

**EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES FACED BY  
TEACHERS AND PUPILS OF LARGE CLASSES IN  
SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS  
OF LUSAKA DISTRICT OF ZAMBIA**

**BY**

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requirements for the award of the degree of  
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## **DECLARATION**

I, Loveness Shwandi, do solemnly declare that this dissertation titled ‘Experiences and Challenges of Teachers and Pupils of Large Classes in Selected Secondary Schools of Lusaka District of Zambia,’ is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references and that the project has not been accepted in any previous application for an academic award.

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## **CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study was to explore the experiences and challenges faced by teachers and pupils of large classes in selected secondary schools of Lusaka district of Zambia. The objectives of the study were to: explore the challenges and experiences faced by teachers and pupils of large classes; identify the teaching strategies used by teachers handling large classes; establish views from school administrators, teachers and pupils on the implications for large class size. Data were collected from forty-five respondents comprising three administrators, six teachers and thirty-six pupils. The study been qualitative, it utilised the descriptive survey design and data were collected using interviews and focus groups guides, observation checklist and document review. Purposive sampling was used to determine the participants.

The study established that teachers could not complete marking pupils' books and that there was too much noise and distractions in the large classes. This concern was also echoed by the pupils. The administrators outlined that teachers could not give as much exercises which compromised quality. In relation to teaching strategies, the researcher observed that most teachers used the lecture and question and answer methods owing to large class size. The study found out that the pupils were aware of what was meant by teaching strategies and that they would appreciate if their teachers used methods that encouraged pupil participation. The teachers and administrators added that large classes were stressful and affected the academic performance of the pupils. It was concluded that while class size affected the choice of strategies that teachers employed, all the participants were aware of the strategies that could be appropriate for large classes. Furthermore, the problematic classroom management would lead inadvertently result in poor academic performance. The study recommended that the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) should consider the introduction of team teaching and build larger classrooms in schools.

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my family and children: Tiwonechi, Tatumbikika and Viwongo, who made a positive contribution to my studies through their understanding, patience and encouragement. To my husband Gilbert, for his encouragement and support during my entire study.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

CA	Continues Assessment
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoGE	Ministry of General Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
SBCPD	School Based Continuing Professional Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific Co-operation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNZA	University of Zambia
ZDP	Zonal of Proximal Development

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Overview**

This chapter presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of study, research objectives and the research questions. The significance of the study, delimitation of the study, limitations and operational definitions have also been presented.

### **1.2 Background**

Teachers around the world face many obstacles when attempting to teach in overcrowded classes. Used interchangeably, overcrowded or large classes are those where the pupil-teacher ratios (PTR) exceed 40:1. Such classroom conditions are particularly acute in the developing world where class sizes often swell up and go beyond 100 students. There are differing opinions about the causes of overcrowded classes in the developing world, Zambia inclusive. The reasons include the reduction or elimination of school fees, free primary education and rapid population growth. Notably, the reality still remains that, while each of these factors have worked to increase class size, the quality of education delivered in schools has been affected.

In Zambian primary schools, large class sizes have been argued to have been necessitated by an increase in enrolment levels due to universal free education, at that level, in line with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2002. In this light, Benbow et al (2007) notes that the Sub Saharan Africa has recorded the largest increase in the primary school age group: up from eighty four million in 1990 to one hundred six in 2000 an average of 2.6 per cent per year, with an estimation that it may exceed one hundred million by the year 2015. In view of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), if the challenges of large classes are not well handled, the quality education

would be compromised in that more and more children would be in school. The fourth SDGs aims at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all boys and girls is provided. It also advocates for free primary and secondary schooling for all boys and girls (UNDP, 2015). But with limited resources and lack of infrastructure the scenario of large class sizes would be the order of the day especially in developing countries.

While most developed countries were reducing their class size, most developing countries were increasing them. In Zambia, like most developing countries, class size in secondary schools is of much concern. In acknowledging this problem, MOE (1996) notes that the over use of school buildings through multiple sessions and large classes coupled with near-absence of public funds for school maintenance and repairs are some of the challenges the ministry faces. MOE (1996) further notes that the average class size is over 45, which is too high for secondary school level. Very large classes are particularly characteristic of Grade 12 where, in 1994, average class sizes of 47 or more were recorded for five of the large provinces.

Owing to the fact that the strategies used by the teacher in the learning process have the potential to affect how much is learned in a number of ways, the problem of class size has been discussed and researched on for some time now. However, no definite conclusion has being reached as to whether pupils perform better in small, medium or large classes. Whereas most people think a small class size would produce better results, there are instances when large classes have performed better as well. This is seen in countries such as Japan and South Korea who consider their class size to be large compared to other developed countries. South Korea, placed second on the 1996 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), has an average of 56.9 students per class in Mathematics and 48.8 in Science. Similar conditions were



observed in both Japan and Singapore, where students are also excelling in larger classes. Benbow et al (2007) observes that, to complicate the issue further, there are several examples of very large classrooms with excellent student learning outcomes.

In Zambia, class size varies depending on school, with classes having as low as 20 students or as large as 40 students or in excess of 100 students per one teacher. This is due to the types of schools found in the country's education system. Vis-a-vis private, government, grant aided, and community schools. In Nigeria the scenario is similar to Zambia with most of the schools being over populated and class sizes mostly large. This is why the all Nigeria Conference of Principles of Secondary Schools recommended a maximum of forty students per class for efficient and effective teaching and learning (Omotere, 2015).

The effects of increased class size on the performance of pupils have raised debate among parents, the government, teachers, teacher unions and school administrators with the results of the debates being inconclusive. Instead of debating on large classes and its effect on pupil performance, there is need to find ways to deal with the situation since it seems the problem of large classes will not improve for some time. It is against this back ground that this study sought to establish experiences and challenges faced by teachers of large classes in selected secondary schools in Lusaka district of Zambia.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Since the introduction of free primary education policy in 2002 and the rapid population growth, class size has increased in most primary schools in Zambia. Though the government through MoGE has tried to build more schools and increase teacher deployment, the problem of large classes does not seem to improve. In order to accommodate the high numbers of primary school graduates the class size at

secondary school level has also increased. Consequently in most schools learning and teaching takes place in over-crowded classrooms for some schools, a situation not conducive for both the learners and teachers. While studies have been done on factors that affect academic performance of students ranging from school environment to teacher teaching styles in specific subjects and teacher-pupil interactions (Lifalalo, 1995; Mbozi, 2008; Benbow et al, 2009; Mulenga, 2012; Nakubugo, 2014), the debate on the relationship between class size and academic performance still rages. It is this knowledge gap that my study, ‘Experiences and challenges faced by teachers and pupils of large classes in selected secondary schools of Lusaka district of Zambia,’ sought to fill.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the experiences and challenges faced by teachers of large classes in selected secondary schools of Lusaka district.

#### **1.5 Objectives**

The objectives of the study were to:

- i. Explore the experiences and challenges faced by teachers and pupils of large classes.
- ii. Identify the teaching strategies used by teachers in handling large classes.
- iii. Establish views from school administrators, teachers and learners on the implications for large classes (large class size).

## **1.6 Research Questions**

The following questions were asked in line with the objectives:

- i. What are the experiences and challenges faced by teachers and pupils of large classes?
- ii. What strategies do teachers handling large classes use when teaching?
- iii. What are the views of school administrators, teachers and learners on the implications of large class size?

## **1.7 Significant of the study**

The study may influence policy on teacher/pupil ratio. Furthermore, educational practitioners such as school administrators and teachers may find the findings of this study useful given the experiences of other schools and teachers. In addition, the study may further contribute to the existing body of knowledge on large class teaching from the Zambian context.

## **1.8 Delimitation**

The study was confined to selected secondary schools in Lusaka district whose names have been withheld for ethical reasons.

## **1.9 Theoretical Framework**

The study was guided by Vygotsky's Social Learning Theory which helped the researcher to understand how people learn in social contexts and informed her on how teachers construct active learning. In this theory, the learner is viewed as an active participant rather than a passive receiver of content from the teacher. It also encourages the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) where a learner at a lower level of thinking collaborates with more capable learners and the teacher. Vygotsky suggested that learning takes place through interactions which the students have with their peers,

teachers and other experts. Furthermore, teachers can create a learning environment that maximises the learner's ability to interact with each other through discussions, collaborations and feedback. Blake and Pope (2008) notes that, Vygotsky argues that learning always occurs and cannot be separated from a social context. Consequently, instructional strategies that promote the distribution of expert knowledge whenever students collaboratively work together to conduct research, share their results and perform a final project help to create collaborating community of learners. Vygotsky believed that if students were not improving academically, their instruction was inappropriate. In this vein, Moalosi (2013) states that a variety of teaching approaches and not just one should be put together to achieve effective learning.

This theory is relevant to this study as it informs us that teachers should view learners as active participants in the lesson. Therefore, it encourages the use of learner centred strategies that may let the learners participate in a lesson and work with one another. Despite the many challenges that teachers face in the large classes, they could create an atmosphere where pupils, especially slow learners, learn from the more knowledgeable pupil or any other expert thereby allowing pupils to work in a social context that achieves the ZPD.

### **1.10 Operational Definitions**

Due to the fact that words may mean differently, depending on the situation at hand, the following terms whose working definitions are given below, were used in the study.

**Class size:** The number of learners in a specific class under the direction of a specific teacher.

**Large class teaching:** This is a situation where a teacher teaches a class of more than 45 pupils.

**Pupil centred teaching styles:** Techniques in which pupils actively and fully participate with minimal guidance from the teacher.

**Teacher centred styles:** teaching methods where the learning and teaching process is dominated by the teacher.

**Teacher/ pupil ratio (PTR):** PTR refers to the total number of pupils enrolled at school divided by the total number of teaching staff at the school.

**Teaching strategies:** Methods or techniques that teachers use to manage and guide learners in the classroom.

### **1.11 Summary**

In conclusion, this chapter has covered the introduction to the study. The background to this study emanated from the need to establish the experiences and challenges of pupils and learners in selected secondary schools in Lusaka district. In addition, the chapter covered the research problem under investigation, purpose, objectives and research questions. The chapter further presented the significance of the study, limitations, definition of terms as well as the organization of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Overview**

In this chapter, literature related to class size and the teaching of large classes was reviewed and it provided the background upon which the study was based. The literature was reviewed and discussed under themes.

### **2.2 Definition of Large Class Teaching**

There is no agreement or standard definition in literature as to what constitutes a large class. This is because as countries differ, so do their perceptions on large class which are influenced by experience, educational theories and philosophies (Sedibe 2012). In Japan for instance, class sizes are very large by international standards, with classes of 40 to 50 learners being the norm. Whereas this does not seem to be problematic for the Japanese, in the United States of America and the United Kingdom, classes with 25 to 30 learners are regarded as large and potentially problematic for some teachers (Tomlinson 1989, Blatchford & Mortimore 1994).

According to Ehrenberg et al (2001) class size refers to the actual number of pupils taught by a teacher at a particular time as opposed to pupil/ teacher ratio which typically includes teachers who spend all or part of their day as administrators, librarians, special education support staff, itinerant teachers, or other roles outside the classroom. In this case, the pupil/ teacher ratio is always lower than the average class size, and the discrepancy between the two can vary, depending on teachers' roles and the amount of time teachers spend in the classroom during the school day. From an administrative or economic viewpoint, pupil/ teacher ratio is very important, because it is closely related to the amount of money spent per child. However, from a psychological viewpoint in terms of how students learn, what matters is the number of

students who are physically present interacting among themselves and with the teacher (Ibid).

Most studies done in western countries favoured the reduction in class size. However no conclusive result has been reached on which class size (small, medium or large) is better to attain student achievement. It should be noted that the numbers that make a large class differ from western developed countries to most under developed countries. No one is absolutely certain whether small classes are inherently better than the large ones with regard to the roles both classes play and their effectiveness in the process of teaching and learning. Therefore, finding a definition to an idealistic class size which could be applicable in almost all teaching and learning environments tends to be difficult. Interestingly enough, teachers in general always favour small classes and believe that students in small classes learn better than their counterparts in large classes as more practical activities are employed (Ehrenberg et al, 2001).

UNESCO (2012) reports that in sub-Saharan Africa, the average class size in public primary schools ranges from 26 pupils in Cape Verde to 67 in Chad. In four out of ten countries reporting data, there are on average 50 or more pupils per class. This is much higher than the average class sizes in the European Union or Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member countries which are below 20 in the majority of countries and below 30 in all countries. Since there is no standard definition on what a large class should constitute. The literature been reviewed may provide an insight on what the appropriate number of pupils in a class should be in order to minimise the difficulties that might be encountered in these classes.

### **2.3 Teaching Strategies and Pupil Academic Performance**

There is little research which has been dedicated to the correlation between teaching styles and pupil academic performance. Benbow et al (2007) acknowledge that teaching in large classes, tends not to be a topic covered in most teacher education coursework. Although several scholars have proposed various factors responsible for the poor academic performance of students, Kyricou (1997) considered class size as one of the factors that affected pupil performance. Additionally according to Galton (1994), classroom size could not be a matter of the number of pupils in class but how that number affects other classroom processes and activities which themselves bear more directly on performance. In addition, Hanushek (1999) stated that it was difficult to prove the effects of classroom size, as it depended on other aspects and variables, such as individual differences among learners and teachers, as well as the approaches which were used by educators.

Ehrenberg (2001) observed that changes in class size were considered a potential means of how much a student learnt. Not only is class size potentially one of the key variables in the production of learning or knowledge, it is one of the simplest variables policy makers can manipulate. He further indicated that though policy makers can manipulate class size, this did not guarantee better performance of pupils as Ehrenberg concluded that there was no significant evidence that variations in class size explained improvements in student achievement. Even if some correlation did exist, he suggested that the benefits are too modest to warrant the high costs of class size reduction implementation.

According to Wilson (2006) many teachers argued that the methods that teachers could use in large classes were not as plentiful as those available to teachers in small classes. There is some truth in this statement in that in small classes, teachers are able to



practice a variety of methods, such as learning centres, higher order questioning, and other active-learning approaches. It was observed that there were cases where learner achievement was higher in smaller classes than in larger classes, but that there were also numerous cases where no obvious differences in achievement could be found (Ibid). Overall, the findings by some researchers suggested that the advantages of small classes are limited to the most vulnerable learners (the very young and those of low ability) because these learners require the individual attention only available from a teacher in a small class. Thus it becomes clear why teachers generally are of the opinion that because large classes do not allow scope to realise individualised instruction, learner achievement will inevitably be lower in large classes.

Handal et al (as cited by Uhrain, 2016) reported that in New South Wales and Australia, results in a study of secondary school Mathematics teachers' perspectives on class size found that, the preferred class size of nearly half of the respondents was 16–20 students. In addition, all of the 12 teachers interviewed for the study believed that smaller class size was beneficial to student achievement. They believed that smaller class sizes led to a decrease in classroom management issues which would be particularly beneficial to lower achieving students. A qualitative study of three secondary school English teachers in Hong Kong revealed similar results to those of Handal et al., where teachers reported they were able to foster more intrapersonal relationships with students, could spend more time for review of material if needed, and had fewer discipline problems in smaller classes (Ibid).

From a training perspective, Benbow et al (2000) noted that teaching in large classes, was not covered in most teacher education coursework. The result was that teachers were left unprepared for the unique challenges faced in the large classroom. However, there are a host of methods that teachers can make use of when teaching in large

classes. Among these are small group discussions, peer tutoring, and shift teaching. Even whole class instruction (that is, lecturing to the entire class) can be an effective practice depending on the learning goals (for example, memorization of formulas and vocabulary). Cooper and Robinson (2000) found that small-group work could contribute to effective teaching and learning by promoting cognitive elaboration, enhancing critical thinking, providing feedback, promoting social and emotional development, appreciating diversity and, reducing student attrition. In the same vein Bahanshal (2013) in his study on the effects of large classes on teaching and learning in Saudi Secondary Schools indicated that:

It is possible for English to be taught and improved in large classes in Saudi secondary schools by producing an interactive model of teaching/ learning process where there is a great interaction between teachers and students and among classmates in the shape of pair and group work. It is also recommended that even though large classes are daunting and lead to huge burden, English teachers should not be distracted by any chaotic situation and carefully plan to control the class as well as to create challenging activities, employ appropriate materials and valid methodology which may result on great impact on English teaching.

Bahanshal (2013) went on to conclude that large classes were not firmly a pedagogical dilemma: the complications found in large classes raise more demands and actions from language teachers in large classes compared with their counterparts teaching smaller ones. Therefore, it was important to explore various methods and apply effective strategies that minimize the effects of large classes and elevate the teaching and learning level to its highest standard. In other words, the effectiveness of any techniques may vary from one context to another as it relies heavily on different aspects such as students, teachers and facilities available in a certain school.

Ehrenberg et al (2001) noted that the number of students in a class has the potential to affect how much was learnt in a number of different ways. It could affect the social engagement of students and it could also result in less or more noise and disruptive behaviour. In addition it could as well affect how much time the teacher was able to focus on individual students and their specific needs rather than as a whole. For these reasons, changes to the class size were considered a potential means of changing how much is learnt. Nevertheless the performance of pupils could improve if the teachers used the right strategies for large classes. Verily, strategic grouping of pupils is fundamental to teaching in large classrooms (Pasnica, 1997). She suggested that when class sizes swell and new or difficult information was being taught, it was best to break the class into groups of 15 to 20 pupils. In addition The Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence (1992) suggested that focussing on three issues: creating a small class atmosphere in a large-class setting; encouraging class participations; and promoting active learning through the use of appropriate activities, as a way to handle large class teaching. The aforementioned studies are of importance to this study in that they emphasize the creation of a conducive environment within the large classes as situation which the researcher, envisages for Zambia.

#### **2.4 Class Size and Pupil Behaviour**

Examining how class size affects the social behaviour of students, Finn et al. (2003) found that small classes encountered less misbehaviour actions than large classes as students in small classes were engaged in more social interactions with their teachers which give them less space to misbehave or fool around. Similarly, Shamim et al. (2007) reinforced this idea when they revealed that teachers in large classes have problems establishing discipline in their classrooms and dealing with the increasing noise level. In line with the preceding indication, Al-Jarf (2006) lamented that large

classes created difficulty for students to hear the teacher and concentrate because they are distracted by the actions of their peers. These studies give an indication that large classes have negative influence on teachers and students which reflects on the teaching and learning outcomes. Though taken from an international perspective, these studies are helpful to the current study in that they shade light on experiences of teachers of large classes leading to a better understanding of the Zambian situation.

## **2.5 Class Size and Pupil Performance**

In her 2008 study of Virginia Commonwealth University, Muenning found that graduation rates were higher among students from small classes. This observation was supported by descriptive findings obtained by Milesi and Gamorah (2003) and Bakasa (2012) which were a triangulation of the data gathered from the various instruments of data collection that concluded that class size and school factors such as teacher effectiveness could influence student achievement. Blatchford, Edmonds, and Martin, (2002) have argued that there is higher quality in small classes.

Christine and Porter (2002) maintained that large class teaching affected the quality of teaching as well as concentration of students. This was also observed by Benbow et al (2007) who noted that pupil attention was an area of particular concern in that it could affect academic engagement. Yet another aspect that is affected by class size is what is known as time-on-task with students tending to spend less time on class assignments when in large classes (Blatchford and Mortimore, 1994; Klein, 1985; Cooper, 1989). These studies are important in that they highlight the role class size plays in relation to pupil performance. They further reveal why there is too much noise in most large classes.

Contrasted against the Student Teacher Achievement Ratio evaluation, Ehrenberg et al. (2001) meta-analysis of class size concluded that there was no significant evidence that variations in class size explained improvements in student achievement. Even if some correlation did exist, Ehrenberg suggested that the benefits were too modest to warrant the high costs of class size reduction implementation. The study by Ehrenberg et al relates to my study in that it creates some recourse to the problem of large class keeping in mind that a reduction in class size is not foreseeable in Zambia, in the immediate future.

Different scholars have conducted research on class size in Africa with divergent results. Some studies that have been carried out show that performance in large classes is poor while others show that performance can be improved if teachers use the right strategies in the said classes. In referring to Chad, UNESCO (2012) reported that, the situation was of particular concern; studies have shown that in the African context classes exceeding 70 pupils have a negative effect on children's learning. In fact, it has been demonstrated that regardless of student grouping, when classes reach this critical size the learning outcomes are generally negative. Large class size really impacts negatively on students' academic achievements and their quality. As some researchers observed, most students who sit at the back neither participate nor pay attention to whatever goes on, but engage themselves in arguments and gossips (Yelkpiere et al., 2012).

Sedibe (1997) when reviewing literature on class size and pupil achievement observed that many authors stated that there were many factors contributing toward pupil academic achievement including appropriate teaching methods, positive teacher attitude, availability of instructional materials, thorough planning and less administration. The fact that teachers seldom changed their methods of instruction in

both large and small classes should not be ignored. He concluded that reduced class size is necessary, but not sufficient to increase achievement scores.

The foregoing was also echoed by Dachs (1998) who added that in essence, the findings in this area (studies on class size) of research remain inconclusive and demonstrate that there is no clear or simple relationship between class size and effective learning. This was not surprising as it was obvious to even the most casual of observers that there were many other variables at work in the classroom. Not least, amongst these, were the teacher's attitude, skills and motivation; the teaching and learning strategies employed in trying to address this problem. In trying to address this problem, West and Woessmann (2003) believed that school districts would do better to hire fewer teachers with better credentials than to hire more teachers without regard to the level of credentials and experience. They argued that the quality of the teacher, rather than the size of the class, drives student achievement. In short, the stakes are high when undertaking these initiatives since endless debates continue to rage about the ability of reduced class size to fuel student achievement, making it critical to approach the issue armed with credible research that helps inform decision-making. West and Woessmann bring out an important aspect to pupil performance and therefore provide some background for my study which seeks to build on existing knowledge by recommending that teachers should view large classes as providing many opportunities for teaching and learning. The quality of the teacher is paramount for the Zambian situation.

In his study on class size and Mathematics achievement of senior secondary school students in South- West Nigeria, Olatunde (2010) found out that the performance of students in large classes was very low compared to those in smaller classes. He reported that the performance of students in large classes was very low (23%)

compared to those students in smaller classes (64%). In the same vein, Adeyela (2000) found in her study that large class size was not conducive for serious academic work. However, Afolabi (2002) found no significant relationship among class size and students' learning outcomes.

Studying class size in Mansa, Mulenga (2012) revealed that the sheer size and anonymity of large classes seemed to militate against the very element that promoted pupils' involvement and intellectual development, learning and success. He observed that in large classes, pupils hardly asked questions. The only activity that pupils were involved in was listening and copying down notes. This was in agreement with MOE (2008) when it stated, that large classes necessitate placing excessive reliance on teacher centred methods, with student participation reduced to listening, taking down notes and absorbing what is received from the teacher. Therefore there was need for teachers to use strategies that were learner centred thereby helping pupils to participate in the class activities even if they belong to overcrowded classes. Although conducted in Mansa, Mulenga's study will be a good reference point for my study owing to the fact that most dynamics are similar as both are Zambian cases.

## **2.6 Large Class and Teaching Practices**

With regards to methods of teaching, Ives (2000) has posited that a single way to teach large classes does not exist. Rather, one has always to consider a number of factors such as teaching style, the characteristics of the students and the goals and objectives of the course. However there is emphasis that it is not the class size that affects the learning process but the teacher's quality and methodology that greatly counts. In this view, Davies (1993) forwards teaching methods that encourage students to think and learn, planning small group discussion with the class, getting the students to be more actively involved in the class, avoiding coming late to class, planning and preparing

lessons carefully and providing regular feedback on the assignments to students as some of the strategies for teaching large classes.

Forming small group of students help to reduce the noise, save the time of performing a certain activity and allow teachers to concentrate on small numbers of groups instead of focusing on many individuals (Chen, 2005; Yazedjian et al., 2007; Herington & Weaven, 2008). They went on to say that it was also a useful technique to bring the distractions to its lowest limit by involving every student in the learning process. In other words, engaging students in challenging activities where individuals or groups compete with one another would bring positive effects of large number in classes. Moreover, creating interesting activities that make students effectively occupied at the same time will increase students' on-task behaviour, minimize students' boredom and bring loafing to its lowest level and that of course will promote learning. Similarly a study conducted by Adrian (2010) on college students showed that active learning involved students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing. By indicating that no single method can be said to be the most ideal for large classes, the aforementioned studies are very important to my study which postulates that what a teacher needs, in a large class, is eclecticism.

Benbow et al (2007) observed that, while few methods to teach in large classrooms have been systematically used in the developing world, there were a number of education projects addressing these conditions through in-service teacher training efforts. These efforts have not been undertaken through projects specifically designed to address large classrooms, but rather through project implementers who find themselves faced with large classrooms and teachers who are asking for help dealing with the many problems they confront in large classrooms. Anecdotal evidence



revealed a list of potential teaching practices that have been recommended as potentially effective.

In his study of strategies for large class teaching, Heever (2000) concluded that the answer to the class size conundrum lies with the characteristics of teachers (competency, experience, knowledge and enthusiasm) and the opportunities they were able to create for classroom interaction and learner participation. It seems that reducing class size does not lead to dramatic changes in teaching behaviour, and that the teacher's own teaching style is a more important determinant of classroom activities than class size. Furthermore, teachers often compare class sizes in terms of what they could do in small classes but not in larger ones, and then come to the conclusion that because certain benefits of small classes were not present in larger classes, the latter constitute a problematic situation which hampers effective teaching. However, thorough his observational study, Heever (2000) reiterates that class size was not probably a convenient excuse for an assortment of problems, none of which really depended crucially on class size. Furthermore, it might be that teachers who find teaching large classes problematic may perhaps be trying to find plausible excuse for their reluctance to rethink their teaching strategies. Heever's study is of significance to mine in so far as it challenges teachers of large classes to rethink their teaching strategies as opposed to finding excuses for their short comings in the classroom.

The Ministry of Education acknowledges that large classes have an impact on the choice of the teaching methods since teachers have to adjust their teaching methods according to the number of pupils in a class which might led to a teacher relying so much on teacher-centred methods. As a result there is wide spread absence of student activity and hands on experience which might contribute to the superficiality of

learning and poor performance being experienced both in examination and subsequently in real-life situations (MOE, 2012).

Meanwhile, Mbozi (2008) observed that large classes might be a limiting factor in the choice of teaching methods. Thus some styles may not be employed at all, thereby depriving some learners who would have benefited from the employment of such styles. Lifalalo (1995) said that although the blame for these large classes was placed on the high population growth coupled with high demand for school places on the one hand and a few available school places on the other hand, ways and means must be urgently sought to correct the situation of large classes. He went on to identify 14 Geography teaching styles which mirror the wide choice of styles that may be employed. In the 2011 report, UNESCO indicated that there were a wide range of teaching and learning strategies used in Zambia schools. These included discussions, investigations, experiment, project work, field work, demonstration, inquiry, problem solving, brainstorming, research, debate, role play, theatre, drama and reflection with pupil centred approaches being emphasised at both primary and secondary school levels. Not with standing this observation, Kamanga and Simuchimba (2015) observed that although teachers talked about variations of teaching methods in their teaching, there was hardly any evidence of that variation in the lessons observed. They went on to state that teachers attempted to defend the use of teacher centred methods on the basis of lack of teaching and learning materials and over enrolment in schools. Both pupil and teacher centred methods may help a teacher who teaches large classes to involve pupils in the lessons if applied appropriately, which may also provide a better teaching and learning environment. Mbozi (2008), Lifalalo (1995), UNESCO (2011) as well as Simuchimba and Kamanga (2015) are in agreement with regards the

multiplicity of methods which a teacher can engage. The studies, therefore, lay a very good background for the current study.

## **2.7 Class Size and Teacher Behaviour**

Akinsolu and Fadokun (2010) in study, Teachers' Perception on Teaching Large Classes in Nigerian Secondary Schools: Implications for Qualitative Educational Planning, concluded that large and poorly resourced classes were not a better preference for teachers in Nigerian secondary schools. The findings also cast some doubts on the skills of the teachers in dealing with the problem. Indulging in the use of negative reinforcement like punishment was not educationally expedient. Although focused on Nigeria, Akinsolu and Fadokun's study is particularly important to the current study in that it gives more information on why most schools with large classes are reportedly understaffed.

## **2.8 Coping Strategies for Teachers in Large Classes**

Nakabungo et al (2012) studied instructional strategies in Uganda and noted that in response to the challenges, different teachers in different contexts had developed strategies to cope with the large classes and 'promote' learning. Some of the strategies were institutional while others were particular to individual teachers. A critical analysis of the strategies resulted into two major classifications. That is, strategies with great potential to enhance learning if well developed, and strategies with limited pedagogical merit. Of particular interest from this study, is the aspect of teachers carefully selecting strategies that will enhance pupil performance which my study envisions for teachers of large classes in Lusaka.

In his report on problems associated with oversize classes with regard to teaching the English language, Fasasi (2015) suggested introductions of the essays at the beginning of the term, practical discussions of the format of the essay, random marking of scripts

of few students followed by discussion of the marked scripts. If these strategies were employed it would ease the difficult task on teachers, and students would learn well even in their large classes. But, Nwideeduh (2003) noted that while spacious room allows for small and large group discussions and activities, overcrowded classrooms on the other hand tend to allow dominated teaching between the teachers and learners.

Sekiwu (2009) does not seem to agree with the above observation and says that on the strategies of copying with teaching large classes, effective use of student-centred methods such as giving assignments, examination and homework, sharing instructional materials, constructing more classrooms and encouraging student centred methods may help to attain Universal Secondary and Primary education in Uganda. In this vein, the National Commission on Education (1995) observed that a teacher should be an expert equipped with knowledge, various classroom methods and techniques that could be skilfully utilised to handle large classes and above all have an understanding of appropriate organisational and management styles.

## **2.9 Class Size and availability of Teaching and Learning Resources**

Research to date does succeed in suggesting that class size does appear to affect teacher performance and that if effective learning is to occur in large classes, attention must be paid to the role of the teacher. This attention might well be best directed towards aspects of motivation, skills development, energy levels and the use of teaching-learning aids. Jawitz (2013) states that investment in new technologies, including multimedia presentation technology and learning management systems such as Blackboard, can provide significant leaning experiences to large numbers of students at the same time. Podcasting and video recording technologies allow students to review what happened in class, while the use of mobile response technology, such as clickers, could facilitate interactive learning during lectures. This study is important for my

study in that it presents a different avenue that might be taken by teachers of large class in this computer age.

In a study conducted in Ghana, Amua-Sekyi (2010) observed that lack of funding was perceived to impinge well beyond the classroom to the workplace and ultimately to the state of the economy. Her respondents indicated that, if they had teaching and learning resources such as slides, flow chart of life cycle on screen, students could make contributions, even as the topic was discussed. She further found that the lack of large classroom space was another problem that her respondents complained about. This was borne out of the fact that lecturers observed that, at level 100 and 200 where class sizes are usually large, students are not really involved in teaching and learning. She argued that, even at level 300 and 400 when the class size gets smaller as they choose areas of specialization, students' contributions seem to improve. She, however, observed that, "Even then one can see they have a lot of defects since they have not developed the attitudes to contribute at lectures and do independent critical thinking." Amua-Sekyi's focus on the funding of education in Ghana reveals a similar situation to Zambia making the study an important background upon which mine will build.

## **2.10 Activities that may be affected by Class Size**

As earlier alluded to, there are a number of attributes that are affected by large class size including teaching methods, class management, motivation of learners, assessment, behaviour management, teaching and learning materials, teacher-pupil interactions and teacher outreach programmes.

### **2.10.1 Behaviour Management**

In relation to class size and behaviour management, Blatchford et al. (2011) found out that for primary schools there was significantly more teacher dealing with negative behaviour in larger classes for low and medium attaining pupils, but no significant effect for high achievers. For low attaining pupils, the odds of a teacher dealing with negative behaviour increase by about 30% for an increase in class size of five pupils. The results for secondary schools indicated that there was significantly less of the teacher dealing with negative behaviour in larger class for medium attaining pupils. Conversely, there was slight evidence that there was more dealing with negative behaviour in large classes for low attaining pupils, although this result was not quite statistically significant. They further stated that a number of studies have reported that pupil discipline tends to be more difficult in large classes and more of an intrusion into the teaching and learning process. In contrast, smaller classes tend to be quieter and more easily managed. Notably, more non-academic procedural arrangements were necessary in large classes. It was expected that there would be less need for critical comments from teachers in smaller classes, reflecting fewer difficulties in classroom management. In general, it might be anticipated that lower attainers would be more off task, and so may be expected to receive more critical comments from the teacher, but it was not clear whether this would be affected by size of class.

### **2.10.2 Teacher Pupil Interactions**

Perhaps the clearest result to emerge from most studies is the way that class size was related to the amount of individual attention given to pupils. Blatchford et al. (2005) observes that larger classes can lead to pupils having a passive role in class. Research in the UK found that children in large primary classes were more likely to engage in passive behaviour; listening to the teacher, while in smaller classes pupils were more

likely to interact in an active, sustained way with teachers. In Australia, Bourke (1986) found more student questions to teachers in large classes but these were mostly requests for clarification or for other help from the teacher. In the study he wanted to check whether there was more active involvement with the teacher through primary and secondary education, and whether this varied by pupil attainment level or secondary schools. As in primary schools, there was less active interaction with the teacher in larger classes.

### **2.10.3 Teaching and Learning Materials**

Teaching and learning materials are resources that are used by teachers to deliver instructions effectively. Mulenga (2012) notes that it is vital that teaching and learning resources play an important role in the improvement of quality of teaching and the learning process in that, they support pupils learning and increases their attention of lessons learnt. In addition, teaching and learning resources significantly increases pupils' achievement by supporting their learning. Learning materials can also add important structure to the lesson planning and the delivery of instructions. Furthermore apart from supporting learning, teaching and learning materials can assist teachers' professional duty; the differentiation of instruction. This is the tailoring of lessons and instructions to the different learning styles and capacities within the classroom. Teaching and learning resources do allow teachers to modify work to best activate each individual pupil's learning styles

### **2.10.4 Class Management**

Marzano et al. (2003) stated that teachers played various roles in a typical classroom; one of the most important roles was that of classroom manager. Effective teaching and learning cannot take place in a poorly managed classroom. If students are disorderly

and disrespectful, and no apparent rules and procedures guide behaviour, chaos becomes the norm. In these situations, both teachers and students suffer. Teachers struggle to teach, and students most likely learn much less than they should. In contrast, well-managed classrooms provide an environment in which teaching and learning can flourish. But a well-managed classroom doesn't just appear out of nowhere. It takes a good deal of effort to create and the person who is most responsible for creating it is the teacher. Good classroom managers are teachers who understand and use specific techniques. Awareness of and training in these techniques can change teacher behaviour, which in turn changes student behaviour and ultimately affects student achievement positively.

#### **2.10.5 Motivation of Learners**

Motivation is the determining factor in learning, since students who do not want to learn will not learn regardless of the calibre of the instructor, and students who do want to learn will (Nguyen, 2008). However, students' motivations may change, such that even those who do not want to learn will change their minds upon exposure to stimulating environments that capture their attention. To keep students engaged, students need to maintain a task-oriented outlook on learning, which is associated with deep-level learning and learning for the sole gratification of acquiring knowledge.

Anderman and Kaplan (2008) looked at various types of social motivational factors, from classroom settings, social motives, and the role of culture, to interpersonal and relational factors in student interaction. Classroom social environment and student-teacher interaction play a significant role in student motivation. Ryan and Patrick (2001) report that when students feel a sense of relatedness or belonging they are motivated to learn and perform well in school. Students feel this sense of belonging if



they believe teachers are supportive of social aspects in the classroom, such as promoting interaction and respect among students. Teachers report that students are motivated to perform well if they believe their teachers care for their social, as well as academic needs. On a more personal level, student emotions relate directly to social factors in the form of interpersonal relationships with peers, parents, and teachers. Ainley (2006) shows that emotions play an important role in motivation and cognition as these three factors relate to learning. Interest in learning raises alertness and attention, which facilitates a desire and motivation to learn.

#### **2.10.6 Assessment**

Assessment is an integral part of instruction as it determines whether or not the goals of education are being met. According to the Abbott (2014), in education, the term assessment refers to the wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students. Assessments are also used to identify individual student weaknesses and strengths so that educators can provide specialized academic support, educational programming as well as social services.

There are different ways in which assessment is used. Pre-assessments are administered before students begin a lesson, unit, course, or academic program. This is done in order to establish a baseline against which educators measure learning progress over the duration of a program, course or instructional period, or determine general academic readiness for a course, program, grade level, or new academic program that a student may be transferring into. Formative assessments are in-process evaluations of student learning that are typically administered multiple times during a unit, course, or academic program. The general purpose of formative assessment is to

give educators in-process feedback about what students are learning or not learning so that instructional approaches, teaching materials, and academic support can be modified accordingly. Formative assessments are usually not scored or graded, and they may take a variety of forms, from more formal quizzes and assignments to informal questioning techniques and in-class discussions with pupils. Related to this, summative assessments are used to evaluate student learning at the conclusion of a specific instructional period; typically at the end of a unit, course, semester, program, or school year. Summative assessments are typically scored and graded tests, assignments, or projects that are used to determine whether students have learned what they were expected to learn during the defined instructional period (Ibid).

Mulenga (2012) stresses the importance of assessment as a very necessary tool in a classroom that all teachers must master. Therefore, every education professional must be able to effectively assess and evaluate the pupils' progress and knowledge of the subjects being taught. A teacher should also be able to assess how a pupil learns and if the methods the teacher is using are effective. As teachers, it is important to be aware of a pupil's performance in the classroom for many reasons. If a teacher is accurately able to assess pupils' progress, the teacher will know if the teaching methods are working, and where the pupils need help. Assessment is a necessary factor in the educational system and all teachers should be aware of the means and methods of assessing. There is need for teachers to take assessment seriously whether it is in a large class or small class because it is the only way through which they can know if learning and teaching have taken place.

### **2.11 Summary**

In winding up, this chapter has reviewed literature related to class size and the teaching of large classes. The literature revealed the relationship between class size and pupil academic performance as well as reasons why most teachers preferred teaching smaller class sizes. The challenges and experiences faced by teachers and pupils of large classes were however, not obviously evident. Which is why, the current study is of importance.

The chapter that follows addresses the methodological concerns of the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Overview**

In this chapter, the researcher describes the research design and the methods that were used in the study. It further highlights the population, sampling, data analysis, ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The study, being qualitative, used a descriptive design in order to answer the research questions posed. In terms of data collection, the study used semi-structured interview guides, lesson observation check lists and focus group discussion guides. Creswell (1994) takes a qualitative study to be a process of understanding a social or human problem based on building a complex, holistic picture formed by reporting detailed views of informants in their natural settings. The qualitative approach was used because it provided insights that would assist the reader to visualise the experiences of the people (Cohen et al., 2007). This design was also appropriate because it sought to get detailed views of participants, since the study focused on people's attitudes, behaviour and opinions in the understanding of strategies employed when teaching large classes and the experiences and challenges faced in large classes.

### **3.3 Population**

Bryman (2004) defines a population as a universe of units from which the sample is selected or chosen. In this study, the sample comprised of all secondary schools in Lusaka district while the target population included all head teachers, teachers and pupils.

### **3.4 Sampling**

The researcher used purposive sampling which is a non-random technique. According to Etikan et al (2015) purposive sampling is a non-random technique where the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of their knowledge endowment or experience. This involves identification and selection of individuals or groups of individuals that are proficient and well-informed with a phenomenon of interest. In addition to knowledge and experience, one should note the importance of availability and willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner.

Schools were purposively selected because they had the characteristics that were relevant to the study. Teachers and pupils were also purposively sampled because not all of them were willing to take part in the study and that they had the experience to provide the information needed since they were directly affected by the large class phenomenon. The head teachers were also purposively sampled basing on their role and experience in school management and the fact that they take overall supervision of all teaching and learning processes in the school. This method was suitable as there was a much higher response rate and clarification of issues which needed clarity. The sample included three head teachers, six teachers and thirty-six pupils from 3 selected Secondary Schools of Lusaka District categorized as follows: 1 head teacher, 2 teachers, 6 grade 11 pupils and 6 grade 12 pupils from each school, bringing the total number of respondents to forty-five.

### **3.5 Data Collection Procedures**

A multi-method approach was used to collect data. According to Cohen (2007), the advantage of using a multi-method approach in data collection is that it eliminates bias or distortions of the researcher's picture of the particular slice of reality which he/ she is investigating.

Focus group discussions were conducted with pupils following an observation of an actual lesson in class with a voice recorder being used to capture the proceedings. The pupils' age in the focus groups ranged from 15 to 18 years. The researcher together with the guidance and counselling teacher explained to the pupils the purpose of the study and they were also informed that, it was not a must for them to take part of the study. It was also stated to them that if they did not want to be part of the study they could withdraw at any time. The head teachers signed the consent forms on behalf of the pupils since they were in their custody and the issue at hand involved the schools. The focus group discussions were vital in that they gave pupils a platform to express their views.

Notebooks, pencils and pens were also used to record the responses for further clarification and comparisons to recordings when analysing data. As for classroom practices and strategies that the teachers used during teaching, a classroom observation check list was used to document the data.

Document study of class and admission registers was also used in order to ascertain the actual numbers of pupils in classes and the school. In order to elicit information on the challenges and experiences faced by teachers and to get views on the consequences of large classes, semi-structured interview guides were used for head teachers and teachers. These are written lists of questions or topics that had to be covered by the

interviewer (Kombo, 2009). The major advantage of this technique was that there were no chances of no-response as the interviewer personally collected data and allowed for probing in order to get in-depth information.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Data analysis refers to the systematic way of organising information collected in order to make sense out of it. In research, data collected must be analysed in order to be meaningful when answering research questions. This study being qualitative in nature, data gathered was analysed according to themes and descriptions which corresponds to the research questions. It was further analysed according to participants under the working objectives. The analysis of data was done after gathering with recurring responses placed under appropriate themes.

### **3.7 Ethical Consideration**

Permission was requested from relevant authorities in order to access entry to the selected schools. The purpose of the study was revealed to the participants who were also assured of confidentiality. The participant's right to take part or withdraw from the study at any time was further explained to them.

### **3.8 Limitations**

The findings of the study are limited to Lusaka and therefore, may not be generalised to other areas. However, this is not to say that the information could not be used in schools with similar situations. This study was further constrained by the scarcity of literature on the experiences and challenges faced by large classes from the Zambian context as little research exists on this topic. Another major difficulty was that some teachers were unwilling to be observed for various reasons. Nevertheless the

researcher was able to go ahead with observation from the teachers who were willing to take part in the study.

### **3.9 Summary**

This chapter has discussed the research design, population, sampling, data collection procedure, data analysis and ethical considerations. It has also outlined some of the limitations encountered during the study. The following chapter presents the research findings.



## **CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Overview**

This chapter presents the findings of the study according to the research questions on experiences and challenges faced by teachers and pupils of large classes of selected secondary schools in Lusaka district of Zambia. The findings were presented thematically and according to participants; giving schools pseudonyms as school A, B and C. The head teachers were coded as HT 1 from school A, HT 2 from school B and HT 3 from School C, respectively while the teachers were teacher T and U from school A, V and W from school B, and X and Y from school C and pupils.

The research questions were as follows: What are the experiences and challenges faced by teachers and pupils of large classes? What strategies do teachers handling large classes use when teaching? What are the views of school administrators, teachers and pupils on the implications of large class size? In light of the above research questions, the study investigated the experiences and challenges of teachers and pupils of large class size and various responses were given. All the respondents pointed out many experiences and challenges that they faced in large classes. In as much as the findings from both teachers and pupils were similar in some ways, they were different in their respective capacities as teachers and pupils. The administrators and teachers also gave suggestions regarding what should be done and what schools were doing in order to ease some of the challenges faced.

### **4.2 Experiences and Challenges of Teachers and Pupils of Large Classes**

To establish the experiences and challenges of teachers and pupils of large classes, it was prudent to begin by establishing the average class size in the sampled schools. The teachers interviewed stated that they taught classes of between 40 and 50 plus pupils and also of 55 and 80 plus pupils, a situation which they described as medium and very

large classes respectively. The study also revealed that the some schools had an average class size of more than 55 pupils in the morning session and more than 75 pupils in the afternoon session.

When asked about the average number of pupils in school, HT 1 and HT 2 indicated that, the morning session classes were between 55 and 60 pupils while for the afternoon session, classes had between 70 and 80 pupils. They added that classes in schools were large. Meanwhile, HT 3 said that the average class size in the school was more than 60 pupils in both the morning and afternoon sessions. She too described the class size as large. Evidently, these schools had overcrowded classrooms.

#### **4.2.1 Marking and Evaluation**

When asked about the experiences and challenges faced by teachers and pupils of large classes, the head teachers pointed out that teachers reported that it was difficult to mark pupils' exercise books. HT 1 stated:

*Teachers find it difficult to mark especially those who teach Mathematics and English. They mark large classes every day; it's a big challenge.*

The head teachers further indicated that teachers also found it difficult to prepare for lessons, and be in time for the next lesson. If they concentrated so much on marking pupils' books then they would not be ready for the next lesson.

Similar sentiments were noted from the teachers who reiterated that teachers did not finish marking the pupils' exercise books on time in readiness for the next class. Teacher Y said, *it is not always that the teacher managed to finish marking all the books at on time.*

She added, *I could not give a lot of work to pupils because I was unable to mark all the pupils' exercise books.* Teacher U said that it was not easy to complete work,

especially marking, and that teachers gave less class exercises for fear of marking the class exercises.

The pupils added that the teachers did not give exercises as often and that teachers did not manage to mark all their books so there was no evaluation on the work which they did in the classroom. A pupil from school A said,

*Sometimes the teacher doesn't manage to mark all our books so we cannot know whether our answers are wrong or right.*

The pupils went on to say that when books are taken by the teacher to be marked from the classroom, some books came back unmarked while others went missing.

#### **4.2.2 Absenteeism and Truancy**

The head teachers noted that the teachers found it difficult to monitor pupils' attendance. As a result, they were not able to notice pupils who frequently absented themselves from school. Teachers V and W indicated that it was not easy to identify trouble makers thus they went unpunished which further contributed to pupil indiscipline. Teacher W said:

*One is not able to know each pupil by name which contributed to pupils misbehaving because they know the teacher would not easily identify them.*

In addition the pupils said that there was too much absenteeism and dodging because teachers did not even notice that one was missing.

#### **4.2.3 Inadequate Teaching and Learning Materials**

The provision of adequate teaching and learning resources was another challenge that was highlighted. HT 2 said,

*The teaching and learning resources are always in short supply because they are easily damaged by the many pupils who handled them.*

There was also limited teaching and learning aids to cater for a large number of pupils, added the teachers. The pupils reported that where they had text books, they shared. They also said that there was limited materials and equipment to enable them perform practicals especially in science subjects. One pupil added, *when doing experiments, most of the time we just see what the teacher is doing.*

#### **4.2.4 Lack of Individualised Attention**

Teachers of large classes found it difficult to monitor and supervise the pupils in the classroom because of the large numbers. HT 3 indicated,

*Teaching becomes difficult; large numbers makes it difficult for the teacher to move around and provide the necessary individualised attention.*

HT 1 emphasised,

*Personal attention is not there at all and large numbers makes it difficult for teachers to move around the classroom and provide individualised attention to pupils.*

The teachers on the other hand went on to mention that there was no space in the classroom for the teacher to reach the pupils at the back of the class and also to monitor what the pupils were doing. Teacher W added *individualised attention could not be given to all pupils because of the large number of pupils in these classes.* Teacher V echoed, *giving pupils the required individualised attentions is a problem.* The pupils said that the teachers were not able to know the challenges that every pupil faced because there was no attention paid to each learner.

#### **4.2.5 Class Size and Pupil Participation**

The teachers indicted that sometimes the atmosphere was not just conducive for teaching and learning to take place. Teacher X said, *you know some pupils just don't want to take part in the lessons and to be part of the lesson.* The teachers also pointed to lack of participation in the lessons by some pupils as one of the evident experiences

in a large class. Teacher V said, *only pupils who sit in front of the classroom participated.*

When asked about their experiences and challenges in large classes, pupils observed that there was too much noise and disturbances, a situation which made it impossible for them to study and concentrate in class especially if the teacher was not there. They also said that some pupils did not want to participate in lessons because they waited for their friends to give answers. One pupil re-emphasised, *some people don't want to work hard in class because they waited for some people to answer for them.*

#### **4.2.6 Stress on the Teacher**

Teachers said that it was not easy to teach in a large class size as there were a lot of challenges and negative experiences encountered. They said that the teacher was constantly stressed because of too much noise making and carry over work. In addition, teacher T said,

*There is no time to rest or prepare the next day's work because the teacher is always working against time. In order to finish marking pupils' books, sometimes one would carry books at home to mark.*

The teachers further said their concentration was affected because of noise and that teaching time was also affected because the teacher would spend time on controlling and counselling pupils instead of teaching. Often times, pupils became uncontrollable and class management was a night mare.

#### **4.2.7 Slow Learners and Class Size**

The pupils pointed out that the teachers did not know most of the pupils by name. They further indicated that it was difficult for the teachers to identify slow learners who, as a result, continued to lag behind.

#### **4.2.8 Lack of conducive Infrastructure and Learning Environment**

Pupils said that there was no proper infrastructure in that classrooms were too small for the number of pupils using them. They added that there was also inadequate equipment for experiments to cater for each pupil. The pupils indicated that text books were always in short supply and when the text books were availed to them, they were always asked to share. Referring to congestion in the classrooms, one pupil added:

*It was difficult to find somewhere to sit because we don't have enough space, chairs and desks, and in the hot season, the classes have no fresh air.*

They also said that the classroom was always stuffy and hot which led to personal discomfort on their part. One pupil said, *in the hot season, we are not able to concentrate because the room is small and hot.*

#### **4.2.9 Ways of easing some challenges faced by Teachers and Pupils of Large Class Size**

On what should be done in order to ease some of the challenges faced by teachers and pupils of large class size, teachers said that the teacher-pupil ratio should be reduced. They suggested employing more teachers whom they said were readily available. They further said that the Ministry of General Education should prioritise the building of more schools and that some primary schools should be upgraded to secondary schools. Teacher Y added,

*In order to ease some of the challenges faced by teachers of large classes the government should build more classes in existing schools and provide enough teaching and learning materials.*

Teacher W was of the view that the government should put up more infrastructure in schools and also reduce on the enrolment levels. The teachers further said that policy

makers should consider maintaining the class size between 40 and 50 pupils. Teacher T added that schools should come up with policies, such as the allocation of time after normal class time for remedial work, which would help slow learners.

### **4.3 Teaching Strategies used by Teachers handling Large Classes**

A number of questions relating to the teaching methods used by teachers were asked to both pupils and teachers. The researcher also observed actual teaching in the classroom. The findings were as follows:

#### **4.3.1 Class size and the Choice of teaching Strategy**

When asked on the classification of their classes in terms of size, teachers from school A said that their classes were large. Teacher X went on to say that in terms of numbers, he taught very large classes. As for teacher Y, he classified his classes as large in that they contained more than 65 pupils. Teacher V said that the class was large as it had 89 pupils and teacher W said the class had more than 65 pupils. The teachers from school C said the classes were large as they contained more than 52 and 65 pupils respectively. All teachers indicated that the recommended class size in Zambian secondary schools was between 35 and 45.

Asked to whether the size of the class affected the choice of teaching methods used, all the 6 teachers said it did, reason been that they found themselves using only teacher centred methods. Teacher X said,

*Sometimes the teacher had to adapt his methods. Sometimes, we use methods that would not encourage pupil participation because of the large numbers of pupils in class.*

Teacher W noted that,

*Class size has a direct effect on the teaching methods a teacher employed. Large classes forces the teacher to use methods that did not allow for high levels of pupil/ teacher interaction.*

On the same question, teacher V said,

*I use the lecture method because of the large numbers and also question and answer because it allows for some form of pupil participation in the lesson. Question and answer gives me the chance to point at different pupils.*

She further said that group studies could also be used when dealing with large class size to ensure everyone participated but she did not often use them because of limited space in the classroom. She added, “*Even time could not allow me as a lesson lasted for 35 minutes only*”. Research method and pupil to pupil interactions were also other methods cited the interviewed teachers.

With regard to the type of strategies used when teaching, teacher T said she used lecture, question and answer, group work, class presentations and pair work. She further said, “*I use the methods mentioned because they help me to teach efficiently and they also allowed pupil to pupil interactions.*” Teacher U mentioned group work, class discussions, teacher exposition and pair work as some of the strategies she used when teaching. She also said they helped pupils to build their self-confidence.

Teacher U further said,

*I use these methods because they help learners to participate in the lessons and also learn from one another. I also use group work because pupils learn better from fellow pupils and pupils find it easier to contribute with their friends.*

With regard to the type of strategies used when teaching, teachers said they used the lecture method, question and answer and sometimes research and experiments. They went on to say that they used them because pupils were at different levels of understanding and that they wanted everyone to understand. They further indicated that group studies could also be used when dealing with large class size to ensure everyone participated. The teachers however stated that they seldom used group studies because the classrooms are small and the pupils too many.



When asked if class size affected the choice of teaching, teacher Y said, *It did because most methods that encourage pupil participation are not used.* With regard to the teaching strategies he used, the teacher pointed to the lecture method, demonstrations and applications as some of the methods he engaged when delivering lessons.

#### **4.3.2 Pupil Preference of Teaching Strategies**

When asked if they understood the term teaching strategies, the pupils from school A responded in the affirmative with one pupil emphasising that teaching strategies are the methods teachers use to teach. When asked about the type of strategies their teacher used, the pupils mentioned teacher exposition, writing exercises and sometimes research. On giving their opinions on the choice of strategies used by the teachers, the pupils had various views. The pupils preferred taking notes first and then teacher exposition. With regard to the research method, some pupils said it was a good method as it allowed pupils to have information before the lesson and this made it easier for them to understand as the teacher explained in class. Others thought that it was not a good method because some pupils found it difficult to carry out the research especially if it involved using the internet which was not readily available. The pupils unanimously agreed that giving exercises was a better method since it tested for pupil understanding and evaluation was immediate.

When asked if the methods used by the teachers encouraged pupil participation in the lesson, certain pupils pointed out that question and answer was not good because the teacher only pointed at the pupils who seemed serious. Other pupils, however, thought it was good as it gave them chance to contribute in the lesson.

When asked to describe how they would teach in a large class given an opportunity, one pupil said that he would first give notes, then explain and later give an exercise.

Another pupil added:

*As for me, firstly, I would put them (pupils) in groups of four and then I would give them different research questions and when they come, they would explain to the class what they did.*

Yet another pupil went on to say:

*I would first write the research question on the board. Tell the pupils to go and research and when they come back I would still write the question on the board and tell the pupils that this is the question we will discuss today.*

The pupils were of the view that group work, research and reporting to the class would work in a large class. They also said that writing a question on the chalkboard followed by a discussion and then the teacher expanding on the points raised by the pupils was also one of the methods that would work in a large class. The pupils pointed out that research, group work, explaining and note taking were some of the methods suitable for large classes. Furthermore, the pupils said that they would like their teachers to use the methods mentioned above more often because they allowed pupils to be more involved in the lesson.

When asked if they understood the term teaching strategies, the pupils from school B were able to explain with one pupil taking it as, “*Ways a teacher teaches.*” On giving their opinions on the choice of strategies used by the teachers, the pupils had various opinions with some pupils saying group work was helpful because it helped them better understand topics under discussion. One pupil said,

*Group work gives us freedom to ask questions from friends than the teacher because sometimes we do not get a chance to ask and clarify some things in class.*

With regard to research method and project work, some pupils said it was a good method as it allowed pupils to work on their own.

In responding to how they would teach in a large class, given an opportunity, a pupil from school B said, *“First, I would capture the pupils’ attention, explain a concept and later give an exercise.”* Another pupil added, *“I would teach a lesson and later give questions to the pupils to see if they had understood what had been taught.”*

On the appropriate methods for teaching large classes, the pupils said that group work, would be suitable for a large class size so that everyone would participate. The pupils further indicated that giving exercises and tests would be helpful.

Asked to give their understanding of the term ‘teaching strategies,’ the pupils from school C responded:

Pupil 1: *Ways in which teachers are supposed to teacher.*

Pupil 2: *Techniques teachers used when teaching.*

When asked about the type of strategies/ methods used by their teachers, the pupils listed dictation, research, group work and drama. On giving their views on the choice of strategies used by the teachers, the pupils had various opinions with some pupils finding dictation helpful because it helped them to improve their writing skills. Group work and drama helped them to understand better and remember things as opposed to merely writing notes.

When asked if the methods used by the teachers encouraged pupil participation in the lesson, they all answered in the affirmative. On the kind of activities they were given during lessons, they said they wrote notes, did presentations, exercises as well as home-work and assignments.

In describing how they would teach in a large class if given an opportunity, a pupil said, *I would first capture the pupils’ attention and inform them of what they would be*

*doing that day and then dictate notes to them. Another pupil added, “As for me, I would dictate notes so that those who don’t have books can also learn and write.”*

The pupils mentioned that dictation, group work and research would work in a large class. On suitable methods for large classes, the pupils pointed out that research and project work enabled them to get first-hand information and it made one to discover and learn more than what could be learnt in class. They added that group work helped those who did not understand from the teacher to learn from fellow pupils and dictation helped pupils to learn to write, especially spellings.

#### **4.3.3 Measures to ensure Appropriate Strategies were used in Large Classes**

On the measures put in place in order to ensure appropriate strategies were used in order to improve academic performance in large classes, all the administrators and teachers interviewed said that schools should intensify CPD so that teachers would engage each other on some of the new developments in pedagogy. The teachers submitted that administrators should strictly monitor what happens in the classroom and provide help where necessary. They further indicated that a way of reducing enrolment in schools should be found. The teachers added that putting up more infrastructure and providing enough teaching and learning materials could also help to ease the problem of book-pupil ratio.

While the teachers called upon the government to introduce a policy of team teaching, one administrator said, *We have, as a school, made progress to maintain the number of pupils in a class at forty-five especially in the morning sessions.*

#### **4.4 Implications of Large Classes**

##### **4.4.1 Poor Academic Performance**

When asked on some of the consequences of large classes, HT 1 said,

*Slow learners do not perform well as teachers do not have time for them because they want to complete what they have prepared. And there are poor results in classes with many pupils.*

The same question was asked to HT 2 who indicated that,

*In large classes, learning is compromised and the out-put is not as one expects. Teachers do not have time and room for remedial lessons because most of the times, all classrooms in school are occupied.*

He went on to say that the performance in large classes was compromised as he thought pupils in smaller class size performed better. He emphasised, “*Standard of performance is compromised. With smaller numbers in class, results show.*”

On the implications of large class size, all the teachers in the study expressed similar sentiments noting high failure rates and poor academic performance in large classes.

In terms of class size and pupil academic performance, most pupils from school A, B and C pointed out that many pupils were likely to fail because there were too many distractions in large classes due to the fact the teacher would not be able to see what all pupils were doing. However, other pupils were of the view that the size of the class did not affect the academic performance. Some pupils from school C said that large classes were good because they fostered competition while others thought that there was no competition but a lot of peer pressure which negatively affected the pupil's performance.

#### **4.4.2 Poor Class Management**

The head teachers said that the consequences of teaching and learning in large classes were that it was difficult for teachers to perform to the best of their abilities. They further said that class management was difficult for some teachers. HT 3 lamented, *You could go to the class where there is a lot of noise only to find that there is a teacher in the classroom.* There were also difficulties in class organization, control and discipline, added HT 2.

#### **4.4.3 Negative Attitude towards Work**

With regards attitude towards work, Teacher X said, *generally, there is negative attitude towards work by the learners because they thought that the teacher would not be able to notice and identify them.*

The pupils also said that being in a large class promoted laziness. To elaborate further one pupil said,

*Some pupils just wait for their friends to answer questions. They don't make any effort to find the answer and some just copy from their friends without the teacher noticing classrooms.*

The pupils further indicated that they also felt that teachers did not go to their class because they were too many. As a result, they lagged behind in most subjects. When the researcher enquired as to why they felt that the large class sizes lead to teacher absenteeism, one pupil said:

*If we went to the staffroom to look for the teacher, we would be told that the teacher was not around, but immediately after their period was over, one would see the teacher around the school.*

#### **4.4.4 Lack of Individualised Attention**

It was reported that teachers were not able to attend to individual differences because of the large classes. One teacher said,

*There is under performance of both teachers and pupils as teachers are not able to attend to individual differences because of large numbers.*

The pupils also said that the teacher would not have time to give each pupil the attention they needed. They indicated that some pupils' books were not marked because the teacher had many classes and many pupils to attend to.

#### **4.5 Challenges of Teaching Large Classes as observed by the Researcher**

From the class observations, the researcher noticed that all the 6 teachers from the 3 different schools under investigation used question and answer method and the lecture method as teaching strategies. On the effectiveness of the methods employed by the teachers of large classes, the question and answer method was not very effective as the teachers only pointed at few pupils and in most cases, some pupils were just chorusing. The researcher observed that in some classes, there was not enough space for other class actives such as group work, role play or dramatization, let alone space for the teacher to move around. This was due to the fact that there were too many pupils in a classroom which was probably meant for 30 or 35 pupils. The researcher also observed that in some classes, pupils had to squeeze on the limited desks. It was also noted that the teachers did not have full control of the classes they were handling as in most cases, the pupils in the back of the classroom were not fully engaged in the lesson and were doing other things and not the subject under study.

#### **4.6 Summary**

In closing, this chapter has presented data collected from participants with regard to experiences and challenges faced by teachers and pupils in large classes in Secondary Schools of Lusaka district of Zambia. Data have been presented descriptively according to common themes as reflected by the research objectives and key questions of the study. The next chapter discusses these findings.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **5.1 Overview**

This chapter discusses the research findings, in line with the objectives, which were: to explore the experiences and challenges of teachers and pupils of classes large; to identify the teaching strategies used by teachers handling large classes and to establish views from administrators, teachers and pupils on the implications for large class size.

The findings of the study reveal different experiences and challenges faced by teachers and pupils of large classes. Though different in their respective capacities as teachers and pupils, they both experienced similar challenges. The positive experiences seem to have been overshadowed by the negative experiences and challenges which include: the marking and evaluation of pupils' books, absenteeism and truancy, inadequate teaching and learning materials, lack of individualised attention, class size and pupil participation, stress on the teacher, slow learners and class size and lack of conducive infrastructure and learning environment.

To establish the experiences and challenges of teachers and pupils of large classes, it was prudent to begin by establishing the average class size in the sampled schools. The teachers interviewed stated that they taught classes of between 40 and more than 50 and also of 55 and above 80 pupils which they described as medium to large and very large classes respectively. The study also revealed that the schools had average class sizes of 55 or more in the morning session and over 75 pupils in the afternoon session as reported by the administrators and also as seen from the official class registers. These classes were clearly large because the statutory class size in Zambian schools is 40 pupils or fewer for primary up to junior secondary and 35 or fewer in senior secondary grades (Education Act, 1966).



## **5.2 Teachers and Pupils of Large Classes Experiences many Challenges**

### **5.2.1 Marking and Evaluation of Pupils' Work**

One major challenge encountered by the teachers when dealing with large classes had to do with the marking of pupils' exercise books and the provision of immediate and helpful feedback to the pupils. When it came to marking of class work, the study revealed that marking was a big problem in large classes. Because of the unbearable numbers, teachers took too long to finish marking or rarely marked pupils' books. This led to a delay in providing feedback to the pupils, which is an important aspect in the learning process. Because of failure by the teacher to mark the pupils' books, some pupils opted not to write the exercises given as they knew that their books would not be marked. This can be said as one of the ways which contributes to pupils not performing well because the provision of feedback in the shortest possible time allows pupils to identify and work on their weakness. As observed by Mulenga (2012), in small classes, marking of books took up less time, and immediate feedback was given to pupils on their performance, and this enabled pupils to work on their weaknesses immediately but in a large class, marking pupils' work took too long and the feedback to pupils was often delayed. Admittedly, teachers need to find ways that would help them mark pupils' books as quickly as possible and not only to put the blame on large classes for failure of marking the pupils' exercise books. One quick way in which this could be done is where the teacher finds answers together with the pupils and then asks them to exchange their exercise books before undertaking the marking of their peers' work. In this way, peer marking would not only help the teachers to mark but it would also help in providing the much needed, immediate, feedback to the learners.

Failure to fully evaluate pupils' learning through class exercises as schemed was another challenge forwarded by teachers of large classes. In cases where class

exercises were administered, very little work was given which was also sometimes not marked. Sadly, this concern was also shared by the pupils as well. This aspect undoubtedly affected the quality of education as there was lack of proper pupil assessment and evaluation by the teachers. This is in agreement with Mulenga (2012) who concluded that owing to large classes, the option that most teachers had was to reduce the amount of activities and frequency for assessment; although this compromised the quality of work. In the same light, Mbozi (2008) reported that in the worst of cases teachers marked only sampled books from the pupils and thereby disadvantaging the rest of the pupils. Such a scenario was not only unfortunate but very detrimental to the aspirations of future generations.

Using the class size as an excuse, teachers lamented the predicament of ineffective evaluation which they had to endure. In the absence of effective assessment, teachers would not know whether effective teaching and learning had taken place. The implication is that pupils would not be aware of their academic performance in respect of their formative assessment. As a result, pupils would not have the ability to identify areas which they needed to work on. It also implies that some pupils would not take their work seriously knowing that they would not be tested at the end of the day. Teachers of large classes are thus challenged to find ways of evaluating pupils' work regularly as evaluation motivates the pupils and encourages them to work even harder.

### **5.2.2 Lack of Individualised Attention**

The lack of individualised attention to the pupils was another revelation of the study. Because teachers did not engage pupils at a personal level, it was difficult for them to identify slow learners and give them the assistance they needed. As a result of the stated lack of individualised attention, the slow pupils always lagged behind. In this manner, the large class size affected teachers as they found it difficult to interact with

their pupils at a personal level. Clearly, overcrowding in classrooms created an unfavourable atmosphere for teaching and learning to both the pupils and the teachers as effectiveness and efficiency could not be achieved thereby leading to the reported poor academic results. This understanding was echoed by Bahanshal (2013) who observed that students in large classes received less individual attention than their peers in small classes and that led to dissatisfaction among students especially weak ones who felt marginalized. Harmer (2000) also reported that large classes brought difficulties to both teachers and students and the entire process of teaching and learning.

It was also evidenced that teaching large classes at times made teachers to feel that they were not always meeting the needs of all the pupils in class adequately. This entails that because the teacher could not discuss with the pupils on a one on one basis, the teachers found it difficult to know if the pupils had grasped what was being taught. Mulenga (2012) also observed that it was difficult to find time to focus on individuals as often as one wanted. Likewise, Nakabugo et al. (2014) revealed that, teachers could not teach as expected because they were unable to reach all the pupils due to crowded classrooms.

### **5.2.3 Inadequate Teaching and Learning Materials**

Another challenge observed and reported by the participants was the issue of inadequate teaching and learning materials. It was reported that in some schools and subjects, both the teachers and pupils had to share the merger teaching and learning materials. This resulted in teachers not preparing the work in good time and efficiently because they had to wait for one another to use the teachers' guides. Where it was possible, the teachers had bought personal copies which again were shared. This shows the seriousness of the problem. This also contributed to teachers using teacher centred

methods because some exercises needed teachers and pupils to use a text book. Although sharing sounds good at a social level, academically, it can be very detrimental. Take for instance, shared text books: most of the books wore out easily. It is believed that for teaching and learning to be enjoyed and set objectives to be met, adequate teaching and learning materials must be made available. Large classes or not, adequate teaching and learning materials are a prime necessity in that these materials may enhance pupils' understanding thus improve overall academic performance.

Poor performance in science subjects can be attributed to lack of materials for experiments. Due to lack of materials, the teachers reportedly resorted to demonstrations where the teacher performed a particular experiment and the pupil observed without hands on experience. Pupils were not familiar with the apparatus and chemicals such that even if they knew what to do, they failed to perform well during examinations because that would have been the only time they were conducting experiments. Clearly, there is need for teachers to teach the Science lessons in the laboratories and perform the experiments together with the pupils so that the pupils are acquainted with the laboratory environment.

#### **5.2.4 Poor Academic Performance of Pupils**

Even if some learners indicated that class size was not a problem and therefore, had no effect on academic performance of pupils, it is clear that due to the earlier alluded to lack of individualised attention among other concerns, the majority of the respondents strongly felt that academic performance in large classes was compromised partly because weaker students were not attended to (Yelkpieri et al, 2012). We should however not throw away the proposition that large classes were not a problem in that from the fast learners' perspective, it might be that they did not see any problems because, as fast learners, they did not need the teachers' assistance as much as slow

learners did owing to the fact that they were able to study on their own and understood concepts quickly. Furthermore, this is not say that fast learners should be put in large classes because there are other processes that may also affect them. This confirms with Blatchford, Bassett and Brown (2011) who noticed that smaller classes can benefit all pupils in terms of individual, active attention from teachers, but that the lower attaining pupils in particular can benefit even more from small classes at secondary level. This suggests that small classes can be a valuable educational initiative. Evidently, smaller classes could benefit all pupils because, learning materials would be available and the teachers would work more efficiently.

The study further revealed that pupils were not able to study or concentrate in class as they wanted to because of disturbances and distractions from the many members of the class. The results of this are that even the pupils who may want to concentrate on their studies may join in the disturbances which may make it more difficult for learning to take place. Because of that, it is very possible that academic performance of the pupils may be affected negatively. A large class needs all pupils to maintain high standards of good behaviour and discipline if meaningful teaching and learning has to be successful. If the distractions are tolerated, the weaker pupils may be demoralised and some of the fast learners might to some extent be affected. Bakasa (2012) shared the same sentiments in her study when she indicated that students found it difficult to be attentive because of noise, interruptions and the generally disruptive nature of large classes.

The researcher observed that most students who sat at the back of the classroom neither participated nor paid attention to whatever was going on, but engaged themselves in arguments, gossip and were busy doing something else. For instance, while the lesson was in progress, pupils would be asking for books from their friends so that they could

copy down the notes which they did not finish in another lesson or generally just fidgeting. This situation was also observed by Ndomi (2006) who noted that large class creates confusion to the students and increases teachers' activities, as teachers spend most of their time in controlling and monitoring students' activities instead of focusing on teaching the subject matter. At the end of it all, this affects the performance of the learners and the teacher achievement of the set lesson objectives. This corresponds with the researcher's observation where the teacher had to call a pupil because she was busy passing small pieces of paper to her friends. This distracted not only the friends she was passing papers to but also the other class mates who helped her pass the papers and the teacher, who had to stop teaching in order to control the situation. In such a situation, the entire class is ultimately affected.

#### **5.2.5 Poor Pupil Participation**

Another common and observable feature of large classes was lack of participation. This study revealed that some pupils waited for their friends to give out answers without them trying, while others just copied from their friends. To some extent, large class size contributes to pupils' lack of interest and poor participation in their studies. When handling large classes and in the interest of time teachers like to point at pupils who would provide correct answers right on. Teachers tend to avoid soliciting for various views for fear of evoking a discussion which they could not hold up to.

Failure to know pupils by name is yet another factor which may lead to poor pupil participation in a lesson in that the pupils knew that the teachers could not directly call them out when they became problematic let alone not participating. This understanding is supported by Bahanshal (2013) who concluded that students in large classes seem to be demotivated as they showed no interest in either the lesson explained or activities presented by the teacher and that was due to the limited or lack of teachers' support.

### **5.2.6 Inadequate Motivation**

As for motivation, it was evidenced that motivating pupils was not easy as teachers indicated that no matter how they taught the pupils were not getting it even if the teachers changed the approaches to teaching. The findings were similar to what Don (2010), observed and noted that class size had an effect on the motivation of pupils. In his study, Dons discovered that motivating children in small classes was easier than motivating them in large classes because each child in class is motivated differently according to his/ her needs and characteristics. Nelson (2009) also states that, motivation of pupils requires knowing individual differences and characteristics of each pupil. In the case of less crowded classes, pupils' needs are more easily recognised and thus easier for teachers to motivate them.

### **5.2.7 Absenteeism and Truancy**

Absenteeism and truancy on the part of the pupils, was also identified as yet another serious problem prevalent in large classes. Surprisingly though, this aspect was not referred to or brought out by teachers at all. Maybe it would be that the teachers did not know their pupils to a level they would identify truants. Pupils reported that most pupils choose to abscond class or play truant as they thought that their teacher would not even notice that they were not in classes; taking into account that the teachers did not know the pupils in their classes by name due to the large classes they belonged to. Undoubtedly, absenteeism and truancy resulted in poor transition of information in a lesson, because it was possible for the teacher to be teaching a set of different pupils every day without really noticing, thereby contributing to the poor academic performance reported by pupils, teachers as well as head teachers. In relation to this, Kapambwe (2010) who concluded that absenteeism posed an obstacle to the smooth

management of pupil performance continuous assessment records as some pupils' attendance was irregular.

#### **5.2.8 Stress on part of Teachers**

Stress on the part of the teachers was also noted as a problem that resulted from handling large classes. Teachers stated that because of being stressed, they failed to perform as they would have loved to. Stress affected the teachers in that sometimes they failed to report to work as they reported feeling sick and that because of being stressed, the teachers ended up using strategies that did not encourage pupil participation. Teacher stress has a direct effect on their performance in the classroom thereby affecting the pupils' academic performance. In considering the impact of class size on teachers' morale and enjoyment of their profession, Finn et al (2003) referred to a 'sense of community' that can exist within a classroom and suggested that smaller classes positively impact teacher and student motivation.

#### **5.2.9 Team Teaching**

Teachers and administrators suggested that in order to ease some of the pressure off the teachers, team teaching would be an option worth exploiting. The teachers were of the view that team teaching could not really be a problem only that each teacher had to know what was required of them and co-operate with others for the strategy to be a success. It is therefore vital for teachers to have a sense of team work and respect for one another if the concept of team teaching has to be successful. Ken-Maduako and Oyatoya (2015) suggested that, considering the large classes that characterized most classrooms in Nigeria, team teaching should be incorporated in the Nigerian educational system as a strategy to enhance better classroom management and control and to ensure more teacher-effectiveness in the teaching/ learning process. If team teaching was a significant instructional strategy that had been recognized



internationally which was also applicable in the Nigerian English language classroom, Zambia could not be an exception. In support of team teaching, Wang (2010) advanced that team teaching could be an extremely beneficial and professionally rewarding experience if all went well. In order to team teach successfully, teachers in the team needed to cooperate and to maintain respect for each other, both inside and outside the classroom. Team teachers also needed to develop and establish a special relationship, both personally and professionally. Since most developing countries, Zambia inclusive, experience schools with large class size, there would be no harm to consider team teaching. Because this may be a new concept in our case, it would be prudent to seek guidance from countries which have implemented it and have seen it working for a while.

#### **5.2.10 Easing Challenges faced by Teachers and Pupils of Large Classes**

In relation to the easing of the challenges faced by teachers and pupils of large classes faced, school administrators together with teachers were making head ways. They stated intensifying continuous profession development activities, administrators strictly monitoring what happened in the classroom and introduction of catch up lessons for pupils in examination classes, as part of the measures that would reduce large class size problems. Some schools were making progress in maintaining the class size of between forty and fifty pupils which is just slightly above the policy guideline of thirty five pupils per class in secondary schools (MOE, 1996). Team teaching, putting up more infrastructure and providing enough teaching and learning materials are the other ways that could help in reducing the problems of large class size.

### **5.3 Teaching Strategies used by Teachers handling Large Classes**

#### **5.3.1 Class size limits the choice of Teaching Strategies**

From the findings of this study, it was revealed that the teachers who unanimously agreed that class size did affect the choice of teaching strategies one could use. They pointed out that they were limited strategies one could use in a large class size. The researcher noticed that the teachers observed, used more of teacher centred methods such as the lecture method and question and answer. This was also noticed by Alumulla (2015) who observed that teachers in large classes used teacher presentation or lecture style with their students more frequently than did teachers in small classes. As opposed to their counterparts in larger classes, teachers in small classes would use group or pair work with their students more often than teachers in large classes. While teachers knew the strategies that could best suit a large class, often times, they could not employ them. Teachers indicated that the situation forced them to use teacher centred methods which helped to save on time. Boyle and Nicol (2003) observed that, teaching methods that promoted interaction and discussion were known to benefit learning. However, large class sizes made it difficult to implement those methods. When it comes to deciding on the methods to use in a class, Ives (2000) argued that there is no single way to teach large classes but, one has to consider three things: ones' teaching style; the characteristics of the students; and the goals and the objectives of the course. It is therefore, the duty of the teacher to be resourceful and ensure that different teaching strategies are used despite the circumstances in which they find themselves. This would make the pupils own the lessons and participate actively.

### **5.3.2 Pupils' preferred Teaching Strategies**

Pupils showed very good understanding of the teaching strategies used by teachers. The researcher was impressed at how well the pupils described how they would teach in a large class if given an opportunity. The pupils were aware of the appropriate strategies for large class teaching and called for the use of strategies that encouraged pupil participation like research and group work. This was because they believed that this could improve pupil academic performance in that, the stated methods allowed them to consult one another and while working on the tasks at hand. This aspect confirms Sekiwe (2009) who found out that effective teaching required use of student-centred learning, which promotes self-discovery, personal study and giving of student assignments.

The above statement consolidates the findings on the second objective, where all participants in the study felt that pupil centred methods makes pupils to be independent thinkers. Letting pupils to work on their own with the help of someone who knows more than them was encouraged by Vygotsky's Social Learning theory which is used in this study. Learning in a social context can also be achieved in a large class by organising the class in a way that would encourage pupils to interact. In a large class, the Zonal of Proximal Development (ZPD) can be achieved in a number of ways. Outside of the classroom setup, the ZPD could be achieved by the teacher pre-arranging the class in groups which could be worked with in order to save on time. These groups could occasionally be rotated in order to allow pupils to interact with different members of the class thus encouraging learning in a social context. Since children learn in social contexts, teachers should as much as possible create situations where pupils could learn from each other and also provide situation which encourages ZPD even in large class sizes.

#### **5.4 Suggested Teaching Strategies for Large Classes arising from the Research Findings**

There are many teaching strategies that a teacher can choose from; depending on what one intends to achieve in a particular lesson. On the one hand, there are pupil centred methods such as question and answer, brainstorming, values clarification, drama, debates, discussions, demonstration and practice, role plays, problem solving, experiments, panel discussions and future's wheels, observations, field trips, educational visits, buzz groups as well as devil's advocate. On the other hand, one would employ teacher-centred methods which includes; lectures, drills and practice, memorisation and demonstration, among others. Using different terms, Wehrli and Nyquist (2003) highlight the direct instruction model, indirect instruction model, interactive instruction model, experiential learning model and the independent study model as some of the strategies that a teacher can utilise. In the direct instruction models (lecture, whole class discussion), the teacher imparts knowledge or demonstrates a skill. With the indirect instruction models, the teacher sets up strategies, but does not teach directly; the students make meaning for themselves (debate, pair work, question and answer) through transactions and dialogue. As for the interactive instruction models, the students interact with each other and with the information and materials; the teacher is organizer and facilitator (group work, presentations). While experiential learning models mean that the students experience and feel the material; they are actively involved (experiments, role play, drama), in the independent study models, the students interact with the content more or less exclusive of external control of the teacher (research, presentations) (Ibid).

Resulting from the research findings, the researcher noted that the participants highlighted a number of strategies that could be used in large classes. The stated

strategies include research, debates, drama, group work, demonstrations, whole class discussions, role play, peer tutoring, question and answer and the lecture methods. If the above mentioned methods are used frequently by the teachers, it is assumed that there could be an improvement in pupil academic performance and generally improves the teaching and learning atmosphere in the classroom.

#### **5.4.1 Group Studies/ Cooperative Learning**

This was one of the methods participants identified in the study as a method that could be employed in the classroom. With this method a teacher can form groups in advance to work with in order to save on time given that there are many pupils in the classroom. It would also be wise for the teacher to rotate group members occasionally to allow pupils to interact with each member in the classroom. Slavin (1987) explains that, cooperative learning as a teaching strategy in which learners work interactively and collaboratively in small groups, on activities that are clearly defined and designed to encourage members to contribute their fair share to accomplish shared goals and to ensure successful learning by all group members. Cooperative environments generally foster greater learning and retention than larger modes of instruction such as the lecture method. Notably, cooperative groups can range from formal study groups to informal discussion groups or task-oriented groups. Cooperation, creativity, responsibility, constructive feedback, conflict resolution skills and problem-solving skills are typically developed and necessary in small group environments. Through cooperative learning, students get to informally address their assignments while the teacher's task is to foster a positive emotional environment where group members experience a sense of responsibility and interdependence. The value of cooperative learning lies in its ability to provide an environment where those who may be reluctant to present their ideas in a large group may find some comfort and confidence.

### **5.4.2 Research**

Research was another method that was brought out in the study, by both teachers and pupils, as a good strategy that could be effectively used in a large class as it allowed pupils to work independently. Teachers must try by all means to let pupils discover things on their own thereby helping them to be responsible and participate in lessons. Because the pupils already have the information at hand, they would be fewer distractions. According to Wehrli and Nyquist (2003), research models of active learning require that students spend a fair amount of time constructing knowledge. Most often, teachers provide pre-established knowledge for their students to analyse and contemplate. At times, teachers design the route and passageways for students to construct and discover new knowledge via a discovery method. Here, the teacher is well aware of the type of knowledge to be constructed. At other times, teachers equip their students with a research method to challenge them to construct new meanings and knowledge. In schools, the research methods are simplified, allowing the students to access the methods at their own levels. Although the teachers did indicate that they use research to engage their classes, this was not self-evident in the study. Furthermore, the pupils were apprehensive of the strategy due to its perceived costs.

### **5.4.3 Demonstrations**

A demonstration is an undertaking where the teacher performs an activity so that learners can observe how it is done in order to help prepare learner to transfer theory to practical application. The value of demonstrations is that it promotes self-confidence and provides an opportunity for targeted questions and answers. It also allows attention to be focused on specific details rather than general theories (Malawi Institute of Education, 2004).

#### **5.4.4 Whole Class Discussion**

Both teachers and pupils in the study said that whole class discussion was another interesting method that could be utilised in the large class size. However the teacher should work with caution so also not to go off task or allow unnecessary discussions. Given the large numbers in the classroom, the teacher should make sure high levels of discipline are maintained so that each pupil would be able to contribute to the topic at hand without feeling intimidated. In this vein Wehrli and Nyquist (2003) notes that, class discussion is one of the most common teaching methods. Systematically facilitated, it is also one of the most democratic of methods. Discussions can be facilitated by the teacher or by one of the students. It is an effective democratic method for dealing with a wide range of issues. Teachers can ask pupils to prepare for components of the discussion by researching outside class, or arrive fresh to the discussion drawing upon their experiences. Discussions can take the form of responding to an issue, asking students what they think the most important issues to address might be; it could be in response to a demonstration or presentation, an assigned reading or field trip. However the strategy has its own problems which could be encountered. For example, pupils make active learner involvement and individual participation during whole-group instruction cumbersome. Promoting lots of discussion, questions and comments on a daily basis could quickly consume all class time which calls for the teachers to manage the time and class very well.

#### **5.4.5 Role Play**

Despite the teachers having to work with large numbers in the classroom, they should try by all means to use a variety of teaching strategies in order to arouse interest in their learners. And one way of doing this is by using role play; one of the many methods identified in this study. Though there may be limited space in the classroom,

teachers may find a bigger room once in a while in order for the pupils to appreciate the teaching strategy been used. If different strategies are used, pupils may have interest in school leading to reduced absenteeism as pupils would be looking forward to go to school and see what the teacher would prepare that day. Role play is where one or more participants adopt a specified role and try to behave in ways characteristic of a person in that role. It actively involves participants and adds variety, reality, and specificity to the learning experience. It also develops problem-solving and verbal expression skills as it provides an opportunity to practice skills before real-world application and when real experiences are not readily available it enables learners to experiment in a safe environment with behaviours which strike them as potentially useful and to identify behaviours which are not. It can further provide an entirely new perspective on a situation and develop insights about feelings and relationships. This type of strategy provides the teacher with immediate feedback about the learner's understanding and ability to apply concepts. Regardless of the number of pupils in a classroom, this strategy would engage the pupils fully thereby improving their attention and performance.

#### **5.4.6 Field/ Educational Visits**

Generally, field trips have been labelled as an expensive teaching strategy and hidden behind the veil of schools failing to finance such undertakings. This is usually in utter disregard of the value that the strategy presents. Apart from consolidating what has been done in the classroom, the field trip would lighten the burden of a teacher handling large classes in that the teacher does little at the site; it is the responsibility of a resource person to explain the ideas and processes to the pupils. It is the duty of the teacher to plan before-hand for the trip to be a success. The pupils should be informed and the importance of the trip explained to them. Malawi Institute of



Education (2001) explains that field trips are lessons conducted outside the classroom with the aim of giving pupils first-hand information and experiences on subject matter under discussions. The trip is part of on-going study and teachers' should prepare in advance activities for pupils to do at the site. Pupils are given the chance to relate classroom work to their everyday life. For example, a teacher may take his or her class to a nearby pond to observe the life cycle of mosquitoes in Science or to a nearby main road to observe road traffic patterns and other road users in Geography and Social Studies.

#### **5.4.7 Peer Tutoring**

Peer teaching is one other strategy that could work in a large class. This strategy could be applied in the classroom or out-side the classroom environment. The teacher could pair pupils in a way that a more able pupil would be able help the less abled one. The teacher could pair the pupils in advance and change them occasionally; if this is done they would be less wastage of lesson time as the teacher and pupils know who to work with. According to Topping (1988), peer tutoring is a strategy that provides opportunities for one or more pupils to receive one-on-one attention as well as regular feedback on the correctness of their efforts. Because they work one-on-one, pupils are able to find out whether their peers have, for example, mastered a certain concept, or need additional explanation. Peer tutoring can be done during class by pairing learners at similar levels to help each other, or by asking a pupil who has achieved certain level or mastered a certain concept, to work with another pupil who has not. The pupil who receives assistance benefits from individualised instruction, while the peer tutor benefits from providing instruction (Emmer 1997). No doubt, encouraging this strategy would be a double blessing in a large class where individualised attention has been said to be lacking.

#### **5.4.8 Debate**

Debate is yet another very engaging teaching strategy which was identified in the study. Given the limited space in the classroom, the teacher and the pupils might need to prepare in advance for a debate session. Carried out either outside or inside the classroom, the teacher has to make sure that there are no distractions. Debate is where two teams discuss a single topic. One team argues for the 'yes' side of the issue whereas the other team argues for the 'no' side. The teams should spend some time brainstorming their arguments before the debate. They should then elect two or three speakers to represent their team in the debate. As the teams brainstorm and follow the deliberations, they engage in collaborative learning and therefore, pupil participation is enhanced with the teacher mainly playing the role of moderator (Topping, 1988).

#### **5.4.9 The Lecture Method**

The lecture method was also cited as a method that was mostly used in the large classes. This was so because the teachers found it easy to use in that the teacher was always in control of the teaching learning process. In as much as teachers often use the lecture method especially when handling large classes, one needs to realise that in its pure form, the pupils have no opportunity to ask questions or offer comments during the lesson. The Malawi Institute of Education (2004) admits that even though lectures appear to be an efficient teaching or training method, as little or no time is spent on discussing, learning is not guaranteed. Therefore teachers should minimise the use of this method so as to encourage pupil participation. When pupils participate in a lesson the teacher could easily evaluate and note if learning has taken place.

#### **5.4.10 Question and Answer**

Question and answer is defined by Mtunda and Safuli (1997) as a method that involves both teaching and oral testing based on the use of the questions to be answered by the pupils. Apparently, no teacher can ever claim to deliver a lesson without engaging this important strategy. However, when engaging the class through oral question and answer, teachers should be aware of the impact of turning down a pupil's response and soliciting the participation of all members of the class. By not accepting a response in a positive way, the teacher may discourage pupils from answering further questions. This scenario is similar to what the pupils in the large classes indicated when they said that most teachers only pointed at the same pupils whom they considered to be serious.

When using question and answer, a teacher needs to note that pupils should be given enough time to think about a response while keeping the pace of questions in line with the pace of a lively class. When asking, open and clarifying questions should be asked to encourage pupils to express themselves. Such questions would also help the teacher to assess his/ her teaching and pupils' learning. It is therefore necessary that teachers formulate higher order questions which require the pupils to apply, synthesize and evaluate knowledge or information (Malawi Institute of Education, 2004).

As observed from the study, there are many strategies which could be used in large class sizes. However teachers and head teachers pointed out various reasons as to why those methods were not often used. The above identified teaching strategies are some of the many which are available for teachers to utilise. However, the teachers should weight their merits and demerits before using them for a particular group of pupils. Teachers should use a variety of teaching strategies to avoid pupils becoming demoralised and demotivated. Eclecticism is key to teaching large classes.

## **5.5 Implications of Large Class Size**

### **5.5.1 Poor Academic Performance**

Large class size affects many areas of the education sector with implications being severe on pupil academic performance. Some administrators and teachers who participated in the study felt that large classes led to poor academic performance while some pupils stated that it did not matter whether one belonged to a large or small class size; as long as one was focused on their studies, they would definitely perform well. This discrepancy confirms what was revealed from related literature which indicated that there was no significant correlation between class size and achievement. In the same light, Carpenter (2006) reported that the extant research on the relationship between class size and student performance has identified conflicting results. In other words, the results of most studies show no significant relationship between class size and student performance. Since some respondents felt that there was no relation between class size and student achievement, there is need for teachers to have a positive attitude when teaching in these classes. Furthermore, there is also need to identify other classroom process that hinder pupils' academic performance and address them. The use of learner centred methods should be encouraged at all costs if we are to have noticeable improvements in pupils' academic performance. If students feel they have not learnt much and they are not prepared, they would go to look for leakages in order for them to pass thereby producing pupils who fail to adapt at tertiary level as well as in real life scenarios.

### **5.5.2 Slow Learners not ably attended to**

The study further found out that slow learners always lagged behind, thus they did not perform well. This could be attributed to the fact that the pupils did not get the attention they needed as it was earlier alluded to. In order to help the slow pupils, it is important to consider the possibility of team teaching so that the pupils could be helped; in the

long run arousing their interest in school, which could lead to improvements in school attendance and academic performance. By virtue of a teacher mentioning a pupil's name in class, the pupils feel a sense of belonging and appreciation which in turn increases their spirit and they would want to participate in class as they know that the teacher knows them by name and recognises their presence. Personal engagement between the teacher and his pupils should therefore be encouraged to foster better academic performance.

### **5.5.3 Negative Attitude towards Work**

With the many distractions and lack of discipline in large classes, there was generally negative attitude towards work by the pupils and sometimes, the teachers. It was reported by the teachers that pupils of large classes show no interest in their school work and that was why a lot of them failed. Sedibe (1997) concluded that class size affects pupils' attitudes, either as a function of better performance or contributing to it. In large classes, teachers should therefore make an effort to learn pupils' names which might help in enforcing discipline and making the pupils feel known and wanted because pupils behave positively when they are aware that the teacher knows them by name.

### **5.5.4 Lack of Infrastructure**

The study went on to reveal that as much as the teachers wanted to help the pupils, there was no time and room for remedial work and catch up lessons during working hours. The teachers were always occupied with either marking or doing other administrative work. And in terms of space, owing to high enrolment levels in schools, all the available rooms in school were occupied and there was no room reserved for activities such as remedial work. Therefore some teachers suggested that if some form of incentive could be introduced to encourage teachers to undertake catch up and

remedial lessons outside working hours or when schools were on recess, it would motivate a lot of teachers to take up the challenge and work effectively.

#### **5.5.5 Teachers' Preference of Teaching Strategy**

The researcher observed that teachers who participated in the study preferred teacher-centred methods which made it easier for them to do away with situations that would make them unable to manage the class. This implies that teachers' use of teacher centred methods was one way of allowing the teacher to manage the class by not allowing a lot of pupils to bring out their opinions. With such strategies at play, teachers did not only increase lesson time but they also avoided situations that might produce unnecessary discussions. Agenda Annex (2005), in their research paper on the impact of large classes in schools reported that the systematic observations and case studies showed all classes had daily sessions for Mathematics and English and these were dominated by whole class teaching, in both small and large classes. There was more whole class teaching in larger classes than in smaller ones. Though observers witnessed many impressive examples of whole class teaching, teachers seemed unsatisfied with this approach. Class size also affected the overall amount of teaching in that there was more teacher talk in smaller classes directly concerned with the substantive content of subject knowledge than in large classes.

From the foregoing, it is clear that large class size must not be an excuse of not improving on the traditional methods or not trying various other methods apart from the traditional ones. So long as the teachers know the characteristics of teaching in large classes, and adjust what and how they teach accordingly, they can make their teaching just as effective as in small classes. Teachers need to view large classes from a different perspective and recognize that despite the perceived disadvantages, large classes can also provide many opportunities for teaching and learning. Class size is not

the determining factor of teaching efficiency. Teachers need to enhance their innovative awareness and capabilities for developing effective ways for dealing with large classes based on the characteristics of large classes.

## **5.6 Summary**

While keeping in line the objectives of the study and theoretical framework that informed the study, this chapter has discussed the findings of the study. From the discussion of the findings, it can be noted that the teachers are aware of the need to improve on the delivery of information in spite of the various challenges encountered in large classes. It is against this background that teachers are calling upon the government to consider the introduction of team teaching as a way of resolving some of the challenges encountered. The chapter that follows draws conclusions and makes recommendations based on the findings of the study.

## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 Overview**

The previous chapter discussed the findings of the study. This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations. These were made based on the research findings and discussions of the study. The conclusions were presented in line with the objectives which were to: explore the challenges and experiences faced by pupils and teachers of large classes in selected secondary schools of Lusaka District of Zambia; identify teaching strategies used by teachers of large classes and lastly, establish views from school administrators, teachers and pupils on the implications of large class size.

### **6.2 Conclusions**

In line with the objectives of the study, the following conclusions were made:

Regarding the first objective which sought to explore the experiences and challenges of pupils of large class size, it was found that teachers and pupils experienced many challenges as they taught and learnt in classes with large class size respectively. One of the major challenges that teachers and pupils were concerned with was the issue of evaluation and provision of immediate feedback. In order for teachers to mark pupils' books on time, they resorted to giving less work which compromised the quality of exercises. With the many pupils in the classes and the reported distractions such as noise, it can be concluded that classroom management was a nightmare for teachers of large classes.

With regard to identifying the teaching strategies used by teachers of large classes, the researcher observed that the teachers largely used teacher centred methods. They nevertheless, identified group work, research, whole class discussions, demonstrations and experiments as some of the strategies that could be used in the large classes.



However, the teachers were quick to defend their choice of teaching strategies owing to the large classes. The pupils were of the view that their teachers should use pupil centred methods more often. It can therefore be concluded from the aforementioned, that all the participants were aware of the strategies that could be used in a large class size and that class size indeed affected the choice of a strategy that teachers adopted or employed.

On the objective which endeavoured to establish the implications of teaching and learning in large classes, various views were given out. It could be concluded that teaching in a large class size made it difficult for teachers to work and that sometimes the atmosphere in the classroom was not conducive for effective teaching and learning to take place. It could also be concluded that poor academic performance by the pupils was likely to occur as a result of the large classes with their shortcomings.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

The challenge of teaching in large classes should be faced at all fronts by all stakeholders and should not be left to school administrators and teachers only. In this regard, based on the findings of the study and the discussion thereof, the following recommendations were made:

- i. The Ministry of General Education should consider introducing team teaching in order to ease some of the challenges faced by teachers of large classes.
- ii. Teachers need to view large classes from a different perspective and recognize that despite a lot of disadvantages, large classes can also provide many opportunities for teaching and learning. They should therefore engage various teaching methods and strategies as opposed to sticking to the traditional ones.

- iii. School administrators, with the help of government, should come up with mechanisms that will see to it that more and bigger classrooms are built within the bounds of existing schools and more teaching and learning resources provided. Furthermore, the new schools being built should have classrooms with larger space since the problem of large class size will be with us for some time.

For further research, a longitudinal study for more in-depth insight into the of matter of the methods teachers used when teaching large classes could be undertaken

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix i: Budget

Description	Unit	Unit Price	Total
Stationary	- Paper	K 50	K 200
	- Pens	K 10	K 10
Typing	- Research proposal	K 100	K 400
	- Research instruments	K 50	K 200
	- Project report	K 300	K 1, 200
	- Binding	K 150	K 750
Tools	- Tape recorder	K 450	K 450
	- Memory stick	K 200	K 200
Transport	- 1 Researcher	K 200	K 1, 000
Food	- 1 Researcher	K 100	K 1, 000
Miscellaneous			K 500
		<b>Total</b>	<b>K 5, 910. 00</b>

**Appendix ii: Work Plan**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Duration</b>
June 2016	Refining of Research Proposal	3 weeks
September 2016 to January 2017	Data Collection and Analysis	12 weeks
February 2017	Report Writing	7 weeks
April 2017	Submission of First Draft Report	4 weeks
May 2017	Submission of Second Draft Report	4 weeks
August 2017	Submission of Final Draft Report	4 weeks

### **Appendix iii: Consent Form**

I am, **Loveness Shwandi**, a postgraduate student of Sociology of Education at the University of Zambia doing research on ‘Experiences and challenges faced by teachers and pupils of large classes in selected secondary schools of Lusaka District of Zambia.’

I am requesting for your voluntary participation in this study. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate or not.

1. There are no risks in taking part in this study. Actually, taking part in the study will make you a contributor to the possible improvement of the education standards in the country.
2. Please consult your parents, if you are less than 18 years of age, before you decide on whether to participate or not.
3. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Remember, participation in this study is voluntary and you have the right to discontinue if you decide otherwise.
4. All the responses will be highly appreciated, treated with the highest confidentiality and used for academic purposes only.
5. If you assent to this study, please sign your name on the space provided.

Participant’s Signature: ..... Date: .....



**Appendix iv: Semi-structured Interview Guide for Administrators on the  
Experiences and Challenges faced by Teachers and Pupils of Large  
Classes in selected Secondary Schools of Lusaka District**

**Part 1: Identification Particulars**

District: .....School: .....

Position: .....Gender: Male/ Female

Date: .....

**Part 2: Content**

1. How long have you been head of this school?
2. What grade is this school?
  - a) 1
  - b) 2
  - c) 3
3. How would you classify the class size in this school?
  - a) Large
  - b) Medium
  - c) Small
4. What are the challenges faced by teachers of large classes?
5. As head teacher and overall supervisor what do you think are the consequences of large classes?
6. What teaching strategies do teachers of large classes employ?
7. Do you think these strategies may improve pupil performance if used?
8. What are some of the measures put in place in order to ease some of the challenges faced by teachers?

**Appendix v: Semi-structured Interview Guide for Teachers on the Experiences  
and Challenges faced by Teachers and Pupils of Large Classes in  
selected Secondary Schools of Lusaka District**

**Part 1: Identification particulars**

District: ..... School: .....

Class taught: ..... Subject: .....

Date: ..... Gender: Male/ Female

**Part 2: Content**

1. For how long have you been teaching in this school?
2. How many pupils do you have in your class?
3. How would you classify your class?
  - a) Large
  - b) Medium
  - c) Small.
4. Are you aware of the recommended class size in Zambian secondary schools?
5. What are your experiences and challenges of dealing with a large class size?
6. What type of strategies do you use when teaching and why do you use them?
7. During your training as teacher were you exposed to strategies that you can use when handling large classes?
8. What type of strategies can you employ when teaching a large class?
9. Have you ever heard of the following strategies: peer tutoring, co-operative learning, pupil to pupil support and mentoring and team teaching?
10. How do the stated strategies work?
11. What do you think are the consequences of large class size?
12. Please recommend measures that schools should put in place to ensure appropriate strategies are used when handling large classes.

**Appendix vi: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Pupils on the Experiences and Challenges faced by Teachers and Pupils of Large Classes in selected Secondary Schools of Lusaka District**

1. As a pupil, what are your experiences and challenges encountered when learning in a large class size?
2. What do you understand by teaching methods/ strategies?
3. What can you say about the teaching methods which your teachers use?
4. What kind of activities are you given during lessons?
5. If you were a teacher, how would you teach in a large class?
6. What type of teaching methods do you think are suitable for large classes?
7. What type of teaching strategies would you like your teacher to employ more often? Give a reason for your answer.
8. What are your views on the consequences of large class size?

**Appendix vii: Class Observation Check List on the Experiences and Challenges  
faced by Teachers and Pupils of Large Classes in selected  
Secondary Schools of Lusaka District**

(To be used by researcher in the classroom)

**Part 1: Identification particulars**

District: .....

School: .....

Class: .....

No. of Pupils: .....

Date: .....

Gender: Male/ Female

**Part 2: Classroom Observation Check list**

S/N	Items	Observation
1	General lesson presentation	
2	Teaching methods and strategies used	
3	Effectiveness of teaching methods and strategies used in the lesson	
4	Classroom arrangement	
5	Visibility of the chalkboard writings	
6	Adequate space for other class activities. (group work, drama presentations)	
7	Teacher gave pupils exercise and marked all books	
8	Pupil participation	
9	Size of class	