

**Article**

## **Teachers' Perceptions Towards In-Service Degree Qualifications in Primary Schools in Zambia**

Thomas Musantu, Peggy Mwanza

Department of Educational Administration and Policy Studies,

The University of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia

thomasmusantu@gmail.com, pmwanza2014@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

The study investigated teachers' perceptions towards in-service degree qualifications in primary schools particularly in Mbala District of Zambia. The study sampled participants using purposive, snowball and simple random sampling methods to come up with a sample size of 106 respondents. Interviews guides and document analysis were used to obtain qualitative data which was analysed using thematic analysis. Quantitative data were collected using questionnaires. It were analysed using descriptive statistics. The Study employed a sequential exploratory mixed methods research design. The study revealed that there was a mismatch between primary school curriculum and in-service degree qualifications acquired with regards to knowledge, content, pedagogy, curriculum and the primary school curriculum's learning experiences. The study also revealed that in-service degree qualifications provided minimal contribution in primary schools because it was single or double subject specialisation based type of qualifications which negatively affected the teaching of all subjects in the primary school curriculum. The study revealed that there was a minimal contribution of in-service degree qualifications towards effective instructional delivery and learner achievements. The study also found that a huge mismatch existed between teachers' in-service degree qualifications and principles of primary school curriculum; which contributed to increased stock of underutilized and misplaced in-service degree qualifications in public primary schools. The study concluded that the degree qualifications were not reflective of suggested instructional strategies provided in the primary school curriculum and this negatively affected learning experiences particularly the reading levels in primary schools. The study further concluded that there was a minimal link between primary teacher's certificate/diploma qualifications and in-service degree qualifications. Therefore, the inconsistency between primary curriculum and degree qualifications contributed to teachers failing to integrate degree qualifications knowledge in instructional delivery in primary schools. The study recommends that the Ministry of General Education should come up with a clear stand-alone policy on in-service professional qualifications that may encourage teachers in primary schools to study programmes in line with the principles of primary education curriculum. The Ministry of General Education

needs to work with institutions of higher learning that offer in-service degree qualifications to revise the in-service degree qualifications training curriculum and adopt a non- subject based type of training curriculum so as to suit the non-specialization teaching in primary schools. The Government should create and gazette more degree qualifications vacancies on the primary school payroll so as to address the issue of delays in reassessment and minimize teachers' exodus and attrition.

Keywords: In-Service Degree Qualifications, Instructional Delivery, Perception.

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

Over the years, most countries had placed teacher in-service qualifications at the forefront of the national educational policies. For Zambia, the major policy reforms in education particularly teacher training were meant to overhaul the teacher trainings in order to meet the needed teaching qualifications to suit the aspirations of education provision of an independent Zambia (Mwanakatwe, 1977). Reforms in primary teacher training aimed at standardising and diversifying teacher professional qualifications, besides relating the content to meet the needs of the learners. Therefore, teachers needed to acquire teacher training not once but continuously to deepen and widen professional qualifications already acquired. To implement the education reforms in primary schools, the government introduced the Zambia Primary Course (ZPC) for teachers that focused on developing competences in primary teachers that would enable them teach all primary grades (Manchishi, 1996).

In 1970, Chalimbana Teacher Training College became the National In-Service Training College (NISTCOL) to offer teacher in-service training and played a pivotal role in retraining in-service primary teachers who wished to upgrade their professional qualifications. In-service teacher training offered at NISTCOL was long term. Long term teacher in-service trainings are conceived as organised procedures by which individuals learn and acquire new knowledge and skills for definite purpose (Oluoch, 2002). Additionally, training and retraining of primary teachers in Zambia Primary Course were in line with the primary curriculum. Kelly (1999) shared that, teachers who were retrained positively contributed to learning achievements in primary schools. This showed that well-planned long term in-service trainings were capable of enhancing increased performance and enabling teachers to cope with the ever-increasing technological advancement in modern education systems. The reform in teacher training was pronounced in accordance with the principles of democracy which made the education training in Zambia to become liberal in 1991.

The liberalisation of in-service teacher training provision in 1990 was meant to enable serving teachers to have increased access to in-service qualifications. Policy reforms in teacher training contributed to an influx of in-service qualifications in primary schools. Liberalisation of in-service teacher trainings narrowed the gap that hindered serving teachers' access to in-service qualifications. Though in-service degree qualifications' programmes introduced by public and private institutions of higher learning for teachers in primary schools were all subject



specialisation based. This appeared to have contradicted the Zambia Primary Course in-service programmes offered to serving teachers at Chalimbana and the principles of primary school curriculum which was tailored to provide increased knowledge and skills to teachers to teach all subjects in primary grades (Grades 1-7) and not subject specialisation (Mwanakatwe, 1977).

The primary curriculum framework constituted that an interactive activity between teachers' in-service qualifications and the learning experiences was expected to produce positive learning outcomes in the learner in all subjects (Curriculum Development Centre, 2013). When such an activity failed to produce change in learning outcomes, then there was a problem. Hence, the contribution of in-service professional qualifications needed to be checked because, teachers were acquiring in-service qualifications however stock of in-service degree qualifications seemingly not to have had a positive influence on instructional provision in primary schools. For instance, Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Measuring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) observed that some qualified teachers were failing to apply modern pedagogies and expose learners' hands on experiences in classroom so as to influence a positive change in learning achievements in primary schools (SACMEQ, 2012). Additionally, the basic principles of in-service qualifications embodied programmes such as demand driven; focus on institutional needs, and subject to avoiding too much dilution at the lower levels (MoE, 2016a). However, the basic principles cited appeared not to have fallen in line with in-service teacher qualifications in primary schools. Consequently, Mahmoud (1999) noted that the intention of in-service training has always been to enhance professional as well as personal development of teachers so as to provide its benefits to learners they teach, classes they deal with and schools they serve.

The ultimate predominate goals had been to improve the teaching climate and to make the provision of teacher qualifications absorb various changes that concerned the education system teachers were serving. However, the significant benefit of in-service degree qualifications in primary schools showed few verified evidences of research. In addition, low learner achievements continued to be reported in National Learners Achievements Assessment Surveys and Educational Statistical Bulletins (MoE, 2015, 2016b; ECZ, 2015). Therefore, it was imperative to investigate teachers' perceptions towards in-service degree qualifications in primary schools particularly in Mbala District of Zambia.

## 1.2 Significance of the Study

Global changes in education reforms, technological advancements and liberalisation of the education systems in education provision and trainings, in-service teacher trainings appear central on the agenda of the 21<sup>st</sup> century education systems as it engages already working teachers update their skills, knowledge content and pedagogies. Nevertheless, teacher's in-service degrees were subject based qualifications and yet there was no subject based specialisation mode of teaching in public primary schools. Therefore, it was worthy knowing how teacher's in-service degree qualifications contributed to quality education; hence the study became more and more relevant to critically investigate teachers' perceptions towards in-service degree qualifications. The study was very significant as it generated information that would be adopted for use as baseline information for in-service human resource development



training planning in primary schools; added up to the existing body of knowledge on impact of teacher's in-service qualifications in primary schools; and provided critically analysed evidence that could be used as secondary literature to other further research in related studies.

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

The Ministry of General Education provides a coordinating role in ensuring that serving teachers continue retraining and acquire quality in-service qualifications because the higher the level of professional qualifications attainment by teachers, the higher the education standards in the country (MOE, 1996). Years after the liberalisation of teacher training provision in 1991, many already working teachers in primary schools have been upgrading their initial qualifications to degree qualifications through long term in-service training particularly degree qualifications. Despite an influx in acquiring in-service degree qualifications by serving teachers in primary schools, little information was known on how in-service degree qualifications impacted on quality service delivery in educational provision in public primary schools because in-service degree qualifications were subject based programmes; and yet there was no subject based teaching in public primary schools. Hence, this study endeavoured to investigate teacher's perceptions towards in-service degree qualifications in public primary schools.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The following were the research objectives to:

1. investigate how in-service degree qualifications contribute on teachers' effectiveness in service delivery in public primary schools.
2. ascertain how teachers in-service degree qualifications benefit learners in public primary schools.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The following were the research questions:

1. How does an in-service degree qualification contribute on teachers' effectiveness in service delivery in public primary schools?
2. How do teachers' in-service degree qualifications benefit learners in public primary schools?

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

In-service teacher training is an organised learning experience, which is provided for a teacher after his/her appointment and designed to develop the understanding of work operations standards, institution, philosophy, policies, procedures, as well as current research results (Lamb, 1995). This description by Lamb (1995) was supported by Roberts (1998) who view that, it is an avenue for teachers to remain on the job while at the same time seeking for additional knowledge and skills which can enable them improve in teaching. In-service trainings thus provide opportunity for already employed teachers to learn new procedures, approaches, and techniques in the use of teaching materials. In India, for instance through National Policy on Education, special efforts were made to provide in-service teacher education

for the professional development of teachers at all levels. Similarly, Zambia through the National education policy *Educating our Future* of 1996 also recognises the importance of in-service training as key in enabling serving teachers enhance their knowledge, skills and pedagogy necessary for 21<sup>st</sup> century education systems (MOE, 1996).

Tiega (2012) observes that, in-service training increases the staff personnel's productivity by helping them to improve the quality and quantity of their work. It develops their productivity which enhances capabilities and their job satisfaction. In this regard, it is worth noting that in-service training promotes efficiency and effectiveness on the job thus reducing the management problems associated with absenteeism, turnover and job restrictions among teachers. Tiega further notes that in-service trainings enable teachers to acquire qualifications that reduce the need for supervision because the staff personnel learn new work methods and how to handle job tasks and to adjust to changes with minimal coaching and supervision.

On one hand, some scholars argue that, in-service training increases the staff personnel's value and that of the institution and prepares officers for promotion and other upward social mobility. For instance, Khan (2008) conducted a study to examine the impact of in-service teacher trainings through second science education project. The study was aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of in-service teacher training programme of second science education project for science teachers and found that the training resulted in an improvement in the content knowledge, delivery skills, lab management skills and professional attitude of in-service science teachers. Hussain (2004) conducted a similar research to study the performance of trained primary school teachers with and those without in-service training in Hazera Division. The main focus of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of in-service training programmes. The researcher collected data through observation of the performance of both trained and untrained teachers and found that primary teachers trained through different in-service teacher training programmes, were effective and performed better, than the untrained teachers.

In a study of first grade reading and mathematics achievement using the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study Kindergarten class of 1998-1999, Cringer et al. (2007) found that, teacher qualifications did have a moderate effect on reading achievement but there were no teacher qualifications that served as a predictor for achievement in mathematics. The authors contributed the moderate effect on reading achievement to the disproportionate amount of time devoted to reading instruction at the first grade level and indicated there might be a stronger relationship for math in later grades. This study correlates with a study and findings of Oholiab and Adebayo (2012) who in their study on *Effect of Teachers' Qualifications on the Performance of Senior Secondary School Physics Students: Implication on Technology in Nigeria* to examine the effect of teachers' qualifications on the performance of Senior Secondary School students in Physics; found that students taught by teachers with higher qualifications performed better than those taught by teachers with lower qualifications. It also shows that students performed better in physics when taught by professional teachers. The result also showed that teacher's gender has no effect on their ability to impact knowledge on the students, much as he/she is a skilled teacher in that field of study. However, Dee (2004) and Nye, et al. (2004) research indicates either insignificant or in some cases even negative



associations between possession of graduate degrees by a teacher and their students' achievement in either mathematics or reading. On the other hand, other scholars argue that teachers' professional qualifications are not significantly related to students' academic achievement (Rifkin et al., 2005; Kimani et al., 2013).

Chidlow (1996) also supports that, there was actually a significant negative correlation between those teachers with higher qualifications and positive learners' outcomes. Feng and Sass (2010) also indicate that, "in-service professional development for teachers has little effect on their ability to increase the achievement gains of students". Similarly, Aaronson et al. (2007) found little or no difference in teacher effectiveness among Chicago Public School teachers with different college majors; except for positive correlations between possession of a master's degree and elementary mathematics achievement found by Betts et al. (2003). Further, the above findings were in conformity with Adaramola and Obomanu (2011) in Nigeria who noted that lack of qualified teachers led to consistent poor performance of students in science subjects.

In Zambia, a study conducted by Maguswi (2011) on factors contributing to under achievement of Zambian female students in O-level Physics examinations found that, lack of qualified teachers of Physics had a significant contribution to low achievements in the subject. Similarly, Jacob and Lefgren (2004) pin that marginal increases in-service training have no statistically or academically significant effect on either reading or math achievement, suggesting that modest investments in staff development may not be sufficient to increase the achievement of elementary school children in high poverty schools. Jacob and Lefgren (2004) argument was supported by Harris and Sass (2006) who studied the effects of various types of education and training on the ability of teachers to promote student achievement and found no evidence that either pre-service (undergraduate) training or the scholastic aptitude of teachers influences their ability to increase student achievement.

A survey conducted by Joyce and Showers (1980) noted that lack of training to a great deal has been responsible for the inefficiently and ineffectiveness so commonly observed in the performance of many educational systems. The quality education provision demands knowledge, skills and attitudes that would enable the teachers to work effectively. This entails the need for a systematic and consistent teacher to enable them to discharge their duties effectively. The review of the above literature showed that teachers' in-service qualifications were critical to the attainment of primary education curriculum goals. In addition, the review of related literature showed little research was conducted to ascertain the contribution of in-service teacher degree qualifications towards quality education provision in primary schools in Zambia. This study endeavoured to fill this void.

### **3. Methodology**

The study followed a mixed methods design particularly exploratory sequential design employing a pragmatist paradigm. The population for research comprised all teachers with in-service degree qualifications, headteachers of public primary schools and District Education office officials. The respondents were selected through purposive, snowball and simple random sampling methods. Total sample size was consisted of 106 participants. That is; Only 15

teachers; 8 headteachers; 1 Human Resource Management Officer; 1 Education Standards Officer-Open and Distance Education; and 1 District Resource Centre Coordinator formed the sample size of the first phase of the study; and 60 teachers with in-service degree qualifications and 20 headteachers formed the sample size for second phase. The research collected data through in-depth interviews, document observation and questionnaires. Qualitative data collected was analysed through thematic analysis. Quantitative data collected was analysed Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences to generate graphs, percentages, pie charts and frequencies and tables.

#### **4. Research Findings and Discussion**

The study investigated perceptions on in-service degree qualifications contribution towards instructional delivery in selected public primary schools. The collection of research data was guided by the following research questions:

1. How did in-service degree qualifications help teachers in primary schools?
2. What motivated teachers in primary schools for acquiring in-service degree qualifications?

##### **4.1 In-Service Degree Qualifications and Instructional Delivery**

Serving teachers in primary schools were found to be passionate for acquiring in-service degree qualifications to upgrade their professional qualifications. This finding was in tandem with Lamb (1995) who pin pointed that, it was an avenue for teachers to remain on the job while at the same time seeking for additional knowledge and skills which can enable them improve in teaching. Therefore, it was worthy to point that in-service qualifications provided an opportunity for already employed teachers to learn new procedures, approaches, and techniques in the use in instructional delivery. Though teachers acquired higher in-service professional qualifications, it was revealed by the study findings that teachers were failing to use degree qualifications knowledge in instructional delivery in primary schools.

The findings are in line with the findings by SACMEQ (2015) that, in sub-Saharan Africa, some teacher qualifications fail to expose learners to hands-on experiences which resulted in low academic achievements in the learners. Additionally, this was attributed to the fact that many teachers had acquired degree qualifications in secondary education which compiled teachers to specialise in one or two subjects while teaching in primary schools where teaching was non specialisation based. Figure 1.



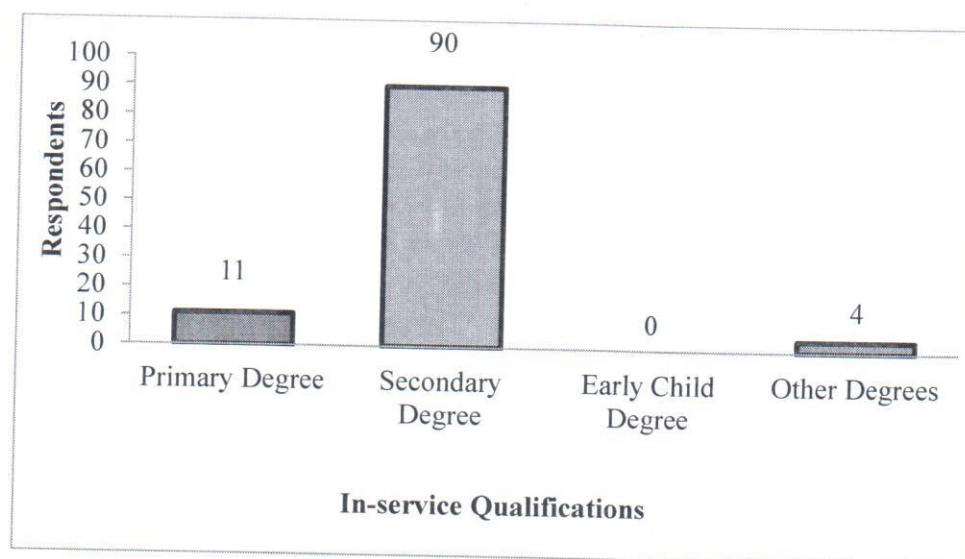


Figure 1: Participants In-Service Professional Qualifications by Degree Type

The study found that in-service degree qualifications were not fitting well in primary school instructional delivery because teacher competence was not appropriate to the ability levels of learners in primary schools. Habiba (2004) advised that "competency is a knowledge skill, or characteristic we want students to acquire." It is a very common fact, if a trained teacher teaches the students; the performance of the students is good because in the process of education the teacher is considered the most crucial element. This shows that the competence levels of the in-service teacher degree qualifications to help in instructional delivery needed was supposed to be in line with the ability levels of learners in a particular education sector.

Specialised education is associated with better child outcomes and improved staff competences to provide suitable pedagogical learning opportunities. The findings revealed that degree qualifications have benefits to learners in secondary schools where subject-based qualifications of teachers are significant. It is noted that in primary schools degree only benefit learners in one subject to the teachers' areas of specialisation. This shows that in-service degree qualifications of staff affects the quality learning outcomes primarily because the knowledge, skills and competencies that are transmitted are only effective in one subject area and the rest of the subject areas suffer. This is supported by Fives (2003) that, staff with specialised type of qualifications believe in their ability to organise and execute the courses of action necessary to bring about desired results. Qualifications can matter in terms of which skill sets and what knowledge are recognised as important for working with young children.

#### 4.2 Degree Qualifications and Primary Teaching Pedagogies

A gap existed between teachers' in-service degree qualifications and intended primary teaching pedagogy suggested in the primary school curriculum. This was because of the mismatch in terms of pedagogies, course content, learning experiences of degree qualifications and intended pedagogy to suit the ability levels of learners in primary schools. This contributed to teachers



failing to apply degree qualifications content in instructional delivery because of minimal link between degree qualifications and primary teaching pedagogies.

The study showed that teachers who relied on their degree qualifications knowledge methods and techniques of teaching, content and instructional strategies were failing to expose learners to the experiences in primary schools. Therefore, to provide instructional delivery degree qualifications holders were limited to use pre-service certificate knowledge and skills.

#### **4.3 In-Service professional Qualifications Enhanced Instructional Strategies**

Pre-service certificate qualification enhanced teacher instructional strategies because the qualification was tailored in line with principles of primary curriculum and learning experiences to suit the different ability levels of learners. This was in supportive of Mwanakatwe (1977) who observed that, the highest qualification for primary school teachers in colonial times and few years after independence was a certificate in teaching but instructional delivery effective and learning achievements were high as the certificate qualification in teaching after was tailored to suit the primary curriculum.

The mismatch in in-service degree qualifications and primary suggested primary school instructional strategies in primary school curriculum contributed to teachers failing to enhance effective instructional strategies in classroom. Degree qualifications instructional strategies were tailored to apply to learners in senior classes and students in higher learning institutions and not learners in primary schools because of the nature of knowledge content, pedagogy which needed high levels of cognitive domain in learning and teaching. Therefore, the instructional strategies for degree qualifications were not intended for primary school learners. Degree qualifications instructional approaches exposed learners to high levels of knowledge and learning experiences which suitable ability levels which was not the intentions primary school curriculum.

#### **4.4 Integration of Degree Qualifications Knowledge**

Teacher qualifications are an integral part of quality education provision to every education system. This means that upgrading initial qualification improves teacher effectiveness on work performance which in turn influences learner achievements in schools. The finding above was in tandem with Fukkink and Lont (2007); and Mitchell and Cubey (2003) who similarly quote that, “a well-trained practitioner does not only have a good initial level of education but makes sure that the effects of initial education do not fade out”. The findings of the study found that the influx of working teachers in primary schools acknowledged that, the effectiveness of every serving teacher develops through acquiring in-service teacher qualifications.

However, the study show that teacher’s in-service degree qualifications contributed less to teacher effectiveness in service delivery in public primary schools; because many teachers in primary schools were obtaining degree qualifications in secondary school teaching which was not suitable for producing the calibre of professionally trained teachers in the type of degree qualifications required for enhancing teacher’s effectiveness in service delivery in primary school education. The findings further indicate that teachers with in-service degree qualifications were finding it difficult to apply in-service degree qualification in secondary



school teaching knowledge content in primary teaching as it was not matching with the ability levels and pedagogy that suited the learners in primary schools.

#### **4.5 Motivational Power of In-service Degree Qualifications**

Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations play an importance role in enhancing increased quality service delivery of employees. The study found that, effective service delivery was affected by low motivation of teachers with in-service degree qualifications in primary schools. It was found that many teachers had developed low motivation levels towards service delivery as the knowledge content from subject based degree qualifications showed a minimal linkage with the pedagogies design for implementing primary school curriculum. It was also found both primary and secondary education degrees had minimal motivational drive on the part of teachers and learners as they were only capable to acquaint teachers with knowledge and skills in only one subject area and yet primary school education required a teacher to have knowledge and skills in all subjects on the primary education curriculum. This finding was in tandem with Ajala (2000) that teacher education programs in Nigerian Universities seem to be weak and inadequate because in-service programs were not tailored to adequately expose in-service graduate teacher to the needs of primary education curriculum. This information was in keeping with the report of Iyamu and Otote (2006) in their assessment of inquiry teaching competencies of professionally trained graduate and non-graduate teachers in South Central Nigeria that professionally trained teachers in pre-service training demonstrated more competence compared to the graduate (B.Ed.) teachers. They noted that this finding reflects the pedagogy gap between the knowledge content of in-service degree qualifications and knowledge need of the primary curriculum.

However, the study found that if teacher's in-service degree qualifications were tailored to include all subjects in primary education in one degree programme was going to be capable of enhancing teacher effectiveness in primary schools as the degrees content would fall within the principles and suggested learning outcomes in the primary education curriculum. The finding was supported of Ali (1992) who similarly emphasised the need for teachers to keep abreast in their field of study in order to be able to communicate their knowledge effectively. This shows that the contribution of in-service degree qualifications are significant when teachers are professionally in-service program directly connected the education sector in which they are serving. As noted by Richards (1998) in-service training fills gaps and equips teachers with skills and updates their content knowledge. Richards (1998) further asserts that in order to be effective, teachers' professional development should address the core areas of teaching content, curriculum, assessment and instruction.

This therefore meant that anyone with in-service degree qualifications in primary school could only qualify to be reassessed based on degree qualification by occupying the position of headteacher and once the position of the teacher is filled up in a particular primary school, any other teacher with degree qualifications could not be reassessed. In this regard, the study found that there was increased stocks of teachers has acquired in-service degree qualifications secondary school teaching but teaching in primary schools.



school teaching knowledge content in primary teaching as it was not matching with the ability levels and pedagogy that suited the learners in primary schools.

#### **4.5 Motivational Power of In-service Degree Qualifications**

Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations play an importance role in enhancing increased quality service delivery of employees. The study found that, effective service delivery was affected by low motivation of teachers with in-service degree qualifications in primary schools. It was found that many teachers had developed low motivation levels towards service delivery as the knowledge content from subject based degree qualifications showed a minimal linkage with the pedagogies design for implementing primary school curriculum. It was also found both primary and secondary education degrees had minimal motivational drive on the part of teachers and learners as they were only capable to acquaint teachers with knowledge and skills in only one subject area and yet primary school education required a teacher to have knowledge and skills in all subjects on the primary education curriculum. This finding was in tandem with Ajala (2000) that teacher education programs in Nigerian Universities seem to be weak and inadequate because in-service programs were not tailored to adequately expose in-service graduate teacher to the needs of primary education curriculum. This information was in keeping with the report of Iyamu and Otote (2006) in their assessment of inquiry teaching competencies of professionally trained graduate and non-graduate teachers in South Central Nigeria that professionally trained teachers in pre-service training demonstrated more competence compared to the graduate (B.Ed.) teachers. They noted that this finding reflects the pedagogy gap between the knowledge content of in-service degree qualifications and knowledge need of the primary curriculum.

However, the study found that if teacher's in-service degree qualifications were tailored to include all subjects in primary education in one degree programme was going to be capable of enhancing teacher effectiveness in primary schools as the degrees content would fall within the principles and suggested learning outcomes in the primary education curriculum. The finding was supported of Ali (1992) who similarly emphasised the need for teachers to keep abreast in their field of study in order to be able to communicate their knowledge effectively. This shows that the contribution of in-service degree qualifications are significant when teachers are professionally in-service program directly connected the education sector in which they are serving. As noted by Richards (1998) in-service training fills gaps and equips teachers with skills and updates their content knowledge. Richards (1998) further asserts that in order to be effective, teachers' professional development should address the core areas of teaching content, curriculum, assessment and instruction.

This therefore meant that anyone with in-service degree qualifications in primary school could only qualify to be reassessed based on degree qualification by occupying the position of headteacher and once the position of the teacher is filled up in a particular primary school, any other teacher with degree qualifications could not be reassessed. In this regard, the study found that there was increased stocks of teachers has acquired in-service degree qualifications secondary school teaching but teaching in primary schools.



#### 4.6 Continuing Professional Development Decay

Banda (2013) in his study on Continuing Professional Development through Sustainable In-service Teacher Training System in Kenya, Malawi and Zambia notes that a teacher is critical in modeling a learner. However, further observes that, “nothing has promised so much and has been so frustrating wasteful as the thousands of workshops and conferences that lead to no significant change in practice when the teachers return to their classrooms”. Neither teacher participants nor workshop leaders are satisfied with the results of their efforts” (Fullan, 1991). Developing countries inclusive of Kenya, Malawi and Zambia are not exempted in this quest. This is in line with the findings of this study that, teachers who acquired in-service degree qualifications show no competence in influencing and stimulating teaching and learning processes. The study found that, teachers with degree qualifications continued using traditional methods of teaching while the 21<sup>st</sup> century recommended pedagogy in primary teaching which encouraged the use of teaching methods that engaged the learners into situation interactions, and active play with imploring trends in the world around them.

Ainscow (2004) illustrated that just as successful classrooms offer the conditions that support and promote all children’s learning, so a successful move toward teacher development must address contextual matters in order to create the conditions that help out the learning. In-service education grew in importance relative to pre-service training of new teachers. Ainscow also observes that, in-service education was expected, would transmit the findings of research on effective teaching and effective schools and respond to demands for developing student achievement. However, the study found that, in-service degree qualifications were not capable of stimulating teaching and learning processes.

Comment by Headteacher:

*Some courses our teachers are studying are not even teaching course, some are doing Law, some economics, now which new knowledge; skill and methodology can a primary school teacher use from those courses to stimulate teaching and learning processes in primary schools?*

According to Banda (2013), Zambia can learn from Feiman-Nemser (2001) who says that the quality of our nation’s schools depends on the quality of our nation’s teachers. Banda notes that, if we want schools to produce more powerful learning on the part of students, we have to offer more powerful learning opportunities to teachers; and that unless teachers have access to serious and sustained learning opportunities at every stage in their career, they are unlikely to teach in ways that meet demanding new standards for student learning or to participate in the solution of educational problems. The study found that the low learner achievement in public primary schools was as a result of the nature of quality of in-service teacher qualifications teachers received. The study further found that there was a huge gap between the primary curriculum and the knowledge content, skills and methodology acquired from in-service teacher qualifications. The study shows that there was not linkage what so ever between in-service degree qualifications knowledge content and the primary curriculum to benefit the learners.



#### 4.7 Benefits of In-Service Degree Qualifications to Learners in Primary Schools

Teaching learners how to read and write is core business in primary schools especially in the lower grades (Grades 1-4). Participants who were interviewed indicated that reading levels were very low in public primary schools in Mbala district. The study found the stock of degree qualifications were failing to influence enhanced instructional delivery in primary schools to improve literacy levels among learners. Degree holders were found to be frustrated and dissatisfied with the job because their qualifications knowledge was difficult to integrate in teaching. One Teacher commented that;

*Teaching reading and writing requires basic skills which teachers acquire during teaching pre-service training. The training provides teachers to develop a foundation in a learners using literacy which makes a learner to acquire knowledge in other study areas with less difficulties. I don't think the degree qualifications have any benefit to learners who require basic knowledge to develop a learning foundation that suits their level and not degree qualifications.*

The study found that the reading levels were pathetic by learners taught by degree qualifications holder's especially that a lot of degree teachers were teaching lower grade classes. The study showed that in-service degree qualifications suitable towards the improvement of teaching and learning of literacy.

#### 4.8 In-Service Degree Qualifications and Reading Levels in Primary Schools

The reading levels of four schools were compared for a period four years 2013 to 2016 as shown in table 2. The study found that there was minimal difference in achievements between learners taught by teachers with pre-service qualifications and those with in-service degree qualifications. This showed that the teacher competence in degree qualifications was not appropriate to influence instructional delivery to improve reading levels. Findings are in line with Banda (2013) who found that; teachers who acquired in-service degree qualifications showed no competence in influencing and stimulating teaching and learning processes in primary schools.

Table 1: Literacy Reading Levels for Selected Primary Schools

		Pre-Service Certificate Qualifications			
		In-Service Degree Qualifications			
Year	School	Literacy (Reading Levels)			
		Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
2013	A	39%	40%	40%	43%
2014	B	37%	37%	42%	40%
2015	C	40%	39%	41%	43%
2016	D	37%	39%	43%	40%

Poor results in literacy were attributed to inadequacies of degree qualification course content, method and approaches for influencing learning experiences to match the intended instructional strategies used in teaching literacy in primary schools hence the variation in results for learners taught by teachers with certificate qualifications and those taught by teachers with in-service degree qualifications. Learners taught by teachers with higher qualifications were expected to perform more much better. For instance, Hussain (2004) to investigate the performance of trained primary school teachers with and without in-service training in Hazara Division. The main focus of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of in-service training programmes. For this purpose researcher collected data through observation of the performance of both, trained and untrained teachers.

The findings showed that primary teachers trained through different in-service teacher training programmes were better in performance than the untrained teachers. Similar Owolabi and Adedayo (2012) carried a study on the effects of teacher's qualification on the performance of senior secondary school physics students: the results revealed that students taught by teachers with higher qualifications performed better than those taught by teachers with lower qualifications. The study showed that the experience of the teacher is significant at impacting the students' academic performance. It was therefore noted that teachers with degree qualifications in primary schools relied on the use of pre-service certificate qualifications knowledge and skills in instructional delivery which suited instructional delivery in primary schools.

#### 4.9 Professional Qualifications Contribution to Learning and Teaching Experiences

The findings of the study revealed that degree qualifications were not reflective of principles primary curriculum to influence teacher effectiveness in coordinating instructional delivery. This was because all degree qualifications either in primary or secondary teaching was subject based qualifications which was not reflective of the suggested learning experience in primary curriculum. Besides, degree qualifications were tailored to accommodate tradition instructional strategies such as lecture methods which were most applicable for teaching learners in higher grades and this contributed to inconsistency in pedagogy. Consequently, teaching approaches and methods suggested in degree qualifications were parallel to primary education learning and teaching experiences. This was an excerpt from one teacher: Both teachers with in-service and teachers with pre-service certificate qualifications were limited to use teaching methods and learning experiences suggested in the primary curriculum. This showed that professional growth among qualified teachers was impeded because they were not practicing what they had studied as they felt that they were unable to use degree qualifications knowledge content and pedagogy in classroom teaching.

Table 2: Degree Qualifications enhanced Learning Experiences in Primary Schools

Scale	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
Response status	7	0	0	12	41

Source: Fieldwork Data, 2018



## 5. Findings

Findings of the study revealed that: forty nine (49) respondents Disagree; twelve (12) Strongly Disagree; and seven (7) Agree to a statement that service degree qualifications enhanced learning experiences in primary schools in public primary schools. This showed that teachers experienced minimal contribution of their in-service degree qualifications in instructional delivery in primary schools. Roberts (1998) supports that, it is an avenue for teachers to remain on the job while at the same time seeking for additional knowledge and skills which can enable them improve in teaching. In-service qualifications provided an opportunity for already employed teachers to learn new procedures, approaches, and techniques in the use of instructional delivery strategies.

### 5.1 Teacher Degree Qualifications and Primary School Curriculum

The findings of the study revealed that in-service degree qualifications were not reflective of primary education curriculum content and pedagogy. The study revealed that degree qualifications were not reflective of primary education curriculum. It was established that degree qualifications knowledge content was tailored for learners in senior secondary schools and not in primary schools because teachers with degree qualifications admitted of failing to apply degree qualifications knowledge content to influence positive learning outcomes based on the needs of primary school curriculum to positively benefit learners.

One Headteacher commented that:

*I don't see any benefits in in-service degree qualifications in enhancing learning in primary curriculum. Quite okay teachers are upgrading but the choice of study program is very contrary to primary education, however, it not their problem, the problem is with the design of primary education degree which seems to have no clear value in primary schools*

The findings further indicate the degree qualifications were not fitting well in the primary school curriculum as the suggested learning outcomes were contrary to the knowledge content of degree qualifications. The study found it practically failing to integrate in-service degree qualifications knowledge content into primary curriculum as degree qualifications were particularly oriented to specific subject and not all subjects as a case was with primary curriculum.

### 5.2 Degree Qualifications and Learning Achievements

The findings of the study revealed, that degree qualifications had minimal benefits to the learners. The study found that, in-service degree qualifications knowledge content was above the ability levels of learners as most of the in-service degree qualifications programme course outline suited the senior secondary school curriculum. The findings of the study further revealed that teacher were obtaining qualifications which were not in line with the ability levels of learners and the needs of the primary education curriculum. It was therefore shown by the study that learners in primary schools required teacher degree qualifications with knowledge content



based on all primary school subjects enshrined in the primary school curriculum and not subject based teacher degree qualifications as the situation stood.

These findings were supported by Khan (2008) study in evaluating the effectiveness of in-service teacher training programme of second science education project for science teachers who found that the training resulted in an improvement in the content knowledge, delivery skills, lab management skills and professional attitude of in-service science teachers. This is in line with Wolff et al (1994) that poor achievement of students in primary schools to teacher qualifications, inadequacy of materials as well as administrative factors. Also, Laitch (2004) in his study did not find significant associations between higher degrees of education or teaching experience and student achievement. However, other scholars who found that teachers' qualification and experience play a crucial role in determining the students' academic achievement (Njeru and Orodho, 2003; Ankomah et al., 2005)

Habiba (2004) quotes that "a competency is a knowledge skill, or characteristic we want students to acquire." It is very common fact, if a trained teacher teaches the students; the performance of the students is good because in the process of education the teacher is considered the most crucial element. The findings show that there were little direct relationship between the in-service degree qualifications of the teacher and the performance of the students besides other factors. However, the study found that the training competencies of teacher's within-service degree qualifications were failing to enhance quality education provision in primary schools. The study further showed that the competence levels of the in-service teacher degree qualifications were not keeping up with competence needed by learners in public primary schools. This information was confirmed by headteachers and district education office officials who indicated that reading levels are very low in public schools in Mbala district because many teachers were acquiring competence in single or double major subject knowledge content degree qualifications whose component for enhancing reading and writing competencies in primary school learners was clear. The finding was also confirmed by responses of headteachers who participated in the survey as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Responses of headteachers views on degree qualifications knowledge content improve reading levels in learners

Scale	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
Response status	0	0	0	18	2

Source: Fieldwork (2018)

Economically, parents and students are becoming more sophisticated in their consumption and are demanding new and better teaching methods and services for their money and any school that cannot meet the demand of its students may likely loose popularity and the much needed prestige. In this regard, the study show that teachers with degree qualification failed to meet parents and society expected teacher effectiveness and learning outcomes to match the consumption in line with parental support. This finding was supported by 2016 Educational



Statistical Bulletin (MoGE, 2016:96) which shows that Mbala district was among the worst performing districts on Grade 7 examinations.

This information given among many other factors indicates that the in-service degree qualifications impacted less on teacher effectiveness and learner achievements in public primary schools were minimal. However, the study shows that degree qualifications impacted more on individual teachers' personal knowledge needs personal advancements aspirations because some qualified teachers' who acquired in-service degree qualifications and decided to leave the profession some were able to found better jobs in the labour market. The study found that the desire by qualified towards effective service delivery was very frustrating hence the passion to leave the profession was high.in Figure 2.

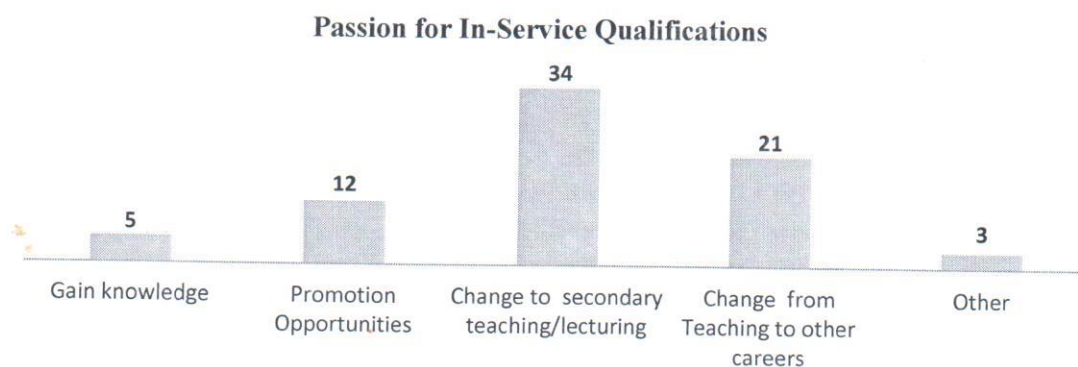


Figure 2: Reasons for Acquiring In-service Degree Qualifications

The findings of this study are also in keeping with the observations of Wolff et al. (1994) who noted that research on in-service qualifications shows generally inadequate results, particularly when these programs are designed to provide teachers with another degree. However, these training programs do not provide adequate linkages and on-going support with classroom practice and therefore actual instructional practices are often not changed and the quality of teaching and student learning is hindered. Only when learning experiences are targeted to the needs of staff and are true learning experiences with development opportunities can professional development have favourable outcomes (Mitchell and Cubey, 2003).

### 5.3 Teacher Attrition

The primary education was at a verge of continuing losing teachers with degree qualifications through attrition. This was revealed by the findings of the study that there were more qualified teachers who had intentions to leave the teaching profession. This was confirmed by the statistics that, between the period 2016-2017, a total number of 26 qualified teachers left the primary education sector in primary schools in Mbala district (Mbala District Quarterly Review Report, 2017); while the statistics at national level as indicated in the 2016 Educational Statistical Bulletin shows that a total of 5341 teachers; that is; 2,831 males and 2510 females (MOE, 2015) left the primary education sector. The findings further show that, the fact that number of teachers who have been leaving since 2008 is much higher than the 5000 annual teacher recruitment means that the system will continue to have fewer teachers to service the

increasing learner population and hence the teacher pupil ratios will continue to rise (2016 Educational statistical Bulletin: 52)

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study established that, teachers play a pivotal role in the educational program and teaching is not complete until knowledge has been successfully impacted to the learners. However, it is clearly noted from the current study that, the in-service professional qualifications acquired by teachers in public primary schools in Mbala district has failed to expose learners to the needs of the present primary school curriculum and has not positively impacted on learning achievements. The study concluded that there was a mismatch between the degree qualifications knowledge content, pedagogy with suggested in instructional delivery strategies provided in revised curriculum to influence learning experiences in primary schools. There was no link between pre-service qualifications to in-service degree qualifications and this contributed to the failure to integrate degree qualifications knowledge in instructional delivery in primary schools.

The primary education system was rigid towards the appreciation of in-service degree qualifications which contributed to attrition in primary schools. In this regard, long term in-service staff development programs have been left to the teachers and the patronage of in-service degree qualifications of teachers in primary schools has been having negative recognition in primary schools. Hence, the ugly outcome in instructional delivery and learning achievements was due to inappropriateness of skills and knowledge to suit the learning needs of learners in primary schools. The scourge was a serious concern the increased stock of degree qualifications and influx of teachers may have a negative impact on teacher performance in instructional delivery and attrition in public primary schools.

## 7. Recommendations

The following recommendations were made on the basis of the conclusions:

1. The government through the Ministries of General Education and Higher Education should come up with a stand-alone policy on in-service professional training so as to regulate, coordinate and provide a systematic audit of in-service teacher degree qualifications in primary schools.
2. Institutions of higher education offering in-service teachers' degree programmes for teachers in the primary education sector should review the training curriculum and adopt a non- subject based type of training for teachers serving in the primary schools so as to suit the non-specialisation based curriculum knowledge content in primary schools.
3. The government should provide a clear roadmap in its national development agenda on education by defining clear and precise objectives of in-service teacher degree qualification in the primary education sector.
4. The Ministry of General Education and institution of higher learning should set up policy that the directorate of standards and curriculum should use as a regulator to ensure uniformity of standard in course content, methodology and evaluation for in-service teacher degree qualifications for primary school teachers.



5. The government through the Ministries of General Education and Higher Education should ensure a linkage between pre-service teacher qualifications and in-service teacher degree qualifications.

## References

- Aaronson D, Barrow L, Sander .W., (2007). *Teachers and Student Achievement in the Chicago Public High Schools*. *J. Labor Econ.* 25(1):95-135.
- Adaramola, M.O, Obomanu, B.J., (2011). *Factors Related to Under Achievement in Science, Technology and Mathematics Education (STME) in Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria*. *World J. Educ.* 1(1)102-109.
- Ainscow, M., (2004). *Special Needs in the Classroom: A Teacher Education Guide*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers/ UNESCO Publishing, 33-38.
- Ajala, A.O., (2000). *Problems of teacher education in Nigeria*. Lagos: Talatan.
- Ali, H., (1999). *Professionalism in teacher education in Nigerian Universities: Issues and expectations*. Oshodi, Ngieria Eudar Publishers.
- Ankomah Y, Koomson J, Bosu R, Oduro G.K., (2005). *Implementing Quality Education in Low Income Countries*. *Institute for Educational Planning & Administration (IEPA)* University of Cape Coast Ghana.
- Banda, B., (2013). *Current status and challenges of in-service training of teachers in Zambia based on the experience of introducing lesson study to the schools: journal of international educational cooperation volume 2*, 89-96. 2007.
- Betts, J. R., Andrew, C. Z., & Lorien, A. R., (2003). *Determinants of student achievement: New Evidence from San Diego*. San Diego: Public Policy Institute of California.
- Chidlow, M. E. (1996). *The relationship between teacher characteristics, learning environment and student achievement and attitude*. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 22(3), 263–74.
- Cringer, R. G., Rice, J. K., Rathbun, A., & Nishio, M., (2007). *Teacher qualifications and early learning: Effects of certification, degree, and experience on first-grade student achievement*. *Economics of Education Review*, 26(3), 312–324.
- Curriculum Development Centre. (2013). *Zambia Curriculum development framework*. Lusaka: Curriculum Development Centre.
- Dee, T. S. (2004). *Teachers, race and student achievement in a randomized experiment*. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 86(1):195-210.
- Examinations Council of Zambia. (2015). *Learning Achievement at Basic School Level Zambia's National Assessment Survey Report 2014*: Examinations Council of Zambia: Lusaka
- Feng L, Sass T. R., (2010). *What Makes Special Education Teachers Special? Teacher Training and Achievement of Students with Disabilities*. CALDER Working Paper No. 49. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.
- Fives, H. (2003), "What is Teacher Efficacy and how does it relate to Teachers' Knowledge? A Theoretical Review", Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Chicago.
- Fukkink, R. G. and Lont .A., (2007), "Does training matter? A meta-analysis and review of caregiver training studies", *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, Vol. 22, pp. 294-3.

- Fullan, M., (1991) *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. London: Cassell.
- Harris, O. and Sass, T.R., (2006). *Value-added models and the measurement of teacher quality*.
- Hussain, M. (2004). *A Comparative Study of the Performance of Trained Primary School Teacher with and without In-Service Training in Hazera Division and Development Strategy for Future*, Islamabad: Unpublished M. Phil Thesis, AIOU.
- Idonije, I. O. (2005). *In-service training and professional development of secondary school teacher*: Journal of Teacher Education and Teaching. Pakistan, 147-148.
- Itegi, M., (2012). *Teacher education administration: In-service training of teachers (Unpublished Lecture Notes)*. Kenyatta, Nairobi.
- Iwuagwu, B. O. (2010). *Influence of in-service training on job performance of secondary school teachers in Edo Central Senatorial District: Unpublished M.Ed. thesis, Department of Educational Foundations and Management, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State*.
- Iyamu, E.O.S., and Otote, C.O. (2006) *Assessment of inquiry teaching competencies of social studies teachers in junior secondary schools in South Central Nigeria*.
- Jacob, B. A. and Lefgren, L., (2002, April). *The e impact of teacher training on student achievement: Quasi-experimental evidence from school reform efforts in Chicago*.
- Joyce, B. R., and Showers, B. (1980). *Improving in-service training*. *Educational Leadership*, 37(5), 379-385.
- Kelly, M.J., (1999). *The Origins and Development of Education in Zambia: From Pre-colonial Times to 1996*: Lusaka: Image Publishers Ltd.
- Khan, R., (2008). *Effectiveness of PEP-ILE Programme in Tehsil Sawabi*, Islamabad: AIOU.
- Kimani G. N, Kara A. M, Njagi .W, (2013). *Teacher Factors Influencing Students' Academic Achievement in Secondary schools in Nyandarua County, Kenya*. *Int. J. Educ. Res.* 1(3):1-14.
- Laitsch, D. (2004). *Reflections on implementations: Two years and counting*. *Info Brief*, 35, 1–7.
- Lamb, M. (1995). *The consequences of INSET*. *English Language Teaching Journal*, 49(1), 72–80.
- Manchishi P. C. (1996). *'In-service Teacher Training in Zambia: An Evaluation of the Zambia Primary Course of the National In-Service Training College'*. *ZERNET Journal. Vol 1, Nos3-4 pp12-23*.
- Maguswi BV (2011). *Factors contributing to under achievement of Zambian female Students in O-level Physics examinations. A case of selected high Schools in Central Province*. A Master's Thesis, University of Zambia.
- Mahmoud, k., (1999). *Effectiveness of In-Service Training Imparted through teacher training project*. M.Phil. Thesis, Allama Iqbal Open University
- Ministry of General Education. (2015). *Educational Statistical Bulletin 2015*. Lusaka: Ministry of General Education.
- Ministry of General Education. (2016a). *Annual Report for 2015*, Ministry of General Education: Lusaka.
- Ministry of General Education. (2016b). *Educational Statistical Bulletin 2016*, Ministry of Lusaka: General Education.



- Ministry of Education (1996) *Educating Our Future; National Policy on Education*: Government Printers, Lusaka.
- Mitchell, L. and P. Cubey (2003), *Characteristics of professional development linked to enhanced pedagogy and children's learning in early childhood settings*. Report for the New Zealand Ministry of Education. Wellington: NCER Unpublished manuscript.
- MoGE (2016). *Education Statistical Bulletin 2015*, Ministry of General Education: Lusaka.
- Mwanakatwe, M. J., (1977). *The Growth of Education in Zambia since Independence*: Oxford University Press.
- Njeru E.H.N, Orodho J.A, (2003). *Access and Participation in Kenya*. Nairobi. Institute of Policy Analysis and Research.
- Nye, B; Spyros, K., and Larry, V. H., (2004). *How large are teacher effects? Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 26(3):237-257.
- Oholiab, O.T and Adebayo, J. O, (2012). *Effect of Teacher's Qualification on the Performance of Senior Secondary School Physics Students: Implication on Technology in Nigeria*: Department of Curriculum Studies, Ekiti State University, Nigeria.
- Oluoch, G. P. (2002). *Essentials of curriculum development*. Bondo: Bondo Bookshop.
- Ministry of General Education (2013) Curriculum Framework. Government Printers, Lusaka.
- Qureshi, A. N. S. (2008). *A Dynamic View of Education*, Peshawar: Gandhara Hindko Board Report 2012: Examinations Council of Zambia: Lusaka
- Owolabi, O., and Adedayo, J. O. (2012). *Effect of Teacher's Qualification on the Performance of Senior Secondary School Physics Students: Implication on Technology in Nigeria*: Department of Curriculum Studies, Nigeria: Ekiti State University.
- Richards, J., (1998). *Beyond Training*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Rifkin S.G, Hanushek E .A, Kain J.F, (2005). *Teachers, Schools and Academic Achievement*. *Econometrica* 73(2):417-458.
- Roberts, J. (1998). *Language Teacher Education*. London: Hodder Headline Group.
- SACMEQ. (2012). *SACMEQ III Data*. Retrieved from <http://www.sacmeq.org/sacmeqdata> (accessed 12 May 2013).
- Tiega, M. (2012). *Teacher education administration: In-service training of teachers* (Unpublished Lecture Notes). Kenyatta, Nairobi.
- Wolff, L, Schiefelbein, E., Valanzuela, and J. (1994) *Improving the quality of primary education in Latin America and the Caribbean: Toward the 21st Century*. Discussion Paper 257. Wash