

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES

Research Report in Development Information Systems and Services(LIS 422)

Evaluation of the effectiveness of School of Education
in disseminating Academic Advising Information to
BAED students on right course combination. *A case
study of the University of Zambia.*

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A research report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Bachelor of
Arts with Library and Information Studies.
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DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

Sign.....*M. Mvula*.....

Makani Mvula.

This research has been submitted for examination with my approval as supervisor.

Sign.....

Mr B. Njobvu

To my late Mum for all your support, care and for believing in me.

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to evaluate the effectiveness of School of Education in disseminating Academic advising information to Bachelor of Arts with Education (BAED) students on right course combination. The objectives of this research were: to identify information needs of BAED students; to identify the existing information support in the school and examine its contributions to BAED students; to assess the availability, accessibility and frequency of information delivery to BAED students; to assess the attitudes of departmental Lecturers in providing information on course combinations to BAED students; and to find out student's perceptions about the school of education in terms of meeting their information needs on course combinations.

Structured self-administered questionnaires were used to collect both primary and secondary data. Data analysis was done by the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The key findings of the research were that more male students are pursuing BAED programme with the majority of students majoring in History .The research revealed that most students face information problems on lack of academic advising information on course combination, lack of information on the number of courses to complete in a subject, lack of information on where to get advise on academic matters, and lack of guidance information on what subject to major in. It was also discovered that there is no existing information support in the school and the frequency at which academic advising information is provided is only once per semester. The majority of students observed that information is not readily available and it is difficult to access any existing information. Departmental Lecturers were found to be unhelpful in providing advising information and that the majority of students are not happy with the academic advising information provided by the school hence rating it bad in meeting their information needs.

One of the major recommendations is that the School should document academic advising information on course combinations, course offerings, pre-requisites, major requirements, and drop and add procedures and provide documented information to all admitted students in their first year and also to ensure that students are guided on their academic journey from the time they are admitted up to the time they graduate by giving them academic tutors to help them on course combinations. A conclusion has therefore been drawn that it is only through the effective dissemination of accurate and current academic advising information that students will be encouraged to develop in their careers.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Information is vital in the education sector in many different ways. Information provides guidance in career choices and prospects to every individual in the education spectrum. It has been observed that information is the driving force to the operation of the education sector in that it spearheads learning, policy formulation, implementation and evaluation, planning and decision making.

To this end, information resources must be harnessed in such a way that information is provided to the users when it is required because none of the above mentioned activities can be effectively undertaken without a healthy input of information. Experience has proved that for “any activity to have a realistic chance of successful execution, it requires accurate, relevant and complete information” (Zulu, 1996:6).

For information to have the desired impact on the user, it must be provided on demand and in the form which facilitates user access to the information resources. To be useful, this information has to be harnessed through a proper system of information management.

There are many types of information in the education sector and this information assist recipients in different ways. There are published education materials in books and journals, calendars and brochures. Other information is made available in electronic format as well as oral and academic talks. Education information available can be categorized into different types where some information enhances learning, decision making and other information provides guidance in career prospects as well as national development.

If this education information is provided to the intended users, it can help them achieve their academic pursuits in learning, right career choices and making informed decisions to achieve their goals in life and help in national development. In case of colleges and universities, education academic advising information is vital so as to let students know what is required of them to do in order to graduate. Such information is of much help to students in order for them to know what courses to register for them to fulfill the requirements of a degree on time, to be able to know the courses being offered by different departments and also to let them know the exact number of courses required to complete for them to graduate on time.

One of the institutions which provide information on education is The University of Zambia (UNZA) and particularly in this study, the School of Education provides information to students in the school.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE INSTITUTION

The University of Zambia which consists of the School of Education, School of Engineering, School of Agricultural Sciences, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, School of Law, School of Medicine, School of Mines, School of Natural Sciences and School of Veterinary Medicine came into legal existence in November 1965. This was after the government appointed a commission under the chairmanship of Sir John Lockwood (a former vice-chancellor of the University of London) in 1963 to advise on the development of a university. In its report, the Lockwood commission unanimously recommended the establishment of a university of Lusaka.

In early 1964, the government signified that it accepted the recommendations of the Lockwood commission and within four months there was an inaugural meeting of the provisional council of the University which was a body charged with bringing the university into being. Later in July 1964, the former institute of Rhodes-Livingstone dating back to 1938 came under the jurisdiction of the provisional council. In July 1965, Dr D.G Anglin of Charleton University in Canada was appointed as Vice-Chancellor and a month later, the Oppenheimer college of Social Service was incorporated into the University in John Mbita road in Ridgeway Lusaka. (UNZA, 2005:10)

On 12th July 1966, the President Dr K.D Kaunda was installed as Chancellor who the following day laid the foundation stone for the University of Zambia on the great east road campus (UNZA:2005). The University developed from this year and by now there are about nine (9) schools, where one of the schools is the School of Education.

The School of Education opened in 1966 with about forty-two (42) graduates who were following a programme leading to the University of London's postgraduate certificate in Education. By 1969, the School of Education also offered undergraduate courses forming part of the Bachelor of Arts with Education (BAED) and Bachelor of Science in Education (BSc. Ed). (UNZA, 2007).

The school now also offers other programmes such as Bachelor of Arts with Library and Information Studies (BALIS), Bachelor of Adult Education, Bachelor of Education (primary and Secondary), Master of Education and Doctor of Philosophy in Education.

1.1.1 Mission statement

The mission statement of the University is the purpose of the University of Zambia to;

- i. To fulfill the historical purpose of a University through the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research and scholarship;
- ii. To advance national development through the application of learning and research;
- iii. To promote learning by offering opportunities for advanced education to all suitably qualified persons, without distinction of race, gender, religion or political affiliation;
- iv. To enhance Zambia's potential to promote the goals of the wider African and international communities.

To attain this mission statement effectively, the University has different objectives by different schools and that the university has the responsibility to marshal and manage the necessary resources. Among the schools with objectives or goals to achieve the above statement is the school of Education whose goals are here-under.

1.1.2 Objectives of the School of Education

In order to help the University to achieve the mission statement, the School of Education has objectives to meet to materialize the existence of a University. These objectives are;

- i. To serve the educational needs of Zambia;
- ii. To prepare for the replacement of BAED and BSc.Ed programmes in the subsequent plan period by more targeted specialized degrees in education;
- iii. In view of the continued priority attaching to primary education aimed at raising the status of primary school teachers; and
- iv. To continue reviewing how programmes in the school can be offered in a more flexible way to educational personnel already in the field.

1.1.3 Activities

The school of education carries out a number of different activities to attain the goals mentioned above. Some of the activities include enrollment of students, teaching and learning, research work by both lecturers and students, and disseminating information to students according to their needs. Other activities include educational conferences, seminars and research paper presentation by different departments in the school as one way of meeting the education needs of Zambia.

1.1.4 Provision of Information

The School of Education provides information to students and other outside research workers in different ways. One of the identified ways of providing information is by publication of books, or other published materials both available in certain departments and other copies are placed in the University of Zambia main Library. Other Information is disseminated to students through published handbooks in departments and in the Library whilst other information is communicated to students on notice boards in the school. Career talks and meetings is another way the school uses to provide information.

However, despite the activities taken by the school of Education and provision of information, it has been observed that academic advising information is not reaching Bachelor of Arts with Education (BAED) students, hence the need to evaluate the school's effectiveness in disseminating information to BAED students on the right course combination to fulfill the requirements of a degree on time.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Bachelor of Arts with education (BAED) students faces a problem on the right course combination to fulfill or complete the total number of courses to be awarded a degree on time. The consequences of this are that most BAED students do not graduate at the right stipulated time. About two-thirds of BAED students register for overloads in fourth year of study to cover up for courses they did not do earlier on and therefore this affects their academic performance. Most students in BAED do not know what course they are majoring in and remain unquoted up to fourth year.

It must be understood that in every society, students are the potential leaders who are expected to have a great influence on the whole nation from leadership level to service provision. It is therefore important that they are directed well on the courses they are supposed to do. This is because the courses done have a bearing on the classification of the degree, and on their competence and efficiency.

Unfortunately this is not the case with most BAED students at campus. With different departments involved in offering courses in BAED, most students do not know exactly which courses to register in order to fulfill or complete the number of courses to be taken in each department and in which subject to major in.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 General objective

- To find out the effectiveness of the School of Education in providing academic advising information to BAED students on right course combination.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

With the view of achieving the general objective, the following are the specific objectives.

- To identify information needs of BAED students.
- To identify the existing information support and examine its contributions to BAED students.
- To assess the effectiveness of the school of education in terms of dissemination of information to BAED students.
- To assess the attitudes of departmental Lecturers in providing information on course combinations to BAED students.
- To find out student's perception about the school of education in terms of meeting their information needs on course combinations.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The evaluation of the school of education in disseminating academic advisory information is necessary considering a problem that there are many BAED students who are registering for overload courses of first and second year in their third and fourth years of study. Furthermore a

number of students in BAED have not graduated at the right stipulated time in the past because they either did wrong courses or they did not complete or finish the total number of courses required to be awarded the degree on time.

There is a high discrepancy between the actual situation and the ideal situation. The ideal situation is that students enrolled in BAED are supposed to do the courses they came for and be quotered in their first year on what courses they are supposed to do. But the prevailing situation in the School of Education is that most BAED students are not quotered up to fourth year because the combination of courses could not be classified for a major and/or minor.

Also considering that the School of Education has been in existence for more than six years, this is deemed long enough to warrant its evaluation in disseminating academic advising information to BAED students. This view is supported by Martyn (1981) who observed that;

“ normally the evaluation of an information system is undertaken when the system has reached a state of stability in terms of its structure, content, organization and user population. In most cases this position is not reached until the system has been in full-time operation for six (6) or seven (7) years, because it takes that amount of time to build up to a stable user community”(Martyn, 1981:51).

This study will also help authorities involved in the delivery of career information to make sure that the information is received and used by the beneficiaries to make proper choices of course combinations. It will also enable authorities to understand areas that need attention in the provision of such information.

1.5 LIMITATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

This research was met with few limitations and constraints.

- Some of the respondents did not answer the questionnaires on time and therefore it had to take a lot of patience and follow ups to collect the questionnaires.
- There was lack of funds to start and finish the research according to schedule. This was due to the late bringing of the project allowance by the Bursaries scheme of the GRZ.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical framework

There is no specific theory developed in line to the provision of academic advising information. But however a number of related theories that contribute or enhance the provision of career information have been used and must be understood by the providers of academic advising information. The most closely related theories which can be used in this study are development theories which include in particular developmental career theories and social learning theories.

Providing academic advising information can be well explained by the use of developmental career theories. Representatives of developmental theories of career development include Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad and Herma (1951) and Super (1990). Ginzberg and his associates theorized that career development occurs generally from about eleven to age seventeen or in young adulthood and moves through three (3) stages: Fantasy (childhood), Tentative (early adolescence), and Realistic (middle adolescence to young adulthood). Movement occurs from play orientations through recognition of work requirements to integration of capacities and interests. According to Super, one of the best known career theorists, "career development occurs throughout the life span and includes stages of crystallization (14-18), specification (18-21), implementation (21-24), stabilization (24-34) and consolidation (35 and older)" (Super, 1990:25). Super's perspective is important in the realm of providing career and academic advising information to students because all these stages can be well accomplished or achieved when students are given the right and accurate information to enhance their career development. With Ginzberg, the stage of realistic is important for students to be provided with accurate academic advising information for them to realistically develop in their careers.

Another developmental theory necessary in the provision of academic advising information is the social learning theory. Social learning theories are well represented by the work of Krumboltz, Mitchell and Gellat (1975) and by Mitchell and Krumboltz (1990). According to these theorists, career development involves the interaction of four factors, "genetic endowments and special abilities, environmental conditions and events, learning experiences, and task approach skills" (Kromboltz, 1975:16). It is thus helpful and be understood that unique

learning experiences and the provision of academic advising information over the life span lead to career choices and further development of such careers.

The above explained theories can be used in this study and that several generalizations can be made about providing academic advising information to illustrate the value of synthesizing such knowledge for use in a particular educational manner. As one's career develops, there is need to understand the theory of development which represents internal change from simple to complex forms and from differentiation to integration (Thomas and Chickering, 1984:27). As development occur students experience their world differently than before and assimilate learning into their lives in a more holistic fashion. In short, students' needs for academic advising information change with each new plateau of development. The roles of academic advising information change as students learn and develop. This can further be highlighted that academic advising information provided to a high school student on what subjects to concentrate in and what careers to pursue when they enter college or university, will definitely be different with academic advising information to be provided at a university level. University students need specific and particular information on career development and course combinations in different degree programmes. It can therefore be categorically stated that the use of these development theories in the provision academic advising information occurs in real-life developmental circumstances.

Developmental theory has direct value to providers of academic advising information in helping to explain many of the complicated issues facing students. Students' needs change significantly over time from information-dominant forms to consultation-dominant forms and therefore it is of much importance that accurate and timely information of programme choices and course combinations is given to students as they enter university and as they develop, more help is needed from faculty staff in consultations by senior students.

Knowledge and use of developmental theory helps "to define tasks of providing academic advising information, identify outcomes of advising information, and promote development directly" (Creamer and Creamer, 1994:20). Creamer and Creamer propose a developmental model for providing academic advising information that embodies setting career and life goals, strengthening self-insight and self-esteem, broadening interests, improving interpersonal relations, clarifying personal values and styles of life, and enhancing thinking and reasoning. They further assert that developmental academic advising information calls for an understanding

of the relationships between the types of questions students ask and the outcomes of effective advising that both students and providers of academic advising information expect.

Knowledge of the types of developmental theories presented earlier (career development theories and social learning theories) is essential to the model of providing academic advising information, because it calls for sensitivity to the real developmental meaning behind the questions asked by students to providers of such information, and to the strategies available to information providers for fostering self-sufficiency in students and addressing their current needs.

2.2 Review of Past Research

Provision of academic advising information has a long and fascinating history. Its foundations lie in the history of American higher education, from the colonial colleges to today's diverse array of colleges and universities (Gordon, 2000:1). Frost (2000) carried out a study and observed that beginning with the earliest colleges and universities in the United States, faculty members have advised students about their courses of study. The topics of this advice ranged from requirements imposed by institutions, departments, and outside agencies to students' notions about their intellectual interests and vocational goals. For the most part, students have valued this advice.

Grites (1979:7) identified that one early attempt to connect students and faculty more closely to the form of a system of academic advising was introduced at John Hopkins in 1889. Other institutions soon emulated the practice of having faculty members advise students about their courses of study. Versey (1965:297) reports that the advisor system for selecting courses was the "fad of the movement at Columbia in 1906", but soon degenerated into brief, impersonal interviews. By the late 1930s almost all institutions had formalized advising programs (Raskin, 1979:101).

In its 1984 report, "involvement in learning", the National Institute of Education identified advising information as one of the weakest components of the undergraduate academic experience. After both two and four years of college, only half of students responding to a survey designed to measure the quality of services expressed satisfaction with advising (Astin, 1987:38). In an effort to encourage both reflection and improved practice, in 1979 the American College Testing Service (ACT) began a series of comprehensive surveys of advising practice. The ACT

surveys conducted in 1979, 1983 and 1987 provide the most comprehensive research on advising during the period. According to findings in 1979, the delivery of information to students was the primary of most programs. By 1987, the only goal approaching satisfactory achievement was to provide information (Carstensen and Silberhorn, 1979). “Because advising remained largely unevaluated at that time, scholars knew little about the effects of services on students” (Frost, 1991:3).

Prior to the rapid growth in higher education a few decades ago, providing academic advising information was the sole responsibility of the faculty. Centra (1982) also observed that as, “institutions grew and became more heterogeneous in their offerings and in the students attendance; alternative sources of advising have emerged” (Centra, 1982:124). He further went on to find out that at large institutions, departmental libraries staffed by professionals trained in educational program advising helped students with information on program requirements. Even selected faculty in departments provides academic advising information. Yet however, it is still true that on many campuses, academic advising is the responsibility of the entire teaching staff.

Gordon (2000) observed that the provision of academic advising information has been a fixture on the higher education since colleges were first established in colonial America. She observed that, “providing advising information in those colleges was a function fulfilled by faculty who assumed responsibility for the intellectual, ethical, and moral development of students in a mentoring capacity” (Gordon, 2000:35). But however with the current practices in provision of academic advising information, it has been observed that there are many challenges and information does not reach the students. For example, one of the essential elements of a quality academic advising program is the articulation of the program’s basic purpose, function and components in a company advising policy. When campuses were queried on this topic in the 1979 survey, only about one quarter of the institutions indicated that they had a published statement on the provision of academic advising information (Carstensen and Silberhorn, 1979:22). By 1983, this figure had increased. “It had increased to 63%, since then however, there have been no appreciable changes in this percentage, with the most recent survey indicating that 61% of campuses had a published statement of advising information” (Habley and Morales, 1998:35).

Another critical element in the development of a quality academic advising program is the need for coordination of effort among many service delivery units. Coordination of advising

services remains primarily an academic affairs function. In this view there must be a coordinating point and staff to provide information on course combination to BAED students at UNZA. Like Habley and Morales (1998:36) found out that in other universities in 1997 survey, 69% of campuses reported that a vice-president for academic affairs either saved as or had administrative responsibility for the coordination of advising. Offices or advising centers where students can find information on course combinations and requirements of degree programs are most obvious. "In 1979, 207 of the 820 institutions surveyed (25%) indicated that an advising office was in place on their campus. By 1997, that percentage had nearly tripled to 73 %" (Gordon, 2000:38).

There has however been a crisis, when the 1997 survey shows that advising centers are far less likely to intervene when students make important educational decisions. Declines were in the number of support materials (handbooks, articulation worksheets, and campus referral) and student information sources (high school transcripts, assessment results, and grade reports) provided to providers of academic advising information. As a result of these findings, it was concluded that, "if steps are not taken to deal with these critical issues, it is virtually certain that the advantages once attributed to advising centers will all but disappear" (Habley and Morales, 1998:64).

It can now be specifically brought to light that the provision of academic advising information also involves informing students on what courses to take in their respective programmes to fulfill the requirements of a degree on time. In as much as adviser and information availability is important in provision of academic advising information, the knowledge of curricular requirements and college policies and procedures is also important (O'Banion, 1972). Providers of information should provide adequate guidance in course offerings, pre-requisites, major requirements, and drop and add procedures and the like. These would be considered the minimal duties of information providers in academic advising. Kramer and Gardner (1977) use the phrase "informational advising" in referring to these basic duties and estimate that 80% of the advising in colleges and universities is at this level. Moreover they add that "information is to advising as knowledge of subject matter is to teaching" (Kramer and Gardner, 1977:26).

Sandeen's (1976) observation on many American universities was that lack of information to guide on the right course combination may be liable to destroy a students' intellectual

confidence. He further went on to state that, “what one sees today is the falling apart of general education and its replacement by a cafeteria system whereby any and every kind of course is admitted within the corpus, so long as a student take some or any courses outside his specialization” (Sandeen, 1976:5). The hopes of inter disciplinary integration, so high 20years ago, have not materialized at least on the general education level. Frequently, those who arrive at universities as enthusiastic and eager first-year students are “turned off” to the learning process and to the institution by the absence of academic advising information, a thoughtful stimulating curriculum, and sometimes by faculty whose priorities are elsewhere.

In Sandeen’s (1976) research on many campuses, especially large universities, the most frequently heard student complaint has to do with inadequate or unconcerned provision of academic advising information. He discovered that provision of academic advising information is often viewed as a low level activity by faculty members, and on large campuses it is virtually impossible for individual faculty to know all the requirements in each academic major. Furthermore, provision of academic advising information is usually not given much recognition in the evaluation process for faculty, and is viewed as a burden for them. It is also often viewed merely as a mechanical process, having to do with fulfilling the requirements and course combinations.

Lack of information on course combinations has led many students to drift from one major to another, often aimlessly, and without any overall direction or feedback from faculty. While it is not being argued that faculty should determine the academic majors for students or the particular course that their lives should follow, institutions should take a much more aggressive and positive role in providing academic advising information, especially to course combinations in a program. For if students do not receive such information, many consequences arise as Sandeen state that;

“If students do not have access to information on course combinations, they may not fulfill the requirements of the degree on time; they may graduate a semester late, miss good job opportunities, increase their own costs or incur the disapproval of faculty and parents”(Sandeen,1976:9)

He further observed that even older students (mature students) face a different set of challenges. They are in school at great personal cost, and at great cost to their families and

therefore they need adequate information on course combinations to complete their degrees on time. They also face barriers of financial aid, child care problems and job pressures.

Gordon (2000) has reported in his research in American universities that Academic advising information helps students schedule classes, plan their courses, and choose their majors, and once in a while referring them to appropriate services on campus if they had personal or academic difficulties. He further went on to explain that a quality shared advising effort leads to students' persistence to graduation, motivation to succeed in college , involvement in the institution, interaction with faculty, satisfaction with college, academic and career connection, personal academic access, academic achievement and cognitive development. It can therefore be stated that academic advising information must be student centered and responsive to students' needs, support student growth and development, and involve continuous contact between the faculty and the student.

Tinto (1993) also observed that academic advising information is most needed to freshman year because they are vulnerable when it comes to course combinations and good academic planning. "The freshman year is especially important to the process of persistence: students are more prone to choose wrong courses or even drop out of college during the first year and before the beginning of the second" (Tinto, 1993:37).

A study taken at Segar University in Midwestern City in United States of America (USA) by Sandeen in 1975 also proves that the provision of academic advising information at Segar was more important to the attainment of the desired student outcomes. Besides the time involved in getting an academic course of study approved, each student was provided with information and an academic advising committee which met with the student for eight (8) hours during the period of four years. Sandeen justifies this time and that especially freshmen should be provided with academic advising information on course combinations because they lack information about the experiences in an academic discipline before they choose it and hence many register for wrong courses or do not manage to complete the total required number of courses (Sandeen, 1976:122). It is also recognition on the part of the Segar faculty that the provision of academic advising information is an extremely important activity for undergraduates that can have a significant impact upon their choice of careers and professional aspirations.

Although Gordon (2000) states that one must marvel at the dynamic growth and diversity of advising programs that have taken place over the last two decades of the 20th century, yet then

provision of academic advising information will not arrive as a fully functional contributor to institutional well being or reach its full potential until decision makers and resource allocators recognize the importance of training, evaluation, and recognition and reward. The future status of academic advising information rests in these functions, as it has been observed by other scholars that the failure of management staff of the school to project future functions of the school has led to the downfall of their image by their students.

As it is stressed out by Platt (1972) that it is important to foresee which parts of the library services are likely to become more significant in the future, so is the same with schools. It is important to foresee which departments or programs are likely to become big in the future. It would appear to be a foregone conclusion that the bigger the department or more students in a programme (like BAED at UNZA), the larger the staff and greater will be the demands made upon the services and provision of information on right course combinations. There are many institutions where students lack information on the proper requirements of their degree programmes and the University of Zambia is no exception.

However, with many troubles in providing information to students on right and accurate degree requirements, McCauley (1996) took a research in the United States and discovered that there are easy ways of computerized systems to provide guidance on such. He identified one such system as the Degree Audit. Simply stated, an automated degree audit matches completed coursework with sets of degree-program requirements, tracking student academic progress from declaration of a major to completion of a degree. Degree audits provide a comfortable academic environment for students by clearly and concisely reporting progress toward graduation, proper course choices and minimum grade point average stipulations. McCauley and Southard clearly states that:

“Degree-audit systems assist with management of course offerings, improve the accuracy of some transcript information , especially with cross-listed courses and converted courses (for which the prefix or number has been changed) as well as course repetition policies. Degree-audits assess degree program progress by evaluating courses according to the number of courses completed, the number of credit hours completed, the minimum grade earned, the minimum grade point average achieved, and the best grades earned from a group of courses used to satisfy a requirement”

(McCauley and Southard, 1996:28).

They further add on that the system correctly identify cross-listed courses, repeated courses, repeatable courses, and converted courses and apply them appropriately to each requirement, without manual intervention by the advisor or a school official. The degree-audit is surely the easiest and fast way of providing academic advising information especially on course combinations to fulfill the requirements of a degree, but it is expensive to buy and implement such a system by most universities in developing countries.

It can however be concluded that the provision of academic advising information represents only a part of the overall developmental effort of an institution in providing degree programs. To be most effective, academic advising should be seen as an effort that is thoroughly coordinated with other units of the college or university to help students gain self-sufficiency and develop fully.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This was a case study of the school of Education at UNZA Great East road Campus. A sample of 60 students was drawn from the total population of fourth (4th) year BAED students in the School of Education. The sample size was 15% of the total population of the target group, which therefore suggests that the research results can be generalized. A simple random sampling method was used to draw the sample.

3.1 Data Collection

This was a qualitative case study intended to look at the dissemination of academic advising information by the School of Education to BAED students. Since the population is literate, a structured self-administered questionnaire was used to collect both primary and secondary data. The questionnaire was used because it was intended to encourage openness among respondents by maintaining confidentiality.

3.2 Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to qualitatively analyze the data. SPSS was used because it has the capability to generate the required, data sets, graphs, pie charts and tables, frequency and percentile distributions and correlations, etc depending on the researchers' requirement. For this study, the analysis was done according to the objectives and research questions. However, simple quantitative methods were used to explain certain quantitative information where it applied.

CHAPTER 4

4.0 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.

This chapter focuses on the presentation of findings of the research. 60 questionnaires were distributed to the sample and all questionnaires were answered. The findings are presented here under according to the questions and sequence in which they were asked.

There were 38 males which was equivalent to 63% whilst there were 22 females (37%) of the sample size. There were 41 respondents or 68% within the range of 20-25 years of age. In the age range of 26-30 years, there were 14 (23%) respondents of the sample size. Only 4 respondents or 7% fell in the age range of 31-35 whilst only 1 respondent or 2% was in the range of 36 years and above. There were 56 single respondents and 4 were married. This represents the percentages of 93% and 7% respectively.

Table 1 below shows the subject majors of each respondent. 38% of respondents major in History, 18% in English, 27% in Geography, 7% in Mathematics, 3% in French, 3% in Religious Studies, and 3% in others such as Linguistics and/or psychology.

Table 1

Subject Major

Subject	Statistics	
	Frequency	Percent
Valid History	23	38
English	11	18
Geography	16	27
Mathematics	4	7
French	2	3
Religious Studies	2	3
Linguistics and Languages, Psychology	2	3
Total	60	100

Out of all the respondents, 65% of respondents are doing the subject major which they wanted to do when they came to UNZA, whilst the remaining 35% of respondents are doing subject majors which they did not want to do.

Table 2 below gives the statistics on the number of academic years spent by each respondent pursuing BAED. It shows that 53 respondents have been doing BAED for 4 years whilst 7 respondents have been doing the programme for more than 4 years.

Table 2

Academic years pursuing BAED

Academic Years		Statistics	
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	4 years	53	88
	More than 4 years	7	12
Total		60	100

The 7 respondents or 12% did not complete the total number of courses to graduate that is why they have spent more than 4 years pursuing BAED.

Graph 3 below shows the information problems faced by the respondents. It presents that 78% of respondents face a problem of lack of advising information on course combination, 57% face a problem of lack of information on the number of courses to complete in a subject, 55% lack information on where to get advise on academic matters, 47% face a problem on lack of guidance information on what subject to major in.

Graph 3

Information problems faced by respondents

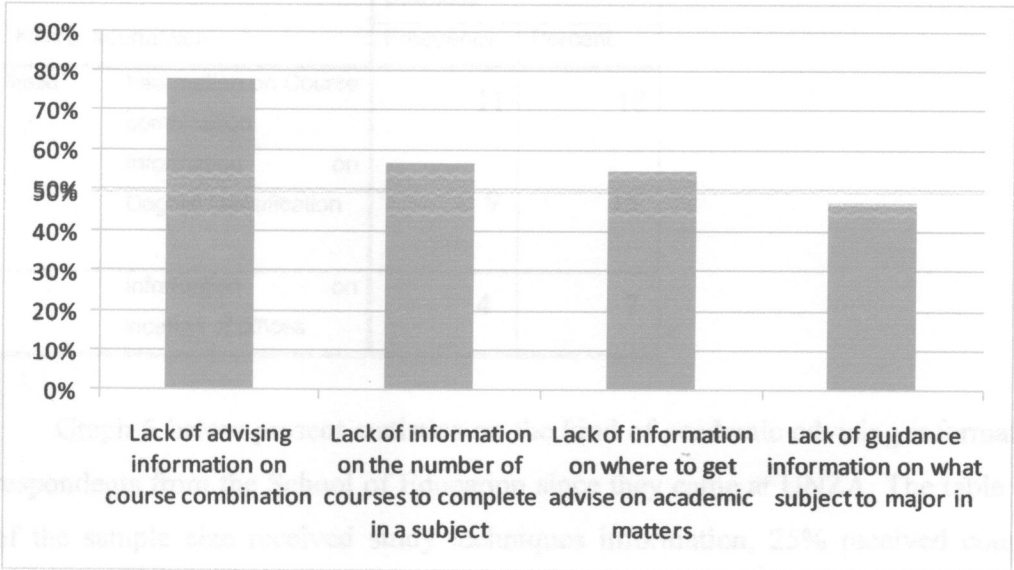


Table 4 below presents statistics on whether the School of Education has any existing information support. The table shows that 16 respondents or 27% of the sample size know that there is an information support in the School of Education whilst 44 respondent or 73% of the sample size do not know of any existing information support in the School of education.

Table 4

Do you know any existing information support in the School of Education?

Existing information support?	Statistics	
	Frequency	Percent
Valid Yes	16	27
No	44	73
Total	60	100

Table 5 below present statistics for the kind of information the information support provides. The table shows that out of the 16 respondents who agreed that there exist information support in the School of education, 18% of respondents responded that the support provides information on course combination. 15% of respondents responded that the support provides information on degree classification, and only 7% of the respondents responded that the support provides information on location of offices.

Table 5

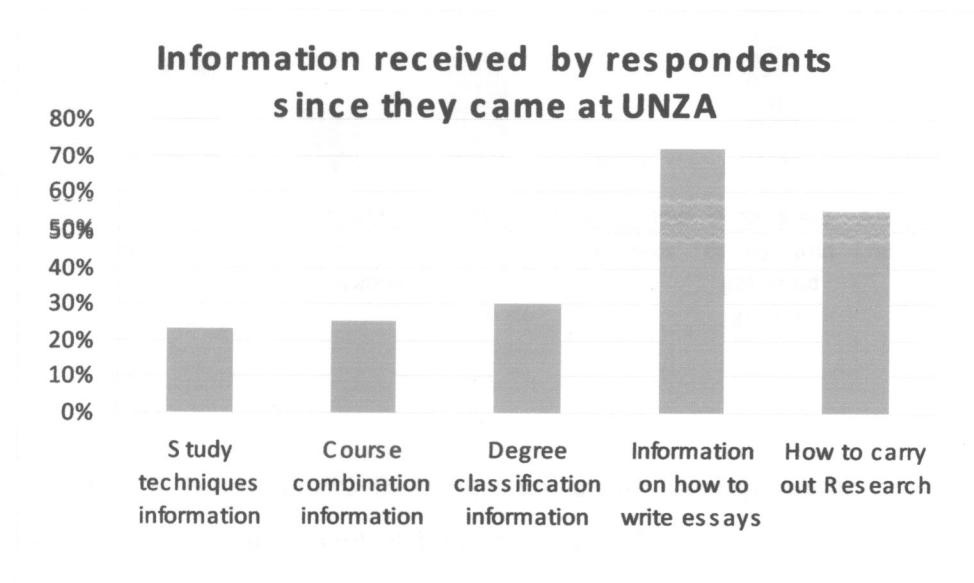
Kind of Information provided by the information support

Kind of information	Statistics	
	Frequency	Percent
Valid Information on Course combination	11	18
Information on Degree classification	9	15
Information on location of offices	4	7

Graph 6 below present statistics on the kind of academic advising information received by respondents from the School of Education since they came at UNZA. The table shows that 23% of the sample size received study techniques information, 25% received course combination

information, 30% of respondents received degree classification information, the majority of 72% received information on how to write essays and 55% of the respondents received information on how to carry out research.

Graph 6



Graph 7 below present statistics on how the information received has contributed to respondents' education at UNZA. The table shows that 37% of respondents have received information which has helped them understand what they learn. 20% of respondents received information which helped them to know exactly course combinations, 40% of respondents received information which helped them to know the number of courses they have to do whilst only 7% of respondents received information which helped them not to have overloads. The majority of 65% received information which helped them write good essays and get good grades and only 12% of respondents received information to help them carry out research.

Graph 7

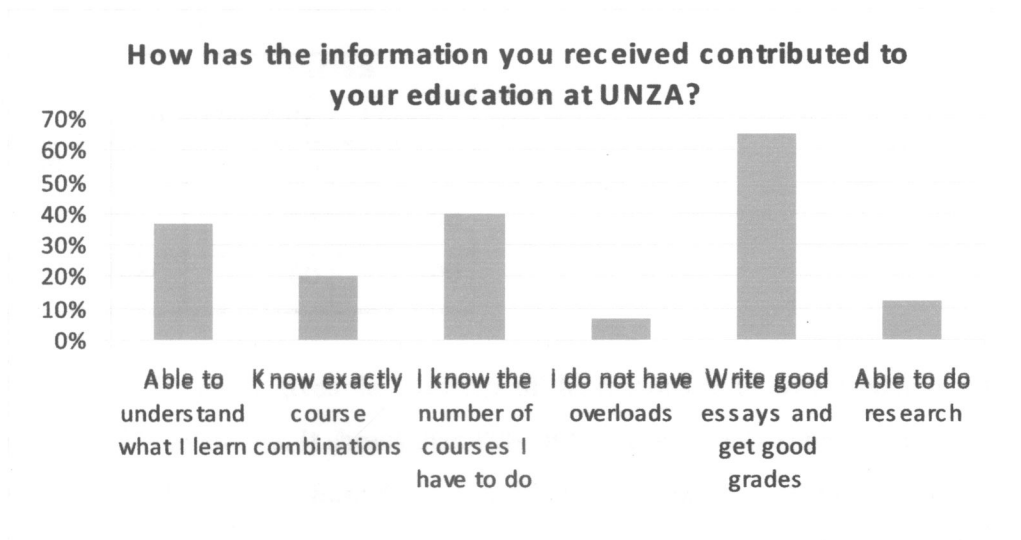


Table 8 below shows the frequency at which respondents receive academic advising information from the School of Education. It is shown that 10% of the respondents responded that they received academic advising information once per month. 35% respondents said they received information once per semester whilst the majority of 55% responded that they never received any academic advising information from the School of Education.

Table 8

How often do you receive academic advising information?

		Statistics	
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Once per month	6	10
	Once per semester	21	35
	None	33	55
Total		60	100

Table 9 below shows the availability of academic advising information whenever the students want to use it. The statistics are that only 10% of respondents agreed that information is readily available whilst the majority of 90% of respondents disagreed noting that academic advising information is not readily available whenever they want to use it.

Table 9

Availability of information

		Statistics	
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	6	10
	No	54	90
Total		60	100

Graph 10 below gives the statistics of the reasons as to why academic advising information is not readily available. It shows that 43% of the respondents support the reason that there is lack of academic advising information. 5% of the respondents feel that the information is not in a desired format. 37% of respondents responded to the reason that there are too many barriers to access information and 12% of the respondents feel that information is not readily available because of lack of departmental libraries.

Graph 10

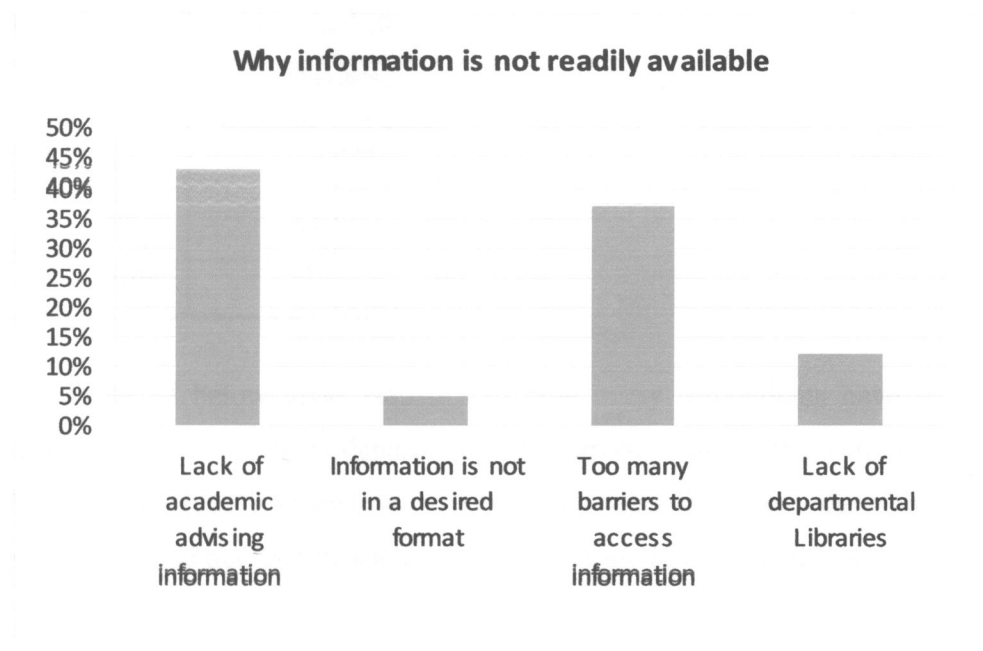


Table 11 below presents statistics if students easily access academic advising information from the school of education. It shows that 12% of respondents agreed that they easily access academic advising information from the School of Education. The majority of 88% of

respondents disagreed meaning that they do not easily access academic advising information from the School of Education.

Table 11

Do you easily access academic advising information from the School of Education?

		Statistics	
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	7	12
	No	53	88
Total		60	100

Table 12 below shows figures on whether students are satisfied with the academic advising information from the School. Only 10% of the respondents are satisfied with the academic advising information they received from the School of Education, whilst the majority of 90% of respondents are not satisfied with the academic advising information they receive.

Table 12

Are you satisfied with the information you receive?

		Statistics	
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	6	10
	No	54	90
Total		60	100

Table 13 below gives statistics of how many respondents have received information on course combinations from departmental Lecturers. It shows that 60% of the respondents agreed that they received information on course combinations from departmental lecturers. 40% of respondents did not receive such information from departmental lecturers.

Table 13

Course combinations information from Departmental Lecturers

		Statistics	
		Frequency	Percent

Valid	Yes	36	60
	No	24	40
Total		60	100

Graph 14 below presents the reasons as to why some respondents did not receive information on course combinations from departmental lecturers. 7% of respondents support the reason that Lecturers are too rigid to give information. 13% of respondents responded that Lecturers are very busy with their own interests. 12% of respondents did not approach any Lecturer, whilst 8% of the respondents came up with other reasons such as Lecturers only promote their courses and some Lecturers do not know new course combinations.

Graph 14

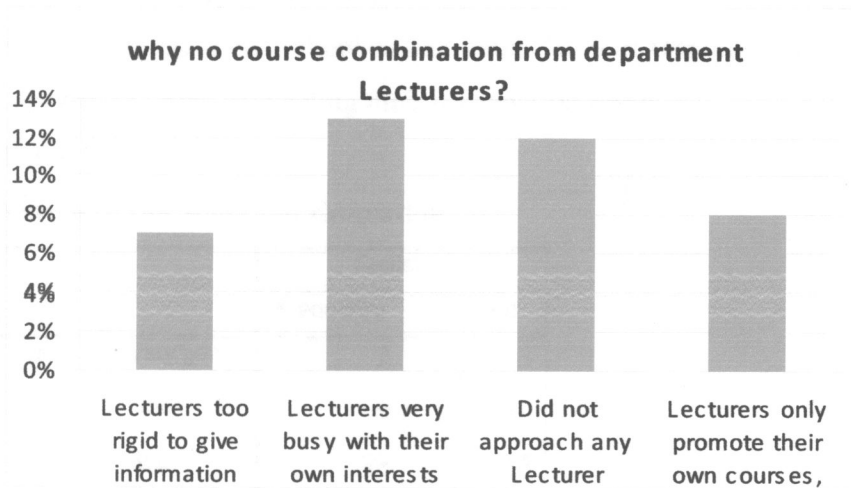


Table 15 below shows that 18% of respondents strongly Agree to the statement that Lecturers are not helpful in providing information on course combination. 38% of respondents agree to the statement. 32% of respondents disagree to the statement whilst only 12% of respondents strongly disagree to the statement that Lecturers are not helpful in providing information on course combination.

Table 15**Lecturers are not helpful in providing information on course combination**

		Statistics	
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	11	18
	Agree	23	38
	Disagree	19	32
	Strongly Disagree	7	12
Total		60	100

Table 16 below present statistics on the rating of the School of Education in terms of meeting information needs of respondents. The table shows that only 3% of respondents rated the School as very good. 15% of respondents rated the School as good. The majority of 55% of respondents rated the School as bad whilst 27% of respondents rated the School of Education as very bad in terms of meeting their information needs.

Table 16**Rating of the School of Education**

		Statistics	
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Very good	2	3
	Good	9	15
	Bad	33	55
	Very Bad	16	27
Total		60	100

CHAPTER 5

5.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter gives an in depth discussion of findings that were obtained from the research and where necessary reference will be made to other literature dealing with a similar subject and with similar findings and also where necessary personal observations from the research will be given. The findings will be discussed in the sequence in which the questions were asked with the sole purpose of only answering the objectives of this research.

General Background information of Respondents

The research revealed that there were more males than females meaning that there are more male students doing BAED than females. The age range of most students is 20-25 years which is about 68%. Most of the students in the programme are not married of which it is about 93%. It is also discovered that many students major in History followed by Geography and then English. The findings also show that many students are not doing the Subject major which they wanted to do when they came at the University. This can be as a result of lack of information to students on courses being offered. As Habley and Morales (1998:36) found out that in many universities in the United States of America, most students pursue degree programmes which they did not want to do, even taking course combinations which they did not want. This was all attributed to the fact that there was lack of advising information on course combinations and also lack of coordination of advising from different departments.

It was also found out that 12 % of the students have been doing BAED for more than 4 academic years. These who have been doing the programme for more than four years cited that the reason was that they did not complete the total number of courses to graduate. This gives an indication that these did not receive academic advising information on the right course combination of the total number of courses to be done in the programme. A similar research was conducted by Sandeen in 1975 on the effects of lack of advising information to students leading to prolonged period of doing the programme. He found out that when students do not have access to information on course combinations, they may not fulfill the requirements of the degree on time; they may graduate a semester late, miss good job opportunities and also increase their costs (Sandeen, 1976:9). These are some of the effects felt by the 12% in this research at the University of Zambia. To some more extent it was found out that out of the 12% who have been

doing the programme for more than 4years, most of them are older students (mature students) and for them to stay long in the programme brings so much disappointment in the sense that these mature students are in school at great personal cost with barriers of financial aid, they are at school at great cost to their families and also face child care problems and job pressures and therefore they need adequate information on course combinations to complete their degrees on time.

Information needs of BAED students

The research also showed that students faced a number of information problems. Most of the students of about 78% face a problem of lack of advising information on course combination. This clearly indicates that there exists a problem in the School of Education in the dissemination of academic advising on course combination. Interconnected to the same problem, it was also discovered that most of the students face a problem of lack of information on the number of courses to complete in a subject major. This surely indicates that students have these information needs which are not met by the School of Education. For instance it was also discovered that 55% of the students face a problem on the lack of information on where to get advice on academic matters. This is evident enough that the School of Education is not effective in providing information to students on academic matters especially on course combinations. 47% of the students also stated that they faced problem of lack of guidance information on what subject to major in.

The above found needs of BAED students are quite similar to the findings of a research conducted on many American Universities by Sandeen (1976) where he found out that the most frequently heard student complaint had to do with inadequate or unconcerned provision of academic advising information. Such problems of lack of information on course combinations is what mostly leads many students to drift from one major to another, often aimlessly, and without any overall direction or feedback from faculty. Just as Gordon (2000) observed that with the current practices in provision of academic advising information, there are many challenges and information does not reach the students hence the manifested information needs of BAED students. It was therefore put across by Gordon that in order to meet these information needs of students, there is need to put up a quality academic advising program with the articulation of the program's basic purpose, function and components in a company policy (Gordon, 2000: 35)

Other problems discovered in the research are that students face a problem where there is outdated course information, lack of organization in offering courses and also lack of coordination between School of Humanities and Social Sciences and School of Education in offering courses. These information problems faced by BAED student is a clear indication that there is a problem with the School of Education in disseminating academic advising information. If the School was effective enough in disseminating academic advising information, all the above problems would not have been manifested in the research.

Information Support and its contributions to BAED students

When asked if Students know of any existing information support in the School of Education, only 27% of the students agreed that there is an information support but the majority of 73% indicated that they do not know of any existing information support in the School. This result explains that since the majority does not know any existing information support, it can be doubtful to commend the minority that there exists an information support. It can therefore be proven or articulated that there does not exist any information support in the School of Education. This gives a similar result to a research conducted by Gordon (2000: 38) in America where it was found out that out of 820 institutions surveyed; only 25% indicated that an advising office was in place on their campus. Just as Habley and Morales (1998) also came to conclude on their research on universities in 1997 that Offices or advising centers where students can find information on course combinations and requirements of degree programs are most obvious.

The research also proved that the majority of students have never received academic advising information on right course combination. This can be analyzed that the School of Education has not done enough in providing information on course combinations to BAED students. It has put concern on giving information to students on how to write essays and how to do research, and on second thought this is only through the efforts of lecturers to do so. There is no clear programme by the School to provide academic advising information.

Considering the above fact, it was also discovered that due to lack of information on course combination and degree classification information, the majority of 93% of students have overloads so as to cover up for the courses they did not do earlier. It is only a few students who know exactly course combinations and only 24% of students know the number of courses they have to do. All this is almost similar to a research conducted by Sandeen in 1975 where he found

out that most eager students are “turned off” to the learning process and to the institution by the absence of academic advising information, and so many overloads given at a later year of study to cover up for the courses they did not take earlier, of course due to lack of direction and advice. In this research it therefore indicates that the School of Education has not done enough in providing course combination information to BAED students hence most students having overloads.

The effectiveness of the School of Education in terms of dissemination of information to BAED students. (*Frequency at which information is provided, Availability and Accessibility of information, and Satisfaction of students from received information*)

When asked on how often the students received academic advising information, it was discovered that the majority of the students noted that they never received academic advising information. This is against the answer of the minority who said they received academic advising information once per semester whilst only 10% received academic advising information once per month. This clearly shows the School of education rarely or never disseminates academic advising information to BAED students. If the stance of the minority can be taken into consideration, it can however still be argued that providing academic advising information once per semester is not often enough to equip and enlighten the students on course combinations. It is only through frequent provision of academic advising information that students can be equipped with the knowledge on their programme requirements such as course combinations and number of courses to take in order to graduate on time.

The research also revealed that 90% of students noted that academic advising information is not readily available whenever the students wanted to use it. They cited reasons to this that there is lack of academic advising information and also there are too many barriers to access information. Only a few students however said that information is not readily available because of lack of departmental libraries and also that information is not in a desired format. The fact that the majority of students said that academic advising information is not readily available therefore reduces the efficiency and effectiveness of the School of education in disseminating academic advising information to BAED students on course combinations. This can be explained that the school is not efficient in providing academic advising information on course combination to BAED students. Career decisions are best made when there is availability of academic advising

information and therefore unavailability of such information leads to destruction of student's intellectual confidence and poor career choices.

The findings that the majority of the students do not easily access academic advising information and that about 90% of the students are not satisfied with the academic advising information they receive in the School of Education manifest that there is a hindrance somewhere in the way the School provides information to students. It also shows that the information provided is not adequate and inaccurate hence the recipients are not satisfied with the information received. It is only when academic advising information is easily accessible that students get to appreciate and enjoy their education. It can also be pointed out from a similar research on academic advising at Segar University in USA where Sandeen (1976) found out that only when academic advising information is easily accessed by students that it can have a significant impact upon their choice of careers and professional aspirations.

Attitudes of Departmental Lecturers in providing information on course combinations to BAED students.

The majority students responded that they received academic advising information from departmental lecturers and only a few did not receive such information. This seems good with the support of the development theory by Thomas and Chikering (1984) that students' needs change significantly over time from information-dominant forms to consultation-dominant forms and thus it is important that accurate information is provided by Lecturers. This shows that departmental lecturers help the school in disseminating academic advising information but it can be argued that in as much as they try to give this information, it was discovered that some of the lecturers do not know recent course combinations they are still with old course combinations. It can also be brought out here that some of the Lecturers are said to be too rigid to provide information on course combinations whilst some are too busy with their own interests. It was however agreed by most of the respondents that Lecturers are not helpful in providing academic advising information. In as much as some lecturers try to give academic advising information on course combination to students, the information provided does not meet the expectations of students hence they as lecturers are deemed to be unhelpful by the majority of the students.

It must be understood from Sandeen's research on many American Universities that what causes most Departmental lecturers not to be helpful in provision of academic advising

information is because the exercise is often viewed as a low level activity by faculty members, and on large campuses it is impossible for individual faculty to know all the requirements in each academic major (Sandeem, 1976: 26). This can be viewed to be true at the University of Zambia, but however it can also be true that provision of academic advising information is usually not given much recognition in the evaluation process for faculty. It is therefore necessary for Departmental Lecturers not to view the provision of academic advising information to students as a mechanical process, but to embrace it and accept that it is the responsibility of entire teaching staff.

Students' perception about the School of Education in terms of meeting their information needs on course combination

The findings show that only a minority of about 18% of students are in favour of the School in meeting their information needs whilst the majority of students rated the School as bad and very bad in meeting their information needs. It is therefore seen in the research conducted that the School of Education is not effective in disseminating academic advising information to BAED students on right course combination. The ratings of the students is a clear indication that they are not satisfied with the information which is provided by the School and therefore it becomes a problem for the students to appreciate the institution, their programme of study and to a later extent they are less confident with their careers and also causing room for germination of a seed of doubt towards the administration and teaching staff.

The findings of the research and the discussion clearly shows that there exists a problem in the School of Education and this problem can be solved or minimized if the authorities can take a step forward to improve on the ways of disseminating information to students. To help the authorities come up with programmes or ways of improving the effectiveness of the school in disseminating information, some weaknesses have been found in the school and therefore this research has come up with recommendations here under.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

- The School should document academic advising information on course combinations, course offerings, pre-requisites, major requirements, and drop and add procedures and provide documented information to all admitted students in their first year. This will help to answer the finding where it was seen that information is not in desired format and academic talks are not documented. It is also necessary to provide documented information to first years because they lack information about the experiences in an academic discipline before they choose it and hence many register for wrong courses.
- The School needs to ensure that students are guided on their academic journey from the time they are admitted up to the time they graduate by giving them academic tutors to help them on course combinations. This is important because it was found that some students could not get course combination information from departmental lecturers because either they did not know who to approach or some Lecturers were busy with their own interests. But when academic tutors are assigned to students, it will be a mandate for Lecturers to provide academic advising information to their students and also students will know the specific Lecturer to approach for advice.
- Course combination information should be given to students during registration every semester by respective departmental Lecturers so that students know and understand why they are registering for that course and also to let students know whether it is necessary to register for such a course. This would serve as a reminder and guide in the students' programme of study.
- The School should establish an information support library with materials and personnel to help enlighten students on course offerings in departments. Since it was found that the School does not have an information support to deliver and disseminate academic advising information, it is therefore necessary to establish one so as to effectively meet students' information needs.
- Orientation should be conducted seriously with an appointed academic advising committee to first year students on course combinations so that students effectively consider their capabilities and incapability. This should be done upon their arrival and first registration to the University. This should be so because it has been found in the research that most students in their 4th year of study have overloads especially of first

and` second year courses which they did not do earlier. So these overloads at 4th year can be minimized if students are well oriented on course combinations in their first year.

- The school should introduce a policy where each department should have departmental careers masters who will be able to give course combination information to students who want to register for courses in the department. This can minimize on the unclear circumstances where students did not know which Lecturer to approach on course combinations in a department.
- The School should publish handbooks on new course combinations and give them to Lecturers so that they are enlightened on new combinations not only in their departments but also in other departments. This should be so because it was discovered that some Lecturers do not new course combinations and others do not know combinations in other departments. The handbooks on course combinations should also be given to students, or put in the Library so that students can access them if they cannot find a lecturer to help them on course combination information.
- There is need to establish departmental libraries staffed by professionals trained in educational advising programme to help students with information on programme requirements.

5.2 CONCLUSION

It can be noted that a problem might not be viewed to be a problem until it has been investigated. This is the case of the School of Education at the University of Zambia where things were seen to be fine with BAED students when in actual fact there exist a problem of the ineffectiveness of the School in disseminating academic advising information on course combination. The School needs to change the ways of information dissemination to the benefit of the students and this can mainly be accomplished if the school can adopt some of the stated recommendations in this research. It is only when the school starts to effectively disseminate academic advising information that students will be helped to schedule their classes, plan their courses, and choose their majors. It is only through quality academic advising information that leads to students' persistence to graduation, motivation to succeed in universities, involvement in the institution, satisfaction with college, academic and career connection, academic achievement and cognitive development.

Appendix 1

Serial No.....

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES

Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

I am a 4th year student studying Library and Information studies currently conducting a Research in Development Information Systems and Services.

The purpose of this Research is to evaluate the effectiveness of School of Education in disseminating academic advising information to BAED students on right course combination.

You have been randomly selected to complete this questionnaire. Please be rest assured that the information which you will provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

In each of the following, tick the most appropriate response.

E.G, Are you in the School of Education? Yes No

OFFICIAL USE

Q1. What is your sex?

1. Male

2. Female

Q2. What was your age as at last birth day?

1. 20-25

2. 26-30

3. 31-35

4. 36 and above

Q3. Marital Status.

1. Single

2. Married

3. Divorced

4. Widowed

Q4. What is your Subject Major?

1. History

2. English

3. Geography

4. Mathematics

5. French

6. Religious Studies

7. Others (specify).....

Q5. Are you doing the subject major which you wanted to do when you came?

1. Yes

2. No

Q6. For how long have you been doing BAED?

1. 4 years

2. More than 4 years

Q7. If your answer to Q6 is more than 4 years, why?

1. Failed

2. Did not complete total number of courses to graduate

3. Others (specify).....

SECTION B: INFORMATION NEEDS.

Q8. What information problems do you face? (*you can even tick more than one*)

1. Lack of advising information on course combination

2. Lack of information on the number of courses to complete in a subject

3. Lack of information on where to get advise on academic matters

4. Lack of guidance information on what subject to Major in

5. Others (specify).....

.....

SECTION C: INFORMATION DELIVERLY.

Q9. Do you know any existing information support in the school of education?

1. Yes

2. No

(From Q10 to Q12 you can even tick more than one answer)

Q10. If your answer to Q10 is Yes, What kind of information does it provide?

1. Information on course combination

2. Information on degree classification

3. Information on location of offices

4. Others (specify).....

Q11. What kind of information of academic advising have you received since you came at UNZA?

1. Study techniques information

2. Course combination information

3. Degree classification information

4. Information on how to write essays

5. How to carry out Research

Q12. How has the information you received contributed to your education at UNZA?

1. Able to understand what I learn

2. Know exactly course combinations

3. I know the number of courses I have to do

4. I do not have overloads

5. Write good essays and get good grades

6. Others (specify).....

Q13. How often do you receive academic advising information?

1. Once per week

2. Once per month

3. Once per semester

4. None

Q14. Is academic advising information readily available whenever you want to use it?

1. Yes

2. No

Q15. If your answer to Q14 is No, Why?

1. Lack of academic advising information

2. Information is not in a desired format

3. Too many barriers to access information

4. Lack of departmental Libraries

Q16. Do you easily access academic advising information from School of Education?

1. Yes

2. No

Q17. Are you satisfied with the academic advising information you receive in the School of education?

1. Yes

2. No

Q18. Have you received any information on course combinations from Departmental Lecturers?

1. Yes

2. No

Q19. If your answer to Q17 is No, Why?

1. Lecturers too rigid to give information

2. Lecturers very busy with their own interests

3. Did not approach any Lecturer

4. Others (specify).....
.....

Q20. Departmental Lecturers are not helpful in providing information on course Combination.

1. Strongly Agree

2. Agree

3. Disagree

4. Strongly Disagree

Q21. How do you rate the School of Education in terms of meeting your information Needs on course combinations?

1. Very Good

2. Good

3. Bad

4. Very Bad

Thank you for your time and for being part of this Research.

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