IMPLICATIONS OF ABOLITION OF THE GRADE 9 CUT-OFF POINTS IN RURAL HIGH SCHOOLS: THE CASE OF MWANDI HIGH SCHOOL IN SESHEKE DISTRICT OF THE WESTERN PROVINCE OF ZAMBIA

BY

MUMBUNA R. KANCHELE

A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Zambia in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Master of Education in Education Administration

2013

DECLARATION

I, **Riemes Mumbuna Kanchele**, do declare that this dissertation is my own work and that it has never been submitted by anyone at this University or at any other University.

Signature…………………………………………………….

Date……………………………………………………….

COPYRIGHT

APPROVAL

This dissertation by **Riemes Mumbuna Kanchele** is approved as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Education Administration of the University of Zambia.

Signed…………………………………………..Date……………………

Signed……………………………………….Date……………………..

Signed……………………………………….Date…........................

DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this work to my wife Veronicah Chawah, daughters Bridget Namweemba and Cecilia, sister Mweembe, nephew Zebron and brother Paul.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate teachers' and pupils' perceived implications of the abolition of Grade 9 cut-off points at Mwandi High School in Sesheke District of the Western Province of Zambia. A case study approach was used in conducting this research. Data was collected through questionnaires, one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions. The sample comprised of 90 pupils, 8 class teachers, one head teacher, one deputy head teacher and one head of department.

Although the study mainly used the qualitative method in the collection of data, quantitative method was also used to complement the qualitative method. The study revealed that no consideration was given to the negative impact that the policy would have on the quality of education. The findings of the study showed that there was a critical shortage of qualified teachers at Mwandi High School and disproportionate teacher- pupil ratios. There was also overcrowding in the classrooms at Mwandi High School and this had a myriad of implications on quality.

Arising from the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made: The Ministry of Education should ensure that the number of teachers they recruit per year match with the increase in pupil enrolments; and the government should provide appropriate and sufficient infrastructure at Mwandi High School. Efforts to rehabilitate existing infrastructure in the school must be doubled so as to improve the quality of education, provide adequate teaching and learning materials.

ACRONYMS

MoE	Ministry of Education
UN	United Nations
DEBS	District Education Board Secretary
MMD	Movement for Multiparty Democracy
UNIP	United National Independence Party
SADC	Southern Africa Development Conference
AU	African Union
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Education is an organized and sustained communication aimed to bring about learning. It has three interrelated components and these are formal, non-formal and informal (UNESCO, 1991). Forojalla (1993) asserts that education plays a central role in the social economic development of human beings. It provides opportunities for growth and poverty reduction, employment, productivity and human development. It is a means of promoting or improving the well-being of an individual's quality of life and one's society at large. D'Souza (1969) describes education as a productive investment and a centre of knowledge which provides basic skills that are important in shaping the organisation and productivity of a country's economy.

Ezewu (1983:33) says education serves society in various ways. It prepares an individual's mind in that he or she may be internally consistent and harmonious with oneself, thus developing the right type of personality for living in society and that it equips the individual with knowledge, skills and values of the past that are cherished and valued by a given society. Ezewu (1983) adds that education helps an individual function properly in his or her society as well as equipping the individual with knowledge which helps to bring about useful changes in the society an individual lives.

From the above, it may be argued that education assists in preparing an individual to live a productive life in a society. Education also liberates one's mind in order to become a critical thinker and it makes people understand others, their values, traditions and background.

1

Above all, it helps to inculcate knowledge and skills so that one can lead a mature and fulfilled life.

Countries throughout the world value education and all governments see improving educational access and quality as essential to national economic and political development. Zambia being a member of the global world has made a lot of reforms in education in order to meet educational needs. At independence, Zambia inherited the British system of education which was examination oriented. A lot of pupils get enrolled at the initial stage of their education but only a few reach the end because of examinations that have to be passed. The system is pyramidal in that a lot of pupils are enrolled at lower levels of education but as they progress, many drop out on the way before completing their education mainly because of failing examinations. Examinations essentially work as a tool to determine numbers of pupils to progress to next grades based on school places available that particular year (Kelly, 1999). This system has never favoured Zambia, a country which needs a lot of educated quality human resource to develop it.

The United National Independence Party (UNIP), under Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, vigorously initiated various educational reforms aimed at increasing access to education by building a lot of schools in all parts of the country. A number of teacher training colleges were also built in conjunction with some Christian missionaries to provide the needed human resource in education (Mwanakatwe, 1968). To improve quality of education in secondary schools, the UNIP government further built the University of Zambia in 1966 and opened the School of Education to train secondary school teachers in the country who were at that time desperately needed (Kelly, 1999).

Despite the various efforts that Kaunda government had made, access and quality education did not improve as envisioned. There were a lot of economic problems which contributed to the government's failure to deliver adequate and quality education. In the 1980s, for example, the Zambian economy became dysfunctional. This situation negatively affected the education system in Zambia, among other sectors. Education standards declined, against the background of growth in terms of enrolments in primary and junior secondary schools. The government could not manage to provide the educational inputs and infrastructure in the education sector to match the rapid growth of the country's population. Examinations, however, still remained a criterion used to select pupils to move from one lower level to higher levels of education (Kelly, 1999).

In 1991, the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) under the leadership of Mr Frederick Chiluba took over power from Kaunda. It is important to point out that the new government inherited a most significant of all the international educational conferences' resolution to date, namely, "Education for all' (EFA) goals which arose from the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All of March, 1990. After realizing that on its own the new government could not manage to run the education system and in order to move with the dictates of liberalization of the economy and to drive the education sector towards the EFA goals, the MMD government designed a philosophical rationale in connection with the provision of education. The rationale involved sharing with partners in the provision of education principles of quality, equity and parity in education.

To champion this call, in 1992 the MMD government approved a new education policy, called 'Focus on Learning' whose aim according to MoE (2007:19-20) was:

> Improving access, equity, efficiency and quality of education through rehabilitating school infrastructure, construction of new schools, training of education managers and procurement and supply of education materials to schools.

The overarching goal was constructed around the EFA goals to be achieved by 2000. The EFA goals are early childhood care, provision of free and compulsory primary education for all and promoting life skills for young and adults. Others include increasing adult literacy by 50%, adhering to gender parity and improving quality of education.

In 1996, the MMD government launched 'Educating Our Future' education reforms policy document. This policy document aimed at decentralizing the education system and allowing all those capable of providing acceptable type of education to come on board. This saw a lot of private schools being opened in Zambia. Focus was to improve access and quality in high schools so that appropriate skills, knowledge, attitudes and values were imparted into the learners. The strategic focus was to expand access to high schools, as earlier stated. It was also based on democratic principles that would suit needs of a liberal country like Zambia. This indeed helped increase the number of places in schools (MoE, 1996).

At Grade 9, (MoE) used two different cut-off points for boys and girls in order to progress to grade 10. Usually the cut-off points for girls were lower than those for boys. This system saw a lot of learners thrown into the streets at their early levels of education.

In 2008, the MMD government saw the need to further improve access to high school education in the country (MoE, 2000). This, according to the MMD government would help in the development of the country because there was going to be a lot of people spread all over the country with high school education needed for various forms of development.

Furthermore, in the quest to achieve the requirements of some of the educational needs of Vision 2030 which among its targets is to make Zambia achieve middle income status by investing in people through education and training ,to ensure job creation, socio-economic transformation by 2030 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for 2015 (G.R.Z.2006), the Zambian government decided to do away with the Grade 9 examination cut-off points system as a way of allowing more pupils access high school education in 2008. This meant that any pupil who managed to get a full certificate at Grade 9 level, despite the grades and marks he or she got, was allowed to proceed to Grade 10. This system, therefore, enabled a lot of pupils to enter grade 10. The MMD government, however, did not put in place measures to implement this new policy such as provision of adequate infrastructure, employing more teachers, increasing funding to enable schools acquire the needed learning and teaching materials, among other requirements cardinal to sustaining quality education.

1.2   Statement of the problem

In 2008, the Zambian government decided to do away with the Grade 9 cut-off points system which was used to select pupils to go to Grade10 in order to improve access. This decision however, like any other decision, had unknown implications. It was because of the need to establish the implications of this decision that this study was carried out.

1.3   Purpose of the study

The study aimed at investigating implications of the abolition of the Grade 9 cut-off points system at Mwandi High School in Sesheke District of the Western Province of Zambia.

1.4   Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were:

1. To asses teachers' and pupils' views on the abolition of the Grade 9 cut-off points system at Mwandi High School in Sesheke District.

2. To establish the teachers and pupils views on the role of examinations in the in light of abolition of the Grade 9 cut-off points system.

3. To investigate the effects of the policy on the discipline of pupils at Mwandi High School.

4. To establish measures taken by the school to improve the academic performance of pupils at Mwandi High School in the wake of the abolition of the Grade 9 cut-off points system.

1.5   Research questions

The research questions were:

1. What are teachers' and pupils' perceptions about the abolition of the Grade 9 cut-off points on the quality of education at Mwandi High School?

2. What are teachers' and pupils' perceptions about the role of examinations in the provision of quality education at Mwandi High School?

3. What are the effects of the policy of no cut-off points on the discipline of pupils at Mwandi High School?

4. What measures has the school put in place to maintain or improve the academic performance of pupils at Mwandi High School as a result of the policy?

1.6 Significance of the study

The findings of this study may provide stakeholders in the education sector with information on how teachers and pupils perceive the policy of abolition of the grade 9 cut-off points system and how it has affected the education system so far. The findings of the study will avail the MoE with information about the effects or impact of the policy on the standards of education at Mwandi High School. The results of the study might also help the MoE to make informed decisions about the policy.

1.7 Delimitation

The study was conducted at Mwandi High School in Sesheke District of the Western Province of Zambia.

1.8 Limitation of the study

The study was a case study and the findings could not be generalised to the rest of the rural high schools in the country.

1.9 Operational definitions

Access: The ability to have equal opportunity in this case, education.

Policy: A statement about practice.

Quality: Worthiness of something.

Test: A collection of items developed to measure human, educational attributes.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Overview

This chapter focuses on the literature about the policy of the MoE on examinations, perceptions about examinations, value of examinations and what access to education and quality of education are. The review of literature includes literature on types of examinations and assessments, importance of curricular reforms, teacher and education reform and school infrastructure. The rest of the literature discussed is on school and classroom issues, educational partnerships and high school education.

2.2   Policy of Ministry of Education (MoE) on examinations

The Ministry of Education aims at providing a comprehensive programme that involves pupils' assessment based on pupils themselves and that feedbacks in the assessments should be an integral part of the teaching and learning process in the Zambian school system. The Examination Council of Zambia (ECZ) in conjunction with the MoE will be responsible for coming up with ways of determining how school-based assessment can be carried out appropriately so as to become part of the final grading for the terminal certificate (MoE, 1996).

From the above statement, the MoE policy on examinations is two sided. One side requires that during the teaching and learning process, pupils are supposed to be assessed in order to identify their weaknesses and strengths. This helps the teacher to identify areas of weaknesses and strengths in his or her own teaching so as to improve the process of teaching

and learning and duly advise relevant authorities in the profession such as the curriculum developers. The other side requires that pupils are examined at the end of the whole course, unit or grade. This type of assessment demands that all the topics in the subjects be taught because assessment questions come from the whole syllabus of each subject.

Some assessments, especially terminal ones if not properly implemented can encourage poor teaching whereby some teachers resort to drilling pupils in answering questions in order for them to pass. Pupils who cannot work unaided may end up cheating during examinations. Summative assessments, however, promote competition among pupils for better marks and competition is beneficial in raising standards of education

2.3   Perceptions about examinations

People have different perceptions of examinations. Some look at examinations as one of the ways of reducing large numbers in the education system to the desired figures or a means of sorting out individuals to their future roles. Others look at examinations as a normal procedure which has to take place in schools. Woods (1961) views examinations as a process of social placement which helps to arrange learners according to skill groups in order to assist them to be marched with their abilities in relation to their career choices or progression.

Adewale (2004) points out that some learners attach examinations with points. They believe that it is through examinations that they can prove to their teachers what they have learnt in their courses. Examinations are also seen to provide knowledge and understanding of the course that may not be available through other forms of assessment. They are also perceived to have the capacity of inculcating into learners the ability to recall and apply theory. On the

other hand some people have different views about the value of examinations in education. Examinations are seen by some people to make learners not to fully comprehend what they are taught for their future use but merely to memorise what has been learnt in order to pass the examinations (Adewale, 2004). Furthermore, some see examinations as a recipe for a lot of cheating during examinations. Cheating in examinations end up making people be in wrong places and fail to perform their tasks effectively. Chare (1972) sees examinations not really helpful in education because they affect learners negatively in that at times they tend to eliminate some candidates from the system who can do better even without examinations.

2.4 Types of examinations

Examinations in education are tools that are used to assess learners in the teaching and learning process. There are various types of examinations in education. Some of the types of examinations that are used are end of term, end of year and final examinations (Munene and Ogula, 1970).

2.4.1 End of term examinations

End of term examinations include written test papers and practicals. These help in providing periodical chances for self-appraisal, improvement and comparisons with both one's classmates and pupils in class other than his or her own. End of term examinations also assist school administrators to record pupils' progress, keep track of teachers' performances in their respective areas (Groundlund, 1981; Ogunniyi 1984).

2.4.2 End of year examinations

Munene and Ogula (1970) state that end of year examinations can be composed of both written tests and practicals. These examinations usually serve the school's administrative

functions. They help administrators to evaluate the general performance of their members of staff through pupils' results and then plan accordingly.

2.4.3 Final examinations

Final examinations can come at the end of primary, junior or senior secondary school levels or generally during a training programme. They are usually prepared by a mandated body or bodies which administer all processes required in the management of such examinations. Written scripts are marked by external markers who are drawn from various learning institutions in the country. At the end of the whole exercise, grades of achievement are awarded to each candidate (Munene and Ogula, 1970). In Zambia, the Examinations Council of Zambia is in charge of running examinations in schools.

2.4.4 Functions of final examinations

Final examinations in education play different roles. One of the functions of final examinations is that of certification. Certificates are awarded after final examinations and they reflect the academic levels a candidate has attained by indicating grades on it. Results of final examinations help to select candidates for further studies. They also play the role of accreditation of an institution. If the final examinations are of dubious quality, the certificate awarded by that institution or examining body shall likewise be of dubious quality. Thus, final examinations provide data for comparing levels of achievement among several schools (Munene and Ogula, 1970).

2.5 Educational assessments

Munene and Ogula (1970) see educational assessments as the process of determining the degree to which a learner has managed to acquire specific knowledge, skills and attitudes in

the training that he or she has undertaken. Educational assessments deal with all the ways which teachers apply to determine what learners know and what they can do. This therefore means that assessments in education must be planned for as responsible authorities in education develop suitable syllabi, teaching guides, schemes of work and lessons.

2.5.1   Functions of educational assessments

The main objective of educational assessment is to basically evaluate learning achievement in line with established criteria and in turn to improve learners' learning process. Educational assessments help to identify problem areas in learners so as to strengthen weak areas, identify reasons a learner is facing problems so that correct feedback is given to improve the identified weakness and to find out whether the learner is at the right level of schooling and can successfully go on to the next class or level as well as to identify curriculum areas which may need study or revision (Munene and Ogula, 1970: Ogunniyi, 1984).

2.6   Types of assessment

2.6.1   Diagnostic assessments

Diagnostic assessments are administered before instructions in order to find out whether or not learners have certain entry behaviour. They can also be done during instructions to help teachers discover the problems learners are experiencing. A teacher of English may devise a diagnostic assessment to analyse the difficulties his or her learners are having when writing compositions. The results of this type of diagnostic assessment will assist the teacher to deal with the problem more effectively by giving them a revision lesson on the same topic (Ogunniyi, 1984).

2.6.2 Formative assessments

Dorothy (1961) states that formative assessments are administered during instructions in order to provide feedback to teachers and learners on the learners' progress towards attaining the required objectives. Formative assessments involve recording development in progress rather than completed development. They are an on-going part of classroom activities and cumulative in nature. They also help to identify areas that need further attention. Formative assessments are a bit more complex than summative ones. Chare (1972) points out that formative assessment provide information on areas of weaknesses and on strengths and they are an important ingredient of motivation in the teaching and learning process. Formative assessments assist teachers to guide their teaching.

2.6.3 Summative assessments

The other types of assessments are called summative. They provide information on the product's efficacy or ability to do that which it was designed to do. They are carried out at the end of a unit, chapter, term, year or course. They are an extension of formative assessments. Other purposes of summative assessments include comparing the performance of learners, school and districts, judging effectiveness of teachers and certifying learners. They are typically quantitative, using numeric scores or letter grades to assess learners achievements. In other words, they summarize completed learning because they usually take place at the end of a period of teaching, such as at the end of a topic, at the end of the year or at the end of a key stage as earlier mentioned (Chare, 1972).

2.6.4 Achievement tests

Achievement tests as assessments are designed to measure the degree to which learners have learnt the intended curriculum (Munene and Ogula, 1970). Grade 9 Leaving Examinations are examples of achievement tests.

2.6.5 Aptitude tests

Aptitude tests as assessments are constructed to measure the level or extent to which learners have the capacity to acquire knowledge, skills and attitude in a specified area of intended study (Groundlund, 1961).

2.6.6 Criterion referenced tests

These are forms of assessments made to measure the level to which the prescribed standards in educational instructions have been met. They examine the learner's mastery of educational objectives. They are used to determine whether a learner has learned specific knowledge or skills. Criterion-Referenced tests ask the question; can learner 'A' do 'B'? (Ogunniyi, 1984).

2.6.7 Norm-referenced tests

Groundlund (1981) explains that norm-referenced tests are assessments designed to compare a learner' performance in the test with that of other learners in his or cohort. They do not help to determine how proficient a learner is in a particular subject or skill. They do not indicate what learners know or do not know.

2.7   Quality education

Quality is the degree of excellence. The MoE (2007) states that quality is brought about by maximising the efforts of all those responsible for the education of learners and by coordinating all the structures of the system so that centres of education, from pre-school to university, are places where effective teaching, learning and research take place and where the highest standards of achievement, in accordance with abilities of learners are obtained. Quality education, is broad because it also involves political, cultural and social contents and it is seen through learners, systems, processes and content. Quality education, hence, entails that the people charged with the provision of education should put in place mechanisms that promote effective and relevant learning (MoE, 2008).

The MoE (2007) states that quality education can be delivered in conducive environments where there is adequate and suitable infrastructure, motivated teachers and learners, enough and appropriate teaching and learning materials and where the learners go to school healthy. Quality education according to MoE (1996) can also be improved and sustained by having quality teachers and institutions that encourage teachers to continuously undergo training in order to acquire deep mastery of their areas of specialization and pedagogy. It must be the one that works to enhance the fulfillment of a learner's life.

Quality education allows learners to reach their potentials in terms of spiritual (religion), emotional (about feelings), social (about community and society) and cognitive which involves the development of the mind. Learners should be healthy and motivated, teachers need to be active and use relevant teaching and learning materials, where the curriculum is relevant and good governance, management and equitable resource allocation exist. Quality

education depends on the political will of the ruling elite. Reasonably well financed education will likely promote quality education.

Cole (1989) suggests that for quality education to be attained, authorities need to design a comprehensive and diversified curriculum which is sufficiently responsive to the aspirations of a country. Curriculum development therefore, is very strategic to the advancement of quality in education service delivery. A good curriculum is the one which has aspects of effective balance of knowledge, skills, values, development and positive attitudes.

2.8 Importance of curriculum reforms when developing a new policy in Education

Each time important policies are made by responsible authorities, it is ideal to look at how such policies may affect the existing education system. According to the MoE (2007) curriculum development is cardinal in the advancement of quality education. A good curriculum should be the one, according to Marley (1992), which is able to transform the education system in order for it to respond to the diversity of learners, improving the quality of education by enhancing the effectiveness of teachers, promoting learner centered methodologies and developing appropriate text books and learning materials to satisfy the reason for change. In short, it must be comprehensive and diversified throughout educational levels of a particular country. MoE (2008) notes that a good curriculum should be relevant to the needs of those who receive it and the community in terms of meeting the challenges of their everyday life. It must have two components of Localised Curriculum which deal with local environment and cultural studies and Core Curriculum which deals with the study.

Dewey (2002) is of the view that reforms in curricular should come as a result of the needs a country or what society identifies to be lacking in the existing education system. A good curriculum must address the child's cognitive, emotional and creative developments. The concept of equity in education necessitates the diversification of the curriculum in order to suit different abilities, talents and interests. Access to education in relation to curriculum is therefore a process which involves addressing and responding to a variety of needs of pupils. This process has in turn implications for teaching, ways of interacting and relations between schools and community (Jacobs, 2002).

2.9   Access to education

According to MoE (1996), access to education refers to the ability of all eligible citizens of a country to have equal opportunities in education in spite of their social class, ethnicity, background or physical disabilities. It is an inclusive system because it promotes equal and quality access to quality education. Every individual has a right to education in Zambia; hence educational policies created must have value and should promote a multi-faceted development of the people taking into account their uniqueness so that they can fully participate in the economic, cultural and social affairs of their societies. Access to education is cardinal in the expansion of education across all forms of ability and diversity (MoE, 2007). The MoE (2006) discusses that for access to be realized, the Ministry of Education needs to expand the existing infrastructure by building more classrooms and schools and by employing more quality teachers to bring the teacher-pupil ratio to acceptable standards.

2.10   High School Education

A critical policy that has created the core of public discussion over high school education is the debate over its value as a source of empowerment. Education provided in high schools must be in line with the needs of the country so that it helps to make individuals to be soundly grounded in communication, mathematics, science and problem- solving skills to create a supply of not particularly skilled, but well-disciplined workers to operate in large scale industrial units. It must equally respond to the needs of individuals for a range of post-vocational opportunities. Owens (1988) notes that high school education helps prepare learners for admission to higher education, prepares learners for the world of work and seeks to fuse academic studies with practical and work oriented studies.

In other words, by helping learners to prepare for admission to higher education, high schools ideally provide learners with levels of education standards which are the basis for one to enter college or university. High school education is the sealing point of none college education. Learners' performance level at high school level will determine what type of career or institution a high school graduate will undertake or enter. It helps to prepare individuals for wide market of employment that suit their performances at the end of their learning duration.   Owen (1988), observes that most of the learners who did well in practical subjects at high school level in America ended up becoming artisans or engineers while those who did well in social sciences did well in politics.

2.11   Teachers and education reforms

Teachers have most influence on learning in the education system. It is important to have quality teachers for the education system to meet challenges of the education reforms. Quality teachers are those teachers who possess current appropriate methodologies or

pedagogy and technologies in teaching which promote learner centeredness (Leamar, 1999). Quality teachers should be those who enjoy the profession and are innovative. A quality teacher can only be realised through constant in-service training in order to meet the needs for expansion in access and quality improvement in high schools (MoE, 2007). Quality of teaching fraternity can be further strengthened by establishing an effective body on quality control.

Quality among teachers can also be enhanced through teacher motivation. Teacher motivation includes improving teachers' conditions of service such as giving them attractive salaries, suitable accommodation as well as creating appropriate working conditions at actual places of work (MoE. 2007). It is therefore imperative that there should be development and operationisation of a framework that can make sure that all teachers automatically develop professionally through putting in place a clear structure and properly coordinated in- service structure. A frustrated teacher may not help in the implementation of educational reforms in one way or the other (Cummings, 1977).

2.12   School infrastructure

School infrastructure refers to the site, buildings, furniture and equipment which contribute to a learning environment (William, 1972). Infrastructure also includes construction and renovation of classrooms. The site refers to the place where the school sports grounds, among others are. The buildings in this case include classrooms, school offices, ablution blocks and any other structures in the school. Furniture are items such as desks, office chairs, tables, stools, and other items falling in this category. These things if properly used and maintained can enhance pupils' academic performance. A school which has adequate and suitable

furniture will attract pupils' attention to learn. Enough and safe classroom buildings also motivate learners because they will always feel safe and relaxed during lessons (Banks, 1975).

Infrastructure such as sports fields help to provide opportunities for some learners to explore and apply their potentialities. It is through sports in schools that some powerful sports men have been identified. Generally, suitable, adequate and safe school infrastructure help to increase school attendance, motivate teachers and learners. Sports can change the total educational climate of pupils in a school (William, 1972).

Additionally, the Zambia Episcopal Conference (2009) observes that policies in education that are well advised, well- timed and based on sound educational principles that go with greater investment in education infrastructure and proper planning can also assist in sustaining quality education

2.13   Teaching Learning materials

Teaching and learning materials help to motivate learners and they generally make the teaching and learning process beneficial to both the learner and the teacher. They help to make the teaching and learning process learner centered because pupils are able to grasp or assimilate what is being taught easily. A school which has the required amount and suitable teaching and learning materials will always produce credible results. Examples of teaching and learning materials include text books, charts and test tubes, among others (Christopher and West, 1999). Teaching and Learning materials are seen by educationists to be very important in the teaching and learning process because they promote pupils' academic

performance since they help teachers to easily explain intended academic concepts to pupils (Cole, 1989).

2.14   School and classroom issues

There are a number of issues within schools and classroom that are universally recognized as influencing education. Some of the issues include the availability of quality and motivated teachers, provision of relevant teaching and learning materials and reliable communication mechanisms among all stake holders, among others. Some of the issues that can affect access and provision of quality education are discussed below.

2.15   Classroom size and teacher-pupil ratios

Teacher pupil ratio is the average number of pupils per teacher at each specific level of education in a given year. The teacher/pupil ratio concept assumes the fact that all teachers at a particular school are well qualified. Teacher/pupil ratio is generally used to measure the level of human resource input in terms of number of teachers in relation to the pupil enrolment. If on the average there are more pupils than teachers, then the pupil teacher ratio is high and this in turn results into poor performance of pupils. In Zambian high schools, the desired teacher pupil ratio is 1: 35 (MoE, 2008).

Class sizes have more direct implications for school policy and practice. Educationists believe that the quality of teaching and learning in schools depend on teachers' teaching and their interactions with learners which decline with an increase in the size of the class. Kendal (1996) asserts that teachers experience more positive attitudes from students and their work when teaching smaller classes. Smaller classes result in more individual interaction and

strong rapport with learners. In general, learner achievement in smaller classes exceed on average than in large classes.

Teachers teaching smaller groups of learners are more likely to feel satisfied with their job and to believe that they are doing better work. In reality, their teaching may not change and even their learners attitudes towards school may also not change. A country that opts to increase population of pupils in classes need to refrain its teaching staff, to take advantage of this initiative negatively (Kelly, 1994).

2.16   Learner absenteeism and truancy

Learner absenteeism and truancy continue to be problems for school administrators as well as to the general teaching staff. WHO (2008) explains absenteeism in terms of young non - school attendees and sees truancy as a more systematic, deliberate and often prolonged absenteeism from school for young people in a higher age bracket. Leemer (1999) reveals that chronic absenteeism and truancy are caused by both external - and school -related causes. External - related causes of absenteeism include financial and economic problems. A poor family for example, may not be able to satisfy most of their child's requirements. Such a child in turn may resort to doing other things such as stealing from friends at school who have things that he or she does not have. Peer-group pressures where a learner associates himself or herself with friends who may be involved in weird activities and the learner in the final analysis inherits them and transfers them to schools. The other external-cause has to do with one's social cultural factors. Such factors can be contrary to requirements of the school laws. The end result is a conflict between the two.

Some of the causes of truancy or indiscipline in schools include irrelevant curriculum and poor instructional methods, inflexible school schedules, insensitive, uncaring teachers, administrators and other school personnel and poor academic or social skills. The education system which is insensitive to the requirements of its clientele ends up producing unruly products. Teachers who do not care to take corrective measures on offending learners make such learners to continue doing such wrong things because they feel they are the right things to do (WHO, 2008).

Lemmer (1999) argues that when coming up with school schedules, school administrators should always take into consideration the prevailing environment in the school and the surrounding area. If a school for example is located in a very cold area, there is need for the school to adjust its time table so that learners report to school when it is a bit warm. If it does not do this, very few pupils may be reporting for lessons and this will be regarded as absenteeism or truancy. Absenteeism can be reduced by providing free education, counselling and relevant curriculum, among others.

2.17 School drop outs

One of the dangers of truancy is that the learner will eventually drop out of school. Dropping out of school according to Kelly (1994) is leaving school early. Dropping out is an individual act due to truancy. The other group of learners leaving school is push outs. Push outs put blame on institutions and is as a result of unequal economic, political and social structures and certain institutional practices like tracking and expulsion which serve to stigmatize, discourage and exclude learners.

2.18 Violence in schools

School crimes have an impact on the quality of children's education. Research reports on violence have shown that in schools where violence is the order of the day, academic work is disturbed and meaningful time wasted. In turn this brings about poor performance among pupils as a lot of valuable time is wasted through unwanted unrest. Learners tend to miss school because they fear for their personal safety (Leemer, 1999).

2.19 Educational partnership

Educational partnerships depend on strong relationships among parents, learners, educators/educational authorities and community personnel working collaboratively to achieve a common mission. Educational authorities in this case may include the government, churches, private individuals or indeed Non-Governmental Organisations involved in the provision of education. Partnerships in education help to build policies which help to promote decentralization, equity and effectiveness. They also encourage and strengthen educational development. These attributes help to create situations which allow the human, financial and any other related resources under the communities, religious groups, voluntary or private agencies to be channeled without strings into the education sector (MoE,1996). In other words, in educational partnerships there is sharing of aims and goals based on common ground but which also acknowledge important differences, sharing of power, responsibility and ownership, although not necessary equally, commitment to joint actions, in which parents, pupils and professionals work together to get things done. Partnerships in education encourage a degree of mutuality which begins with the process of listening to each other and which incorporates responsive dialogue as well as 'give and take' on both sides.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1   Overview

This chapter outlines the methodology that was selected and used in the study. The methodology includes the study design, target population, sample size, sampling procedures, research instruments for data collection and how they were administered, data collection techniques and analysis.

3.2   Research Design

Before stating the research design used in this study, an understanding of the term research design is important. Orodho (2003) defines a research design as the scheme, outline or plan that is used to generate answers to research problems. It is an arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance with the research purpose. It is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted.

Bryman (2008) states that, a research design helps the researcher in the development of the framework which assists to collect and analyse data. Research design shows the decision about the priority that a researcher gives to a range of dimensions of the research process. In other words, a research design is a structure of the research or the nature of the research.

Ghosh (2003) defines a case study as a method of collecting information about an individual, a family, an institution, a group of persons that can know precisely the factors and causes of a practical phenomenon.

This researcher opted to use a case study design over other designs. This design allowed for an in-depth study of the case in its natural setting (Feustein, 1986). The design was well

suited for this study since it was based on one school in Sesheke District in the Western Province of Zambia.

In collecting data for the study, qualitative methods of data were mainly used. Qualitative methodology usually stresses on words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data (Best and Khan, 2008). The method uses the natural atmosphere like classrooms and it lies on a research method that is flexible. Furthermore, qualitative research helps to describe and analyse culture and behaviour of people and their associates from the point of view of those being researched on (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). However, quantitative methods of data collection were also employed to deal with data that needed statistical interpretations.

3.3   Target Population

The study targeted all high school learners, school managers and class teachers at Mwandi High School in Sesheke District.

3.4   Sample size

Table 1: Summary of the Sample

Type of Respondent	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
School Managers	3	-	3
Teachers	7	1	8
Pupils	53	37	90
Total	63	38	101

3.5 Sampling Procedure

The need for a researcher to select appropriate participants is cardinal in research. To select interviewees, the researcher used purposive sampling and lottery sampling methods to make sure that each of the teachers and pupils at Mwandi High School had an equal opportunity to be selected. Names of all pupils were written on pieces of paper and were put into a box. Pieces of paper were then mixed thoroughly and were picked from the box. The names picked randomly from the box constituted the sample. This was the method used to pick teachers to answer questionnaires, pupils and teachers to be involved in Focus Group Discussions. Feustein (1986) explains that purposive sampling helps researchers to pick on people who have information and experience to answer questions regarding the study in question. Furthermore, in purposive sampling the researcher deliberately picks the people who are believed to be reliable for the study. The credibility of this sampling method depends on the ability of the researcher to select data or information of rich cases suitable for in depth analysis connected to issues under study (Bryman, 2008).

3.6 Research instruments

The study used questionnaires, interview guide for teachers, discussion guide for pupils and question guide for school managers. An observation schedule and some documents were also used by the researcher. Use of different instruments was designed to ensure triangulation. This means that data that was not captured through the use of one instrument could be captured through the use of another (Best and Khan, 2008).

3.6.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were administered to 8 class teachers after making appointments with them within a short period of time. Questionnaires help to generate data in a systematic and orderly manner (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). They were preferred for this category of respondents in order to collect primary and consistent data. Questionnaires provide respondents adequate time to consult other relevant sources and they are also uniform to measure. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) state this fact when they elaborate that questionnaires as instruments of data collection in research provide data in a systematic and orderly manner. These instruments help to cover a wide area of study. They also eliminate chances of bias on the part of both the researcher and the respondents. Each questionnaire had introductory remarks introducing the study and assuring each respondent that the information to be collected was going to be held with utmost confidentiality it deserves.

3.6.2 Interview schedule/guides, discussion guide and observation schedule

One semi- structured interview guide was designed and used to conduct interviews by the researcher to obtain data from teachers at Mwandi High School. Interview guides help to obtain in-depth supplementary data, feelings or expressions from teachers that could have not been captured by the questionnaires.

An interview guide according to Feustein (1986) entails designing a set of questions which are to be looked at in advance, before the interview begins. Even though issues that were dealt with were outlined in advance, the researcher had to decide how to phrase the questions in order to suit the situational needs in the process of the interview.

In order to obtain information from 90 pupils, the researcher designed a discussion guide. This allowed face-to-face interaction between the researcher and pupils. This instrument was necessary because it assisted the researcher to realize pupils' feelings or emotions about the policy under study. Kombo and Tromp (2006) qualify the usage of the discussion guide when they say this instrument helps in observing and forming impression about respondents. The researcher also used the observation schedule. The observation schedule was used so that the researcher physically sees the areas of interest listed on the schedule physically and make impressions in relation to the information he was looking for. Observation schedule was also used for the purpose of triangulation. It was done to supplement the information derived from other instruments which were used.

3.6.3   Documents analysis

Having in mind that the purpose of the research was to carry out an investigation into the implications of the abolition of the Grade 9 cut-off points system at Mwandi High School, the researcher deemed it simpler to confirm views, ideas and perspectives from informants through documents.

Document analysis usually refers to scrutiny of written texts and materials that relate to the topic in question (Taylor, et.al, 2009). The documents being referred to in this context involve mock examination results registers, end of term results analysis registers, class registers and punishment books. The advantage of using documents is that data for such is non-reactive and not prone to changes (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Data therefore collected from such documents tend to provide the researcher with data which is largely reliable. Documents and records were used to confirm some information obtained in some instruments used in this study such as disciplinary and attendance levels as well as passing percentages.

Appropriate data that fitted in the objectives of the research work was compiled and applied accordingly.

3.6.4   Validity and reliability of the instruments

Validity is defined by Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) as the extent or degree to which the selected methods measure and describe the situation or phenomena that is under examination. In qualitative research, there is the use of alternative criteria when analyzing research findings and these include authenticity, trustworthiness and dependability of the collected data. The fact that the researcher employed such alternative criteria means that the reporting was truthfully done to provide the expected results of the study.

3.7   Data collection procedures

The researcher drew a programme for school visits. Appointments with the school administration were done in advance in order to find respondents on each proposed day ready. During visits, questionnaires were distributed to teachers who completed them and then collected by the researcher. Interviews were done with the respondents on agreed days and time. The researcher sought for permission from the head teacher to go round the school campus to observe areas of interest. The researcher also sought permission from the head teacher to visit various departments to access school files and to observe some lessons in order to supplement data that was collected from respondents.

3.8   Data analysis

Qualitative data which was obtained through interview guide for teachers, discussion guide for pupils, question guide for managers and observation schedule was analysed by coding and grouping the emerging themes. Quantitative data obtained through semi-structured

questionnaires was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Computer generated tables of frequencies and percentages were used in describing distributions of the variables which were presented in the form of tables and figures.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Respondents were assured that their views were only to be used for this study and that their names were not going to be disclosed to any

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1   Overview

This chapter presents the findings of the study regarding the implications of the abolition of the Grade 9 cut- of points system in rural high schools: The case of Mwandi High School in Sesheke District in the Western Province. The findings are presented according to the stipulated questions of the study. The questions of the study were based on : asses teachers' and pupils' views on the abolition of the Grade 9 cut-off points system at Mwandi High School in Sesheke District, establish the teachers and pupils views on the role of examinations in the in light of abolition of the Grade 9 cut-off points system, investigate the effects of the policy on the discipline of pupils at Mwandi High School and establish measures taken by the school to improve the academic performance of pupils at Mwandi High School in the wake of the abolition of the Grade 9 cut-off points system.

4.2   Teachers and pupils views on the effects of abolishing cut-off points on the quality of education.

4.2.1   Teachers views

Teachers respondents were asked to indicate whether the abolition of cut- off points had any effect on the quality of education in the school. Out of the 8 teachers who were interviewed, 6 agreed that the abolition of the Grade 9 cut-points had an effect on the quality of education in various ways while two as observed at the school where the learning environment was not good while (2) of them said it had no effect at all.

3 school manager respondents went further to say that the government should have had first consulted with all major stake holders in the provision of education in Zambia to find out the state and availability of infrastructure and teachers available on the ground in order for the ministry to make an informed decision on the matter.

Some teacher respondents indicated that the policy had widened the gap between themselves and pupil such that it was difficult to constantly go through pupils' work.

Teachers were asked to indicate how regularly they went through pupils' work in class. Their reactions were as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Frequency with which teachers went through pupils work
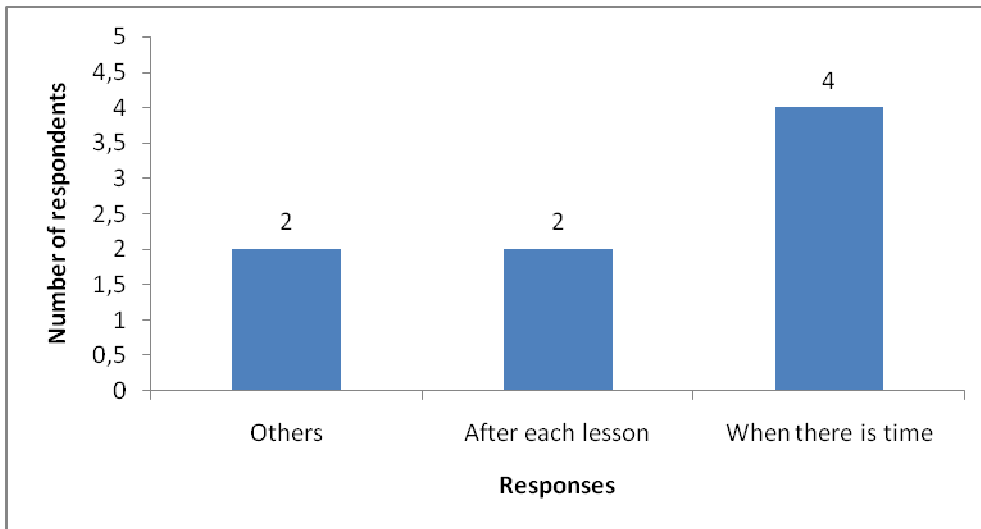
Figure 1 above shows that 4 of the teachers said they went through pupils work 'when there was time' while 2 of them said 'after each lesson.' The rest of them (2) said 'others'. These are the respondents who did not provide definite situations when teachers go through pupils work, they were not sure.

During interviews with the teachers, one of them said:

> It is not easy to constantly go through pupils' work. There are a lot of pupils to attend to and it takes a lot of time to go through just one exercise book of a pupil because of the way pupils write. Teachers are few and have a lot of other things to do within the school during working hours. When we go through pupils' work, we normally only put a big red mark just to show that we have seen the book and not that we have thoroughly gone through it and made corrections. I know this does not help pupils in any way but there is nothing we can do.

The teacher respondents were further asked to indicate the state of teaching and learning aids in the school. Their reactions were as shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Whether school had adequate teaching and learning materials
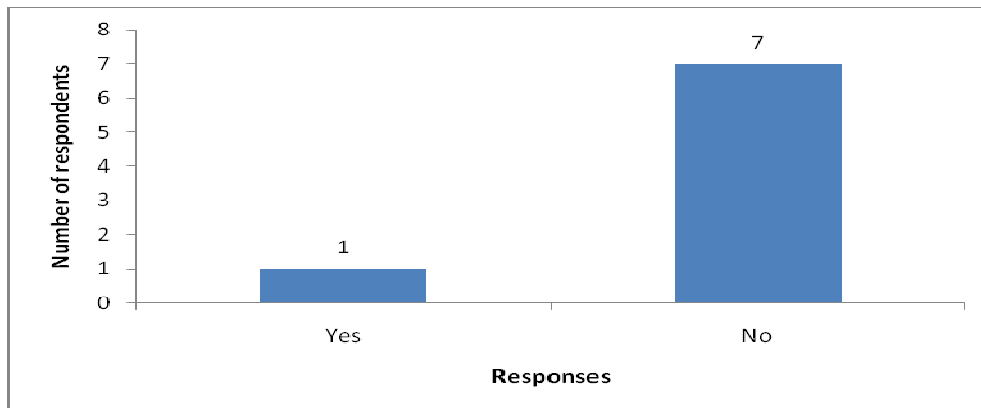
The figure above shows that 7 of the teachers indicated that the teaching and learning materials were not adequate while 1 of them said they were available. 1 of the teachers who said the school lacked teaching and learning materials had this to say:

In the stockrooms there was only one old human skeleton and a few test tubes but no chemicals. Laboratories had neither running water nor fire extinguishers. Government funding is inadequate. We cannot purchase chemicals, equipment and other requirements.

Another teacher said: 'This school has inadequate teaching and learning aids for us to use in the teaching and learning process. In many instances, we use our initiative and improvise the teaching/learning materials.'

From the illustration in figure 2 and the sentiments of teachers, it seemed that the school had no adequate and unsuitable teaching and learning materials for pupils. Observations by the researcher also showed that even the little teaching and learning materials that were there were not up to date. Some teachers even used old pupils note books from other high schools as reference books.

Teacher respondents were asked to indicate whether the school had adequate infrastructure to cope with the policy because favourable infrastructure is cardinal in the provision of quality education. Interviews with teachers and observations by the researcher showed that the school had inadequate infrastructure. One of the teachers said, 'We have two laboratories in the school which are not enough and have no appropriate equipment for use by pupils to conduct meaningful experiments.' The school had no sports infrastructure. This was evidenced by the head teacher's response when he said 'During sporting activities, pupils use the sports ground at the nearby Mwandi Basic School.'

The teacher respondents suggested that government should improve the road network in Mwandi, build more classroom blocks and generally motivate qualified teachers. One of the teachers explained thus:

> Once the road infrastructure was improved, benefits would be two fold. On one hand, we as teachers would develop the desire to work in the catchment area of Mwandi High School. On another hand, the quality of education would improve since standards officers would be able to easily visit our school regularly.

Teacher respondents further stated that the Ministry of Education should have put in place the curriculum with emphasis on outcome-defined, self-directed learning, interpersonal, competence and to deal with information on age issues.

Some subject teachers in various subjects were asked to state the class performance progression of their learners through class assessments as a result of the policy. The study revealed that 5 of the teacher respondents interviewed said that class performance was not encouraging at all. They further explained that learner performance became poor as the pupils progressed from lower grades to higher grades.

Teachers were also asked to indicate whether they felt that the results obtained by pupils in the class assessment test were encouraging. Of the 8 teachers, 3 of them said that results were encouraging considering the fact that most of their learners did not do well at grade 9 level but were in grade 10 as a result of the new policy of the abolition Grade 9 cut-off points where as 5 said the situation was not encouraging.

The teacher respondents were further asked to state what they thought contributed to the poor performance by learners in school. Nearly all the teachers said that the poor performance among pupils could be attributed to the fact that most of them were from rural basic schools and lacked basic academic skills. These pupils could neither read nor write properly or express themselves in English effectively. In addition, they could not comprehend fully what they learnt.

One teacher lamented: 'In my class, most pupils are always passive not because they desire to do so but due to their inability to express themselves in English. This has made my job very difficult.'

Another teacher remarked thus:

> As a result of the kind of Grade 10 pupils the school received, who could not even perform the required tasks of a Grade 10 pupil, we are forced to start teaching Junior Secondary School work for the purpose of bringing the affected pupils to high school standard before we introduce them to Senior Secondary School work. Unfortunately, this usually results in yet another ripple effect of not completing the High School Syllabi from which the Examinations Council of Zambia (E.C.Z) set questions.

Observation by the researcher during the Focus Group Discussions revealed that some pupils could not express themselves properly and most of them could not comprehend questions from the researcher. The discussions were passive and this tallied with the teacher

respondent's observation. During the English and history lessons in two grade 10 classes, the researcher observed that most pupils lamentably failed to read given passages as well as copying work from the board properly. Furthermore, an observation by the researcher also showed that pupils' performance was indeed very poor as evidenced by the mock examination results in Table 2 below availed to him by the school management for one of the Grade 11 classes that was picked at random.

Table 2: Mock results of a Grade 11 class.

Sex	No. of pupils	Performance levels (in %)							Total (%)
		Below 40	**40-50**	**51-60**	**61-70**	**71-80**	**81-90**	**91-100**	
Girls	11	8	1	1	0	0	0	0	3.6
Boys	47	21	8	3	1	1	0	0	22.0
Total	58	29	9	4	1	1	0	0	26.0

The findings of the study through interviewees revealed that there was an urgent need for the Ministry of Education to strengthen the base by employing enough and suitably qualified teachers.

4.2.2   Pupils views

The pupil respondents were asked to indicate their views on the abolition of the cut-off points. Their responses were as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Pupils' views about the effects of the abolition of the Grade 9 cut-points
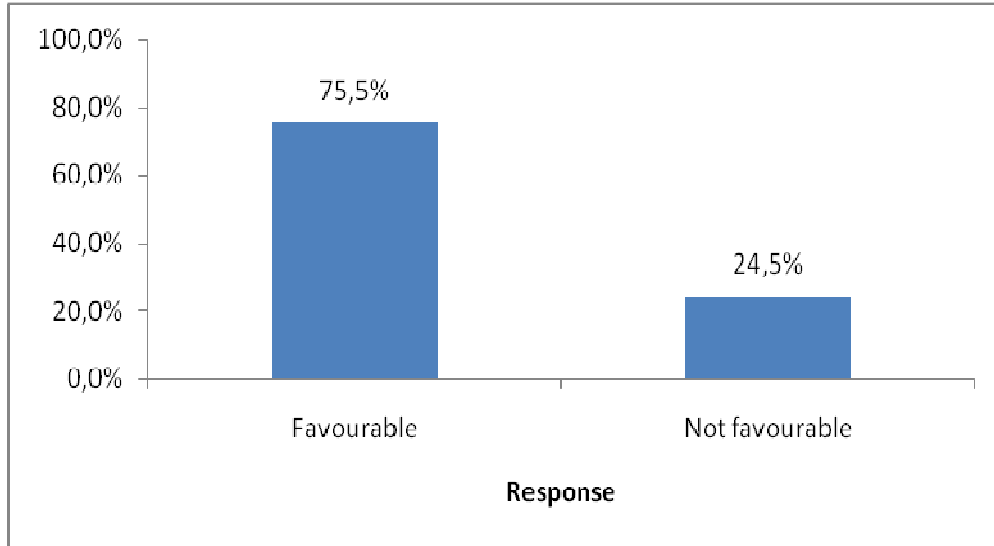
The figure shows that out of 90 pupils interviewed, 68 (75.5%) indicated that the policy was favourable because it allowed them to access high school education. They argued that being pupils from rural areas where there were huge shortages of teaching and learning materials, qualified teachers and a generally poor learning environments, the policy had accorded them an opportunity to access high school education.

However, 22 (24.5 %) of them were of the view that the policy brought about unfairness to those pupils who work hard. They complained that it was unfair for hard workers to be put in same classes with those who do not attach any significance to education. They equally complained of congestion in classrooms which made learning difficult for them. One pupil complained that:

> We are 7 in our class. As a result we can't learn properly. Some teachers
> only stand in front and teach without moving around the class to check
> how we are doing the work. At times it is difficult to follow what is

being taught especially if you are sitting at the back, you are forced to stand in order to see what the teacher is doing on the chalk board.

Some pupil respondents further revealed that many teachers seldom mark their books or indeed attend to most of their individual needs. In a focus group discussion with some pupils, one pupil said:

> Our mathematics teacher usually asks us to exchange books and mark for our friends. We are told not to add the final mark. When he gets our books, he just adds the ticks and puts his signature. If the teacher decides to collect our books, he can keep them for some time. When he gives the books back to us, he does not ask us to go through the previous work in order to make corrections. Because of this behaviour of the teacher, some of us don't even care if we do not get the work correct because after all nothing happens to those who either do well or bad.

In a Focus Group Discussion with pupils, they also revealed that the school lacked infrastructure. One of the pupils had this to say, 'We lack sports infrastructure and other sports utilities. The school has absolutely no sports ground for any sports discipline found in a high school.'

Grade 9 respondents from some affected basic schools, who were now at Mwandi High School revealed that at the schools where they came from, they only had 1 by 3 classroom block for Grades 1 up to 7. One pupil said, 'In most cases we learnt under trees even when

we needed to do practicals in science subjects. We had no teachers at that basic school in most cases. We wonder what products the school can produce.'

Observations by the researcher revealed that the toilets were not enough and suitable for pupils and members of staff. The school had only 2 pit latrine blocks. 1 pit latrine block was used members of staff toilets. The block was demarcated into 2, one side for males and the other side for females. There was the same arrangement with pupils' pit latrines. The pit latrine for pupils was in most cases congested forcing a lot of learners to go into the nearby bush to answer the call of nature.

The pupil respondents were asked to indicate the type of teaching and learning materials used at their school during lessons. 1 pupil responded, 'I have never seen charts, beakers and other related teaching and learning aids in this school.'

Another pupil said:

> Since I came to Mwandi High, no teacher has ever given us any
> textbooks to use in our studies. In some subjects like Zambian
> Languages (Silozi), the teacher is the only one who has a textbook.
> Each time we have Silozi lessons, the teacher has to read for us and
> if the teacher is not available, our fellow pupils who are fluent in
> Silozi took charge.

4.3   Teachers' and pupils' views about the role of examinations in the provision of quality education.

4.3.1   Teachers' views

A question was asked to teacher respondents to indicate their views about the value of examinations in the provision of quality education. 6 respondents answered in affirmative that the policy eliminated the spirit of competitiveness in high schools by disregarding the examination results. The teacher respondents explained that examinations make teachers work hard in order to have a lot of their learners pass and compete well with other learners of the same cohort. They went on to say examinations also make pupils to study hard because they know that in the end they have to pass an examination for them to progress to another level.

4.3.2 Pupils' views

Over 80% of the pupil respondents interviewed revealed that examinations were not fair because the instilled fear in them and made a lot of learners, especially from rural basic schools fail acquire high school education. They thanked the MMD government for ending the cut-off points system. However, the other 20% felt that the policy encouraged laziness among pupils and teachers.

Teachers and pupils comments tallied with what the researcher observed in 2 grade11 classes where teachers in certain subjects only covered 4 grade 10 topics and high levels of absenteeism.

4.4   Effects of the policy on the discipline of pupils at Mwandi High School.

Teachers were asked to indicate whether the abolition of the Grade 9 cut-off points system had any effects on the discipline of pupils. Of the 8 teacher respondents, 6 of them said that

the policy had impacted negatively on the discipline of pupils while 2 of them indicated that the policy had no impact at all. In an interview with the teachers, one respondent complained that:

> The abolition of the cut-off points system has done more harm than good. Today's pupils do not see school places to be hard to come by; hence they neither respect teachers nor strictly observe school rules. They merely do as they wish. You find grade 9 boys hanging around in drinking places when they are supposed to be preparing for exams. When talked to, they become rude and boast that whether the adviser likes it or not, they would be in grade 10 the following year.

Violence among pupils was also reported by some respondents. One teacher had this to say:

> Pupils only come to school when they feel like. Others come to school with hang-over of beer and are the ones that cause problems to fellow pupils and to some teachers. If a teacher tries to advise, they threaten such a teacher with violence outside the school premises.

4.5   Measures put in place to improve pupil performance at Mwandi High School.

Teacher respondents were requested to indicate measures which the school had put in place in order to improve the performance of pupils. The teacher respondents indicated that the school had put in place a deliberate school study policy where all pupils had to attend one hour preparatory period in the afternoon from Monday to Friday every week.

43

In addition, the school Head teacher said that the school had made it mandatory for all teachers in their respective subjects to be give home work to their pupils regularly and record monthly and mid-term test results in addition to end of term tests. Furthermore, the school council had resolved that all teachers should and be committed and dedicated to duty as a way of supplementing earlier measures put in place to improve pupils' performance.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1   Overview

This chapter discusses the findings of the study which sought to investigate implications of the abolition of the Grade 9 cut-off points in rural high schools: The case of Mwandi High School. The chapter discusses the themes from the findings under each objective and analyse the themes within the framework of the literature review.

5.2   Teachers and pupils views on the effects of the abolition of the cut- off points

As regards views on the abolition of cut- off points, most of the teachers were of the view that it adversely affected the quality of education. This study revealed that teachers seldom went through pupils work to foster quality. One of the teachers complained that it was not easy to constantly go through pupils' work because of the large number of pupils to attend to and it takes a lot of time to go through just one pupil's exercise book because of the poor writing by the pupils. Additionally, teachers are very few and have a lot of other school responsibilities.

The researcher's understanding of teacher's submission is that teachers at Mwandi High School had lost touch of their pupils' needs as a result of the unfavourable working conditions existing at the school. Pupil-teacher ratio is compromised resulting in teachers' inability to allocate time and attention to pupils. In other words, classes have large numbers of additional pupils without having the necessary human capacity. This dismal pupil-teacher contact time contribute to poor quality of education (MoE, 2007). MoE (2008) recommends 1:35 teacher pupil ratio for quality education to be realized.

Findings from the pupils also showed that indeed teachers rarely marked their exercise books. Mathematics and English teachers collected pupils' books and returned them to their owners in the next periods usually without any corrections or feedback given to the pupils. One pupil reported that the mathematics teacher usually asked them to exchange books and mark their friend's work. However, they were told not to add the final mark as this remained the responsibility of the teacher. In such circumstances, one wonders what type of education is being offered to the pupils in school. Teachers are supposed to give feedback to pupils through comments and suggestions but in this case how can a teacher do so since he/she was not the one marking the books? It remains for the authorities concerned to see to it that this is corrected if pupils were going to receive advice from the teachers as regards their academic performance. Totaling the marks and appending a signature is not healthy at all for pupils' academic progression.

The study also showed that guidance and counselling hardly took place at Mwandi High School. Observations by the researcher for the teachers' failure to frequently mark pupils' work and non-guidance and counselling was attributed to unfavourable teacher-pupil ratios at the school as earlier observed. Furthermore, the school does not have trained guidance and counselling teachers. However, to resolve problems of the above nature, there is demand that institutions encourage teachers to continuously undergo training in the respective needy areas so that they acquire the necessary knowledge to handle learners. MoE (2007) also observes that a strong investment in education and training is cardinal in the provision of competent and motivated human resource.

As regards learning and teaching materials, 85% of the teachers indicated that the learning and teaching materials were not adequate and readily available. In many instances, teachers

used their initiative and improvised the teaching/learning materials. A check by the researcher confirmed the non-availability of modern text books in nearly all the subject stock rooms visited. Some teachers even used old pupils note books from other high schools as reference books.

Furthermore, most pupil respondents disclosed that they had never seen charts, beakers and other related teaching and learning aids. Pupil respondents further informed the researcher that since they went to Mwandi High School, no teacher had ever given them any textbooks to use in their studies. They further reported that in some subjects like Zambian Languages (Silozi) the teacher was the only one who had a textbook. Each time they had Silozi lessons, the teacher had to read for them. Once the teacher was not available, then pupils that were fluent in Silozi took charge. Looking at this situation it was not surprising that the standards of education at this school were not encouraging.

The pupil respondents complained that lack of teaching and learning materials at the school made them lose interest in some subjects. Marley (1992) indicates that lack of teaching and learning aids in the teaching and learning process makes the work of teachers quite difficult because intended concepts are not well delivered to pupils. The lack of teaching/learning materials in turn demotivates the learners. It is imperative that the MoE through its relevant officers take keen interest in the provision of such materials to the school if the school has to improve in the provision of quality education. MoE (2008) recommends 1 text book per pupil and where there is a shortage, 2 pupils can share 1 text book.

As regards school infrastructure, although the school had 2 laboratories, through the researcher's observation and interviewees' responses, the study revealed that these were not

enough for use by pupils to conduct meaningful experiments. Mwandi High School had 3 blocks. Each block had 2 classrooms. In total, the high school had only 6 classrooms. Out of the 6 classrooms, 2 classrooms were turned into laboratories. The 2 stockrooms which were supposed to be storage rooms for science chemicals and equipment were turned into offices. The ceiling boards in the 2 laboratories were falling and there was a strong stench of bat droppings. The laboratories have very few stools which were in bad condition. Quality education is usually badly affected by the poor state of school infrastructure, especially in rural areas (MoE, 2007).

In the stockrooms, the researcher only found one old human skeleton and a few test tubes but no chemicals. The laboratories had neither running water nor fire extinguishers. The absence of science chemicals, equipment and other requirements was attributed to inadequate funding by the government. This made the teaching and learning environment poor. MoE (1996) has it that poor funding to schools contributes to poor education standards in schools. MoE (2007) also notes that lack of sufficient educational materials contribute to low quality of education.

In the 4 classes the researcher entered, the desks were not enough for the learners. 3 big girls and boys sat on small desks not suitable for their sizes. Learners were also crammed together inside classrooms. There were 72 of them in 1 of the classrooms as contrasted to the space available contrally to the MoE (2008) which recommends 1or 2 pupils per desk in high schools if quality education is to be achieved.

As regards sports facilities, pupils bemoaned the lack of sports infrastructure and other sports utilities. The school had absolutely no sports grounds for any sports discipline found in a

48

high school. The sports master of the school said that during sporting activities, pupils used the sports ground at the nearby Mwandi Basic School. Lack of sports grounds was attributed to the negative attitudes the school administration attached to sports. However, it is worthy to mention that sports are vital in the development of human beings' body and intellect and thus cannot be detached from the learning process. Sports are important to learners because they make an individual's mind and body healthy. This conforms to MoE (1996) which affirms that quality education demands that learners go to school healthy.

For toilets, it was observed that the school had inadequate toilets for pupils and members of staff. The school had only 2 pit latrines; 1 for members of staff which was demarcated into 2, one side for males and the other side for females and the other for pupils which had the same arrangement as that for members of staff. The pit latrine for pupils was in most cases congested forcing some pupils to go to the nearby bush to answer the call of nature. This situation negatively affected learning as some learners took long to go back for lessons and eventually lost out in terms of learning. MoE (2008) Recommended average number of pupils per latrine or toilet referred to as pupil/latrine ratio by MoE is 2 VIP latrines for each class, thus 1 for boys and 1for girls to supplement other requirements that promote quality education.

For pupil class performance, 63% of the teacher respondents interviewed reported that class performance was not encouraging at all. They further explained that learner performance became poor as the pupils progressed. The teachers attributed the poor performance to the fact that most of the pupils were from rural basic schools and lacked basic academic skills.

The teachers also reported that more than 70% of the learners did not know how to read and write properly. The two deficits made it difficult for learners to comprehend what was being taught. The teachers attributed poor performance exhibited by pupils to poor preparation of learners at upper basic.3 of the teachers informed the researcher that the results were favourable considering the fact that most of their learners did not do well at Grade 9 but were in Grade 10 as a result of the abolition of the Grade 9 cut-off points. In pursuit to confirm the sentiments by the teachers, the researcher conducted oral discussions with the pupils to determine pupils' abilities to communicate in English. The general observation was that indeed most pupils performed badly as most of the pupils could hardly express themselves in English.

5.3   Teachers and Pupils views about the role of examinations in the provision of quality education.

Teachers were asked to indicate their views about the role of examination in the provision of quality of education. Some teachers said that examinations made pupils work hard in their academic subjects in order to earn competitive Grade 10 places which in turn contributed positively to the promotion of quality education. They also explained that examinations helped to promote competition among and within schools. Teachers in various schools used to work hard in order to do better than their colleagues in other schools so as to earn prestigious recognition. The abolition of the cut-off points has made teachers to relax since pupils no longer compete.

 The above findings are in line with Groundlund's (1981) view that examinations can assist learner's skills of working hard as individuals if they know that at the end of it all they will be required to sit for examinations as individuals. This finding also agrees with Chare (1972)

who states that examinations play a role in placing learners according to their abilities in relation to their career development.

Out of the 90 pupils interviewed, 75.5% reported that the policy was favourable because it allowed them to access high school education. They argued that being pupils from rural areas where there were huge shortages of teaching and learning materials, qualified teachers and a generally poor learning environment, the policy had provided them an opportunity to access high school education.

24.5 % of the pupil respondents reported that the policy brought about unfairness to those pupils who work hard. They complained that it was unfair for hard workers to be put in same classes with those who do not attach any significance to education. They also complained of congestion in classrooms which made learning difficult as a result of not using examination results to determine those who should be in grade 10. 1 pupil complained that they were 72 in class which made it difficult for them to learn properly. It was also difficult for the teacher to move around the classroom to observe pupils due to congestion. At times it was difficult to follow what was being taught especially if the pupil was sitting at the back of the class; this forced some pupils to stand in order to see what the teacher was doing on the chalk board.

From the above sentiments, it is deemed that the new policy has demotivated some pupils who worked hard to pass and reach the set cut-off points. The policy also induced into some teachers the 'I don't care attitude' as it is reflected in the pupil interviewee's response describing some teachers being motionless while teaching. A good teacher is supposed to be eclectic or innovative in order not to bore pupils (Christopher and West, 1999).

5.4 Effects of the policy on the discipline of pupils.

As regards the effects of the abolition of the cut- off points on the discipline of pupils, 5 out of the 8 teachers interviewed felt that it had impacted negatively on the discipline of pupils. One teacher expressed with disappointment stating that 'the abolition of cut- off points has done more harm than good.' The respondents further indicated that as a result of the abolition of the cut-off points, pupils do not see the value of hard work as they know that as long as they had a full certificate they were going to progress to another grade. This has made most pupils lose respect for academic work as well as for teachers and school rules. One of the teachers concluded by saying that: 'pupils nowadays merely do as they wish.' The study further revealed that there was a lot of absenteeism among the pupils which in turn affected their academic performance. In most classes performance among the pupils was below average.

Asked to state the most common type of disciplinary cases attended to at Mwandi High School, the teacher respondents and all the 3 school managers said were those that had to do with high levels of absenteeism, dodging lessons, and use of abusive language among pupils towards teachers. The above disciplinary cases could be attributed to the fact that most of the pupils who were enrolled in these schools were those with low marks who only entered high school as a result of the abolition of the cut-off points and had no regard for education. Munene and Ogula (1970) observe that examinations that are well administered help authorities to determine which learners have the capacity to acquire certain attitudes needed at each level of education. In Zambia, the abolition of the cut-off points has contributed to the low pupil attitude towards learning. This made it difficult for the system to determine which learners have positive attitude towards learning.

Violence at Mwandi High School among pupils was also reported by some teachers. The study revealed that some pupils came to school with 'hang-over'. One teacher told the researcher that some pupils only came to school when they felt like. These pupils caused a lot of problems to their fellow pupils thus disturbing the learning atmosphere. At times, even some teachers became victims of violence.   The study revealed that when a teacher tries to advise such pupils, they threatened such a teacher with violence outside the school premises. Violence in schools made pupils miss lessons because of fear for their safety and this affected the quality of education in schools that are prone to violence. It is common sense that in schools prone to violence, pupils begin to have a sense of insecurity and shun school. The above finding is in line with Lemmer (1999) who observes that violence in schools can make some pupils begin to miss lessons because of fear for their own safety.

Absenteeism and truancy according to Kelly (1994) are caused by among other things internal and external factors. These, according to Kelly (1994) can only be cushioned by intensifying guidance and counselling programmes at school. The other noted cause of indiscipline is a defective curriculum. Dewey (1902) notes that a curriculum that does not address the child's cognitive, emotional and creative development makes learners lose interest in attending school; to avoid this; there is strong need to reform the existing curriculum each time a new policy is put in place.

Some pupil respondents reported that some of their friends' attitudes towards learning were pathetic. They said that such pupils regularly passed derogatory remarks on teachers in class especially if they failed to comprehend what their teachers were teaching them.

The abolition of the Grade 9 cut-off points system in examinations watered down the aspect of determining among learners their capability to gain knowledge and skills such as listening skills, in this case. The examinations at Grade 9 level had become norm-referenced type of assessment. Lack of capacity to acquire knowledge and skills in the course of an instruction can lead to indiscipline among learners. There was a tendency for learners to abscond classes. Groundlund (1991) notes that norm-referenced assessment does not help to determine what learners know or do not know.

The current absence of discipline at Mwandi High School showed the opposite of what used to happen in the pre-independent Zambia where indiscipline among pupils was almost none existent. In the colonial days, as an African, being in school was seen as a great privilege because school places were generally difficult to secure. The shortage of places made pupils to appreciate the value of education and thereby guarded this opportunity jealously. They also knew that good behaviour at all time was assurance against forfeiture of a place in school (Mwanakatwe, 1968). Today, however, high school places are in abundance for an African child. In addition, abolition of the Grade 9 cut-off points has worsened pupils' attitude towards schooling in the sense that pupils do not fear losing their places as a result of bad behaviour.

5.5   Measures put in place by Mwandi High School to improve the performance of pupils

As regards the measures put in place by the school to improve the performance of the pupils, the study showed that the school had put in place a deliberate school study policy where all pupils were required to attend a one hour preparatory period in the afternoon every day. In addition, the school administration made it mandatory for all teachers to give home work to

their pupils regularly and to record the monthly and mid-term test results in addition to end of term tests. The measure of assessing pupils was arrived at after the school administration realized that teachers did not effectively carry it out despite it being one of the drivers of improving education standards.

Furthermore, teachers had agreed and resolved to be punctual, committed and dedicated to duty as required by their conditions of service. It was hoped that this would supplement earlier measures put in place to improve pupils' performance. This finding conforms with that of Car and Burnhan (1999) who encourage innovativeness and commitment to duty by all teachers. The above indicates that once teachers are innovative and dedicated to duty, desired knowledge and skills can be delivered effectively to pupils in any given environment.

Respondents were asked to indicate the measures that that they thought the government should have put in place before the implementation of the policy on the abolition of Grade 9 cut -off points for girls and boys at Grade 9. Most of the teacher respondents were of the view that the government should have had consulted first with all major stake holders in the provision of education in Zambia. They suggested that the government should have researched extensively to find out how many classes and teachers were on the ground. MoE (1996) indicates the importance of collaborating whenever new policies are put in place regarding the operation of the education system that it promotes collaboration and the sense of responsibility among stake holders in the education sector.

Teacher respondents suggested that the Zambian government should have made possible curricular reforms in the education sector before effecting the policy. Curricular reforms refer to the improvement of the curricular by removing flows and weaknesses and it is associated

with planned innovations, adoption, change and departure from established practices (Steinhouse, 1988).

The teacher interviewees further told the researcher that the government through the Ministry of Education was supposed to upgrade the general standards of teaching and learning in upper basic schools. There were inadequate teaching and learning materials at basic schools. Consequently, pupils were just taught in abstract. Grade 9 respondents from some affected basic schools, who were now at Mwandi High School revealed that at the schools where they were, they only had one by three classroom blocks for grades one up to seven. As a result in most cases they learnt under trees even when they needed to do practicals in science subjects. They expressed concern with the kind of products such institutions would produce. They reported that the academic challenges they encountered at Mwandi High School were as a result of the poor school infrastructure, lack of trained teachers and inadequate teaching and learning materials. The above scenario should be checked and given the much needed attention by the relevant authorities if the school was going to give quality education to the pupils and produce quality pupils who in future would help in providing the required human power and help to the development of the nation.

In this respect, both teacher and pupil interviewees indicated the urgent need for the Ministry of Education to strength the base, in this case the upper basic schools, where high school candidates come from by employing enough and suitably qualified teachers. Respondents expressed unhappiness about the general situation found in most basic schools which supply Grade 10 pupils to Mwandi High School. Concern was raised over some of the basic schools where a primary school trained teacher was offering four subjects at Grade 8 and 9 levels.

When suggesting solutions to some of the problems, teacher respondents suggested that government must improve the road network in Mwandi, build more classroom blocks and generally motivate qualified teachers. Respondents explained that once the road infrastructure was improved, benefits would be two fold. On one hand, teachers would develop the desire to work in the catchment area of Mwandi High School while on the other hand, the quality of education would improve since standards officers would be visiting Mwandi High School and surrounding basic schools when ever need arose. Indeed for any meaningful educational development to take place road network is vital so that educational materials can be delivered to the school. Furthermore, it allows for easy communication between schools and the Ministry of Education. In the case of Mwandi High School, which is situated in the heart of a rural area, it is inevitable that the Ministry of Education procures a four wheel drive vehicle which can easily move on the sandy environment. The provision of such a vehicle would also enable Standards Officers to consistently supervise upper basic schools in remote areas that are hard to reach. This finding is in agreement with the Ministry of Education's observations which affirmed the need of adequate logistic provision to schools if access and quality education are to be enhanced and sustained (MoE, 2007)

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1   Overview

This chapter concludes the study and makes recommendations based on the findings of the study.

6.2   Conclusion

The study established that the policy was formulated and implemented without first of all putting in place the required investments in education and proper planning; it is no doubt that it was hurriedly implemented.

The findings of this study established that the policy had put Mwandi High School under pressure to accept a large number of additional pupils without government mobilisation of necessary human resource, acquiring relevant educational materials and creating enough and suitable infrastructure. The study also showed that cases of indiscipline at Mwandi High School were rising and difficult to handle generally because quite a number of pupils at the school were those who had obtained low marks at the Grade 9 examinations and had generally little interest in education; equally, their performance was poor.

The study further found out that the policy of admitting all pupils with Grade 9 full certificates to Grade 10 brought about disproportionate teacher pupil ratio. The classes were overcrowded and this resulted in teachers failing to allocate more time and attention, especially to needy pupils. The policy widened the educational interaction gap between teachers and pupils. Teachers could not manage to attend to individual pupils as required by

the Zambian education standards. The study revealed that teachers no longer corrected pupils' work for feedback purposes due to large volumes of work to be corrected in classes as a result of the policy at hand. It suffices to mention here that due to large numbers of pupils in classes, most teachers applied the teacher-centred methods of teaching. These methods of teaching had a negative impact on the slow learners who could not comprehend the teachers.

Furthermore, the study revealed that the policy had watered down the importance of examinations which encourage competition among pupils. Examinations help to determine pupils' placement, time management and building of self confidence in individuals. Competition, placement and individual confidence among others are paramount in education because they play a cardinal role in improving and maintaining quality.

The findings of the study also established that there is a critical shortage of qualified members of staff in most upper basic school which are catchment areas of Mwandi High School. In addition, the study revealed that due to poor road infrastructure leading to most upper basic schools which provide pupils to Mwandi High School, standards officers seldom visit such schools for quality assurance as well as teacher supervision related activities, among others.

The study found out that the policy has helped in increasing access to high school education to many disadvantaged pupils from distant basic schools. This move by the government was most welcome by many people in Mwandi area and was seen as one of the long term initiatives of empowering and cushioning widespread poverty in most parts of the country. However, the biggest lesson to learn is that policy must be informed by research. There was no inquiry by government into what would be the implications of automatic progression from

grade 9 to grade 10. Further, it was unfair on the part of pupils just as it was on the teachers and the school managers as they were to handle large numbers of pupils without the necessary inputs and human resource. The decision by the then Minister of Education compromises the principle of quality education. It appears that the minister was calling for "schooling" than educating the child.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- There is need for the school to put in place more extracurricular activities after school to keep learners busy as well as more character building activities such as religious programmes and motivational speeches, among others in order to help reduce indiscipline in schools.

- The Zambian Government should invest heavily in educational infrastructure by rehabilitating and constructing more classrooms to reduce congestion and some boarding houses to accommodate some learners in boarding to reduce disciplinary cases at Mwandi at High School.

- The Ministry of Education must reinforce its educational materials production and procurement systems so that they become more decentralized. This will assist in making the teaching and leaving material available to the end users easily like at Mwandi High School where they are lacking.

- The Zambian Government must implement what is stated in MoE (1996) to make school based assessments become part of the final grading for terminal certificate at each level. This will help to promote and sustain quality education.

- The Ministry of Education should consider increasing the number of teachers they recruit per year to match with the increase in pupil enrolments. This will help resolve the problem of disproportional teacher-pupil ratios in schools. This will make teachers be available to attend to individual pupils' work accordingly. The increased recruitment of teachers should go hand in hand with improving conditions of service for teachers so that their morale is boosted and in turn, quality teachers will be retained in the teaching profession.

- Government must reinforce the operations of the department that deals with quality assurance to make Standard officers monitor quality standards in high schools as required. Routine monitoring of schools such as Mwandi by standards officers will assist in promoting and sustaining standards in schools.

- The Zambian Government should consult extensively other stake holders in the provision of education such as religious groups, communities and Non-Governmental Organisations in order to come up with a united position over new reforms. The situation at hand is not health where mission schools accept pupils to grade 10 using their own methods.

REFERENCES

Adewale, J.C. (2004). *Examiners 'Sociological Factors as Correlates and attitude towards public Examinations Assessments: International Center of Educational Evaluation.* Ibadan: University of Ibadan

Banks, J. A. (1993). *Education and Cultural Diversity in the USA*. London: Rout ledge.

Bastian, M. (1993). *Running Schools with communities*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Best, W. J. and Kahn, J.V. (2008). *Research in Education*. New Delhi: Prentice-Hall.

Bruce, G. (1969). *Secondary School Examinations and Facts and Commentary*. London: Pergamon Press.

Calderhead, J. and Sharrock, S. B. (1997). *Understanding Teacher Education.* London: Palmer Press.

Chare, D. (1972). *Assessments in Education*. London: MacMillan Publishers.

Christopher, C.B and West, B.J. (eds) (1999). *Managing Learning for Achievement through Effective Learning*. New York: Prentice-Hall.

Cole, M. (ed) (1989). Education for Quality: *Some Guidelines for Good Practice Good*. London: Routledge

Cummings, W.K. (1977). *Patterns of Modern Education*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Dewey, J. (2002). *The child and the Curriculum*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Dorothy, A.W. (1961). *Test Construction-Development and Interpretation of Achievement Tests*. Ohio: Merril Books, Inc.

D'souza, A. A. (1969).*The Human Factor of Education*. Bombay: Longman.

Edwards, A. and Knight, P. (2002) .*Effective Early Years Education-Teaching Children*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Ezewu, E. (1983). *Sociology of Education*. Lagos: Longman.

Feustein, M.T. (1986). *Partners in Education: Evaluation Development and Community Programmes with Participants*. Oxford: MacMillan Education.

Forojalla, S.B. (2003). *Educational Planning for Development*. New York: MacMillan Press Limited.

Ghosh, B.N. (2003). *Scientific Methods in Social Research*. A-59 Oklahoma: Sterling Publishers**.**

Groundlund, N.E (1968). *Constructing Achievements Tests*. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Groundlund, N.E. (1981). *Measurement and Evaluation in Teaching. 4ᵗʰ Edition* New York: MacMillan Publishing House.

GRZ, *2006. Vision 2030*. Lusaka: Government Printers

Jacobs, M. (2002). *Teaching and Learning Dynamic, A Participative, Approach.* New Delhi : Sterling Publishers Private Limited*.*

Kelly,D. M. (1994). "School drop outs", in Hussein and Postlethwaite (eds). *The International Encyclopedia of Education volume 9, 2nd Edition.* Sandton: Heinemann (Pty) Limited.

Kelly, M.J. (1998). *The Origins and Development of Education in Zambia: From Pre-Colonial Times to 1996.* Lusaka: Image Publishers Limited.

Kombo, D. and Tromp, D. (2006). *Proposal and Thesis Writing: An Introduction*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.

Leemer, E. (1999). Contemporary Education-Global Issues. *Teachers' College Record* 9 (4) 595-612.

Lewis, E.M. (1960). *Teaching History in Secondary Schools*. London: Evans Brothers Limited.

Marley, A.(1992). *Resource Book For Teachers* .Oxford: Oxford University Press.
MoE (1996). *Educating Our Future: National Policy on Education*. Lusaka:
Zambia Publishing House.

MoE (2007). *Education Sector National Implementation Framework 2008-2010*. Lusaka: Government of the Republic of Zambia.

MoE (2008). *Governance In Education Boards: A Handbook for Planning and Decision Making*. Lusaka: MoE.

Mugenda, M.M and Mugenda, A.G. (1999). *Research Methods. Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches.* Nairobi: African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS).

Munene, C. K. and Ogula, P. (1970). *Handbook on Educational Assessment and Evaluation*. Nairobi: New Kent Publishers.

Mwanakatwe, J. (1968). *The Growth and Development of Education in Zambia Since Independence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nieto, S. (1992). *Affirming Diversity: The Social Political Context of Multicultural Education*. New York. Longman Publishing House.

Ogunniyi, M.B. (1984). *Educational Measurements. Types of States and Evaluation*. Ikeja: Longman.

Orodho, A.J. (2003). *Essential of educational and Social Sciences Research Method*. *Nairobi*: Masola Publishers.

Owen, R. G. (1988). *High Schools*. Phoenix: Oryx.

Sidhu, K. S. (2007). *New Approaches to Measurements and Evaluation*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited.

Snelson, P. (1990). *Educational Development in Northern Rhodesia 1883-1945*. Lusaka: Kenneth Kaunda Foundation.

Steinhouse, L. (1988). *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development*. London: Binddles Limited, Gulford and King's Lynn.

Tom, R and Korthagan, T. (eds) (1975). *Teachers who Teach Teachers. Reflections Teacher Education*. Hong Kong: The Palmer House Press.

Tylor, A. (2009). *Research Methodology: A Guide For reserch in Management and Social Sciences*. New Delhi: PHI Learning.

UNESCO, (1981). *Planning Education for Reducing Inequalities, An 11EP Seminar*. Paris: International Institute of Educational Planning.

Wheeler, D. (1967). *Curriculum Press*. London: University of London.

WHO, (2008). *Absenteeism: Its causes and Implications*. Bulletin Number 8, page 3-4.

William, J. H. (1972). *The Diffusion of Modern schools*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Zambia Episcopal Conference, (2009).' *A Call To Integrity*'. A Pastoral Letter from the Zambia Episcopal Conference on the role of all Zambians to work for the common good of our nation. Lusaka: Zambia Episcopal Church.

APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

1. What is your opinion regarding the Zambian Government's 2008 policy of doing away with the grade 9 cut-off points?

2. Does the policy affect the overall academic performance of pupils in your school?

3. How is the discipline of pupils in your school?

4. Does the policy of abolition of the grade 9 cut-off points have any effect on the available teaching and learning aids in your school?

5. How does the policy affect the professional teacher-pupil relationships in your school?

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

The purpose of this study is to gather information on the implications of abolition the Grade 9 cut-off points system in rural high schools: The case of Mwandi High School in the Western Province of Zambia. The information you will provide is only going for academic purpose. Please do not indicate your name and feel free to express yourself. Answer appropriately either by ticking or by explaining.

1. What is/are your teaching subject(s)

    ……………………………………………………………..…………………………........

2. How many years have you been teaching at Mwandi High School?

(a)   Below two (2) years   ☐

(b)   Between 3 – 5 years   ☐

(c)   Five (5) years and above   ☐

3. Do you think the policy of abolition of the grade 9 cut-off points has any effects on the quality of education in your subject?

(a) Yes   ☐   (b) No   ☐

    Give reasons for your answer in '3'.

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

4. Has the policy got any effects on the discipline of pupils in your lessons or

    Classes?

(a) Yes   ☐   (b) No   ☐

Give reasons for your answer in '4'.

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

5. How regular do you go through pupils' work in class?

After every lesson   [   ]

When there is time   [   ]

Others   [   ]

Explain your answers………………………………………………………………….

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

6. Are there adequate desks, teaching and learning aids or space for pupils in your classes?

(a) Yes   [   ]   (b)   No   [   ]

Explain your answer in'6'

…………………………………………………………………………………...……

…………………………………………………………………………………………

7.   How are the performance levels of pupils in your lessons/classes?

(a) Encouraging ☐   (b) Not encouraging   ☐

8   If not encouraging, what measures has your school put in place to improve

pupil performance.

………………………..…………………………………………..……………………………………

……

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

1. What is/are your teaching subjects?

2. How many periods do you teach in a week?

3. How many pupils do you teach per lesson on average?

4. How is the general class academic performance of learners in your subject?

5. Do you have adequate infrastructure in your school?

6. Are the teaching and learning aids at your disposal, sufficient in your area of specialisation?

7. What measures do you think the Zambian government should have put in place before doing away with the grade 9 cut-off points?

8. How are the levels of absenteeism in your school?

9. How frequent as a teacher do you interact with individual pupils over academic Issues?

10. Do you have any views about the effect of abolishing grade 9 cut-off points on the quality of education in your school?

APPENDIX 4

DISCUSSION GUIDE WITH PUPILS

1. On the average, how many are you in class?

2. Do you have enough learning materials such as books during lessons?

3. Do you have adequate desks in your classrooms?

4. How often do teachers mark your work?

5. How often do teachers attend to you as individuals when you have academic or social problem?

6. How often do teachers assess you?

7. What is your opinion about the abolition of grade 9 cut-off points?

APPENDIX 5

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

S/No.	Item	Comment
1	Learning and Teaching Aids	
2	Desks	
3	Classrooms	
4	Attendance of lessons	
5	Discipline	
6	Facilities for extra-curricular activities	