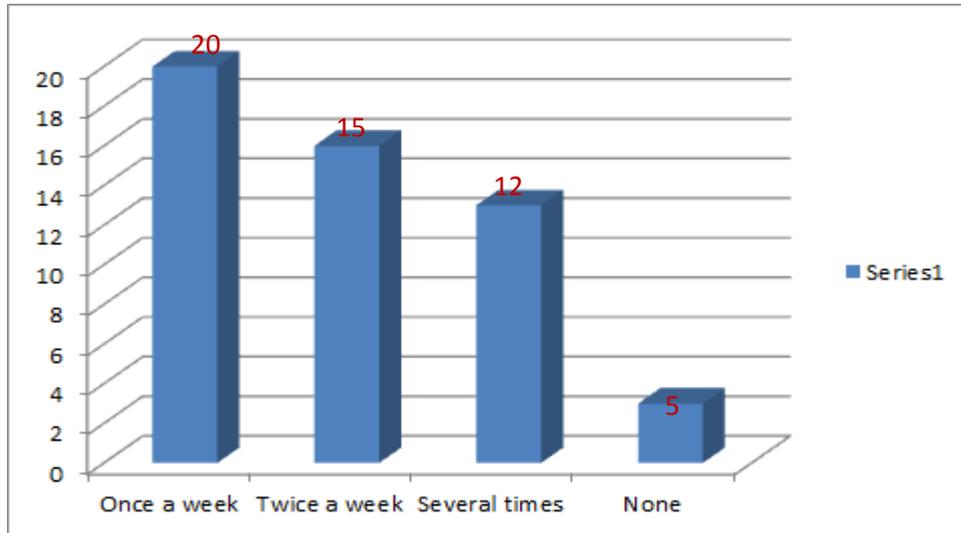


**Figure 19: Do you help your child with homework?**

The study further sought to find out whether the respondents helped their children with homework. The study found out that 44 out of 52 respondents who were involved in the study helped their children with homework 84% and 6 indicated that they did not representing about 12% and 2 did not answer the question which is 4%. It is clear from the above chart that majority of the people sampled in this study helped their children with homework. One of the respondents said that it was important to help their children with homework because it provided an opportunity to assess the progress of the child in school. Another parent observed that teachers were not giving enough homework to the children so it was not possible to help them. Instead, she would once in a while check the books but again there was scanty work done in a term. She further revealed that she did not know what to do in such situations. Another parent stated that books for children were not kept well at school as a result most of them were torn and dirty. Yet another parent stated that homework policy was a good idea

but in some cases books were not marked in time or not marked at all. He said this trend of not marking homework discouraged both the child and the parents who were expected to help the child

#### 4.6.3 How many times do you help the child with homework?



**Figure 20: How many times do you help the child with homework per week?**

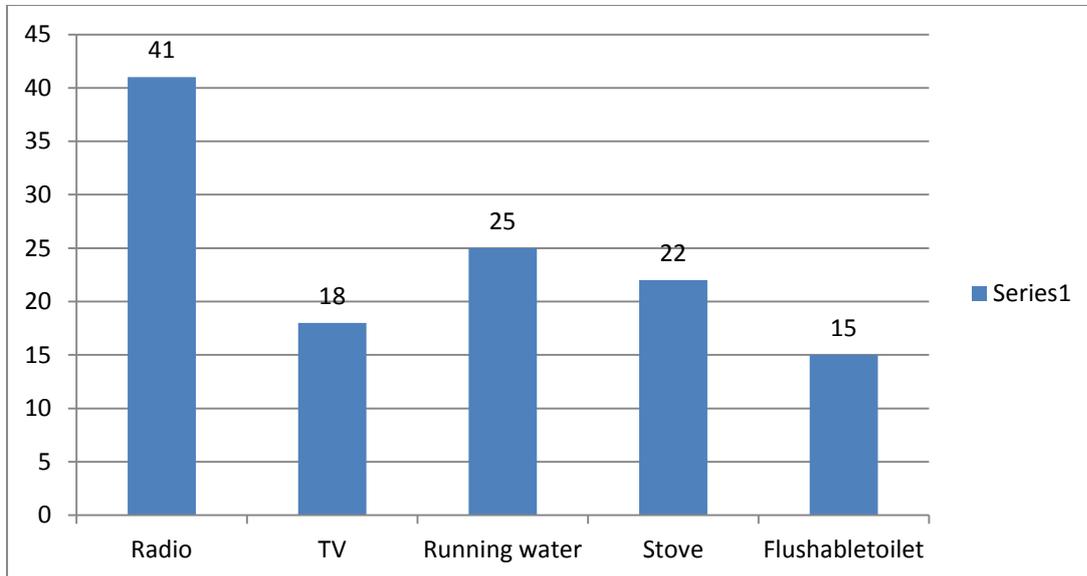
The chart above shows the frequency of parents helping the child with homework. In the study 20 out of 52 parents said they helped their children once per week, 15 helped twice a week, 12 said they helped several times and 5 did not help at all. This study therefore, shows that majority of the parents in the study sample helped their children only once or twice per week.

A male parent from Primary School (X) stated that it would appear as though teachers were reluctant to give learners a lot of homework. He observed that once children were given homework, the parents had no way out but to help them with that work. On the other hand, some parents indicated that it was not easy for them to help because sometimes children could not even inform them of the work given to them by their teachers. In addition one parent had this to say:

*Our children usually are given homework by their teachers but they do not tell us about it. Sometimes teachers also do not even mark those books after children have written their home. We need to work together with teachers. If there was a way, teachers should inform parents about this homework.*

#### 4.6.4 Home Literacy Possessions

Radio 41 out 47, TV 18 out 47, Electricity 20, Running water 25, Flushable toilet, 15 Stove 22



**Figure21: Home literacy possessions**

The above histogram shows the home possessions that were available in various homes where the study was conducted. 41 out of 52 parents indicated that they had radios in their homes. 18 out of 52 said they had televisions in their homes. 25 out of 52 indicated that they had running water. 22 out of 52 had a stove and 15 out of 52 parents said they had flushable toilets.

One of the parents during the Focused Group Discussions had this to say:

*Lack of electricity is affecting learners and parents' exposure to outside information as it was difficult to know what was happening out there since we do not own televisions.*

Television today is the major provider of latest information and is an important tool towards learning. In the same vein, one parent pointed out that although they lived in an urban area, they lacked certain necessities like electricity, running water, flushable toilets and other items that require electricity. Lack of the basic requirements negatively affected the way parents were preparing their children for school.

Another parent also observed that their lack of information had a negative effect on their children's literacy skills development. She stated that she could not afford a newspaper even though she lived in an urban area. In the same vein, one parent had this to say,

*'There are a lot of challenges that we face as parents of school going children especially here in the rural set up. First challenge is lack of knowledge with regards how we should help our children with school work.'*

One parent from Primary School (Y) had this to say:

*'Most of the parents here do not actually know that they are supposed to help their children with homework. Apart from lack of this knowledge, conditions in the village set up are not good enough for parental involvement because food security is not guaranteed for most households. We have to search for what has to be cooked on a daily basis and have little or no time to check and monitor children's performance at school.'*

#### **4.7.0 To ascertain the literacy proficiency levels of grade one learners: Practical tests**

The researcher adapted Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education's 2014 grade one literacy proficiency assessment instrument.

The sixty learners who comprised the sample were given practical tests in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, writing and comprehension. These tests were administered at various Primary schools where data was collected. With regards phonemic awareness, learners were asked to identify the initial sound of the word (piki) which (p), thirty six (36) out of sixty (60) were able to recognize the initial sound of given word and 24 could not. The learners were also asked to identify the frequency of a particular letter (i) in a given word (inzinini) which was 4. 38 learners were able to identify the number of times and 22 could not identify.

With regards phonics, 41 learners were able to identify initial sound in a given word (nswene) –(nsw) and 10 were not able to. The learners were also asked to match given words with the appropriate pictures. 56 out of 60 were able to match the words with pictures. The pictures included (Kayuni) or bird, (cuuno) chair and (ncinga) bicycle.

Apart from the above questions, learners were asked to complete a given sentence with one of the provided options. The learners were given 22 questions ranging from phonemic

awareness, phonics, vocabulary, writing and comprehension. The proficiency levels were such that those who got between 0 and 8 were below minimum. This in itself means that their literacy levels were very low and were between 0% and 39%. Those who got between 9 and 12 scored out of 22 were at the level of minimum and ranged between 40% and 59%. Those who scored between 13 and 17 out of 22 questions their proficiency level was desirable and the percentages ranged 60% to 79% while those who scored 18 up to 22 were outstanding and ranged between 80% and 100%.

The proficiency test revealed that with regards phonemic awareness, 78% of all the learners who took part in the scored at the level of outstanding, in phonics 59% of the learners got at the level of outstanding. Those who scored at the level of outstanding in vocabulary were at 88% of all those who participated, writing 61%, and comprehension at 57%.

From the findings above, we can deduce that most of the learners in the sample were behind in as far as these literacy skills were concerned. Considering that that the tests were administered in the third term, it means those who were not moving at the same time as others were going to be left behind. This is in line with (MESVTEE,2013) when it said that children who fall behind in learning to read typically become entangled in a cycle of failure and children below a certain level by the end of grade one are more likely to stay behind, and the gap widens.

#### **4.8 Summary of Chapter Four**

This chapter has presented the research findings on parental participation in the acquisition of literacy skills by grade one learners. It has also presented findings on the perceptions of parents on what constitute a rich home environment as well as a practical test administered to children.

## **5.0 CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **5.1 Overview**

This chapter presents a discussion of findings in relation to the research questions. This chapter presents answers to research questions which were as follows- (1) To what extent are parents participating in promoting their children's acquisition of literacy skills (2) What activities do parents carry out at home to develop their children's literacy skills. (3) What are parents' perceptions of what constitutes a rich literacy home environment? (4) What do parents perceive as challenges to their involvement in their children's literacy development?

#### **5.2 To what extent were parents involved in the promotion of their children's acquisition of literacy skills.**

In view of the extent to which parents were involved in their children's acquisition of literacy skills, parents showed largely that they were involved. With regards reading a story book, 34 out of 52 parents indicated that they read a story book to their child at bed time. In addition, parents were also asked whether they read a book to a child at other times other than bed time. The study further discovered that parents read story books at bedtime to children but most of them indicated that their major challenge was lack of books and especially those books suitable for the learners. The other issue that came up was lack of libraries where books could be accessed by the parents. In line with the issue of reading to learners, Beck, McKeown and Kucan, 2002 state that when children are exposed to reading aloud, it improves their vocabulary skills. The study also found out that some parents could not read to their children because they were not able to read themselves. Those parents who read to their children said their children enjoyed being read to. Morrow & Gambell,( 2002), Teal, (1986), also state that when children are read to aloud, they learn to make sense of what has been read to them which is important for literacy development and later success in learning. When parents also contribute to their children's learning, to manipulate minimal units of meaning called morphemes (Chomsky, 1972), children have increased interest and motivation for reading (Morrow, 1992). An added advantage of reading aloud to children is the development

of children's patience, attention span and general listening comprehension (Morrow and Gambell, ( 2002), Teale,(1986).

It was noted that although parents read story books to their children, most of them did so as a mere pass time activity. They did not know the contribution they were making towards their children's literacy development. During such reading sessions, parents were in line with Vygotsky, (1987), concept of the zone of proximal development which is the gap between a learner's ability to carry out a task while being guided by a knowledgeable adult and the learner's ability to solve a problem without assistance.

It was found out that although parents read story books to their children, little did they know that what they were doing was actually important in the promotion of literacy skills especially oral language development. This came out during the Focused Group Discussion where a good number read story books without an intention of helping the child to read. It was also found out that those who did not read to the child most of them were unable to read themselves. One woman said that she envied those parents who were able to read and write for they were in a better position to help their children. Parents also noted that the failure for learners to read was due to the inability by teachers to teach pupils the skill of reading early enough. One parent observed that learners of today can go as far as grade nine without knowing how to read. She stated that during her time as a pupil, they would be taught how to read and by end of grade two, they would all be fluent readers. It was also observed that reading materials were readily available in schools those days.

Asked about what they were doing themselves to help their children to read, one parent lamented lack of resources and said they were being taxed double by paying school fees and again buying materials like books for their children. The view of the researcher here is that there is need to educate parents on their role in promoting a literacy rich home environment and the benefits that accrue when they get involved.

### **5.3 Activities that parents were engaged in that promote Literacy skills acquisition**

Another literacy activity brought out by the study was that of parents singing a song to the learners. Singing of songs to the learners has the capacity to expose learners to different literacy behaviors and enhance children's literacy skills and language enrichment. The study

showed that most parents sang a song to their children. The type songs that were commonly sung were religious songs and those were mainly sung in Chitonga the local language. It is also believed that apart from parents, care givers and siblings, children also heard songs from radio and television. In many homes, radios and television sets provided a good platform for learners to acquire literacy skills. Apart from parents, the learners were also exposed to different types of songs sung by their siblings, and peers and adults. This finding was in line with the objectives of the study to find out what activities were done by parents that promote literacy skills acquisition. Songs played a very important role in oral language development. The study further noted that most of these activities had some kind of multiplier effect as there was a fluid flow of these activities especially songs from school to home and vice versa.

It was revealed from home literacy checklist that television and radio had a lot of influence on the development of oral language. Chong and Gan (1997) have indicated that there is no better way to gain knowledge and confidence in oral language than through songs. Oral language is said to be an interactive and social process, and songs are a natural way for children to experience rich language in a pleasurable manner. Songs in Zambian languages, popular drama, and other advertisements help learners to acquire vocabulary and in some cases correct pronunciation of words. These activities were supplementing what pupils were learning at school there by cementing their literacy skill acquisition. Strong social bonds usually are established through songs. In addition, songs have always been a way for children to remember stories and learn about the world around them

Parents played games with their children such as Chess, Draft, Insolo, and Chiyato. The researcher's argument here is that in as much as the parents were engaged with the children in performing these games, little did they know that these games enhanced their children's numeracy and literacy skills acquisition. As it was revealed from the study, children did not only play these games with their parents, but they also did so with their siblings, peers, neighbors and other adults within the community.

Although a good number of parents said that they told stories to their children, they acknowledged the fact that story telling had drastically gone down and were slowly being replaced by watching television especially in homes that had television sets. This was highlighted during Focused Group Discussions. One parent from Primary school (Z) said that even though they did not have a television set in their home it was not common these days for parents to tell stories at bed time. The researcher would like to indicate here that although the

social economic status of parents and caregivers was not given prominence in this study, it was clear that it affected the level and manner in which parents engaged in various literacy activities with their children. This was evidenced by non- availability of literacy materials in the homes like books and other print materials. Not only the availability of books, but also the amount of time spent with the children as in most homes parents were preoccupied with looking for food to feed the family.

Parents during discussions appreciated the importance of storytelling in the development of literacy skills of their children. This is in agreement with what Glazer and Burke ( 1994), Isbell, (1979), and Raines and Isbell,(1994) who state, that story telling fosters literacy development thereby keeping many young children away from the risk of reading failure in their education .The researcher would like to argue here that even though radio and television are said to have taken away time for storytelling, parents and indeed care-givers can still find time to tell stories to their children. There are several opportunities that are available in the home and children usually are eager and willing to listen to stories from their parents.

Another finding is that some parents and their learners engaged in the shared book reading. This shared book reading occurred mainly where parents were able to read and write. The evidence in this study also proved the assumption of the importance of parental involvement in the development of the child's literary acquisition. It provided a motivation to the children to read; Currenton and Justine,2008,Dickson and Tabors 2001, Seneschal, LeFvre, Thomas and Daley,1998, also found out that shared book reading between parents and children reflect a rich home literary environment. It has also been viewed as an indicator of the nature of a home literacy environment associated with emergent literacy development, vocabulary development and heightened motivation for reading.

#### **5.4 Perceptions of parents of what constitutes a rich literacy Home Environment**

With regards a reading area or shelf for keeping books, it was noted that a good number of parents indicated that they had a reading area or shelf. However, most of the parents indicated that they did not actually have a designated reading area instead they had a shelf where books were kept. The study further found out that most of the parents involved in the study had problems with acquiring books for children to read. Many cited economic hardships as a major constraint towards purchase of books. Although many parents indicated that they had a shelf where books were kept most of these shelves were actually empty. The study found out

that there was no designated area in most homes which would be deemed as study areas. It was also found out that many participants in the study did not have spacious houses, but had in some cases a one room house or a two room house hence there was not enough space to spare. In some cases all the rooms available were occupied and used as bedrooms. In some cases the libraries in these homes were boxes where books were kept and reading areas provided were dining tables which were used for serving of food.

Furthermore, the available reading materials were also not appropriate to the level of the learners. The books that were on these shelves were mainly Bible commentaries, Bible study Guides and books on Marriage and Health. In some cases those who were members of Jehovah's Witness had Awake Magazines in their homes.

It was also noted that with regards print materials in the home, calendars, wall clocks, Bibles and religious charts were the most used materials. However, it became clear during the Focused Group Discussions that some parents did not know that these print materials in the home and immediate environment were important in literacy skills development of learners. The researcher's argument is that environmental print in the home or immediate environment which is not supported by the adult and brought to the child's attention is of no use. This is especially where the parent or care-giver is not able to read the print material may be of no use to the literacy skills acquisition of the learners. A small number of parents indicated that they were not able to read and write, so they relied on the siblings and other adults to help out. This explained why certain literacy practices lacked in the homes because for children to acquire literacy skills, literate materials for reading should be readily available in the homes. The findings also have shown that parents who were literate had a better chance of surrounding their children with a literacy rich environment.

This is in line with Henderson and Berla (1994) who state that family practices which stimulate and support learning have significant impact on student learning. Research points out that education-friendly homes foster student achievement in education (Kellaghan et al., 1993). Further, studies have reported that supportive home processes such as valuing education, setting high education expectations, setting space for children to study, placing high premium on reading, modeling positive behaviours (Kellaghan et al., 1993), providing supplementary learning resources in the home (Clark, 1983; Caplan et al., 1993), and controlled spending of after-school time (Becher, 1984) all support the widely held view that

home environments are important aspects of parental participation which result into educational achievement and literacy development.

Some parents indicated that they had pictures in their homes which were mounted on the walls for children to access them. However, the study further discovered that most parents did not know what constituted reading materials. Most parents limited reading materials to books only. They did not acknowledge the fact that calendars, wall clocks, labels on boxes of bought items, receipts, tickets, water bills, electricity bills, postcards all constituted what is termed as home print materials. The said material can make a huge contribution to learners' rich home literacy environment if properly utilized.

During the focused Group discussion, parents revealed that for them the only print materials they were familiar with were books. The researcher's arguments is that such parents may not utilize the print available to initiate literacy activity because they lacked both the knowledge and the strategies to do so. This shows why in some homes such materials were kept away from children. The researcher's view is that the availability of these so called literacy materials in the homes was one thing and putting these to use for the benefit of the child was another thing.

In as far as reading materials were concerned; parents provided writing materials to use at school. The most used writing materials according to the study were pencils with (25) parents indicated that they provided pencils and (16) pens, (5) crayons and (6) none.

The provision of materials in the home is in line with Holly Howat (2004) who stated that if early literacy activities are the foundation for later literacy success, then family literacy is important to beginning literacy (Evans, Shaw, & Bell, 2000). Children need supportive, encouraging community members to help them in their increasing awareness and understanding of the printed word. Family members are often the most readily available individuals in the child's immediate environment to provide a model and scaffold for the child's literacy development. Literacy-building experiences can take place with mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, grandparents, and other extended family members (Edwards, 1995; Ortiz, 2000; Yarosz & Barnett, 2001). In addition to the importance of family involvement in literacy development, the abundance and variety of reading and writing materials is necessary for encouraging early literacy development (Taylor, 1983). Children must be exposed to

books, papers, crayons, pens, environmental print, and more in order to gain access to the meaning-making process needed to understand the printed word.

The other discovery was that some parents viewed these writing materials as those that were supposed to be kept under lock and key as they were supposed to be used at school only and not at home. This view accounted for the reason why some parents could not engage with their children in any literacy activity.

The findings also revealed that parents who were themselves literate had a better chance of surrounding their children with literacy rich environment which isolated children in those homes to play more literacy games and activities.

Parents were also engaged with their children in joint activities in the homes. The popular joint activity was singing. Although parents engaged in this activity, most of them were not aware of the importance of songs in the oral language development of their learners. Most parents who took part in the study indicated that the songs they sang were more of religious in nature. In the study although it indicated that parents were involved a joint activities such as playing Chess, Draft parents were not aware that these enhanced their children's emergency literacy and cognitive power. Some parents said that they involved their learners in writing letters of the alphabet though they did not have the ability to teach them letter sounds. The implication here is that although the parents were not trained to teach they complemented what was being taught to the learners at school.

Furthermore, it was discovered that parents were helping their learners with homework. Homework given to the learners required that learners were assisted by parents, caregivers or siblings. The study revealed that the majority of the parents helped the children with homework.

### **5.5 Perceptions of parents as challenges to their involvement in the literacy development of their learners**

Some parents involved in the study expressed ignorance on the need to help their children with school work. These parents pointed out that they did not know that as parents they were supposed to engage their children in various literacy activities. It was revealed that the school-home linkage was so weak that many parents did not even know the teachers that were

teaching their children let alone talking to them on issues affecting their children. This situation according to some parents account for their lack of involvement. One parent also said that the PTA meetings were usually focused on the infrastructure development and on the final academic performance of grade 9 and 7 but little is said about the performance of other grades. This is in line with what research indicates that one of the challenges to parental involvement in education is the attitude of teachers who think that it is not worthwhile for parents to participate in their children's education (Eccles & Harold, 1993; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Ramirez, 1999). As a result of this attitude by educators, parents keep away from schools and educators see these parents as sources of conflicts that should be kept at a distance. In some cases, teachers fear that parental involvement will reduce their authority as reservoirs of knowledge. This argument is further supported by the work of Baker (2000a) which makes an assertion that many teachers feel that parents did not respect them and without any justification question their authority as educators. Thus, it is evident that rather than promote parental participation in education, educators in many cases exhibit behaviours which discourage parental involvement and weaken the much lauded school-home linkages. This also shows the extent to which in some cases the issue of consensus between teachers and parents on how parents ought to be involved is lacking. Williams and Stallworth (1983-1984), consequently, indicate that their study found while educators in general terms agree that there is need for greater parental involvement in education, the roles parents play should be limited to non-instructional activities such as PTA and fund-raising.

The social economic status of the family was noted as one of the factors that affected parental participation. Parents who took part in this study expressed this as a factor to their level of participation in the literacy development of their children. Most of the parents involved in this study were either peasant farmers or unemployed. The study found out that a number of parents did not have the necessary means to obtain materials and create the necessary conditions for literacy development in the homes. Parents could not afford supplementary books and other materials to create a literacy rich home environment.

It was found out that parents felt that there was poor communication between the schools and the homes where children were coming from. This lack of collaboration was hampering children's progress in school. The researcher would like to argue here that school-home linkages were a necessary ingredient in ensuring that learners receive utmost support in their literacy development. Apart from the PTA meetings and Open Day gatherings, parents

indicated that there should be a deliberate policy for each school in ensuring that their children's progress in school was kept in check.

### **5.6 To ascertain the level of literacy proficiency of grade one learners**

The learners' literacy proficiency tests revealed that a good number of them were still struggling in various aspects such as phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, writing, and comprehension. The implication of this scenario means that those children who lag behind in literacy by the end of grade one will remain behind and will find it difficult to catch up in other subjects since reading is viewed as a pre.-requisite to learning other subjects. This assertion is in tandem with (MESVTEE, 2013) which stated that it is important that children learn to read and write within the first few years of schooling, once they learn functional skills, they can focus on more complex tasks. It is also said that children who fall behind in learning to read typically become entangled in a cycle of failure.

### **5.7 Summary of Chapter Five**

This chapter has presented the discussion of the findings on the parental participation in literacy skills acquisition of learners. It has also discussed findings with regards what parents perceive as challenges to their involvement. The next chapter presents the summary and conclusion of the study.

## **6.0 CHAPTER SIX**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **6.1 Overview**

This chapter presents the summary, the conclusion and recommendations drawn from the findings of the study for possible policy development and further research.

#### **6.2 Conclusion**

This study sought to establish parental involvement in the acquisition of literary skills among grade one learners in Monze district. The study further aimed at establishing the extent to which parents were involved, type of activities that were done in homes to enhance literacy skills acquisition. It also examined parents' perception of what they considered as challenges to their involvement. The research has generated useful information which could be used by both teachers and parents to promote literacy skills among grade one learners.

The study has found that parents were involved in the literacy development of their children but they lacked knowledge on whether they were supposed to be involved or not. As a result of this, most of them were not in a position to help because they thought their role was simply to provide uniforms and payment of school fees.

It was established through this research that most of the parents were preoccupied with activities that would bring food on the table rather than helping their children with school work. It was further noted that traditional games like Nsolo, Chiyato which enhanced numeracy and literacy skills were slowly fading away. This scenario has been attributed to lack of motivation by parents and the social and economic as well as technological advancement. The study noted that parents lack knowledge of emergent literacy and hence they are not aware that they were supposed to surround their children with rich literacy home environment. The study noted that parent' perceptions of literacy acquisition and skills promotion by learners was the duty of the teachers since teachers were paid for that job and if pupils were unable to read then the blame was on teachers alone. Some parents observed that

pupils these days are poor readers and they also delay in acquiring the skill of reading. They attributed this poor start to teachers' inability to teach young ones how to read.

Apart from this, the development of oral language through story telling was also going down as many parents cited lack of interest by both parents and children to tell and listen to stories respectively. However, those parents who engaged in storytelling, the study showed that their children enjoyed listening to such stories. It was further noted that some guardians who had several children to look after could not provide individual attention to these learners as their major responsibility was to provide food. To check individual performance of these learners was not priority according to them. In some cases, it was highlighted that due to financial difficulties, parents and care givers were unable to buy even books for the learners and this affected the children's performance at school. Some parents said that books were expensive and they only managed to buy exercise books and not story books.

This study has established that, despite the fact that parents were involved in the literacy skills acquisition of their grade one children, most of them did not know that they were supposed to help their children in the academic work. The study found out that parents' perception of their involvement was limited to their support in terms of provision of school uniforms and payment of school fees. In terms of literacy related activities like games, storytelling, reading with the children, the study found out that parents were not willing to engage in these activities as they were preoccupied with economic related activities so that they could put food on the table for their families. It was also noted that the link between school and homes where these children were coming from was not strong enough to support flow of information that could help the learners in their literacy development.

This study confirms that the family influences the overall development of the child in addition to their educational attainment, of which reading is the foundational skill. The findings highlight the role of the family in a child's learning process in Zambia. The first implication of these findings is that families should be incorporated more explicitly within the educational programme of their children. This can be achieved through raising awareness of the significant contribution the family can make in the entire learning process.

Secondly, family involvement in a child's learning process should go beyond the physical provisions of uniforms, books, and food. This could be done by actively promoting a learning environment at home, such as creating space and time for reading and providing learning

opportunities for children at home. Similarly, there is need to consolidate home–school/parent– teacher partnerships bearing in mind that through this collaboration, the child would benefit highly (Kabali, 2014). This may be a partnership that represents the communicative behaviors between parents and school personnel about the child’s educational progress at school. Active parental and family engagement in the child’s learning process may yield some confidence in parents in literacy teaching at home. Phillips (2010) noted that it is important to teach parents how best to develop their children’s literacy. This study, as well, revealed that literacy experiences within families are not restricted to contextual factors. Rather, the physical and social settings are manipulated by psychological processes, such as attitudes of parents towards school and teachers. Interpretation of these results strongly suggests that parents and families play a critical role in the learning process of children. Therefore, parents and families need to be made aware of their responsibility to teach their children in informal settings. Such activities within families and communities are part of the child’s experience that enhance cognitive development and, in particular, the acquisition of reading skills.

#### **6.4 Recommendations**

1. Government should strengthen the already existing link between schools and parents to ensure homes provided the much needed support to learners at all stages of the education system.
2. Parents must be sensitized on the need for them to take keen interest in the education of their children.
3. Teachers, district and provincial officials should engage parents and show them that they were partners in the education of their children by devising a system where parents can access their children’s progress chart without any difficulties.
4. Schools must create partnerships with parents in order to bridge the gap between home and school.
5. Parents should be made aware of such research findings through seminars and workshops so that they play a role by providing necessary materials in order to have a literacy rich home environment.

6. Parents can be made aware of the fact that they can be participants in the learning of their children.
7. Teachers should encourage parents to regularly check pupils books so that their performance is assessed continuously and also parents should provide feedback to school on pupils work.
8. The Ministry of General Education should work with publishing houses to produce more reading materials especially supplementary readers.
9. Government should revamp library services in all districts of the country in order to rekindle the seemingly declining reading culture.
- 10 Future research regarding different measures of parents' beliefs about reading and its impact on students' early literacy is recommended.
11. More research regarding specific components of early literacy that are impacted by home literacy environment is needed.
12. Parents should be educated about the impact of literacy practices prior to school and the role these play in equipping children with pre-requisite skills to be successful readers.

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## APPENDIX 1

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

DEAR SIR/MADAM,

#### HOME LITERANCY ENVIRONMENT

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed to collect data on various aspects of home literacy environment in Zambia. The data collected will help the researcher to compile the report which is a requirement for him to complete his study programme. The data collected will be treated with utmost confidentiality and is purely for academic purposes.

Thank you for accepting to complete this questionnaire.

#### PART A PERSONAL PARTICULARS

1. GENDER MALE [ ] FEMALE [ ]
2. LEVEL OF EDUCATION (TICK) ONLY APPROPRIATE BOX

Grade 9		Grade 12		GCE		Other	
---------	--	----------	--	-----	--	-------	--

3. What is the gender of your child ?

MALE		FEMALE	
------	--	--------	--

#### PART B

#### PARENTAL ASSISTANCE IN LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

4. Do you read a book or a story book to your child at bedtime?

YES [ ] NO [ ]

If your answer is YES, how often do you do you read ?

[ ] Once a week

**Two to three times a week**

**Five times a week**

**Several times a week**

5. Do you read a story or book to your child at any other time beside bedtime?

**Yes**  **NO**

If **YES**,How often?

**Once a week**

**Twice or three times a week**

**Five times a week**

**Several times a week**

6. Do you sing song a with the child or recite rhymes? **YES**  **NO**

If **YES**, how many times a week?

**Once a week**

**Two or three times a week**

**Five times a week**

**Several times a week**

7. Do you play any activities (such as puppet or toy animals) with your child? **YES**   
] **NO**

If your answer is **YES**, name the games you play;

a. ....

b. ....

c. ....

d. ....

8. Do you “finger play” songs or games with your child? **YES**  **NO**

9. Do you make stories, poems with your child **YES**  **NO**

10. Do you tell folk tales before bedtime to the child **YES**  **NO**

If **YES**, name some of the folktales.

a

.....

b.

.....

c.

.....

d.

.....

11. Does your child like storytelling sessions in the home. **YES** [ ] **NO** [ ]

12. List the folktales that the child likes

a. ....

.

b.

.....

c. ....

d. ....

13. What other activities do you engage your child (circle all that apply)

**a. Puzzles                      b. Letter writing    c. Singing    d. Playing Sports    e. video games**

b. Mention any other literacy activities the child is engaged in at home

(1) .....

(2) .....

(3) .....

(4) .....

14. Do you share books with your child by reading together **YES**[ ] **NO** [ ]

15. Does the child identify letters in his/her name?

16. Does the child enjoy being read to?

**a. Very much** [ ]

**b. Not very much** [ ]

**c. Sometimes** [ ]

**d. Not all** [ ]

17. Does the child read words with your help? **YES** [ ] **NO** [ ]

18. a. Do you help your child with his/her homework? **YES** [     ] **NO** [     ] b.

How often does your child come with homework?

[     ] **Once a week**

[     ] **Twice a week**

[     ] **Several times**

[     ] **None**

19. Do you provide your child writing materials?

20. If yes, list the type of writing materials you provide.

a. ....

b. ....

c. ....

21. List some writing materials used for writing that are found in the home

a.....

b.....

c.....

d.....

22. What print materials are available in the home.

a.....

b.....

c.....

d.....

23. Does the child identify numerals in a written text **YES** [     ] **NO** [     ]

24. Do you ask your child to label or describe pictures (What is this?)

.....

25. Do you have family reading area or bookshelf. **YES** [     ] **NO** [     ]

26. Does the child have access to the storage of books

27. A. How many books or other reading materials have you bought for the child.....

B. list the materials in the home that support literacy development

a. ....

b. ....

- c. ....
- d. ....

28. What do you consider necessary in the home for the development of literacy in children?

- a. ....
- b. ....
- c. ....

29. Explain briefly the importance of parental involvement in children's school work.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

List the benefits of parental involvement in literacy development of your child.

- a. ....
- b. ....
- c. ....
- d. ....

30. What challenges do you think parents face in their efforts to get involved in their children's literacy development?

- a. ....
- b. ....
- c. ....
- d. ....

**END OF QUESTIONNAIRE AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

## APPENDIX 2

### **FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**

#### THEMES FOR FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Why should parents get involved in their children's education?
2. What do they do when they involved?
3. What activities do they engage in with children at home that promote literacy development?
4. What materials did they provide in the home that support Literacy development?

### APPENDIX 3

#### HOME LITERACY ENVIROMENT CHECK LIST

The instrument is designed to as to assess whether literacy environment at home provide quality literacy experiences.

Name.....

House No: .....

Date.....

No.	TYPE LITERACY MATERIALS AVAILABLE	YES	NO
1.	Do you have picture books, magazines, newspapers in the home		
2.	Does your child have art/ writing materials		
3.	Have plenty of paper and writing tools		
4.	Do you have a table for wring or drawing		
5.	Does the family have a variety of books for child to read		
6.	Does the Child have easy access to books		
7.	Is there a good light to read by		
8.	Store books and writing materials where children can reach them.		
9	Are manipulatives available for the child to play with		
	<b>READING AND READING MATERIALS</b>		
10.	Does the parent read aloud to children		
11.	Does the parent display, pictures, photos, posters,		
12.	Make time for children read books independently		
13.	Parent interact with children		
14.	Does the parent read picture books with the child		
15.	Have conversations with the child nearly everyday		
16.	Teach new words to the child		
17.	Help child with school work		
18.	Take child to book shops to buy books		
19.	Encourage children to ask questions and talk about stories read		
20	Ask children what they are learning at school		

**QUESTION 5**

Tell the learners: *Bikka kanwe kako anambala 5. Ndilaamba bbala. Enga keengo atuvwumina ntoomvwa kumatalikilo aabbala kuzwa kuli tootu twapegwa mukabbokesi. Bbala ndya 'nswene'.*

nkw                  ntw                  nyw                  nsw

The correct answer is 'nsw'.

**QUESTION 6**

Tell the learners: *Bikka kanwe kako anambala 6. Ndilaamba bbala. Enga keengo atuvwumina ntoomvwa kumatalikilo aabbala kuzwa kuli tootu twapegwa mukabbokesi. Bbala ndya 'nkuku'. Sala tuvwumina tuluzi ntoomvwa kumatalikilo aabbala.*

nw                  nk                  ns                  bw

The correct answer is 'nk'.

**QUESTION 7**

Tell the learners: *Bikka kanwe kako anambala 7. Ndilaamba tubeela twabbala tobilo alimwi uyakusala bbala lijisi tubeela tobilo ntweetaambe kuzwa kuli tootu twapegwa mukabbokesi. Tubeela twabbala tobilo nwa 'nda + ta'. Engela bwiinguzi bwako.*

Tanda                  ndete                  panda                  sonda

The correct answer is 'tanda'.

**QUESTION 8**

Tell the learners: *Bikka kanwe kako anambala 8. Ndilaamba tubeela twabbala totatwe alimwi uyakusala bbala lijisi tubeela totatwe ntweetaambe kuzwa kuli tootu twapegwa mukabbokesi. Tubeela twabbala totatwe nwa 'ka + ntu + fwa'. Say the three syllables separately. Engela bwiinguzi bwako.*

fwambulafwampukafwantukafwenkula

The correct answer is 'fwantuka'.

**SECTION A: PHONEMIC AWARENESS**

**QUESTION 1**

Tell the learners: *Sala kavvuumina kuzwa kutuvvuumina twapegwa mukabbokesi kalo kali kumatalikilo aabbala.*

*Bikka kanwe kako anambala 1. Ino nkavvuumina nzi kali kumatalikilo aabbala lya `piki`. Zingulusya keengo akavvuumina kaluzi.*

b p w i

The correct answer is 'p'.

**QUESTION 2**

Tell the learners: *Bikka kanwe kako anambala 2. Ndilaamba bbala. Undaambile mweelwe watubeela tuli mubbala. Ibbala ndya `inzinini`. Zingulusya keengo anambala iiluzi.*

3 1 4 2

The correct answer is '4'

**QUESTION 3**

Tell the learners: *Bikka kanwe kako anambala 3.. Ndilaamba bbala. Sala tubeela twabbala ntoomvwa twalo tuli mubbala kuzwa kuli tootu twapegwa mukabbokesi. Bbala ndya `tola`. Engela tubeela twabbala ntoomvwa.*

matokabala

The correct answer is 'to + la'

**SECTION B. PHONICS**

**QUESTION 4**

Tell the learners: *Bikka kanwe kako anambala 4. Ndiyanda kuti weenge keengo atuvvuumina ntoomvwa kumatalikilo aabbala kuzwa kuli tootu twapegwa mukabbokesi. Bbala ndya `mwana`.*

nw mw bw ng

The correct answer is 'mw'.

**SECTION C: VOCABULARY**

**QUESTION 9**

Tell the learners: *Bikka kanwe kako anambala 9. Sala bbala kuzwa kuli yaayo mabala apegwa mukabbokesi kweendelanya ancoobona mucifwanikiso. Engela bwiinguzi bwako.*



*kaluli*

*kakoli*

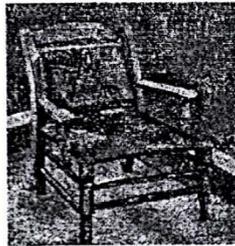
*kayuni*

*kacula*

*The correct answer is 'kayuni'.*

**QUESTION 10**

Tell the learners: *Bikka kanwe kako anambala 10. Sala bbala kuzwa kuli yaayo mabala apegwa mukabbokesi kweendelanya ancoobona mucifwanikiso. Engela bwiinguzi bwako.*



*ceele*

*citina*

*cibuno*

*cuuno*

*The correct answer is 'cuuno'.*

### QUESTION 18

Teacher, read the question for the learners and tell them: *Bikka kanwe kako anambala 18. Sala bwiinguzi buluzi kuli boobo bwapegwa. Engela bwiinguzi bwako. Nguni usoomona?*

**Mutale      Moonga      Cimbwa      Cikolo**

The correct answer is 'Moonga'

### QUESTION 19

Tell the learners: *Bikka kanwe kako anambala 19. Sala bwiinguzi buluzi kuli boobo bwapegwa. Ncinzi ncaalya Moonga? Engela bwiinguzi bwako.*

**mapopwe      cimbwa      nyama      nsima**

The correct answer is 'cimbwa'

### QUESTION 20

Tell the learners: *Bikka kanwe kako anambala 20. Sala bwiinguzi buluzi kuli boobo bwapegwa. Ncinzi ncaataunkila kucikolo Moonga? Engela bwiinguzi bwako.*

**Walya cimbwa**

**Ulasoomona**

**Tayandi biyo**

**Bamuuma bayi**

The correct answer is 'Ulasoomona'

**TELL THE LEARNERS: MAMANINO AAMUSUNKO!**

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
ZAMBIA



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HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CONSENT FORM

(Translated into vernacular if necessary)

TITLE OF RESEARCH:

REFERENCE TO PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET:

1. Make sure that you read the Information Sheet carefully, or that it has been explained to you to your satisfaction.
2. Take note of whether tape or 'audio' recording will be used.
3. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary, i.e. you do not have to participate if you do not wish to.
4. Refusal to take part will involve no penalty or loss of services to which you are otherwise entitled.
5. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of services and without giving a reason for your withdrawal.
6. You may choose not to answer particular questions that are asked in the study. If there is anything that you would prefer not to discuss, please feel free to say so.
7. The information collected in this interview will be kept strictly confidential.
8. If you choose to participate in this research study, your signed consent is required below before I proceed with the interview with you.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT

I have read (or have had explained to me) the information about this research as contained in the Participant Information Sheet. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I now consent voluntarily to be a participant in this project and understand that I have the right to end the interview at any time, and to choose not to answer particular questions that are asked in the study.

My signature below says that I am willing to participate in this research:

Participant's name (Printed): .....

Participant's signature: ..... Consent Date: .....

Researcher Conducting Informed Consent (Printed) .....

Signature of Researcher: ..... Date: .....

Signature of parent/guardian: ..... Date: .....