



**ESTABLISHING THE EFFECT OF THE PRIMARY LITERACY  
PROGRAMME ON LITERACY LEVELS OF GRADE FOUR (4)  
LEARNERS IN CHIRUNDU DISTRICT**

**BY**

**NJEKWA NJEKWA**

A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Zambia in collaboration with Zimbabwe Open University in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Masters of Education in Educational Management

**The University of Zambia in collaboration with Zimbabwe Open University**

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**The University of Zambia And Zimbabwe Open University**

**UNZAZOU**

**Lusaka**

**October 2017**

## DECLARATION

I, Njekwa Njekwa hereby solely declare that the work contained here in this dissertation is mine and as a result of my own dedication. I further declare that this work has never been published by any researcher for an academic award and that all the work from other researchers has been acknowledged.

Signature: .....

Date: .....

Supervisor's signature: .....

Date: .....

## APPROVAL

The dissertation by Njekwa Njekwa is approved as a fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Masters of Education in Educational Management of the University of Zambia.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this piece of work to my parents, brothers and sister, my wife Judith and my children Njekwa Jr, Nalishebo, Nyambe, Nosiku and my nephew Mwiya for their encouragement and moral support. Special dedication goes to my DEBS Veronica Mubanga for according me an opportunity to take a local leave for my work to succeed.

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## Abstract

The main purpose of the study was to establish the effect of the Primary Literacy Programme on literacy levels of Grade 4 learners in selected primary schools in Chirundu District. The study used qualitative data collection and analysis procedures to establish the effect of PLP in Chitonga among the grade 4 learners under this programme four years after it had been introduced. The researcher employed interviews and Focus group discussion to collect data from 65 respondents comprising of 30 learners, 20 teachers, 5 Head teachers, 5 parents, 3 standards officers and 2 In-service Coordinators. Data was also collected using observation methods and document analysis. The instruments used were observation checklist, interview guide and focus group discussions guide.

This allowed the researcher to collect views on the effect of the primary literacy programme on literacy levels based on the current low literacy levels among grade 4 learners. Data obtained from learner performance in week 5 and 10 assessment was computed. Since this was a cohort of 2014, the researcher tracked the performance of current grade 4 learners from the time of enrolment into grade 1 in 2014. Data was based on the performance of learners for the past four years using the assessment format as guided in National Literacy Framework of 2013. The current review establishes clearly that the factors that seemed to have the greatest impact on the effect on the PLP are: family; pupils; teachers; administrators (internal and external monitors) and school related. Some of the factors cited include: lack of PLP materials; over enrolment; knowledge gap between standards officers and teachers and lack of teacher mentorship by their immediate supervisors; teacher and pupils transfers from one region to another of different languages background and lack of parental motivation.

A number of recommendations have come out of the study and the following are some of them: The Ministry of General Education should secure grade 3 and 4 teaching and learning materials (TLM) in schools for teachers to use during lesson planning. Teachers too, should embrace the idea of making and using teaching and learning materials made from using locally available resources (TALULAR) and the use of story decoding where they do not have conventional materials. The Head teachers should carefully select competent teachers to handle lower grades. Schools should intensify School Based Continuing Professional Development (SBCPD) by revitalizing Grade Meeting at the Resource Centre (GRACE).

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.1 Introduction

This Chapter introduces the study on establishment of the effect of the primary literacy programme on literacy levels of Grade 4 learners with special reference to five selected primary schools in Chirundu District of Lusaka province. The chapter gives the background to the study with particular focus on the Primary Literacy Programme. This was built up from the cohort of 2014 grade Ones who are currently in grade Four and at the centre of the study. The chapter further presents the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, Objectives of the study, Research questions, Significance of the study, Theoretical Framework, Delimitation of the study, Limitation of the study, Conceptual Framework and Operational Definition of Terms.

### 1.2 Background

The baseline study of the Zambian Primary Reading Programme conducted in 1999 noted that the literacy levels of grade 1-6 was below grade level in their own Zambian language. It was against this background that the Ministry of Education developed a National Literacy programme attempting to improve literacy situation in Zambia. Many studies have shown that low literacy levels in primary schools can only be solved by scaffolding learning through instruction in local languages. The rationale for teaching in local languages is rooted in scientific research which support developing a learner's language abilities, vocabulary, grammatical rules and use of their language to develop reading and writing skills (MoE, 2013).

Literacy is defined as a set of related cultivated skills and knowledge that serve as a basis for learning, communication, language use and social interaction. Literacy ranges from the basic ability to read, write, listen and speak, to higher or elevated skills where the learner is capable of deducing, interpreting, monitoring and elaborating the acquired concept (MoE, 2014).

Laiou (1993) indicates that levels of literacy are still questionable in the whole world. According to United Education Scientific and Cultural Organization-UNESCO (2015) literacy levels have generally been low in Africa, Zambia inclusive. About  $\frac{3}{4}$  of illiterate persons are in Sub-Sahara Africa. The Ranking of African countries by literacy on 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2013 indicated that Zambia ranked 13<sup>th</sup> position. Such a level of literacy could impede the

economic development of the country in the present dynamic driven world. UNESCO (2016) emphasised that, the monitoring and supervision function need to be further expanded in order to become instruments for the improvement of the literacy in education.

The Provision of the best education borders on the learners' ability to read and write. The MoE (2013) developed the National Literacy Framework to address the low literacy levels. The Primary Literacy Programme (PLP) in Zambian Primary Schools was initiated by the Ministry of Education in 2014. At the time of implementation, the dominance language was that of play and familiar during instruction. The main aim was to address the extremely low literacy in Zambian primary schools which were a matter of concern to the Government and other stakeholders including parents. However, there has been a paradigm shift from using the familiar language and language of play to more emphasis on the regional language. The Primary Literacy Programme was a follow up course after the abolishment of the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) which was a seven-year literacy programme in Zambian Schools instigated by the Ministry of Education in 1999 until 2013 when the new literacy framework was developed.

The 2013 National Literacy Frame Work shows the pedagogical steps in a literacy lesson delivery and the literacy assessment pattern. It also encompasses a weekly schedule of what the teacher should teach each day. Under this programme, the teacher uses a regional and familiar language to teach all the subjects from grade 1 to 4. The course emphasizes the use of local language as medium of instruction to the learners from grade 1 through to grade 4. Nevertheless, Oral English is introduced at grade 2 as a subject and taught in English while emphasis is made using the familiar language. At grade 3 and 4, all content subjects and literacy in Zambian languages are taught in local language while English language and literacy is taught in English language. Nonetheless, this programme propels learners' proficiency in literacy because of its approachable nature to literacy development.

There was notable success in literacy levels with an improvement from 23% to 60% (2014 grade 1 national literacy assessment report (MoE (2015)). This performance although was received with mixed feelings by some stakeholders. On the contrary, the use of familiar language to some extent was supported by various research findings on early literacy which claim that first language (L1) literacy skills acquired in the first grade were easily transferred to the development of second language (L2) literacy skills later (Banda, 2002; Heugh, 2006; Kelly, 1995; MOE, 1996, Sampa, 2003, Tambulukani, 2001; Williams 1993).

Therefore, the topic under study aimed at evaluating the effect of the New Primary Literacy programme on alleviating the difficulties learners face in reading and writing in selected Primary Schools in Chirundu district of Lusaka province.

### 1.3 Statement Of The Problem

The expectations of the Ministry of General Education's primary literacy programme as outlined in the 2013 National Literacy Framework is that, PLP is expected to raise the reading levels of pupils in both the first language L1 and the second language L2 at middle primary level. It was not yet known whether the PLP has effectively addressed the low literacy to the desired levels in the district, hence the study was undertaken to establish the effect of the new primary literacy programme on literacy levels.

### 1.4 Purpose Of The Study

The purpose of the study was to establish the effect of the primary literacy programme on literacy levels.

### 1.5 Objectives Of The Study

The study was guided by the following specific objectives;

1. To establish how teachers were prepared on pedagogical skills
2. To establish whether the course had enough teaching and learning materials
3. To investigate how the head teachers were prepared to monitor the implementation of the programme
4. To determine whether the Zonal Language is suitable for this programme

### 1.6 Research Questions

The study attempted to answer the following questions in relation to the objectives outlined above:

1. Did the course prepare teachers on the pedagogies in relation to the primary literacy programme?
2. Did the course have enough teaching and learning materials?
3. How were the head teachers prepared to monitor the implementation of the programme?
4. Is the zone language suitable for this programme?

### 1.7 Significance Of The Study

This study may generate useful information on the effect of the new primary literacy programme on literacy improvement. This information may help teachers as well as curriculum specialists in devising the best practices and materials for the effective teaching of literacy. Furthermore, the information would add to the existing body of knowledge on the effect of using local language as medium of instruction associated with policy on language of instruction.

### 1.8 Delimitation Of The Study

The study was limited to Chirundu district, Lusaka province of Zambia. The study was conducted in 5 selected primary schools out of the population of 25 primary schools. The 5 Primary Schools in Chirundu district were selected on the premise that they were strategically located.

### 1.9 Limitations Of The Study

The findings of the study were limited to only 5 selected primary schools in the district. The findings of this study cannot be generalized to all the schools because they were in different setting.

### 1.10 Theoretical Framework

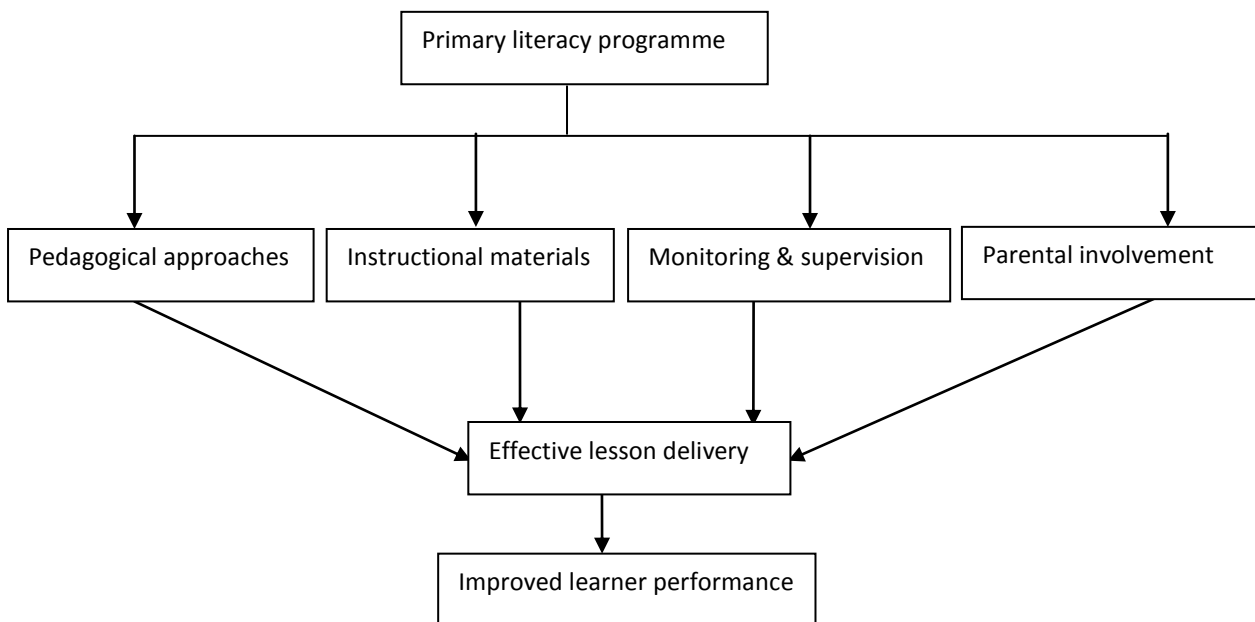
Vroom's expectancy theory (1964) was employed. The theory assumes that behaviour results from conscious choices among alternatives whose purpose is to maximize pleasure and to minimize pain. Vroom realized that an employee's performance is based on individual factors such as personality, skills, knowledge, experience and abilities. It is based on the premise that performance is determined by interactive effects of motivational level, ability, traits and pride perceptions. The theory is generally the most comprehensive and widely accepted explanation of the employee motivation to date. The theory states that the individual tends to act in a certain way based on the expectation that the act will be followed by a given outcome and on the attractiveness of that outcome to the individual. It includes three variables or relationships as follows: Individual Effort; Individual Performance; Organisational Rewards and Individual Goals. Performance is a multiplicative function of ability and motivation. To get performance, these factors must be present, and if one of these is absent there is no performance. Therefore, the study used this theory because management techniques and

strategies which are based on the above are likely to motivate employees thereby making the organization more efficient and effective and increases productivity.

### 1.11 Conceptual Framework

This showed the relationship among dynamic variables which influence the behavior of individuals. The Head teacher's involvement in curriculum instructional management (independent variables) influences the performance (dependent variables) in the education process and teachers implement the curriculum (intervening variable).

Fig: 1. Primary Literacy Programme Framework



### 1.12 Operational Definitions of Terms

This section provided operational definitions of terms used in this study:

Comprehension – the ability to derive meaning from the words and the concepts they convey in written text

Decoding -understanding the relationship between letters and their sounds

Expressive language-language for oral communication

Fluency – the effortless, automatic ability to read words in connected text

Granularity - the size of phonemic or morphological aspects of a language

Grapheme - letter symbols represented in written language

Illiterate - Unable to read and write; Failure to interpret art; Unable to go through Primary or basic courses

Literacy- the ability to read and write

Low achiever - slow learner

Morpheme - the smallest grammatical unit of written language

Monitoring - looks at specification and quality work in literacy programmes.

Orthography - the writing system of a language

Phoneme – the smallest sound unit of a language realized through graphemes

Phonology - the sound system of a specific language

Phonemic awareness – the ability to hear the sound and manipulate it

Phonological awareness - the ability to perceive and attend to a word's sound-structure, as opposed to its meaning

Primary Literacy Programme - a primary literacy teaching programme available in Zambia schools where first graders start initial literacy in a local language and start to learn English at grade 5

Supervision - a process of overseeing people and projects for effective results

Unilingual - acquiring and using one language for communication

Vocabulary – refer to a set of words a learner acquires

### 1.13 Summary Of Chapter One

Chapter one has presented the background to the study on establishment of the effect of the new primary literacy programme on literacy levels of Grade 4. The chapter further presented the Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the study, Objectives of the study, Research questions, Significance of the study, Delimitation of the study, Limitation of the study, Theoretical framework, Conceptual frame work and Operational definition of terms.



The next chapter gave a review of some of the available foreign and local literature considered to be relevant to the study with a view to align the study to other previous studies and bodies of knowledge on emergent literacy.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature on literacy skills, common trends in reading and writing difficulties and pedagogical approaches.

### 2.1 Regional Local Perspectives

Globally, studies on low literacy levels have been of great concern by most of people in most parts of the world making researchers expressing different thoughts on the subject matter. However, these scholars have collectively agreed on a number of related literatures about the programme under study.

The Native English Teachers (NET) section of education bureau of Hong Kong organized the English Language Curriculum Guide in 2004. The curriculum indicated that the primary literacy programme was introduced as a pilot programme to address the low literacy levels. The objective of the programme was to develop a holistic approach of teaching literacy (ELCG, 2004). The curriculum indicated that the primary literacy programme enforced the language structures and vocabulary that students acquired. The programme promoted the use, by teachers, various literacy strategies for effective lesson delivery. Furthermore, it creates an inside and outside classrooms environment rich enough to foster acquisition of literacy enabling the children to learn in a fun and authentic way.

The English language curriculum reported that the Primary Literacy Programme was guided by three teachers; the class teacher, the assistant teacher and the local teacher. The local teacher was used to explain concepts in an explicit manner that children could easily understand and grasp the idea. Classrooms were full of picture cards and work cards from various units. These were kept in rooms for students' reference. It also helped students to remember the words they covered. Besides, extra literacy books were provided for students to read at the end of the lesson (ELCG 2004). The territory wide evaluation (TWE) showed that there was great improvement in literacy between 2004 and 2006.

This research was informed by another study conducted by Elley in 1992 in Singapore. The findings showed that students under primary literacy programme produced mean scores that were well above the international average (Smith and Elly 1977). Similar findings were mirrored by research in Sri Lanka as reported by Elley and Foster in 1996. The findings of

studies conducted in South Africa showed that the programme was good and suitable for privileged schools and learners as supported by Le Roex and Schollar in 1996, Ng and Larking in 1994 (Smith and Elley 1997).

The programme showed positive elements of literacy development because of the measures that were put in place. The students were gaining skills in word recognition, oral language, reading and inferential comprehension and vocabulary at an increased rate (Elley and Foster 1996 in Smith and Elley 1997). Their observations also indicated changes to classroom practices for schools participating in the programme. This confirms not only that the programme was effective in second language acquisition but also effective in Hong Kong context over the past three years period in reference.

The study by Gordon (2005) in Guinea acknowledges the fact that learners easily grasp the concept when instructions are done in the familiar language. This was supported by other Research studies done globally acknowledging the use of local language as determinant for effective classroom communication. (UNESCO, 2003: 2010 and Tihtina Zenebe Gebse, 2014). These findings were mirrored by some research done in Zambia that support the use of familiar language as medium of instruction in schools to foster acquisition of literacy skills (Alidou 2001, Banda 2002;2006, Matafwali 2010, Tambulukani and Bus 2001).

Learning to read and write is one of the greatest accomplishments in childhood because it is the foundation for learning and academic achievement. The primary literacy programme points out that a child who cannot read cannot learn. Once children develop literacy skills they learn how to read and write on their own. The performance of our learners has not been impressive for quite so many years now in Zambia. Therefore, it is not surprising that debates among educators about how best to help children learn to read have been heated and unsettled for many years (Paris, 2005).

The current approach under PLP considers five competences which must be developed in a learner at an early stage. These competences are: Phonemic awareness which is the ability to hear sound and manipulate it orally; Phonic - the ability to put written letters and their sounds together; Fluency – the ability to read orally with accuracy, speed and expression; Vocabulary – the ability to understand the meaning of the words and use them orally and in writing and Comprehension – the ability to understand the meaning of what is read or heard (Linan-Thompson, 2007). Furthermore, it has a reading assessment scheme guide which measures learners' achievement of the literacy outcomes through a series of formative and

summative assessments whose feedback is used to improve instruction. To assess the learners' achievement, the teacher assigns the performance level descriptor against each learner so as to find appropriate interventional measures. Summative and formative types of assessments were designed to measure specific taught and learnt content outcomes at a given period of time. The formative assessment was administered at the end of each fifth week and thirteenth week of each term to assess whether the learners were able to carry out the given tasks such as the learners' ability to identify vowel sounds, consonant sounds, syllables, words and read simple sentences as well as answering comprehension questions (MoE, 2013).

Dixon and Nessel (1983) argue that in order to learn sound-letter association, one must first be able to discriminate sounds orally and then must learn to associate them with letters that they represent. Successful application of phonics is dependent on the reader's ability to hear and produce the sounds of a language - the approach recommended by the national literacy framework, 2013.

World Conference on Education for All, in Jomtien, Thailand spelled out targets and strategies to meet the basic learning needs of all. The goal was to: have universal access to learning focus on equity; emphasize learning outcomes; broaden the means and the scope of basic education; enhanced environment conducive for learning and strengthened partnerships (UNESCO, 2009).

Study by Paris (2005) show that debates among educators about how best to help children learn to read and write have been heated and unsettled for many years. This prompted the researcher to establish the effect of the new primary literacy programme on literacy levels. There could be just other factors deterring learners' ability to break through in literacy to the desired level.

Rembe (2006) postulates in his studies done in Zimbabwe, inadequate human resource in implementation of education curriculum negatively affects learners' performance in literacy. This situation has a direct effect on learners that compromises learner progression and transmission of skills. In an attempt to address teacher inadequacy, does double class bridge the gap? The researcher assumes that the presence of a teacher in a classroom has an effect as long as he could communicate, learning could takes place. The double class equalizes the inadequacy of the teaching staff. Unless the school had only one teacher against three grades or more then there could be a challenge.

Clarke (2008) purports in his findings in Zimbabwe that where there was inadequate or lack of materials to sustain literacy programmes, it was hard to find appropriate curriculum materials which were authentic inclusive of pedagogical strategies to support learning. The researcher assumes that there are several supplementary readers' materials which were used long before the implementation of the new literacy programme which were still useful. These materials would not be of great use without adequate acquisition of literacy skills. However, if the learners acquired the relevant literacy skills would they be able to read any sort of materials available to them. Similar findings were mirrored in studies done in Tanzania that inadequate teaching and learning resources affect provision and implementation of any education curriculum (Njuwe 2006).

Wanjiru (2008) in his studies conducted in Kenya suggests up-grading and developing of new infrastructure before developing new curriculum as key. His observations confirm the challenges that most of the schools face during the implementation of new primary literacy programme which aims at attaining the lessons' specific outcomes by each learner. Inadequate classroom space over crowds the room hampering the effectiveness of lesson delivery.

Dickinson (2006) postulates early literacy begins at birth by constantly reading to babies. If this assertion is a factor, how many of the parents do this especially in the area where this study was undertaken. Considering this, it is important for parents to tell stories to their babies at birth. This could be an interesting area of study if such factors are likely to contribute to low literacy levels.

Flewitt (2011) asserts there are different levels of literacy. Learning to read and write depends on mastering a number of basic awareness and language development processes such as phonetic awareness and phonological awareness, orthographic and skills to comprehend. This suggests that for learners to learn to read and write, they need to have knowledge of the listed language skills. Phonological Awareness (PA) is essential for literacy development of a child; without which a child cannot read (Matafwali, 2010). PA is the ability to hear the sound and manipulate it. This ability helps learners to realize that words are made up of several speech sounds. The phonemic awareness of a child lays a very strong foundation for phonological build-up. This process of learning to read and write is cardinal to learners.

Phonological ability could also depend on the extent to which phonological inventories of the L1 and L2 share certain features such as phonemes and syllables. Furthermore, language

transfer and phonological awareness abilities might interact with reading ability because of the reciprocal development of reading and phonological awareness. Skilled and less-skilled readers might be differentially affected by the demands inherent in processing phonological elements that are L2 specific. In other words children who are less-skilled readers might be those who are less competent at processing the phonemes and phonemic contrasts that are specific to L2. This is an important issue to investigate because bi-literacy acquisition often entails the challenge of learning new phonological information and the ability to reliably assign this information to the appropriate representation on grapheme (Stanovich and Siegal, 1994).

The primary goals of primary literacy programme as outlined in the 2013 national literacy framework are developing in the learner the pre-reading skills including writing and handwriting; promoting competences to do with phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency. These skills must not be taught in isolation. The five competencies should be embedded in one lesson plan (MoE, 2013).

There are numeracy factors that adversely affect the performance of the learner in schools leading to low performance, (MoE, 1996:42). Teachers like other professionals need to deepen their knowledge to improve their pedagogical skills over the course of their career to adapt to changes in education trends. There is need for teachers to deepen their skills through professional development so that they are up to date with the new trends in education (Barbara 2004). Concerning teaching methodologies, Commeyras and Inyega (2007), argue that all language teachers, whether of English or African languages need education in General Language Teaching Methodologies for teaching specific languages more effectively.

Owino (1987) also notes that when the teachers are not fluent in English and African languages, they make mistakes in teaching literacy. So, teachers' knowledge both in content and methodology is of great importance if the teaching of the two language media is to succeed. Furthermore, Shcroeder (2005), points out that reading instruction depends in part on the teacher's knowledge and effective use of instructional methods. The study made an inquiry whether teachers were well equipped with pedagogical approaches for the programme.

Monitoring and supervision was reported to have a positive impact on school results. Intensified monitoring and supervision improves teacher preparedness and learner performance. This is affirmed in a study, "Elusive Search for Quality Education: The Case of

Quality Assurance and Teachers Accountability in Kenya'', show that the cause for poor quality education in Kenyan Schools is not the performance of teachers per se, but deeply management practices and government policies (Olivia 1997 and Stanovich 1986). The study made an enquiry on whether Head teachers were monitoring and supervising the implementation of the programme by the teachers.

Wang'ombe (1988) carried out a survey of the factors that affect teaching and learning of science in primary schools in Western Province. The findings were scarcity of teaching and learning materials. This study sought to find out whether lack of revised 2013 teaching and learning materials adversely affect the literacy levels.

Swanepoel van de (2009), observed that a spoken language does not require a conscious awareness of the speech sounds in words. Speech is produced and understood automatically, with little conscious attention given to sounds. However, phonological awareness is the conscious awareness of the sounds of language. It is the ability to reflect on the sounds in words separately from the meaning of words. As the alphabet represents speech sounds, the beginning reader must become aware of these sounds in order to understand how the alphabet works, but awareness of these sounds may not always be easy for young children, hence the need for systematic phonemic instruction in order to attain superior performance in literacy levels.

UNESCO (2003) encourages countries to consider using mother tongues in their pupils' primary education because it provides promising results. Familiar language enhances intellectual ability, motivation, and easy understanding. This assertion was supported by (Alidou 2001; Banda 2002; Khejeri 2014; Matafwali 2010; Tambulukani and Bus 2001). The study found out how proficiency teachers were in the local language and what challenges they were facing.

But with the 2013 new language policy of using local language as medium of instruction from grade 1 – 4, there is no information established about the effect of the primary literacy programme on literacy levels.

### 2.3 Summary

The literature reviewed that there are various views posited by the scholars pertaining to mediums of instruction in relation to primary literacy programmes. The studies noted that a large body of research has based its findings and arguments on the benefits of using local

languages for initial literacy in primary schools. It cannot be disproved that these findings are based on genuine research. It is for this reason that the current study was a necessary endeavor on establishment of the effect of the new primary literacy programme on literacy levels of grade 4 learners. The next chapter gives a detailed discussion of the methodology that was employed during the research process.



## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter presented research methodology that was used in the study. The following were the components covered in this chapter: the research design, research sites, target population, sample size, sampling techniques, and data collection procedures, research instruments, data analysis and ethical issues.

### 3.1 Qualitative Research Design

The study was a case study and used qualitative design. A qualitative research strategy method allowed the researcher to obtain in-depth information about phenomenon under investigation through interviews and focus group discussions without subjecting them to rigid pre-set categories. This method is usually described as interpretative by understanding the reality from the participants' point of view (Bryman 2008: 366). Case studies are concerned with a rich and clear description of the events relevant to the study. They strive to portray what it is like to be in a particular situation (White 2010:3). The generalization of the results is related to the theoretical conclusions that can be drawn from the empirical results (Bryman 2002: 271). The qualitative method in this study was deemed suitable for collecting desired data on the pretext to understand human and social behavior from the viewpoint of those who live in the environment (Aryl 1996; 476). In order to establish the effect of the primary literacy programme on literacy levels from grade 1 – 4, the researcher took the initiative to listen to the participants' experiences pertaining to the subject matter. Interviews and focus group discussions were used to gather as much information as possible on the perceptions of teachers and head teachers on the effect of the new literacy programme on literacy levels of grade 4 learners. The researcher also explored the use of document analysis such as grade 4 week 5 and 10 assessment results and the Head teacher's monitoring instrument where all in-service trainings conducted at the school were recorded - the School In-service Record book (SIR). The next section explains the research design that was used in the study.

### 3.2 Research Site

The study was carried out in 5 Primary Schools in Chirundu District of Lusaka Province, Zambia. The 5 schools were carefully selected from the 2 zones. The zones were selected as study areas because they could give a good representation of the schools in the district. The location of these zones could be classified into two parts (zone 1 urban and zone 2 rural). The

two zones were located in Chirundu District. The first zone was in an urban set-up whereas the second zone was in the rural setting of the district. The two zones comprised three different school settings. The researcher undertook such a deliberation of sampling out of schools from three on assumption that the findings would represent all schools in Chirundu district. The actual names of the schools could not be displayed due to ethical considerations. The researcher therefore used terms such as Urban Zone and Rural Zone when referring to two settings. The names of the informants were concealed in the study. Letters of the alphabet were used to refer to various informants. Schools in the urban zones are densely populated than in rural zones. However, there were also assumptions that urban schools were in a cosmopolitan society. On the other hand, rural zone schools were sampled on assumptions that they predominantly spoke zonal language. The other factor that was considered was that Chirundu District is one of the districts in Lusaka province whose zone language is different from that of the location of study and is bordering Zimbabwe and Zambia on the lower Zambazi River.

### 3.3 Target Population

McMillan dictionary (2001:169), defines a population as a group of elements or causes, whether individuals, objects or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of research. Target population constituted all grade 4 learners and teachers under the primary literacy programme, all head teachers, Zone In-service Coordinators, Education Standards Officers and all parents in Chirundu district.

### 3.4 Sample Size

A sample is a sub-set of a population that is used to represent the entire group (White 2003). In this study the sample size was 65 which comprised 30 learners, 20 teachers, 5 head teachers, 5 Parent Teacher Committee (PTC) representatives, 3 standards officers and 2 Zone Coordinators. The 5 schools under were purposively selected to constitute the sample size of the study. The assumption is that all the sampled schools in Chirundu District were implementing the New Literacy Programme in teaching and learning literacy. Owing to inadequate period available for the designated field work, there were limited samples of respondents from the following schools that were represented by these colours: RED Primary School; BLACK Primary School; GREEN Primary School; PINK Primary School and ORANGE Primary School were interviewed. The sample description was outlined below.

Table: 1 - Number of Respondents

Primary school	Head teachers	Teachers	Pupils	PTC representative	Totals
Red	1	4	6	1	12
Black	1	4	6	1	12
Green	1	4	6	1	12
Pink	1	4	6	1	12
Orange	1	4	6	1	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>60</b>

Table: 2 - Number Of External Monitor Respondents

Institution	DEBS	DESO	ESO	ZIC	Total
DEB	1	1	1		3
Zone 1				1	1
Zone 2				1	1
<b>Total</b>					<b>5</b>

### 3.5 Sampling Procedures

The researcher used purposive sampling to decide on the District. Kombo and Tromp (2006), purport purposive sampling is used when a specific characteristic is to be studied in-depth. In purposive sampling, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of their possession of a particular characteristic being sought. That is, a satisfactory sample is built up to meet their specific needs (Moulton, 1998).

#### 3.5.1 Grade 4 Teachers

The 20 grade 4 teachers who took part in the study were selected on grounds that they were practicing teachers of grade 4 classes on the primary literacy programme since its inception in 2014. They were also the main implementers of the new language policy through their delivery of the approved Zambian curriculum in the classroom. Their views were very important in the study in that they personally interacted with learners.

#### 3.5.2 Head teachers, Standards Officers and Zone In-service Coordinators

The 5 head teachers, 3 Standards Officers and 2 Zone In-service Coordinators were carefully selected because they were zone head teachers coordinating fellow heads in the district

through In-service Programmes. These were also in constant contact with the learners, teachers, standards officers and parents. They had the first hand information about the new language policy where teachers were expected to use local language as medium of instruction for grades 1 to 4. They were important because they had the experience and would give appropriate information on the subject under the study.

### 3.5.3 Parent Teacher Committee Representatives

The 5 Parent Teachers' Committee was sampled purposively because these were always found in institutional decision making. The researcher wanted to assess whether or not their views may have influence on the perception of teachers on the new language policy.

### 3.5.4 Grade 4 Learners

The 30 Grade 4 learners were selected so that an assessment could administered to them to ascertain their performance based on week 5 and 10 assessment format approved in the National Literacy Framework 2013. This was done to establish the effect of the primary literacy programme and suggest recommendations.

Chirundu District although in Lusaka Province is bordering Zimbabwe on the lower Zambezi River. However, the town is cosmopolitan but the official language is Chitonga unlike Chinyanja which is spoken in the other 7 districts of Lusaka province. Therefore, Chirundu District is officially defined as a Chitonga speaking area (Serpell in Kashoki, 1978). The 5 schools in Chirundu district were sampled because the findings could represent the other schools. However, simple random sampling was used to select the 5 schools. Purposive sampling was used to select the 20 practicing teachers of grade 4 classes. The researcher designed a lottery technique to select the 6 pupils from each school. All the names of Grade 4 pupils at each school were written on pieces of papers and put in the box which was vigorously shaken before the picking exercise. An independent teacher from each school was asked to pick six (6) papers each from the box, one at a time to come up with thirty (30) names of pupils for the sample.

## 3.6 Research Instruments

The researcher used three instruments in order to get views from respondents:

### 3.7 The Primary Literacy Observation Checklist

This instrument was used alongside with the National Literacy Framework guide of 2013 under the primary literacy programme. The checklist comprised elements that the researcher was looking for in the lesson and in the teacher on how literacy lessons were taught at grade 4 on the programme under review. The researcher physically went into the classrooms to observe the literacy lessons. An observation literacy checklist was used to measure various teaching aspects such as; teacher's local language proficiency; availability of teaching and learning materials; availability of learner performance tracker record sheet; time allocated to teach each language, content coverage, use of the library and availability. During structured observations, the focus was on a small number of specific behavioral patterns, and only those appearing on pre-determined observation checklist were recorded (Kombo and Tromp (2006). Points were recorded in the note book.

#### 3.7.1 The Interview Guide

These instruments comprised some structured and open-ended questions that the researcher asked the standards officers, head teachers, teachers and parents. Open-ended questions were used for complex questions that could not be answered in a simple way but required more detail and discussion (White 2003: 69). In this study open-ended questions allowed respondents to expand their ideas.

#### 3.7.2 The PLP Assessment Tool

This structured PLP week 5 and 10 achievement sheet comprised the five core primary literacy programme assessment components. The researcher designed assessment items that were administered to the learners having given instructions in Chitonga.

### 3.8 Data Collection Procedures

Field data was collected within the maximum of three months beginning from 1<sup>st</sup> June to 30<sup>th</sup> August 2017.

#### 3.8.1 Primary Data

##### Interviews

Primary data was obtained from interviewing teachers, learners, parents, standards officers and school managers. The researcher furthermore conducted focus cluster discussions with Grade 4 pupils on the reading and writing difficulties in order to collect more data from as a

triangulation strategy. The researcher prepared questions in advance in order to have a focused interview. The researcher recorded all the responses from the respondents. The researcher asked for additional clarification for answers which were not clear.

### 3.8.2 Observations

The researcher physically went into the classrooms to observe the literacy lessons in order to determine various teaching aspects such as; teacher's local language proficiency; availability of teaching and learning materials; availability of learner performance tracker record sheet; time allocated to teach each language, content coverage, use of the library and availability.

A document was used to review time allocation for the Chitonga languages at planning stage. The study for this reason used multiple sources of investigation to address the concerns professionally.

### 3.8.3 Secondary Data

The University of Zambia was the main source of the secondary data. The research was informed through the use of UNZA publications and information available on the internet, in different formal organization in Zambia which included the SACMEQ reports, and MOGE. The idea of collecting information from different sources was to validate the findings.

### 3.8.4 Data Analysis

#### Qualitative Data Analysis

The study employed qualitative data analysis method. Data collected from the interviews and focused groups were analyzed through thematic approach. Any unprocessed data that was comparable in some way was tried under a single theme so that it can be analyzed and discussed. This was done through arrangement of data collected according to the themes in relation to the research questions. Categories and themes of data was identified and analyzed so as to establish trends and propositions for easy interpretation. Interpretation and analysis was used to institute emerging themes and conclusions.

### 3.9 Ethical Considerations

Data from the participants was accessed through presentation of introductory letters from the University of Zambia (UNZA) and the District Education Boards Secretary (DEBS) to the sampled schools. The Head teacher thereafter introduced researcher to the members of staff and parents teachers' committee (PTCs) members. The researcher was later taken around the

grade 4 classrooms where he met the teachers and learners in their respective classes. After a short briefing with the teachers, the researcher was given permission to collect data. Data was collected in all schools during May and August, 2017.

### 3.10 Summary

This chapter enabled the researcher to conduct a case study and use of qualitative design as the approach to establish the effect of the new primary literacy programme on literacy levels in Zambian primary schools after the introduction of PLP. The chapter has also discussed the instruments which were used to collect and analyze data. It indicated that data was analyzed thematically by virtue of grouping related data under similar themes. The next chapter presents the findings of the research.

## CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The data presented were obtained through in-depth interviews, focus group discussion, lesson observations, and document review and learner performance assessment results. The study brought out a number of issues from participants related to the research questions. However, thematic approach was used in reporting the finding.

### 4.1 The General Overview On Primary Literacy Programme By Respondents

According to the findings of the study, all the respondents indicated that the primary literacy programme approach in teaching and learning literacy was a good move by ministry of education. However, concerns were that sensitization was not done properly. The ministry should have piloted the programme in one or two provinces whilst orientation and production of revised literacy teaching and learning materials was going on. Other concerns were related to local language as medium of instruction and teacher's language interference which was a hindrance for some of the teachers to enjoy teaching literacy because they were not able to speak the local language fluently a situation that attracted massive teacher transfers to regions where they could execute their duties diligently and help learners to progress. The findings also showed that there was rampant teacher and learner absenteeism especially among the teachers who were studying and most learners preferred going to their fields to drive away birds and monkeys. Some teachers did not attend grade meetings at the resource centre (GRACE) during holidays either because they joined their husband or wives or went for residential school. Lastly, the findings reviewed that there was lack of clear guidance by the curriculum development centre on literacy approaches to use for grades 2 – 4.

### 4.2 The School Managers' Views On Primary Literacy Programme

On the question about how much the head teacher were oriented on monitoring and supervising the implementation of the primary literacy programme. The Head teachers expressed knowledge about the new literacy programme which was implemented in 2014 in Zambian schools. The head teachers' knowledge on the programme showed that the programme aimed at improving literacy levels of the learners. The approach was good and could help in improving literacy levels in the country. However, the ministry of education should not have abandoned the Primary Reading Programme because it was gaining grip and



teachers were getting to understand its approaches. Moreover, the ministry spent huge sums of money to orient all the teachers in that programme (PRP) compared to the current literacy programme (PLP). However, when the primary literacy programme was introduced, a meeting was called for to orient all the head teachers on the expected outcomes of the programme. On the other hand it were not all head teachers who were oriented and most of them retired creating a gap in the implementation. The zone head teachers who should have continued orienting the others had less time to do so and mostly did not fully understand the pedagogical aspects. Most of the schools did away with the old teaching and learning materials because they assumed that the government was read to provide teaching and learning materials the soonest possible. The head teachers regret that they were not adequately prepared for the fruition of the programme.

Other findings on whether schools had all their teachers oriented on Primary Literacy Programme methodologies, the head teachers made an observation that all the teachers were oriented in the programme save for a small number of them who recently joined the ministry. However, in-service meeting were organized to accord them opportunities on the methods but the challenge was that most of those teachers came from outside the district. It was also difficult to contain them during school holidays because some of them visited their families while others went for residential school.

The head teacher at school BLACK said:

*‘Education policies at times affect the quality of education. For instance, in an effort to educate all gave chances for any child at the age of seven years to be enrolled in school even when there was no space for them resulting in over-enrollment. The teacher pupil ratio at my school is 1:124. You do not expect good performance no matter how good the teacher was. Government should have considered improvement on infrastructure and teacher recruitment to equate the desirable learner to teacher ratio. It is also difficult to conduct remedial lessons with slow learners because the class is overcrowded. These are major complaints from teachers’.*

Head teachers expressed concerns that the literacy levels were still low. Their assumption was that it was caused by over-enrollment and non-availability of teaching and learning materials on the revised curriculum. Schools did not have any literacy text books for grades 3 and 4 in not even a teacher’s guide. The ministry had so far distributed grade 1 to 2 Chitonga literacy books and grade 3 only had term 1 coursework. It was difficult to expect the teacher

to follow the out lined specific out comes based on the syllabus. Nevertheless, teachers were encouraged to use any literacy material they had in schools. Nevertheless, teachers still did not attain the intended literacy outcomes.

Commenting on local languages and challenges on teacher's local language proficiency, the head teachers reviewed that teachers were trying their best to learn the language apart from very few who had negative attitude about the local language of the area under study. Those who failed to learn the local language processed transfers to regions where they thought would teach effectively. However, these transfers had diverse effects on the school especially that the transfers were coming from headquarters and no replacements were made.

The head teachers observed that the non availability of teaching and learning materials in the revised curriculum had negatively impacted literacy lesson preparations. Teachers needed a guide on what to teach and how to teach. The syllabus only outlined contents to be taught and not how to teach the expected outcomes. It should not be taken for granted that all the teachers were experienced enough to teach using the content from the syllabi alone. Furthermore, they reviewed that when the Read on Course was abandoned in 2014, teaching and learning materials were not replaced to suit the new literacy programme. They wondered why the ministry kept telling them to use the available literacy materials when the approach is different. They observed that the unnecessary changes to literacy programmers were destroying the education system of the country. They noted that if the programme was donor funded dancing to the tune there were signs of failure to sustain literacy programmes. This programme is becoming unreliable since the MoE was supplying the materials in phases resulting in literacy gaps especially with the first cohort.

Finally, another head teacher from RED primary who was in agreement with the views expressed above had this to say:

*“Mostly Pupils who failed to read came from poverty stricken communities because they were not exposed to reading materials. Their parents were fond of sending them to chase monkeys and birds from their fields and causing them to miss lessons”.*

#### 4.3 Teachers' Views on Primary Literacy Programme

On the question on how they find teaching literacy in local language, teachers observed that it was a good idea but challenging to teachers who were not familiar with the local language. All the teachers had one answer in common and said it delayed learners' acquisition of

literacy skills because in some cases the teacher was also a learner of the language under instruction. Findings from the teachers showed that they did not have problems in teaching English language but the challenge was that learners were extremely slow in acquisition of the concept that is why tried their best to learn the local language in order to improve communication between the teacher and the learner. Teachers felt they were not involved from the beginning and as such there were several gaps on how to teach literacy because mostly the people who attended the orientation were on practicing teachers but administrators who had long forgotten the methodologies.

Teachers expressed concerns on the non availability of literacy teaching and learning materials of the primary literacy programme. Findings showed that teachers had difficulties in teaching literacy without teaching and learning materials in a class of over 95. They said that had never seen a literacy text book for grade 4 ever since the curriculum was revised in 2013. The schools did not have any single of the Teachers' guide in literacy. This made their work difficult and had affected the literacy levels of the learners.

Similarly, another teacher from BLACK Primary said that he had never used any revised text books for grades 3 and 4 in literacy and only uses anything he thought would help him get information for use during lesson planning. He picked on materials such as language coursework text books and any other relevant Chitonga literacy materials.

The teachers explained that the coursework was already involving, coupled with lack of materials makes it even worse. The teachers had to find or make teaching and learning materials and at the same time there is inadequate staffing and was suppose to teacher the other grades. This situation can not yield positive results. The weekly schedule for example, shows the literacy content coverage of grades 1 to 4 with a pattern of assessment beginning at week 5, 10 and 13. Additionally, learners were writing mid-term and end of term tests. Teachers felt that it was too much of assessment than teaching because of the already inadequacy staffing. The findings from the teachers showed that the assessment took more than two days because they needed to assess each individual at a time.

One of the teachers from PINK Primary said:

*“The programme was very retrogressive in that if one followed the weekly schedule religiously, none of the learners would learn how to read and write because learners had a pattern of absconding from class. Today you have 57 learners present, the other*

*day most of them are absent and another group reports. It is just difficult to help them learn regardless of how well prepared the teacher is. Mostly teachers are the ones who look for learners and plead with their parents to bring them to school. Mostly learners who failed to read and write were those who did not break through in grade 1 because of either absenteeism or other related factors. In most of the schools here, teachers were the ones looking for the learners and pleading with their parents to release them for class. Once the learner misses early reading skills it takes long for them to catch-up''.*

The teachers somehow did not have clear guide on language of instruction. They showed that the worst thing about the new language policy was whether teachers were supposed to teach literacy using a familiar language also known as language of play by both the learner and the teacher or it was strictly zonal language. If teachers were restricted to using zonal language then it ceased to become the language of play because not all the learners and teachers spoke the language. The researcher feels that this situation must be clarified, let the teachers and the learners have the freedom to code switch for learners to benefit otherwise the situation remains the same.

One teacher at PINK Primary School reviewed that some pupils from their school had negative attitude towards using Chitonga language prompting teachers to use an alternative language. The question was whether an alternative language could not be used to develop literacy skills by both the teacher and the learner since most of the learners were learning the zone language. This implied that both the teacher and learners' attitude towards the language was mixed-up because learning was done in a second language of the learners. This propositions shows that Pupils had different language backgrounds that was the reason for failing to read and write Chitonga fluently. Some of these children did not speak Chitonga at home because their parents were not speakers of Chitonga. As a matter of fact children were forced to speak Chitonga in class but spoke a different language with friends and family members. This created confusion on the learners' part and the question is what should be done. The best is to use familiar language as long as no child is disadvantaged.

A teacher from YELLOW Primary said that she was Bemba and had great difficulties in teaching literacy using Chitonga language. She largely depended on her learners to teach her the language. She preferred teaching literacy in English language which was against the primary literacy policy. All the teachers acknowledged that the new approach in teaching

literacy could yield desired literacy levels if the ministry took into consideration their concerns as well as putting in place correct placement during teacher recruitment.

The Phonemic Awareness is part of the five key competences under the Primary Literacy Programme methodologies used by teachers to teach literacy in Chitonga language at the lower primary section. The interviews with the teachers established that some teachers were not able to say letter sounds of the alphabet correctly and were struggling to say the correct pronunciation. This situation meant that learners were denied the correct pronunciation of letter sounds making it even more difficult for them to learn how to read and write. However, the fewer learners who were able to read helped their teachers in correct word pronunciation and meaning. It was observed that some teachers who handled grade 4 classes were not conversant with the new primary literacy methodologies while others were not able to speak Chitonga fluently. The lack of inadequate methods in literacy lessons were mostly discovered among the newly deployed teachers. The was what the teacher said;

*“I have never attended any GRACE meeting ever since I started work and heavily depend on the little knowledge that I acquire from my fellow teachers who were also trained through the resource centre because I go out for residential school during holidays and do not live with my family here because I lack decent accommodation”.*

The preceded findings showed that lack of teacher accommodation deters them from attending professional meetings meant to capacity build their teaching competences. Lack of both internal and external monitoring caused the lapse and teacher relaxation on their work. Some teachers had never been monitored since they were employed in 2011. He complained that she has never been observed by either the head teacher or standards officer. She emphasized that monitoring encouraged proper planning and adoption of improved pedagogical approaches. The teacher from PINK Primary school therefore said:

*“Being one of the teachers handling lower grades designed to improve literacy levels in the country, there is need for my supervisors to observe me at least once in a term so that I can improve literacy methodologies. Lack of monitoring has an effect on the learner performance because teachers tend to relax”.*

#### 4.4 Pupils Views on Primary Literacy Programme

The views gathered through focus group discussion with pupils indicated that the primary literacy programme was very good especially for the ones who were familiar with the zone language. The findings were that learners easily understood the teacher if they were taught in the language they understood and frequently asked questions where they did not understand creating a more enabling environment for learning.

This is an indication that children learn better and enjoy learning in the language they not only understand but speak. However, the programme might have some negative effect if children transferred from one regional to another. One learner who had experiences in transfers reviewed that she had difficulties in understanding Chitonga language because she came in recently from another school where she only learnt for one year. these were her remarks:

*‘I find it difficult to understand Chitonga and this was affecting my performance in other subjects. I just came recently to this place and it would take a little bit of time for me to fully understand the language. From the time I started grade 1, my parents have moved to two different places and every time I went to a new school I had to learn the language. I wish teachers could teach in any language as long as learners understand’.*

Findings from other learners showed that learners who learnt how to read and write in Chitonga and English languages received encouragements and support from their parents. The support was in form of literacy text books in Chitonga and English. However, it was reviewed that there were very few Chitonga books on the market compared to English language books but parents encouraged them to write decodable stories and read their own literature.

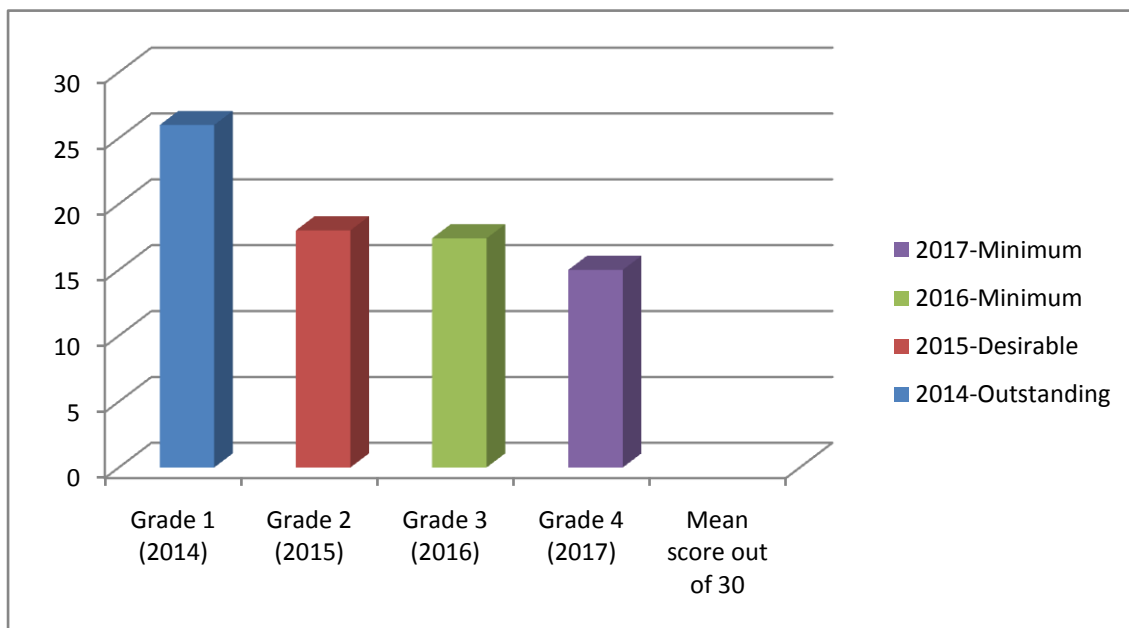
#### 4.5 How to Conduct Week 5, 10 and 13 Assessments

The learners from grade 1 to 4 in the district were given 30 assessment items at the end of week 5, 10 and 13 of each term. The assessments were segmented in the category of 5 Vowels; 8 Consonants; 8 Syllables; 5 Words and 4 Sentences giving the total of 30 marks. The criteria for awarding marks depended on the learners who score above the average. The learners who got 3 out of 5, 4 out of 8 and 2 out of 4 were considered to be readers and their total marks affected the mean average score of the class, school, zone and district. The

summation of the total scores obtained by learners was divided by the actual number of the learners who were assessed to determine their mean and performance. The performance level descriptor was assigned against the mean score as below minimum (BM) for the mean average score of between 0 and 11; at minimum (M) for scores between 12 and 17; desirable (D) between 18 and 23 and finally outstanding (O) for the mean average score of between 24 and 30.

Fig: 2 - 2014 to 2017 cohort learner performance on literacy

Literacy levels from the inception of the primary literacy programme in Chirundu district.



District local source:

The outstanding performance of these learners when they were in grade 1 in the year 2014 was an indication that the programme can alleviate the difficulties learners face in reading and writing. The concerned of teachers from the finding should be addressed the soonest. This will help to determine whether the problem is attitude of teachers or the non-availability of the materials.

The researcher also took time to assess learners in vowel, consonants and syllable sounds. The findings were that there were still some grade 4 learners who still had challenges in letter sound identification.

Fig: 3 Learner Performances On Letter Sounds

The diagram below indicated that the findings showed that there were still learners who still needed assistance on vowel identification. However, it was observed that learners performed well in syllabic sound than in consonants sounds because most of the learners put a vowel in front of the consonant.

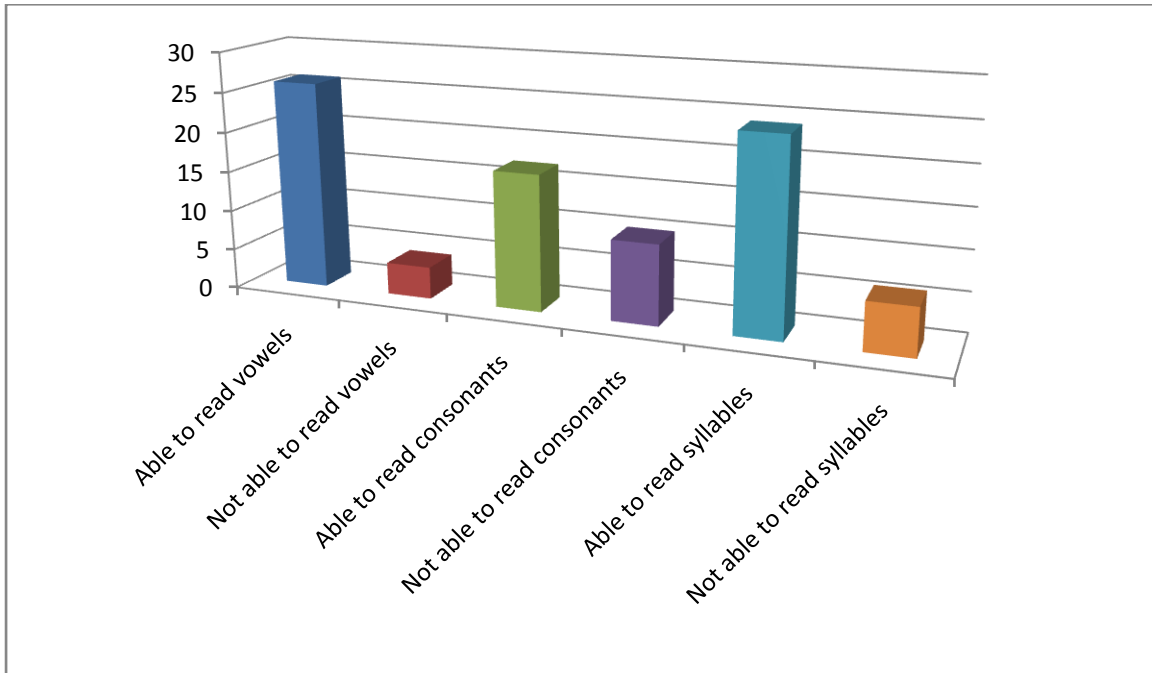
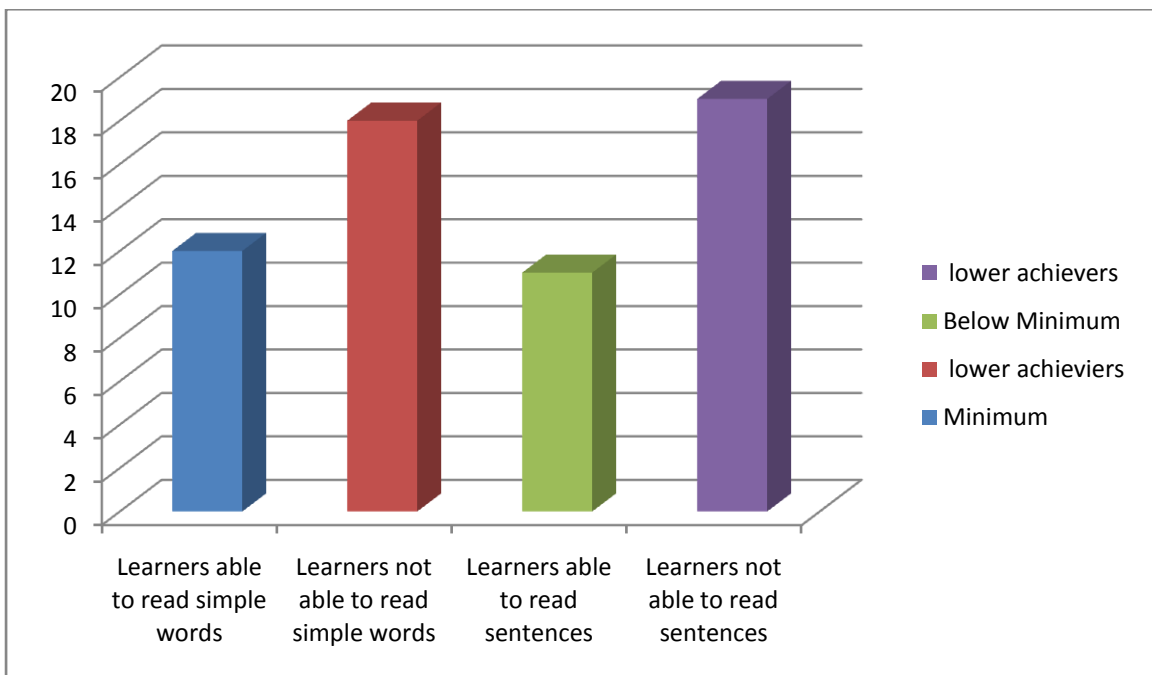


Fig: 4 learner performance on reading





The bars showed how learners were able to perform at reading. The findings showed that more learners were not able to read despite teaching them using zonal language on assumption that they were all familiar with it.

#### 4.6 Parents Views

The views gathered through interviews with parents indicated that the Primary Literacy Programme was good. Most of the parents interviewed were not able to read and write. They developed interest in literacy when they saw their children reading at grade 1. This steered in them the interest to enroll for adult literacy lesson. One of the parents had this to say:

*‘I live with my granddaughter who is currently in grade 4. I am so impressed because she was able to read most of the words in Chitonga when she was in grade 1. As I am talking, the girl is a fluent reader in both Chitonga and English’.*

Findings from parents reviewed that most of the grade 4 learners still had difficulties in reading especially English language. They read English words in vernacular. They implored the ministry of education and curriculum development centre to provide appropriate methodology to foster acquisition of literacy skills by the learners. They observed that schools had inadequate teaching and learning materials to enable them assist their children.

There was general observation that parental transfers affected the learners’ local language proficiency. Findings showed that every time parents transferred their children were also affected by a new language especially if it were a regional transfer. Suggestions were that the ministry should allow code switching so that both the teacher and the learner who were not familiar with the language may find room to interact with each other.

Another parent noted that any literacy programme would fail in Zambia because of the decayed reading culture among the parents, teachers and learners. There was no one to motivate the other to read. Most of the parents were busy with their work giving less attention to their children. They observed that during the ancient time, children were finding time to listen the folktales from grandparents the situation that improved their pre-reading and listening skills. The modern parents and children had taken a different angle coupled with the children’s rights worsens the situation. Modern children were played with electronic gadgets such as video and computer games depriving time for academic work. Furthermore, clarifications were that electronic gadgets were not bad but some parents did not control the

way their children used the facilities because gadgets were kept in children's bedrooms curtailing time to perform remedial work.

#### 4.7 External Monitors Views

Findings from the Education Standards Officers showed that they knew about the Primary Literacy Programme that it was a programme that was aimed at improving literacy levels. However, they confessed that they had never gone out to monitor any literacy lessons in schools. Even if they went, they would not be of good help to the teachers because they did not understand its approaches. They also attributed their failure to monitor schools to lack of transport at the district education office.

The views from the Zone in-service Coordinators showed that schools were understaffed. Each one of the Zone in-service Coordinator interviewed showed that they had double classes and taught from 07:00 hours to 17:00 hours. This situation affected the excusing of responsibility as zone in-service coordinator. The findings reviewed that they had scheduled all the activities but they did not implement them because they taught double classes. Their concern was that their positions as Zone In-service Coordinators (ZIC) were not established through pay roll. This conflicted with the roles of the head teachers on assigning duties even when they knew that their role as ZICs as In-service Providers was critical. It was observed that it was difficult for the head teacher to give them permission to check on teacher preparedness at a nearby school because they were full time class teachers. If one went out their class would suffer.

Generally parents blamed the government for not providing literacy materials to the schools. Even when the schools had, the materials were inadequate that they could not equate the demand.

The findings revealed that the programme was good. However, it lacked material support from the government through provision of adequate teaching and learning materials and literacy text books for grades 3 and 4. The study found that all the five schools had not yet received these books.

The findings also showed that the learner – teacher ratio was high which made teachers find difficulties in preparing remedial work for the slow learners of which most of these slow learners were fond of absconding class.

Furthermore, the findings showed that some teachers missed in-service meeting because they were either attending residential school or they went to join their family members for lack of accommodation in the school. This situation had a negative impact on both the learner and the teacher. There was also inadequate staffing in schools whose average number of learners per class was 87. The next chapter presented the discussions of finding.

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the discussion of the key findings based on the effect of the new primary literacy programme on literacy levels among grade 4 learners. The findings were discussed in the order of presentation in chapter four.

### 5.1 The General Overview Of The Primary Literacy Programme By The Respondents

The following discussions were based on the findings from the head teachers, teachers, pupils and parents. The researcher used thematic approach to integrate the discussion of findings from the various sources into one coherent whole.

According to the findings of the study, the majority of the respondents indicated that the primary reading programme was a good approach for teaching and learning literacy because it enabled learner to interact with the teacher in the language of play. The discussions established that the programme was not well managed that was the reason for the low literacy levels among the learners. It was observed that there were several gaps that needed to be filled for the programme to yield positive results. For instance, schools had no text books to support literacy learning, there was inadequate monitoring of the programme, some teachers were not competent in the methodology, and some teachers were not able to give correct pronunciation of letter sounds during lesson delivery. Some factors were related to failure of government support such as reduction in high pupil – teacher ratio, teacher transfer, lack of clarity on the methodology; while others were community attributed factors such as parent transfers, learner absenteeism, teacher and learner’ s language background and inadequate in-service teacher training.

The findings above suggest that all the respondents were aware of the effect of the Primary Literacy Programme on literacy levels. In order to be focused in the discussion, the findings were grouped into variables thought to influence the effect of the new primary literacy programme on literacy levels into school, teacher, pupil and parent related factors.

### 5.2 School Related Factor

School conditions such as lack of instructional materials for grade 3 and 4, inadequate staffing, over-enrollment, lack of supervision by District Education Board Staff and head

teachers, teacher absenteeism and teacher's inability to use the local language proficiently contributed to literacy levels.

The 1992 education policy (EFA) advises that teaching and learning materials are key ingredients for learning. Materials such as text books were known to enhance pupils' achievement. Lack of materials impeded to the provision of quality education. Since 2013 when the curriculum was revised to 2017, learners' literacy text books and teachers' guides for certain grades such as grade 3, 4 and 7 had not been distributed into schools. It is not known whether these materials have not been published or they were scarce. The ministry should have published the text books before rolling out the programme. Availability of teaching and learning materials was a factor to learner performance improvement in literacy. The findings on the need for availability of TLM for PLP were supported by other research conducted by (Elley 1992, Smith and Elley 1997) in Singapore. The same findings were mirrored by research in Sri Lanka (Elley and foster 1996, in South Africa by Le Roux and Scholar in 1996).

On the contrary, one of the respondents indicated that lack of Revised Literacy Material was not a factor because so many books were readily available for use than waiting for the Ministry of Education for supply. However, the performance of his class was also at minimum indicating less significance.

The discussions established that over enrolment and under staffing hampered the successfulness of Primary Literacy Programme. Schools were understaffed most of which were handling double classes. They had no time to prepare remedial work for the slow learners because they were busy throughout with an average class of 87 pupils per grade. In one school the head teacher also was teaching reducing time for monitoring his teachers. His class was a role model because of his commitment to duty a situation that provided information of the effect of the new primary literacy programme on alleviating the difficulties learners face in reading and writing.

Despite the fact that the researcher may agree to the views of the respondents, it could still be argued that non-availability of resources could not be used as an excuse for teachers to improve the literacy levels of the learners. Materials were always available in schools that could be used to teach literacy as long as teachers were pedagogically competent and were attending in-service training and practicing on the knowledge they acquired through

preparation of Teaching and Learning Materials Using locally Available Resources (TALULAR).

The findings of the study showed that lack of supervision and monitoring of implementation of the primary literacy programme by the district education board staff and head teachers affected the effect of the programme. The general picture derived from the findings of this research indicated that the level of both internal and external monitoring done in schools was inadequate. Most of these monitoring were done on sport check and ad hoc defeating the purpose of providing professional guidance. Furthermore, there were isolated cases showing when the school was last monitored by standards officers and all the schools had no records on School In-service Meeting since 2009. The programme may slowly die a natural death if interventions were not put in place to sustain the programme. The government should set standards of this literacy programme to favour families that transferred from one region to the other. The deployment of teachers should be decentralised so that both the learners and the teachers were not disadvantaged by the Zone Language. Zone In-service Coordinators and their counterpart School In-service Coordinators should put in much effect in providing capacity building to teachers. The head teachers should ensure that these officers work to the expectations and standards of the Ministry of Education through supervision. The Education Standards Officers should also come up with a monitoring schedule for schools to ensure Quality Provision of Education. This was in agreement with the views expressed by Fordman (1992) that supervision of teachers is a critical factor in improving quality of education. Furthermore, he stated that supervision and support were two critical factors of effective teaching.

While the researcher may agree to the views of the respondents, there was also need to realise that supervision and monitoring may not have an impact on the effect of the New Primary Literacy Programme but the attitude of teachers towards their work. The argument was that Standards Officers and head teachers' monitoring and supervision may not have an impact on the literacy programme because they may not have been trained on the New Primary Literacy Programme Methodologies. Teachers were sought to be the main actors in the improvement of the literacy levels in schools and not the monitors. Furthermore, it was noted that there was great need for teachers to change their attitude towards their work if the results were to be improved. Only if well trained in literacy and in supervision would teacher supervisors become a critical factor (MOE, 2001).

The researcher used the expectancy theory based on the concept that performance was multiplicative function of ability and motivation (dependant variable is learner performance benefit while independent variables are head teachers involvement in curriculum instructional management).

### 5.3 Teachers' View On Primary Literacy Programme

On the question on whether the teachers found it difficult to teach literacy in local language, the findings from the lesson observation and interviews showed that all the respondents had interest in teaching literacy in schools and were following the schedule. While all the respondents were following the schedule, majority of them argued that it was not easy to teach literacy effectively. There was language interference among some teachers and the local language especially at grade 1 when most of literacy skills were impacted into the learner. The findings were supported by other studies on the need for teachers to be proficient on local language as medium of instruction if the programme yielded positive results (Banda, 2002; Griffin et al 2006; Sampa 2003 and UNESCO (2010).

While the researcher may seem to agree with the views of the respondents, mostly it was the attitudes of teachers towards the use of local language that deterred them to teach effectively which could have hindered the effect of the literacy programme on literacy. Some teachers pretended not to know the local language so that they were not given lower grades to teach.

The implication of the lack of sufficient knowledge and experience about New Primary Literacy methodology may affect the quality of education and is irrelevant to pupils' needs and of the society. When teachers lack sufficient subject matter and knowledge to teach pupils adequately in a particular subject area, the standards of education is compromised (Fordham, 1992).

In conclusion, however, the researcher does not agree with views by many respondents that generally, grade 4 teachers seemed to lack sufficient knowledge and experience about PLP pedagogical approaches but for lack of interest and negative attitudes towards the programme and continuing professional development programme. The Native English Teachers placed emphasis on teachers' professional development to improving teaching techniques as critical (Griffin, 2006).

### 5.4 Parents' View

Findings of the study showed that pupils failed to read and write Chitonga because of the location of the school and transfer related issue. Some parents bought electronic gadgets for their children reducing time for them to read and study. The non-availability of literacy books in Chitonga language in the revised curriculum was claimed to be one of the factors that could have deterred the effect of the Primary Literacy Programme. Other views suggested that lower class families have diverse effect on learner performance compared to the well to do families.

These findings supported the World Bank (2004) report which showed that pupil from rural areas and low economic status families were likely to perform poorly. One would agree with the respondents that children who come from poor households face difficulties in reading compared to the well to do families. Lower class parents prefer sending their children to either sell at the market or to the fields to drive away monkey and birds from their fields. There was no significant different between schools from Zone 1 and 2. Their performance was at par in some cases children from rural schools performed better than those from urban.

#### 5.5 Assessment And Achievement

All schools undertook some form of assessment in Chitonga language during week 5, 10 and 13 of each term. The teachers administered reading assessments commonly prepared at the District Education Board. They also devised their own test and used the outcomes of the assessment to inform their teaching and learning. There was scope for development in assessment policies in all the schools under the study. In these schools the results of assessment were not sufficiently utilized to inform the teaching and learning in the classroom. In many instances there were no formal school procedures in tracking learner performance. The results of the standardised tests were rarely used to help slow learners.

#### 5.6 Conclusion,

The findings showed that schools embraced the idea of teaching and learning using Zonal Language but had scope for development. The classroom teachers differentiated their teaching according to the pupils needs. Most classrooms did not provide a supportive environment for the implementation of the programme. However common gaps included the lack of emphasis on the development of higher-order thinking skills, insufficient attention given to the development of the emotional and expressive skills and promotion of the pupils' cognitive skills. The significant finding of the study was that the teaching of literacy was



weak. The inspectors emphasised on the need for more effective approaches and curriculum adaptation; the provision of greater range of reading materials; the more effective use of classroom assessment procedures and the creation of more stimulating environments. Respondents agreed that there was a relationship between schools related factors and community on the effect of primary literacy programme on literacy levels. This was in agreement with some researchers that suggested a strong correlation between the educational statuses of the families and their level of education to supporting learner achievement in education (Banda, Chimombo and Mchikoma 2002; griffin 2000 reported in Nguyen et al., 2005). Additionally, Griffin et al (2006) found that the primary literacy programme was beneficial to low social economic groups especially with the involvement of parents in giving support to their children. It was purported that support from parents enabled children to acquire decent education. These findings were in conformity with the views that parents expressed.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTIONS

### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter highlights the conclusion, recommendations and suggestions derived from the findings of the study. The study established the gaps that impeded to the effect of the new primary literacy programme on grade 4 learners.

### 6.1 Conclusion

Several scholars carried out research on the literacy programmes in Zambia before and after the introduction of the primary literacy programmed in 2013. The findings showed that the reading levels were still low (MoE, 2008).

The study reviewed that the primary literacy programme was good and aided learners to develop literacy skills. The present study clearly established that the effect of the primary literacy programme on literacy levels on grade 4 learners was dependent upon many variables. Factors such as school, teacher and family related were reviewed and gaps were identified.

#### a) School Related Factors

- i) Lack of literacy text books for learners and teacher's guide
- ii) Lack of pedagogical competency
- iii) Over enrollment
- iv) Inadequate staffing
- v) Inadequate supervision by standards officers and head teachers

The findings also showed that some schools were not conducting in-service training such as GRACE, teacher group meetings intended to up-date teachers on new approaches under the ministry of education tailored at improving teaching skills.

#### b) Teacher Related Factors

- i) Lack of teachers' local language proficiency in Chitonga
- ii) Lack of teaching experience in literacy
- iii) Knowledge gap on pedagogical approach
- iv) Teachers' attitude towards the PLP

The study reviewed that teachers had abandoned other literacy materials for Zambian language that could have supported the literacy in schools and only waited upon the ministry of education to provide grade 3 and 4 literacy materials that had not yet been received from 2014 to 2017. The only literacy book which was delivered to schools during the course of study was literacy Chitonga book 3 term 1. Teachers found it more appropriate to teach literacy in English than Zambian language but the question was whether learners understood the concept or not. Probably this could have led to the ineffectiveness of the programme.

c) Family Related Factors

- i) Regular transfers by parents
- ii) Teacher and pupil language background
- iii) Poor family background
- iv) Electronic gadget such as Television, computer, cell phones and video games

d) Pupils Related Factors

- i) Absenteeism
- ii) Pupil transfers
- iii) Pupils negative towards the language
- iv) Pupils spend most of their time playing

The findings above were in conformity with those which were reported in the international studies on the factors that lead to low reading levels in SACMEQ countries (Nguyen and Calvitto, 2003; World Bank 2004) that may be of interest to other future researchers in Zambia.

## 6.2 Recommendations

The Main Recommendations Are:

As expensive as it may be but because we are looking at developing the literacy levels of our prospective future leaders, the Ministry of Education should quickly deliver grade 3 and 4 literacy books for teachers to begin using them during planning so that the other group does not suffer set back. There was need to have teaching and learning materials with content that supported learning across the curriculum. The ministry therefore, should provide content literacy books that should be appropriate to the level of the learner. The ministry should allow more book developers related to the grades so that there were a variety of literacy books.

On the other hand, schools should not only depend on the ministry for the provision of teaching and learning materials, they could still source for these materials locally and make them using locally available material (TALULAR). This was cost effective and literacy lessons could be taught effectively. Members of the management team should be assigned responsibilities for the implementation of the curricular areas. Nonetheless, the children could also be involved in story decoding. Schools should intensify in-service training. Head teachers should carefully select teachers to handle grades 1 to 4 and there should be intensified monitoring by standards officer and the school head teachers.

The Ministry of Education should conduct needs assessment before teacher recruitment so that they ascertain the relevance of the teacher to would be deployed station. Since teacher recruitment is decentralised, the ministry should allow teacher selection to be done by the district education board and staff so that they pick on people who applied to their respective districts of choice and were able to speak the local language fluently. This would reduce the excuses teachers gave on language proficiency.

Ministry of Education Headquarters should desist from transferring teachers have saved less than two years at their station as this defeat the purpose of teacher deployment to areas of need. Mostly, schools' positions payment identities were occupied by ghost teachers who only existed on pay roll and were serving in other districts. This situation disadvantaged and deprived learners' privilege to acquire quality education especially in rural district.

Besides, the ministry of education should extend grade 1 primary literacy methodology to grade 4 in both English and Zambian language and provide clear guidelines. This would enable all the teachers to acquaint themselves to the literacy methodologies in case of any transfer.

The primary goal of the government is to provide quality education for all. Therefore the government should give attention to the curriculum and other educational matters. The government should not be rushing to implement programmes when they are not ready. This has a direct impact on the learner performance. Regardless of how good the programme is, adequate preparation is imperative if the results were to improve. Nevertheless, a pilot programme was going to be used to assess the effect of the programme because the curriculum should be evidence based research. This was going to help the government to address all the concerns as shown from the findings.

There should be further analysis on cost effectiveness of such programmes by educational policy makers and planners to determine the degree of expense and the immediate outcome benefit on literacy at both the short and long term.

Children's achievement depends on the quality of teaching, support and supervision. Pupils bear the consequences if teacher lack knowledge about the course content. To improve the quality of teaching, the Ministry of Education should support Zone In-service Coordinators in schools to enable them run their programmes effectively.

Supervision of both external and internal monitors in schools was not satisfactory. The frequency of monitoring should be improved as well as the scope of monitoring strategies. The ministry should develop a monitoring framework for proper documentation and best practices periodically.

Teachers should intensify Lesson Study Cycles and observe one another's lesson and school based training to improve lesson delivery. Measures such as local learner performance tracker should be encouraged among the teachers. This could enable the teacher to identify areas of learning difficulties among the learners and provide appropriate intervention.

It is very important that schools disseminate appropriate information to parents so that they know that they have a part to play in the education of their learners. Sending children to drive away birds and monkeys increased illiteracy levels in the district. Schools should get into habit of inviting parents to schools and show them how they could improve learner performance such as provision of reading materials, encouraging learners to go to school and going through their learners' books. This could motivate learners and eventually improve their literacy levels.

There was need to educate Education Standards Officers to desist from using emotional decisions when advising teachers. This situation did not motivate the teachers instead monitors should give professional guidance. The concept of repeat policy should be embraced to help the low achievers. The parents whose learners are truant should be stiffly warned and if the behaviour continued their children should be made to repeat or given forced transfers. This would prompt parents to give holistic support to the learners.

### 6.3 Suggestions For Further Studies

1. The first area recommendation for further research is that there is need to evaluate the kind of old syllabus literacy materials for grade 4 in order to bring them in line with the revised literacy materials and make a recommendation on appropriateness.
2. Future research needs to be undertaken to examine the relationship between the type and quality of teaching and learning materials and learners' achievement to establish appropriate interventions.
3. The third area of future research is that there is need to conduct a comparative research on pupils' reading achievement in private and community schools to ascertain the level of language proficiency of both the learners and the teachers and the effect it has on learner performance.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Interview Guide For Grade 4 Teachers

1. Are you aware about PLP course in schools?
2. Did the course prepare teachers on pedagogical approaches?
3. Have you undergone training on Teachers' Curriculum Implementation Guide (TCIG) for the revised curriculum?
4. Did the course have enough teaching and learning materials?
5. Is the zonal language suitable for this programme?
6. How were teachers prepared to teach literacy using zonal language?
7. How do you find teaching literacy in English language?
8. How do learners respond to these two languages?
9. What impact has this new literacy programme on alleviating the difficulties learners face in reading and writing?
10. What are the areas of strength about the PLP?
11. What are the areas of weakness about the PLP?
12. Have you undergone training on new literacy methodologies?
13. How often do you assess your learners?
14. How often are you monitored by your supervisors?
15. How supportive is your head teacher?
16. What are parents' views about PLP?
17. What language do you speak best?
18. How many learners are in your class and how many can read and write?
19. How old are you in teaching service?
20. Do you give remedial work to your class?

Thank you very much for your participation and you are free to ask any question about what has been discussed.

## Appendix 2: Interview Guide For Head Teachers

1. How much do you know about PLP?
2. How were the head teachers prepared to supervise and monitor implementation of the programme?
3. Did the course prepare teachers on the new literacy methodologies?
4. Did the course have enough teaching and learning materials?
5. What are the areas of strength about the PLP?
6. What are the areas of weakness about the PLP?
7. What impact has this new literacy programme on literacy?
8. What type of support do you give to your teachers?
9. What challenges do you face as a manager in supporting the programme?
10. Do you monitor your teachers in this programme?
11. Is the zonal language suitable for this programme?
12. Do you receive external monitors specifically to monitor literacy lessons?
13. Do you hold Head teacher's in-service Meeting to discuss literacy?
14. Were teachers prepared to teach using zonal language?
15. Were parents oriented on this literacy programme?
16. What are your views on the performance of primary literacy programme since 2014?
17. What suggestions can you make to the ministry of education concerning this course?

Thank you very much for your participation and you are free to ask any question about what has been discussed.

### Appendix 3: Focus Group Discussion Guide With Grade 4 Learners

1. What language do you speak at home?
2. What language are you using to learn in class?
3. In which language do you enjoy reading?
4. How do you find learning literacy using Chitonga language?
5. Is the zonal language suitable for this programme?
6. How do you find learning literacy using English language?
7. Do you have grade 4 literacy books in school?
8. Do you have classroom library corners in your school?
9. If you have any, do you read them?
10. Are you able to read Chitonga language?
11. Are you able to read English language?
12. What difficulties do you face in learning how to read Chitonga?
13. Are your parents supportive to your education?
14. What do you think should be done to help you learn how to read Chitonga fluently?

Thank you very much.

#### Appendix 4: Observation Checklist

The following observation checklist was used to help in recording the observations made by the researcher in grade 4 classroom.

##### a) Teacher's Working Documents

<b>DOCUMENTS</b>	<b>AVAILABILITY</b>	<b>COMMENT</b>		
		<b>Good</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
Revised Grade 4 Literacy Books				
Literacy Teachers' Guide				
Teaching And Learning Aids				
Syllabus				
Schemes Of Work				
Weekly Forecast				
Lesson Plan				
Time Table				
Literacy Progress Sheet				

b) Observable practices

ACTIVITY AREA	EXPECTED OUTCOME	REMARKS		
		Good	satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Approach for literacy lesson	New primary literacy programme			
Training on pedagogical approach	Through resource centres			
Home work	Schemed weekly forecast			
Language of instruction	Regional language			
Language used by teachers in class	Appropriate to the programme			
Language used by learners in class	Appropriate to the programme			
Literacy assessment sheet	Formative and summative assessment through availability of Week 5 and 10 results			
Teacher-pupil ratio	1 – 50			
Class management	Good class control			
Individual learner support	Availability of remedial work			
Class library corner	Availability of library books in the classroom corner			
Decodable stories	Availability locally made stories.			