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Contents

ABSTRACT.....	iv
DECLARATION.....	vii
DEDICATION.....	viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	ix
Chapter One.....	1
1.0 Overview.....	1
1.1 Background to the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of Problem.....	3
1.3 Purpose of the study.....	3
1.4 Research Objectives.....	4
1.5 Research Questions.....	4
1.6 Significance of the study.....	4
1.7 Scope of the Study.....	5
1.8 Operational Definitions of Key Terms.....	5
Chapter Two.....	6
1.0 Introduction.....	6
2.1 Learner Absenteeism.....	6
2.2 Teacher Absenteeism.....	7
2.3 Impact of Teacher and Learner Absenteeism.....	8
2.4 The Zambian Situation.....	10
2.5 Conclusion.....	12
Chapter Three.....	14
Theoretical And Conceptual Framework.....	14
3.0 Introduction.....	14
3.1 Theoretical Framework.....	14
3.1.2 Expectancy Theory.....	14
3.2 Conceptual Framework.....	16
3.3 Hypotheses.....	17
3.4.1 Personal Factors.....	17

3.4.2 Socio-economic Factors	18
3.4.3 Institutional Factors	18
Chapter Four	19
Research Methodology	19
4.0 Introduction	19
4.1 Research design	19
4.2 Study area or Site	19
4.3 Sample size and sampling procedures	19
4.4 Study Sample	20
4.5 Sampling Techniques	20
4.6 Data Collection Instruments	21
4.7 Sources of Data	21
4.7.1 Primary Data	21
4.7.2 Secondary Data	21
4.8 Data collection	22
4.8.1 Instrument of Data Collection	22
4.9 Reliability and Validity	22
4.9.1 Reliability	22
4.9.2 Validity	23
4.10 Data Collection Techniques	23
4.10.2 Preparation of Questionnaires	23
4.10.3 Pilot Testing	24
4.10.4 Filling Questionnaire	24
4.10.5 Validation of Data	24
4.11 Data Management	24
4.11.1 Data processing	25
4.11.2 Data Analysis	25
4.11.3 Correlation Analysis of Data	25
4.12 Limitations of Research	25
4.13 Ethical consideration	26
4.14 Summary	26

Chapter Five.....	27
Data Presentation	27
5.0 Introduction	27
5.1 Response rate.....	27
5.2 Demographic Characteristic of Respondents	28
5.2.1 Gender of the Respondents.....	28
5.2.2 Age Group of Respondents.....	29
5.2.3 Level of Education of Respondents.....	29
5.2.4 Type of Occupation of Respondents	30
5.2.5 Period of Operation of the Respondents.....	30
5.2.6 Ownership of the School	31
5.2.7 Number of Teachers at School	32
5.3 Learners, Personal Factors	33
5.3.1 Age of Learner affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations.....	33
5.3.2 Gender of Learner affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations	34
5.3.3 Illness of Learner affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations.....	37
5.3.4 Disability of Learner affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examination	35
5.3.5 Inadequate preparation affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations	35
5.3.6 Expulsion of Learners from School affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations	36
5.3.6 Lack of Parental Involvement affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations ..	36
5.4 Socio-Economic Factors	37
5.4.1 Lack of Transport affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations	37
5.4.2 Food Insecurity affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations.....	37
5.4.3 Child Labour in Homes affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations	38
5.4.4 Teenage Pregnancy affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations.....	38
5.4.5 Early Marriages of Girl Child affects Learner absenteeism in Public Examinations...	39
5.4.6 Vulnerability of Orphaned Children affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations	39
5.5. Institutional Factors.....	40
5.5.1 Teacher absenteeism affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations.....	40

5.6 Desk Review Findings	40
5.6.1 Absenteeism Rates.....	41
5.7 Summary	41
Chapter Six.....	42
Analysis and Discussion of Findings.....	42
6.0 Introduction.....	42
6.1 Data Analysis	42
6.1.1 Learners' Personal Factors	43
6.1.2 Learners' Socio-economic Factors	44
6.1.3 Learners' Institutional Factors	45
6.2 Summary	46
Chapter Seven	48
Conclusion and Recommendation.....	48
7.0 Introduction	48
7.1 The Conclusion	48
7.2 Practical Recommendations for Action.....	49
References.....	52
APPENDICES	56
APPENDIX I	57
QUESTIONNAIRE	57

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine learner absenteeism in public school examinations. The four objectives were; to establish the relationship between learner absenteeism from class during learning time and learner absenteeism during public examinations; to examine the relationship between learner absenteeism from public examinations and socio-economic backgrounds; to ascertain whether learners where teachers' absenteeism in class is high are more likely to be absent during public examinations; and to explore the ways of improving learner absenteeism in public examinations.

The study was carried out by using quantitative study that was mainly through a questionnaire. It also used desk research and literature search in nature. The primary respondents were the former learners who absented themselves from any of the public examinations, the learners who are in examination classes, community members and education standards officers. The research was a case study of Senanga District of Western Province of Zambia and involved the collection of primary and secondary data in order to arrive at an informed decision. A sample of 100 respondents was selected using purposive sampling from the communities. The sample for the study was drawn from schools, communities and district education offices within Senanga district. The study found that learner absenteeism from examinations was prevalent in the district and quite high especially at Grade 9 level. The average absenteeism rates over the 5 year period, from 2011 to 2015 were 14.3 percent during Grade 7 examinations, 16.7 percent during the Grade 9 examinations and 5.3 percent during the Grade 12 examinations.

The research revealed that learner absenteeism in public examinations was caused by a number of factors which included; personal factors, socio-economic factors and institutional factors. However, the personal factors and socio-economic factors were most prevalent. The study recommends that Government implements effective and functional learner orientation and learner support programmes, and ensures that all the stakeholders in education sector are involved in addressing learner absenteeism in public examinations.

DECLARATION

I, Kabutu Lubasi hereby, declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, or material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree of this university or other institution of higher learning. All the concepts used in this document are my own work, except where due acknowledgement has been made.

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DEDICATION

I sincerely dedicate this work to my beloved mother Mrs. M. L. Kabutu and my son Emmanuel Kabutu for the support and time they allowed me to be away from them, for the finances and the love they give me. I will always be indebted to and love you; you are great, you are the more reason for my happiness, God bless you.

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Chapter One

1.0 Overview

Education has been seen as a human right and it is protected within the bill of rights for most countries of the world, because the educational policies are aimed at developing the human resource which is the main component in fostering economic growth and development (ECZ, 2013). Moreover, a large and growing body of literature has showed that a lot of countries including Zambia have taken a lot of measures to increase enrolment rates to education so that no child of school going age is left behind. Therefore, this thesis examined learner absenteeism in public examinations.

1.1 Background to the Study

Basically education is a component for socio-economic growth as well as the reduction of intergenerational transmission of poverty in any given country. UNESCO (1991) defines education as, an organized and sustained communication process designed to bring about learning and is principally formal and non-formal education. Kelly (1999) affirms that the concept and expectations of education, its provisions, and the uses to which it is put are all affected by the historical, social, cultural, economic and political context.

The recognition of education as a Human right and cornerstone for development has seen Zambia record tremendous progress towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goal number two of achieving universal access to primary education. The pace of investments in education has stimulated a lot of positive growth and this has created an enabling environment for the country's drive towards the actualization of the education for all (EFA, 1990) targets by 2015.

Some of the factors to which the growth in access to primary education in Zambia is attributed to include; provision of free primary education, construction of schools, removal of examination fees at grade 7 and 9, and introduction of favourable policies such as re-entry policy aimed at getting more children, especially girls, into school (MEVTEE 2011, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (IOB), 2012).

The above efforts increased the number of learners in the Zambian assessment system. ECZ (2013) points out that, the learner/student assessment system in Zambia comprises; school-based assessments, large-scale national and international assessments and public examinations. The public examinations conducted are the Grade 7 Composite Examination, the Grade 9 Junior Secondary School Leaving Examination (JSSLE) level and the Grade 12 Joint Examinations for School Certificate (SC) and General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary level. These examinations are high stake in nature, because the main purpose is selection and certification. This means that for learners to progress to grade 8 after seven years of primary schooling, or to move to Grade 10 after completing two years of junior secondary, they must sit the relevant examination. The grade 12 examination is a school exit examination and the gateway to the world of tertiary education and employment. On the other hand, it is used not only for selection but certification of learners who successfully complete twelve years of schooling and are awarded a School Certificate or the General Certificate of Education (GCE).

According to the examinations statistics by Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ, 2013), the period 2000 to 2013, examination candidature increased exponentially at both primary and secondary school levels. However, the same period recorded relatively high rates of absenteeism from examination at all levels. Absenteeism rates at primary and secondary school have a high potential of undermining the attainment of quality education in Zambia. In particular, absenteeism rates in public examinations recorded have been proportionately high over time. The absenteeism from examinations is in two forms namely:

1. Candidates absenting themselves from one or more subjects but present in some subjects.
2. Candidates absenting themselves from the entire examination.

Obeng-Denteh, et al. (2005) defines absenteeism as the persistent absence from work or some other place without good reason. In the context of this study, absenteeism has been used to refer to a proportion of learners who duly register for examinations during a particular calendar year but fail to present themselves for part or the entire examination.

Since the advent of free primary education policy in Zambia, enrolments rates have increased dramatically. However, the increase in candidature at all levels also recorded an increase in

learner absenteeism during public examination. In particular, the high rates of absenteeism during Grade 7, 9 and 12 public examinations have been identified as one such hindrance towards the attainment of quality and access to education. Therefore, some degree of empirical studies to specifically examine learner absenteeism in public examinations prompted this study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The measures taken by the government to increase access to education have improved the enrolment rates significantly in Zambian schools. However, this has also seen an increase in learner absenteeism during public school examinations, that is considered to be high and of a serious threat to attainment of quality education. Although, this has been a concern for a long time now by many Zambians, there have been few academic studies to examine the issue of learner absenteeism in public examination. Furthermore, learner absenteeism from public school examinations has a potential to invalidate these gains, if left unchecked.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to examine learner absenteeism in public examinations in some selected public schools of Senanga District in Western Province of Zambia. The study aimed at comprehensively investigating the extent to which personal, socio-economic and institutional learning environments and other factors contribute to absenteeism during public examinations at Grade 7, 9 and 12. The study also aimed at generating pragmatic solutions that would help remedy the increasing absenteeism rates during public examinations. It is hoped that the study recommendations would ultimately, inform policy in devising interventions to reverse the challenges of absenteeism.

Therefore, the purpose of the study was ascertaining evidence on the increase of absenteeism from public examinations in Zambia’s primary and secondary schools. The studies that have been conducted on the phenomenon mostly focus on learner absenteeism from school class. Thus, this study would contribute to filling that knowledge gap on the topic of absenteeism from public examinations.

1.4 Research Objectives

The general research objective for this study was to examine learner absenteeism from examinations at grade 7, 9 and 12 levels.

The specific research objectives were as follows;

1. To establish the relationship between learner absenteeism from class during learning time and learner absenteeism during public examinations;
2. To examine the relationship between learner absenteeism from public examinations and socio-economic backgrounds;
3. To ascertain whether learners where teachers' absenteeism in class is high are more likely to absent during public examinations;
4. To explore the ways of improving learner absenteeism in public examinations.

1.5 Research Questions

The main research question for the study was to find the factors of learner absenteeism during public examinations at Grade 7, 9 and 12 levels.

The Specific Research Questions were as follows:

1. Are the learners who absconded from class during learning time more likely to abscond during public examinations?
2. Are learners with a particular socio-economic background more likely to be absent from public examinations than others?
3. Are learners where teachers' absenteeism in class is high are more likely to absent during public examinations?
4. How can learner absenteeism in public examinations be improved?

1.6 Significance of the study

The study would help address the problem of learner absenteeism in public examinations in Zambia. The information may also be worth undertaking as it would help educational practitioners come up with interventions to address the challenges that this poses. If the factors of this problem would be exposed, more learners could stay in school as strategies to prevent the situation would be devised. This would help policy makers come up with evidence-based

ecisions when dealing with the matter. Further, the gains attained as a result of already existing favourable policies such as the removal of examination fees and the introduction of the re-entry policy for girls who fall pregnant would be consolidated.

.7 Scope of the Study

This study was limited to learner absenteeism from public examinations at grade 7, 9 and 12 in some selected public schools of Senanga District of Western Province of Zambia. The study did not consider those other institutions that are found in the district to avoid distorting the data. Further, the sample was drawn of only primary and secondary schools with the highest absenteeism rates from 2011 to 2015 examination session. The time frame for undertaking the study was one month. The data used in the study was both primary and secondary data from some selected schools in Senanga district and other stakeholders of the schools.

.8 Operational Definitions of Key Terms

Absenteeism refers to a proportion of learners who duly registered for an examination during a particular calendar year but fail to present themselves for part of or an entire examination.

Education is a process of teaching, training and learning especially in schools to improve knowledge and develop skills.

Examination is a formal written or practical test, especially at school or college, to see how much one knows about a subject or what one can do.

Performance is the way in which somebody or an institution does a job judged by its effectiveness.

Institution is a place of tuition and learning, an open system established to meet the educational and training needs of the community at large.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

.0 Introduction

In this Chapter an attempt was made to highlight studies done on teacher and learner absenteeism. Particularly, the literature review was focused on learner as well as teacher absenteeism; the impact of learner / teacher absenteeism on learning and performance, and the suggested strategies for combating absenteeism. The chapter concluded by the identification of gaps in the literature reviewed with particular emphasis on the Zambian situation.

.1 Learner Absenteeism

In America, a study was conducted by Bridgeland, et al. (2006) to better understand the lives and circumstances of students who drop out of high school. The study was conducted in response to the high school dropout epidemic in America. Focus group discussions and a survey was conducted in which participants who identified themselves as high school dropouts in 25 different locations throughout the United States participated to give their stories. The findings revealed that participants generally regretted the decision to drop out of school. Among the major reasons advanced by respondents for dropping out of school were that they absented themselves from class for many days and therefore could not catch up. Some found classes uninteresting and spent time with people not interested in school while others indicated that they had to get a job; became parents or had to care for a family member.

A study was conducted in India by Create India Policy (2011) to explore the causes and correlations of absenteeism, repetition and silent exclusion. The analysis was based on the Create research in three clusters in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The findings showed that absenteeism was rampant considering that on the day of the field visit, 22 percent of the children were absent from one sampled school, 35 percent in the second school and 47 percent in the third school. The findings generally revealed that children from economically and educationally disadvantaged families had high levels of absenteeism and repetition.

In Africa, a similar study was conducted by the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (2007) it investigated the incidence of learner and reasons for absenteeism in South Africa. The investigation used interviews and structured questionnaires to collect data from school principals, representatives of school governing bodies and district or provincial education officials. Among

he factors identified for student absenteeism were: personal characteristics (illness, age, gender, learning disabilities); socio-economic (lack of parental involvement, disintegrated family structures, food insecurity, child labour, transport, teen pregnancy); school-based (competence of educators, punishment for late coming, violence in school and poor school facilities).

One of the major recommendations provided on addressing absenteeism was that approaches to managing absenteeism should be devised in a holistic way implying that solutions must take into account specific socio-economic and cultural characteristic of the schools and surrounding communities where absenteeism was a problem.

1.2 Teacher Absenteeism

The Teacher's Union of Nepal were contracted by UNICEF Nepal in October 2009 to undertake an assessment of seasonal factors impacting teacher and learners school attendance in selected schools of the Karnali zone. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative data methodologies to collect data. Particularly, focus group discussions, structured questionnaires and school attendance registers were used to collect data. The main findings of the study were that 83 school-days were lost each year through absences linked to seasonal events.

Some of the main seasonal factors cited for teacher absenteeism were early departure for vacations; late return after vacations; involvement in farming activities and migration to avoid cold weather. The main non-seasonal factors cited were poor management of teachers in schools, participation in teacher training with no system for providing substitute teachers during these periods and involvement in trade or business. The study conclude that learners from poor families and those from households engaged in agriculture or livestock-raising were more likely to be absent from school.

In Africa, a study was conducted in Uganda by the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (2010) to measure the extent of and reasons for teacher absenteeism. Using both random and non-random sampling methods, the study focused on Iganga district following reports by the district office about possible teacher absenteeism in the previous three years. A total of 620 people participated in the study through interviews. The major findings showed that absenteeism among female teachers was more than that of the males.

Sickness, involvement in other income generating activities especially farming; inadequacies in inspection; weak monitoring mechanisms at school level; lack of teachers' houses; long distances to school and distances to tanks were linked to absenteeism.

2.3 Impact of Teacher and Learner Absenteeism

Teacher absenteeism can influence the overall quality of education considering that it can greatly reduce the overall effectiveness of the school, diminish pupil achievements, damage the school's reputation; induce pupil absenteeism and display negative role models for students who often see teachers as mentors (Bray, 2003). Das, et al. (2005) conducted a study that was aimed at examining the casual effects of teacher absences. Apart from conducting interviews with school principals, patterns of teacher absences were documented based on local school calendars. The findings showed that each 10 days of teacher absenteeism reduced student's mathematics achievement by 3.3 percent of a standard deviation.

The Independent Advocacy Project (2009 - 2010) in Nigeria also conducted a study with the purpose of finding out the causes and consequences of teacher absenteeism in Nigerian public schools. The study methodological approach included a desk study, focus group discussions, facility visits and survey questionnaires. The findings indicated that teacher absenteeism contributed to the falling standards of education. Particularly, the results showed that absenteeism of teachers amounted to heavy loss of valuable class work and the inability to cover the syllabus. Other findings showed significant absenteeism behaviour among female teachers, the major causes of absenteeism included poor salaries, lack of effective monitoring oversight and economic pressures.

The study conducted by African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN, 2010) Uganda Chapter with Support from Transparency and Accountability Program (TAP, 2012) of the Results for Development Institute in Uganda found that, absenteeism was more rampant among female teachers than of the males teachers (Teacher absenteeism was found to be at 43.6% being higher among females (51%), than males (49%). It was found out on average that, the absenteeism rate of head teachers was 19.7%). Some reasons advanced for teacher absenteeism included sickness, attending to family

raining, leave and attending to administrative duties. Sponsored by UNICEF, Hua (2008) conducted a study aimed at identifying the status and trend in school wastage with a focus on students' participation and attendance in schooling in Armenia.

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methodologies and used various data sources to analyse and evaluate key indicators of school wastage, including student participation and academic performance. One of the key results was that student absenteeism in Armenia was negatively correlated with student academic performance - the more hours students were absent, the worse their academic performance was. Other findings were that the dropout rate in Armenian schools had worsened over the years and that students in higher grades were more likely to be absent than those in lower grades.

In another study carried out by Chen and Lin, (2008) to investigate the determinants of student performance in mathematics and dictation tests among fourth-grade school children in Indonesia, it was revealed that teacher absence rate was among the strongest influence on student performance. Further, a study to investigate the impact of learner/teacher absenteeism on performance was conducted by Amedeker, (2011). The study which was exploratory in nature was conducted in Kumasi, Ghana to find out whether student and teacher absenteeism affected the performance of students in Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) results. The results indicated that while student absenteeism was of no significance to the performance of students in BECE, teacher absenteeism greatly impacted on the performance of the students in BECE.

Wadesango and Machingambi (2011) conducted a study to examine the implications of student absenteeism in selected universities in South Africa. The study also sought to explore the extent and reasons of student absenteeism. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews with students. The study found an inverse relationship between student absenteeism and course performance. The study further revealed that student absenteeism was rampant in the universities under study. Some of the reasons advanced for absenteeism were lack of subject interest, poor teaching strategies by lecturers, unfavourable learning environment, too much socialization, part-time jobs to augment meagre bursaries and poor relations with the lecturers.

Other scholars like Epstein and Sheldon (2002) also conducted research on absenteeism which took a different dimension. Particularly, the research which was a longitudinal study was aimed at finding out how families and community involvement activities were implemented to reduce chronic absenteeism among students. The findings showed that communicating with families about attendance, celebrating good attendance and connecting chronically absent students with community mentors measurably reduced students' chronic absenteeism from one year to the next.

2.4 The Zambian Situation

Learner absenteeism is equally a challenge in Zambia as the situation is not any different from that of other countries reported above. For example, the 2012 National Assessment Survey on Learning Achievement at Grade 5 Level cited learner absenteeism as serious, considering that 97 percent of pupils that participated in the research stated that they were absent once or more times in the school term. The major reasons that accounted for learner absenteeism were sickness (53%). Other reasons included; pupil involvement in economic activities, teacher harassment and inability to pay user fees.

Studies on the impact of teacher absenteeism in Zambia have shown similar findings to those conducted in other countries. For example, the findings of a study conducted on the consequences of teacher absenteeism on learner achievement revealed that a 5 percent increase in teacher absenteeism rates reduced learning by 4 to 8 percent of average gains over the academic year in English and mathematics (Das, et al., 2007).

In Zambia, researchers sought to understand the effect of teacher absences on student achievement in a country where the ravages of the AIDS epidemic often meant increased absenteeism for both students and teachers (Das, et al., 2007). In 2002, the researchers surveyed 182 schools in four provinces of the country. Questionnaires were administered to teachers and head-teachers in order to gather data about their demographics, personal characteristics, absenteeism, outside options and classroom conditions. Further, they obtained information about each school's financing and receipts of educational inputs during the academic year. Data were collected on the identity of each student's teacher for both the 2000-2001 and 2001- 2002 school years. The questionnaires were administered to all of the matched teachers, resulting in a sample

of 541 teachers in 182 schools. Student achievement results were collected by administering Mathematics and English achievement tests to a maximum of 20 students who were randomly selected in Grade 5 at each school in 2001. The same tests were administered to the same students' one year later, by focusing on those students who remained with the same teacher in two consecutive years, Das, et al. (2007) found that a 5 percent increase in the teacher's absence rate resulted in an approximately 4 percent decline in achievement in English and Mathematics across the two years. Researchers found that the reduction in learning was reflective of the joint effect of the teacher's time away from the class, decreased teaching quality in the classroom, and less lesson preparation when at home (Das, et al., 2007).

Phiri (2013) found that provision of additional infrastructure through construction of new schools and classroom blocks in existing schools, led to increased access to education and candidature at Grades 7, 9 and 12 levels. He further found that all levels of examinations (Grades 7, 9 and 12) experienced an increase in absenteeism, with the highest increase being at Grade 9 Level from 54,547 in 2012 to 67,807 in 2013. The highest absenteeism rates were recorded in Central Province at 15.24% (Grade 7), 28.63% (Grade 9) and 2.53% (Grade 12) respectively. The lowest absenteeism rates were recorded from the Copperbelt Province at 8.50% (Grade 7) and 12.81% (Grade 9). The study carried out by ECZ (2013) indicated that, the reduced number of candidates who sat for 2013 Grade 9 examination was attributed to increased absenteeism from examinations, which was as a result of inadequate preparation due to absenteeism from class by pupils and teachers, repetition of candidates, early marriages, pregnancies, double entries for examinations and environmental factors such as flooding and caterpillar collection.

Phiri (2013) further found out that, teacher and pupil absenteeism rates from class were reduced by strengthened monitoring of schools. This enhanced pupil preparedness for examinations, leading to a reduction in rates of absenteeism during public examinations. Additionally, the Examinations Council of Zambia established a system that allowed candidates at Grades 9 and 12 levels to enter the examinations using the number they used at Grade 7 level. This has eliminated double entries that were currently prevalent at Grade 9 level and by doing so, reduced on the absenteeism numbers. The use of one number during all school examinations has also

made it easy for researchers to conduct tracer studies from primary to senior secondary school level.

Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC) and Transparency and Accountability Program (TAP) (2012) conducted a study to examine the extent and causes of teachers' absenteeism in selected basic schools in Zambia as well as identify strategies for improving the teachers/pupil contact hours at basic school level. Spontaneous survey visits to schools were made to provide insight on absenteeism rates. The findings indicated that absenteeism among teachers was widespread considering that out of the 908 teachers who were employed in the 10 sampled schools, 388 (42%) teachers were not in school at the time of the visit. Absenteeism from examinations is also a growing challenge in Zambia. The Examinations Council of Zambia (2011) reported that absenteeism during examinations grew from 4.17 percent in 2004 to 9.75 percent in 2009.

Another study conducted by the Examinations Council of Zambia in 1997 sought to report the extent and causes of learner absenteeism during examinations at Grade 7, 9 and 12 for the year 1994 - 1995. The extent of learner absenteeism was obtained through an analysis of statistics on examinations at national and provincial levels. The findings showed that the causes of absenteeism included; lack of preparedness for examinations, expulsion and natural causes. For most girls, pregnancies and early marriages was the most predominant reason for absenteeism (80%).

ECZ (2013) points out that, absenteeism was on the rise and this situation raised a lot of concern from various stakeholders in the education system. The extent of learner absenteeism was obtained through an analysis of statistics on examinations at national and provincial levels. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative data methodologies to collect data. The instruments used to collect data included; questionnaires, checklists, interviews and focused group discussion. The findings showed that absenteeism rates during the 2011 and 2012 examinations were selected from three districts with the highest rates of absenteeism in each of the 10 provinces of Zambia. From such schools, learners who did not sit either the Grade 7 or 9 examinations were selected for the study. Some of the key findings of the study included the following; the average rates of absenteeism were 9.04 percent and 11 percent at Grades 7 and 9,

respectively despite the introduction of free education policy and the abolition of examination fees from Grade 1 to 9.

ECZ (2013) further indicated that, at Grade 7 level, the absenteeism rates were higher for girls than boys. Overall, absenteeism rates amongst girls were higher than boys across all the provinces. Boys from Lusaka and Copperbelt Provinces, which are predominantly urban provinces, recorded lower rates of absenteeism compared to rural provinces such as Northern, Luapula and North Western Provinces. North Western, Western and Northern Provinces consistently recorded high rates of absenteeism at both levels of the examination. The absenteeism rates were higher for girls than boys across all provinces with the exception of Central Province where boys' average absenteeism rates were slightly higher for boys compared to girls. For example, 10.12 percent of the girls were absent compared to 9.48 percent boys in the 2012 examination session; 13.64 percent of the girls were absent compared to 11.95 percent boys in 2011; and 11.76 percent of the girls were absent compared to 11.14 percent boys in 2010. The pattern of having more girls being absent from public examinations was found both at Grade 7 and 9 level.

ECZ (2013) revealed that, in terms of provincial absenteeism, Western (14.35%) and Northern (13.24%) Provinces recorded the highest rates while Copperbelt (7.26%), Southern (7.68%) and Lusaka (7.98%) Provinces had the lowest rates. Lusaka (11.34%) and Copperbelt (11.62%) Provinces recorded the lowest rates of absenteeism at Grade 9 level while Western (23.65%) and Central (21.19%) were the provinces with the highest absenteeism rates.

2.5 Conclusion

By and large, most studies reviewed show that learner absenteeism is quite prevalent all over the world and that Zambia is not an exception. Globally, the factors and consequences of learner absenteeism are different and multifaceted. Consistent also in the studies is that teacher absenteeism adversely affects learner performance and the provision of quality education. It is also important to mention that most studies on absenteeism have concentrated more on the absenteeism of learners from class than from examinations that is why this research is looking at factors of learner absenteeism in public examinations in Senanga District.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

3.0 Introduction

Taylor (2013) describes a research's theoretical framework as the appropriate theories that a researcher adopts and applies to his or her research as its basis. In other words like Sekeran (2003) put it as cited by Adediran and Adediran (2008:25), "A theoretical framework is a conceptual model of how one makes logical sense of the relationship among the several factors that have been identified as important to the problem."

A Conceptual framework of a research study on the other hand is a researcher's summarized perception of the research problem and providing explanation and the means to solving the problem (that is, prediction of the outcome) expressed in most cases in either mathematical or diagrammatic flow charts (Taylor, 2013). He further alludes that it (the Conceptual Framework) is done for the following reasons:

- Easy representation and understanding,
- Simplification, and
- Variable relationships.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This section presents the theoretical framework guiding the study. A theory was identified that was used to explain the relationships in the conceptual framework.

3.1.2 Expectancy Theory

A major factor in attendance motivation can be attributed to expectancy theory first developed by Victor Vroom in 1964. It is a process theory that assumes that all behaviour is learnt and results from certain processes an individual has experienced (Vroom, 1964). Vroom here, is not concerned with the needs or wants of an individual but how wants produce and sustain action. According to Owens (1981:127) expectancy theory of motivation is essentially based upon the three assumptions:

People do not just respond to events after they occur, they anticipate or (expect) that things will occur and that certain behaviours in response to those events will probably produce predictable consequences. Expectancy theory suggests, then that individuals are highly proactive and merely reactive; humans usually confront possible alternative behaviour (and their probable consequences) in rational ways; through experience, individuals learn to anticipate the likely consequences of alternative ways of dealing with events and, through this learning, modify their responses.

On the basis of the three assumptions, it can be concluded that Expectancy theory of motivation focuses on behaviour as rational, and that is the anticipation or expectation of events that are likely to occur. One can almost predict the outcomes and consequences. Owen (1981:128) explains that:

Valence means the degree or extent of preference that one has for a potential outcome. Valence can either be positive or negative. Valence defines what an individual wants from a job; Expectancy is a belief that behaviour will result in a predictable first-level outcome; First-level outcome means direct or immediate consequences of one's behaviour.

Mitchell (1983:175) argues that, "if attendance, diligence or punctuality are important, they must be rewarded publicly and frequently." That is, the expected situation of not attending lessons and the valence that a learner places on those situations and incentives. Peretz and Fried (2012) find that, the performance for both the learner and the institution is associated with reduced rates of learner absenteeism, and Johansson and Palme (2002) affirm that, increased obstacles associated with absenteeism has a negative effect with its frequency.

Psychological factors may play a role in both attendance motivation and ability to attend lessons. Avey, et al., (2006) identify four state-like attributes of positive psychological capital, which they theorize can influence the frequency of both voluntary and involuntary absenteeism: resilience, or the ability to quickly rebound from a setback; optimism, or a realistic expectancy of positive outcomes; self-efficacy, which describes one's confidence in their ability to achieve a task or outcome; and hope, or the ability to envision achievement and goal attainment despite

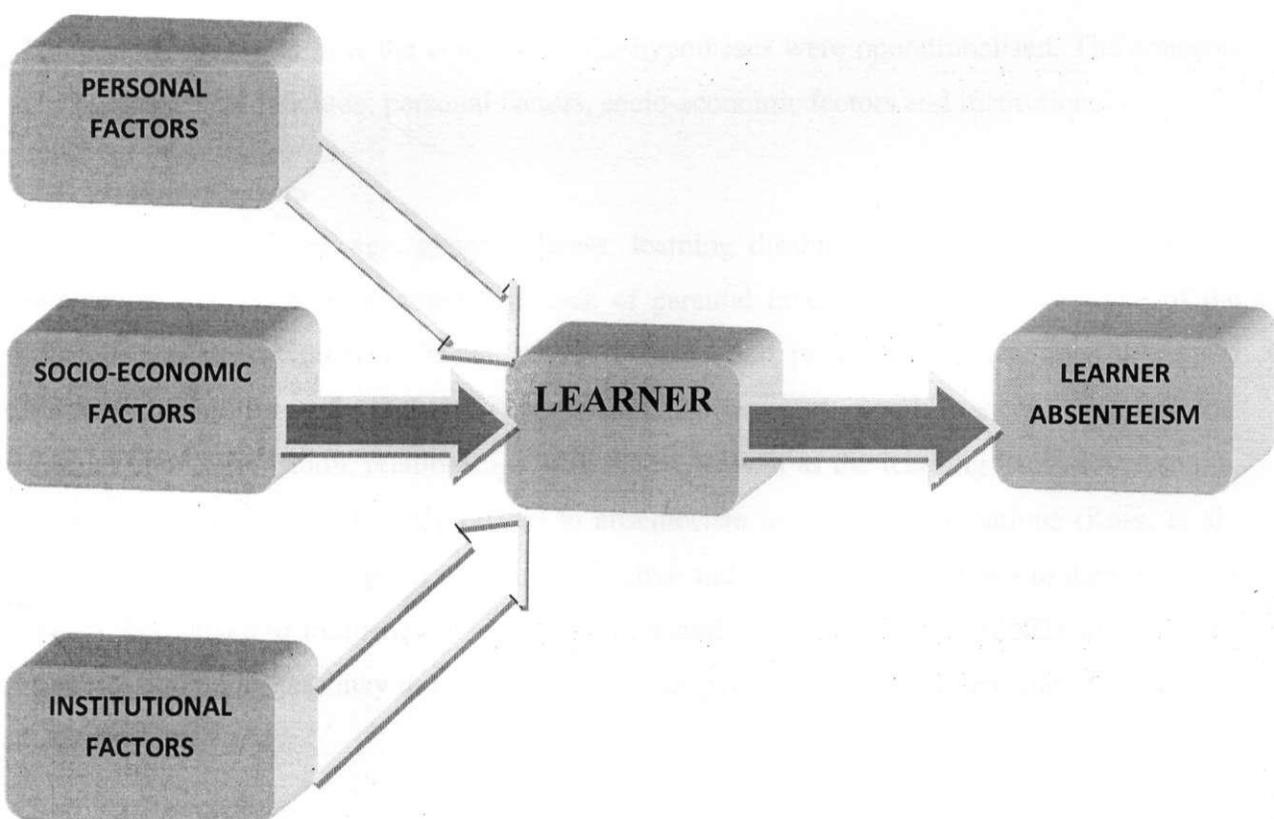
potential obstacles. While these attributes were found to have a statistically significant relationship with involuntary absenteeism, dimensions such as lesson satisfaction and institutional commitment, treated individually, were stronger indicators of voluntary absenteeism.

3.2 Conceptual Framework

For the purpose of the current research, the researcher has adopted and applied the factors of learner absenteeism from public examination and the concepts herein as the basis for the research in the Zambian context. This is done with the aim, as the title suggests, of studying learner absenteeism in public school examinations in Zambia. The current researcher's conceptual framework is based on the model below (Figure 3.1):

Figure 3.1: Conceptual Framework

Factors of Learner Absenteeism from Public Examinations



Source: Author 2016

Figure 3.1 shows the learner absenteeism factors in public examinations. It depicts that; learner absenteeism from public examinations is influenced by personal factors, socio-economic factors and institutional factors. The dependent variable which is learner, and independent variables which are; personal factors, socio-economic factors and institutional factors, influence the participation of pupils in the public school examinations. The dependent and independent variables are undertaken within the confines of the above mentioned model which encompasses the identified theory supporting this study.

3.3 Hypotheses

- H₁.** Personal factors are positively related to learner absenteeism from public examinations.
- H₂.** Socio-economic factors are positively related to learner absenteeism from public examinations.
- H₃.** Institutional factors are positively related to learner absenteeism from public examinations.

3.4 Operationalisation of the Concepts in the Hypotheses

This segment discusses how the concepts in the hypotheses were operationalised. The concepts to be operationalised include; personal factors, socio-economic factors and institutional factors.

3.4.1. Personal Factors

Personal factors such as; age, gender, illness, learning disabilities, lack of preparedness for examination, expulsion from school and lack of parental involvements could be some of the factors of learner absenteeism. Some personal factors and psychological reactions to certain conditions can influence the absenteeism in school and thereafter in public school examinations. Boredom in one's situation, relationships with others, as well as the learning itself, for example, has been found to be significantly related to absenteeism in public examinations (Kass, et al., 2001). An individual's perception of both distributive and procedural unfairness in their situation has also been linked to frequency of absenteeism; a study by Bakker, et al., (2002) suggests that such perceived unfairness may in fact be related to the psychosomatic exacerbation of a learner's health problems.

3.4.2 Socio-economic Factors

Some learners find themselves in vulnerable situations, such that the only option is to engage themselves in socio-economic activities, as such absenteeism is enhanced. Cultural factors may influence absenteeism behaviour as well, as research suggests that societies that have more collectivist cultures, tolerate lower levels of inequality, and are generally more future oriented, and tend to have lower rates of absenteeism (Peretz and Fried, 2012). Some of the socio-economic factors that influence learner absenteeism in Zambia include; lack of transport to school, food insecurity, child labour, inability to pay user fees, teen pregnancy and early marriages (ECZ, 2013).

3.4.3 Institutional Factors

Institutional factors are widely reported factors of learner absenteeism. Some of the institutional factors causing learner absenteeism include; teacher absenteeism, teacher harassment, punishment for late coming, bullying or violence in school and poor school facilities. Previous studies of public institutions indicate that learners in these institutions may possess some form of absenteeism, (Perry, 2000). Recent work by Christensen and Wright (2011) suggests that public institution motivation may have a stronger role in predicting learner fit; that is to say, the nature of the learning itself and an individual's public institution may influence absenteeism.

Similarly, previous research has suggested that higher levels of institutional commitment are related to lower absenteeism (Blau and Boal, 1987; Koch and Steers, 1978; Steers, 1977). Porter and colleagues describe institutional commitment as a broad concept characterized by three major factors: "strong belief in and acceptance of the institution's goals and values, willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the institution and definite desire to maintain institutional membership". Further, they suggested that general attitudes toward one's institution may be more important than attitudes towards one's individual commitment in predicting absenteeism and return (Porter, et al., 1974). A study of institutional commitment among learners found significant correlations between institutional commitment and an individual's future career (Liou, 1995). Other literature from recent years suggests that managers with transformational leadership styles can foster public institutional motivation among learners (Wright, et al., 2012).

Chapter Four

Research Methodology

4.0 Introduction

This chapter gives detailed description of the methodology that was used in the study. The chapter is comprised of the following: research design, population, sample size and sampling procedures, methods of data collection, research instruments, reliability and validity of the instrument, data processing and analysis and ethical consideration.

4.1 Research design

The study employed quantitative approach, to collect data on factors of learner absenteeism during public school examinations. The use of this method afforded the researcher an opportunity to use its strengths, which are; quantitative data is often viewed as objective, collected data can be presented using descriptive statistics or even tests of statistical significance and use of the computers is strongly encouraged in the processing of large amounts of quantitative data. Qualitative approach made an inquiry into a problem based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers and analyzing with statistical procedures in order to determine whether the predictive generalizations of the theory hold true.

4.2 Study area or Site

The research was carried out in some selected schools in Senanga District, in Western Province, as this is near to the home residence of the researcher and she has done most of her work in this town. It has been done from 3 selected schools with high absenteeism rates.

4.3 Sample size and sampling procedures

The sample size was got by using Morgan and Krejcie (1970) Table for calculating sample size. The calculated sample size for this study was 375 respondents, however due to time and limited resources the researcher used 100 respondents only. The researcher used purpose sampling as she was only targeting to get responses from the 3 selected schools with high absenteeism rates from public examinations for the past five years.

4.4 Study Sample

The sample for the study was drawn from the schools, communities and district education offices within Senanga District. The key sources of information in schools were the learners, the class teachers, guidance teachers and head teachers. Parents and former learners who failed to present themselves from the 2011 to 2015 examination sessions were also identified using purposive sampling from the communities. Education Standards Officers were identified as key informants at the district level. The distribution of target group for the study was as follows;

1. In each of the 3 selected schools, 10 (5 boys and 5 girls) learners currently in examination classes (Grades 7, 9 and 12) were selected using critical case sampling and snowball sampling responded to the questionnaire. In total, 30 (15 boys and 15 girls) former learners living in surrounding communities of the 3 selected schools were purposively sampled in the district and also given the questionnaire. In each of the 3 sampled schools, 7 selected class teachers handling examination classes as well as teachers in charge of school guidance, and counseling responded to the questionnaire. In each of the 3 sampled schools, all school head-teachers responded to the questionnaires also.
2. Ten community members consisting of parents and guardians and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) were given questionnaires representatives.
3. Three key informants comprising of District Education Standards Officer, Education Standard Officer-General Inspection and the Education Standard Officer-Special Education also responded to the questionnaires.

4.5 Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling was used to select 3 schools from Senanga District of Western Province. The only criterion was that each of these schools in the district should have been among the schools with the highest rates of absenteeism from 2011 to 2015 examination sessions. The participants for the questionnaire were selected from the sampled schools using critical case sampling and snowball sampling which according to Groves, et al., (2009) were non probability sampling methods. The former learners living in surrounding communities of the 3 selected schools were purposively sampled.

4.6 Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected using the following instruments;

1. Self-administered questionnaires for key informants,
2. Desk review of Examinations Statistics

4.7 Sources of Data

The data collection methods or techniques formed an important part of this research. According to Patton (2002) using more than one data collection instrument strengthens and gives credibility to the study. The use of more than one data collection instrument portrays a true picture of the case under study. In this regard, the required data from two (2) different sources were collected. This approach was used because it revealed issues that could not be raised in using only one data collection instrument. The study made use of primary and secondary data sources as outlined below, in order to gather relevant information for the study.

4.7.1 Primary Data

The primary data was collected by use of structured questionnaires. The answers for the above variables were offered on the following scale; strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. The primary data were collected from the selected respondents within the sample frame in the research population. The analysis of the study was substantially based on this data. The data was analyzed using quantitative analysis.

Quantitative method, however, uses standardized instruments, so that the varying perspectives and experiences of people can fit a limited number of predetermined response categories, to which numbers, tables, pie chart and bar chart are assigned and measured statistically (Cresswell, 1994).

4.7.2 Secondary Data

For secondary data, annual reports were collected on learner absenteeism in public examinations from various publications, the websites, the District Education Office, selected schools in the district and from Examinations Council of Zambia. These were used so as to obtain additional information in order to answer the questions set in the problem definition on the subject.

4.8 Data collection

The researcher used a self-administered questionnaire to collect data from the respondents.

4.8.1 Instrument of Data Collection

The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents to read and fill in responses. The completed questionnaire was collected from the respondents individually or in groups as suggested by (Kothari, 2004). This method of data collection was preferred because the respondents were alone when filling-in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire comprised of close and open-ended questions. The researcher developed close-ended questions on a 5 point Likert scale which was developed by utilizing the item analysis approach wherein a particular item is evaluated on the basis of how well it discriminates between those persons whose total score is high and those whose score is low (Kothari, 2004). The researcher adopted this type of scale so as to give respondents wider choices of answers and therefore gathering different views of respondents.

Table 1: definition of scale

Description	Mean range	Interpretation
Strongly Agree	5	Very High
Agree	4.00-4.99	High
Neutral	3.00 -3.99	Neutral
Disagree	2.00 -2.99	Low
Strongly Disagree	1.00-1.99	Very Low

4.9 Reliability and Validity

4.9.1 Reliability

The researcher ensured reliability or the degree of consistency and precision in which the measuring of instruments is demonstrated (Amin, 2005). In establishing the reliability of the

instrument, 10 questionnaires were administered to and collected from the head teachers of the three selected schools, as pilot testing of the questionnaires and data was entered in the SPSS computer package to test for reliability. The responses of some of the questions that were designed in the socio-economic factors had shown the same answers with those on the institutional factors, such questions were therefore, redesigned in order to curb ambiguity.

4.9.2 Validity

To ensure validity of the instrument, the instrument was given to the supervisor who used the face validity. To check the content validity, the researcher used Content Valid Index=Total number of valid items / number of items, if the answer got was to be 0.7 and above then the instrument was considered valid for the study.

4.10 Data Collection Techniques

In this study, the main technique used in the collection of data in order to find answers to the research questions was questionnaire survey.

4.10.1 Questionnaire Survey

In order to satisfy the research purpose, survey goals and available resources, the method used in the collection of the research data was questionnaire survey method with close-ended questions. The questionnaire questions had answers where respondents were asked to choose from, and these were; strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree.

4.10.2 Preparation of Questionnaires

The study was centered on learner absenteeism from public examinations in 3 selected schools of Senanga District. The supervisor provided valuable suggestions as the researcher framed the questionnaires so that the objectives of the study could be achieved.

Different statements were placed for the respondents to know their views which was measured in a strongly agree to strongly disagree (1-5) five point Likert Scale format. Opinions of respondents on different aspects on the study were also analyzed.

4.10.3 Pilot Testing

In order to determine the suitability of the questionnaire for the sample, three days were allocated for pilot testing the questionnaires. This was done so as to check if there were any errors that needed to be corrected and to help improve on the response rate. Three selected school head teachers were therefore asked the questions from the questionnaire and some responses to some of the questions resulted in the redesign of some of the questions. For example, some of the questions that were designed in the socio-economic factors had the same answers with those on the institutional factors, such questions were therefore, redesigned in order to curb ambiguity.

4.10.4 Filling Questionnaire

The researcher distributed questionnaires to the sampled organizations namely; schools, communities, and district education office within Senanga district. According to the sampling frame, one hundred (100) questionnaires were distributed to the mentioned organizations. Out of the one hundred (100) questionnaires, all of the hundred (100) sampled respondents filled in and returned the questionnaires, making it to have 100% response rate. This high response rate was attributed to the data collection procedure where the researcher personally administered the questionnaires and waited for the respondents to fill in, and picked the questionnaires once fully filled in. The response rate, attested to the fact that, the respondents were willing to participate in the study.

4.10.5 Validation of Data

To confirm validity and reliability of the collected data, triangulation method was used, where data collected from one method was cross-checked with another method. Data triangulation was used where different sources of data, for example, pupils in examination classes, former pupils who failed to write the examination, class teachers, guidance teachers, head teachers, community members and education officials. Methodological triangulation was also used where questionnaire survey was cross-checked with secondary data.

4.11 Data Management

11.1 Data processing

The collected data was presented using descriptive statistics. Data was cleaned, edited and coded through the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to ensure consistence of responses by using various quantitative statistical models such as tables to illustrate the results. This was done by re-arranging data in new, but meaningful ways through making connections between categories, in order to come up with appropriate themes.

11.2 Data Analysis

In this study, quantitative method was employed in the data analysis. The quantitative data from the school checklist, questionnaires, class registers and examination datasets were analyzed using SPSS software to generate descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics was used to identify the factors of learner absenteeism.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data entry and analysis of the data collected. Data preparation by re-arranging it was the initial step to convert raw data into structured format that was more appropriate for the analysis. Tasks in this stage included data cleaning, data coding and data entry, frequency distributions, percentages, and descriptive analysis of assessing the factors of learner absenteeism from public school examinations. Data collected was collated and analyzed using various quantitative statistical models such as tables to illustrate the results. The findings were critically examined to ensure consistency with the research objective and hypotheses.

11.3 Correlation Analysis of Data

Correlation analysis is generally used to analyze data measured at any level, that is, nominal, ordinal, interval or ratio. For this research, correlation analysis was used in order to effectively show the relationships among variables. In this research, data was mainly nominal and coded in order to measure the variables.

12 Limitations of Research

There was a challenge in collecting information related to school attendance by learners and teachers, for example, some of the class registers for the previous years were not properly kept.

Another problem encountered was difficulty in gaining access to participants because some of them would not want to talk for fear of victimization. Furthermore, time and lack of financial resources were also problematic in the study process as the researcher had no sponsor. Thus the research concentrated only on sampled participants.

4.13 Ethical consideration

For each of the respondents that had taken part in the study, informed consent was sought before they participated in the study, hence, confidentiality and anonymity was granted as no names or addresses were quoted in any of the materials (questionnaires). Thus, there are no known risks, social or physical harm that was arisen from participating in the study. From the respondents consent was sought by them completing the consent form. The researcher had seen to it that names or personal details of the respondents are not revealed or published. The data that was collected was kept confidential and was only used for research purposes (UNESCO, 1976).

4.14 Summary

The researcher used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to help her analyze quantitative data, this is because SPSS programme was found simpler and made it easy to analyze and interpret social science findings. Specifically objective 1, 2 and 3 was analyzed using descriptive statistics, that is, frequency percentages.

Therefore, this chapter highlighted the target population and described how the sample size was drawn. The research design and sources of data are also mentioned and how the data collected was analyzed. The next chapter shall deal with data presentation.

Chapter Five
Data Presentation

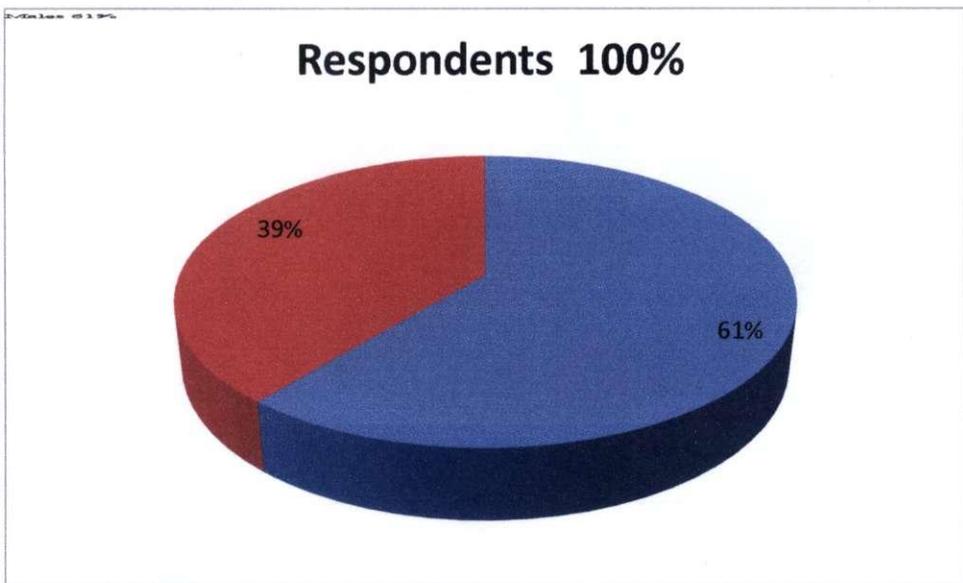
5.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with data presentation of the study. The data has been presented in form of tables, pie charts and graphs using frequencies and percentage scores.

5.1 Response rate

The study distributed the questionnaires to the sampled organizations namely; schools, communities, and district education office within Senanga district. According to the sampling frame, one hundred (100) questionnaires were distributed to the mentioned organizations. Out of the one hundred (100) questionnaires, all of the one hundred (100) sampled respondents filled in and returned the questionnaires, making it to have 100% response rate. This high response rate was attributed to the data collection procedure where the researcher personally administered the questionnaires and waited for the respondents to fill in, and picked the questionnaires once fully filled in. The response rate, attested to the fact that, the respondents were willing to participate in the study. Below is a pie-chart showing the response rate of the respondents shown in Figure 5.1

Figure 5.1: Showing Response rates for the people interviewed in the study



Source: Author (2016)

5.2 Demographic Characteristic of Respondents

The study investigated socio-demographic characteristic of the respondents. The aim was to find out how they impacted on the study findings. The characteristics included; gender, age group, education level, type of occupation, period of operation, ownership of school (proximity to school) and number of teachers. The findings on the socio-demographic characteristics are presented in this sub-section of the report.

5.2.1 Gender of the Respondents

Table 5.1 : Sex of a Respondent

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	61	61.0	61.0	61.0
Female	39	39.0	39.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

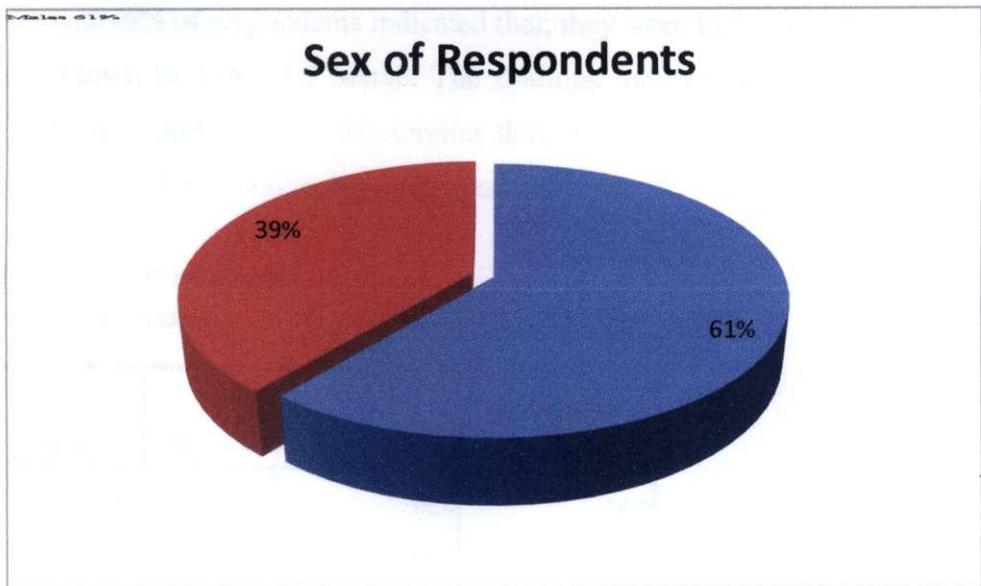
Source: Author (2016)

Figure 5.2 : Sex of the Respondents

Sex of Respondents

Males 61%

Females 39%



Source: Author (2016)

The study sought to find out the distribution of gender of the respondents. According to the data presented, 61% of the respondents indicated that they were males while 39% of the respondents, indicated that they were females. The results are shown in Table 5.1 and Figure 5.2 above.

5.2.2 Age Group of Respondents

Table 5.2 :Age of a Respondent

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 15 years to 25 years	18	18.0	18.0	18.0
26 years to 35 years	17	17.0	17.0	35.0
36 years to 45 years	19	19.0	19.0	54.0
46 years and above	46	46.0	46.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author (2016)

Some people are sensitive about disclosing their age. Hence, the administered questionnaire requested for only the age group. The study results revealed that, 18% of the respondents were aged between 15 to 25 years while 17% of the respondents indicated that, they were aged between 26 and 35 years. Additionally, 19% of the respondents indicated that, they were aged between 36 to 45 years and 46% of respondents indicated that, they were in the over 46 years age group. The results are shown in Table 5.2 above. The findings indicate that, majority of the respondents were middle aged and elderly. This implies that, they are experienced people who could have given the relevant information to the study area.

5.2.3 Level of Education of Respondents

Table 5:3 Level of Education of a Respondent

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Primary	14	14.0	14.0	14.0
Secondary	18	18.0	18.0	32.0
College	34	34.0	34.0	66.0
University	34	34.0	34.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author (2016)

The study results revealed that, 14% in the study had attained primary level, whilst 18% had attained Secondary level. Additionally, 34% had attained College and 34% attained University level education. The results are shown in Table 5.4 above.

5.2.4: Type of Occupation of Respondents

Table 5.4 below shows the study findings on the type of occupation of the respondents. From the 100 respondents that were involved in the study, 3% indicated that they were Standards Education Officers, 3% indicated that they were head teachers, 21% indicated that they were class teachers handling examination classes, 3% indicated that they were guidance teachers, 10% indicated that they were community members/PTA members and 60% indicated that they were pupils in examination classes and former pupils who missed the examinations. Since majority of the respondents at 60% indicated that they were pupils in examination classes and former pupils who failed to write examinations, this means that most of the respondents involved in the study were pupils and former pupils and these are the key informants.

Table 5.4: Type of Occupation of Respondent

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Education Officer	03	03.0	03.0	03.0
	Head Teacher	03	03.0	03.0	06.0
	Class Teacher	21	21.0	21.0	27.0
	Guidance Teacher	03	03.0	03.0	30.0
	PTA member	10	10.0	10.0	40.0
	Pupil	60	60.0	60.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author (2016)

5.2.5: Period of Operation of the Respondents

Table 5.5 below shows the study findings on the period of operations. Out of the 100 respondents that were involved in the study 17% indicated above 10 years, 51% indicated between 5 to 10

years and 32% indicated below 4 years. This means that more views gathered in this study were from those respondents who have been in the area for the period between 5 to 10 years. However, some more views were gathered from those respondents, who have been in the place for over 10 years, this further means that, the respondents were very vast in knowledge as far as this topic under investigation is concerned. The results are shown in Table 5.5 below.

Table 5.5: Period of operation for a Respondent

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0 to 4 years	32	32.0	32.0	32.0
	5 to 10 years	51	51.0	51.0	83.0
	10 years and above	17	17.0	17.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author (2016)

5.2.6: Ownership of the School (Proximity to School)

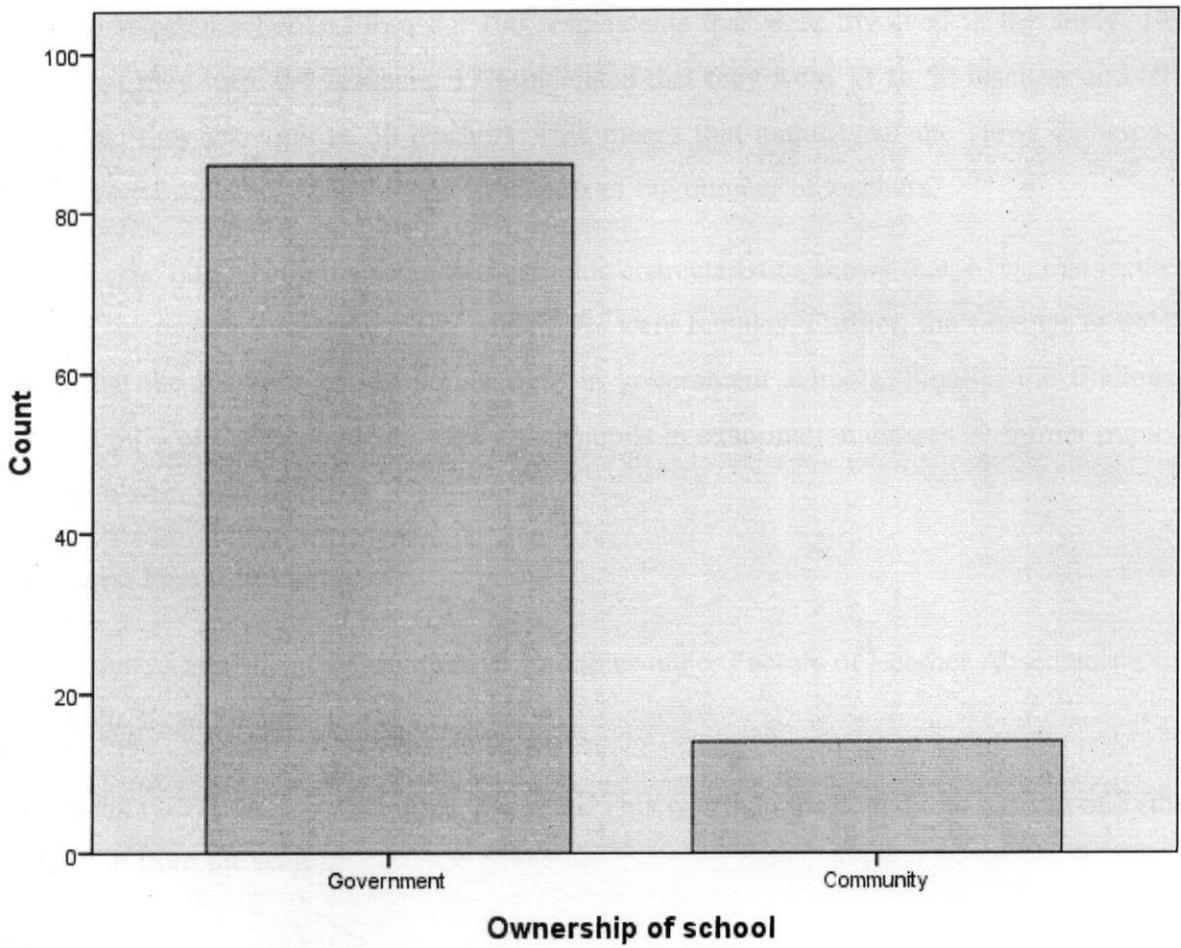
Table 5.6 and Figure 5.3 below show the study findings on the ownership of the school. From the 100 respondents that were involved in the study 86% indicated being at or living near government owned school, 14% indicated that they were at or living near community schools (proximity to school). Since majority of the respondents, that is, 86% indicated being at, or living near government schools, this means that most of the respondents that the researcher involved in the study have the experience of government schools.

Table 5.6: Ownership of School

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Government	86	86.0	86.0	86.0
	Community	14	14.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author (2016)

Figure 5.3: Ownership of the School



Source: Author (2016)

5.2.7: Number of Teachers at School

Table 5.7: Number of Teachers at school

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0 to 5 teachers	14	14.0	14.0	14.0
11 to 50 teachers	17	17.0	17.0	31.0
50 and above	69	69.0	69.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author (2016)

Table 5.7 above shows the study findings on the number of teachers indicated by the respondents in the three selected schools. From the 100 respondents that were involved in the study, 14% indicated that they were 0-5 teachers, 17% indicated that they were 11 to 50 teachers and 69% indicated that they were above 50 teachers. This means that majority of the views gathered in this study were from respondents found in schools of big number of teachers.

In summary, the findings on the socio-demographic characteristics shows that, 61%, that is, the majority of the respondents were male, while 39% were females. Further, the findings at 86% indicated that the majority of the pupils were in government schools. Finally, the findings indicated at 60% of the respondents were either pupils in examination classes or former pupils who failed to write examinations.

5.3 Learners, Personal Factors

5.3.0 Descriptive Statistics for Quantitative Variables under Factors of Learner Absenteeism in Public Examination

The five point (1-5) Likert Scale format was used. This was then translated into a mean of 3 (that is, the median from the scale).

The study investigated learners' personal factors from respondents. The aim was to find out how they impacted on the study findings. The learners' personal factors included; age, gender, illness, disability, inadequate preparation for examinations, expulsion of a learner and lack of parental involvement. The findings on the learners' personal factors are presented in this sub-section of the report.

5.3.1 Age of Learner affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations

Statistics from the data on this variable were below 3 on the scale which was neutral or the mean as reflected by the data of 83% of the respondents disagreed. This means that, the majority of the respondents disagreed that, age of a learner does not affect learner absenteeism in public examinations.

Table 5.8: Age of a learner affects learner absenteeism in public examinations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	17	17.0	17.0	17.0
Disagree	83	83.0	83.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source

e: Author (2016)

5.3.2 Gender of Learner affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations

The respondents indicated that gender of a learner does not affect learner absenteeism in public examinations as statistics from the data on this variable was reflected by 81% of the respondents. ECZ (2013) revealed that, overall absenteeism rates amongst girls were higher than boys across all the provinces. However, the findings, on this variable was different in Senanga district due to the fact that the girls in Senanga district have been sensitized by the Non-Governmental Organization that is known as Women for Change, and this is the reason for the girls' awareness of performing better like boys, as they look at gender not being a hindrance, although there are some girls who fail to write examinations due to teenage pregnancies and early marriages. The other reason is the fact that some of the girls in school were learning a lesson after seeing the hardships which were being faced by the girls who dropped out of school due to early marriages and teenage pregnancies, so that helped them to work hard so that they do not end up suffering like the girls who dropped out of school.

Table 5.9: Gender of the learner affects learner absenteeism in public examinations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	81	81.0	81.0	81.0
Agree	19	19.0	19.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author (2016)

5.3.3 Illness of Learner affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations

Statistics from the data on this variable were above 3 on the scale which was neutral or the mean as reflected by the data of 65% of the respondents agreed. This implies that, the majority of the respondents agreed that, illness of a learner affects learner absenteeism in public examinations.

Table 5.10: Illness of a learner affects learner absenteeism in public examinations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	65	65.0	65.0	65.0
Strongly Agree	35	35.0	35.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author (2016)

5.3.4 Disability of Learner affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examination

Table 5.11: Disability of a learner affects learner absenteeism in public examinations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	83	83.0	83.0	83.0
Neutral	17	17.0	17.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author (2016)

Statistics from the data on this variable were below 3 on the scale which was neutral or the mean as reflected by the data of 83% of the respondents disagreed. This means that, the majority of the respondents disagreed that, disability of a learner does not affect learner absenteeism in public examinations.

5.4.5 Inadequate preparation of Candidates for Examinations affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations

Table 5.12: Inadequate preparation of candidates for examinations in public examinations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	83	83.0	83.0	83.0
Strongly Agree	17	17.0	17.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author (2016)

Statistics from the data on this variable were above 3 on the scale which was neutral or the mean as reflected by the data of 83% of the respondents agreed. This implies that, the majority of the

respondents agreed that, inadequate preparations of candidates for public examinations affect learner absenteeism in public examinations.

5.4.6 Expulsion of Learners from School affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations

Statistics from the data on this variable were above 3 on the scale which was neutral or the mean as reflected by 46% of the respondents were neutral. This means that, the average of the respondents agreed that, expulsion of learner from school affects learner absenteeism in public examinations.

Table 5.13 Expulsion of a learner affects learner absenteeism in public examinations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Neutral	46	46.0	46.0	46.0
Agree	36	36.0	36.0	82.0
Strongly Agree	18	18.0	18.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author (2016)

5.3.7 Lack of Parental Involvement in Learner School activities affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations

Statistics from the data on this variable were above 3 on the scale which was neutral or the mean as reflected by the data of 83% of the respondents agreed. This implies that, the majority of the respondents agreed that, lack of parental involvement in learner school activities affects learner absenteeism in public examinations.

Table 5.14: Lack of parental involvement in learner school activities affects learner absenteeism in public examinations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	83	83.0	83.0	83.0
Strongly Agree	17	17.0	17.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author (2016)

5.4 Socio-Economic Factors

5.4.0 Descriptive Statistics for Quantitative Variables under Factors of Learner

Absenteeism in Public Examination

The study investigated learners' Socio-economic factors from the respondents. The aim was to find out how the socio-economic factors impacted on the study findings. The learners' socio-economic factors included; lack of daily transport to school, food insecurity, child labour, teenage pregnancies, early marriages and vulnerability of orphaned children. The findings on the learners' socio-economic factors are presented in this sub-section of the report.

5.4.1 Lack of Transport affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations

Statistics from the data on this variable were below 3 on the scale which was neutral or the mean as reflected by 46% of the respondents were neutral. This implies that, the average of the respondents strongly disagreed that, lack of transport to school does not affect learner absenteeism in public examinations.

Table 5.15: Lack of daily transport for commuting learners to school affects learner absenteeism in public examinations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	46	46.0	46.0	46.0
Disagree	37	37.0	37.0	83.0
Neutral	17	17.0	17.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author (2016)

5.4.2 Food Insecurity affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations

Statistics from the data on this variable were above 3 on the scale which was the mean, as reflected by 54% of the respondents agreed, while 46% of the respondents strongly agreed. This implies that, food insecurity affects learner absenteeism in public examinations.

Table 5.16: Food insecurity in homes affects learner absenteeism in public examinations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	54	54.0	54.0	54.0
Strongly Agree	46	46.0	46.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author (2016)

5.4.3 Child Labour in Homes affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examination

Statistics from the data on this variable were above 3 on the scale which was neutral or the mean as reflected by the data of 82% of the respondents agreed. This implies that, the majority of the respondents agreed that, child labour in homes affects learner absenteeism in public examinations.

Table 5.17: Child labour in homes affects learner absenteeism in public examinations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	82	82.0	82.0	82.0
Strongly Agree	18	18.0	18.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author (2016)

5.4.4 Teenage Pregnancy affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations

Statistics from the data on this variable were below 3 on the scale which was neutral or the mean as reflected by 54% of the respondents were neutral. This means that, the average of the respondents disagreed that, teenage pregnancy affects learner absenteeism in public examinations.

Table 5.18: Teenage pregnancy affects learner absenteeism in public examinations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	54	54.0	54.0	54.0
Agree	46	46.0	46.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author (2016)

5.4.5 Early Marriages of Girl Child affects Learner absenteeism in Public Examinations

Table 5.19: Early Marriages of girl child affects learner absenteeism in public examinations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	36	36.0	36.0	36.0
Strongly Agree	64	64.0	64.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author (2016)

Statistics from the data on this variable were above 3 on the scale which was neutral or the mean as reflected by the data of 64% of the respondents strongly agreed. This means that, the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that, early marriage of child affects learner absenteeism in public examinations.

5.4.6 Vulnerability of Orphaned Children affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations

Statistics from the data on this variable were above 3 on the scale which was neutral or the mean as reflected by 45% of the respondents were neutral. This implies that, the average of the respondents agreed that, vulnerability of orphaned children affects learner absenteeism in public examinations.

Table 5.20: Vulnerability of Orphaned children affects learner absenteeism in public examinations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Neutral	45	45.0	45.0	45.0
Agree	38	38.0	38.0	83.0
Strongly Agree	17	17.0	17.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author (2016)

5.5. Institutional Factors

5.5.0 Descriptive Statistics for Quantitative Variables under Factors of Learner Absenteeism in Public Examination

The study investigated learners' institutional factors from respondents. The aim was to find out how the institutional factors impacted on the study findings. The learners' institutional factors are those that affect the learner which are caused by the school, like teacher absenteeism. The findings on the learners' institutional factors are presented in this sub-section of the report.

5.5.1 Teacher Absenteeism affects Learner Absenteeism in Public Examinations.

Statistics from the data on this variable were above 3 on the scale which was neutral or the mean as reflected by the data of 64% of the respondents agreed. This means that, the majority of the respondents agreed that, teacher absenteeism affects learner absenteeism in public examinations.

Table 5.21: Teacher absenteeism affects learner absenteeism in public examinations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Neutral	17	17.0	17.0	17.0
Agree	64	64.0	64.0	81.0
Strongly Agree	19	19.0	19.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author (2016)

5.6 Desk Review Findings

With emphasis on learner absenteeism in public examinations in Senanga District, the desk review findings established that the number of candidates who duly registered for the examinations at Grade 7, 9 and 12, had significantly been increasing from 2011 to 2015. However, the number of candidates who failed to write the examinations at all levels, that is, Grade 7, 9 and 12, also increased over the years from 2011 to 2015 in Senanga District as a whole.

Table 5.23: Candidature and learner absenteeism at grade 7, 9 and 12 in Senanga District.

Grade 12			Grade 9			Grade 7		
Candidature	Absentees	%	Candidature	Absentees	%	Candidature	Absentees	%
1 399	49	3.5	1 361	188	13.8	2 247	233	10.4
1 462	67	4.6	1 689	221	13.1	2 389	276	11.6
1 489	70	4.7	1 602	279	17.4	2 458	353	14.4
1 535	106	6.9	1 841	326	17.7	2 473	408	16.5
1 767	118	6.7	1 802	389	21.6	2 579	486	18.8

Source: Senanga DEBS Office (2016)

5.6.1 Absenteeism Rates

The study indicated that, the majority of those who failed to present themselves for examinations due to various reasons were at Grade 7 and Grade 9 level in all the years as compared to Grade 12. In absolute terms, Grade 9 level also recorded absenteeism numbers larger than Grade 7 in all the years in examination sessions. On average, absenteeism rates over the five-year period, that is, from 2011 to 2015, were higher at Grade 9 level compared to Grade 7 and Grade 12 level.

5.7 Summary

This chapter focused on the data presentation achieved in this research. The chapter presented a highlight of how the data collected. A thorough analysis and detailed discussion of what has been highlighted in this chapter is given in chapter 6.

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

6.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the analysis and discussion of the findings. The findings were analyzed and discussed on the basis of conceptual framework, namely; learners' personal factors, socio-economic factors and institutional factors, and also in line with literature. The aim of this study was to examine learner absenteeism in public examinations.

6.1 Data Analysis

Sekaram (2003) asserts that, there are three objectives in data analysis; getting a feel for the data, testing the goodness of the data, and answering the research questions. He notes that, establishing the goodness of data provides credibility to all subsequent analysis and findings because it measures the reliability and the validity of the measures used in the study. After gathering data from questionnaire schedules, the data was entered into the SPSS database and checked adequately for reliability, accuracy and clarification.

6.1.1 Learner's Personal Factors:

Personal factors have an effect on learner absenteeism in public examinations. Bridgeland, et al. (2006) study on learner absenteeism affirm that, among the major reasons, absenteeism of learners from class for many days was a factor for learners absenting themselves from public school examinations. They further suggest that learners absent themselves from public examinations because they could not catch up. This view is supported by Schalk (2010) who argues that an individual may miss an examination due to an illness.

The findings show that learners' personal factors are a big challenge in Senanga district because these factors adversely affected learners in public school examinations. The learners may miss learning and examinations due to a minor cold. This means that learners may miss public examinations as a result of illness. Once a learner may not be feeling well, it may be difficult for such a learner to write the examination and illness contributes to absenteeism during public examinations.

In adequate preparation for examinations is another personal factor for learner absenteeism. Other findings show that inadequate preparation for examinations affect learners' attendance during public examinations. This is further supported by ECZ (2013), that lack of preparedness for examinations, may be some of the reasons for learners absenting themselves from public examinations. This is true because once learners have not prepared for examinations adequately; they may likely miss public examinations.

Phiri (2013) further affirms that, inadequate preparation of candidates for examinations lead to absenteeism during public examinations. However, this can be reduced in schools by strengthening monitoring in Senanga district by the District Education Officers and the school administrators, in order to ensure that teacher and learner absenteeism rates from class and public examination are reduced.

Expulsion of learners from school attendance in public examinations was a factor. When learners are expelled from class, they will not be allowed to attend lessons therefore; they will have missed a lot and won't be able to catch up. The findings show that for learners who are expelled from school, it is rare that such learners may come back and sit for public examinations. The findings show that expulsions affect learners' attendance during public examinations.

Expulsion of learners from school, therefore, affect learner attendance during public examinations. Godin and Kittel (2004) point out that, learners' personal conditions such as poor school-life balance may lead to absenteeism in public examinations. Hence, more guidance and counselling on the learners is needed in Senanga district in order to keep offending learners in school because expulsion is not the solution but it also creates other problems like of absenteeism during public examinations

Furthermore, through the learners' personal factors, there can be stresses arising from the need to display emotions that are considered acceptable within the learning institution, as well as self-control demands that have been found to have interactive effects with situation strain and anxiety, both of which have been linked with attendance in public examinations (Diestel and Schmidt, 2010).

6.1.2 Socio-economic Factors:

The findings show that children from economically disadvantaged families had high levels of absenteeism. This view has been supported by Create India Policy (2011), children from economically and educationally disadvantaged families had high levels of absenteeism and therefore failed to write the public examinations. As food being one of the socio-economic factors, once there is food insecurity in a home, learners tend to be negatively affected in school because it is difficult for children to go to school during the year and write the public examinations at the end of the year when there is food insecurity in a home, therefore, such children absent themselves during public examinations.

The other socio-economic factor that affects learners in school is child labour. The findings show that child labour affects learners' attendance during public examinations. Learners with a particular socio-economic background miss public school examinations than others. Child labour affects attendance in public examinations, because instead of the candidate writing the examinations, he or she may be involved in some socio-economic activities in order to support the family. Teachers' Union of Nepal (2010) study on learner absenteeism in public examinations shows that, learners from poor families and those from households engaged in agriculture or livestock-raising were more likely to be absent from school due to child labour.

Learner absenteeism as a result of child labour is equally a challenge in Senanga district as the situation is not any different from that reported above. The learners who come from poor families are engaged in activities such as farming, herding cattle and fishing while some learners may be engaged in activities of selling some merchandise in order for them raise an income for the family instead of going to school.

Other findings show that, vulnerability of orphaned children affects learner absenteeism in public examinations. Schalk (2010) affirms that while absenteeism may generally come about as the result of an individual being affected by a number of external factors that may influence absenteeism, financial constraints, for example, may influence absenteeism from public examination. This is true even in Senanga district because some of the orphaned and vulnerable children do not have any support and may fail to pay even for the private costs such as books,

pens, uniforms and user fees and that may result in the learners absenting themselves from school and thereafter from public examinations.

The findings show that teenage pregnancy affects learner absenteeism in public examination. ECZ (2013) confirm that for most girls, pregnancies and early marriages was the most predominant reason for girls' absenteeism from public examinations. The above view is not different from the one that is being experienced in Senanga district. The findings show that some of the vulnerable families look at educating a girl child as a share waste of time. Once the girls become of age, parents prefer to marry them off. These parents tend to prefer marrying off their daughters because they will have realized the immediate benefits through dowry which is paid in form of cattle or money, than for the parents to continue spending on their daughter who they may not even be sure of the educational returns, that is, whether she may find a gainful employment after writing her public examinations.

Other findings show that the girls get pregnant because children are regarded as source of labour and also source of wealth, and the parents may have some immediate benefit of charging damage in form of cattle or money for any girl who gets pregnant, that is, from the man responsible for the pregnancy. This has caused a good number of girls to be absent during public examination due to pregnancies and early marriages.

6.1.3 Institutional Factors:

Furthermore, institutional factors have an effect on learner absenteeism in public examinations. The institutional factors are factors that affect the learners as a result of the school. Teacher absenteeism is one of the factors that affect the learners at school and also affect learner attendance during public examinations. The findings show that learners where teachers' absenteeism in class is high are more likely to absent themselves during public school examinations. When the teacher is absent, it will be very difficult for the learners to learn and therefore, tend to miss public examinations. Bray (2003) affirms that, teacher absenteeism can influence the overall quality of education considering that it can greatly reduce the overall effectiveness of the school, diminish pupil achievements and damage the school's reputation. He further suggested that teacher absenteeism induce pupil absenteeism and display negative role models for learners who often see teachers as mentors.

Other Findings show that female teachers tend to miss more work than males. This view is supported by Ichino and Moretti (2006) who assert that gender has been found to have a complex relationship with absenteeism, due to both biological and family differences. This is true due to the fact that female menstrual cycle not only increases female absenteeism, but can also partially affect the female performance at work. Therefore, women will take a greater number of days off for reasons other than being on vacation. This view is further supported by Flanagan et al. (1974), Garrison and Muchinsky (1977) and Scott and McClellan (1990) when they confirm that woman's traditional role of childrearing, will have fewer work days available for discretionary absences, and this also result in learner absenteeism. Scott and McClellan (1990) suggest that, women of childbearing age are more likely to have dependent children, and traditional gender roles. They further suggest that women are more likely to be the primary caregiver for an ill child than men. However, it is expected that both males and females with dependent children will demonstrate higher rates of absenteeism. This may be explained by the higher tendencies of teachers of childbearing age to have more days off duty as there is need to take dependent children to the doctor or to school or extracurricular functions. Therefore, it has been seen that teacher absenteeism can affect learner absenteeism in class and also thereafter affect learner absenteeism in public examinations.

The findings from the study bring to question a number of issues amongst stakeholders in the education sector. This implies that efforts to stamp out the problem of absenteeism should be directed at addressing all the factors within the wider social, economic and institutional environment rather than merely concentrating at the learners.

Further, the finding that absenteeism in class is related to being absent from public examinations calls for the attention of two critical stakeholders, namely the parents and the school. These can be instrumental in preventing and remedying the situation. The partners in the provision of education in Zambia must endeavour to carry out their respective roles diligently. Government needs to improve teachers' working conditions to boost their morale which could lead to less absenteeism from class. However, working conditions alone may not be adequate to address the problem of absenteeism without some sort of quality control or monitoring system in place.

Therefore, district education offices and head teachers must ensure that their monitoring systems are effectively done.

6.2 Summary

To conduct this study, the researcher distributed a total of 100 questionnaires to various stakeholders in the education sector and all the 100 questionnaires were completed and returned, representing a response rate of 100%. This response rate was adequate to allow the researcher to continue with the analysis. Out of the 100 respondents, 61 were male and 39 were females (Figure 5.2 and Table 5.1). This result shows that the research was not biased on gender since both male and female stakeholders in education sector were considered.

The questionnaires were composed of questions that addressed the objectives of the study. Based on the aforementioned objectives, the study sought to examine the learner absenteeism in public examinations. According to the results presented in Table 5.18, it was revealed that though the government of Zambia implemented the re-entry policy to the girls who fall pregnant to return to school after delivery, more concerted efforts to disseminate the provisions of the policy are needed. Furthermore, in line with other relevant literature, it has been analyzed that learner absenteeism in public examinations does not just involve one factor, but it is from a number of factors which include personal, socio-economic and institutional factors. However, from the findings; the personal and socio-economic factors of learner absenteeism adversely affect learner absenteeism than the institutional factors. In order to get the information on whether there are some efforts to reduce learner absenteeism in public examinations, it was proper that the study determine the respondents' views on the subject matter.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion and Recommendation

7.0 Introduction

The aim of this study was to examine learner absenteeism during public examinations at Grade 7, 9 and 12 levels.

7.1 The conclusion

Based on the findings, discussions and analysis presented in the last two chapters, the following conclusions have been made:

The study established that the common factors of absenteeism were; personal factors, socio-economic factors and institutional factors. The quantitative data revealed that there was a strong relationship between learner absenteeism in class and learner absenteeism from the public examination due to personal factors, socio-economic factors and institutional factors.

The study revealed that, teachers were contributing to learners' absenteeism from public examinations because learners where teachers' absenteeism in class is high are more likely to absent themselves during public school examinations, hence not preparing the learners adequately for public examinations.

Findings that some respondents missed public examinations because they felt inadequate or ill-prepared call for the attention to which teachers contribute to learner preparedness. Teacher absenteeism made learners to be discouraged as teachers were unable to cover the entire prescribed syllabus on which the learners would be assessed on. This calls for the district education officials and school administrators to monitor learners and teacher attendance during the school year so that the learners were adequately prepared for the public examinations.

This study found out that there was lack of parental involvement in learners' school activities which contributes to learner absenteeism in public examinations. Parents need to play an important part in ensuring that their children attend class during the year and prepare adequately for the public examinations.

In addition the study revealed that, absenteeism from public examinations has a socio-economic character that works adversely against learners whose families were at the bottom end of the economic spectrum.

7.2 Practical recommendations for action

Despite the government abolishing examination fees at Grade 7 and Grade 9 levels, the rate of absenteeism during public examinations is still high in Senanga District, for example, the average absenteeism rates over the 5 year period, from 2011 to 2015 were 14.3 percent during Grade 7 examinations, 16.7 percent during the Grade 9 examinations and 5.3 percent during the Grade 12 examinations. There are various factors of learner absenteeism that have been identified, and these are; personal factors, socio-economic factors and institutional factors that need to sensitize all the learners for the need to write the public examinations, because failure to write these examinations has far-reaching consequences on the individuals, families, community and the nation at large. Public examinations are not only used to evaluate pupil performance but also act as a measure of the performance of the curriculum and the education system as a whole.

The abolishing of payment of examination fees at grades 7 and grade 9 levels did not see a reduction in absenteeism rates. This is can be remedied first by parents in the home. Parents ought to support their children with basic school requirements as well as encouraging them to attend school and write the free public examinations. Other stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education, cooperating partners and the general public at large also need to give a lot of attention in order to curb the problem of learner absenteeism from public examinations. It is not just an educational problem but also a social and economic issue. Therefore, this study advocates that in order to address the problem in a meaningful way, efforts should be directed not only at the learner or school but at the broader socio-economic and political environments in which schools are located. This then calls for a holistic and pragmatic approaches in order to mitigate the challenge of absenteeism from public examinations by learners.

There is urgent need to reduce the large numbers of learners absent from public examinations at Grade 7, 9 and 12 levels by coming up with pragmatic interventions by the relevant stakeholders in education. In order to address the identified factors of learner absenteeism in public

examinations and considering the conclusions derived from the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

7.2.1. Learners and Communities

- (i) Parents and communities should be sensitized against withdrawing the learners from examinations to involve them in economic activities like fishing, and selling merchandise.
- (ii) Sensitizations of parents against early marriages should be strengthened in order to curtail the scourge.
- (iii) Sensitization on the 'Re-entry Policy' for girls who fall pregnant and would like to go back to school after delivery.
- (iv) Severe punishments should be given out to men who marry or impregnate school going children.

7.2.2 Community-Related Recommendations

- (i) Strengthening of community social protection programmes so that children are not removed from school for economic reasons.
- (ii) Strengthening the provision of social security schemes, for example, bursaries.
- (iii) Sensitization on the dangers of early marriages and teenage pregnancies.
- (iv) Design programmes that can encourage parents to be more involved in the education of their children.
- (v) Encourage a reading culture among learners and the community at large to reduce cases of learner unpreparedness and general fear of the examinations.

7.2.3 Teachers and School Administrators

- (i) Head teachers as first line standard officers should ensure that learners are learning and that syllabuses are adequately covered to instill confidence in the learners to face examinations when the time comes.
- (ii) Introduction of restrictions or strict measures that will avert double registration of learners within the district.
- (iii) Learners need regular career guidance and counseling services.

(iv) The In-service colleges and Teacher Resource Centers should identify training needs such as school management for school Head teachers and Guidance and counseling programmes for teachers. This would enhance their skills in managing learner and teacher attendance and also improve on the counseling skills in handling problems learners are faced with.

7.2.4 Government and Cooperating Partners

(i) Where possible, school feeding programmes should be introduced in schools surrounded by vulnerable communities.

(ii) There is need for concerted efforts to build more schools and improve infrastructure. This would help reduce the distance learners cover to write examinations.

(iii) Colleges of education should incorporate a module on guidance and counseling.

(iv) To review the free primary education policy and identify the 'hidden costs' schools are incurring in running schools and examinations that are transferred to the learners. The hidden costs should then be factored in the funding of the schools.

(v) Sensitization on the 'Re-entry Policy' for girls who fall pregnant so that they go back to school after delivery.

(vi) Sensitize the schools on the procedures and guidelines for attaining status of examination centre.

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APPENDIX I

A STUDY ON LEARNER ABSENTEEISM IN PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS IN WESTERN PROVINCE OF ZAMBIA: A CASE OF SENANGA DISTRICT

SELF-ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondents,

My study focuses on a study on learner absenteeism in public examinations. Am requesting you to provide me with information required to fulfilling this study, your information will be of great help and will enable me complete my requirements to obtain a degree of Master of Education in Educational Management at The University of Zambia in collaboration with Zimbabwe Open University. All information provided will be treated with absolute confidentiality.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Instructions

Do not write your name.

Please, be honest in responding to the questions

Section One: Background Information

1. What gender are you? Please tick. Male 1 Female 2
2. What is your Age?
- a) (15 – 25) 1
- b) (26 – 35) 2
- c) (36 – 45) 3
- d) (46 – and above) 4
3. What highest level of education have you attained?
- a) Primary 1
- b) Secondary 2

Key Provided

- 1 = Strongly Agree
- 2 = Agree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Disagree
- 5 = Strongly Disagree

	5	4	3	2	1
Age					
Gender					
Illness					
Learning disability					
Lack of preparedness for examinations					
Expulsion from school					
Lack of parental involvement					

Section Three: Learners' Socio-economic Factors

9. Below are the various types of learners' socio-economic factors that affect learner absenteeism from public examinations. Please indicate by a tick in the boxes provided in each type which applies to your case.

Key Provided

- 1 = Strongly Agree
- 2 = Agree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Disagree
- 5 = Strongly Disagree

	5	4	3	2	1
Lack of transport to school					
Food insecurity					
Child labour					
Teenage pregnancy					
Early marriages					
Orphans and vulnerable children					

Section Four: Learners' Institutional Factors

10. Below are the various types of learners' institutional factors that affect learner absenteeism from public examinations. Please indicate by a tick in the boxes provided in each type which applies to your case.

Key Provided

1 = Strongly Agree

2 = Agree

3 = Neutral

4 = Disagree

5 = Strongly Disagree

	5	4	3	2	1
Teacher absenteeism					

Thank You for Your Participation!