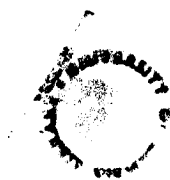


**FACTORS LIMITING CAREER CHOICE AMONG GRADE 12 VISUALLY  
IMPAIRED SCHOOL LEAVERS IN ZAMBIA**

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**CHULUMANDA BENSON MULENGA**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF THE MASTER OF  
EDUCATION IN SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION**



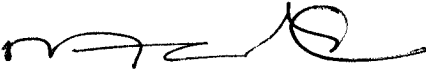
**UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA**

**MAY - 2010**

## DECLARATION

I, Chulumanda Benson Mulenga, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is typically as a result of my own individual effort and that all the work from other researchers has been acknowledged. I further certify that this dissertation has not previously been submitted for a degree in any university or similar institutions.

0279670

Signature:  .....

Date: 17-05-2010 .....

## APPROVAL

The University of Zambia approves this dissertation of Benson Mulenga Chulumanda as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Sociology of Education.

Signed... B. Chulumanda ..... Date... 1/06/10 .....

Signed... S. Karonde-Ngandu ..... Date... 1/06/10 .....

Signed... M. Mucalumbi ..... Date... 1/06/10 .....

## **DEDICATION**

To all my loved ones.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

In carrying out the study, I was in one way or another assisted by a number of people whose help I wish to acknowledge.

I would like to thank Dr. Oswell Chakulimba for his support and advice while I prepared this dissertation. I am also thankful to Dr. Manchishi of the University of Zambia for equipping me with knowledge and skills in research methods.

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My gratitude, admiration and respect are extended to the past and present visually impaired students.

## **ABSTRACT**

The study examined the factors that limit career choice among grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia. The objectives of the study were to determine if lack of information on career choice is a limiting factor among grade 12 school leavers in Zambia, to find out if the socio-economic status of the family limit career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers, to examine if the geographical location of the school attended impacted on career choice and to establish if inadequate job opportunities in Zambia is a limiting factor in Career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers. The researcher used a survey as his research design. The target population for the study included visually impaired basic school teachers, visually impaired telephone switchboard operators and School Counsellors. The sample consisted of forty-eight (48) respondents, twenty (20) visually impaired basic school teachers, twenty (20) visually impaired telephone switchboard operators from Lusaka and Copperbelt Provinces and eight (8) School Counsellors from eight high school units for the visually impaired spread throughout the country. Purposive sampling was used to arrive at the School Counsellors while snowball was used to get the visually impaired respondents.

In collecting data, questionnaires were administered to the School Counsellors while interviews were administered to the visually impaired respondents. These instruments were piloted before they were used in the study. Qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods were used while tables were used in the presentation of data.

The findings of the study revealed that lack of information on career guidance was one of the limiting factors in career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers. Other limiting factors for career choice among the visually impaired school leavers included low socio-economic status of the family, poor combination of subjects taken at school, inadequate vocational training institutions, inadequate job opportunities for the visually impaired and lack of supportive policies and legislation. Geographical location of the school attended by Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers was not a significant factor in Zambia.

In view of the findings, it was recommended that the government should create more vocational and rehabilitation centres for people with visual impairment. The government should also come up with career guidance programmes for visually impaired school leavers and a deliberate policy and legislation on the employment of people with visual impairment. Moreover, children from low socio-economic status families should be given financial and material support by government so that they have equal chances in pursuing their career aspirations as their sighted peers.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter covers the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, theoretical framework, definition of terms and limitations of the study.

### **Background to the Study**

One of the most important functions of education is to guide the child whilst still in school for a right career choice which would match well with the individual's abilities, interests, aptitudes, personality, qualities and present circumstances. According to Kochhar (2003), understanding how to make smart career choices is a life skill that everyone needs. This is because, the decisions an individual makes about his or her career have a profound effect on every aspect of his or her life. For the majority of people, employment is considered to be a major life activity that enhances quality of life, offers financial self-determination, improves self-esteem, gives feelings of contributing to society, and offers general life satisfaction. This is also true among people with visual impairment where employment is an essential factor in gaining their independence, achieving social inclusion and ensuring equal participation in all aspects of life.

For a long time, it was assumed that unemployment and underemployment of people with visual impairment was closely related to the consequence of the physical and mental impairments of these persons. However, according Manuele (1984), it has been recognised that many of the disadvantages the visually impaired persons face and the fact that they are often excluded are not due their visual impairment, but rather as a result of many other factors such as the reaction of society to the impairment and the socio-economic status of the family.

International Labour Organisation (2000) further reports that there is ample evidence that people who are visually impaired, are more likely than the sighted persons to experience discrimination in the labour market and elsewhere. As a result of these experiences, people with visual impairment are disproportionately affected by unemployment. When they work, they can often be found outside the formal labour market, performing uninspiring low-paid and low-skilled jobs which offer little or no opportunities for job promotion or other forms of career progression. Employees with visual impairment are often underemployed.

A closer look at the Zambian job market also shows that people with visual impairment are usually employed in specific areas. Although there are no specific statistics in Zambia, the study conducted by Mulenga (2007) reveals that the great majority of visually impaired persons who are in employment are mostly

employed by the Government, and the majority are confined to switchboard telephone operating and to teaching.

International Labour Organisation (1991) also estimates that of the working age among the visually impaired persons in Zambia, more than 80% are unemployed, 6% work as switchboard operators in government ministries, 8% work as basic school teachers, and 1% are self-employed while less than 0.5% work in the private sector. It is also reported that many visually impaired school leavers go into teaching and switchboard telephone operating; many shift about aimlessly from one wrong choice to another; others are anxious and troubled by indecision. Many wear themselves out, becoming frustrated and defeated as they struggle for a place in an occupation for which they are unsuited.

It is with this background that this study was carried out to investigate factors that limit career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It has been established that despite some visually impaired people completing Grade 12, most of those who are in employment, work as either switchboard telephone operators or as basic school teachers. There may be a number of



factors limiting career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia.

### **Purpose of the study**

*The purpose of the study was to get a better understanding of the factors limiting career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia.*

### **Objectives of the Study**

The following were the objectives of the study:

1. To determine if lack of information on career choice is a limiting factor among grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia.
2. To find out if the socio-economic status of the family limit the career choice among grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia.
3. To examine if the geographical location of the school attended is a limiting factor in career choice among grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia.
4. To establish if inadequate job opportunities in Zambia is a limiting factor in career choice among grade 12 visually impaired school leavers.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions served as a guide in the study:

1. Does lack of information on career choice limit career choice among grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia?
2. Does the socio-economic status of the family limit career choice among grade 12 visually impaired school leavers?
3. Does the geographical location of the school attended a limiting factor in career choice among grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia?
4. Does the inadequacy of job opportunities a limiting factor in career choice among grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia?

## **Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study might be of importance not only to policy makers but also to visually impaired persons. Policy makers in the Ministry of Education and other line ministries may use the information from the study to provide quality career guidance services and equity of access to training and employment of the visually impaired school leavers. If proper guidance services were provided to Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia, their status would rise from the current levels.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The labelling theory was used as the theoretical framework. The labelling theory according to Bruce et al (1989) focuses on the reaction of other people and the subsequent effects of those reactions which create deviance. The theory is concerned with how the self-identity and behaviour of individuals may be determined or influenced by the terms used to describe or classify them, and is associated with the concept of self-fulfilling prophecy and stereotyping.

### **Definition of Terms**

In the study, the following terms were used to mean:

**Career:** course or progress through life.

**Career Choice:** the act of selecting a vocation or career.

**Factors:** any circumstance, person condition or influence that brings about a certain conflict.

**Visual impairment:** loss of vision either partial or total.

**Grade 12:** the highest level at which the learners leave school to enter tertiary education.

**Basic school:** school that offers education from grade 1 to grade 9.

**High school unit for the visually impaired:** this is a section within the regular high school attended by the visually impaired learners.

**School counsellor:** these are teachers who have been given the responsibility of giving information and assisting learners in their career choice.

**Switchboard telephone operators:** these are people who work in switchboard rooms to receive and connect telephone messages to the recipients.

### **Limitations of the study**

One of the limitations in this study was that of time. This was because when the Researcher and the Research Assistant were expected to collect data, they were also expected to carry out their daily routines at their places of work. This compelled the Researcher to limit the sample to a small size.

Inadequate resources also limited the study in terms of both the number of sites and the number of resources. Hence, the study was conducted in only two provinces and forty-eight (48) respondents were selected to take part in the study. This might make it difficult to generalise the findings to all the Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia.

Moreover, limitations in career choice among Grade 12 visually school leavers can be as a result of many factors. However, it was not possible to examine all the factors.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

In this chapter, research findings and conclusions made by other Researchers on career choice are discussed according to themes. The themes are: the influences of career information on career choices, the influence of parents on career choice, the influence of socio-economic status of the family on career choices, the influence of geographical location on career choices, the influence of availability of job opportunities on career choices and the influence of personality factors on career choices. Some of the studies used were not done on the visually impaired persons but were used because they related to the study.

#### **Influence of Career Guidance Information on Career Choice**

According to Kush and Cochran (1993), School Counsellors have the obligation to provide current and accurate information to visually impaired pupils about their specific occupational field, including opportunities for contacts with workers and work settings. They should provide much of the attitudinal support and knowledge from which more motivated and informed career development may flow.

In the study on factors affecting career choice among visually impaired students, American Foundation for the Blind (2000) concluded that lack of information on

career choices had an impact on the career choices made by the visually impaired persons. It was found that 76% of the respondents who did not make good choices of their career did not receive information on what type of career they were to pursue after graduating from the high school. Herr and Cramer (1972) explain that assistance for individuals in obtaining information related to career choice is a highly important service to visually impaired school leavers. Visually impaired school leavers need a variety of information about themselves and their values, skills and interests; occupations, training and credentialing requirements; standard educational requirements; and career education services and resources.

In another study done by Dickson et. al. (2000), on career choices, two groups of visually impaired students at Cornell University were compared in their selection of careers. One group had received information on career choice while another did not have information on career choice. The findings showed that those with information on career choice made better choices as compared to those who did not have information.

Career information according to Bandura et. al. (2001), is important to pupils with visual impairment in that we are living in a highly complex and rapidly changing world of work. Requirements in industrial jobs, altered market conditions for professional human resource and many labour market trends are

always changing and therefore, the need for continuous provision of career information. These changes make occupation selection more difficult than ever. Pupils in schools need to be informed about various jobs and openings available, the requirements, responsibilities and the nature of work involved in them so that they measure themselves up to the requirements and develop and crystallize their occupational goal. They need help in making meaningful occupational selection and preparation for entering a rewarding career.

Scholl (1985) further observes that the need for providing information to the visually impaired pupils in the choice of a proper career is further felt by the fact that the majority of visually impaired pupils in schools are the first general learners. In their family, they have no one with an experience of school education or the background to guide them in the choice of a career.

Visually impaired pupils also need to be given information on courses and careers, stipends and scholarships available, competitive and entrance examinations so that their journey ahead becomes smooth and profitable. Herr and Cramer (1984) explain that the School Counsellors should plan career exploration activities and discuss the importance of capitalising upon certain personal characteristics in making career decisions. Career exploration should often include examining past experiences of visually impaired school leavers to evaluate both vocational and non-vocational successes and failures. This type of

exercise can help in identifying skill strengths and weaknesses that may be important in future job decisions. Career exploration may also involve the process of value clarification, which assists individuals in identifying priorities related to life-style choices, including choices concerning careers and occupations.

Ginzberg (1972), observed that visually impaired pupils, just like any other pupils also need to be guided for developing good study habits and adequate preparation so that they develop confidence to sit for examinations. Special guidance has to be provided on how to overcome difficulties, especially when they find it difficult in following certain subjects, lack concentration or get poor grades.

### **The Influence of Parents on Career Choice**

Many studies on career aspirations have revealed that parents are a significant factor in the career choices of their children. According to the study done by Ferry (2006) on visually impaired school pupils on career choices, the findings suggested that as the school leaving age drew near, the aspirations of pupils tended to move closer to the occupational level of their parents even though earlier they were close to the occupational goals common within the school. It was explained that parents' influence on career choice stems from the continuous process of relationship with their children. Early childhood



experiences play an indirect role in shaping later career behaviour and parent-child relationships influence personality orientations and the development of psychological needs; vocational interests and choices.

Altman (1997) also supports the relational context of career development. He cites research demonstrating that secure parent-child relationships are associated with progress in career decision making, affirmative career self-efficacy beliefs, and career planfulness. The study found that students who had secure attachments to parents engaged in greater levels of environmental and self-exploratory activity. He concluded that secure, comfortable relationships were critical in helping students take the risks necessary in exploring new settings and roles.

Other research findings, according to Trice (1991), demonstrate that parents' comments, beliefs, and interactions with their children have a profound influence on the child's vocational development. Parental messages contain an underlying message of 'don't make the same mistake that I did'. These interactions may influence young people to select specific collegiate majors or pursue particular occupations. Other family variables that have been shown to influence career aspirations include the parent's occupation. The father's occupational status is highly correlated with his son's occupation.

Krannich and Krannich (1993) also explain that research studies support the influence of parental expectations and aspirations on the career decision and aspirations of their children. These expectations lay a foundation for parents' behaviours and interactions with their children which then indirectly or directly influence choices they make in the future. Parental support and encouragement are factors that have also been found to influence vocational outcome. For instance, the attitudes and behaviours that children adopt toward work may be the result of what parents say. Parents convey their influence to children through interactions such as conversations and through their reactions (both verbal and non-verbal). This then affects what children think, say, and perceive about various careers.

In a study done by Bwali (1990) on some factors related to choice of teaching as a career among pre-service Zambian teachers, the majority of the respondents, 42% males and 58% females indicated that their choice of teaching as career was influenced by their parents. Other respondents indicated that they chose teaching as a career simply because they were advised by their relatives to do so or because their parents were once teachers.

Some studies conducted on career aspirations of visually impaired students also revealed that the education level of the parents had a direct influence on the educational aspirations of the student. Finlayson (1971) found that the aspiration

level of visually impaired students was significantly related to the parent's education. Kaswanga (2006) also confirmed the reviewed literature's assertion that parents have a significant influence on career choices of learners. In Lusaka schools it was evident that the parents' education, occupation, and family functioning played a role in the choices of career among the learners.

### **The Influence of Socio-economic Status of the Family on Career Choice**

The home background of pupils is related to their career choice not only directly but also indirectly. According to Rojewski and Yang (1997), visually impaired school leavers in communities of more affluence appear to have more family and school support in career exploration, which result in consideration of wider range of career options. Parents, followed by other family members, provide valuable learning experiences through their own role models and supporting activities that assist in exploring career interest. Work-bound visually impaired pupils' parents frequently teach skills that provide their children with a broader understanding of their own aptitudes contributing to career choice.

In a study conducted on factors influencing careers of adolescents and young adults in Pennsylvania, Vetter et. al. (1986) confirmed the existing knowledge about the great impact that family, school and community have upon visually impaired school leavers' self identity and career choice. The study's findings of the impact that the broader context of the school and community environment

has in supporting or delaying career decision-making extends the understanding of the importance these entities have upon the visually impaired school leavers' identity and occupational goals. They all come into play in providing input into the visually impaired school leavers' perception of self, educational efficacy, and vocational interests.

Davies and Kandel (1981) also concluded that in the case of parents' aspirations for their visually impaired children, the socio-economic status of the family has the strongest impact, even higher than the academic success of the visually impaired child. The level of education one attains is closely related to earning power and job status of the family. Generally, the income bracket correlates with the level of education. The socio-economic factors, educational levels and occupation status, have a major impact on the family status and goals and, therefore, on the child.

Krannich and Krannich (1993), also explain that the social class into which one is influences the amount of education to which one aspires, the success in the academic realm, and the range of occupations for which one qualifies. This can be partially explained by the stimuli and the cultural schemata one received from the family. The other explanation is the realisation that important and lucrative careers require a great deal of formal education, something which the lower class visually impaired pupil may not have been able to afford.

Lipsett (1992) postulates that generally, visually impaired pupils from upper income families enrol in high school academic programmes, aspire to attend college and aspire for careers with high prestige. The opposite is true, visually impaired pupils from lower income families tend to enrol in vocational programmes and move directly from high school into the labour market. Visually impaired pupils from lower income families often have little contact with college graduates or with people that are in the more prestigious jobs or professions; therefore, they are less likely to have role-models to emulate or to encourage them towards higher aspirations.

Holland (1973) also concluded that the socio-economic level of the family appears to exercise the most potent influence of all. The level and quality of education available and aspired for, as well as the level of work accessible and aspired for are greatly affected by the family's finances and social contacts. The upper and middle class parents tend to have higher educational and career aspirations for their children than do the lower-class parents. Thus, their children have higher aspirations either as a result of pressure from the parents or as a result of internalizing parental pressures or both. Persons who belong to families from the higher socio-economic strata also have better chances of finding employment at higher level because parents, and themselves have more

contacts with people who are well-to-do and influential, people who are employers not employees.

According to Fredrickson (1982), sociological or situational approaches to career development are significant because they identify many factors not usually considered in other approaches. The family's socio-economic status, in terms of education and occupation is closely related to career choice of an individual. This, in part, is explained by the fact that the lower the social status, the weaker the intellectual stimuli and less supportive the cultural background (Boundon, 1974). For the most part, the higher the economic resource of the family, the higher the child's educational and career aspirations. The status of the family has a direct impact on the educational and career aspirations of visually impaired pupils and of parents for their children.

### **Influence of Availability of Job Opportunities on Career Choice**

According to McCormick (1973), the availability of jobs on the market provides opportunities to students to pursue their career aspirations. McCormick observed that if the output of school leavers grows much more rapidly than the labour market can absorb, then many of the young generation will have education but when they come to labour market, they cannot find jobs. This situation may force them to take up any career which comes their way.

Eggleston (1967) also explains that individuals have varying levels of aspirations which may rise and fall depending on the prevailing economic and social conditions in the working environment or country. For example, an economic recession or high rate of unemployment may force an individual to scale down his or her career aspiration while an expansion of activities of an organisation or government department may raise the level of job opportunity

On the other hand, while planning the career, the individual, naturally, avoids the vocations with low wages and low prestige even though these may be the ones in which he or she is interested most. Trice (1991) revealed that the cyclic nature of business is another economic factor affecting the vocational development of young persons as well as the vocational pattern and adjustment of older adults. It is an established fact that business completes a cycle of success and failure. It flourishes and brings the society to the condition of complete prosperity followed by another period of depression. A young adult who completes his or her education during depression is faced with the strains of scarcity of employment which is unfamiliar to another young man who may have passed college during the prosperous times. The two are forced to make very different vocational adjustments.

The career choice of an individual may also be affected by local policies on employment. For example, Mwanakatwe (1974) reported that at independence

there was need to expand the education system in Zambia in order to have trained manpower in key posts in government ministries. The expansion of primary and secondary education was accompanied by the expansion of facilities for training teachers. At independence, therefore, many young men and women took up teaching as a career not because they all wanted to be teachers but because there was a deliberate policy by government.

### **Influence of Geographical Factors on Career Choice**

Many studies have revealed that the geographical location in which one lives or learns has an influence on his or her career aspirations. Herr and Cramer (1984) explained that physical factors such as the geographical location of the home, the physical conditions prevailing therein, and the health of various members of the family may, at times have a significant effect on the career choice of the visually impaired pupils. A boy coming from a home in a remote village will have much difficulty in obtaining a college education compared to a boy residing in a town.

Davies and Kandel (1981) also support this by pointing out that the characteristics of the catchment area not only affect individual pupil's choices, but also strongly influence the provision of the curriculum by schools. The occupational characteristic of the environment in which the visually impaired children are brought up and learn have an influence on their career choice.



In a study on career choice among the Form VI students in three cities, Birmingham, Shropshire and Herefordshire in England, Morris in Wood (1974), reported that it was concluded that a difference existed in career choice between students from urban and rural areas. Urban Form VI students were observed to have been attracted more to careers which were associated with urban life such as industrial work than careers such as teaching which attracted most rural Form VI students.

Bwali (1990) in his study on some factors related to choice of teaching as a career among pre-service Zambian teachers concluded that both male and female teachers who took part in the study, born and brought up in rural areas of Zambia showed more interest in teaching than those who were born and brought up in urban areas. One hundred fifteen (115) out of two hundred (200) teachers were from rural areas.

In another study by Klingelhofer (1967) on career preference of secondary school pupils conducted in Tanzania, Bwali (1990) reported that the findings showed that rural-urban differences affected career choice of pupils. Pupils that lived in urban areas made more realistic career choices than those pupils who came and who lived in rural areas.

A study conducted by Wood (1974) on job prestige among Form v school leavers in Zambia also revealed that rural Form V school leavers rated teaching and nursing as high prestige careers in contrast to urban Form V school leavers who rated careers like engineering, medicine and law as high prestige jobs. This situation could be explained by the fact that Form V school leavers in rural areas were only exposed to jobs like teaching and nursing while those from urban areas were exposed to a wide range of jobs and access to information on different careers.

### **Personality influences on Career choice**

Research findings have reported that there is a relationship between personal characteristics and career choice. A nationwide poll of 3 000 visually impaired, conducted by the American Foundation for the Blind in 1990 to examine their perceptions of themselves and their future, revealed that the higher self-esteem of visually impaired pupils translated into bigger career aspirations. It was therefore, recommended that before a visually impaired person makes a career choice, he or she should learn about himself or herself. This is due to the fact that, his or her values, interests and skills, in combination with certain personality traits, may make some careers especially suitable for him or her.

In the study that compared the effects of low-esteem and lack of motivation on career choice between the sighted and the visually impaired persons, Holland

(1973) reports that evidence showed that visually impaired school leavers had a low self-concept, low self-esteem, less motivation and were often intellectually underdeveloped. They were overeducated for the jobs they held, and were in some cases, in the lowest jobs in pay and less opportunity for advancement. The sighted were seen as having greater power to control their destiny and to succeed. This concept was inherent in the stereotyped images of the sighted and visually impaired presented in television and print. Certain careers are seen as for the sighted while others are seen as for the visually impaired, and those which are thought to be for the sighted are seen as more valuable.

In another study, Lipsett (1992) reported that visually impaired persons with higher intellectual ability, tend to seek and prepare for jobs which required superior intelligence while the ones with lower mental ability go in for semi-skilled jobs and continue in inconsequential positions. Individuals not choosing their careers according to their level of ability are caught in the slough of despondence as a result of poor competence.

Furthermore, Dickson et. al. (2000) report that in one of the studies it was possible to follow up eight visually impaired school leavers who had been diagnosed as feeble-minded or of borderline intelligence. Some eighteen years earlier, when their vocational achievement was studied, two of them were working as switchboard telephone operators; another two were receptionists;

three were music instructors and one was a teacher. On the other hand, a group of above intelligence visually impaired school leavers was followed after a considerable long period. The members were found occupying positions of significant importance. Eighty per cent of them had graduated from college; seventy-five per cent were employed in professional or semi-professional positions. Many of them were university lecturers, lawyers, and consultants.

The hereditary theory has also been used to explain the factors affecting career choice among the visually impaired school leavers. According to Cliff (1966) in Lipsett (1992) the hereditary theory relates intelligence quotient with socio-economic status and scholastic performance. This theory states that people inherit 80% of their intelligence and could only attribute about 20% to the environment; therefore, according to this theory, career choice among the visually impaired school leavers may be influenced by their intelligence levels. In support of this, Herr (1970) reports that Roe (1956) revealed that specific vocational behaviours exhibited by an individual are influenced by the individual's genetic endowments such as intelligence or physical ability

Kochhar (2003) also explains that the personality of an individual affects his or her career choice just as it does his or her interests and their development. Every job can be described in terms of the personality characteristics it requires for the person to be happy and satisfied in it. For example, good teachers are usually

social, communicative, self-confident, self-sufficient and aggressive. Bankers, dentists and musicians are conservative, self-contained and less aggressive.

In summary, the studies above have revealed that the factors limiting career choice among school leavers include lack of information on career choices, socio-economic status of the family, influence of parents, teachers and peers, geographical location of the school attended, personality factors and availability of job opportunities of the market. All these factors may be applicable to the Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia although personality factors and location of the school attended may not be significant.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

*This chapter presents the research methodology. The elements described in this chapter are the research design, target population, sample size, sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis.*

#### **Research Design**

The study was designed in form of a survey. This design was adopted because it allows a collection of small amount of data in a standardised form from a relatively large number of individuals.

#### **Target Population**

The population of the study included School Counsellors from eight (8) high school units for the visually impaired across the country and working with visually impaired persons from Lusaka and Copperbelt provinces. The working visually impaired persons targeted were switchboard telephone operators from five (5) government ministries and basic school teachers from six (6) basic schools. Telephone operators and basic school teachers were picked from Copperbelt and Lusaka Provinces. Switchboard telephone operators and basic school teachers were targeted because the majority of visually impaired persons are in these careers.

School Counsellors were picked from Munali Girls High School Unit for the Visually Impaired, Mwense High School Unit for the Visually Impaired, St. Mary's Girls Secondary School Unit for the Visually Impaired, Mporokoso High School Unit for the Visually impaired, Katete High School Unit for the Visually Impaired, Mumbwa High School Unit for the Visually Impaired, Sefula High School Unit for the Visually Impaired and Rusangu High School Unit for the Visually Impaired. Switchboard telephone operators were picked from Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Ministry of Works and Supply, Ministry of Justice, Ministry Information and Broadcasting, and Ministry of Health. Basic school teachers were selected from Ndola Lions School for the Visually Impaired, St. Lawrence Special School, Bauleni Special school, Mano Unit for the Visually Impaired, Mufulira Basic School and Chilengwa Basic School.

### **Sample size**

The sample consisted of forty-eight (48) respondents, eight (8) School Counsellors from the eight high schools units for the visually impaired, 20 visually impaired switchboard operators and 20 visually impaired basic school teachers picked from Lusaka and Copperbelt Provinces.

**Gender of Respondents**

Respondents were asked to indicate their sex. Their responses are shown in the table 1 below.

Table 1: Distribution of the sample by gender

Occupation	Male	Female	Total
Telephone operators	12	8	20
Basic School Teachers	15	5	20
School Counsellors	8	0	40
Total	35	13	48

The distribution of the sample by gender shows that more males took part in the study as compared to females.

**Sampling Procedure**

Purposive sampling was used to pick the School Counsellors. The Researcher purposively selected the School Counsellors who he believed had the required characteristics needed for the study.

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling procedure in which the respondents or units are selected purposely. This sampling procedure has an



advantage in that the purpose of the study can be fulfilled even with a small sample which is picked purposely and carefully.

The Researcher used snowball sampling to pick the working visually impaired persons. The Researcher and the Research Assistant first identified one visually impaired switchboard telephone operator and some teachers from each of the provinces (Lusaka and Copperbelt) involved in the study. These were later used to identify others in different schools and departments.

### **Research Instruments**

In order to solicit views from the School Counsellors, visually impaired telephone operators and basic school teachers, questionnaires and interviews were used. Open-ended questionnaires were administered on School Counsellors while semi-structured interviews were conducted with the working visually impaired persons.

Questionnaires were used on the School Counsellors because these teachers were able to read and write ink print and since the high school units for the visually impaired are spread throughout the two provinces, they were more economical in terms of resources and time. Questionnaires also allowed the respondents to express their views freely.

Interviews were used on the visually impaired respondents because they were not able to read ink print and preparing questionnaires in Braille was going to be expensive. Interviews also allowed the Researcher to go deeper into the issues that were being researched.

Questionnaires consisted of questions which respondents responded to by ticking on the preferred choice (Yes or No) and by providing brief written explanations where it was required. The semi-structured interview schedule also consisted of the 'Yes' and 'No' and brief explanatory questions which were done orally. The instruments were pretested on some sighted teachers and visually impaired persons in Lusaka Province. Those items that were found not to be clear were either removed or made much clearer.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The Researcher personally visited the identified School Counsellors and explained to them purpose and significance of the study. The Researcher left the questionnaires with the School Counsellors to be filled in. The filled in questionnaires were sent to the Researcher through the postal mail.

As for interviews, the Researcher used the Research Assistant to collect data from the respondents on the Copperbelt. The Research Assistant interviewed all the respondents from the Copperbelt while the Researcher personally

interviewed those from Lusaka Province. The Researcher and Research Assistant had already prepared questions which were asked and responses were recorded on the same sheets of paper.

### **Data Analysis**

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in the analysis of data, although most of the analysis was done qualitatively. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data. That is, using frequency distributions, percentages and graphic presentations in form of tables. Non-structural questions were analysed through categorisation and coding of themes.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The data presented were obtained through interviews and questionnaires. Interviews were administered on forty (40) visually impaired school leavers who comprised of twenty (20) telephone operators and twenty (20) basic school teachers. Questionnaires were administered to eight (8) School Counsellors from the eight (8) high school units attended by visually impaired pupils.

#### **Lack of Information as a Limiting Factor on Career Choice**

The first objective of the study was to determine if lack of information is a limiting factor in career choice among grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia. In addressing this objective, information on availability of trained School Counsellors in schools and adequate provision of information on career choice to Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers was collected from visually impaired respondents and School Counsellors as presented in the tables below.

Visually impaired respondents were asked to state whether or not there were trained School Counsellors in high school units. Their responses are shown in table 2 below.

Table 2: Availability of trained School Counsellors in high school units for the visually impaired learners

	Yes	No	Total
Telephone operators	0	15	15
Basic school teachers	0	18	18
Total	0 (0%)	33 (100%)	33 (100%)

The findings in the table above show that all the visually impaired respondents said that guidance school teachers were not trained to work with Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers.

School Counsellors were also asked to indicate whether or not they were trained to work with visually impaired persons. The findings are presented in table 3 shown below.

Table 3: School Counsellors’ training to work with learners with visual impairment.

	Yes	No	Total
School Counsellors	01	07	08
Total	01 (12.5%)	07 (87.5%)	08 (100%)

The findings above show that only one (1) School counsellor was trained to work with visually impaired pupils while the rest were not.

Visually impaired respondents were asked to state whether they had received adequate information on career choices and their responses have been tabulated in table 4.

Table 4: Provision of adequate information on career choice to Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers

	Yes	No	Total
Telephone operators	4	16	20
Basic school teachers	5	15	5
Total	9 (24.5%)	31 (75.5%)	40 (100%)

The table above reveals that most (75.5%) of the visually impaired respondents did not have adequate information to make good career choice.

Those who said that they did not receive any information on career choice while at school gave the following as common reasons:

- ◆ School Counsellors had negative attitudes toward the visually impaired learners.
- ◆ School Counsellors did not understand what visually impaired learners were capable of doing.
- ◆ There was no time given on the time-table for talks on career choice.

- ♦ Work was left to resource room teachers who did not have much information on career choices.

School Counsellors were asked if they gave adequate information to enable Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers for them to make good career choices. Their responses have been recorded in table 5 below.

*Table 5: School Counsellors' provision of adequate information on career choice to Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers.*

	Yes	No	Total
School Counsellors	03	05	08
Total	03 (37.5%)	05 (62.5%)	08 (100%)

The findings presented in table 5 above show that 37.5% of the School Counsellors said that they gave adequate information on career choice to the visually impaired school leavers while the 62.5% did not.

The five (5) respondents who said that they did not give information to the Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers explained that they did not know what information to give them since they were not trained in that area. Some indicated that they did not know the job opportunities available for the visually impaired apart from teaching and telephone operating.

**Influence of Subjects Taken by Visually Impaired Learners on Career Choice**

In determining whether lack of information is a limiting factor on career choice, the Researcher felt that there was a relationship between the subjects taken by visually impaired persons and the information received on career choice, and therefore, the Researcher investigated if visually impaired learners took the same subjects as their sighted peers and if the subjects taken prepared them adequately for the existing job market. The data collected from both the visually impaired respondents and School Counsellors was presented in tables below.

The working visually impaired persons were asked whether or not they took the same subjects as their sighted peers. The findings were presented in the below.

Table 6: Visually impaired learners taking the same subjects as their sighted peers at school.

	Yes	No	Total
Telephone operators	6	14	20
Basic school teachers	7	13	20
Total	13 (32.5%)	27 (67.5%)	40 (100%)

Table 6 reveals that few of the visually impaired respondents took the same subjects as their sighted peers while most of the respondents did not take the same subjects as their sighted peers.



Those who said that they did not take the same subjects as their sighted peers gave the following the reasons:

- ◆ Most the teachers in the schools were not trained to teach the visually impaired learners in subjects like mathematics and science.
- ◆ Lack of appropriate learning materials.
- ◆ Lack of acceptance by some teachers and school administrators.
- ◆ The disability itself stopped them from doing some subjects.

School Counsellors were asked to state whether or not visually impaired learners took the same subjects as their sighted peers. The findings are presented in table 7 below.

Table 7: School Counsellors’ knowledge of the subjects taken by visually impaired learners

	Yes	No	Total
School Counsellors	02	06	08
Total	02(25%)	06 (75%)	08 (100%)

The table above revealed that six (6) School Counsellors reported that visually impaired learners took the same subjects as their sighted peers, while two (2) reported to the contrary.

Some of the reasons given by School Counsellors for visually impaired pupils not taking same subjects as their sighted peers were:

- ◆ Teachers did not have the knowledge and skills of teaching the visually impaired pupils.
- ◆ There were no materials that could be used by the visually impaired pupils. All the materials were meant for sighted pupils.
- ◆ Visually impaired students had negative attitudes towards subjects like science and mathematics.

Visually impaired persons were further asked whether or not the subjects they took while at school prepared them for the job market. The findings are indicated in the table below.

Table 8: Relevance of the subjects taken by visually impaired learners at school to the existing job market

	Yes	No	Total
Telephone operators	2	18	20
Basic school teachers	3	17	20
Total	5(12.5%)	35 (87.5%)	40 (100%)

The findings in the table above show that only 12.5% of the respondents had taken subjects which had prepared them adequately for the existing job market

while the majority had not taken subjects which had prepared them for the job market.

Those who indicated that the subjects taken at school did not prepare them for the existing job market revealed that their subject combinations did not allow them to do other courses. They lacked science and mathematics which are a prerequisite to most of the courses.

School Counsellors were also asked to state whether or not the subjects taken by the Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers prepared them for the job market. The findings are presented in the table below.

Table 9: School Counsellors’ statements on the relevance of the subjects taken by visually impaired school leavers.

	Yes	No	Total
School Counsellors	03	05	08
Total	03(37.5%)	05 (62.5%)	08 (100%)

The results show that only 37.5% of the respondents agreed that the subjects that were taken by Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers prepared them adequately for the existing job market while 62.5% did not.

The respondents who said that the subjects taken by the visually impaired school leaver did not prepare them adequately for the existing job market gave the following reasons for their response:

- ◆ Visually impaired pupils did not learn mathematics and science at high school level.
- ◆ Visually impaired students had wrong combination of subjects, which were mostly art subjects.

**Influence of Socio-economic Factors of the Family on Career Choice**

The second objective of the study was to find out if the socio-economic status of the family limit the career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia. The data that was gathered from visually impaired respondents and School Counsellors is presented in the tables below.

Visually impaired persons were asked if the socio-economic status of their families had an influence on their career choices. The findings are shown in table 10.

Table 10: The effects of the socio-economic status of the family on career choice.

	Yes	No	Total
Telephone operators	10	10	20
Basic school teachers	14	06	20
Total	24(60%)	16 (40%)	40 (100%)

Table 10 shows that many visually impaired respondents were of the view that the socio- economic status of their families had an effect on the choice of their career whereas a small number (40%) felt that the socio-economic status of their families did not affect their choice of career.

The views of School Counsellors on whether or not the socio-economic status of the family of the visually impaired persons had an effect on their career choices were sought. The findings are indicated in the following table.

Table 11: School Counsellors’ knowledge of the effects of the socio-economic status of the family on choice career.

	Yes	No	Total
School Counsellors	06	02	08
Total	06(75%)	02 (25%)	08 (100%)

The findings in the above table show that three quarters of the respondents said *that the socio-economic status of the family had an influence on the career choice* of the visually impaired school leavers. Only one quarter of them was in disagreement.

### **Influence of Geographical Location of the School Attended on Career Choice**

The third objective of the study was examine if the geographical location of the school attended had influence on career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia. Access to information on career choice may depend on the geographical location of school attended. The Researcher, hence, gathered information on whether the location of the school attended had influence on career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia. The findings are tabulated below.

Table 12: Influence of the geographical location of the school attended on career choice.

	Yes	No	Total
Telephone operators	5	15	20
Basic school teachers	10	10	20
Total	15(37.5%)	25 (62.5%)	40 (100%)

The findings in the table above revealed that five (5) telephone operators said that the location of the school attended had an influence on their career choice while 15 of them did not. Basic school teachers were 50:50.

School Counsellors were also asked to state whether or not the geographical location of the school attended had an effect on the career choice of the Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers. The findings are presented in the table shown below.

Table 13: School Counsellors’ knowledge on the influence of the geographical location of the school attended on career choice.

	Yes	No	Total
School Counsellors	03	05	08
Total	03(37.5%)	05 (62.5%)	08 (100%)

The findings in the table above show that more respondents (62.5%) said that the geographical location of the school attended had an influence on career choice of the visually impaired school leavers.

In determining if lack of information is a limiting factor among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers, the Researcher (although indirect) further looked at which persons influenced their career choice. The responses from both visually

impaired respondents and School Counsellors are presented in the tables 14 and 15.

Table 14: Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers’ responses on whether they chose on their own their current jobs.

	Yes	No	Total
Telephone operators	12	08	20
Basic school teachers	11	09	20
Total	23(57.5%)	17 (42.5%)	40 (100%)

The findings in the table above show that the majority of switchboard telephone operators and basic school teachers who took part in the study did not on their own choose the kind of job they doing.

Most of those who said that they had chosen the job that they were doing said that they had interest in that job. Others explained that they had no idea of other alternative jobs.

Out of the 23 respondents who said that they did not choose on their own the kind of work they were doing, 14 of them said that they were influenced by their parents while 4 were influenced by their friends and 5 were influenced by their teachers.



*School Counsellors were also asked if Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers chose their own careers. Their responses are presented in the table below*

Table 15: School Counsellors’ statements on if Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers chose on their own their current jobs.

	Yes	No	Total
School Counsellors	04	04	08
Total	04(50%)	04 (50%)	08 (100%)

The findings revealed that half of the respondents were in support of the statement while another half was in disagreement.

All the four (4) respondents who had indicated that the visually impaired school leavers did not choose their careers out of their own interest said that they were influenced by their friends, family members (in particular parents) and teachers.

**Influence of Availability of Job Opportunities on Career Choice**

The forth objective of the study was to establish if inadequate job opportunities in Zambia is a limiting factor in career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia. The tables that follow (tables 15 and 16) show the views of visually impaired basic school teachers, switchboard operators and School Counsellors.

Visually impaired persons who took part in the study were asked if there were adequate employment opportunities for the visually impaired persons in Zambia. The table below indicates their responses.

Table 16: Availability of adequate employment opportunities for Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia.

	Yes	No	Total
Telephone operators	00	20	20
Basic school teachers	00	20	20
Total	00 (00%)	40 (100%)	40 (100%)

The findings revealed that all the visually impaired telephone operators and basic school teachers said that there were inadequate employment opportunities in Zambia for Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers.

School Counsellors were also asked if they felt that there were adequate employment opportunities for the Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia. The findings are tabulated as shown below.

Table 17: School Counsellors’ responses on availability of adequate employment opportunities for Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia.

	Yes	No	Total
School Counsellors	03	05	08
Total	03(37.5%)	05 (62.5%)	08 (100%)

Table 17 shows that a small number of the School Counsellors (37.5%) said that there were adequate employment opportunities for Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia, while the majority (62.5%) of the respondents did not agree to this.

In relation to objective three, the Researcher also investigated if there were adequate number and appropriate training institutions that accommodate Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia. Information on the findings have been presented in tables 18 and 19.

Visually impaired respondents were further asked if they agreed that there were adequate and appropriate vocational institutions in Zambia that accommodate Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers. The findings are tabulated below.

Table 18: Availability of adequate number and appropriate training institutions in Zambia for Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers.

	Yes	No	Total
Telephone operators	00	20	20
Basic school teachers	00	20	20
Total	00 (00%)	40 (100%)	40 (100%)

Table 18 reveals that all the respondents did not agree that there were adequate and appropriate vocational institutions in Zambia that could accommodate Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers.

The reasons given by respondents for not having adequate and appropriate training institutions that accommodate visually impaired school leavers included:

- ◆ Courses offered do not take account of the needs of the visually impaired;
- ◆ Poor infrastructure;
- ◆ There is no clear policy on training of the visually impaired in the country, and
- ◆ Negative attitudes from society.

School Counsellors were also asked about what they felt on availability of adequate and appropriate vocational institutions in Zambia that accommodate Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers. The findings are as tabulated below.

Table 19: School Counsellors’ knowledge on availability of adequate number and appropriate training institutions in Zambia that accommodate Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers.

	Yes	No	Total
School Counsellors	01	07	08
Total	01(12.5%)	07 (87.5%)	08 (100%)

The findings show that most of the School Counsellors felt that there were inadequate number and appropriate institutions that accommodate the visually impaired school leavers. Only one respondent felt that they were adequate and appropriate.

The seven respondents who said there were inadequate and inappropriate training institutions to accommodate the visually impaired school leavers in Zambia gave cited poor infrastructure and lack of knowledge and skills to work with the visually impaired as reasons.

The Researcher further investigated if visually impaired basic school teachers and switchboard operators were of the view of taking up other careers instead of what they were doing. Their responses and those of the School Counsellors have been presented in tables 20 and 21.

**Interest of Visually Impaired School Leavers in Taking up other Careers**

Responses of the visually impaired respondents were sought on whether or not they had interest in taking up other jobs apart from what they were doing. There responses were presented as shown below.

Table 20: Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers’ interest in taking up other careers.

	Yes	No	Total
Telephone operators	16	04	20
Basic school teachers	14	06	20
Total	30 (75%)	10 (25%)	40 (100%)

The findings reveal that three quarters of the respondents had interest in taking up other careers instead what they were doing. One quarter of them said that they not interested in other careers.

If it were possible, 12 out those who said ‘yes’ indicated that they would have become lawyers, 9 said they would have become journalists, 3 would have become secondary school teachers and 1 would have become a priest. The other 5 did not indicate anything.

When asked on what their opinion was on whether or not Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers showed interest in taking up other careers apart from

teaching and switchboard telephone operating, the School Counsellors’ responses were as tabulated in table 21.

Table 21: School Counsellors’ response on interest of Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers taking up other careers.

	Yes	No	Total
School Counsellors	08	00	08
Total	08(100%)	00 (00%)	08 (100%)

The findings showed that all the School Counsellors were of the opinion that Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers had interest in taking up other careers apart from teaching and telephone operating. They identified the following as some of the careers that visually impaired school leavers would take:

- Journalism
- Law
- Music

**Influence of Visual Impairment on Career Choice**

The findings in the study showed that 100% of visually impaired respondents did not agree with the notion that loss of vision had an influence on career choice, and only 12.5% of School Counsellors said that loss of vision had an impact on career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia.

Visually impaired respondents were further asked on what they felt were the main factors limiting career choices among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia, they identified the following as the main limiting factors:

- Poor combination of subjects was cited by thirty-six (36) respondents as a limiting factor.
- Negative attitudes of teachers in schools towards the visually impaired learners was cited as a limiting factor by thirty (30) *respondents*.
- Inadequate job opportunities were indicated as a limiting factor in career choice among the visually impaired persons by thirty-eight (38) visually impaired persons.
- Lack of information on other careers was cited by twenty-eight (28) visually impaired persons as one of the limiting factors.
- Inadequate training institutions were cited by thirty-six (36) visually impaired respondents as a limiting factor.

School Counsellors also identified the following as factors limiting career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia:

- Inadequate training institutions that can accommodate the visually impaired.
- Negative attitudes towards the visually impaired persons by teachers and their peers.



- Poor grade 12 results among the visually impaired persons.
- Poor combination of subjects.
- Inadequate job opportunities for the visually impaired school leavers.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

This chapter discusses the findings on the views of visually impaired basic school teachers, switchboard telephone operators and School Counsellors on factors limiting career choice among grade 12 visually impaired school leavers has been done. The discussion is based on the objectives and research questions of the study.

#### **Influence of Career Guidance Information on Career Choice among the Grade 12 Visually Impaired School Leavers.**

One of the objectives of the study was to determine if lack of information on career choice is a limiting factor among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia. The responses from visually impaired respondents indicated that 77.5% of them did not receive information on career choice while 62.5% of the School Counsellors said that they did not give information to visually impaired school leavers on career choices. It was also revealed that 100% of the visually impaired respondents who indicated that they had received information on career choices did not receive adequate information to make a good a career choice.

These results were in line with Ferry (2006) who found that visually impaired people did not receive much information career choice while at school. This trend



was a result of the absence of qualified personnel. Scholl (1985) also noted that finding well-trained School Counsellors who understood the unique needs of visually impaired people and who could cultivate appropriate job opportunities for them was difficult. Historically, "one-size-fits-all" professional training programmes produce counsellors who are not equipped to meet the needs of the visually impaired clients.

The findings from visually impaired basic teachers, switchboard telephone operators and School Counsellors revealed that there were no significant difference in their views on availability of trained and skilled School Counsellors in schools to work with grade 12 visually impaired school leavers. It was clear that the schools where visually impaired pupils went lacked trained School Counsellors. This has been supported by Kush and Cochran (1993) who observed that in most of ordinary schools where the visually impaired pupils are educated, teachers are not trained and lacked information on career choice for the visually impaired persons. This makes it hard for visually impaired persons to make sound career choices. School Counsellors do not provide current and accurate information which the grade 12 visually impaired school leavers can use to choose specific occupational fields. These people are not provided with much of the attitudinal support and knowledge required from which more motivation and informed career development may flow.

One of the reasons given by the visually impaired basic school teachers, telephone operators and School Counsellors as to why School Counsellors do not give information on career choice to the visually impaired learners was that School Counsellors lacked knowledge and skills on how to work with the visually impaired pupils. They did not know what the visually impaired learners were capable of doing. Scholl (1985) points out that inadequate knowledge and skills on occupational needs of the visually impaired on the part of teachers negatively impacts on the career choice of the visually impaired school leavers.

The other reason that was common from the respondents was that there was no time specifically set for career guidance in the schools. Ginzberg (1972) observes that if learners have to make a good career choice, they should be exposed to a variety of careers and School Counsellors need to spend more time exposing learners to variety of careers. Ginzberg (1992) further explains that career choice and subsequent vocational development are greatly influenced by the experience a child undergoes. The choice of a career is, therefore, not merely a decision of the moment: it is a complex and difficult process that spans a number of years.

The findings also showed that the majority of the respondents (both the visually impaired and the School Counsellors) indicated that visually impaired pupils did not take the same subjects as their sighted peers. The visually impaired pupils mostly took art subjects without science subjects and mathematics. Poor subject

combination was identified by 90% of the visually impaired respondents and 100% of the School Counsellors as a factors limiting career choice in Zambia.

The common reasons from the respondents for visually impaired pupils not taking the same subjects as their sighted peers were that: teachers in schools where the visually impaired went to learn did not have the knowledge and skills of teaching some subjects, there were no specialised learning materials for certain subjects, and the negative attitudes of not only the learners, but also the teachers towards learning and teaching certain subjects.

The general feeling of the respondents was that the subjects taken by the visually impaired pupils did not prepare them adequately for the existing job market. *This was because the pupils did not take certain subjects like science and mathematics which were a prerequisite to entering most of the higher institutions of learning.* Visually impaired learners also had a wrong combination of subjects.

These findings were consistent with Rojewski and Yang (1997) who revealed that teachers of the visually impaired pupils in many developing countries did not teach science subjects and mathematics to the visually impaired pupils. This is because in many developing countries, specialised equipment was inadequate and most the teachers were not well prepared to handle the visually impaired

pupils who were included in their classrooms. Rojewski and Yang (1997) explain that to take up certain careers, one needed to be knowledgeable and skilled in certain subjects. For example, if one's desire was to become a doctor, he or she needed to have studied biology and other related science subjects.

The findings of the study also revealed that most of the grade 12 visually impaired school leavers did not choose the jobs that they were doing out of their own interest. There were a number of persons that had a hand in their choice of career. All the respondents indicated that parents, peers and teachers played a role in influencing the career choice of visually impaired school leavers.

These findings are supported by Boundon (1994) who explained that parents were a significant factor in the career choice of their children. Finlayson (1971) also supports that parents have an influence on career aspirations of the learner. Finlayson (1971) found that the aspiration level of visually impaired students was significantly related to the parents' education. Parents who were educated and well placed in society tended to have higher career aspirations in contrast to those parents whose educational background was low. Children have higher aspirations either as a result of pressure from the parents or as a result of internalised parental pressure or both.

Altman (1997) also reveals that parents play a significant role in the occupational aspirations and career goal development of their children. Without parental approval or support, children are often reluctant to pursue or even explore diverse career possibilities. Overall, research supports the influence of parental expectations and aspirations on career decision and aspirations of their children.

The influence of peers on career choice is supported by Altman (1997) and Blustein (1997). They explained that siblings can be a source of challenge and competition and a basis for comparison of abilities, thus providing a context for identity formation. Interactions can include positive behaviours such as showing support and interest and communicating openly, or negative behaviours such as pushing and controlling.

Moreover, the findings from both the visually impaired and School Counsellors showed that the location of the school attended did not have an influence on the career choice among the grade 12 visually impaired school leavers. These findings have departed from the findings of other studies whose findings showed that the location of school attended had an impact on career choice. For example, Ferry (2006) concluded that there were differences in career choice among the students from urban and rural areas. Urban students were attracted to careers which were associated with urban life than careers such as teaching which attracted most rural students. The findings of other studies done by Wood

(1974) and Bwali (1990) also indicated that rural school leavers had limited career choice because they were not exposed to a wider range of jobs and access to information on different careers.

### **Influence of the Socio-economic Status of the Family on Career Choice**

Another objective of the study was to find out if the socio-economic status of the family limit career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia. The socio-economic status of the family was also recognised by 60% of the visually impaired respondents and 75% of the School Counsellors as one of the factor limiting career choice among some visually impaired school leavers. This is also consistent with the revelation of Davison and Kandel (1981) who found that the socio-economic status of the family had the strongest impact on career choice.

The findings are also supported by Boundon (1974) who concluded that the family's socio-economic status, in terms of education and occupation is closely related to career choice of an individual. According to Boundon (1974) the lower the social status, the less the support and motivation the child will receive in terms of educational and career aspirations. For the most part, the higher the economic resource of the family, the higher the child's educational and career aspirations.



The findings also are in line with Holland (1973) who, in his study, reported that the socio-economic level of the family was the most potent influence among respondents who took part in the study. He noted that the quality and level of education available and aspired for, as well as the work accessibility and aspired for are greatly affected by the family's finances and social contacts. Holland (1973) also adds that children born in families from higher socio-economic strata have better chances of finding employment at higher level because parents have more contacts with people who are well-to-do and influential.

As Herr (1970) explains, a human being is a product of his or her environment, his or her inherent aptitudes and neural endocrinal make-up. The nature of the career pattern is determined by the individual's parental socio-economic level, mental ability and personal characteristic and by the opportunities to which he is exposed. Career choice and subsequent vocational development are greatly influenced by the experience a child undergoes. According to the wide variety of research available, Ginzberg (1972) reports that most theorists have agreed that there are many factors that enter into the selection of a career. The choices a person makes, the values a person holds, the successes and failures a person experiences, the social class in which a person has developed, and the interests, strengths and capacities of the person all enter into this decision. In other words, career aspiration is a product of heredity and environment, and the person's self-concept is vitally important in that decision. The choice of a career is, therefore,

not merely a decision of a moment: it is a complex and difficult process that spans a number of years.

### **Influence of Geographical Location of the School Attended on Career Choice**

The findings from both the visually impaired respondents and School Counsellors showed that the location of the school attended did not have an influence on the career choice among the Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia. Only 37.5% of both the visually impaired respondents and School Counsellors agreed that the geographical location of the school attended had an influence on career choice.

These findings departed from the findings of other studies whose findings showed that the location of the school attended had an impact on career choice. For example, Ferry (2006) concluded that there were differences in career choice among the students from urban and rural areas. Urban students were attracted to careers which were associated with urban life than careers such as teaching which attracted most rural students. The findings of other studies done by Wood (1974) and Bwali (1990) also indicated that rural school leavers had limited career choice because they were not exposed to a wider range of jobs and access to information on different careers.

## **Influence of Availability of Job Opportunities on Career Choice**

Inadequate employment opportunities was identified by both visually impaired respondents (95%) and School Counsellors (62.5%) as one of the limiting factors of career choice among the visually impaired school leavers in Zambia.

In support of this, Finlayson (1971) observed that career aspirations may depend on the labour force requirement at any given time. When the labour force grows much more rapidly than the economy can absorb, it is likely that the young generation will have problems fulfilling their aspirations. Bwali (1990) also explains that individual aspirations may either be fostered or impinged upon depending on the prevailing economic and social conditions in the working environment.

The findings also revealed that 75% of the visually impaired respondents and 100% of the School Counsellors were of view that visually impaired school leavers had interest in taking up other careers. The responses from both the visually impaired and School Counsellors indicated that most of the visually impaired school leavers if provided with an opportunity, most of them would have become lawyers, and journalists.

This is supported by Ferry (2006), who noted that visually impaired persons always had interest in doing other jobs apart from their tradition careers of

teaching and music. They are just denied opportunities of advancing in their careers of choice by, not only economic and physical factors but other personal factors as well.

Moreover, 75% visually impaired respondents and 50% of School Counsellors cited inadequate number of training institutions as a factor limiting career choice among the grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia. This is supported by Scholl (1985) who concluded that in most countries, there are no separate training institutions that are meant for the visually impaired candidates. Visually impaired candidates are expected to go to the same training institutions as their sighted peers and face the competition in being accepted at these institutions. The number of training institutions that look into the various career needs of the visually impaired persons are not adequate and appropriate. Where such facilities exist the programmes offered do not take into account the various needs and interests of the visually impaired.

Scholl (1985) noted that the absence of training centres that meet the vocational needs of people with visual impairment is a limiting factor. The absence of vocational and rehabilitation centres means that the visually impaired are not provided with vocational training in line with the developments of the labour market, and the employment prospects of each individual are not taken into account. Vocational and rehabilitation centres provide services to trainees

which aim to promote their skills, and abilities to become independent and face potential psychological problems.

Other findings in the study showed that 100% of visually impaired respondents did not agree to the notion that loss of vision had an influence on career choice, and only 12.5% of School Counsellors said that loss of vision had impact on career choice. The findings of the American Foundation for the Blind (1990) also had similar results that revealed that loss of vision on its own did not affect career choice among the visually impaired. The foundation explained that just like the sighted learners other personal factors such as emotional, psychological, cognitive and social factors need to be examined first.

Scholl (1985) also noted that loss vision on its own has no effect on career choice. Visually impaired learners with higher intellectual ability tend to seek and prepare for jobs which require superior intelligence while the ones with lower mental ability go for semi-skilled jobs just like the sighted peers.

However, in another study conducted by Holland (1973), different results were yield. Holland (1973) reported that evidence showed that loss of vision had an influence on career choice among the visually impaired. He explained that the visually impaired have low self-esteem, less motivated and often intellectually

underdeveloped. In some cases, they are found in lowest jobs in pay and have less opportunity for advancement.

The other limiting factor that was common among the visually impaired respondents (62.5%) was the absence of positive and proper legal support actions concerning the difficulties people with visual impairment faced regarding their training and employment. Although the Persons with Disabilities Act safeguards equal rights and opportunities in the employment of persons with disabilities, the provision of its positive measures has never come into effect.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter covers the summary of the study, conclusions that are drawn from the study and recommendations.

#### **Summary**

This study investigated factors limiting career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia. A survey was conducted in Lusaka and Copperbelt provinces on forty-eight (48) respondents, twenty (20) visually impaired basic school teachers, twenty (20) visually impaired switchboard telephone operators and eight (8) School Counsellors. Purposive sampling was used at the School Counsellors while snowball sampling techniques was used to get the visually impaired respondents.

The study report was divided into six chapters. Chapter one consisted of the background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance, definition of terms and limitations of the study. Chapter two was review of related literature while chapter three contained the research methodology. Chapter four consisted of presentation of findings while chapter five contained discussion of the findings. Chapter six covered the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

Evidence from the data collected revealed that lack of information on career choice was one of the limiting factors in career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia. Other limiting factors of career choice among grade 12 visually impaired school leavers included socio-economic status of the family, poor combination of subjects taken at school, inadequate training institutions, inadequate job opportunities for the visually impaired and lack of supportive policies and legislation. Geographical location of the school attended and personal characteristics of the Grade 12 school leavers were not significant factors in Zambia.

## **Conclusion**

The objectives of the study were to: determine if lack of information on career choice is a limiting factor in career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia, to find out if the socio-economic status of the family limit career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers and to establish if inadequate job opportunities in Zambia is a limiting factor in career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers.

From the results it can be concluded that grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia are not provided with the necessary information on a variety of career opportunities available for them. This could be one of the reasons why they end up as either telephone switchboard operators or basic school teachers.



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## **Conclusion**

The objectives of the study were to: determine if lack of information on career choice is a limiting factor in career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia, to find out if the socio-economic status of the family limit career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers and to establish if inadequate job opportunities in Zambia is a limiting factor in career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers.

From the results it can be concluded that grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia are not provided with the necessary information on a variety of career opportunities available for them. This could be one of the reasons why they end up as either telephone switchboard operators or basic school teachers.

It can also be concluded that just like in other studies done elsewhere, the socio-economic status of the family also limits career choice among grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia.

*It can further be concluded that the subjects taken by visually impaired learners while at school may be taken as a limitation in their career choice. It was noted that visually impaired learners did not take subjects such as science and mathematics.*

In addition, it can also be concluded that inadequate training institutions and job opportunities may be some of the limiting factors of career choice among the grade 12 visually impaired school leavers. It was revealed that visually impaired school leavers did not have adequate training institutions and job opportunities were scarce.

Furthermore, it may also be concluded that while in some studies geographical location of the attended was identified be to limiting factor, this study showed that this was not significant limiting factor among the visually impaired school leavers in Zambia.

## **Recommendations**

In view of the findings and the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were proposed:

- (a) Since there are inadequate training institutions that accommodate the visually impaired school leavers, the government through the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Science and Technology should create more vocational and rehabilitation centres for people with visual impairment. These centres should be staffed with qualified personnel and should have a variety of programmes that would suit the needs and interests of the visually impaired school leavers. In the event that a programme is not available at the vocational centre, other training establishments or employers should provide such training in cooperation with the staff at the vocational centres. It is important for specialists involved in the field of vocational training to realise that people with visual impairment have abilities to engage any task with competence in a manner similar to sighted peers.
- (b) The Government through its training institutions like TVTC and the University of Zambia should come up with career guidance programmes that should not only focus on the needs of the sighted learners but should also consider the visually impaired school leavers. This implies that School Counsellors should be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge

on the needs and career opportunities for the visually impaired school leavers. It is important for specialists involved in the field of vocational training to realise that people with visual impairment have abilities to engage any task with competence in a manner similar to sighted peers.

(c) Enabling the student to make realistic choices for the future is the vital ingredient for successful training and job placement. It is important that the curriculum in pre-service teacher training colleges be designed to incorporate skills and knowledge on how to work with the visually impaired learners. Teachers should be made very comfortable to teach their specialised subjects to the visually impaired learners since certain careers have a bearing on the kind of subjects one took while at school. Visually impaired learners should be taught and be encouraged to take up a good combination of subjects necessary for their career choice.

(d) The government should also come up with a deliberate policy and legislation on employment of the visually impaired people. Appropriate and supportive legislation needs to be voted in so as to promote opportunities for the employment of people with visual impairment. Such legislation should cover equal participation of people with visual impairment in all processes taken by decision-making bodies as well as political encouragement for developing initiatives. If such policy legislation or policy is there, it needs to be strengthened and put into practice.

- (e) Parents also should be made aware of and understand that, their children can have other career opportunities that may be open for them. They should not direct their children on what career to take even when such a career is not of their child's interest. Their critical role is to give them support so as to enable them meet their career aspirations.
- (f) Visually impaired learners who may be coming from low socio-economic status families should be given financial and material support and help by government and the school, early enough during their school life so that they have equal chances in pursuing their career aspirations as their peers.

### **Future research**

In order to help visually impaired school leavers attain their career aspirations, there is also need to carry out studies in the following areas:

- Attitudes of employers towards employing visually impaired school leavers.
- The effectiveness of the Zambian legislation and policies toward the employment of the visually impaired.
- The current job market, new occupations, vocational training opportunities and educational orientations for people with visual impairment.

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## Appendix (i)

### The University of Zambia School of Education

#### Department of Educational Psychology, Sociology and Special Education

#### Questionnaire for School School Counsellors

This research intends to determine the factors limiting career choice among Grade 12 school leavers in Zambia. As School Guidance and Counselling teacher, you have been selected as a participant in this study. Your participation is highly valued.

The information obtained from the study shall be treated with high confidentiality and your name will not be published in the document. The study is for academic purposes only. Kindly provide your honest answers by filling in the information appropriately and truthfully.

**Instructions:** Tick or write the response in the spaces provided on each item.

1. (a) Name of School.....

(b) Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

© Highest Professional Qualification:

Certificate ☐ Diploma ☐ Degree ☐

(d) Area of Specialization (e.g. Mathematics, Special education, Guidance and Counselling)

.....

2. Does the school have adequate number of School Counsellors?

Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Are you trained to work with Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers?

Yes ☐ No ☐

4. Are Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers given information on career choice while at school?

Yes ☐ No ☐

5. If your answer to question 4 is 'Yes', do you think the information is adequate for them to make a good choice?

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.....  
.....

6. If the answer to item 4 is 'No', explain.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

7. Do visually impaired pupils take the same subjects as their sighted peers at school?

Yes ☐ No ☐

8. If the answer to item 7 is 'No', please specify

.....  
.....  
.....

9. Do the subjects taken by the visually impaired pupils prepare them adequately for the existing job market?

Yes                      No    ☐

10. If the answer to question 9 is 'No', specify.

.....  
.....  
.....

11. Do you think visually impaired school leavers choose their careers on their own?

Yes    ☐                      No    ☐

12. If the answer is 'No', to item 11, briefly explain

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

13. If the answer to item 11 is 'Yes', what are some of the careers do they choose?

.....  
.....  
.....

14. Do you think parents have an influence on career choice of visually impaired school leavers?

Yes ☐

No ☐

15. Does social and economic status of the families of the Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers have an influence on their career choice?

Yes ☐

No ☐

16. Is your school in rural or urban area?

Rural ☐

Urban ☐

17. Do you think the location of the school affects the career choice of Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers?

Yes ☐

No ☐

18. Are there adequate and appropriate vocational institutions in Zambia that accommodate the visually impaired school leavers?

Yes ☐

No ☐

19. If the answer is 'No', to question 18, explain

20. Do visually impaired school leavers show interest in taking other jobs apart from teaching and telephone operating?

Yes ☐

No ☐

21. Are there adequate employment opportunities in Zambia for the Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers?

Yes ☐

No ☐

22. In your own view what factors do you think are the factors limiting career choice among Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia?

.....

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.....

.....

Thank you.

## Appendix (ii)

### The University of Zambia School of Education

#### Department of Educational Psychology, Sociology and Special Education

#### Interview Schedule for Visually Impaired Teachers and Telephone Operators

This research intends to determine the factors limiting career choice among Grade 12 school leavers in Zambia. As one of the school leavers who are in employment, you have been selected as a participant in this study. Your participation is highly valued.

The information obtained from the study shall be treated with high confidentiality and your name will not be published in the document. The study is for academic purposes only. Kindly provide your honest answers by answering the asked questions.

**Instructions:** Please respond to all the questions that being asked.

1. (a) Name of  
School/Organisation.....

(b) Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

(c) Highest Professional Qualification:

Certificate ☐ Diploma ☐ Degree ☐

(d) Occupation

.....

2. Did you have School Counsellors at school?

Yes ☐ No ☐

3. If 'yes', were the School Counsellors trained to work with Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers?

Yes ☐ No ☐

4. Did you receive any information on career choice while at school?

Yes ☐ No ☐

5. If your answer is 'Yes' to question 4, do think the information you received while at school on career choice was adequate to make a good choice?

Yes ☐ No ☐

6. If the answer to item 4 is 'No', why

.....  
.....  
.....

7. Did you take the same subjects as their sighted peers at school?

Yes ☐ No ☐



8. If the answer is 'No' to question 7, why?

.....  
.....  
.....

9. Did the subjects you took prepare you adequately for the existing job market?

Yes ☐                      No ☐

10. If your answer is 'No' to item 9, explain

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

11. Did you decide on your own to choice the kind of job that you are currently doing?

Yes ☐                      No ☐

12. If your answer is 'Yes' to question 11, why?

.....  
.....  
.....

13. If your answer is 'No' to question 11, who influenced you to take it up?

.....  
.....

14. Did your parents have an influence on your career choice?

Yes ☐                      No ☐

15. Did the social and economic status of your family affect your choice of career?

Yes ☐ No ☐

16. Was the school that you attend in a rural or urban area?

Rural ☐ Urban ☐

17. Do think the location of your school influenced your career choice?

Yes ☐ No ☐

18. Are there adequate and appropriate vocational institutions in Zambia that can accommodate the visually impaired school leavers?

Yes ☐ No ☐

19. If the answer is, ' No' to question 18, explain

.....  
.....  
.....

20. Did you have interest in taking other jobs apart from what you are doing?

Yes ☐ No ☐

21. Are there adequate employment opportunities in Zambia for the Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers?

☐

Yes

No ☐

22. In your view what do think are the factors limiting career among the Grade 12 visually impaired school leavers in Zambia?

.....

.....

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.....

.....

**Thank you**