

**DETERMINANTS OF SCHOOL CHOICE:  
UNDERSTANDING HOW PARENTS CHOOSE  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LUSAKA DISTRICT**

**BY**

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fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of  
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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I, **Godfrey Kunda Kaoma** do hereby declare that this dissertation presents my own work and that it has not been previously submitted for the award of a degree or any other qualification to the University of Zambia or any other University. All references have been adequately acknowledged.

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## APPROVAL

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study explored the determinants of school choice by parents in selected secondary schools in Lusaka district. This was done by investigating whether school choice was determined by the school's academic performance, parents' socio-economic status, location of parents and moral and religious values. The theories that guided this study were rational choice and free market theories.

The research design used in this study was a convergent parallel mixed-methods design; an approach to inquiry that combines both qualitative and quantitative methods concurrently, prioritizing both methods almost equally. For qualitative method, interview guides were used and for quantitative method, questionnaires were distributed to respondents. The sample size was 135 participants. The study used both simple random sampling and purposive sampling to select respondents. 120 parents responded to questionnaires, 8 parents were interviewed to crosscheck other parents' responses in the questionnaires. Interviews were also used to collect data from 6 head-teachers and 1 officer at the DEBS office as key stakeholders or informants. Qualitative data was analysed according to emerging themes while quantitative data was analysed using SPSS, excel and mega stata where regression was run.

The findings of this study suggested that parents had the freedom to exercise school choice in Lusaka. However, this choice was hampered by some factors. The research conducted found out that school academic performance was the significant variable; hence it was the biggest determining factor in parents' school choice for their children for it told a lot about the quality of education offered at a particular school. It was followed by moral and religious values. Respondents revealed that they appreciated schools where discipline was enforced. Parents' socio-economic status was also revealed to have influence on school choice though not significant when multiple regression was run. Location of parents was found to be insignificant as a determinant of school choice.

The study recommended that government needed to work at issues that enhanced school academic performance and discipline in schools such as intensifying monitoring and supervision especially in public schools so as to reduce teachers' and pupils' *laissez-faire* kind of attitudes and avoid big class sizes by building or opening more secondary schools thereby improving the quality of education in schools. There was need for further research in rural areas of Zambia on determinants of school choice as some of the factors that might have influenced parents' choices in urban settings may not apply in rural areas. There was also need to conduct research on determinants of school choice at primary level in Zambia both in rural and urban settings as it seemed a major factor in influencing the type of secondary schools pupils went to.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my parents Mr. Noah Kaoma and Mrs. Agatha Chipulu Kaoma whom I am deeply indebted for their selflessness in truly employing rational choice theory in their exercise of school choice. They ensured that they sent me and my siblings to the best secondary schools in the province (Luapula) where we grew up by sacrificing their resources which they could have used for their own happiness.

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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AIDS:	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BSA:	British South African
DEBS:	District Education Board Secretary
ECZ:	Examinations Council of Zambia
EoF:	Educating our Future
ESO-GI:	Education Standard Officer General Inspection
HIV:	Human Immuno Virus
HoD:	Head of Department
MoE:	Ministry of Education
PTA:	Parent Teacher Association
SPSS:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UNIP:	United National Independence Party
USA:	United States of America

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Overview**

This chapter gives an overview to the study. It presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives and research questions, significance of the study, delimitation and limitations, theoretical and conceptual frameworks as well as operational definition of terms. The chapter concludes with a summary.

### **1.1 Background**

School choice is quite a recent area of study in Economics of Education. School choice is defined as the parents' possibility to choose a school for their children (Pöder and Kerem, 2012). Underlying the school-choice movement is the widely held belief that private schools respond to competition in ways public schools do not, and consequently are superior to public schools in providing educational services (Figlio and Stone, 1997).

One of the longstanding and highly debated proposals to improve primary and secondary public education in the United States was to expand schooling options available to parents with the use of school choice reforms (Nichols and Ozek, 2010). The two scholars argued that many leading economists advocated that such market-based educational systems (market-based in the sense that parents 'shop' for schools) were efficiency-enhancing because they induced competition between schools and potentially produced better student-school matches. School choice reforms had been proposed as ways to enhance efficiency, equity, and effectiveness in education (Lauen, 2009).

Studies further postulated that, increasing parental choice could also be regarded as increasing equality of opportunity, since it served to level the playing field in terms of access to high-quality education for disadvantaged students who could not otherwise afford the higher-quality schooling options (Nichols and Ozek, 2010). The argument was that school choice took great interest in the role of parents in making sure that their children received quality education in the schools they chose for them. Lauen (2007) citing Furstenberg *et al* (1999) wrote that the



influence of particular family management strategies on the school-choice process was likely to be particularly salient during the transition from elementary to secondary school. Research had found, for example, that parents who exerted a high degree of control over the management of their children's educational careers were more likely to be successful in placing their children in non-neighborhood schools and in keeping them in these schools once they were enrolled (Wells and Crain 1997).

According to available literature (Olson Beal and Hendry, 2012), the role of parents in school choice is critical. By the 1980s, in response to criticisms that failing schools were eroding America's place in the global economy, many urban school districts implemented increased accountability measures and school choice. A key policy narrative within the school choice movement, suggested that empowered parents acting as "citizen/consumers" would stimulate the competition necessary for school improvement (Schneider *et al.* 1997a). School choice advocates suggested that because schools had become bureaucratic monopolies oblivious of the need for internal reform, new actors—namely, parents and private enterprise—must enter the process. Two ideologies drove this reform narrative: restoring democracy, in which parental involvement was equated with reenergized citizenship, and privatization of institutions (Corwin and Schneider 2005), in which schools mimicked private markets. Historically, these two ideologies had driven the debate "over whether public education should be seen primarily as a public good or a private good" (Labaree, 2000: 112).

Nichols and Ozek (2010) wrote that opponents of school choice, on the other hand, argued that school choice reforms hindered the progress of low-performing public schools by attracting the 'best' students (i.e. cream-skimming effect) and withholding much needed funds as students departed and enrollment numbers declined.

In the United States school choice was seen by its proponents as alluded to above in the context of improving quality education and contributing to economic growth through competition as determined by market forces. The argument according to Keating (2015:6) was that, economic growth typically resulted when businesses, workers, investors, and entrepreneurs were free to compete, innovate, and work to better serve consumers by supplying new or improved goods and services. These incentives governed the marketplace, and when built upon a sound foundation of

property rights, the rule of law, open trade, minimal governmental burdens, and price stability, economic growth and prosperity emerged.

Keating (2015) further argued that true choice and competition in education would shift that system's incentives dramatically, with the education entrepreneurs and providers focused on supplying added value to the customers, that is, students and parents. The resulting improvement in educational quality and attainment would raise productivity, personal earnings, and the overall economy. Expanding school choice and competition—ideally, transforming a government monopoly into a universal school choice system—would significantly boost both educational attainment and education quality. In turn, economic growth would be spurred through an assortment of channels.

Hoxby (2003) said that at its core, school choice relied on very basic economic theory about the effects of competition. She argued that the lack of market forces in education was one of the most promising potential explanations of the puzzle that had yet been put forward. After all, market pressures were generally credited with stimulating firms to be productive. Thus, it was natural that economists were interested in the productivity consequences of choice: They knew that there was a puzzle to be solved, and they knew that market pressures were a potential solution that was worth understanding.

However, some studies conducted earlier in the USA indicated that school choice did not necessarily impact on pupil performance. In order for this theory of school choice to realize the assumptions behind it, the scholars suggested that there was need for parents to be well informed on schools they sent their children to (Loeb *et al*, 2011). Scholars argued that this assertion made sense because sometimes school choice was taken by parents like shopping coca-cola without being informed properly about the school the child was sent to. This was supported by Olson Beal and Hendry (2012) citing Saltman (2001) when they found out that parents experienced school choice as a form of informal education and induction into the corporate world of free-market skills, where they engaged in the “Coca-Cola commercialization” of schooling.

In Bangladesh, private schools- usually Islamic generally offered lower quality of education than government. Asadullah *et al* (2012) said that studies done found out that religious preferences might be important in explaining madrasah enrolment, but at the same time, household choices

could be driven by economic costs and benefits. In this latter respect, the household decision for a family in rural Bangladesh was not dissimilar to that of a family in a developed country. Citing Neal (1997), Asadullah *et al* (2012) said that irrespective of their mode of finance and management, faith schools (Catholic and/or Church affiliated) in the US were considered to be superior to public schools in terms of quality. In the US, these faith schools were overwhelmingly under private management and charged high fees which limited participation of children from poorer socio-economic backgrounds. Public school enrolment was thus inversely correlated with household income. In Bangladesh, it was the religious schools which offered a cheaper, but lower quality alternative to non-religious schools. In this sense, parents in both settings faced a trade-off between school cost and school quality.

This research sought to explore the determinants of school choice by understanding how parents chose secondary schools for their children in Lusaka district. The topic was explored using four variables namely academic performance, parent's socio-economic status, parent's location and school's moral and religious values. These are the factors that were anticipated to be significant in how and why parents choose schools in Lusaka.

There seemed to be a gap on studies on school choice in Zambia. But the Ministry of Education (MoE) (1996) through its policy document called 'Educating our Future' encouraged this system or theory. The policy stated that the virtual monopoly exercised by the Government over the provision of education, particularly at the primary level, had several negative consequences. Contrary to the provisions of the 1966 Education Act, the government greatly restricted parents' rights to choose the type of education they wanted for their children. It failed to tap the valuable human and financial resources available in the non-governmental sector. It fostered the oppressive culture of over-dependency on the state that served to prevent communities from tackling their own problems. Finally it was incapable of responding to all the needs and failed to provide education in either the quantity or the quality that individuals and the country needed.

In the document (Educating our Future 1996) it was further stated that with the re-introduction of multiparty politics in 1991, government aimed at creating a democratic society in all spheres of life including education. This same policy document brought about some educational reforms. It advocated for democratization or liberalisation of education. The current policy states that "the government respects the legitimate interests of various partners in education and supports the

distinctive character of individual schools, colleges and universities. They, in turn, have a corresponding obligation to respect and support the principles and rights upon which a democratic society is based.” The document says that among the three major principles that inform the government’s important role in education is- democratization of education. This with its demands for partnership in educational provision, requires that the Government creates an enabling environment and establishes rules and regulations, that will protect the right of various educational agencies to full and fair participation in educational development” (MoE, 1996).

According to the current educational policy, liberalization of educational provision entails fundamental changes in power relations within the education sector. Under a liberalized educational system, the right of private organizations, individuals, religious bodies, and local communities to establish and control their own schools and other educational institutions is recognized and welcomed. Liberalization of educational provision allows those with resources to establish institutions and to run them in accordance with their own principles- subject, however, to stipulated rules and regulations. In this way, “liberalization contributes to expansion of educational opportunities while protecting the right of parents to send their children to educational institutions of their own choice”, be they public, private, religious or communal (MoE, 1996).

From the above, it is clearly seen that the Ministry of Education (1996) respects parents and pupil school choice. Ministry of Education encourages the private sector and non-governmental organizations participation in the provision of basic education (and by implication other levels of education) and improvement of its quality.

It is against the backdrop of the above background that this study explored the determinants of school choice by parents in the Zambian context in Lusaka district. What really did parents look for in the choice of schools for their children since the government had apparently liberalized education?

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

This research sought to explore the determinants of school choice by exploring how parents choose secondary schools for their children in Lusaka district since as already alluded to, the Government of the Republic of Zambia protects the right of parents to send their children to

educational institutions of their own choice be they public, private, religious or communal (MoE, 1996). The topic was explored using four variables namely school academic performance, parent's socio-economic status, parent's location and school's moral and religious values. These were the factors that were anticipated to be significant in how and why parents chose schools as some studies showed (Ahmed *et al*, 2013).

It was not clear in Zambia what determined school choice if such choice was even there in the practical sense. Also school choice seemed to be a preserve of the privileged in society. Already, some literature in Zambia indicated that government schools in Zambia were poorly funded and lacked resources. Most of the more affluent residents sent their children to a rather expensive private school. The argument was that private schools operated independently of the Zambian government and had flexibility in their admissions, curriculum choice and academic year (Global Media, 2016).

School choice was important for it created competition among schools and hence improved quality of education as such studies on it were important. It was not clear in Zambia what determined school choice, it appeared there was no such study that had been done before like in other countries. This study endeavoured to establish whether school choice mattered and suggested appropriate strategies that could be put in place to make sure that everyone regardless of the socio-economic status of the parents had a chance to exercise this right and be accorded a chance to receive quality education.

If this study was not conducted, we would not know why certain schools were not preferred to others and how this impacted on the quality of education and as a result, we would have a situation where the poor would continue to be poorly educated and remain poor without improving their economic and social status as school choice seemed to be a preserve of the rich.

### **1.3 Aim or Purpose of the Study**

The aim of this study was to explore the determinants of school choice by parents in selected secondary schools of Lusaka district.

### **1.4 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of this study were to;

- i. determine if school academic performance influenced the way parents chose secondary schools for their children in Lusaka district.
- ii. establish whether parents' socio-economic status impacted on the way they chose secondary schools for their children in Lusaka district.
- iii. investigate the extent to which location of parents determined school choice by parents in selected secondary schools in Lusaka district.
- iv. investigate whether moral and religious values upheld by particular schools influenced school choice at secondary level by parents in Lusaka district.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The general research question of this study was about what determined the choice of secondary schools parents sent their children to in Lusaka district?

Then the following questions were asked to answer the specific objectives.

- i. Did school academic performance in secondary schools influence parents' school choice in Lusaka district?
- ii. To what extent did parent's socio-economic status affect the way they chose secondary schools for their children in Lusaka district?
- iii. In what ways was location of parents linked to choosing of secondary schools by parents in Lusaka district?
- iv. How did school moral and religious values influence parents in their school choice of secondary schools for their children in Lusaka district?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study would establish whether school choice mattered and suggest appropriate strategies that could be put in place to make sure that everyone regardless of the socio-economic status of the parents had a chance to exercise this right and be accorded a chance to receive quality education.

Another significance of this study was that, since a new Zambian educational revised curriculum was introduced in 2013, this study was likely to raise awareness in parents to take interest to know the type of curriculum (courses or subjects) and quality of education at particular schools they wanted to send their children to so that they could make informed decisions with regard to

school choice. The study also sought to see if their economic standing favoured their freedom of school choice.

This study was also likely to inform policy makers in the Ministry of General Education to come up with interventions that would improve the quality of education offered in public schools so that it could compete favourably with that of grant aided and private schools. By this, the study would offer suggestions that may help address issues of elitism and meritocracy.

The study would also contribute to the body of knowledge on school choice especially in Zambia as Olson Beal and Hendry (2012) put it that despite parents' central role in contemporary school reform efforts and a growing body of literature that explores parental involvement in school choice, the majority of these studies are large-scale anonymous surveys. So there is need to look critically on the role parents can play in improving quality of education in schools since their children are consumers of services offered in these institutions.

### **1.7 Scope of the study (Delimitation)**

This study was confined to Lusaka district because parents had various options of school choice as compared to rural districts. Another reason was that parents of all socio-economic statuses were represented and it was of interest to find out what determined school choice for their children at secondary school focusing on Grade 8s. Six secondary schools were targeted in Lusaka namely two public, two grant aided (mission), and two private.

### **1.8 Limitations**

Since only selected parents in Lusaka district participated in the research, its findings may not be generalised. However, it was hoped that the results of this study had given an insight of what the picture was like regarding school choice in Lusaka district. Another constraint was related to the unavailability of and access to adequate and relevant literature for review on school choice in Zambia as little or no research had so far been done in the Zambian context.

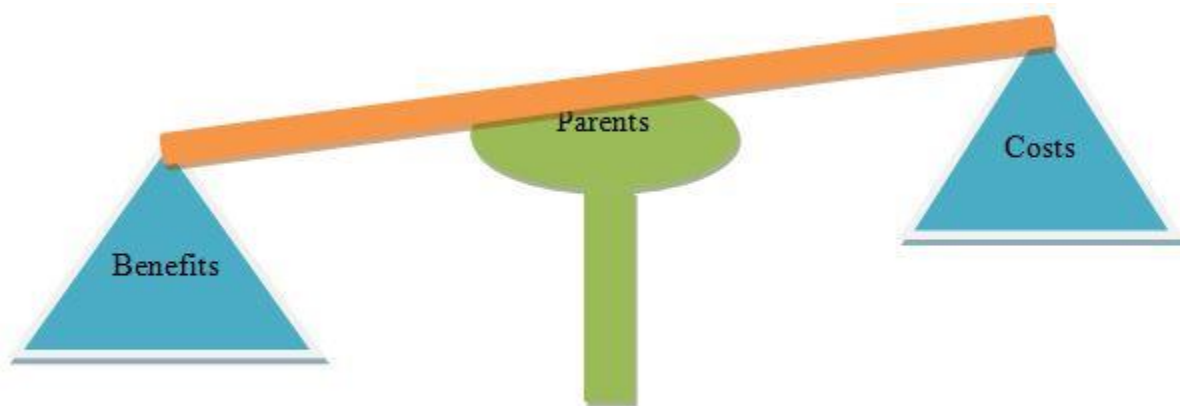
### **1.9 Theoretical Framework**

There were a number of theories that could be applied in this study such as allocation theory which provided an important lens through which to view the influence of schools and

neighborhoods on the selection of high schools (Lauen, 2007). However, the theories that were employed in this study were rational choice and free market theories.

### 1.9.1 Rational choice theory

Rational choice theory starts with the idea that individuals have preferences and choose according to those. It informs most school choice plans. This theory according to Bosetti (2004), quoting Fuller *et al* (1996) suggested that parents were utility maximizers who made decisions from clear value preferences based on calculations of the costs, benefits, and probabilities of success of various options; that they were able to demand action effectively from local schools and teachers; and that they could be relied upon to pursue the best interests of their children. School choice policy rested on rational choice theory (Coleman, 1990), in which parents would engage in an orderly, sequential process, “gathering information about the quality of services that schools offer” (Schneider *et al.* 1998, 490), and then make a “rational” decision based on such objective data as test scores (Olson Beal and Hendry, 2012). Figure 1.1 below illustrates how rational choice theory operates where parents made cost benefit analysis where school choice was concerned.



*Figure 1.1: Illustration of how rational choice theory operates*

Bosetti (2004) citing Hatcher (1998) noted that research, however, indicated that the context of parental decision-making was far more complex than the result of individual rational calculations of the economic return of their investment in particular education options. Parental choice was part of a social process influenced by salient properties of social class and networks of social relationships. Bosetti (2004) also cited Coleman (1988:238) who explained that when an



individual was faced with important decisions, ‘a rationale actor will engage in a search for information before deciding’. Other research suggested, however, that parents’ school choice behavior did not always reflect rational choice theory (Holme 2002; Thomas 2010). Many parents trusted informal social networks or “grapevines” more than official school information (Olson Beal and Hendry, 2012). Parents however, wrote Bosetti (2004), appeared to employ a ‘mixture of rationalities’ involving an element of ‘the fortuitous and haphazard’. To make decisions regarding their children’s education, parents would rely on their personal values and subjective desired goals of education, as well as others within their social and professional networks to collect information. Bosetti (2004) claimed that, parents whose network did not provide access to relevant and valuable information regarding options of school choice, were limited in their capacity to make informed choices.

Much of the research on school choice was based on assumptions at the theoretical level with little empirical evidence. The focus tended to be on the relationship between school governance (more autonomy) and organizational efficiency (increased productivity) (Greene, 2001). Empirical studies tended to focus on whether students who attended private schools showed higher achievement than those who attended public schools. These comparisons were typically limited to the apparent impact on test scores in reading and mathematics at the elementary level. Bosetti (2004) argued that, there was an increasing body of research examining the longer-term impacts of market reforms on education in terms of school effectiveness, social class, race, and ethnicity.

Scholars like Bosetti (2004) said that there were, however, many unobserved factors that were difficult to measure. These factors accounted for differences among families that selected private, public, and alternative schools, and might also account for differences in student achievement scores. They included the level of education of parents, particularly mothers since they were the key decision makers, level of family income, parental involvement in their child’s learning, time spent with their children in school-related activities, and their values and beliefs about the goals and purpose of schooling.

Rational choice theory suggested that wage earning or working-class families, like salaried service or middle-class families, were concerned that their children obtained the educational

qualifications necessary to preserve their present class position, or at least guard against downward mobility (Bosetti, 2004).

In support of Bosetti's (2004) assertion that parent's school choice were not always influenced by rational choice but also by other factors, Olson Beal and Hendry (2012) study revealed that, contrary to a central premise of school choice policy, parents did not make objective, data-driven decisions about schools. Parents obtained information from a wide range of sources, including the "grapevine" knowledge of informal networks. They further said that research that "conceptualizes parental choice as a rational process, whereby parents first discern and rank the factors that are important to them and then set out to find the school that objectively matches their criteria" did not adequately describe the decision-making process. Olson Beal and Hendry (2012) quoted Stockwell, the former EBRP (East Baton Rouge Parish) chief academic officer who said, "It's not rational. People try to make it rational. Researchers try to make it rational. But it's not an exact science." For parents in this study, the *cultural logics* (Fuller and Elmore 1996) used to determine a quality education included the nature and rigor of the curriculum and the degree of student diversity. Parents were reluctant to use standardized test scores as the sole, or even the primary, criterion (Olson Beal and Hendry, 2012).

In the case of Zambia we do not seem to clearly know the process of parent school choice since no research or study has been done on the subject matter and this work has endeavoured to fill that gap.

### **1.9.2 Free Market theory (sometimes called Market theory)**

Free market theory basically states that corporations will govern themselves efficiently, no need of much regulations or oversight. In the context of this study, market theory suggests that a system of school choice will create competition among schools for student enrolment resulting in schools being more responsive to the needs and interests of parents and students by providing different types of programmes for different types of families. Bosetti (2004) cited Levin (2002) that competition would result in improved school effectiveness, productivity, and service, leading to higher quality education. According to Loeb *et al* (2011), market theories were particularly common, since the defining characteristic of a school choice reform strategy was its treatment of families as consumers and the corresponding accountability of schools to their

enrolled — and potentially enrolled — families. Figure 1.2 demonstrates how market theory is contextualized in school choice whereby parents have a variety of options in terms of schools to choose from and the schools that perform better in many areas would definitely attract the families or parents as consumers than others.

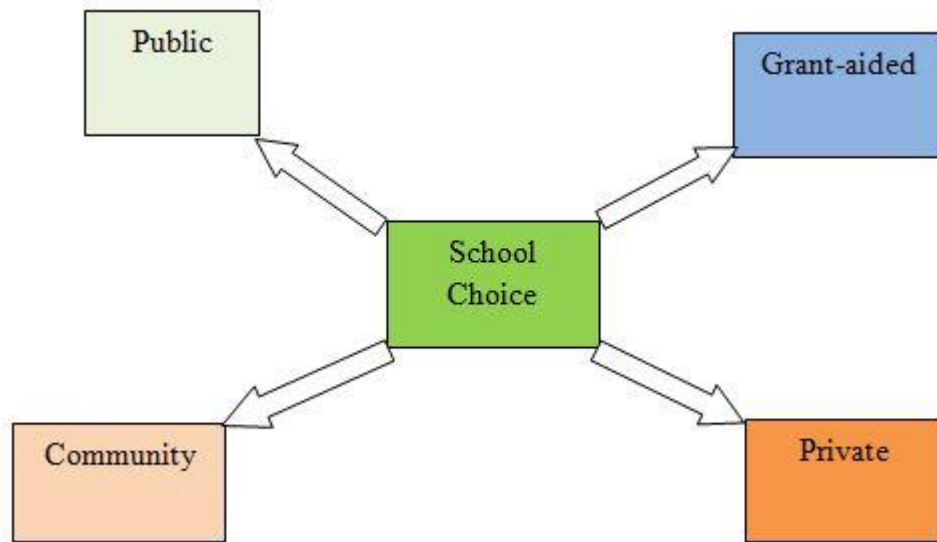


Figure 1.2: Illustration of market theory in school choice context

Olson Beal and Hendry (2012) citing Rogers (2006) and Schneider *et al* (1997) said that school reform had increasingly adopted market-like characteristics that assumed that parents, endowed with increased power as citizen/consumers, would increase the social capital supporting “strong democracies”. This market-driven approach, which relied on competition to promote change, assumed that education should function as a private good rather than a public good. Some research countered the claim that increased parental involvement would lead to greater democratic engagement by suggesting instead that citizens knew little about public policy due to institutional arrangements in schools that insulate them from outside involvement (Chubb and Moe 1990; Schneider *et al.*, 1998). Others, however, suggested that the increasing popularity of private, magnet, and charter schools (in the US) indicated heightened parental awareness of educational policies (Goldring and Phillips 2008; Hanushek *et al.* 2007; Hastings *et al.*, 2007).

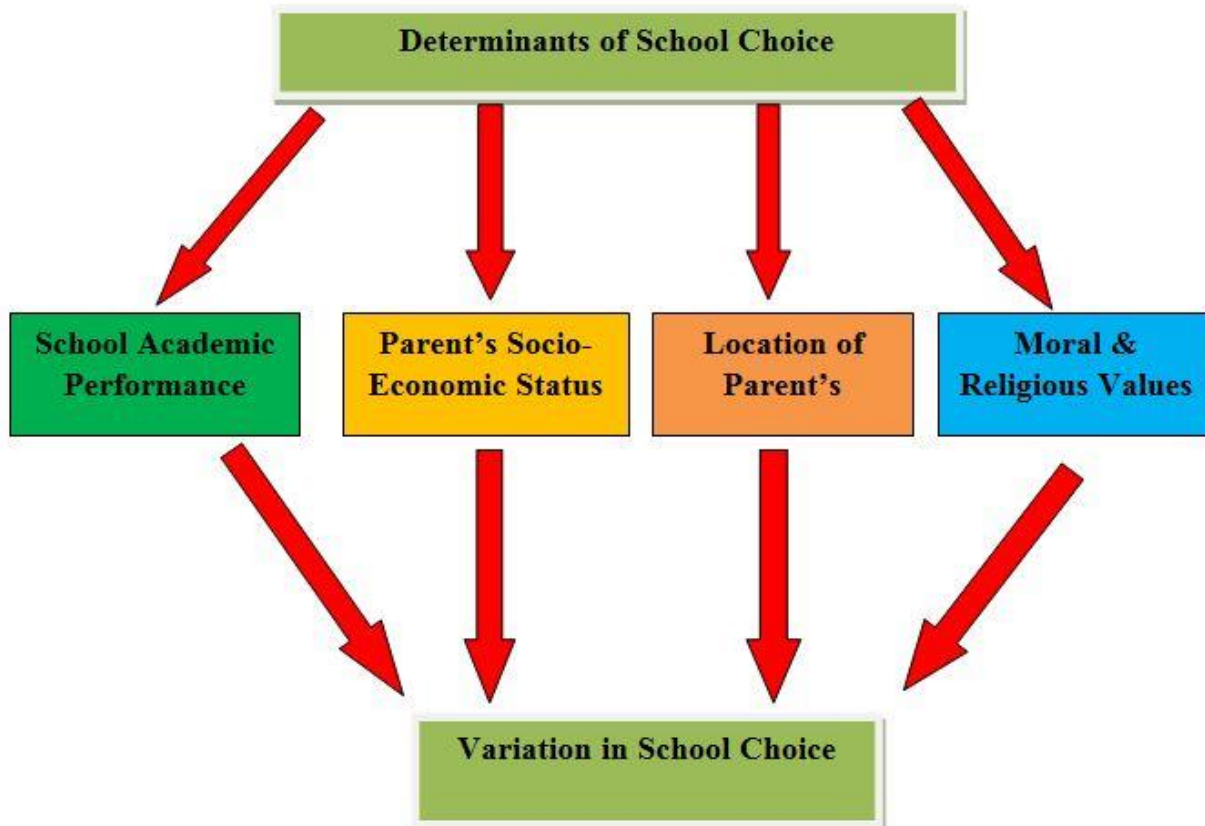
The study by Olson Beal and Hendry (2012) complicated the assumption that a market-based school choice model would make schools more responsive to parent demands (Chubb and Moe 1990; Friedman 1955; Ravitch 2000). They argued that while participation in school choice did lead to enhanced parental involvement, the focus of parents' engagement was stimulating competition for seats in already limited EBRP (East Baton Rouge Parish) magnet schools rather than community building or assisting in creating authentic learning experiences for students. The two scholars further argued that as a result of participation in school choice, parents in this case had become more engaged in the education system and with each other. Their efforts, however, focused on market-based outcomes, such as increased enrollment and waiting lists, rather than educational outcomes. "Shopping" for schools involves parents in education and to some degree creates social capital. Olson Beal and Hendry (2012) argued that parents exhibited some self-interest in this process. They didn't think about the global aspect of the system. Parents in this case were not working to improve educational outcomes for students or to produce what Coleman (1988) called the "public good quality," which promotes the common good over self-interest. Rather, they behaved more as individual decision makers, which was reflective of a market-based mentality.

Olson Beal and Hendry (2012) proposed that policy makers must examine critically the relationship between parent engagement in school choice and democratic engagement. When parents' role in school choice focuses on individual agency and competition, it reinforces notions of equality that obscure structural inequities and contributes to the erosion of public education as a common good. Their research highlights the "cult of individualism" promoted through the citizen/consumer market-based ideology and the ways it undermines a sense of community essential to building democracy. Their research raised questions about the profound ways in which current reform efforts complicated definitions of private (i.e., market ideologies) and public (i.e., democratic ideologies) in relation to democracy. By engaging in choice, parents participated in a market culture situating schools as a private, consumer good. Conceptualizing public education as a private rather than a public good advanced an understanding of democracy as a consumer commodity. Democracy itself, not just schools, was being reformed.

This market theory seems to favour the privileged in society and the elites. This study endeavoured to find out if it was only the well to do that participated in school choice.

### **1.10 Conceptual framework**

The framework for this study followed the structure as illustrated below in figure 1.3. The framework consisted of an interrelated network of factors, organized into four groups that influence school choice. These four variables had been established as some of the factors that determined school choice. These were school academic performance, parents' socio-economic status, location (residence of parents) and moral and religious values. On academic performance some authors as presented in chapter 2 that has dealt with literature review had argued that those schools that performed better attracted more students especially whose parents had good socio-economic status and most of these were religious and private schools. Poor performing schools according to literature did not enhance school choice and most of these were public. By socio-economic status this study referred to parents who were economically well and had attained 'higher' education (especially university education). Location or residence of parents was also looked at as a determinant of school choice. Moral and religious values which were considered as something influencing parents' school choice. Two theories namely rational choice theory and market theory were employed to understand how parents choose secondary school for their children in Lusaka district. The expected outcome of this study is variation in choice of schools depending on the determinants.



*Figure 1.3: Conceptual framework*

### 1.11 Operational definition of terms

The following terms were key words (especially the variables) and they were defined as follows according to the context they were used in this study.

- i. **Determinants:** factors that cause or influence school choice.
- ii. **Grant-aided Schools:** are those 'schools' to which the Government contributes 75% of the cost of their capital works programme in the form of a grant and to which a grant on recurrent expenditure is also made to cover the payment of teachers' salaries, school requisites, boarding costs, etc. Example of this category is mission schools (Kelly, 1999:176).
- iii. **Location of Parents:** A place of settlement or residence of parents in relation to distance to the nearest secondary school.

- iv. **Moral and Religious Values:** Moral values refer to a set of principles that guide an individual on how to evaluate right versus wrong while religious values are ethical principles founded in religious traditions, texts and beliefs.
- v. **Parent:** Somebody's mother, father, or legal guardian.
- vi. **Parents' socio-economic status:** as the social standing of parents. It is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation.
- vii. **School choice:** is a term or label given to a wide array of programmes offering students and their families alternatives to publicly provided schools, to which students are generally assigned by the location of their family residence.
- viii. **School academic performance:** is the outcome of education- the extent to which a school (institution) has achieved its educational goals.
- ix. **Understanding:** grasping, knowing and interpreting something, in this case how parents choose a secondary school.

## 1.12 Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter one has given the general introduction to the study of 'Determinants of School Choice: Understanding how Parents Choose Secondary Schools in Lusaka District' by providing and explaining the background to the study, the statement of the problem, purpose, the research objectives and questions. The significance of the study has also been given. Other issues discussed in the chapter include delimitation or scope of the study, the limitations encountered, theoretical framework, conceptual framework and the operational definitions used in this study.

Chapter two presents the literature review. Relevant literature was reviewed from both foreign and local studies which helped to support and identify the gap of this study. Chapter three has discussed the methodology of the study particularly, the research design, research study area or site, study population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection methods and instruments, validity and reliability, data analysis and ethical considerations.

Chapter four presents the findings of the research study. The findings are presented according to objectives. Chapter five discusses the findings of the study. The discussion was done under objectives and themes emerging from the findings of the same objectives and was guided by the

theories of rational choice and free market. Chapter six gives the conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

## **Summary**

The chapter introduced the study on ‘Determinants of School Choice: Understanding How Parents Choose Secondary Schools in Lusaka District’ which sought to explore the determining factors behind parental decisions when choosing secondary schools for their children in Lusaka district. The chapter also presented the background to the problem, the problem statement, research objectives and questions, significance of the study and the theoretical perspectives applied to the study among others. The chapter also gave the overview of the whole dissertation. The next chapter provides a review of literature relevant to the study from global, Africa as well as as Zambian perspectives.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Overview**

In this chapter, literature related to determinants of school choice were reviewed. Studies in this regard that had been done globally, in Africa and Zambia that was available was consulted. The review was not necessarily done variable by variable because even the literature consulted mostly tackled them as a whole. However all the variables of the research work namely academic performance, parent's socio-economic status, parent's location and school's moral values were addressed. Thus this chapter helps to show the existing gap in literature on school choice in Zambia.

#### **2.1 School Choice in Global Literature**

McLaughlin (2005) gave a general, basic definition of school choice citing Brighouse (2000) that, at the heart of the notion of school choice is the provision of systems of schooling “that officially and directly give substantial weight to the preferences of parents regarding the allocation of their children to schools”. Unofficial and indirect forms of parental choice (e.g., via families moving into the catchment areas of favored schools) can, and have, coexisted with schooling systems that do not provide much scope for parental choice in a formal sense. While such unofficial and indirect forms of parental choice are not insignificant, what is distinctive of school choice schemes, as Brighouse brought out according to McLaughlin (2005), is their provision of parental choice in an official and direct way.

The prominence and controversial nature of school choice as an educational policy question in liberal democratic societies arise from the fact that some educational policy makers seek to extend official and direct forms of parental choice into the provision of schooling within the “public” education system, via, for example, the use of vouchers. Private, fee-paying schools, providing official and direct parental choice in a straightforward way, have long coexisted with public schooling in liberal democratic societies (McLaughlin, 2005). Zambia is not an exception in this regard.

### 2.1.1 North America

School choice theory is one of the hotly currently debated issues in the United States. According to Loeb *et al* (2011), Friedman (1955) ushered in one of the fiercest debates in the history of American education. He proposed a system of parental choice that he argued would bring the virtues of the free market into the public school system and enable the government to “... serve its proper function of improving the operation of the invisible hand without substituting the dead hand of bureaucracy”. Friedman’s reasoning was seductively simple. By providing families with funds to cover expenses at their choice of a government-approved, privately operated school, the state could generate healthy competition between schools that would increase and improve the schools available to families. The same Loeb *et al* (2011) cited Chubb and Moe (1988) that they breathed new life into Friedman’s work in the late 1980s, arguing that private schools were more responsive to children’s needs than public schools. Privately operated schools, they said, were accountable to the demands of consumers in the educational marketplace, while public schools were entwined in the conflicting interests of constituency groups, politicians, and other democratic forces. Loeb and others (2011) gave credit in part to Friedman and Chubb and Moe’s work in establishing a conceptual foundation for school choice.

Scholars further argued that competition would improve the schools incentives, since they would be forced to improve when faced with competition instead of just being local monopolies. This was the main motivation for this study. Would public schools subjected to competition produce higher achieving students? A much discussed paper by Hoxby (2000) concluded that a greater degree of Tiebout choice in the US increased public school productivity. The results showed a positive effect.

The USA School choice policy assumes that situating schools in a market-based environment will force schools to compete for students by improving the quality of the educational product. Parents will choose the best schools for their children based on data derived primarily from increased accountability measures (i.e., standardized testing). School choice will also enable minority and low-income parents to escape failing schools and thereby increase the democratic nature of schools, (Olson Beal and Hendry, 2012).

As a result of this theory of school choice, studies have been done as to what determines school choice by parents on behalf of their children. According to Bosetti (2004), research on school choice in Western industrialized countries indicated that parents who actively chose schools were better educated, had higher levels of income, and were less likely to be unemployed than non-choosing parents. This study tried to establish whether this was the case in Zambia specifically in Lusaka under the objective that dealt with parents' socio-economic status' impact on school choice.

In their study in USA, Figlio and Stone (1997) noted that parents with bachelor's degrees were typically more likely to send their children to private school, but this tendency was diminished (particularly for religious school selection) as the fraction of adults in the community with bachelor's degrees increased. Similarly, while high-income parents were more likely to send their children to private schools, their tendency to do so (for nonreligious schools, at least) decreased with the median income in the community. Therefore, Figlio and Stone (1997) argued that they found strong evidence that parents were responsive to community characteristics, and particularly to interactions between community characteristics and their own characteristics, when choosing their children's schooling sector.

Again quoting Levin (2000), Bosetti (2004) stated that proponents of school choice argued that, in a liberal democratic society, parents had the right to raise their children in a manner consistent with their lifestyle and their religious, philosophical, and political values and beliefs. This was also dealt with in objective four that sought to establish whether moral and religious values were factors in school choice.

Bosetti (2004) argued that education was a natural extension of child rearing preferences; therefore, parents should be able to choose schools consistent with these preferences. Olson Beal and Hendry (2012) contended that an argument might arise whether school choice promoted individualism or elitism (as also argued by Msango, 2014) whereby the privileged people in society perpetuated themselves using their position as education system in this arrangement seemed highly selective. In addition to these factors, research had shown that regardless of social background, parental motivation was particularly salient in predicting participation in school choice (Lauen, 2007).

Some studies done in the USA by Goldring and Rowley (2006) indicated that parents chose private schools for their academic and curricula emphases, discipline, and safety. They argued further by citing Catholics that they were much more likely to attend private school than other students, often choosing for religious values. Also that as family income and parents' levels of education rose, so did the propensity to choose a private school. There was some evidence that lower public school test scores in elementary schools increased the likelihood of private school choice (Buddin, Cordes & Kirby, 1998; Lankford & Wyckoff, 1992). In the public school arena, parents indicated that they chose schools for academic reasons (quality), because of dissatisfaction of their zoned school and for safety and convenience. Goldring and Rowley (2006) said that Charter school research suggested that parents chose for the promise of smaller class size, which parents believed would provide better educational quality. All issues in this paragraph were addressed in the objectives in order to see whether they also applied in Lusaka district.

In the United States, Olson Beal and Hendry, (2012) found out that socioeconomic status and educational background also influenced what parents valued when choosing schools (Hastings *et al.* 2007). While the Carnegie Foundation Study (1992), for instance, found that low-income parents did not select schools based primarily on academic excellence, Schneider *et al.*'s (1998) research conversely suggested that black parents and parents with high school diplomas but no college education ranked high test scores as important in their choice process. White parents were also more likely than minority and/or low-income parents to report that student diversity was important in choosing a school (Schneider et al. 1998, 2000). Lauen (2007), citing Lee and Bryk (1988), suggested that social contexts mattered for adolescents' development. He had highlighted three features of the social context that were relevant to the study of school choice: social and economic disadvantage, academic press, and peer effects.

Following the increase in the participation in school-choice programs across the United States of America since the early 1990s, Lauen (2007) acknowledged that while some had examined the role that families played in the school-choice process, research had largely ignored the role of social contexts in determining where a student attended school. In his journal article 'Contextual Explanations of School Choice'; Lauen (2007) improved on previous research by modeling the contextual effects of elementary schools and neighborhoods on high school enrollment outcomes

using population level geocoded administrative data on an entire cohort of eighth graders from one of the largest urban school districts in the United States. The results of hierarchical multinomial logistic models suggested that the contextual effects of percentage black, poverty, and neighborhood concentrated disadvantage reduced the likelihood of students attending private or elite public high schools. Students in schools with high average achievement were less likely to attend selective-enrollment magnet schools, perhaps because of a "frog pond" effect. Finally, the study found evidence of peer effects on attending non-neighborhood schools. Together, these findings suggested a new way of conceptualizing the causes of school choice at a time when such programs were becoming more prevalent. This was the same thinking that prompted the researcher to fill the gap in terms of literature in conceptualizing the causes of school choice in Zambia.

Olson Beal and Hendry (2012) found out that numerous studies in the USA concluded that white, higher-income, and more formally educated parents relied more on social networks, whereas lower-income and less formally educated parents relied primarily on school-based information (Bosetti, 2004; Holme, 2002; Schneider *et al.* 1997b, 2000). Goldring *et al.* (2004) found that magnet programs tended to attract black and white students whose families had access to social networks that valued education more than other groups, which led them to seek out higher-quality schools for their children. While some research suggested that low-income parents were "less informed consumers of school quality," Hanushek *et al.*'s (2007, 845) study of low-income charter school parents did not support that claim. Smrekar and Goldring (1999) found that parents took into consideration visits to the school, conversations with teachers, and their child's opinion when choosing a school. However, Buckley and Schneider (2003) suggested that parents were "metarational," using a combination of formal and informal choice criteria to choose schools, rather than objective and sequential, as rational theory suggested. Differences in types of social networks and access to information about schools might have resulted in information stratification that rendered the school choice process more serendipitous than rational (Smrekar and Goldring, 1999).

Lauen (2007) argued that a shortcoming of the standard economic approach to decision making was that it ignored the endogeneity of preferences-that students' preferences were socially constructed through interaction with peers and other significant persons. A key finding of the

Coleman report (Coleman *et al.* 1966) was that students' achievement was strongly related to the educational backgrounds and aspirations of other students.

The findings by Bosetti (2004) in his study in Canada indicated that non-religious private schools appeared to attract students from families with higher socio-economic status. This in part could be attributed to the tuition fees which ranged from \$6,000 to \$12,000 per year. Religious private schools appeared to be an option for students from families with socio-economic status equal to or lower than public school families. These schools had significantly lower tuition fees (\$3,500 to \$5,600) than non-religious private schools, and made tuition concessions for families with more than one child. Parents who chose public alternative schools had a higher level of education than public and religious school parents according to Bosetti (2004), but would not be able to afford the high tuition cost of non-religious private schools, and would not be attracted to the more affordable religious affiliated private schools. The majority of alternative schools did not provide bussing for students, and parents were to arrange transportation for their children, thereby limiting access to children from lower income and single parent families who would not have the time or resources to provide private transportation. Bosetti (2004) further stated that poor families chose religious schools because they were apparently cheap. Parents of economically, and perhaps socially disadvantaged groups did not appear to be exercising choice, or accessing alternative school options.

The school choice literature in North America especially the USA indicated that parents who participated in school choice differed from non-choosers in five important ways: demographics, satisfaction with previous school, parental involvement, educational priorities, and social networks. Choosers tended to differ in terms of education level, family income, and race. They also tended to be less satisfied with their children's education prior to participating in school choice. Parents who chose also tended to be more involved in their children's education, and they also placed more emphasis on educational priorities that were associated with academic outcomes such as student achievement. Choosers were also more likely to have social networks that facilitate participation in the process of school choice (Goldring 2006).

Opponents of school choice feared the possible effects on social inequality (Astin, 1993; Lee, 1993) maintaining that it would produce elitism and segregation and entrench class inequalities (Gerwitz *et al.*, 1995). Furthermore it was middle class parents that were likely to exercise choice

opportunities that were available, and those previously disadvantaged in the school system were unlikely to benefit within the new educational market (Goldring, 2006).

Hill (2005) said that some studies in the USA had also been conducted to show evidence about the links between choice and student learning, improvement of the overall school supply, increased segregation, and harm to children left behind in public schools found that in every case it was clear that choice did not cause any of those outcomes directly. Instead choice set in motion a chain of events that might or might not lead to a particular outcome. Results indicated that, whether an individual child whose parents exercised choice learned more depended on many factors—for example, the quality of schools available, whether parents could learn enough about the options to find a school that matched the child's needs, whether the child got admitted to the school her parents chose and could gain physical access to it, and whether, once admitted, that child made the level of effort the school required. The finding by Hill (2005) implied in essence that if the choice was done properly, it could enhance the learner performance thereby rendering the school choice ideology good.

But choice opponents and skeptics according to Hill (2005) quickly found safe new grounds in the claim that the practical problems of choice implementation were too hard to solve. The debate, in effect, shifted from ideology to practicality. Choice supporters were poorly prepared for this change. With some help local officials in the USA (e.g., city councils and school board members) understood that funding mattered, poor parents were supposed to get a great deal of new information, and something was supposed to be done to protect the children left behind in failing schools, but they did not know how to do what was supposed to be done. Their lack of capacity in these areas was a major barrier to the success of choice.

Lauen (2007) explained that, schools, as social institutions that were sustained by middle-class culture, deteriorated as the class structure of the neighborhood changed... Because schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods were likely to be perceived as being of low quality, however, students in disadvantaged neighborhoods would perhaps had a greater incentive to exercise choice than would students in more affluent neighborhoods. In fact, a central thesis of the school-choice literature was that students in disadvantaged communities would access educational opportunity by choosing to attend schools in more affluent communities (Friedman

1955). This thesis suggested that concentrated disadvantage would be positively associated with the propensity to exercise school choice.

Cohen-Zada and Sander (2008) citing US Department of Commerce (2006) indicated that most private elementary and secondary school students in the United States attended parochial schools. Non-religious private schools only accounted for about 17% of private school enrollment. Cohen-Zada (2006) earlier study established that religious values in the demand for private schooling were clearly important although they had not received much consideration in studies on private schools. Parents sent their children to religious schools in part to preserve a religious identity and instill religious values.

Peterson (2003) also in his study in the USA observed that many professional educators worried about giving parents a choice of school. If parents had choice, they would select a school for what were thought to be wrong reasons—religious affiliation, racial composition, athletic facilities, convenience, or simply the school friends were attending. They also feared the degree of educational stratification that might accompany systems of educational choice. But if educators worried about choice, classical economic theory celebrated it. For one thing, customers were expected to be happier if they had a choice. Few propositions drawn from classical economic theory were as widely accepted as this one. Tell a customer they had no choice of doctors and they would complain bitterly about the one they had. Allow them to choose freely among medical professionals and their satisfaction levels rose.

From the above literature that dealt with school choice in North America, it can be seen that a lot of factors were involved in the exercise of school choice by parents. This study tries to explore determinants of secondary school choice by parents in Lusaka district of Zambia.

### **2.1.2 Europe**

In Europe, studies on school choice have also been conducted. In Italy, studies had also been carried out on parent choice. Checchi and Japelli (2004) argued that very little was known about the factors that guided parents' choice between private and public schools. Apart from the obvious role played by parents' resources, it was still unclear if parents' decisions were driven by quality considerations and quality comparisons between public and private schools. In their paper Checchi and Japelli (2004) provided evidence on the effect of quality on school choice



using data drawn from the 1993 Survey of Household Income and Wealth, which covered a large cross-section representative of the Italian population.

Poder and Kerem (2012) argued that school choice was present in more or less all European countries despite the different government models of public service delivery, for example quasimarket, unregulated or controlled type of models. The context of how the phenomenon of school choice had emerged varied as well. In some countries the policy of choice and competition, including school choice, had been the clearly managed policy direction and conscious policy tool to improve the quality of schools. In others, school choice had been a rather latent by-product in development, since families were given an opportunity to apply for a school other than the one allocated on the basis of their place of residence, and schools were able to take pupils from outside the catchment area. The principles of equal distribution of students according to their achievement levels, financial resources devoted to the education procedure or institutional context differed as well. Poder and Kerem (2012) further said it was noted that choice in quasi-markets was necessarily local, specific and complex. Specific contextual path-dependent legal and political legacies were apparent in our cases of Estonia and Finland. Also, relying on the British experience, West (2006) and West *et al.* (2010) were convinced that admission was to be at least the responsibility of the local authority; they were to make decisions about who were to be allocated to which schools on the basis of the expressed preferences of parents, and the admission criteria (priorities) of the school. The admission criteria needed to be objective, school choice and accountability seemed to play a small but significant role in improving student performance (Poder and Kerem, 2012). Could these results be questioned in light of the idea of “skimming the cream”? Did choice schools perform better at the expense of others by taking only the top students or were they just better schools? These were some of the questions Poder and Kerem left unanswered.

### **2.1.3 Asia**

Another study was conducted in Pakistan by Ahmed *et al* (2013) whose objective was to understand why parents in rural areas of Punjab, Pakistan, chose to send their children to private schools when free public schools were available. It revealed five main factors as important determinants of private school choice. These included the socioeconomic status of the household, the degree of a school’s accessibility, the cost of schooling, parents’ perceptions of school

quality, and their perceptions of the available employment opportunities in the region. The findings suggested that parents' perceptions played an important role in school choice. In particular, their perceptions of school quality and employment opportunities emerged as key determinants of private school choice. Additionally, expenditure on and access to private schooling relative to public schooling as well as the socioeconomic status of the household had a significant impact on parents' probability of choosing a private school for their child. This current study sought to establish if it was the case also in Lusaka district of Zambia.

Ahmed *et al* (2013) concluded in their study that school quality emerged as the single most important determinant dictating which school parents would choose for their children. There were various dimensions of "school quality," the most obvious being test scores that gauged student learning levels. Rehman, Khan, Tariq, and Tasleem (2010) pointed out that parents selected private schools because they produced better examination results and engaged in activity-based learning. Andrabi *et al.* (2007) found that there was a huge learning gap between private and public schools: private school-going children tended to outperform public school children in the same village, thus explaining parents' preference for private over public schools.

Apart from test scores, there were other tangible characteristics that related to school quality, such as physical infrastructure (the condition of the school building, availability of latrines) and student-teacher ratios. Lloyd, Mete, and Sathar (2005) pointed out that private schools had more teachers and smaller classes, which reduced the teaching load for a given teacher. Not only do they had lower pupil-teacher ratios, but they also usually had parent-teacher associations to encourage parents' participation in their child's progress. Siddiqui (2007) as cited by Ahmed *et al* (2013) found that meting out physical punishment was extremely common in public schools, which could explain why children dropped out at an early stage and why parents preferred private schools to the former. All these factors constituted "school quality" and might have induced the child to continue his/her education at a private school.

On the demand side, household attributes such as family income (or wealth) and parents' education were important determinants of private school choice (Andrabi, Das, & Khwaja, 2008; Iram *et al.*, 2008; Lloyd *et al.*, 2005; Alderman *et al.*, 2001; Burney & Irfan, 1995; Sathar & Lloyd, 1994). Apart from the miscellaneous expenditure incurred on uniforms, books, and transportation, and the opportunity cost of not having the child to help in household chores,

private schooling entailed additional costs in the form of tuition fees. Consequently, the lower the family income, the less the family's ability to bear the costs associated with private schooling and the greater the likelihood that the child would either not be enrolled or would be enrolled in a public, rather than a private, school. Educated parents had a better chance of assessing the quality of their child's school (Andrabi, Das, & Khwaja, 2002). Thus, one would expect better-educated parents to send their children to private schools and not public schools if they perceived the former to be of a higher quality.

In addition, the distance to school was found to be an important factor in parents' school choice behavior. In a sample of 812 schools in three rural districts of Punjab, 34 percent of children lived at a walking distance of 5 to 15 minutes while 40 percent lived at a walking distance of 5 minutes or less (Andrabi *et al.*, 2007). The study also found that private schools in rural Pakistan were generally clustered around the main village settlements while public schools were located mostly in the peripheral areas. Given this clustering of private and public schools in the education market, it was a natural response for "distance-conscious" parents to choose nearby private schools rather than far-away public schools (Ahmed, 2013).

#### **2.1.4 Australia**

Other studies conducted in Australia by Buckingham (2010) indicated that although the religious affiliation of a school was an important factor in school choice, these surveys provided strong evidence that it was rarely the most important factor. Religious affiliation did feature strongly in some surveys, but for the most part it was outweighed by educational factors (such as a 'holistic' emphasis on children reaching their potential and teacher quality) and perceptions of the school's environment (such as values, discipline and security). Perhaps part of the reason for religion being a less important factor in school choice according to Buckingham (2010) was that almost all non-government schools were religious, so religion was a given to a large extent. By deciding to go for a non-government school, parents had already accepted its religious affiliation and could pay attention to other factors.

Curriculum had also been found to be a determinant in school choice in some cases. Research on Catholic schools, for example, had called attention to how a constrained academic curriculum and the normative dimensions of schooling affected students' motivations to learn (Bryk *et al.*

1993; Lee and Bryk 1988; Lee *et al.* 1998). In schools with a strong academic press, teachers and administrators set high expectations, eliminated low level courses, and restricted students' curricular choice. Students in schools with greater access to more rigorous curricula were likely to be better prepared for more selective high school placements (Lauen, 2007).

The reasons for choice of school were significant, if only to provide a strong indication that to some extent, the market for non-government school education was skewed away from what parents preferred. Since most parents prioritised the non-religious aspect of schools, it was curious that there were so few secular schools in the non-government school sector. Regardless of their own religious beliefs, growing numbers of parents were educating their children exclusively in religious schools. These schools were increasingly likely to be associated with smaller religious denominations holding strong 'fundamentalist' religious tenets rather than the 'broad church' traditions of the Roman Catholic and Protestant denominations (Buckingham, 2010).

## **2.2 School Choice in Africa**

Not so many studies had been done in Africa on the topic of school choice. The study carried out in Kenya by Nishimura and Yamano, (2008) suggested that more parents and children would tend to choose private schools over public schools on the basis of performance. They also found that girls and boys from wealthier households, measured by the household assets, were more likely to attend private schools than girls from less wealthier households. According to the results of the study conducted, they showed that educated mothers seemed to prefer sending their children to private schools.

In South Africa a study conducted by Hoadley (1999) showed that working class families in this context were actively engaged in choice processes was related to the implicit and explicit suggestion in much of the literature that it was primarily middle class actors that exercised choice. The choice of the working class actors in this study was to a large extent framed and determined by the material constraints of their lives. Despite the limitations imposed upon these families in terms of location and cost of schooling, however, it was suggested that these working class families placed a considerable emphasis on making selections towards a good education and used the resources available to them in making these choices. Despite constraints, therefore,

choice appeared to be exercised not only by the middle but also the working classes. Process of introducing greater choice in the system had benefited whites and a minority of blacks, but had not increased choice for the majority of blacks. They showed how this was a result of geographical location and distance (a legacy of Group Areas), and strategies employed by the schools that had limited black learners' access. However, not all educational economists scholars were agreeable to the assumptions of the school choice theory (Hoadley, 1999).

Another study done in South Africa by Ndimande (2012) was that parental choice in South Africa was modeled on neoliberal discourse. Post-apartheid South Africa had adopted a neoliberal agenda in the economic sphere and in other structures. The economic policy—Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) program (now known as ASGISA) - was a structural adjustment policy which “recommended the complete privatisation of non-essential state-owned corporations and the partial privatisation of others.... The entire strategy depended heavily on new investment, particularly from foreign sources, pouring into South Africa”.

Ndimande (2012) further explained that South Africans current “choice” was not an adequate alternative. Democratic reforms were to provide all public schools with adequate resources so that all children had access to good schools; and social justice education meant deciding to end social poverty by creating equal educational access to all students.

There were also ways in which households in Tanzania sought to ensure educational opportunities for their children. According to Plank (2010), he said that scholars made clear that these efforts had little, if anything, to do with choice, as the choices of very poor households in a very poor country were few and narrowly constrained. Rather, parental strategies to gain access to scarce opportunities and support for their children as they moved through the educational system depended on the cultivation of complex networks of social obligation.

### **2.3 School Choice in Zambia**

There had not been much literature written or studies conducted on school choice in Zambia if any. However, Zambia being a democratic society had always supported freedom of choice where schools were concerned. Liberalization that was effected in 1991 had contributed to the expansion of educational opportunities while protecting the right of parents to send their children

to educational institutions of their own choice, be they public, private, religious or communal (MoE, 1996).

To understand properly this subject of school choice in Zambia, it was salient to put it into historical context especially regarding the evolution or development of education in Zambia from pre-colonial times to post-independence times. What may be referred to ‘formal’ education was started by missionaries. From the arrival of the first missionaries in Zambia, the provision of schooling had been closely connected with religion. Most of the early schools were regarded as instruments of conversion (Carmody, 2004: 108).

The first people to pioneer education development in Zambia were the missionaries. In pre-colonial times schools were mainly operated by missionaries, they were also the route to becoming Christian (Carmody, 2004: xii). Influx of missionaries was between 1890 and 1906 to all parts of the country. They were mainly coming from the southern part, as a result, Southern Province had more schools (Msango: 2014). They were highly motivated people and were giving formal education (Western type to do with literacy and numeracy) so that they were able to read the Bible and there came evangelization. Some missionaries wanted to promote agriculture, others to promote skills. In terms of curriculum, there was little incorporation with traditional type of education like on how to become an adult. Missionaries rejected that and called them “heathens”. As a result, western type of education was alien to our people because it did not touch the traditional culture of our people. It was western inspired (Msango: 2014).

The first school was opened in 1883 by Paris Evangelical Missionaries in Barotseland. In 1890, the British South African Company gained control of the territory of Northern Rhodesia. The BSA encouraged the advent of missionaries. Carmody (2004: 3) wrote, by 1924, there were fifteen missionary societies in the territory, practically all of which operated schools. However, from the point of view of schooling, the history of the BSA Company for the subsequent thirty-four years was one of consistent neglect. There was no financial responsibility for schooling. It established one school during its period of administration. This was the Barotse National School which was set up in 1906. They wanted a school where the English language would have a key place. In short there was no government educational policy to talk about up to 1920s. This in itself contributed to the slow growth of education in Zambia. Some African parents also resisted

to send their children to school. Snelson (1990:87) stated that parents expected to be paid for sending their children to school.

In 1924 the British Government ended BSA Company rule in Northern Rhodesia. The colonial government in London began ruling Northern Rhodesia. The colonial government decided to look into education system in Northern Rhodesia when it called the Phelps Stokes Commission to study the education in the country, to find out the needs of Africans in Northern Rhodesia in terms of religion, social hygiene and health. That was the time that marked the beginning of the education policy in our country (Snelson 1990:138). The colonial government's policy was not one of widening the scope of education to cover the majority of the people of this country but was meant to cater for very few to provide, as it were, clerical, menial and other services (Mwanakatwe 2013: x).

As Mwanakatwe (2013: xii) observed, the record of the colonial government in the education field was pathetic. African schools had been pathetically neglected by the Colonial Government in the past. These schools were, therefore, generally inferior to schools provided for the children of Europeans, Asians and Coloureds (Mwanakatwe, 2013:28). This attitude was having a negative bearing on the development of education in Zambia. However, on the other side, the Phelps Stoke Commission had also positive recommendations such as raising the status of women and girls, government subsidizing education e.g. by paying teachers and building schools, prioritizing teacher training institutions and supervision or inspection of teachers especially in bush schools so as to improve.

Carmody (2004:110) asserted that since the beginning of colonial rule (i.e. in 1924), partnership characterized the provision of education in Zambia. It was of course true that during the days of the British South Africa Company rule that the partnership was rather one-sided. Education was almost totally provided by the missionary societies who came into the territory. However, from 1925 onward, with the advent of colonial rule, the government closely cooperated with the Christian missions. Its major document, Education Policy in British Tropical Africa, stated: "Government welcomes and will encourage voluntary educational effort which conforms to the general policy" (Carmody, 2004:111).

By 1957, eleven of the seventeen secondary schools in the territory were mission run. After Independence in 1964, the Education Act of 1966 was put in place in which while the new government recognized and upheld the principle of partnership, it made clear who was in control, as the Minister of Education's speech at the dawn of Independence illustrated (Carmody, 2004: 113). As years went by, it became more difficult for missionary bodies to continue the partnership, sometimes because they were in direct competition with government schools which were more attractive. Lungwangwa as quoted by Carmody (2004) explained that:

Increases in state support to government schools made them to have an advantage over schools managed by other agencies. The supply and retention of teachers in voluntary agency schools, in particular became very difficult. Teachers were not willing to teach in schools managed by voluntary agencies because of their relative inferiority in facilities. Compared to government schools, such benefits like transport facilities when on leave were generally lower in schools managed by voluntary agencies. These schools increasingly found it difficult to recruit and retain teachers.

Partnership with government at the secondary level seemed more satisfactory from the churches' perspectives. By 1996, church run secondary schools catered for roughly sixteen per cent of the total secondary enrollment though they had no great autonomy. The 1966 Education Act had placed serious restrictions upon them. Between then and the appearance of the Educational Reform document of 1977, the attitude seemed to have been, since the state could not make adequate provision for everyone, aided schools were permitted (Carmody, 2004:114). Carmody (2004) further stated that a much more positive appraisal was provided in the ERIP report of 1986, where the aided institutions were especially commended for their cost-effectiveness and the good academic performance of their students..... By the late 1980s, there were calls from political figures to extend the churches' management of schools. Sikwebele is quoted by Carmody (2004) as having said that:

In spite of lack of control on admission, the church schools have maintained a high reputation for efficacy, discipline and high academic performance due to low staff turnover, prolonged experience and good training among their staff. Other factors which have contributed to high quality teaching and learning include the availability of teaching and learning resources, libraries and well equipped laboratories as well as maintained facilities, books, equipment and buildings. It is partly due to their religious background, attitudes to work and property maintenance that they managed to enforce a good culture of caring for property among the students in the schools. The ways in which all the students are made to care for and maintain their school buildings and surroundings make them feel responsible, unlike the state of affairs in public schools.



In the new political climate of the 1990s, government amended the regulations governing aided institutions in an effort to make them more attractive to the churches in the hope that government would be assisted in restoring a system that had greatly deteriorated. In 1993, the 1966 Education Act was updated and provided for the establishment at each aided institution of virtually autonomous boards of management, which would exercise extensive control over every aspect of educational provision. At the same time, it would empower boards to protect the particular ethos of each institution through, among other things, a code of conduct, control over staff appointment, retention of staff and admission of students (Carmody 2004:115).

Regarding private institutions, in the interest of racial and ethnic integration, the newly independent government of 1964 focused heavily on the ideal of equity. In order to best promote this goal, government centralized the educational system and at the same time became less open to private schooling, which it probably viewed as being at odds with its egalitarian ideology (Carmody 2004:116).

Nonetheless, as in the case of the grant-aided institutions, when government realized that it did not have the resources to be the only provider of education, it revised its attitude towards private education and encouraged it to some limited degree (Carmody, 2004:116). By the mid-1980s, private provision of education was relatively small. At the primary level, it accounted for less than one per cent, and at the secondary level it provided about six per cent of the overall provision. Because of the fees that were being charged, they were only accessible to middle or upper income families and many of these were non-Zambians. Here we see how social-economic status of families influenced school choice. As well as the cost-saving role of private schools, the rights of parents in a democratic society became more part of government perspectives in the 1990s (Carmody, 2004:116).

The Ministry of Education (1996) in its policy document *'Educating Our Future policy'* respected parents and pupil school choice. Ministry of Education encouraged the private sector and non-governmental organizations participation in the provision of basic education (and by implication other levels of education) and improvement of its quality. It had been the intention of all successive governments since the 1990s that private sector played an active role in all spheres of life. Kelly (1999:172) pointed out that economic growth and efficiency in Zambia required a vital private sector. It was important, therefore, that private entrepreneurs be encouraged to

participate freely in the economic activity of their choice and that competition be promoted. The government had already introduced several reform measures that would contribute to a more efficient and dynamic private sector.

Carmody (2004) explained that part of the new government's policy included privatization and partnership. Private schools run by individuals and organizations which operated both on the basis of profit and non-profit had received more open support. This was seen to be a departure from the previous era when the state appeared to be hostile to partnership and adopted a centralized system of control and management of schools. Carmody (2004) further argued that the virtual monopoly of educational provision by government (UNIP) had negative consequences. Contrary to the provisions of the 1966 Education Act, parents' rights to choose the type of education they wanted for their children had been severely restricted. Moreover, government failed to utilize resources available through the non-government sector and promoted a culture of over dependency on the state." For a variety of reasons, after the 1991 elections, government felt that the time had come to seek wider cooperation with potential partners in the task of providing education.

The 1996 'Educating Our Future' policy document on education noted that the provision of education would no longer come simply from the government. The rights of other providers would be welcomed. Carmody (2004) argued that partnership was clearly not a new idea. Partnership had been part of the educational system from 1924. It had involved central and local government agencies, missionaries and the private sector. However, it had been somewhat overlooked in the post-Independence developments. Quoting 'Focus on Learning, 1992' educational policy, Carmody (2004) wrote that "community participation in the provision of education is not just an emergency stop-gap measure in times of financial difficulty. It is a preferred alternative in its own right, promising greater accountability and more efficiency."

As a result of the Ministry of Education's liberalization approach, in 1993, grant-aided and private institutions received updated regulations which gave them a much greater degree of autonomy. Through their boards of management, grant-aided institutions would be permitted to regulate the conditions of enrolment of pupils, including fees and charges, to control the calendar, as well subjects as subjects of instruction. They could decide on acceptance and retention of academic staff in accordance with their ethos (Carmody, 2004). As cited already in

the background, Carmody (2004:60) citing ‘Educating Our Future’ says that the new pattern of partnership with grant-aided and private sectors accorded with the liberalization policy:

Liberalization of educational provision allows those with resources to establish such institutions and to run them in accordance with their own principles- subject, however, to stipulated rules and regulations. In this way, liberalization contributes to the expansion of educational opportunities while protecting the right of parents to send their children to educational institutions of their own choice, be they public, private, religious or communal.

It seems, the privileged pupils in Zambia are mainly the ones who attend grant-aided and private secondary schools that have proved to perform better than public schools. The past two Grade 12 final examinations (2013 and 2014) results indicated that grant-aided schools and private schools had outperformed the government schools. Dr. John Phiri the then Minister of Education reported that from the total of 386 schools which registered candidates for the 2013 examinations in Zambia, grant-aided schools (69) had the highest mean raw scores followed by private schools (69). Government schools at 247 were third and the only community school in Kitwe had the least performance (Times of Zambia 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2014).

Dr. Michael Kaingu the then Minister of Education at the time when announcing the Grade 12 performance for the 2014 examination session noted that government and community schools performed the least as compared to grant-aided and private schools (Post Newspaper, 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2015).

Regarding Grade 9 examination results, Dr. Phiri explained that of the total 2,621 schools operating as examination centres, the results analysis showed that private schools had the highest performance followed by grant-aided schools. Community schools from the results analysis were third while Government schools were the least with a mean performance below the national mean, a trend similar to that recorded during the 2013 Grade seven composite examination results (Times of Zambia, 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2014).

Other studies in connection with school choice in Zambia though not specific were that of Masaiti (2015). He postulated citing (MOE, 1992; 1996) that, with the liberalization of Zambia’s economy in 1991, in the third republic, market forces were introduced in different sectors of the economy including education. Private players including institutions were encouraged to supplement government effort in the provision of education. Education started

operating on the market model. Masaiti (2015) further says that the result for this was that individuals and institutions started using neoliberal policies and as an economic rationality to make educational decisions, including attempts to treat and govern the university just like any traditional business, its faculty as traditional workers, and its students as customers.

Again Masaiti (2014), in discussing the link between education and employment brought to play dynamics of school choice theory based on investments and production functions. He discussed the low productive capacity of Zambian economy which had hampered the real economic choices by its citizens. This was simply a desk review research and did not solely investigate the issue of school choice in detail. Masaiti (2014), (2015) & (2016) had discussed a number of issues related to cost sharing, revenue diversification, student loan policies and the roles of universities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. All these themes had implications on school choice theories and mostly anchored on neo liberal thinking. Masaiti (2016) further recommended that school choice in Zambia was at variance and needed to be studied in context.

As for Grade 7 2015 exams, private schools came first, then grant-aided (mission) followed by community & government schools were the least in terms of performance. This was according to the then General Education Minister Honourable John Phiri on Parliament Radio on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2015 at 15:00 hours.

## **2.4 The Identified Gap in Literature Review**

However, there was a gap in terms of literature on school choice especially on understanding how parents choose schools for their children in Lusaka district. There had been no study before that had been carried out in Lusaka district to understand how parents chose secondary schools for their children. This research tried to fill this gap by looking at how parents in Lusaka district made school choices for their children in secondary schools. Were the four variables mentioned in the study influenced school choice in Lusaka as well like other countries? Was there really school choice in Lusaka (and Zambia as a whole) in the practical sense? How could the study on school choice address the issue of elitism and meritocracy in the education sector (Kelly, 1999: 116)? Another gap that was identified in the literature review basing on all the studies that were done globally was that, the methodological approach that were used in investigating school choice was quantitative but this study brought in an aspect of qualitative approach as well

through interviews so as to crosscheck other parents' responses in the questionnaires. The use of both quantitative and qualitative methods provided for greater validity and reliability of the emerging inferences (see chapter 3). If this study was not undertaken, we would not know the determinants of school choice at secondary level in Lusaka and we would not be able to come up with strategies that could help improve all available secondary schools so that there was equality and equity where school choice was concerned at secondary level.

## **Summary**

The chapter presented some literature available on school choice globally, in Africa and Zambia. The main focus was to look at the determinants of school choice. Studies on what influenced parents in the way they chose schools for their children had been explored especially in America, Europe and Asia but not much in Africa and in Zambia. Despite the Zambian's government educational liberalisation policy where parents reserve the right to choose the schools for their children, there seemed to be a gap in literature in terms of determinants of school choice. Among the determinants the international literature had pointed out regarding school choice were the desired school academic performance, socio-economic status of parents, residence or location of parents as well as the moral values (discipline) of a particular school that would include religious beliefs.

The chapter also pointed out that school choice policy, especially as embedded in No Child Left Behind in the United States of America, assumed that empowering parents with choice would improve education by holding schools accountable and would reenergize democratic participation in public education. While parents were seen as critical change agents, little research documents how engaging in school choice affected parents' lived experiences as citizens engaged in the democratic process. Also some available studies seemed to suggest that choice worked in complex, contradictory ways to both empower and disempower parents as participatory citizens in democratic change and that market-driven school choice situated parents as consumers and thus redefined education as a private rather than a public good. But proponents of school choice argued that if it was properly implemented it could enhance the public good of education. In the next chapter the methodology that was employed in this study has been discussed.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Overview**

The previous chapter reviewed literature relevant to the study. This chapter presents the methodology used in the study. This chapter describes the research design, study site, study population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection methods and instruments, validity testing and reliability, data analysis techniques, ethical considerations and ends with the summary of the chapter.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Research design refers to a plan or framework within which research must be carried out so that the desired information can be obtained with greater precision. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), a research design can be regarded as an arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance with the research purpose. It is the glue that holds the research project together (Kasonde-Ng'andu, 2013). It involves the intersection of philosophical strategies of inquiry and specific methods (Creswell, 2008). According to De Vaus (2001:9) "The function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables us to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible." Obtaining relevant information, therefore, entails specifying the type of evidence needed to answer the research question, to test a theory, to evaluate a programme or to accurately describe some phenomenon. It is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted. Citing (Kothari, 2003), Kombo and Tromp (2006) stated that it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data.

The research design this study used in understanding the determinants of school choice by parents in Lusaka district was a convergent parallel mixed-methods design; an approach to inquiry that combines both qualitative and quantitative methods concurrently, prioritizing both methods almost equally (Creswell and Clark, 2011). In this case, the quantitative and qualitative methods complemented each other and provided for the triangulation of findings, hence greater validity of the emerging inferences. Whereas the former approach provided a more general

understanding of the issue of determinants of school choice by understanding how parents chose secondary schools in Lusaka district, the latter provided a detailed and in-depth understanding of the same. Creswell (2014: 219) stated that:

In this convergent parallel approach, a researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data, analyzes them separately, and then compares the results to see if the findings confirm or disconfirm each other. The key assumption of this approach is that both qualitative and quantitative data provide different types of information— often detailed views of participants qualitatively and scores on instruments quantitatively—and together they yield results that should be the same.

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches had inherent strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, Onwuegbuzie and Frels (2013) argued that an increasing number of pragmatic researchers were advocating for conducting studies that utilized both qualitative and quantitative techniques within the same inquiry. The key components of a convergent parallel approach, as with any other mixed methods approach, has to do with priority and sequence. In terms of priority, both qualitative and quantitative approaches were given equal weight. In terms of sequence the researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time.

In qualitative research, feelings and insights are considered important. Sometimes qualitative research is called naturalistic inquiry or field studies. Bryman (2008) asserted that qualitative research usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. As a research strategy it is inductivist, constructionist, and interpretivist, but qualitative researchers do not always subscribe to all three of these features. In terms of data collection in the qualitative approach, the study used in-depth semi structured interviews and documents analysis.

In quantitative approach, data collection involved questionnaires. Bryman (2008) argued that, quantitative research usually emphasizes quantification in the collection and analysis of data. As a research strategy it is deductivist and objectivist and incorporates a natural science model of the research process (in particular, one influenced by positivism), but quantitative researchers do not always subscribe to all three of these features. Kombo and Tromp (2006) postulated that quantitative research relies on the principle of verifiability. That means confirmation, proof, corroboration or substantiation. Knowledge emerges from what can be proven by direct observation. The researcher's values, interpretation and feelings are not considered. Objectivity

is reinforced. This research focuses on measurement i.e. the assignment of numerical events according to rules. The numbers are specified, for example, sex: male or female. The quantitative data from parents was collected through a designed questionnaire that had variables established from the literature review as the main determinants that influenced school choice in many countries. The study tried to verify these hypotheses (variables) if they too applied in the case of Lusaka or there were some other variables that influenced school choice.

### **3.2 Study Site**

The study was conducted in Lusaka district. This research site was selected on the basis that parents in this district had various options of school choices at secondary school level compared to rural districts. Another reason was that parents of all socio-economic statuses (or rather social demographic characteristics) were represented and it was of interest to find out what determined school choice for their children at secondary school focusing on Grade 8s. Six secondary schools were targeted in Lusaka namely two public, two grant aided, and two private.

### **3.3 Study Population**

A population is a universe of units from which the sample is selected or chosen (Bryman, 2008). According to Kombo and Tromp (2006) a population is a group of individuals, objectives, or items from which samples are taken for measurement. In the case of this study, the population was the number of parents in Lusaka District who had their children attending secondary education and from this, came a population sample.

A sample is a segment of the population that is selected for investigation. It is a subset of the population (Bryman 2008). A population sample in this case involved parents of pupils in six selected secondary schools in Lusaka (2 public, 2 grant-aided and 2 private- this was done deliberately so that the sample was representative), head-teachers of the selected schools, and one Education Standards Officer (ESO) at the District Education Board Secretary's (DEBS) office in Lusaka who were considered as key stakeholders with regards to the topic under investigation. Hence, the population sample targeted parents of 20 Grade 8 pupils from each selected school making the total of 120 parents, 6 head-teachers, and 1 ESO from the District Education Board Secretary's office to represent the population under study.



As Bryman (2008) argued, in order to be able to generalize findings from a sample to the population from which it was selected, the sample must be representative. By targeting all types of schools in this study, the sample was justified. The sample was quite representative. A representative sample is a sample that accurately reflects the population so that it is a microcosm of the population (Bryman, 2008). In this study the district that was chosen served students of diverse ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds. A consideration was put in place to see to it that there was no sampling bias, that is, a distortion in the representativeness of the sample that arises when some members of the population (or more precisely the sampling frame) stand little or no chance of being selected for inclusion in the sample (Bryman, 2008). Sampling frame is the listing of all units in the population from which the sample will be selected (Bryman, 2008). Below is the formula and calculation that was used to come up with the actual sample size.

### 3.4 Sample Size

The sample size was picked from the target population which was 480 parents since six schools were purposively selected that were well balanced (representative of schools found in Lusaka). Each sampled school had an average of 80 eighth graders whose parents were interviewed. The sample size was arrived at using the formula by Yamane (1967) as shown below.

The formula: 
$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N (e)^2}$$

Whereas: N= Target population (480)

n=Total sample size

e = Desired margin error (0.05)

$$n = \frac{480}{1 + 480 (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{480}{2.2}$$

$$2.2$$

$$n = 218 \text{ Respondents}$$

However, the researcher used 135 respondents (which represented 62% of the total sample size). Though not all the 218 respondents were represented, the actual respondents (135) were justified because respondents had similar socio-demographic characteristics, and some respondents did not return the questionnaires.

### **3.5 Sampling techniques**

According to Bryman (2008) as already stated, a sample is a segment of the population that is selected for investigation. It is a subset of the population. The method of selection may be based on a probability or a non-probability approach. A probability sample is a sample that is selected using, random selection so that each unit in the population has a known chance of being selected. It is generally assumed that a representative sample is more likely to be the outcome when this method of selection from the population is employed. The aim of probability sampling is to keep sampling error to a minimum (Bryman, 2008). Non-probability sample is a sample that has not been selected using a random selection method. Essentially, this implies that some units in the population are more likely to be selected than others.

The respondents were chosen on the basis of accessibility. Dellinger (2005) stated that the sample population should be within reach and accessible. The researcher employed both probability and non probability sampling procedures. Random and purposively sampling were used to choose respondents (and schools). Random sampling is a method used where each unit in the population has an equal chance of being selected Kombo and Tromp, 2006. Specifically simple random sampling was used in this study since no complexities are involved (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). This method was used in selecting parents. Random sampling was used to choose 20 Grade 8 pupils from each selected school whose parents were going to answer the designed questionnaire. The researcher obtained a list of all eighth graders at each selected secondary schools and then using a sequence of numbers from a random numbers table selected 25% portion of names on that list, making sure that he was not drawing from any letter of the alphabet more heavily than others. Among the advantages of simple random sampling are that the samples yield research data that can be generalized to a larger population.

Non-probability sampling was employed in this study. Under this, purposive sampling was used. In this sample method, the researcher purposely targeted a group of people believed to be reliable

for the study such as school administrators, and Ministry of Education officials. These stakeholders were critical to the subject of school choice although parents were the major players in the issue. Purposive sampling was used in the qualitative approach when interviewing head-teachers in the selected schools and an Education Standard Officer from DEBS office as Bryman (2008) stated that most writers on sampling in qualitative research based on interviews recommended that purposive sampling is conducted. Such sampling was essentially strategic and entailed an attempt to establish a good correspondence between research questions and sampling. In other words, the researcher sampled on the basis of wanting to interview people who were relevant to the research questions.

In sampling procedure the following were considered; balancing the type of school and sex. Six secondary schools were targeted in Lusaka namely two public, two grant aided (mission), and two private. The criteria used in the sampling procedure were both inclusive and exclusive. Under inclusion criteria: only parents with children at secondary school were eligible and participated in the interview and for exclusion criteria: parents with no children at secondary school were excluded to take part.

### **3.6 Data Collection Methods and Instruments**

Research instruments refer to the tools that the researcher uses in collecting the necessary data (Kasonde-Ng'andu, 2013). In order to gather data for this study, research instruments that were used during the research included the following: questionnaires and interview schedules. Table 3.1 below shows the distribution of respondents in the study by interview and questionnaire. Questionnaires expected to be answered by parents were given to more than 20 pupils in each selected school. Head-teachers in the six schools were interviewed according to the interview guide. Interviews using a semi structured protocol were conducted with ESO GI at DEBS office as well as interviewing 8 parents. Documents from DEBS were analysed especially where the academic performance in terms of final examination results of the sampled schools were concerned (appendix vi). Appendices ii, iii, iv and v of research instruments are attached to this report at the end.

Table 3.1: *Distribution of Respondents in the Study by Interview and Questionnaire*

Category	Questionnaire	Interview	Total
Parents	120	08	128
Key Informants	00	07	07
Total	120 (88.9%)	15 (11.1%)	135 (100%)

### 3.6.1 Questionnaires

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), a questionnaire is a research instrument that is used to gather data from a large sample. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to 120 parents of Grade 8 pupils in selected secondary schools of Lusaka to collect quantitative data. The main essence of administering a self completion questionnaire to parents was to explore the determinants of school choice by understanding how parents chose secondary schools in Lusaka district for their children.

The questionnaire had three sections (see Appendix: ii). Section **A** dealt with social demographic information and section **B** contained statements regarding determinants of school choice, that is, factors (variables that acted as objectives) that were anticipated as influencing parents in their selection of secondary schools for their children especially those in Grade 8. To achieve that, 30 related statements based on a **5-point** Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, with **5** representing the extreme positive perception and **1** representing the extreme negative perception of all responses were prepared. Respondents were availed with the questionnaire for grading to determine each one's level of agreement with the statement. The rankings were categorized as follows: **1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Not Sure, 4=Agree and 5=Strongly Agree**. Students therefore, graded each statement by means of ticking one of the five (5) rankings appearing next to it. Finally section **C** of the questionnaire sought parents' perceptions with regards to their secondary schools of preferences they think offer quality education.

### 3.6.2 Interview schedules

An interview as a method of data gathering refers to the questions which are asked to the respondents orally (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). It consists of a written list of questions or topics that need to be covered by the interviewer. In this study, to collect qualitative data, semi-

structured interviews (Appendix iii) were administered to 8 parents to crosscheck other parents' responses in the questionnaires. Semi structured interviews were also used to collect data from 6 head-teachers and 1 officer at the DEBS office as key stakeholders or informants (Appendices: iv and v). According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), semi-structured interviews are interviews based on the use of an interview guide. This is a written list of questions or topics that need to be covered by the interview.

Using the interview guide, one-on-one interviews were conducted and tape-recorded to collect data on school choice from all the key informants and parents in the study. Due to semi-structured interviews' flexibility, both open and closed-ended questions were included in the interview schedules to collect in-depth information so as to get a complete and detailed understanding of the issue at hand (Kombo and Tromp, 2006).

### **3.7 Validity and Reliability**

Issues of validity and reliability were thoroughly addressed throughout the study process. Validity is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research (Bryman, 2008:3). Validity in this regard entails the extent to which an instrument fairly and comprehensively represents the factors under study (Cohen et al., 2007). It has to do with the accuracy and precision of data, and whether a study can yield the same results when repeated. Validity examines the extent to which the results of the study could be generalised to the real world (Bless and Achola, 1988). Criterion related validity was used in the study. The criteria used in sampling procedure were both inclusive and exclusive as explained under sampling technique. At the same time, all the research instruments to do with qualitative data were personally administered by the researcher who ensured that probes, clarifications and follow-up questions were addressed but also contact numbers (of the researcher) were put on self-administered questionnaires that dealt with quantitative data. Recording of the interviews also helped in further strengthening the trustworthiness of data by ensuring that data was not distorted.

Reliability is concerned with the consistency of the results obtained from a measuring instrument. According to Bless and Achola (1988), reliability is concerned with the degree of consistency to which a particular measuring procedure gives equivalent results over a number of

repeated trials. It depends on the *trustworthiness* of the research instruments, whether a research instrument is consistent and able to generate the same data when repeated several times. To ensure that the research instruments remained consistent, all the instruments were piloted so that corrections and modifications could be made. Also the research design itself was ensuring that validity and reliability were addressed. As earlier pointed out above, the research design this study used was a convergent parallel mixed-methods design; an approach to inquiry that combines both qualitative and quantitative methods concurrently, prioritizing both methods almost equally (Creswell and Clark, 2011). In this case, the quantitative and qualitative methods complemented each other and provided for the triangulation of findings, hence greater validity and reliability of the emerging inferences. Parallel forms are a type of reliability. Multiple methods of data collection validate research. This was so because methods complemented each other with no overlapping weaknesses (Brewer and Patton, 2002). Combination of methods ensures that inconsistencies are removed and thus valid and reliable data emerges (Patton, 1990).

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Data analysis refers to examining what has been collected in a survey or experiment and making deductions and inferences (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Since the research design that was used in this study was a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, even the data analysis was done separately for both quantitative and qualitative approach and then conclusion was drawn.

#### **3.8.1 Quantitative Data Analysis**

Quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire. The data from 120 questionnaires collected, were entered on the data entry screen created on the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (**SPSS**) version 20.0 software. SPSS software facilitated for accuracy and speedy entry of data from questionnaires as well as analysis of the responses. Descriptive statistics in form of frequencies tables, means and charts were generated using SPSS Software and excel. In order to make a presentation of results (of analysis) of certain critical variables simple, the 5-Point ranking responses for section **B** of the questionnaire were collapsed and reduced to 3-Points: Agree, Not-sure and Disagree for easy analysis.

It is also important to note that the data set created in SPSS was exported to **mega stata** software for analysis on excel spread sheet. **Mega stata** was used for running regression. The multiple

logistic regression was also run in order to determine which one was a significant variable. After analysis, quantitative data were interpreted by the researcher to answer the research objectives before looking at the qualitative data. Below is how quantitative data was analysed.

To determine which variable was a significant determinant of school choice in the sample population, the study used both single and multiple regression. The above four variables (objectives in chapter 1) were combined to form a dependent variable named Determinants of School Choice abbreviated as **DSC**. Then the responses (from the questionnaire) under each objective were run as one independent variable through regression against the dependent variable which in this case was **DSC**.

#### *Key to the abbreviations in the Regression Analysis*

**AVEDSC**= Average for Determinants of School Choice (Dependent Variable).

**AVESAP**= Average of responses for School Academic Performance as a determinant of School Choice (Independent Variable).

**AVEPSE**= Average of responses for Parents' Socio-economic status as a determinant of School Choice (Independent Variable).

**AVELP**= Average of responses for Location of Parents as a determinant of School Choice (Independent Variable).

**AVEMV**= Average for Moral and Religious values as a determinant of School Choice (Independent Variable).

The findings for each variable together with regression analyses are presented in chapter 4 below.

### **3.8.2 Qualitative Data Analysis**

Qualitative data analysis according to Kasonde-Ng'andu (2013) is a manipulation of the collected data for the purpose of drawing conclusions that reflect the interest, ideas and theories that initiated the study. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:209), suggested that in analysing qualitative data, the initial task is to find concepts that help "make sense of what is going on. Creswell (2012) observed that analysing qualitative data required an understanding on how to make sense of the text and images so that answers to the research questions are formed.

Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews were also collected, transcribed and coded into themes and sub-themes that emerged through thematic analysis. This was done by carefully listening to the recorded conversations in order to interpret, reduce and code key responses into major and sub-themes that emerged for later discussion. This was done in the light of the research questions at hand. Some responses were also isolated to be used as original quotes for verbatim to highlight important findings of the study.

Eight (8) parents were interviewed also to crosscheck other parents' responses in the questionnaires. Interviews were also used to collect data from 6 head-teachers and 1 officer at the DEBS as key stakeholders or informants. The 6 head-teachers were purposively selected so that the sample was not biased. They were selected from all the three different types of school found in Lusaka district namely Public, Grant-aided and Private Schools, 2 from each category. The respondents are shown in table 3 below in chapter 4.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

Before going in the field for data collection, permission was requested from UNZA Ethics Committee and an introductory letter from the Assistant Dean Post Graduate in the School of Education was given (cf. appendix vii). Also the authority of the District Education Board Secretary for Lusaka district where research was conducted was sought (appendix viii). No coercion was exerted on the respondents. Consent was sought from relevant research authorities and respondents. Confidentiality was assured in the whole process. The findings of this study were strictly for academic purposes as clearly stated in the consent form (appendix i).

### **Summary**

This chapter has described the research design and methods that were used in data collection. It has also explained the population, sampling, data collection instruments, data analysis, ethical considerations that were adhered to during the study and validity and reliability that confirmed the data from the research findings of the study. The next chapter will present the research findings of the study.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

#### **Overview**

The previous chapter presented the methodology employed for collection and analysis of data in the study. The data was collected from parents as main respondents and other key informants such as head-teachers and one official from the DEBS office. The present chapter presents the results on the determinants of school choice by understanding how parents choose secondary schools for their children in Lusaka district. To answer the general research question as to what determined the choice of secondary schools to which parents sent their children to in Lusaka district, the results are presented using the thematic approach in line with the specific research questions set out in chapter one of this dissertation. These were:

- i. Did school academic performance in secondary schools influence parents' school choice in Lusaka district?
- ii. To what extent did parent's socio-economic status affect the way they choose secondary schools for their children in Lusaka district?
- iii. In what ways was location linked to choosing of secondary schools by parents in Lusaka district?
- iv. How did school moral and religious values influence parents in their school choice of secondary schools for their children in Lusaka district?

This chapter describes the quantitative data results that also include demographic information of the main respondents (parents) that participated in the quantitative data collection and also presents the findings for qualitative approach. The findings from the parents are presented alongside those from key stakeholders such as head-teachers and an official from DEBS in the qualitative data. Quantitative data is presented in form of tables and figures. For qualitative data, actual words said by respondents have been used as much as possible in the descriptions while other words have been paraphrased.

As already pointed out in chapter 3, the research design used in this study was a convergent parallel mixed-methods design; an approach to inquiry that combines both qualitative and

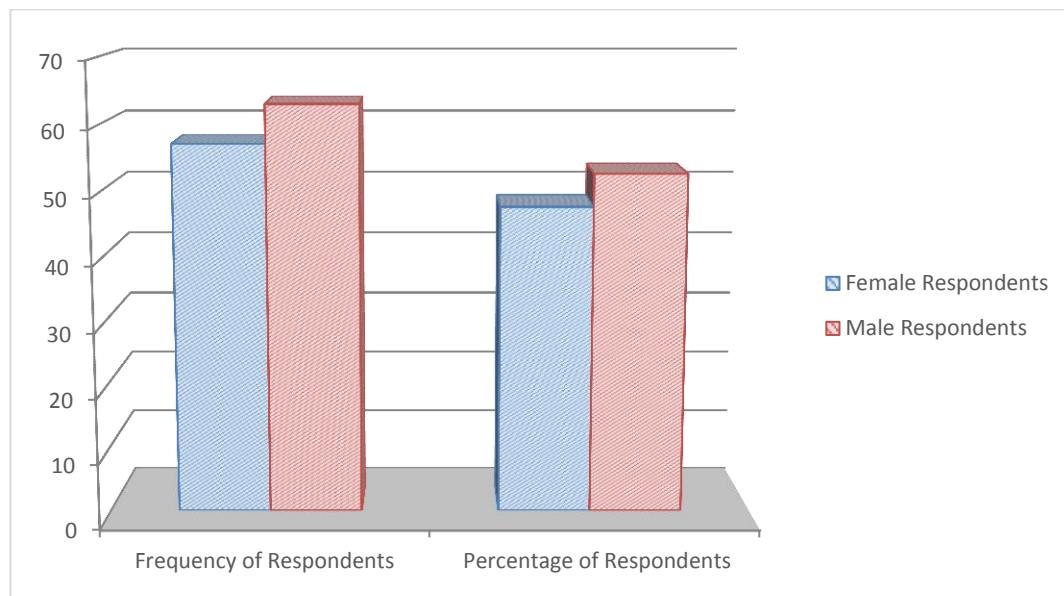
quantitative methods concurrently, prioritizing both methods almost equally, though in this case, quantitative was predominant. For qualitative method, interview guides were used for respondents and for quantitative method, the questionnaires were distributed to respondents. The sample size was 135 participants. 120 parents were subjected to questionnaires, 8 parents were interviewed also to crosscheck other parents' responses in the questionnaires. Interviews were also used to collect data from 6 head-teachers and 1 officer (ESO GI) at the DEBS office as key stakeholders or informants.

It is important to note that both methodological approaches (quantitative and qualitative) present the findings of each objective alongside each other.

#### 4.1 Demographic information of the respondents in Quantitative Data

##### a) *Sex of Respondents*

Parents were asked to indicate their sex figure 4.1 below shows the distribution of gender of the respondents who participated in answering the questionnaire.



*Figure 4.1: Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to gender*

Figure 4.1 shows that 47.5% of respondents were female while 52.5% were male.

### ***b) Age of Respondents***

Table 4.1 shows the age of respondents. The majority of the respondents were aged between age 35-49 (62.5%), followed by those aged 50 years and above (20.8%). Those aged between ages 20-34 were 16.6% of the total number of respondents.

Table 4.1: *Age of Respondents in Quantitative Data*

Age of Respondents (Years)	20-34	35-49	50 and Above
Frequency	20 (16.6%)	75 (62.5%)	25 (20.8%)

### ***c) Marital Status of Respondents***

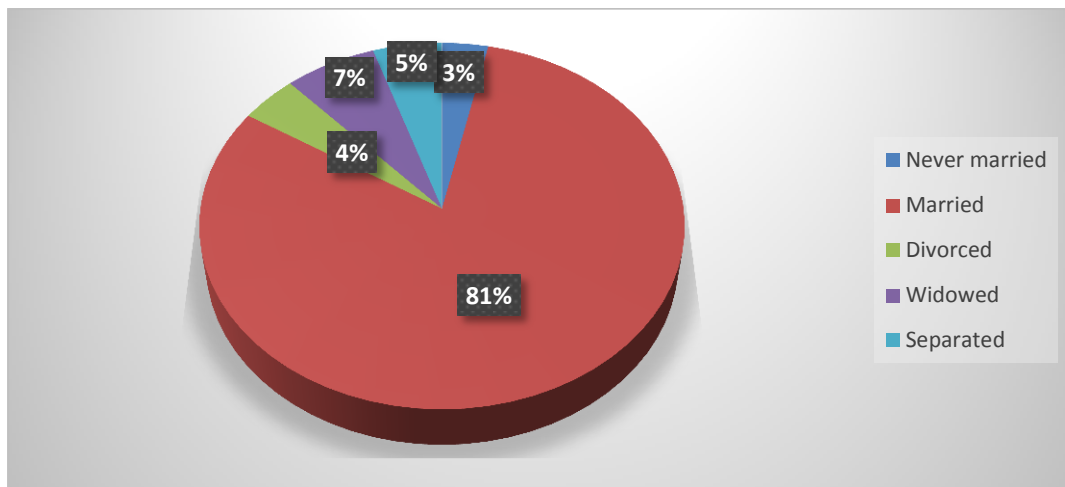
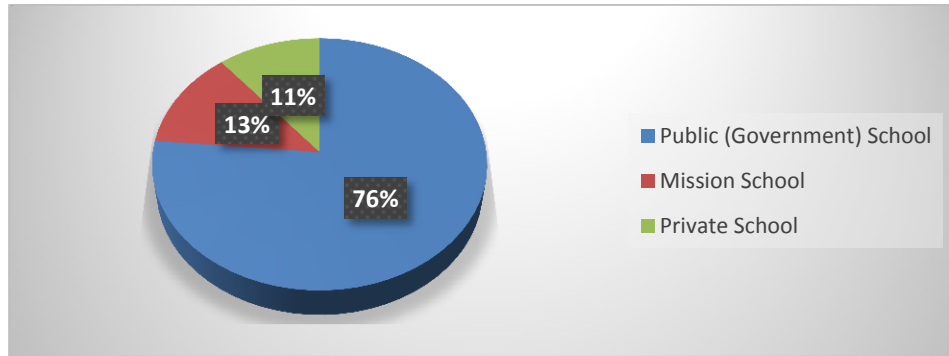


Figure 4.2: *Marital status of respondents*

The above figure shows that the majority of respondents that took part in the questionnaire were married, representing 81%. Those never married were 3%, divorced 4%, widowed 7% and separated 5%.

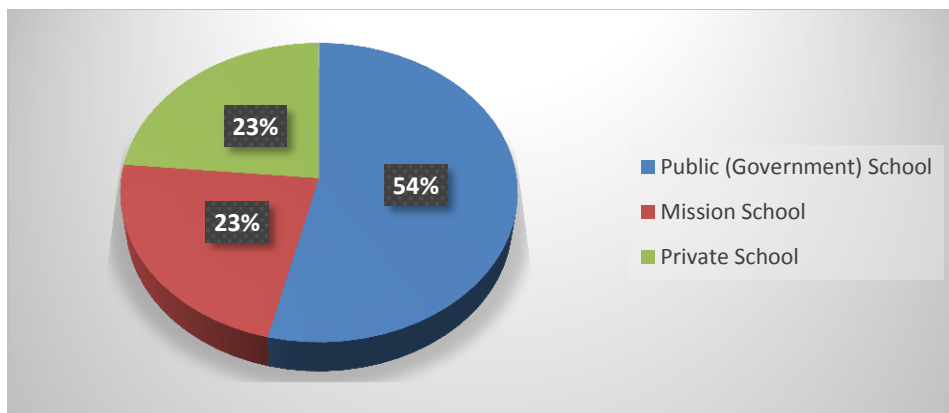
***d) Type of Secondary School parent/guardian attended***



***Figure 4.3: Type of secondary school parent/guardian attended***

Figure 4.3 shows the type of secondary schools the 120 respondents themselves attended. 76% said that the attended public (government) schools, 13% attended Mission (or Church run) schools whereas 11% went to private schools. This data was important to see if the type of school parents/guardians attended could have a bearing on their preference of secondary school for their child.

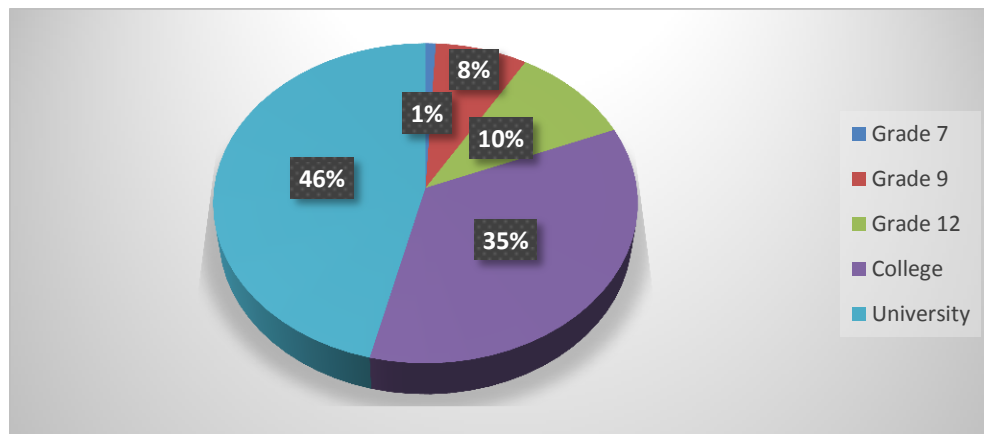
***e) Type of School Children (dependants) attending***



***Figure 4.4: Type of school children (dependants) attending***

Figure 4.4 shows the kind of schools children/dependents of respondents were attending. 54% were attending public schools, 23% represented those that attended church run schools again another 23% represented those that attended private schools.

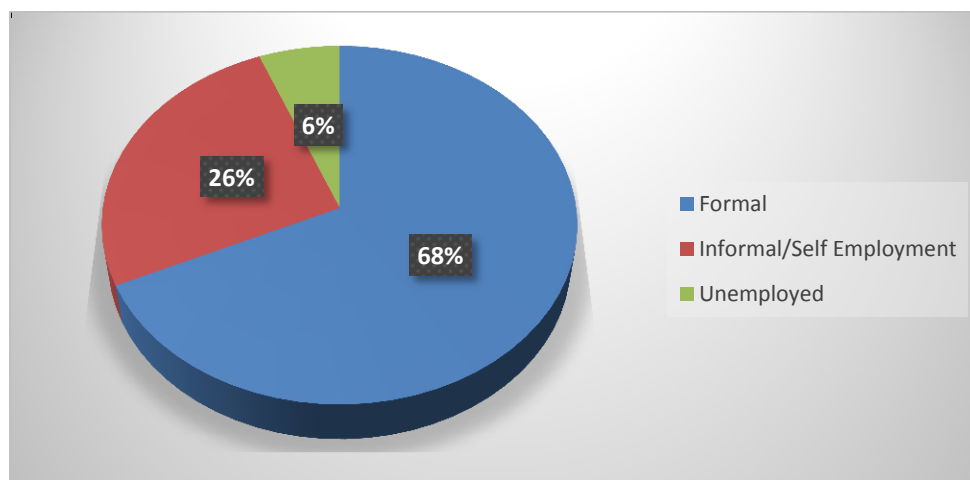
***f) Parents' Level of Education Attained***



***Figure 4.5: Parents' level of education attained***

Figure 4.5 shows the level of education of parents/guardians. Those that attended university education was 46%, college education they were 35%. 10% were those with Grade 12 level of education whereas those that just went up to Grade 9 and 7 were 8% and 1% respectively.

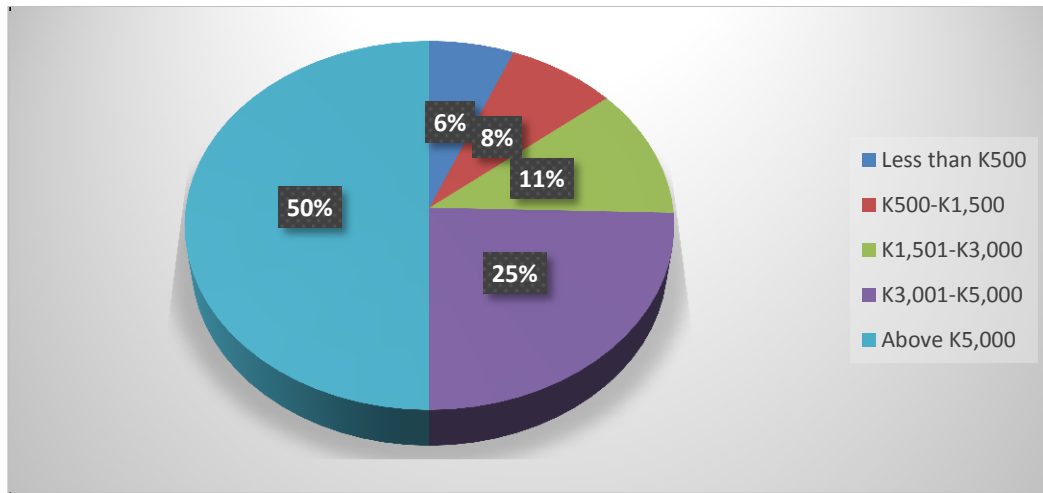
***g) Parents' Employment Status***



***Figure 4.6: Percentage distribution of parents' employment Status***

Figure 4.6 shows parents/guardians' employment status. 68% were in formal employment, 26% were either in informal or self-employment. 6% said to be unemployed.

#### *h) Parents' Monthly Income*



*Figure 4.7: Percentage distribution of parents' monthly income*

Figure 4.7 show parents' monthly income. 50% indicated that they earned above K5,000, 25% were between K3,001-K5,000, whereas those who earned between K1,501-K3,000 were 11%, those between K500-K1,500 were 6% and those that earned less than K500 were 6%.

## **4.2 Demographic information of the respondents by gender in Qualitative Data**

*Table 4.2: Frequency distribution of respondents by gender*

Category	Key Informants	Parents	Total
Male	04	05	09
Female	03	03	06
Total	07	08	15

## **4.3 School Academic Performance Influence on School Choice**

The first objective sought to determine if school academic performance influences the way parents choose secondary schools for their children in Lusaka district. The findings for both methodological approaches are presented below.

#### 4.3.1 Quantitative Results on School Academic Performance as a determinant

In response to this objective the following were the results (of 120 parents respondents) from data set created in SPSS which was later exported to **mega stata** software for analysis on excel spread sheet. **Mega stata** was used for running regression. analysed using SPSS;

Table 2.3: *Descriptive statistics on school academic performance*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	5	4.2	4.2	4.2
	Disagree	5	4.2	4.2	8.3
	Not Sure	16	13.3	13.3	21.7
	Agree	47	39.2	39.2	60.8
	Strongly Agree	47	39.2	39.2	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The above data was collapsed to three responses as indicated in the pie chart below.

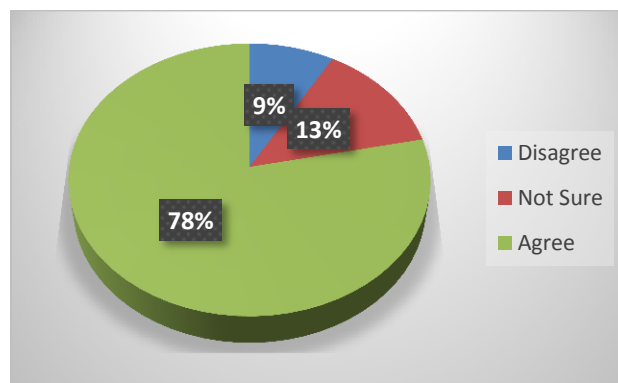


Figure 4.8: *School academic performance influence on school choice*

The above results show that 78% agreed that school academic performance influences the way parents choose secondary schools for their children in Lusaka. 13% were not sure and 9% did not agree.

Table 4.4: Showing Single Regression for AVESAP (School Academic Performance)

Regression Analysis					
	r <sup>2</sup>	0.222	n	120	
	r	0.471	k	1	
	Std. Error	0.652	Dep. Var.	AVEDSC	
ANOVA table					
<i>Source</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p-value</i>
<b>Regression</b>	14.3051	1	14.3051	33.64	5.66E-08
<b>Residual</b>	50.1718	118	0.4252		
<b>Total</b>	64.4769	119			
Regression output					
<i>variables</i>	<i>coefficients</i>	<i>std. error</i>	<i>t (df=118)</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Confidence interval</i>
					95% lower 95% upper
<b>Intercept</b>	1.6662	0.3053	5.458	2.70E-07	1.0617 2.2707
<b>AVESAP</b>	0.5451	0.0940	5.800	5.66E-08	0.3590 0.7311

\* $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$  being the standard to measure the level of significance.

The single regression output for school academic performance as a determinant of school choice was highly significant the  $p\text{-value}$  being 5.66E-8.

### 4.3.2 Qualitative Results on School Academic Performance as a determinant

In response to the first objective the following themes or issues emerged;

All the 15 respondents (representing 100%) who participated in the interview in line with this objective were agreeable that the school academic performance was a major determining factor which parents looked for when choosing secondary schools for their children. This was somehow in tandem with what was seen in the responses in the questionnaire where 78% of parents agreed that school's academic reputation is critical in school choice. The ESO GI at DEBS office when interviewed acknowledged that:

At Grade 7 there is choice of school the parents want to send their child to. Parents work hand in hand with their children. Parents are supposed to be consulted by children. Head teachers ask pupils to go and talk to parents about the school they want to go to after graduating from primary school then bring feedback, for input..... Parents are key decision makers for their children in their education. They know which schools are performing well and those not performing well.



Despite the acknowledgement of parents having freedom of school choice, it was discovered that they were prevented from sending their children to academic reputable schools due to failure by their children to reach the cut-off point. So here cut-off point emerged as a sub theme under this objective.

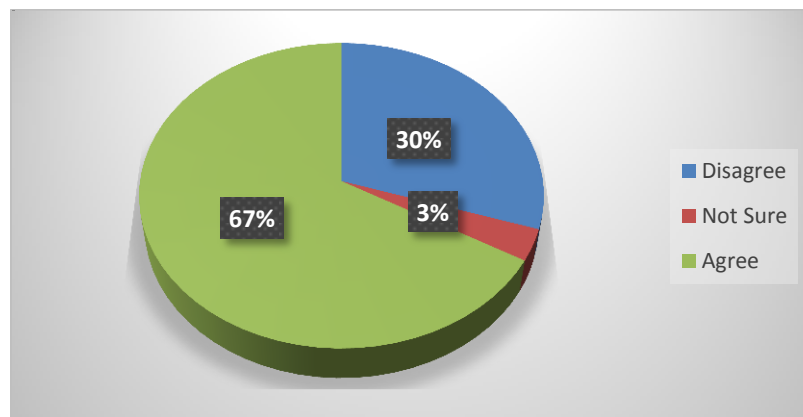
#### 4.3.2.1 Cut-off point

One head teacher at a grant aided school said that:

Our school is relatively cheap as opposed to the general perception of the public. Pupils only pay K2,000 per year. And when we tell people this, they get surprised. The only major prohibiting factor why pupils who would like to come to this school fail to come is the high marks set as cut-off point for qualification.

This assertion by the said head teacher seemed to have been supported by parents, head-teachers and the ESO GI who participated in the interview and questionnaire.

The conclusion was that the cut-off point that the child obtained at Grade 7 was critical to determine the type of school he or she went to. The results in the questionnaire that agreed with responses in the interview are illustrated in the pie chart in figure 4.9 where parents were asked if the Grade 7 ECZ exam results scored by their children determined the secondary school choice, 67% of the respondents agreed, 30% disagreed and 3% were not sure of the answer.



*Figure 4.9: Showing that Grade 7 ECZ results as determinant in school choice*

Since not every parent agreed that the Grade 7 results determined the kind of school their children went to in the questionnaire's responses, this suggests that there could be other reasons that need to be studied that made them send their children to the schools they went to.

In line with this same issue of cut-off point, the results through interviews with the ESO GI and head teachers from all types of schools dispelled the notion as attributed to by some scholars in the literature review that there was selection bias at Grade 8 in good performing schools. When these stakeholders were asked as to whether there was or no selection bias when admitting pupils to Grade 8, the following were the responses;

One head teacher from a public school said:

All children are given choice to choose at Grade 7. One has to reach the cut-off point to qualify to a particular school. During selection, only national (technical schools) are given priority to choose first. The rest just pick those pupils who had chosen their schools and who reach the cut-off point. However, some end up given schools they did not choose if the schools they had chosen have no more places (Teacher Interview, January 2016).

Another head-teacher from a public school added that:

Government schools usually take up those pupils who are left in the schools they chose due to limited places but had met the qualification because government schools remain usually with available places and it is government's policy to give access to education to every citizen and this contributes to having big class sizes.

The ESO GI during interviews said:

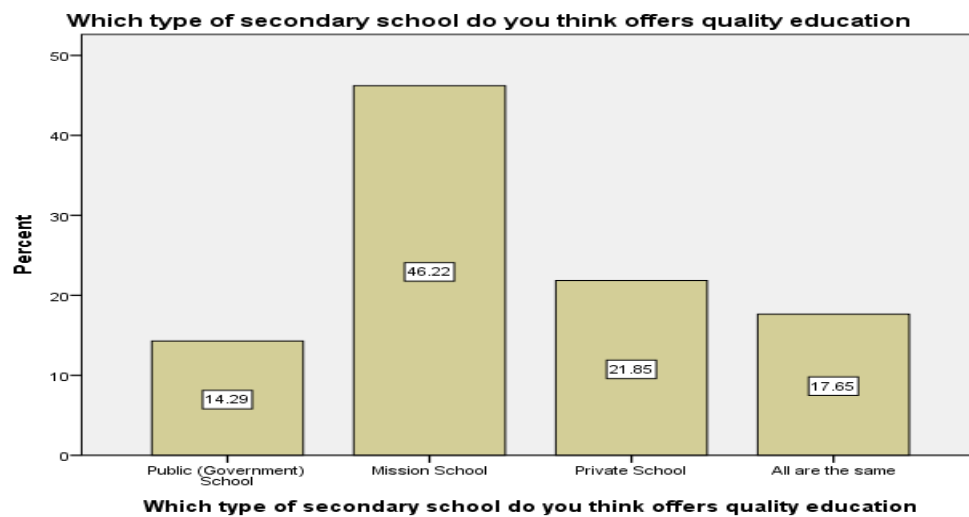
Selection at Grade 7 is free and fair. Children choose schools. The good performing schools seem to go for the cream because many people choose those schools, in the end, they end up picking those who have scored the highest due to having limited places.

And the national exam results obtained from DEBS office proved that actually the national technical school found in Lusaka district was most times behind schools like grant aided schools and private that did not even enjoy the privilege of choosing first in terms of performance, See appendix ix.

Also performance in national Grade 12 examinations of the six sampled schools for the past five years are shown in appendix vi.

The results seemed to agree with parents' perception in the questionnaire as which type of school they thought offered quality education as shown by statistics below in figure 4.10. 46.22% of respondents thought mission (church run) schools offered quality education, 21.85% thought that

private schools were better in terms of the provision of quality education, 14.29% thought public (government) schools and 17.65% thought all the schools were just the same.



*Figure 4.10: Parents' perceptions on the type of school that offers quality education*

And when asked which type of school they would prefer to send their children to, the results were as presented in figure 4.11. 39.50% preferred to send their children to a catholic school, 27.73% opted for a public school, 16.81% favoured private school, 9.24% did not mind the type of a secondary school and 6.72 favoured a protestant school.

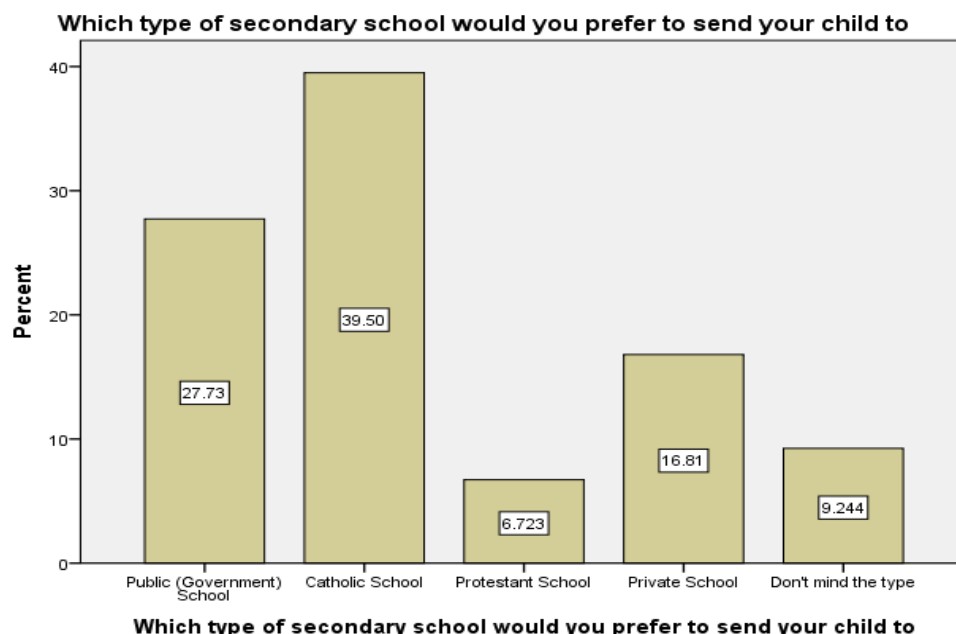


Figure 4.11: Preferred type of school parents' would send their child to

#### 4.3.2.2 Supervision and Monitoring

This also came out as a theme or factor in contributing to good school performance. The head teacher of Grant-aided school B argued that *“Good performance has been attributed to serious supervision. Teachers are given guidelines to follow. Also non-examination classes continue learning during national examinations and the school has afternoon classes.”*

One parent also said that:

Private and faith schools perform better than most government schools because supervision is strict among teachers. At government schools there is much more of *laissez-faire*. Private and church run schools have also small class sizes that make them easier to supervise and monitor, hence the good results for example at Lwitikila, St. Theresa, Malole and Namwianga to mention but a few.

The conclusion here was that, school academic performance as a determinant of school choice was enhanced by strict supervision and monitoring of school programs.

### **4.3.3 Conclusion of the results on school academic performance as a determinant of school choice**

The conclusion drawn from the results obtained from quantitative and qualitative data sets on the variable to establish whether school academic performance influences school choice of secondary schools by parents in Lusaka district was that, both methodological approaches were affirmatively agreeable that it was a key determinant factor in school choice. The single regression output for school academic performance as a determinant of school choice in the quantitative data clearly showed that the variable was highly significant, the  $p$ -value being  $5.66\text{E-}8$ . The standard to measure the level of significance was at  $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$ .

As regards the qualitative data results, all the 15 respondents (representing 100%) who participated in the interview in line with this objective were agreeable that the school academic performance was a major determining factor which parents looked for when choosing secondary schools for their children. Even the verbatims illustrated above attested to this fact.

## 4.4 Parents' Socio-Economic Status Impact on School Choice

The second objective sought to establish whether parents' socio-economic status impacted on the way they chose secondary schools for their children. Below were the results or findings from both quantitative and qualitative data.

### 4.4.1 Quantitative Results on Parents' Socio-Economic Status Impact on School Choice

In response to this objective the following were the results from data analysed from 120 parents;

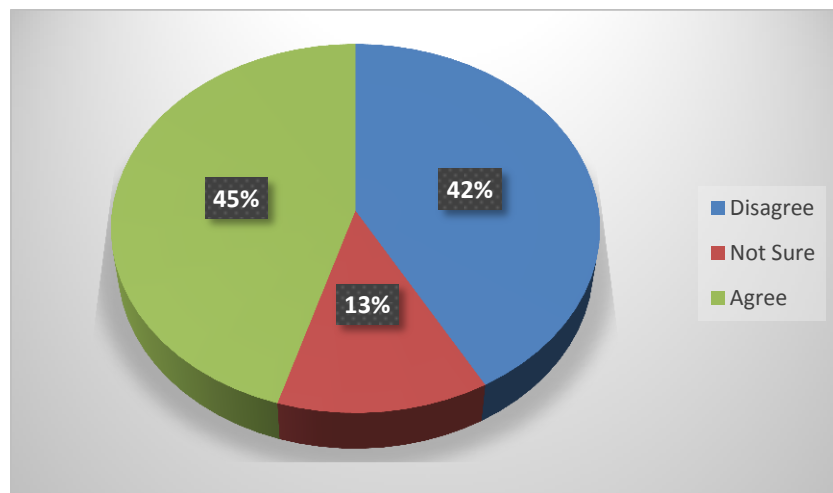


Figure 4.12: Parents' socio-economic status impact on school choice

The above results in figure 4.12 show that 45% of respondents thought that parents' socio-economic status impacted on the way they chose secondary schools for their children. 42% of respondents interviewed did not seem to agree with this, whereas 13% were not sure with the response to the question.

Table 4.5: Showing Single Regression for AVEPSE (Parents' socio-economic status as determinant)

Regression Analysis					
	$r^2$	0.043	$n$	120	
	$r$	0.207	$k$	1	
	Std. Error	0.723	Dep. Var.	AVEDSC	
ANOVA table					
Source	SS	df	MS	F	p-value
Regression	2.7671	1	2.7671	5.29	.0232
Residual	61.7098	118	0.5230		
Total	64.4769	119			

Regression output					<i>Confidence interval</i>	
<i>variables</i>	<i>coefficients</i>	<i>std. error</i>	<i>t (df=118)</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>95% lower</i>	<i>95% upper</i>
<b>Intercept</b>	2.6828	0.3199	8.387	1.24E-13	2.0493	3.3163
<b>AVEPSE</b>	0.2934	0.1276	2.300	.0232	0.0408	0.5460

$p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$

The single regression output for parents' socio-economic status as a determinant of school choice was significant the p-value being 0.0232.

#### **4.4.2 Qualitative results on Parents' Socio-economic status as a determinant**

Surprisingly as already seen in the quantitative data that only 45% agreed that parents' socio-economic status was a determinant in school choice implies that it was not so much a factor. However, there were some respondents during interviews who intimated how critical this variable was in school choice. And among the themes that emerged under this was parents' level of education and their economic status (in terms of their income).

##### **4.4.2.1 Parents' Level of Education**

When the ESO GI was asked as to what extent did parent's socio-economic status affect the way they chose secondary schools for their children, this is what he had to say: *"Level of education of parents is critical in school choice but those who are not educated may not understand some of these things. Educated ones even get annoyed if they are not consulted in this regard."*

This statement was supported by a parent who had a child at a private school who said that:

What I can say on the socio-economic status of parents vis-à-vis school choice is that, the middle class and literate appreciate the importance of school and hence make informed decisions. They also appreciate open days at schools. For us such interactions are very encouraging.

From the above we can deduce that the level of education of parents is critical to have informed decision in exercising school choice.

##### **4.4.2.2 Parents' Economic Status**

Another theme that emerged under this variable of parents' socio-economic status was the issue of parents' economic status. A female parent who has a child at a public school had this to say:

Yes we can say that there is school choice in Zambia at secondary school but it is hampered by financial challenges. Economic status has an impact in that the poor parents tend to choose community schools for primary education of their children then at secondary level mainly it's government schools, I'm unable to send my child at expensive private schools because of my unstable income.

The above statement was confirmed by the head teacher at one of the private schools who said that:

Socio-economic status does matter in school choice. For example, our school is expensive and only pupils from the social high class (affluent families) usually attend. In terms of fees they are a bit expensive. At junior level, the fees are at K7,400 and at senior level are at K8, 240 per term which some families can't afford.

The statement was supported by the head teacher at a public school who said that *"the well to do exercise this freedom of school choice more than the poor."* One male parent lamented that *"finances are also a hindrance; I would love to send my child to a boarding mission school e.g. a Catholic school but I cannot afford."*

Thus the theme of economic status emerged here. However, though in quantitative data it did not seem to be a big determinant in school choice, it was somehow a deterrent that prevented intelligent but vulnerable pupils from attending such affluent schools as some parents indicated during interviews. But still they had options such as grant aided schools that were relatively cheaper that equally produced good results, in most cases even better than private schools as the results in *appendix vi* indicate. Two head teachers at grant aided schools confirmed that their fees were not even much according to them, one charged K2,000 per year whereas the other was at K1,900 and yet according to provincial records of their academic performance, they were among the best schools in the district and province.

#### **4.4.3 Conclusion of the results on parents' socio-economic status impact on school choice**

The results from both methodological approaches of the variable that looked at parents' socio-economic status impact on school choice indicated that this was also a determinant factor. The single regression output for parents' socio-economic status as a determinant of school choice in quantitative data was significant the p-value being 0.0232 (being less than the  $p$ -value  $\leq 0.05$  which was the standard to measure the level of significance).



For qualitative data, the results from the respondents did not contradict those of quantitative as seen in the responses from different respondents. Actually they were even more affirmative especially as seen in their responses above when they clearly indicated that the level of parents' education and economic status were critical in school choice.

## 4.5 Location as a Determinant of School Choice

The third objective sought to investigate to what extent location determined school choice by parents in selected secondary schools in Lusaka district.

### 4.5.1 Quantitative Results on Location as a Determinant of School Choice

In response to the objective on location as a determinant of school choice, the following were the results from data analysed using SPSS from 120 parents;

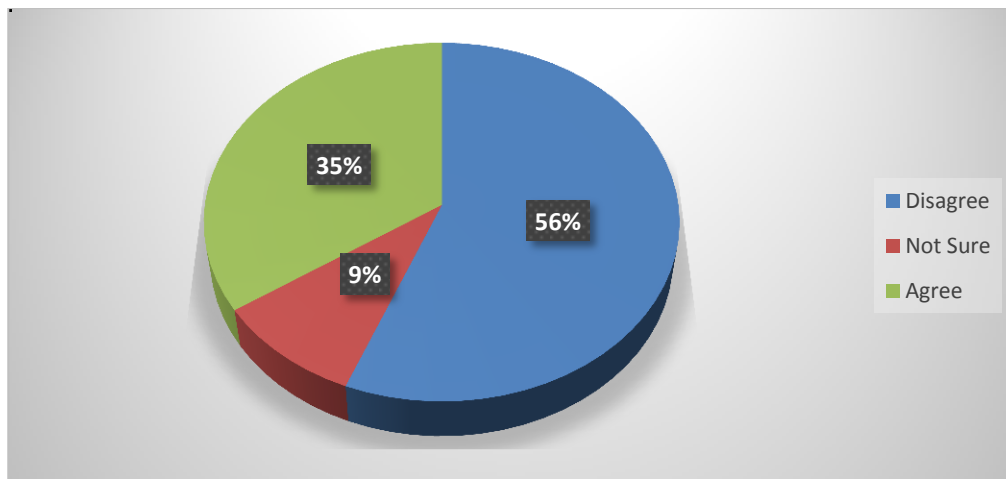


Figure 4.13: Results on location of parents as a determinant of school choice

According to the results in figure 4.13, 56% of respondents indicated that location was not a determinant of school choice only 35% agreed and 9% were not sure.

Table 4.6: Single Regression for AVELP (Parents' Location as determinant)

Regression Analysis					
	r <sup>2</sup>	0.001	n	120	
	r	0.028	k	1	
	Std. Error	0.739	Dep. Var.	AVEDSC	
ANOVA table					
Source	SS	df	MS	F	p-value

<b>Regression</b>	0.0507	1	0.0507	0.09	.7611	
<b>Residual</b>	64.4262	118	0.5460			
<b>Total</b>	64.4769	119				

Regression output					<b>confidence interval</b>	
<b>variables</b>	<b>coefficients</b>	<b>std. error</b>	<b>t (df=118)</b>	<b>p-value</b>	<b>95% lower</b>	<b>95% upper</b>
<b>Intercept</b>	3.3351	0.2321	14.367	1.12E-27	2.8754	3.7948
<b>AVELP</b>	0.0230	0.0755	0.305	.7611	-0.1265	0.1725

$p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$

The single regression output for parents' location (residence) as a determinant of school choice was not significant the p-value being 0.7611.

#### 4.5.2 Qualitative Results on Location as a Determinant of School Choice

Parent's including school administrators when asked during interviews as in what ways was location of parents linked to choosing of secondary schools were categorical that what mattered most was school academic performance and discipline enforced at that particular school. Head teachers apparently from well performing schools indicated that they received pupils as far as Kafue or Chisamba which were not even in Lusaka because of the quality of education they offered. One head teacher at a private school intimated that:

I don't think that location of parent's has a big impact on school choice. For example at our school, we have pupils coming from as far as Kafue and Chisamba because of the quality of education we offer.

Another head teacher at a grant-aided school said that:

I don't see location to be a big factor in parent's school choice for their children. Our school is ever on demand and where we are located is not the best. We are near to a big township.

Parents also indicated that proximity of their residence and school was immaterial in their choosing of a secondary school. Six (6) out of eight (8) parents who were interviewed on this variable attested to the fact that parents' location was not a big factor in secondary school choice. One parent said that:

My child is attending the school where he is because that is where he was allocated after the Grade 7 results were announced. I did not choose the school because it is near my home but the results he got determined the school he was

selected to. Actually I wanted to send him to a mission school which is not even near to where I'm staying.

#### 4.5.3 Conclusion of the results on location of parents as a determinant of school choice

Responses seemed unanimous as most seemed to agree that location or residence of parents was not a big or no factor at all in determining school choice. Just like the responses in the questionnaire showing 56% disagreeing and only about 35% agreeing. Even when single regression was run, this factor proved non-significant since the p-value was 0.7611. From responses gotten from parents and other stakeholders such as head teachers, they said that what mattered was the quality of education offered at a particular school.

#### 4.6 Moral and Religious values' influence on School Choice

The fourth objective sought to investigate whether moral and religious values such as discipline influence school choice by parents in Lusaka.

##### 4.6.1 Quantitative Results on Moral and Religious values' influence on School Choice

In response to the objective that sought to investigate whether moral values such as discipline and religious beliefs influenced school choice at secondary level by parents in Lusaka district the following were the results from data analysed using SPSS from 120 parents in the quantitative research;

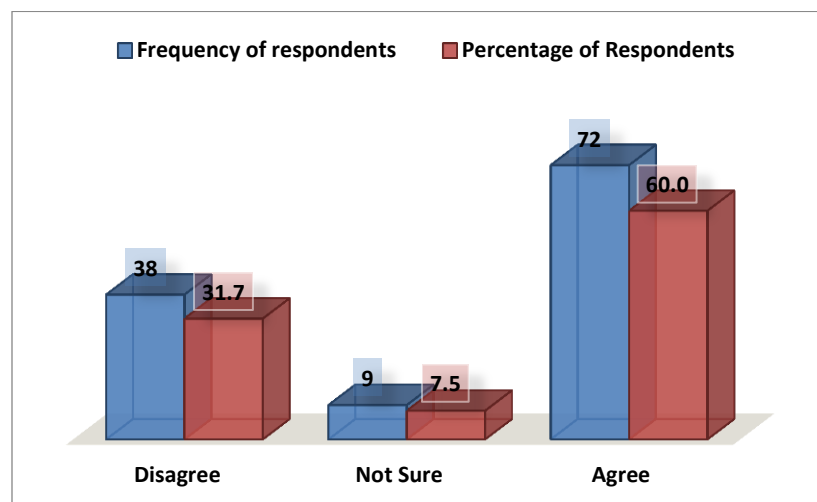


Figure 4.14: Results on moral and religious values' influence on school choice

The above results in figure 4.14 show that 60% of respondents agreed that moral values upheld by the school determines school choice, 32% did not agree whereas 8% were not sure.

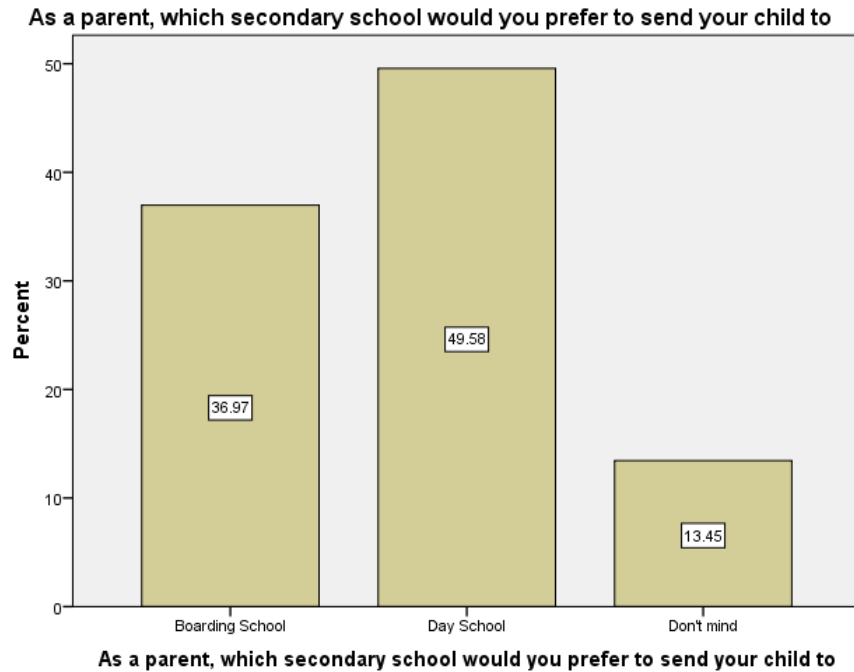
Table 4.7: *Single Regression for AVMV (Moral and Religious Values as determinant)*

Regression Analysis					
	r <sup>2</sup>	0.212	n	120	
	r	0.460	k	1	
	Std. Error	0.656	Dep. Var.	AVEDSC	
ANOVA table					
<i>Source</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p-value</i>
<b>Regression</b>	13.6483	1	13.6483	31.68	1.25E-07
<b>Residual</b>	50.8286	118	0.4308		
<b>Total</b>	64.4769	119			
Regression output					
<i>variables</i>	<i>coefficients</i>	<i>std. error</i>	<i>t (df=118)</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Confidence interval</i>
					95% lower 95% upper
<b>Intercept</b>	2.3542	0.1957	12.031	3.02E-22	1.9667 2.7417
<b>AVEMV</b>	0.4193	0.0745	5.629	1.25E-07	0.2718 0.5669

$p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$

The single regression output for moral values (and religious beliefs upheld by the school) as determinant of school choice was significant the p-value being 1.25E-07.

Further, another investigation in line with the research question as to how moral and religious values influenced parents in their choice of secondary schools for their children in Lusaka district was done to find out whether parents wanted to exercise the right to raise their children in a manner consistent with their lifestyle and their religious, philosophical, and political values and beliefs. When asked as to which type of secondary schools they would prefer to send their children to between boarding and day school, the majority who answered the questionnaire favoured the latter. Those who preferred to send their child to a boarding school were 36.97%, those who chose day school were 49.58% and those who did not mind about the type of school were 13.45%. The results are presented in figure 4.15 below.



*Figure 4.15: Preferred type of secondary school by parents between boarding and day school*

Another question was asked to parents as to which secondary school would they prefer sending their children to basing on sex. Findings in figure 4.16 shows the type of secondary school parents would prefer to send their children to according to the responses given in quantitative data.

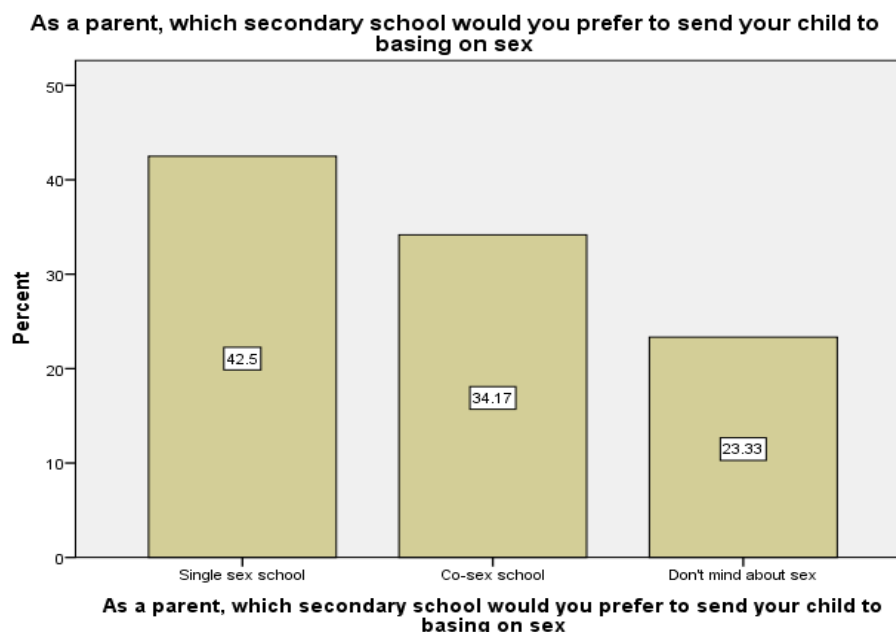


Figure 4.16: The type of secondary school parents would prefer basing on sex

#### 4.6.2 Qualitative Results on Moral and Religious values' influence on School Choice

This was found to be important when exercising school choice by parents. The theme which emerged prominently here was the issue of *discipline*. All parents that were interviewed expressed willingness to send their children to secondary schools that were renowned for discipline. A head teacher from a grant aided school and one parent both said that discipline was cardinal for learning hence parents looked for this.

The ESO GI praised mission schools and some private schools of being attractive because of their discipline. He said that; *“Mission and some private schools do well especially due to discipline,..... supervision and monitoring is serious as opposed to government schools.”* And one head teacher at a grant aided school attributed the good performance of her school to moral values upheld at the school. She said that:

We have child protection policy at school, teachers know the limits, school is renowned for discipline, retreats are conducted every term for both teachers and we have Mass. There is no bullying. There is disciplinary committee. Pupils are trained holistically, academically, spiritually and do manual work. Monitoring and supervision is critical to schools' performance.

It was also noted that *religious issues* of faith matters were a factor to some parents. One female parent who had a child at a government school said that *“Yes as parents we are free to choose*

*secondary schools for our children basing on the results but avoid schools with Satanism practices.”* This implied that parents needed schools that had ‘good’ religious practices.

#### **4.6.3 Conclusion of the results on moral and religious values’ influence on school choice**

The results from both quantitative data and qualitative data had shown that moral values upheld by the school were significant in determining school choice by the parents.

### **4.7 Summary of Findings from Quantitative and Qualitative data**

As already pointed out in chapter three, this study used a convergent parallel design, an approach to inquiry that combines both qualitative and quantitative methods concurrently, prioritizing both methods almost equally (Creswell and Clark, 2011). Hence this section tries to make a synthesis of findings from both approaches so as to draw a valid inference. But before that is done, a summary for each methodological approach results is given before the synthesis is drawn.

#### **4.7.1 Summary of Findings from Quantitative data**

The results were that, on single regression all the variables namely school academic performance, parents’ socio-economic status, moral and religious values were significant determinants of school choice except location of parents which showed no effect on school choice.

Multiple regression was also run to determine which one of all the factors determining school choice was more significant. The results in table 4.8 show that only school academic performance and moral and religious values were significant determinants of school choice when all the factors were combined.

Table 4.8: *Showing Multiple Regression Analysis*

Regression Analysis					
ANOVA table					
<i>Source</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p-value</i>
<b>Regression</b>	19.6134	4	4.9033	12.57	1.62E-08
<b>Residual</b>	44.8635	115	0.3901		
<b>Total</b>	64.4769	119			

Regression output					<i>Confidence interval</i>	
<i>variables</i>	<i>coefficients</i>	<i>std.error</i>	<i>t(df=115)</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>95%lower</i>	<i>95%upper</i>
<b>Intercept</b>	1.0765	0.4497	2.394	.0183	0.1857	1.9672
<b>AVESAP</b>	0.3935	0.1050	3.747	.0003	0.1855	0.6016
<b>AVEPSE</b>	0.1068	0.1155	0.924	.3574	-0.1221	0.3357
<b>AVELP</b>	0.0629	0.0662	0.951	.3435	-0.0681	0.1940
<b>AVEMV</b>	0.2501	0.0837	2.990	.0034	0.0844	0.4158
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.304	R	0.552			

$p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$

According to the multiple regression output above, School academic performance had a p-value of 0.0003, followed by moral and religious values with 0.0034 and the conclusion here was that, these two variables were significant in school choice. Parents' social economic status had a p-value of 0.3574 and location of parents had a p-value of 0.3435 that showed that these last two were not significant when multiple regression was run.

#### 4.7.2 Summary of Findings from Qualitative data

The researcher started by familiarising himself with the data in order to get a sense out of it by listening to the recorded interviews and reading through observational and field notes before transcribing them. Then compiled answers from participants to a certain question. The researcher identified the most significant elements in answers given by participants. After that, there was condensation, or reduction, of the individual answers to find the central parts of a dialogue, then followed preliminary grouping or classification of similar answers. The categories were then compared and named. In short, qualitative data from semi-structured interviews were collected, transcribed and coded into themes and sub-themes that emerged through thematic analysis.

The results revealed that school academic performance was a determinant in terms of influencing parents in their school choice of secondary schools. Among the themes that emerged under this were cut-off point and the seriousness of supervision and monitoring. The respondents that were interviewed were unanimous in their response to affirm that school academic performance was critical in influencing school choice. Parents and key stakeholders in the education sector also acknowledged the fact that parents' socio-economic status impacted on secondary school choice and indicated that the well to do parents were more privileged in exercising this school choice.



However, parents indicated that proximity of their residence to school was immaterial in their choosing of a secondary school. Six (6) out of eight (8) parents who were interviewed on this variable attested to the fact that parents' location was not a big factor in secondary school choice. Even the head teachers that were interviewed on this variable had the similar response. As for moral and religious values upheld by a school were found to be very important especially in areas of discipline and religious issues as most respondents seemed to have strong allegiance to religion. Hence this variable was proved to be significant in school choice.

#### **4.7.3 Synthesis of Findings from Quantitative and Qualitative data**

According to the findings in both quantitative and qualitative data, the results indicated similar outcomes. Both acknowledged that school academic performance was the most significant determinant factor in school choice followed by moral and religious values, then parents' socio-economic status. Location of parents vis-à-vis school choice was insignificant.

#### **Summary**

The findings of the study had revealed that parents had freedom to exercise the school choice in Lusaka district just as the *Educating Our Future 1996* education policy stated. However, this was hampered by other factors. The research conducted found out that School academic performance was the most significant factor in parents' school choice for their children for it told a lot about the quality of education offered at a particular school. It was followed by the variable that looked at the influence of moral and religious values upheld by the particular school in school choice. This was seen important especially in matters of discipline. The findings further revealed that despite parents enjoying the freedom to choose secondary school for their children, they were hampered by economic challenges and that restricted to a larger extent their school choice apart from the cut-off point which also was a limiting factor for some parents since they could not send their children to preferred schools who failed reach the required marks (scores). Hence parents' socio-economic status to a lesser extent mattered though it was not proved to be significant when multiple regression was run. Location of parents was also found not to be significant where parents' school choice was concerned. The next chapter has discussed and analysed the above findings in detail.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

#### **Overview**

The previous chapter presented the results of the study. This chapter presents the discussions of the research findings of this study. The discussion of findings is presented based on the objectives of the study which were: to determine if school academic performance influenced the way parents chose secondary schools for their children in Lusaka, to establish whether parents socio-economic status impacted on the way they chose secondary schools for their children, to investigate to what extent location determined school choice by parents in selected secondary schools in Lusaka and to investigate whether moral and religious values influenced school choice by parents in Lusaka district.

The present chapter further discusses the findings presented in chapter four by relating them to the literature reviewed in chapter two in the light of the four objectives of this study indicated above.

The discussion of findings from the parents has been integrated with those from key educational stakeholders namely the head teachers and Lusaka district ESO GI.

#### **5.1 School Academic Performance as a determinant**

In this study, it had been established that school academic performance was a big determining factor on how parents in Lusaka district chose secondary schools for their children. The results showed that many respondents favoured to send their children for secondary school education to schools that were renowned for good examination results. Out of 120 respondents who participated in the research (by answering the questionnaire), 78% indicated that they chose those schools because of being reputed for good academic results (excellence). When the four variables that were being investigated as to see whether they were determinants of school choice were analysed through multiple regression, school academic performance seemed to be the most significant. This showed that it was a major determinant factor.

Supporting the point from literature review that school academic performance was significant, Some studies done in the US by Goldring and Rowley (2006) indicated that parents chose private schools for their academic and curricula emphases, discipline, and safety. However, research findings showed that despite parents wishing to send their children to best performing schools, some did not manage due to their children failing to reach the cut-off point demanded by these few limited good performing schools which mainly were Church run.

Further, other studies showed that there was some evidence that lower public school test scores in elementary schools increased the likelihood of private school choice (Buddin, Cordes & Kirby, 1998; Lankford & Wyckoff, 1992). The statement was proved right even in the Zambian context. Grade 7 results (cut-off point) were the major qualification to enter good performing schools which were mainly mission (especially Catholic schools) and private schools. These schools picked students with high marks mainly due to their limited places and yet had many applicants. Whereas, government schools absorbed other students as long as they had minimum qualifications (marks) since places were readily available and since them being government schools, it was their responsibility to give access to education to all qualified pupils not just basing on those scoring higher marks.

According to the reviewed literature, in the public school arena in USA, parents indicated that they chose schools for academic reasons (quality), because of dissatisfaction of their zoned school and for safety and convenience. Goldring and Rowley (2006) said that Charter school research suggested that parents chose for the promise of smaller class size, which parents believed would provide better educational quality. In good performing schools, head teachers attested that smaller class sizes were among the factors that contributed to their good performance. Again other studies showed that student academic achievement gains were higher in schools of choice than in traditional public schools (Bast and Walberg, 2003). Again this had proved to be the case in Lusaka district as student academic gains seemed to be higher in schools where obviously children went because of wanting to be there rather than just being allocated (see appendix vi).

Some literature in Zambia (Global Media, 2016) indicated that government schools in Zambia were poorly funded and lacked resources. Most of the more affluent residents sent their children

to expensive private schools. The argument was that private schools operated independently of the Zambian government and had flexibility in their admissions, curriculum choice and academic year. Whereas this literature in Zambia was proved right that more affluent residents sent their children to expensive private schools, however, key educational stakeholder, the ESO GI disputed the fact that government schools in Zambia were poorly funded and lacked resources. He instead attributed government school failures (some) to the lack of setting priorities correctly especially in the allocation of funds. And some head teachers from grant aided schools (though might have been biased) said that actually government schools received more money than church run schools and from school fees looking at the number of pupils in public schools.

On curriculum influencing choice, most parents were not aware of the type of curriculum offered in schools, so it could be deduced that curriculum played a minimal role in school choice. On flexibility in terms of admissions, that applied in certain instances in private schools than grant aided which people preferred more than the former, so again it showed that this issue (of flexibility in terms of admissions) was not a big deal in school choice.

According to some literature cited in chapter 2, it asserted that there was some evidence that lower public school test scores in elementary schools increased the likelihood of private school choice (Buddin, Cordes & Kirby, 1998; Lankford & Wyckoff, 1992). In the public school arena, parents indicated that they chose schools for academic reasons (quality), because of dissatisfaction of their zoned school and for safety and convenience. Goldring and Rowley (2006) said that Charter school research suggested that parents chose for the promise of smaller class size, which parents believed would provide better educational quality. To say that lower public school test scores in elementary schools increased the likelihood of private school choice was not the case in Lusaka district in that, according to the ESO GI, he said that most people who went to private schools were from well to do families and most of them attended private schools at primary level that were known for very good Grade 7 results. Of course some private schools took pupils with lower marks due to their flexibility in terms of admissions since their schools were business entities and wanted to make profit. Otherwise even in Lusaka it was true that parents indicated that they chose schools for academic reasons (quality).

Not so many studies have been done in Africa on the topic of school choice. The study carried out in Kenya by Nishimura and Yamano, ( 2008) suggested that more parents and children would tend to choose private schools over public schools on the basis of academic performance. This assertion was somehow true even in Zambia though the top most good performing schools in the district were not even private but grant aided (or church run schools).

In relating our discussion to the theories that were used, while we can conclude that most parents in Lusaka district employed rational choice theory, it was only to a limited extent. Most parents interviewed indicated that they gathered the information about their preferred school in an informal way especially through social interaction not going in person to concerned schools and then interview the staff at those particular institutions. It is important to note as already pointed out in chapter one that the school choice policy rests on rational choice theory (Coleman 1990), in which parents engage in an orderly, sequential process, “gathering information about the quality of services that schools offer” (Schneider *et al.* 1998: 490), and then make a “rational” decision based on such objective data as test scores (Olson Beal and Hendry, 2012). Instead, basing on the data collected from the field, what obtained on the ground was what Buckley and Schneider (2003) suggested that parents were “metarational,” using a combination of formal and informal choice criteria to choose schools, rather than objective and sequential, as rational theory suggested.

The findings were also in tandem with what other researches suggested, however, that parents’ school choice behaviour did not always reflect the rational choice theory (Holme 2002; Thomas 2010). Olson Beal and Hendry (2012) argued that many parents trusted informal social networks or “grapevines” more than official school information. Parents however, wrote Bosetti (2004), appear to employ a ‘mixture of rationalities’ involving an element of ‘the fortuitous and haphazard’. To make decisions regarding their children’s education, parents would rely on their personal values and subjective desired goals of education, as well as others within their social and professional networks to collect information. Bosetti (2004) claimed that, parents whose network did not provide access to relevant and valuable information regarding options of school choice, were limited in their capacity to make informed choices.

In support of Bosetti’s (2004) assertion that parent’s school choice was not always influenced by rational choice but also by other factors, Olson Beal and Hendry (2012) study revealed that,

contrary to a central premise of school choice policy, parents did not make objective, data-driven decisions about schools. Parents obtained information from a wide range of sources, including the “grapevine” knowledge of informal networks. They further said that research that “conceptualizes parental choice as a rational process, whereby parents first discern and rank the factors that are important to them and then set out to find the school that objectively matches their criteria” does not adequately describe the decision-making process.

However, under this objective, we can say that the market theory was employed, market-based in the sense that parents ‘shopped’ for schools that they thought performed better. The market theory suggested that a system of school choice would create competition among schools for student enrolment resulting in schools being more responsive to the needs and interests of parents and students by providing different types of programmes for different types of families. Bosetti (2004) cited Levin (2002) who said that competition would result in improved school effectiveness, productivity, and service, leading to higher quality education. According to Loeb *et al* (2011), market theories were particularly common, since the defining characteristic of a school choice reform strategy was its treatment of families as consumers and the corresponding accountability of schools to their enrolled — and potentially enrolled — families.

## **5.2 Parents’ Socio-economic status as a determinant**

According to the findings of the study, it had been established that parents’ socio-economic status was also a determining factor in how parents in Lusaka district chose secondary schools for their children. The results showed that a good number of respondents (about 45%) agreed that parents’ socio-economic status was also a determining factor in school choice. However despite the socio-economic status being a factor in school choice, it was not found significant when regression was run on all the four variables of this research.

The literature as postulated by Bosetti (2004) that research on school choice in Western industrialized countries indicated that parents who actively chose schools were better educated, had higher levels of income, and were less likely to be unemployed than non-choosing parents was not necessarily the case in Lusaka at secondary level. As all parents interviewed from different socio-economic backgrounds confessed that they were all free to choose secondary schools for their children (even to choose the most academically performing ones which were

relatively cheap as seen in chapter 4). The major challenge only came about when their children failed to meet the cut-off point as these 'good' schools were competitive. As a result, poor parents failed to find places in relatively good private schools but expensive (who were flexible in terms of their recruitment) due to lack of financial resources. Apparently poor parents' children also had difficulties in reaching cut-off point for the best schools due to the poor primary school background. During the interviews, the ESO GI had indicated that most good performing primary schools were expensive private schools where only the affluent families managed to send their children to. Therefore, it logically followed that most children who competed capably for best performing secondary schools were from private schools (implying from rich families) hence were able to meet the cut-off point for limited best schools in Lusaka district especially the grant aided ones.

It is the view of the researcher that another challenge that would make sense why parents' socio-economic status did not come out as a significant determinant of school choice was that most respondents seemed economical with information regarding their socio-economic status.

Olson Beal and Hendry, (2012) found out that socioeconomic status and educational background also influenced what parents valued when choosing schools (Hastings *et al.* 2007). While the Carnegie Foundation study (1992), for instance, found that low-income parents did not select schools based primarily on academic excellence, Schneider *et al.*'s (1998) research conversely suggested that black parents and parents with high school diplomas but no college education ranked high test scores as important in their choice process.

Goldring and Rowley (2006) argued that as family income and parents' levels of education rose, so did the propensity to choose a private school. This might be true in Lusaka district as the majority of pupils at private schools in Lusaka came from affluent families as two head teachers at private schools admitted during the interviews. But when parents were asked despite their economic status as to which type of secondary schools they would prefer to send their child to in the questionnaire, About 42% preferred church run schools especially Catholic schools, followed by government schools that had about 28% and private schools had about 17% and 13% never minded the type (see figure 4.11 in chapter 4).

Another study was conducted in Pakistan by Ahmed *et al* (2013) whose objective was to understand why parents in rural areas of Punjab, Pakistan, chose to send their children to private schools when free public schools were available. Findings revealed that five main factors emerged as important determinants of private school choice. These included the socioeconomic status of the household, the degree of a school's accessibility, the cost of schooling, parents' perceptions of school quality, and their perceptions of the available employment opportunities in the region. The findings suggested that parents' perceptions played an important role in school choice. In particular, their perceptions of school quality and employment opportunities emerged as key determinants of private school choice. Additionally, expenditure on and access to private schooling relative to public schooling as well as the socioeconomic status of the household had a significant impact on parents' probability of choosing a private school for their child. This was not different with the situation in Lusaka district.

In this sense, we can conclude as Asadullah *et al* (2012) postulated that parents faced a trade-off between school cost and school quality since parent's socio-economic status had been established to be a factor though may not be so significant as compared to cut-off point.

### **5.3 Location of parents as determinant of school choice**

The findings from both quantitative and qualitative data revealed that parents' location or residence in terms of proximity to the school did not matter. This variable was found to be insignificant in school choice.

According to literature, it revealed that in the public school arena, parents indicated that they chose schools for academic reasons (quality), because of dissatisfaction of their zoned school and for safety and convenience (Goldring and Rowley, 2006). These findings were not different to the scenario in Lusaka district where parents (majority) indicated that the proximity of a secondary school to their residence did not matter much.

Another study was conducted in Pakistan by Ahmed *et al* (2013) where he found out that the distance to school was found to be an important factor in parents' school choice behavior. This was proved not to be the case in Lusaka district by the data collected. Parent's including school administrators were categorical during interviews that what mattered most was school academic performance and discipline enforced at a particular school. Head teachers from well performing



schools indicated that they received pupils from as far as Kafue or Chisamba which were not even in Lusaka because of the quality of education they offered. They indicated that proximity of their residence and school was immaterial in their choosing of a secondary school.

#### **5.4 School moral and religious values as determinant of school choice**

The findings established that school the moral values and religious grounds were significant as determinants of school choice. Results showed that parents valued religious and moral values such as discipline upheld by a school they were sending their child to. One parent at a public school said that “*We fear to send our children to certain schools lest they will initiate them into Satanism.*” From this we can deduce that parents’ religious and moral preferences were big factors. Actually, this objective, in terms of significance, was second to objective one (that dealt with school academic performance) when regression was run.

Quoting Levin (2000), Bosetti (2004) stated that proponents of school choice argued that, in a liberal democratic society, parents had the right to raise their children in a manner consistent with their lifestyle and their religious, philosophical, and political values and beliefs. Education was a natural extension of child rearing preferences; therefore, parents were supposed to choose schools consistent with these preferences. Findings of this study confirmed Bosetti’s assertions. This could explain why most parents seemed to prefer mission schools to government schools.

In chapter 4 as illustrated in figures 4.11 and 4.16, it was seen that parents wanted to exercise the right to raise their children in a manner consistent with their lifestyle and their religious, philosophical, and political values and beliefs. When asked as to which type of secondary schools they would prefer to send their children to between boarding and day school, the majority who answered the questionnaire favoured the latter (see figure 4.15). This could imply that parents needed to be closer to their children in order to instill their preferences and values in them as the literature review earlier revealed in chapter 2.

Again, some studies done in the US by Goldring and Rowley (2006) indicated that parents chose private schools for their academic and curricula emphases, discipline, and safety. They argued further (citing) that Catholics were much more likely to attend private school than other students, often choosing for religious values. Cohen-Zada and Sander (2008) in their study found that both religion and religiosity had important effects on the demand for private schools. This, however,

could not be established as to whether Catholics in Lusaka district were much more likely to attend private schools mainly for religious reasons. Perhaps further studies can investigate this as we did not ask about religious affiliations of respondents. Findings just showed that people would prefer mission schools due to their renowned academic performance and discipline. Figure 4.11 in chapter 4 shows the type of secondary school parents would prefer to send their child to according to the responses given in quantitative data.

## **Summary**

As Buckley and Schneider (2003) suggested that parents were “metarational,” using a combination of formal and informal choice criteria to choose schools, rather than objective and sequential, as rational theory suggested was what was proved to be the case in Lusaka district where school choice was concerned. It can also be said that the objectives were achieved.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Overview**

This study aimed at exploring the determinants of school choice by parents in selected secondary schools of Lusaka district. So far, the study in chapter one, has provided the general background on what prompted the undertaking of this study. The statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives and research questions, the significance of the study, delimitation and limitation, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, operational definitions and structure of the dissertation were also discussed in the same chapter. A review of relevant literature both foreign and Zambian were discussed in chapter two. Chapter three highlighted the methodological issues employed in the collection and analysis of data. Research findings and the subsequent discussion of the major findings were presented in chapters four and five respectively.

This chapter presents the conclusion to the study and recommendations of the dissertation based on the findings and make suggestions for further research.

#### **6.1 Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was aimed at exploring the determinants of school choice by understanding how parents chose secondary schools for their children in Lusaka district. This was premised on the assumption that parents were key decision makers regarding their children's education. Hence the dissertation explored the determinants of parental decisions when choosing secondary schools for their children in Lusaka district of Zambia. The choice was studied in terms of public, government dependent (grant aided mainly church run) and private schools.

After analysis of the findings, the researcher was of the view that while parents had the right to exercise school choice in Lusaka (Zambia being a liberal democratic state where the district is found), there were a number of factors that were involved in employing school choice. These factors were referred to as determinants of school choice. The researcher identified four determinants basing on the literature review namely school academic performance, parents'

socio-economic status, location (residence) of parents and moral and religious values held by the school.

The main results indicated that the most significant influence on the decision of school type came from school academic performance which was captured in the first objective of this study. The conclusion drawn from the results obtained from the data on the variable to determine whether school academic performance influenced school choice of secondary schools by parents in Lusaka district was that, findings were agreeable that it was a key determinant factor in school choice. The single regression output for school academic performance as a determinant of school choice in the quantitative data showed that the variable was highly significant, the  $p$ -value being  $5.66E-8$ . The standard to measure the level of significance was at  $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$ . Even in multiple regression, it was the most significant variable with the  $p$ -value being 0.0003 (see tables 4.4 and 4.8 in chapter 4). As regards the qualitative data, all the above 15 respondents (representing 100%) who participated in the interview in line with this objective were agreeable that school academic performance was a major determining factor which parents looked for when choosing secondary schools for their children. Even the verbatims illustrated in chapter 4 attest to this fact. Among the reasons attributed to good performing schools was that, they got children who had higher marks at Grade 7, who most likely were intelligent and continued to do well, at the same time the seriousness of those schools in terms of supervision and monitoring, academic and moral disciplines even class size was small.

The second objective of the study tried to establish whether parents' socio-economic status had an impact on school choice. According to the findings, though not a major factor, it was acknowledged that, well to do parents exercised more school choice than poor parents though it was established that among a good number of well performing secondary schools in Lusaka district which were grant-aided, did not charge more in terms of school fees as most of them were church run. The results indicated that this was also a determinant factor. The single regression output for parents' socio-economic status as a determinant of school choice in quantitative data was significant the  $p$ -value being 0.0232 (being less than the  $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$  which was the standard to measure the level of significance). But when multiple regression was run with other three variables, it was insignificant with  $p$ -value being 0.3435 (see tables 4.5 and 4.8 in chapter 4). For qualitative data, the results from the respondents did not contradict those of

quantitative as seen in the responses from different respondents. Actually, they were even more affirmative especially as seen in their responses in chapter 4 when they clearly indicated that the level of parents' education and economic status were critical in school choice.

The third objective of the study sought to investigate to what extent location of parents determined school choice. Responses from both methodological approaches seemed unanimous as most respondents seemed to have agreed that it was not a big or no factor at all in school choice. Just like the responses in the questionnaire showed 56% disagreeing and only about 35% agreeing that it was a determinant. When single regression was run, this factor proved non-significant since the p-value was 0.7611 even in multiple regression it was insignificant with p-value of 0.3435 (see tables 4.6 and 4.8). According to responses gotten from parents and other stakeholders such as head teachers, they said that what mattered was the quality of education offered at a particular school. In short this variable was insignificant to school choice.

The fourth and last object strove to investigate how moral and religious values upheld by the school influenced school choice. The results showed that moral values upheld by the school were significant in determining school choice by the parents. When single regression was run, this factor proved to be highly significant since the p-value was 1.25E-07, even in multiple regression it was significant with p-value of 0.0034 (see tables 4.7 and 4.8 in chapter 4). This variable was found to be very important especially in areas of discipline and religious issues as most respondents seemed to have strong allegiance to religion as can be seen in verbatim under this objective in chapter 4. Hence this variable was proved to be significant in school choice.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

In the light of the major findings explained in the previous section, the following recommendations are being proposed to ensure effective understanding of secondary schools parents would wish to send their children to. Suggestions are also offered to relevant authorities like the government and other stakeholders to see to it that all schools perform almost at the same level hence leveling the playing field for parents from all types of social classes and enable their children receive quality (best) education they deserve thereby promoting equity in the education sector.

The researcher recommended the following:

- i. There was need for monitoring and supervision to be intensified in public schools so as to reduce teachers' and pupils' *laissez-faire* kind of attitudes and thereby improve school academic performance that had proved to be a big factor in school choice. Closer supervision by HoDs and other members of school management team was needed, in public schools where in most cases teachers were left scot-free which in a way had impacted negatively on school academic performance. Government should be firm on non performing schools in terms of academic performance by disciplining teachers for example through demotions, suspensions or even transferring them to schools where they can be properly monitored.
- ii. Government should build more secondary schools so as to reduce over enrollment so as to improve the quality of education. One of the head teachers from public schools during the interviews said that, the over-enroll pupils because it is government policy to give access to education to every citizen (pupil). This was found to be contributing to poor performance because of big class sizes. Hence schools should not be politicized in the name of giving access to everyone but quality should also be looked at. If it means repeating pupils who do not perform well, the better or to be taken to vocation schools where they can learn some skills if academic career path way proves difficult for them.
- iii. Government and other Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) should sponsor some well performing pupils but vulnerable who would want to go to school of their choice.
- iv. Priorities in terms of how school resources were distributed needed to be properly set in public schools (teaching and learning materials should be a priority as opposed to others that impact less on effective teaching and learning such sending many teachers to accompany pupils to sporting disciplines at a fee).
- v. There is need to motivate teachers in public schools by giving them certain incentives to make them even work better and even good performing schools should be awarded by the Ministry of General Education so as to encourage positive competitions among schools and thereby improve the quality of education.
- vi. Finally, more parent-teacher interactions need to be encouraged in schools by holding of PTA meetings and open days every term in schools so that parents get to know in detail what is happening to their children schools and whether they are receiving better education.

### **6.3 Suggestions for Further Research**

The studies on school choice in Zambia are still in its infancy if at all any detailed studies have been carried out. As such further research may therefore be conducted on the following topics:

- i. Determinants of school choice at primary level in Zambia both in rural and urban settings as it seems a major factor in influencing the type of secondary schools pupils go to (since cut-off point is a major factor). The findings of this study show that, the majority of pupils who tend to be attending better performing secondary schools had the privilege of attending better primary schools mainly private and managed to score high marks at Grade 7 ECZ examinations and met the cut-off point to go to good performing secondary schools.
- ii. There is also need to conduct research in rural areas of Zambia on determinants of school choice as some of the factors that may influence parents' choices in urban settings may not apply in rural areas. This kind of study may help policy makers or the government to come up with strategies that can bring up an enabling environment whereby the education offered in rural areas is equivalent to that in urban setting thereby promoting equity in the education sector and lead to national development.
- iii. Another study that would be of interest to embark on is to establish whether the type of school affect pupils' academic performance in Zambia. It seems there is no study in Zambia that has been carried out to establish whether there is a correlation between the type of school and pupil's academic performance in Zambia. This study will go a long way as to know what makes other schools perform better than others and to offer solutions as what could be done to help underperforming schools so that all children of the country have equal opportunities to receive the best education not only the elites.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix i: CONSENT FORM

Dear parent/guardian,

I am **Godfrey Kunda Kaoma**, a postgraduate student at the University of Zambia studying Education and Development. My topic of research is “*Determinants of School Choice: Understanding How Parents Choose Secondary Schools in Lusaka District.*” This research seeks to discuss the determinants of school choice by understanding how parents choose secondary schools for their children in Lusaka district. The topic will be discussed using four variables namely academic performance, parent’s socio-economic status, parent’s location and school’s moral and religious values. These are the factors that are anticipated to be significant in how and why parents choose schools in Lusaka.

I am kindly requesting your voluntary participation in this study. I would appreciate if you could answer all the questions asked and give me the feedback as soon as possible. Please read the information below and ask for clarification 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 body of knowledge on the subject matter.
2. 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. But out of courtesy communicate your non-participation in good time because I am counting on your contribution for this project to be successful.
3. All the responses will be highly appreciated, treated confidentially and used for academic purposes only.
4. If you have any questions about this study, kindly contact me on 0955/0965/0977-394553.
5. If you consent to take part in this study, kindly answer the questionnaire.

**Appendix ii: DETERMINANTS OF SCHOOL CHOICE: UNDERSTANDING  
HOW PARENTS CHOOSE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LUSAKA DISTRICT**

**Plc: Self-Administered Questionnaire**

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Questionnaire No: [ ][ ][ ]

**SECTION A: Social Demographic Information** (tick the appropriate answer)

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1. Sex of respondent:

(a) Female [ ] (b) Male [ ]

2. How old were you at your last birthday? (Indicate years) [ ]

3. What is your current marital status?

(a) Never married [ ] (b) Married [ ]

(c) Divorced [ ] (d) Widowed [ ]

(e) Separated [ ] (f) Cohabiting [ ]

4. What type of secondary school did you attend?

(a) Public (Government) School [ ] (b) Mission School [ ] (c) Private School [ ]

5. What kind of secondary school is your child or dependant attending?

(a) Public (Government) School [ ] (b) Mission School [ ] (c) Religious Private School [ ]

6. Who are you to your dependant (Relationship)?

(a) Father [ ] (b) Mother [ ] (c) Guardian [ ]

7. What is the highest level of education have you obtained?

(a) Grade 7 [ ] (b) Grade 9 [ ] (c) Grade 12 [ ]



(d) College ☐ (e) University ☐ (f) None ☐

8. Employment Status: (a) Formal ☐ (b) Informal/Self Employment ☐ (c) Unemployed ☐

9. What is your monthly income?

(a) Less than K500 ☐ (b) K500 - K1,500 ☐ (c) K1,501 - K3,000 ☐  
(d) K3,001- K5,000 ☐ (e) Above K5,000 ☐

### SECTION B:

Below are statements regarding determinants of school choice, that is, factors that are anticipated as influencing parents in their selection of secondary schools for their children especially those in Grade 8. Please read each statement carefully and **circle** or **tick one** appropriate number that suits your opinion. **Kindly make sure all statements are answered.** Use the following five point scale of the agreement and disagreement with the statement.

**1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Not Sure, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree**

S/N	Determinants of School Choice	Five Point Scale				
	<b>School Academic performance influences school choice</b>					
10.	I chose the secondary schools for my child because the school has good exam results/academic reputation.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I chose the secondary schools for my child because it has general good impression (it is attractive for various reasons e.g. facilities).	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I chose the school because of its curriculum & co-curricular activities such as clubs, sporting activities.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I chose the secondary school for my child because the school offers specialized curriculum e.g. music, dance, foreign language like French.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I chose the secondary school for my child because the school caters for special needs (e.g. remedial classes).	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I chose the secondary school for my child because it is a good school-good for specific reasons not elsewhere specific. (e.g. Only	1	2	3	4	5

	school that offers a special service)					
16.	I chose the secondary school for my child because the school has small class sizes.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I chose the secondary school for my child because the school has good facilities (e.g. science and computer laboratories).	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I chose the secondary school for my child because the school is a feeder school, meaning it supplies many students to Universities and Colleges.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	The type of primary school my child attended affected the secondary school choice.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Grade 7 ECZ exam results score determined my child's secondary school choice.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	My child's primary school academic record (performance) influenced the selection of the secondary school.	1	2	3	4	5
	<b>Parents' socio-economic status</b>					
22.	My socio-economic status determined my choice of secondary school for my child/dependant.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	My choice preference was a big factor in secondary school choice for my child.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	My spouse's choice preference was a big factor in secondary school choice for my child.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	My economic status (wealth) influenced the type of secondary school I chose for my child.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	I consulted teachers of the chosen school to gather more information about it before choosing it.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	I collected information about the selected secondary school through social networks/interactions with friends (e.g. at place of work, church or drinking places).	1	2	3	4	5
28.	I chose the secondary school for my child because that is where place was available.	1	2	3	4	5

29.	I took my child to the secondary school because that is where he was allocated. I did not necessarily choose the school.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	I chose the secondary school for my child because he/she (child) wanted to go there (i.e. following child's choice).	1	2	3	4	5
31.	I chose the secondary school for my child because his/her friends went there.	1	2	3	4	5
32.	I chose the secondary school for my child because her/his sister or brother went there.	1	2	3	4	5
33.	I chose the secondary school for my child because I (or my spouse or other relatives) schooled there.	1	2	3	4	5
	<b>Location (Residence) of Parents</b>					
34.	Location (Residence) i.e. proximity to school is a determinant of school choice.	1	2	3	4	5
35.	I chose the secondary school for my child because it is near to my home.	1	2	3	4	5
36.	I chose the secondary school for my child where it is easy to get on public transport.	1	2	3	4	5
37.	I chose the secondary school for my child where it is easy and cheaper to reach.	1	2	3	4	5
38.	I chose the secondary school for my child because its location is safe (There is security where the school is located).	1	2	3	4	5
39.	I chose the secondary school for my child because it is located in a clean environment.	1	2	3	4	5
40.	I chose the secondary school for my child because it is located in a conducive environment (e.g. the environment is quiet, there is no noise)	1	2	3	4	5
	<b>School's moral values (e.g. discipline) and religious grounds</b>					
41.	School's moral values (e.g. discipline) and religious grounds influenced the choice of secondary school for my child.	1	2	3	4	5
42.	Religious values upheld by the school influenced my choice of	1	2	3	4	5

	school.					
43.	My religious beliefs influenced my secondary school choice for my child.	1	2	3	4	5
44.	My (or spouse's) church influenced school choice for my child.	1	2	3	4	5
45.	The church of my child influenced school choice.	1	2	3	4	5
46.	I chose the secondary school for my child because the school has strong anti-bullying policy.	1	2	3	4	5

### SECTION C

Below are other statements regarding determinants of school choice, that is, factors that are anticipated as influencing parents in their selection of secondary schools for their children especially those in Grade 8. **Tick** or **circle** the answer you would agree with.

47. I chose the school because it is a

(a) Public (Government) School ☐ (b) Mission School ☐

(c) Private School ☐ (d) Never minded the type ☐

48. Which type of secondary school do you think offers quality education?

(a) Public (Government) School ☐ (b) Mission School ☐

(c) Private School ☐ (d) All are the same ☐

49. Which type of secondary school would you prefer to send your child to?

(a) Public (Government) School ☐ (b) Catholic School ☐ (c) Protestant School ☐

(d) Private School ☐ (e)

Don't mind the type ☐

50. As a parent, which secondary school would you prefer to send your child to?

(a) Boarding school ☐ (b) Day school ☐ (c) Don't mind ☐

51. As a parent, which secondary school would you prefer to send your child to basing on sex?

(a) Single sex school [    ]                      (b) Co-sex school [    ]                      (c) Don't mind about sex [    ]

52. Do you think there are other factors that determine school choice at secondary level other than what have been captured in the questionnaire? What are they?

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**NB:**            Indicate            name            of            school            your            child            is attending:.....

**The End.**

**Thank you for participating in this interview!**

### **Appendix iii: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS (8 RESPONDENTS)**

Interviewer:\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee:\_\_\_\_\_

School:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Start Time:\_\_\_\_\_

Please note that this is purely an academic study which seeks to investigate the determinants of school choice by understanding how parents choose secondary schools for their children in Lusaka district. The information you give will be treated confidentially.

1. Do you think all parents are really free to choose schools for their children especially at secondary school level in Zambia? Explain.
2. What are the determinants of School choice in Zambia? (How do you choose secondary schools for your children?)
3. Does school academic performance influences school choice? How?
4. To what extent does parents' economic status affect school choice?
5. In what ways is location (residence of parents) linked to school choice?
6. How do moral values and religious grounds influence school choice?
7. How much are you aware of the new school curriculum?
8. How do you gather the information about the school you send your children to? (Do you talk to the teachers or it's through social interaction?)
9. Which schools are better among the following types and why; Government public schools, Church run schools, Private schools, Religious private schools (other than Christian ones- e.g. Jewish and Islamic Schools).

#### **Appendix iv: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL HEAD-TEACHER**

Interviewer:\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee:\_\_\_\_\_

School:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Start Time:\_\_\_\_\_

Please note that this is purely an academic study which seeks to investigate the determinants of school choice by understanding how parents choose secondary schools for their children in Lusaka district. The information you give will not in any way interfere with your job and will be treated confidentially.

1. What do you think are factors that attract the kind of pupils you have to your school?
2. Does school academic performance in secondary schools of Lusaka influence parents' school choice? In other words does your school academic performance attract parents to send their children to your school?
  - (i) How has been the academic performance of the school especially at Junior Secondary level in the past five years?
  - (ii) How competitive is your school to others in terms of attracting pupils who score higher marks at Grade 7?
  - (iii) What are the conditions for enrolment at your school especially at Grade 8 (selection criteria)?
  - (iv) What is the teacher-pupil ratio at your school? How many pupils do you accommodate per class (Grade 8)? [Class size].
3. To what extent does parent's socio-economic status affect the way they choose secondary schools for their children?
  - (i) What kind of pupils generally according to your records attend your school? (Meaning the socio-economic status of the parents, location)
  - (ii) How much are the school fees? (Could be per term or year) How affordable are they?
  - (iii) What are the sources of funds for your institution apart from school fees?
4. In what ways is location linked to choosing of secondary schools by parents in Lusaka?
  - (i) Are most of your students coming from far (distant areas)?
  - (ii) How is the security of the environment where the school is located?
  - (iii) Is the location conducive for learning in terms of quietness and cleanliness?

5. How do school moral values and religious grounds influence parents in their school choice of secondary schools for their children in Lusaka District?
  - (i) What are the school ethos at your institution?
  - (ii) Is your school renowned for discipline?
  - (iii) Do you have anti-bullying policy at your school? Explain how it is effected if you have?
6. What do you think prevent other pupils from coming to your school?
7. What are some of the challenges that your institution faces?
8. What are some of the opportunities that exist at this institution that you think have been or can be explored to attract more pupils coming to your school?
9. In which ways do you market your school to the public? (How is the information about your school disseminated?)



**Appendix v: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OFFICIAL  
(DEBS)**

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

District: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Please note that this is purely an academic study which seeks to investigate the determinants of school choice by understanding how parents choose secondary schools for their children in Lusaka district. The information you give will not in any way interfere with your job and will be treated confidentially.

1. Does the Ministry of General Education promote school Choice? If so, what is the rationale behind?
2. What determines the choice of secondary schools parents send their children to in Lusaka District?
3. Does school academic performance in secondary schools of Lusaka influence parents' school choice?
4. To what extent does parent's socio-economic status affects the way they choose secondary schools for their children?
5. In what ways is location (residence of parents) linked to choosing of secondary schools by parents in Lusaka?
6. How do school moral values and religious grounds influence parents in their school choice of secondary schools for their children in Lusaka District?
7. According to the Ministry of General Education records, which schools have been performing better academically in the last 5 years among Public, Grant-aided and Private especially at Junior Secondary Level in Lusaka District?
8. What could be the explanation to the answer given in question 7?
9. What is the government doing to address the imbalances between public and private schools (grant-aided schools included)? What appropriate strategies would be suggested to level the playing field between government and private schools in terms of delivering quality education?
10. Do you give any rewards to good performing schools as way of motivating them even to work harder?

11. Does funding correlate with school performance?
12. How is student's selection done at secondary school? Isn't it bias? If so, what can be the better solution to the situation?
13. To what extent are the parents informed about the new educational curriculum at secondary level?

**Appendix vi: PERFORMANCE RECORD OF THE SIX SAMPLED SCHOOLS FOR  
THE PAST FIVE YEARS IN NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS**

**Public School A**

<b>GRADE 9</b>		<b>GRADE 12</b>	
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>PASS %</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>PASS %</b>
2011	Had no Grade 9	2011	61
2012	Had no Grade 9	2012	64.53
2013	Had no Grade 9	2013	64.80
2014	70	2014	60.56
2015	87.7	2015	63

**Public School B**

<b>GRADE 9</b>		<b>GRADE 12</b>	
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>PASS %</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>PASS %</b>
2011	Had no Grade 9	2011	65
2012	Had no Grade 9	2012	61.63
2013	Had no Grade 9	2013	70.51
2014	25	2014	64.86
2015	50	2015	65

**Grant-aided (Mission) School A**

<b>GRADE 9</b>		<b>GRADE 12</b>	
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>PASS %</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>PASS %</b>
2011	98	2011	99
2012	99	2012	96.64
2013	99	2013	97.37
2014	86	2014	97.48
2015	100	2015	100

**Grant-aided (Mission) School B**

<b>GRADE 9</b>		<b>GRADE 12</b>	
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>PASS %</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>PASS %</b>
2011	100	2011	99
2012	99	2012	100
2013	99	2013	95.88
2014	98	2014	96.97
2015	100	2015	98

**Private School A**

<b>GRADE 9</b>		<b>GRADE 12</b>	
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>PASS %</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>PASS %</b>
2011	100	2011	99
2012	97	2012	97.30
2013	98	2013	97.70
2014	96	2014	97.06
2015	97	2015	98

**Private School B**

<b>GRADE 9</b>		<b>GRADE 12</b>	
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>PASS %</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>PASS %</b>
2011	70	2011	67
2012	75	2012	65.79
2013	65	2013	84
2014	64	2014	57.69
2015	69	2015	69

## Appendix vii: INTRODUCTORY LETTER FROM ASSISTANT DEAN PG-EDUCATION



### THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Telephone: 291381  
Telegram: UNZA, LUSAKA  
Telex: UNZALU ZA 44370

PO Box 32379  
Lusaka, Zambia  
Fax: +260-1-292702

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> NOV. 2015

#### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

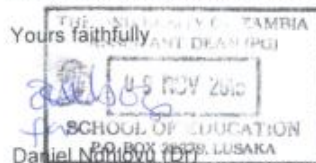
#### RE: FIELD WORK FOR MASTERS / PhD STUDENTS

The bearer of this letter Mr./Ms. KADMA GODFREY KUNDA Computer number 513803573 is a duly registered student at the University of Zambia, School of Education.

He/She is taking a Masters/PhD programme in Education. The programme has a fieldwork component which he/she has to complete.

We shall greatly appreciate if the necessary assistance is rendered to him/her/

Yours faithfully



Daniel Nkhosho  
ASSISTANT DEAN POSTGRADUATE STUDIES- SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

cc. Director, DRGS  
Dean, Education

## Appendix viii: AUTHORITY LETTER FROM LUSAKA DEBS

*All correspondence should be addressed  
to the District Education Board Secretary  
Telephone: 0211-240250 / 240249 / 0955 623749  
E-mail: desbstsk@yahoo.co.uk*



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EARLY EDUCATION**  
**DISTRICT EDUCATION BOARD SECRETARY**  
**P.O. BOX 50297**  
**LUSAKA**

*In reply please quote:*

*No. ....*

5 February 2016

The Assistant Dean Postgraduate Studies  
School of Education  
University of Zambia  
P.O. Box 32379  
LUSAKA

**RE: FIELD WORK FOR MASTERS/PHD STUDENTS KAOMA GODFREY KUNDA: NO 51380373**

Reference is made to your minute dated 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015 concerning Field work for Masters and PhD students.

I am pleased to inform you that this office has no objection and authority has been granted for the above mentioned subject.

Vincent Zgambo (Mr.)  
DISTRICT EDUCATION BOARD SECRETARY  
LUSAKA DISTRICT

## Appendix ix: LIST OF SCHOOLS IN LUSAKA PROVINCE

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION SCIENCE VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EARLY EDUCATION  
LUSAKA PROVINCE  
GRADE 12 EXAMINATION RESULTS

SN	DISTRICT	CODE	SCHOOL	RA	School Certificate %			Ranking in the province		
					2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
1	LUANGWA	9015	KATONDWE GIRLS SEC. SCHOOL	GRANT	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	1	1	1
2	CHONGWE	9017	KASIM GIRLS SECONDARY SCHOOL	GRANT	98.25%	100.00%	100.00%	2	1	1
3	LUSAKA	9025	IBEX HILL SECONDARY SCHOOL	PRIVATE	91.67%	96.00%	100.00%	3	1	1
4	KAFUE	9027	MALUNDU SECONDARY	PRIVATE	98.18%	95.92%	100.00%	4	1	1
5	CHILANGA	9031	MAKENI ISLAMIC SCHOOL	PRIVATE	82.14%	100.00%	100.00%	5	1	1
6	LUSAKA	9251	MARY QUEEN OF PEACE	PRIVATE	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	6	1	1
7	KAFUE	9020	KAFUE SECONDARY SCHOOL	GRANT	98.53%	98.46%	99.24%	7	7	7
8	LUSAKA	9005	ST. MARYS SECONDARY SCHOOL	GRANT	98.85%	100.00%	98.53%	8	1	8
9	LUSAKA	9018	LAKE ROAD	PRIVATE	100.00%	98.18%	97.50%	9	8	9
10	LUSAKA	9001	ROMA GIRLS SECONDARY SCHOOL	GRANT	96.64%	97.37%	97.48%	10	10	10
11	LUSAKA	9302	THORNHILL DAY BOARDING (pvt)	PRIVATE	98.51%	95.65%	97.22%	11	11	11
12	LUSAKA	9080	RHODES PARK SCHOOL	PRIVATE	97.30%	97.70%	97.06%	12	12	12
13	LUSAKA	9003	MATERO BOYS SECONDARY SCHOOL	GRANT	100.00%	95.88%	96.97%	13	13	13
14	CHILANGA	9407	KASAMU SCHOOL (Pvt)	PRIVATE	88.00%	100.00%	95.65%	14	14	14
15	LUSAKA	9374	CRESTED CRANE ACADEMY PVT	PRIVATE	88.57%	94.55%	95.56%	15	15	15
16	LUSAKA	9383	PESTALOZZI EDUCATION CENTRE	PRIVATE			94.87%	16	16	16
17	LUSAKA	9297	HERMAN GMEINER HIGH SCHOOL	PRIVATE	97.01%	92.59%	93.33%	17	17	17
18	LUSAKA	9319	TICK SCHOOL (Pvt)	PRIVATE	94.12%	93.88%	92.86%	18	18	18
19	CHILANGA	9301	ROSEBANK SCHOOL	PRIVATE	80.23%	94.52%	90.48%	19	19	19
20	LUSAKA	9288	KINGS HIGHWAY SDA (Pvt)	PRIVATE	90.74%	65.83%	90.32%	20	20	20
21	CHILANGA	9377	LONGRIDGE PRIVATE SCHOOL	PRIVATE			83.33%	21	21	21
22	LUSAKA	9299	LUMUMBA ROAD SECONDARY SCHOOL (pvt)	PRIVATE	48.28%	53.33%	78.57%	22	22	22
23	CHONGWE	9240	MUKAMAMBO II GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL	GRZ	80.63%	81.74%	78.49%	23	23	23
24	CHONGWE	9068	MIKANGO HIGH SCHOOL	GRZ	73.55%	77.27%	77.17%	24	24	24
25	KAFUE	9113	CHITENDE HIGH SCHOOL	GRZ	66.67%	81.48%	76.67%	25	25	25
26	LUSAKA	9137	HIGHLAND HIGH SCHOOL	GRZ	69.78%	67.29%	73.12%	26	26	26
27	LUANGWA	9012	LUANGWA SECONDARY (BOARDING)	GRZ	62.90%	75.58%	72.66%	27	27	27
28	LUSAKA	9087	CHILENI SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL	GRZ	77.07%	58.99%	72.62%	28	28	28
29	LUSAKA	9006	LILALA SECONDARY SCHOOL	GRZ	63.08%	64.54%	72.04%	29	29	29
30	LUSAKA	9378	ARAKAN GIRLS SECONDARY SCHOOL	GRZ			66.83%	30	30	30
31	LUSAKA	9011	DAVID KAUNDA SEC. TECHNICAL	GRZ	76.25%	74.11%	66.67%	31	31	31
32	LUSAKA	9007	ARAKAN BARRACKS	GRZ	65.95%	72.61%	66.04%	32	32	32
33	LUSAKA	9220	CHUDLEIGH HOUSE SCHOOL	PRIVATE	84.62%	78.57%	65.79%	33	33	33
34	CHIRUNDU	3227	CHIRUNDU HIGH SCHOOL	GRZ			65.00%	34	34	34
35	LUSAKA	9030	OLYMPIA HIGH SCHOOL	GRZ	61.63%	70.51%	64.86%	35	35	35
36	LUSAKA	9013	KAMWALA SECONDARY SCHOOL	GRZ	61.63%	56.09%	61.85%	36	36	36
37	KAFUE	9008	NABOYE SECONDARY SCHOOL	GRZ	62.55%	69.38%	61.36%	37	37	37
38	LUSAKA	9303	LUSAKA HIGH SCHOOL (GRZ)	GRZ	64.53%	64.80%	60.56%	38	38	38
39	CHILANGA	9380	MWEMBESHI SECONDARY SCHOOL	GRZ			60.00%	39	39	39
40	LUSAKA	9034	CHELSTONE HIGH SCHOOL	GRZ	58.70%	55.89%	59.78%	40	40	40
41	LUANGWA	9294	MWAVI SCHOOL	GRZ	58.89%	57.75%	59.72%	41	41	41
42	LUSAKA	9002	KABULONGA GIRLS SEC. SCHOOL	GRZ	64.32%	60.89%	59.67%	42	42	42
43	LUSAKA	9223	MUNALI GIRLS	GRZ	58.04%	59.90%	58.95%	43	43	43
44	LUSAKA	9298	KAMULANGA HIGH SCHOOL	GRZ	66.06%	54.74%	58.93%	44	44	44
45	CHONGWE	9009	CHONGWE SECONDARY (BOARDING)	GRZ	60.74%	64.54%	58.82%	45	45	45
46	LUSAKA	9014	MUNALI SECONDARY SCHOOL	GRZ	59.47%	61.98%	58.68%	46	46	46
47	SHIBUYUNI	7119	NAMPUNDWE HIGH SCHOOL	GRZ			58.49%	47	47	47
48	LUSAKA	9307	FIRSTRATE INTERNATIONAL (PVT)	PRIVATE	65.79%	84.00%	57.69%	48	48	48
49	CHILANGA	9016	PARKLANDS SECONDARY SCHOOL	GRZ	58.18%	63.24%	56.54%	49	49	49
50	CHIRUNDU	3117	LUSITU HIGH SCHOOL	GRZ			55.30%	50	50	50
51	LUSAKA	9382	LADY DIANA PRIVATE	PRIVATE			54.96%	51	51	51
52	KAFUE	9026	KAFUE DAY SECONDARY SCHOOL	GRZ	61.41%	62.40%	54.92%	52	52	52
53	LUSAKA	9086	CHUNGA HIGH SCHOOL	GRZ	51.04%	47.08%	54.24%	53	53	53
54	LUSAKA	9010	KABULONGA BOYS SEC. SCHOOL	GRZ	65.24%	62.16%	54.01%	54	54	54
55	LUSAKA	9323	GOSPEL OUTREACH CHRISTIAN ACADEMY (PVT)	PRIVATE	92.00%	84.93%	53.50%	55	55	55
56	LUSAKA	9295	ZIPAS HIGH SCHOOL	PRIVATE	48.35%	47.96%	52.50%	56	56	56
57	LUSAKA	9035	CHINKA HIGH SCHOOL	GRZ	50.57%	49.52%	51.80%	57	57	57
58	LUSAKA	9373	I.M. ACADEMY (PVT)	PRIVATE	80.00%	44.29%	51.67%	58	58	58
59	LUSAKA	9339	MUTEMA-CHIME SCHOOL (Pvt)	PRIVATE	47.06%	32.47%	51.16%	59	59	59
60	LUSAKA	9300	DOLLY DOLAK CHRISTIAN SCHOOL (pvt)	PRIVATE	37.74%	24.14%	50.00%	60	60	60
61	LUSAKA	9316	WILLOWS HIGH SCHOOL (Pvt)	PRIVATE	38.76%	45.85%	49.69%	61	61	61
62	LUSAKA	9296	TINA TRUST SCHOOL	PRIVATE	100.00%	79.17%	48.53%	62	62	62
63	LUSAKA	9004	MATERO GIRLS SECONDARY SCHOOL	GRZ	48.73%	42.71%	48.11%	63	63	63
64	LUSAKA	9322	TAOMISA TRUST SCHOOL (Pvt)	PRIVATE	49.44%	33.80%	47.84%	64	64	64
65	LUSAKA	9289	DON GORDON SCHOOL (Pvt)	PRIVATE	67.27%	37.10%	43.50%	65	65	65
66	LUSAKA	9272	TUM SECONDARY (PVT)	PRIVATE	50.00%	44.91%	39.13%	66	66	66
LUSAKA PROVINCE					62.48%	61.59%	61.78%	4	4	4

PREPARED BY SENIOR PLANNING OFFICER