

**STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS ON ABSENTEEISM AMONG
PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS FROM TOBACCO AND NON-
TOBACCO FARMING HOMES: A CASE OF NKEYEMA DISTRICT.**

BY

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of The Requirements For The Award of The Degree of Master of Education
In Sociology of Education.**

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DECLARATION

I, **SISHWASHWA NYUMBU**, do hereby declare that this dissertation represents my own original work as it does not contain any work that has ever previously been submitted for the award of a degree at the University of Zambia or any other University.

I further declare that all literature used in this dissertation has been acknowledged

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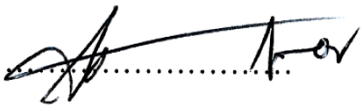
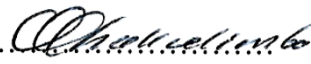
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation of Sishwashwa Nyumbu has been approved as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in Sociology of Education by the University of Zambia.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my cousin, Mukelabai Mubiana who is my hero and source of inspiration.

ABSTRACT

This study was aimed at ascertaining the link between tobacco farming and the factors which contribute to learner absenteeism in selected primary schools of Nkeyema District. The objectives were to: analyse the factors which contribute to absenteeism of learners from tobacco and non-tobacco farming homes in Nkeyema district, find out the stakeholders' perceived effect of tobacco farming on primary school learner absenteeism in Nkeyema district and to devise measures for addressing learner absenteeism in Nkeyema district. The study was qualitative in nature and had a sample of 44 participants who were purposively selected from two primary schools in Nkeyema District. These participants were selected from class teachers, learners from both tobacco and non-tobacco farming home backgrounds, tobacco and non-tobacco farming parents from the communities of the two selected schools. A descriptive design was employed and data was collected using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Data was later analyzed thematically. The findings of the study revealed that the major factors which contributed to absenteeism among learners from both tobacco and non-tobacco farming homes were; working in tobacco activities, doing of house chores, long distances from homes to schools and lack of encouragement by parents. The study also found out that tobacco farming had a negative effect on learner absenteeism in Nkeyema District in that it exacerbated the problem of long distances from homes to school through the camp farming system, tobacco farming promoted the over dependence on children to do house chores when parents were busy with farm works. Tobacco farming also promoted child labour. The study suggested some remedies which can be used to reduce learner absenteeism in Nkeyema District. These were; parents to be providing their children with the educational requirements as a way of motivating them to attend school, sensitize both parents and their children on the importance of regular school attendance, increase parents- teachers collaboration on matters affecting learners and that the tobacco farming companies operating in Nkeyema District should work together with the school administrators to introduce mobile education program for learners in the tobacco farming camps.

Key words: *Absenteeism, Farming, Learners, Tobacco, Perceptions, Parents.*

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ACRONYMS

JTI	Japan Tobacco International
DEBS	District Education Board Secretary
EFA	Education for All
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
MOE	Ministry of Education
PTA	Parent Teacher Association

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview

This chapter presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, and research questions. The significance of the study, theoretical framework, delimitation, limitations, and operational definitions of terms are also elaborated.

1.2. Background of the Study

The declaration of Education as a basic human right at the World Conference on Education for All Jomtien, Thailand 1990 and the World Education Forum Dakar, Senegal 2000 led to the growth of interest in improving the provision of education by most countries. Article 26 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that, every child has a right to education that develops their human personality and strengthening of the respect for Human Right. The Article further states that, “Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages.” Any nation’s children are its future workers and leaders. Education remains a major tool by which people become economically and socially empowered. Zambia like other countries has put in place measures aimed at providing free Primary education to every child. However, this has faced a number of challenges such as learner absenteeism (Educating Our Future, 1996).

Keter (2013) describes absenteeism in school to be the habit of staying away from school without providing a genuine or any reason for not doing so. When students are absent from school, arrive late, or miss class, they reduce their opportunities to learn and miss on critical content planned for the time. It is noted that absenteeism is highest in primary schools which is the most critical level for developing foundational skills like reading (California Department of Justice, 2014). A study by Kasanda and Sakala (2006) on the provision of quality education in Zambia revealed that school attendance was poor in rural areas compared to urban area. This has contributed to poor

performance of children in rural schools during national examinations. Regular attendance at school is essential if pupils are to learn and keep up with lessons. Absenteeism is a concern as it leads to the academic performance of the child going down, ultimately leading to the decline in the overall school performance.

Zambia has put in place laws to help achieve the goal of providing quality education to all children. The Zambian Education Act 434 No 23 of 2011-part IV Right to Education cap 1 no 15 and 17 states; A child has a right to free basic education. 17(1) states except as provided for in this Act or any other written law, a parent shall enroll a child who has attained the school going age at an education institution and shall ensure the child's attendance at the education institution. Despite what has been declared in the Zambia Education Act of 2011, absenteeism is still rampant in most primary schools especially those in rural areas where parents tend not to monitor their children's attendance in school.

According to the EPDC Spotlight on Zambia, (2012) net attendance rate for primary school pupils was at 82.4, suggesting that more than 10% of pupils enroll but do not attend school regularly. The Understanding Childrens' Work report on Zambia (2012) further stated that child labour emanating from agricultural activities in rural areas have a negative impact on pupil school attendance and that the most affected learners are those from poor economic background. Sometimes learners may be withdrawn from school by their parents to boost their family income by involving them in cheap labour at an early age. Teasley (2004) is of the opinion that learners' poor attendance is associated with poverty and that learners tend to show first warning signs in the primary school phase of their education. Education in rural areas faces a number of challenges which requires some finances if a child is to have access to quality education. Raising

such finances is what leads to some parents to involve the children in some form of cheap labour which in turn contributes to absenteeism.

In Nkeyema District which is one of the farming-blocks in Zambia, tobacco is a common cash crops which has seen majority of the population being involved either as famers or as farm workers. In this District, tobacco farming is seen to be the main source of upward social mobility. There are different views of people concerning the effect of tobacco farming on primary school education in Nkeyema district. In this study the reasercher was intreseted in finding out the stakeholder's perceptions on absenteeism among primary school learners in Nkeyema District by analyzing the factors which contribute to absenteeism in both tobacco farming and non- tobacco farming homes.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Despite, the various measures which the government of the republic of Zambia has put in place aimed at achieving universal access to quality primary Education such as the implementation of the policy on free primary Education, learner absenteeism from school is still a challenge in most rural schools (Shooba, 2013). If not reduced, absenteeism may make Zambia fail to meet the 2030 sustainable development goal of promoting a lifelong and equitable education for all. While a number of studies have been done on the causes and effects of pupil absenteeism from school (Kabanga and Mulauzi, 2020), little seems to be known about the stakeholders' perceptions on absenteeism among primary school learners from tobacco and non-tobacco farming homes especially in Nkeyema District of Zambia hence this study.

1.4. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the link between tobacco farming and the factors which contribute to learner absenteeism in selected primary schools of Nkeyema District.

1.5. Research objectives

1. To analyse the factors which contribute to absenteeism among learners from tobacco and non-tobacco farming homes in Nkeyema District.
2. To find out the stakeholders' perceived effects of tobacco farming on primary school learner absenteeism in Nkeyema district.
3. To devise measures for addressing learner absenteeism in Nkeyema District.

1.6. Research Questions

1. What are the factors which contribute to absenteeism among learners from tobacco and non-tobacco farming homes in Nkeyema district?
2. What are the stakeholder's views about the effects of tobacco farming on primary school learner absenteeism in Nkeyema District?
3. What can be done to address learner absenteeism in Nkeyema District?

1.7. Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may provide valuable information on managing primary school learner absenteeism to Educational Administrators, Policy Makers and other Stakeholders working in schools. Furthermore, the findings of this study might influence policy formulations and may be used to develop evidence-based decisions when dealing with learner absenteeism in primary schools at the district and later at national level. Above all, the study will add knowledge to the existing body of literature on primary school learner absenteeism in relation to tobacco farming .

1.8. Theoretical Framework

This study adopted Maslow's theory as lenses to interrogate the intersection between various factors in tobacco and non-tobacco farming homes and absenteeism. The humanistic approach is

of the view that human beings possess an innate tendency to improve and to determine their lives through decisions they make (Lahey, 2009). Maslow proposed a hierarchy of needs model featuring five levels to provide a better way of understanding how individual needs are met (Maslow, 1943). The five levels of motivational needs are physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, self-esteem needs and self-actualization as highlighted in the diagram below;



Figure 1: Maslow's hierarchy of needs

The first basic needs are physiological needs such as water, food, medicine, and shelter (Milheim, 2012). Maslow (1943) describes the body's physiological needs as basic to human survival. Children cannot attend school when they are hungry, lack adequate clothing. Socio-economic factors can cause learners to absent themselves from school. Maslow (1943) indicated that until physiological needs are satisfied to a degree to maintain life no other motivating factors can work. Children are motivated to absent themselves from school by unsatisfied needs. The next level, safety needs imply that without safety, pupils feel anxious and uncertain. If the school does not

establish a comfortable climate such as proper buildings during, for example, cold or rainy days, learners may absent themselves from lessons. Moving upwards the hierarchy, the third level relates to an individual's goal of belonging and being accepted by others. If the child is deprived of love and belonging by parents there is a high likelihood of not attending school. The fourth level in Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs is self-esteem which is the need for humans to be respected and valued by others. Pupils desire to be held in self-esteem so as to have confidence. If they feel undervalued, labeled and made funny of they will decide not to be in school all the time. According to Maslow (1943) self-actualization involves helping people become all that they are capable of becoming. If the parents, teachers and the education system as whole does not support learners as they strive to self-actualize, they will be demotivated and eventually end up as chronic absentees. Tobacco farming is an economic activity in Nkeyema District which however is more labour demanding than other crops grown in the District (Goma et.al,2020). This theory provided the framework to understand various connections through which tobacco affects primary school learner absenteeism in Nkeyema District.

1.9. Limitations of the Study

The focal point of this study was to find out the stakeholders' perceptions about absenteeism of learners from tobacco and non-tobacco farming homes. The study was dependent on the two sampled primary schools in Nkeyema District and as such the sample size was too small to warrant generalization of the findings to other settings. The other limitation was that, the researcher had challenges in acquiring information from some participants due to the nature of the topic. Some participants might have been apprehensive in this study and might not have disclosed vital information especially the home related factors associated with learner absenteeism.

1.10. Delimitation

According to Orodho (2005), delimitations are choices made by the researcher describing the boundaries that have been set for the study. This study was confined to only 2 selected primary schools in Nkeyema District. Nkeyema District was chosen for this study because it is one of the main tobacco farming regions in Zambia which the researcher could easily access.

1.11. Definition of Key Terms

Learner Absenteeism– The term that was used throughout the study to encompass all learner absence from school both excused and unexcused.

Chronic Absenteeism– learner absenteeism that is frequent, prolonged, or excessive. Chronic absenteeism is frequently excused by parents.

Truancy– Being absent from school without permission.

Tobacco farming- In this study tobacco farming referred to all year round activities involved in the production of tobacco. From land preparations to the receiving of money after selling.

Learner attendance - It referred to the presence of pupils in school and the opposite of learner absenteeism.

School- An institution designed to provide the learning process and learning environment for the teaching of learners in different skills under the directions of teachers.

Tobacco farming parent - The significant caregiver, one who has primary responsibility for, and lives with the child. This can be a family member or guardian to the child involved in tobacco farming.

Non-Tobacco farming parent - The significant caregiver, one who has primary responsibility for, and lives with the child. This can be a family member or guardian to the child not involved in tobacco farming.

1.12. Summary

This chapter gave a background to the study on the stakeholder's perception about the impact of tobacco farming on learner absenteeism in selected primary schools. The next chapter will review various literatures deemed relevant to the study based on the research objectives.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the related literature and is presented thematically as a foundation for trying to understand the causes of learner absenteeism, effect of tobacco farming on pupil school attendance, and strategies which can help reduce pupil school absenteeism and increase attendance.

2.2 The Concept of Absenteeism

According to Gabb (1994), a number of terms are related and used interchangeably with learner absenteeism. These concepts are familiar in meaning and similar to absenteeism. The concepts include truancy and school phobia. Absenteeism can be authorized and unauthorized; absenteeism can be legitimate e.g. due to illness or illegitimate due to parents and learners under estimating the value of education (Atkinson et al.,2000). Truancy can be defined as unauthorized absence from school. In this case, a learner reports for school for a brief moment and later on disappears. It is also closely linked to partial absence as a learner may show up and leave school before the actual knocking off time. Truancy can also be explained as the act or condition of being absent from school without permission (Edward & Malcon, 2002). In this case both the school administrators and the parents have no reason as to why the learner has not reported to school.

Another concept closely related to learner absenteeism is school phobia. School phobia refers to unwillingness to attend school and staying at home with the knowledge of the learner's parents or guardians. School phobia includes fear of failure and concern about the health and welfare of learners by parents (Moseki, 2004). An example of school phobia is a child's sudden fear of attending school because he or she is subjected to criticism by other learners and teachers.

Another important concept closely related to pupil absenteeism from school is condoned absence which mostly comes as a result of parents or guardians of the pupils failing to uphold their responsibilities and shift them to the children thereby depriving them of the time to attend school. In this study all the terms discussed above shall be used by the researcher to generally mean learner absence from school.

2.3 Factors which Contribute to Pupil Absenteeism

The reasons for increased learner absenteeism from schools cited in most literature are numerous but can be categorized in three main groups. These groups are individual factors, family socio-economic factors and school based factors. Individual or personal characteristics of people influence their personal lives in different ways including the ability to attend school or to absent themselves from school. School going pupils have different sets of personal characteristics such as abilities, expectations and interests and based on these sets of characteristics, they maybe more or less susceptible to absenteeism. Reid, (2005) states that individual pupils with inadequate social skills, cognitive skills, emotional problems and low self-esteem are more likely not to attend school regularly. Hence it is noted that the characteristics and qualities of individuals determines the rate at which they attend school.

In a study done in Australia by Moseki (2004), it was found that age is a cause of pupil absenteeism from schools. Older learners are more likely to absent schools than younger ones because of many reasons such as peer pressure and joining of gang groups which do various devious activities during school hours. For example, in most rural areas of Zambia parents use their children to do most home activities for them. The older the children the more home obligations they are expected to have hence making it difficult for them to attend school regularly. Apart from the learners' age, Moseki' study also found that personality factors such as lack of recognition of regular attendants

can promote learner absenteeism and this was in line with Kearney (2008). Learners need some acknowledgement for regular school attendance and when this is not done they down play the importance of school attendance. The study by Moseki adopted a quantitative approach and was done in secondary schools in Australia, hence its findings may not be generalized to a Zambian setting and also taking into account that the study was conducted in secondary schools. The age differences between secondary school going learners and primary school going pupils may have some implications on the findings. The current study sought to analyse the factors found in tobacco and non-tobacco farming homes and how such factors contribute to learner school absenteeism.

In a study done by Katanga in Namibia in 2016 on the management of learners' absenteeism in rural primary schools, the findings on the causes of learner absenteeism from schools were categorized as; family, individual, school environment and socio-economic. Most respondents stated that, learners basically absent themselves from schools because of their involvement in performing domestic chores at home and in the fields. The study also cited various personal reasons such as absenteeism of female learners during their menstrual periods, lack of motivation to attend school and early marriages. The socio-economic status of parents was also stated to be one of the major contributing factors to learner absenteeism in primary schools. Due to the low economic status of parents, hunger was seen to be a contributing factor to absenteeism because some learners did not have food to eat at home hence making it difficult for them to attend school on an empty stomach. These findings are in line with the Nelson Mandela Research Report of 2005 which noted hunger to be a contributing factor to learner absenteeism in South Africa. The report further stated that learners went to school without having breakfast or having missed a meal the previous night hence making them weak to participate in school activities and this subjected them to absenteeism. Child labour was also stated as the cause of learner absenteeism. The HSRC (2005) states that,

38% of South African learners were engaged in some form of household or domestic labour. At some schools learners were expected to work, for instance cleaning their classrooms. School attendance was slightly higher for learners who were not engaged in any work at school. Attendance rate of learners who attended schools in which they were made to work was 94% compared to 97% in a school where learners did not work at all (Wittenberg, 2005). This clearly shows that there is a link between work given to pupils and their possibility to attend school. Most schools in the rural areas of Zambia use pupils to do many more type of jobs such as cleaning the classrooms and school premises. The study of Katanga focused on the management of learners absenteeism in primary schools and did not put into consideration of the farming home backgrounds of the pupils in trying to see the causes of absenteeism hence this study.

According to a research done by UNESCO (2009), learner absenteeism in rural areas was seen to be caused by lack of proper modes of transport from homes to schools and limited hostel facilities which expose learners to difficulties in times of bad weather such as when it is too rainy, very cold or hot. The research further cited incidents of intimidation of girls by boys and outsiders as a contributing factor to learner absenteeism.

In Zambia, Kabungo conducted a study in 2018 on learner absenteeism in primary schools in Itezhi-tezhi District using a mixed method approach. The findings of his study were that poverty led to learners' absenteeism due to the hunger that stroke their homes. His study findings reviewed that , learners resorted to staying home than going to school on an empty stomach because it will be of no use attending lessons while the concentration is low. It was put that concentration when one is hungry is threatened as it requires energy to pay attention to what is happening around especially in a classroom situation.

Kabanga and Mulauzi (2020) in their study of understanding pupil absenteeism and its factors in rural primary schools of Nyimba District of Zambia found out that causes of absenteeism were in five categories: physical factors (e.g. rivers, long distances), health factors (e.g. sickness), personal factors (peer pressure, lack of interest, early marriages), home related factors (poverty, farming, household chores, family business), cultural factors (puberty rites), and school related factors (lack of motivation, teacher punishment). In their study, Kabanga and Mulauzi adopted a descriptive research design which was supported by qualitative methods of data collection. Interview guides and six focus group discussions were used to collect data from a purposively sampled population. Similarly, a study by Weiss and García (2018) cited in Kabanga and Mulauzi (2020) revealed that poor health, residential mobility, extensive family responsibilities (e.g. children looking after siblings) along with inadequate supports for students within the educational system (e.g. lack of adequate transportation, unsafe conditions, lack of medical services, harsh disciplinary measures, etc.) were all associated with a greater likelihood of being absent, and particularly with being persistently absent. In as much as this study had a similar methodology with that of Kabanga and Mulauzi (2020), the findings of the two studies differ because the current study was conducted in a different setting and had a specific interest of looking at the factors in both tobacco and non-tobacco farming homes and how those factors affected learner school attendance.

Shoba (2013) investigated causes of pupils absenteeism from Grade 7 composite examination. The study also sought to determine the roles that parents and schools need to play to curb pupil absenteeism. The findings showed that the major drivers of pupil absenteeism from Grade 7 composite examination were physical factors such as long distance to school and adverse climate, especially in the rainy season when roads became impassible due to floods, health factors such as illnesses and death in the family, and personal attitude like pupils not being interested in school

due to peer pressure and laziness. Other causes of pupil absenteeism from Grade 7 composite examination were, home related factors like parents and guardians having a negative attitude towards school, house chores, parents' failure to provide food and other school requirements, herding cattle, parents relocating and children being withdrawn from school during the farming season. Furthermore, cultural and social factors such as early marriages, early pregnancies and initiation ceremonies and also teacher related factors like teacher's absenteeism from work and lack of commitment, teachers' failure to cover the syllabus adequately and failure to prepare the pupils for examinations were yet other causes of pupil absenteeism from examinations. Additionally, school climate and classroom environment were also found to be causes of pupil absenteeism during examinations especially poor sanitation, poor water supply, one candidate being entered at more than one centre, lack of classroom furniture and unavailability of teaching and learning materials. In as much as shobas' study focused on pupils absenteeism from grade seven examinations, the findings still fits and can be applied to the class absenteeism, for example these findings are not very different from those of Wadesango and Machingambi (2011) in South Africa. However the current study intends to interact with all these findings by checking the home background of a pupil (tobacco and non-tobacco farming homes) and how the characteristics found in such a home can either fight or promote the causes of absenteeism.

2.4 The Impact of Tobacco Farming on Learner Absenteeism

In all societies, the family plays a major role in shaping the educational experiences and achievements of the children and transmission of status from one generation to the other. Throughout the world, children from parents with high socio-economic status are more likely to be enrolled in school than children from poor families (Buchman, 2002). Household characteristics are important determinants of schooling decisions and outcomes. The household production

function approach developed by Becker (1965) is often used by researchers in economics of education to show that household characteristics such as income and levels of parental education determine whether a child attends school, stays in school, learns and makes progress to higher levels of education or not (Samarrai & Peasgood, 1998). It is also used in economics of education to model other household schooling decisions, such as the type of school that a child attends (Kingdon, 2007). The above principles are very important and informative to the current study in that they lay a ground argument. This study sought to find out the perceived effect of tobacco farming on school absenteeism. Tobacco farming is an economic activity through which people raise their socio-economic status in NKeyema District. At the same time tobacco farming is said to be more labour demanding. It is this unclear debate that the current study sought to address.

According to a study done in Indonesia by the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 2014, most children attended school and worked in tobacco farms only outside school hours, before and after school, and on weekends and during school holidays. However, the Human Rights Watch found that work in tobacco farming interfered with schooling for some children. These children often said that their families could not afford to put them through school, or relied on them to work. Most communities did not have to pay school fees to attend public schools but the cost of books, uniforms, and transportation to and from school. Some of these children decided to work so as to make money for the family and for food (ILO, 2014). These findings are more important to this study in that there is a number of child headed school going children in zambia. These children are more likely to involve themselves in any form of employment available so as to raise funds for their consumption.

Statistics from various studies reveal that child labour continues to be evident in various parts of the African continent and numbers of child laborers keeps on increasing day by day. Lekakeny, (2012) noted that in Kenya, child labour continues to be a problem. It is rampant in agriculture, domestic service, quarries and fishing. It is also rampant among street children and in child prostitution (ILO/IPEC, 2007). Child laborers can be classified in three groups; never enrolled in school, school drop-outs and those who are enrolled and work at the same time. The latter group has higher chances of dropping out of school so as to enter fully the labor market. In Kenya, Non-enrolled children constitute 3.5million with about 2 million of them being engaged in hazardous work, for example, quarrying, mining, fishing and child prostitution (ANPPCAN, 2005).

The International Labour Organization did a rapid assesment on child labour in tobacco growing communities of Kaoma District of Zambia in 2014 to investigate working children in tobacco-growing communities with a view to understand the problem of child labour in tobacco growing activities and suggest solutions. The findings were that Child labour in agriculture in general, and in tobacco-related activities in particular Kaoma District was a serious problem and affected both boys and girls of all age-groups. Most children worked in tobacco as family labour with no remuneration for their work, while the much older children (from15 to 17years) would seek work for wages in other tobacco small-holder family farms. Children's work in agriculture is considered as natural like any other domestic work and as such, most families believed that children had a paramount responsibility to work in the fields as a service to their households. Because of such a mind set, a large proportion of children interviewed saw nothing wrong with engaging in tobacco growing and other related activities. The assessment further reviewed that, the cultural belief system of the parents promotes child labour and what makes it worse is the very modest levels of education of parents of the working children. Parents with very little or no education at all ,thus

do not put a premium on their children's education putting the future of children in jeopardy as such children will have very few alternatives in life.

Most studies on how farming factors affect learner school attendance have been done though not directly related to tobacco farming but rather farming in general and other sources of child labour. Agriculture in Zambia is growing but the sector also continues to have the largest share of child laborers estimated at more than 90 per cent. This is according to findings of the International Labour Organization (ILO) which also indicated that the trend had not reduced since 2012. The ILO Global Estimates of child labour results and trends focusing on the 2012-2016 interval also notes that a number of children are trapped in child labour worldwide, but the largest proportion of children in hazardous work is in the sub-Saharan Africa. According to ILO's 2012 study for child labour and modern slavery, which included human trafficking, child labour remained primarily concentrated in agriculture.

Various studies have shown that economic activities have an effect on the education of children by facilitating the involvement of these children into child labour. Westaway et al (2009) studied the educational attainment and literacy in Ugandan fishing communities undertaken in three Ugandan villages. They established using an in-depth qualitative research that low educational attainment existed in the fishing communities where very few children completed primary school and even fewer transitioned to secondary school. In addition to high dropouts, they also observed poor attendance and poor results in the end of year examinations. Some of the reasons they highlighted for the dropout and poor performance were offer of paid work (often in relation to fishing), group influence and lack of money to pay for school requirement. Udo et al (2013), in their study, which was aimed at establishing the effect of fishing activities on academic performance of teenagers amongst the riparian communities, found that academic performance of

students was statistically and inversely related to frequency of fishing per week but directly and significantly related to fishing as a means of supporting education. This literature clearly shows that parents in most communities especially in rural areas engage their children in what ever economic activities so as to maximize the labour force in order to meet the educational requirements.

From the above reviewed literature, it is not clear wheather factors found in a tobacco farming home contributed or reduced abseteeism in Nkeyema District where it is the main cash crop grown by most farmers. It is this gap in literature that this current study intended to close.

2.5 Measures for Addressing Absenteeism

Various measures for addressing learner absenteeism have been suggested in studies done in different parts of the world. In the study of Moseki (2004), it was established that one of the ways through which the problem of learner absenteeism can be curbed is through improvement of learner welfare both in the school and at home. Cohen and Ryan (1998) states that, the provision of school-based support services in the form of pastoral care counselling can help to reduce truancy and learner absenteeism in schools. The study further suggested that there was need for inter-departmental cooperation and government initiatives in the fight against learner absenteeism. Various agents in the communities must play a role in the promotion of learner school attendance by working towards the reduction in factors which hinder regular school attendance.

Katanga (2016) found out that, strategies most schools used to reduce learner absenteeism were; promotion of extra-curricular activities, awarding and recognizing good school attendance, improved school relationships with the community. The primary school feeding nutritional programme had contributed to school attendance. In Tanzania, a study on the characteristics associated with primary learners school attendance amongst the most vulnerable children indicates

that providing school fees, food assistance and holding support meetings improved school attendance (Ngondi, 2010). A study by Sianzala (2011), similarly reports that school feeding programme improved learner school attendance in all the schools it was introduced in Namibia. It is obvious that some pupils may fail to attend school regularly because of poverty, hence when such pupils are exposed to meals at school it becomes a big motivation. However this measure is not sustainable in that it is very difficult to continuously be able to provide meals to pupils in all schools. This finding was very important to the current study as it provided a base to be used in trying to see if learners from tobacco farming or non-tobacco farming homes can be motivated to attend school regularly or not.

Another intervention to absenteeism suggested by Teasley (2004), is that the family and the school should work hand in hand as a single unit where schools help parents to vigorously be involved in ensuring that their children attend school regularly. The involvement of parents in monitoring absenteeism is very significant as it makes them aware of the day to day progress of their children. The assumption underpinning this strategy is that school attendance can be improved if there is a good school-parent relationship by involving parents in the decision making processes and in monitoring absenteeism at school on a daily basis. However some of the findings on the causes of absenteeism stated above were that some parents use their children in various economic activities and as laborers. This therefore poses a doubt on the willingness of such parents to be able to cooperate with school administrators even when called upon.

In their study, Kabanga and Mulauzi (2020) suggested ways of addressing absenteeism and these included; calling for parents, teachers and all stakeholders in education to make firm decisions to stop absenteeism among the learners by avoiding early marriages, fostering collaboration and being flexible in time management. The study further recommended that school administrators

should take keen interest in providing careers talk to learners through invitation of significant people in society to share experiences with learners. Schools should engage in constructive sensitization of parents on the importance of education to curtail absenteeism in primary schools, parents should utilize parent teacher association (PTA) platforms to sensitize each other on the importance of education, promote traditional ceremonies during the holidays and weekends. The study also recommended that the ministry of general education should consider building more schools in rural areas to alleviate the problem of long distances learners cover daily. Harsh punishments should be given to men who marry or impregnate school going children. The findings of Kabanga and Mulauzi (2020) are very important measures which can help in the reduction of learner absenteeism because in most parts of the country especially in rural areas long distances between schools and homes is a major cause of absenteeism hence construction of more schools can really help. It is important to note that in this study, the researcher was interested in devising more attainable measures to help in reducing learner absenteeism in Nkeyema District.

The Zambian Education Act 434 No 23 of 2011 Article 18 also stipulates various measures aimed at ensuring that quality education is accessed by learners in the country by prohibiting avenues such as absenteeism. The Article under cap. 1 prohibits marrying off a learner who is a child and also clearly states that no parent should prevent or stop a learner who is a child from attending school for the purpose of marrying. A person who contravenes this section commits an offence and is liable, upon conviction, to imprisonment for a period of not less than fifteen years and may be liable to imprisonment for life. The provisions under this cap can help reduce the problem of child marriages which is one of the major contributing factors to learner absenteeism in schools and school dropout. The Education Act further states that a teacher, employee or other person at an educational institution shall not impose or administer corporal punishment on a learner. This is

very important in the race to reduce the problem of absenteeism among school going children because it aims at making the school environment welcoming and friendly for children. Like other studies reviewed above on the causes of absenteeism, corporal punishment is a very common contributing factor to absenteeism. A number of learners fail to attend school because they are scared of punishments and all other forms of inhuman treatment from the teachers.

2.6. Gaps In Literature

The above studies which the researcher reviewed were conducted in different geographical locations with different socio-economic environments from that of Nkeyema District where the current research was conducted. There was also no common studies which seemed to have provided data on whether tobacco farming contributed to learner absenteeism or reduced it particularly in Nkeyema District which is a tobacco farming zone in Zambia, hence the gap. There was also scarcity of statistical data on the nature and conditions of children from tobacco farming homes in relation to school absenteeism.

2.7. Summary of the Reviewed Literature

Empirical literature has shown that children of primary school going age from different parts of the world are involved in child labour. The major beneficiaries of child labour are individual households although there are also some pupils who gain from it.

Most of the studies affirm that child labour is inextricably connected to socio-economic situation of a given region. Most studies have not focused on specifically tobacco farming but agriculture in general and how it impacts on learner school attendance. Though there is not much work done on specifically tobacco farming related child labour. The literature reviewed above has shown various factors that contribute to learner school absenteeism and also some remedies that can be used in reducing it. This literature has informed the current study which sought to provide a check

on whether tobacco farming promotes or fights the various causes of learner absenteeism. The next chapter gives an insight and discussion of the methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

The previous chapter presented a literature review related to learner absenteeism in relation to tobacco farming. This chapter looks at the research methodology applied in this study in an effort to obtain appropriate data that would answer the research questions on the perceived effect of tobacco farming on primary school learner absenteeism in Nkeyema District of Western province. The chapter presents a logical process for identifying research participants, data collection and analysis.

3.2. Research Design

Kombo and Tromp (2006:70) defines a research design as a glue like structure that holds all the elements in a research project together. A descriptive research design was employed in this study in order to obtain extensive results on perceived implications of tobacco farming on primary school learner absenteeism. This design was used with the intention to conduct an in-depth investigation aimed at getting peoples' (selected stakeholders in education) views, attitudes, and perceptions concerning certain phenomena under the natural setting. The research adopted qualitative methods of data collection so as to have an insight to the research problem (learner absenteeism) through narrative and verbal data rather than by a scaled, calibrated measurement as it would be the case with quantitative research designs (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). According to Creswell (1998), a qualitative approach can be used to explore the extent of participant behavior through in-depth and open-ended interviews. The qualitative approach helped the researcher to solicit views and perceptions of participants about the impact of tobacco farming on primary school learner absenteeism in Nkeyema District. Descriptive studies often result in the formulation of important knowledge and solutions to significant problems such as learner absenteeism which was the major problem in this study. According to Cohen and Manion (1994), descriptive designs aim to describe the nature of a situation at a particular time. It helps to critically analyze the objectives to be achieved and reflects on the type of knowledge to be obtained, that is to describe, explain and understand the phenomena in the frame of the perspective chosen. Using this design, interviews and focus group discussions were conducted on a sample of people which was selected to accurately represent the entire population which was being studied to collect primary data while secondary data was collected from school documents such as attendance registers.

3.3. Target Population

This study targeted all the primary school going learners, teachers and parents of learners in two selected primary schools of Nkeyema District in Western province.

3.4. Sample Size

This study had a sample size of 44 participants distributed as follows: 16 learners, 8 class teachers and 20 parents of learners from the 2 selected primary schools. The following tables show the biographical data of the participants:

Table 1: Biographical Details for Teacher Participants.

Participant	Gender	Name of School	Age	Qualification	Years of Teaching
Class teacher 1	M	School A	37	Degree	10
Class teacher 2	F	School A	40	Diploma	14
Class teacher 3	M	School A	46	Certificate	16
Class teacher 4	F	School A	39	Diploma	12
Class teacher 5	F	School B	48	Certificate	17
Class teacher 6	M	School B	44	Degree	14
Class teacher 7	M	School B	40	Degree	10
Class teacher 8	F	School B	38	Degree	9

Source: Field data (2020).

Table 2 :Biographical Data of Parent Participants from both School A and B

Participant	Gender	Age	School Community
Tobacco Farming Parent 1	F	48	School A
Tobacco Farming Parent 2	M	50	School A
Tobacco Farming Parent 3	M	49	School A
Tobacco Farming Parent 4	F	36	School A
Tobacco Farming Parent 5	M	34	School A
Tobacco Farming Parent 6	M	41	School B
Tobacco Farming Parent 7	M	36	School B
Tobacco Farming Parent 8	F	40	School B

Tobacco Farming Parent 9	F	42	School B
Tobacco Farming Parent 10	M	53	School B
Non- Tobacco Farming Parent 1	M	45	School A
Non- Tobacco Farming Parent 2	F	39	School A
Non- Tobacco Farming Parent 3	F	41	School A
Non- Tobacco Farming Parent 4	F	48	School A
Non- Tobacco Farming Parent 5	M	33	School A
Non- Tobacco Farming Parent 6	M	50	School B
Non- Tobacco Farming Parent 7	M	39	School B
Non- Tobacco Farming Parent 8	F	42	School B
Non- Tobacco Farming Parent 9	F	37	School B
Non- Tobacco Farming Parent 10	F	44	School B

Source: Field data (2020).

Table 3 :Biographical Data for Learner Participants from both School A and B.

Participant	Name of School	Gender	Grade	Age	Absenteeism/Attendance Status
Learner 1	School A	F	7	14	Absentee
Learner 2	School A	F	7	13	Absentee
Learner 3	School A	M	7	15	Absentee
Learner 4	School A	M	7	14	Absentee
Learner 5	School A	M	7	17	Absentee
Learner 6	School A	M	7	15	Absentee

Learner 7	School A	F	7	14	Absentee
Learner 8	School A	F	7	13	Absentee
Learner 9	School B	M	7	14	Absentee
Learner 10	School B	F	7	14	Absentee
Learner 11	School B	F	7	14	Absentee
Learner 12	School B	M	7	14	Absentee
Learner 13	School B	F	7	13	Absentee
Learner 14	School B	F	7	15	Absentee
Learner 15	School B	M	7	14	Absentee
Learner 16	School B	M	7	14	Absentee

Source: Field data (2020).

Table 4: Biographical Details of All Participants

School A		School B		Total
Number of Teachers	Female 2 Male 2	Number of Teachers	Female 2 Male 2	8
Numbers of parents	Female 5 Male 5	Number of parents	Female 5 Male 5	20
Number of learners	Female 4 Male 4	Number of learners	Female 4 Male 4	16
Total	22		22	44

Source: Field data (2020).

3.5 Coding of Participants

For ethical reasons and also for easy identification of respondents, participants in this study were assigned the following codes; learners from school A (L1-8), learners from school B (L9-16), class teachers from school A (CT1-4), class teachers from school B (CT5-8), tobacco farming parents from school A (TFP1-5), tobacco farming parents from school B (TFP5-10), non-tobacco farming parents from school A (NTFP1-5) and non- tobacco farming parents from school B (NTP5-10)

3.6 Sampling Procedure

Sampling is a process of selecting people who will be included and involved in a research study (Remler and Ryzin, 2011). It is a process of selecting a portion of the elements in a population that is studied in an effort to understand the population from which it was drawn. In this study, the researcher used purposive sampling to select, class teachers, parents and learners from the two primary schools which were also purposively chosen. Purposive sampling involves purposely handpicking of individuals from the population based on the knowledge and judgment of the researcher when it comes to selecting participants that are to be studied (Msabila & Nalaila, 2013). Purposive sampling was used because it enabled the researcher to gather participants who were able to provide quality information on the research topic. Under purposive sampling the researcher used the following branches; schools were selected using extreme case purposive sampling, parents and teachers were selected using homogeneous purposive sampling while learners were selected using typical case purposive sampling. Extreme case purposive sampling focuses on cases that are rich in information because they are special in some way. The two schools were special in that the communities in which they were located had a balance in the numbers of tobacco and non tobacco farmers unlike other schools which were found in communities where there more tobacco farmers than non-tobacco farmers while others had more

non-tobacco farmers than tobacco farmers. Homogeneous sampling picks up a small sample with similar characteristics to describe some particular subgroup and in this case teachers and parents. Typical case sampling uses one or more typical cases to provide a local profile. It demands the involvement of the locals in selecting participants and in this study teachers helped the researcher in selecting learner participants (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Purposive sampling procedure was used in order to choose a sample which was reliable and able to provide the researcher with the information needed. Parents, learners and class teachers were sampled because of the experiences they have on tobacco farming and absenteeism. From each of the 2 selected schools, 16 learners were involved in this study and 8 of these were chosen on an equal basis between absentees from both tobacco farming homes and non-tobacco farming homes with the help of the learner attendance registers and class teachers; 10 parents were selected on an equal basis between tobacco farmers and non-tobacco farmers from each of the two schools and lastly 8 class teachers were selected from the two primary schools.

3.7 Instruments of Data Collection

In this study, qualitative methods of data collection were used to collect primary data. These included interview guides and focus group discussion guides. Due to language barrier, the researcher used English and in some interviews used Lozi which was a common vernacular language spoken in the research sites.

3.7.1 Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Kombo and Tromp (2006) states that semi-structured interviews are based on the use of an interview guide which is a list of questions or topics to be covered by the interview. One-on-one interviews were conducted on learners and teachers to get their perceptions on the topic. A number

of open-ended questions were prepared based on the information from Maslow's theory of basic needs. The questions were aimed at bringing out information in line with the factors found in the home background of a learner and how such factors could either contribute or reduce the ability of a learner to reach self-actualization through good school attendance. Interviews enabled the participants to talk about and interpret their experiences and communicate how they observed circumstances from their individual perceptions. See details of the interview guides used in the appendix.

3.7.2 Focus Group Discussion

According to Black (1999), a focus group discussion is a group discussion of 5-12 persons guided by a facilitator during which members talk freely and spontaneously about a certain topic. The researcher used focus group discussions to collect data from the two groups of participating parents (tobacco and non-tobacco farmers). The reasoning for choosing the FGD for parents was to help them feel comfortable to express their opinions in the presence of others since they had similar features in terms of either being a tobacco farmer or not. Focus group discussions were used because they enabled the researcher to obtain information on participants' beliefs, views, attitudes and perceptions on a defined area of interest (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). See details of the focus group discussion guide used in the appendix.

3.7.3 Document Review

The researcher did some document review in the two selected primary schools in order to answer objective number one and also for triangulation purposes. The only documents which the researcher had access to was the learner school attendance registers which indicate the age,

gender, days present, days absent, parents and the address of the learner. The school attendance registers guided the researcher on the attendance rates of the participating learners.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

During the data collection process the researcher spent 5 days at each of the two primary schools. The researcher got permission to conduct the research from the Ethics committee at the University of Zambia and later at the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) who provided an introductory letter to the head teachers of the two primary schools selected. Interviews were conducted as planned with the participants and according to the times that were suitable for them. Prior to the interviews, the participants were given a consent form to read through and sign. Informed consent can be explained as the measures in which participants decide whether or not to participate in a study after being well informed of the full details that could influence their decisions (Cohen et al., 2005). The researcher made sure that the purpose and significance of the study was explained in order to reassure the participants and obtain their consent.

Four focus group discussions were conducted with parents, two at each school for both tobacco and non-tobacco farming parents after they signed the consent forms. The researcher communicated the date and a venue which was convenient for all participants in a week time to give room for preparation. A positive atmosphere to enable the participants to express their perceptions and views willingly was created by the researcher in all the 4 sessions of the discussions. The researcher used a voice recorder and note pads to record the conversations so as to capture opinions and views of the respondents.

3.9 Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis is the manipulation of the collected data for the purpose of drawing conclusions that reflect on the interest, ideas and theories that initiated the study (Ng'andu, 2013). Qualitative data collection often yields large amounts of information that needs to be sorted into categories and themes. The first step was transcribing of the recorded views from both interviews and focus group discussions. The data was then edited, serially numbered, and coded into categories and themes related to the research questions. Since the study was purely qualitative, data was thematically analyzed to make meaning out of the participants responses on both one on one interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher derived the themes from the objectives of the study and each theme was analyzed and interpreted critically to draw conclusions that reflected the original views of the participants. From the school learner attendance registers, the researcher captured the attendance rates of the learners who were chosen for the study from both tobacco farming and non-tobacco farming homes for two academic years.

3.10 Trustworthiness of the Study

In order to ensure trustworthiness of the research findings, the researcher engages in various research activities that make the findings believable, convincing, trustworthy and confirmable (Lead and Ormrod, 2005). Since this study was qualitative in nature, the researcher used various approaches with a purpose to increase trustworthiness. The researcher triangulated the data collected from various participants in order to reduce the risk of a biased conclusion which may be as a result of limited data sources.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was sought from the ethical committee of the University of Zambia and permission to conduct this study was given by District Education Board Secretary who gave the

researcher an introductory letter into the schools. Head teachers in selected schools where the study was conducted also gave the researcher permission to go ahead before data collection was done. The consent for participants to take part in the study was sought from all the participants and those willing to do so were made to sign informed consent forms. The participants were informed that they were free to either participate or withdraw from the study at any time and stage if they so wished. The researcher upheld the confidentiality of non- disclosure of the identities of the participants and schools. The information gathered was also kept in high confidentiality. As such, no names were used for identifying respondents. Instead, codes were used to identify the different categories of respondents. The two selected schools were not mentioned with their original names but code-named as school A and B.

3.12. Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the methodology used and why it was chosen for the study. Having presented the above, the next chapter presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

The previous chapter outlined the methodology employed by the researcher to come up with the data by means of various instruments. This chapter will present the findings of the study as were provided by the participants in the two selected schools namely school A and school B. The presentation of research findings will be guided by the research questions and appearing under themes derived from the research objectives:

1. To analyse the factors which contribute to absenteeism of learners from tobacco and non-tobacco farming homes in Nkeyema district
2. To find out the stakeholders' perceived effect of tobacco farming on primary school learner absenteeism in Nkeyema district.

3. To device measures for addressing learner absenteeism in Nkeyema district

4.2 Factors which Contributed to Absenteeism of Learners from both Tobacco Farming and non-Tobacco Farming homes

The participants were asked questions by the researcher about the factors which contributed to absenteeism of learners and the factors shown in Table 5 below emerged from their responses:

Table 5 : Summary of Factors which Contributed to Absenteeism of Learners from both Tobacco and non-Tobacco Farming homes.

Responses on factors which contributed to learner absenteeism in Nkeyema District.	Frequencies of participants					Percentage of the participants (%)
	Teachers	TFP	NTFP	TFL	NTFL	
Working in tobacco activities.	8	6	10	6	7	84
Doing house chores	8	7	9	5	6	80
Long distances from homes to school	7	4	7	8	6	73
Lack of encouragement from the parents	6	5	8	5	7	59

Source: Field data (2020).

4.2.1 Working in Tobacco Activities

Participants stated that tobacco farming was more labour demanding hence every member of the family including those of primary school age were made to participate in the various activities of tobacco growing by their parents hence making such learners miss school in most cases. In line with this, one class teacher (CT 5) from school B had this to say:

Because of the need to make more profit, most parents in this community do not employ enough workers in their tobacco fields for the fear of food expenses and end of contract payments. What they do instead is to use their own family members including young school going children as a cheap source of labor in their fields. Because of this, most of these children end up not attending school regularly. I feel sorry for these children because even when they come to school they don't concentrate because of the hard work they may have done in the night or in the morning.

Parents also contributed their views on how tobacco farming contributed to learner absenteeism. The researcher noted that most responses from tobacco farming parents were not personalized but rather general in nature and mostly referring to other farmers. A (NTFP5) during a focus group discussion stated that:

I stopped farming tobacco last year because it required more labour which I couldn't manage and made me resort to using my own young children at the expense of their school. My children could miss school some times when I had a lot of pressure especially during the carrying period when I needed to be awake the whole night to avoid wastage of the leafs. There is no secret about it, even now most tobacco farmers in this community still take shifts with their children at night when they are carrying tobacco. Now tell me how can such a child attend school the following morning? It is not possible.

Another parent from school B (TFP1) responded like this:

It is very dangerous and risky to employ farm workers for tobacco purposes because sometimes we make a loss and when that happens workers will demand all their payments in full because they have worked the whole season. To avoid such disputes I prefer farming with my children after all the money I get is what helps me to solve their school requirements. I don't give them very hard jobs but they only help me during carrying and grading which is the most critical stage and they know I can't handle it alone without their help hence they have to miss school just for a few weeks not all the days.

Learners who participated in the study also stated various ways through which tobacco farming contributed to their absenteeism. One learner from school B (L 10) had this to say:

I will be very happy if my parents stop farming tobacco because I will have a chance to attend school always. I have to do my task in the farm before going to school if I don't finish it means I have to miss school that day. Sometimes I finish doing the work late and feel very tired at the end I decide to just stay home and rest. If I go late, teachers will also punish me.

Another participating learner from school A (L5) also had this to say:

My classmates whose parents cultivate tobacco always complain that their parents give them a lot of work to do at home. My friend tells me that he helps his parents to make tobacco ridges and sometimes grade tobacco at night that's why he does not come to school.

Participants also stated that some learners are also affected by tobacco farming indirectly in that their parents are not tobacco farmers but they work in tobacco farms as labourers. In line with this, learner 9 (L 9) had this to say:

My parents are not tobacco farmers but we work in other people's farms to make money for food. My parents say if we don't help them to do the work they won't be able to buy food and books for us, hence I miss school on some days so that I help them.

4.2.2 Doing Of House Chores.

Participants stated that, learners whose parents were tobacco farmers absented themselves frequently from school because they were subjected to doing all the house chores when their parents were busy with the tobacco farm activities. To support this assertion, one tobacco farming parent (TFP 7) said:

TBZ (Tobacco Board of Zambia) does not allow the use of children in the tobacco fields hence my children take up all the responsibility of doing house chores so that we the parents have enough time to meet our daily targets without having disturbances such as breaking for cooking.

Another parent (TFP 5) said:

My children help me a lot for me to have a successful season. I don't give them heavy jobs to do but mostly they do house chores and take care of the home since me, my wife and the workers are preoccupied with various types of work throughout the day and even at night sometimes. I don't know how I could have managed if not for the help of these children because sometimes we work continuously so as to meet the daily targets hence time to do house chores especially food preparation is rarely available.

A class teacher (CT 6) had this to say:

What these parents now do is that they give an overload of all the house chores to their children so that they have enough time to work on their tobacco without considering the need for these children to attend school. The children do all sorts of work such as cooking for a lot of people including farm workers in some cases hence they are mostly busy even during the time they are supposed to be in school.

The participants further stated that, doing of house chores did not only contribute to absenteeism of learners from tobacco farming homes but also those from non-tobacco farming homes. One participant (TFP 7) had this to say:

We are not the only ones who give work to our children. Non- tobacco farmers also give their children work of doing home activities such as fetching water and cooking.

A learner from school school A (L 6) stated that:

My parents leave me with a lot of work to do at home when they go to work in the farms of tobacco farmers. Some times I remain with my young sisters which I need to take care of, hence I miss school.

4.2.3 Long Distances from Homes to School

It was also established that learners absented themselves from school frequently because of the long distances from homes to schools. In line with this statement, one parent (NTFP 2) from school A said:

The long distance between homes and the school makes it difficult for a child to attend school everyday. Some of these children need to cover more than 7 kilometers everyday on foot to attend school and in some cases the roads are not clear because they pass through the bush which makes the young ones get scared, hence miss school.

Most participants stated that, the problem of long distances from homes to schools was increased by tobacco farmings' camp farming settlements. One parent in school B reported that:

One of the reasons why learners coming from our friends who are involved in tobacco farming fail to attend school regularly is because of the long distances from the far farming camps they move to especially during the harvesting season. Drying tobacco leaves demands continuous supply of firewood hence these farmers prefer to go and camp in the bush for the farming purposes without considering how long the distance their children will need to cover if they are to attend school every day.

Another parent (TFP 8) from school B stated that:

Most of us (tobacco farmers) have two settlements, the usual home and the farming camp where we have the Balans (tobacco drying ovens). During the harvesting period we have to move to the farming camp because the type of work is done day and night hence no one can manage getting back home. I am forced to move with my children to the farming camp because no one can take care of them if they were to remain home.

A learner (L3) from school A said:

I am required to do my task in the field such as collection and hooking the tobacco leaves in readiness for drying before I can leave for school. Our tobacco farming camp is very far from school and I don't have a bicycle to use when coming to school hence sometimes I just stay and rest.

On this, one class teacher (CT3) indicated that:

It is difficult for these pupils coming from tobacco farming homes to attend school regularly because of the movements their parents expose them to. Some parents start by shifting from their usual homes to a gardening camp where there is enough water for tobacco nurseries mostly near a stream or a dam and later move to the drying camps mostly in the bush where there is availability of trees. All these movements make it difficult for their children to attend school always because some camps they go to are very far from school.

Another class teacher (CT 7) had this to say:

We experience a lot of learner absenteeism from school during term one and two when most of the tobacco farmers have moved away from their usual

homes to the farming camps which in most cases are very far from school. Children find it difficult to cover such long distances every day on feet and this situation is coupled with some tiresome work which these very same children still have to do in the farms. These movements really affect the attendance of these learners negatively and eventually leads to their poor performance academically.

4.2.4 Lack of Encouragement from the Parents

The study also noted that learners absent themselves from school frequently because they lacked encouragement from their parents. Most parents were illiterate and considered education as a share waste of time. To justify this sentiment, one class teacher (CT 1) responded like this:

low levels of education among parents has contributed more to absenteeism. These parents do not have time to sit their children down and advice them on the need to attend school regularly.

Participants stated that, the problem of not encouraging learners to attend school was more common among tobacco farmers. One teacher from school B said that:

Another reason why these children especially those from tobacco farming homes absent themselves from school frequently is lack of encouragement by their parents. To them, tobacco farming is the way to go for their children hence school is just some share waste of time. They can't even think of encouraging their children to attend school because it does not help them in any way.

In addition to that one parent (NTFP 7) also said that:

For these children to attend school every day there is need for serious and continuous encouragement. However it is not the case with most of our colligues who are in tobacco farming because they seem to overlook the value and need to educate their children just because of the money they get from the farming of tobacco.

Another parent (TFP 9) had this to say:

I know it is important for my children to attend school but there is no harm for them to just stay home and help me during the critical period of the farming season after all they are learning how to farm on their own. I don't want to lie to my children that going to school will solve their problems when I know they can make more money from a good yield of tobacco than even the so called educated people.

4.3 Perceived effect of Tobacco Farming on Learner School Absenteeism in Nkeyema

District.

To determine the effect of tobacco farming on learner absenteeism, participants were asked for their views and the following themes summarized in Table 6 were coined from their common responses:

Table 6: Participant's Response Frequencies on Perceived effects of Tobacco Farming on Learner School Absenteeism.

Responses on the effects of Tobacco Farming on Learner School Absenteeism	Frequencies of participants					Percentage of the participants (%)
	Teachers	TFP	NTFP	TFL	NTFL	
Tobacco Farming Increased Absenteeism in Term 1 and 2	8	4	9	6	7	77
Tobacco Farming made learners lose interest in Education	8	4	8	7	5	73
Tobacco Farming Promoted child labour.	6	4	7	8	6	73
Tobacco Farming Promoted Illicit Behaviors	6	5	8	5	7	59
Tobacco Farming helps to meet learner's educational needs	3	6	2	4	3	41

Source: Field data (2020).

4.3.1 Tobacco Farming increases Learner Absenteeism in Term 1 And 2

Most of the participants indicated that tobacco farming increased learner absenteeism especially in the first and second term of the school calendar. These responses also conform to the findings

of the data generated from the analysis of registers by the researcher which showed an increase in absenteeism in term one and two. In line with this, one Class teacher (CT 8) responded like this:

Tobacco farming has a negative effect on primary school learner attendance since there are more disadvantages than the advantages that a school going child gets from it. Parents to these children will always say tobacco enables them to provide school requirements for learners but they overlook the harsh conditions which make these learners not to attend school. There is a clear trend of increase in the levels of absenteeism in term one and two which lie in the planting and harvesting of the leaf where the children are most used in various activities.

In line with what class teacher 8 said, one parent (TFP 5) added his voice by saying:

If well managed tobacco farming can really help us to support our children's education but the problem is most of the farmers do not employ enough workers but cultivate big acres of fields which leads them to depend on their children including those who are primary school going. This is what makes these children fail to attend school regularly especially in months ranging from January when planting takes place to May when harvesting is done. This period demands for a lot of labour and that's why most children are given tasks such as; collecting the leafs from the field, hooking of the leafs in readiness for drying, grading of the leafs and many more of which most of us think they are just easy tasks for our children but these activities consume most of their time which they are supposed to use for school.

4.3.2 Tobacco Farming made Learners to lose interest in Education

From the class teachers and the non- tobacco farming parent's perspective, tobacco farming made learners lose interest in education. Once a learner has lost interest in education his/her attendance also is likely to reduce. One class teacher (CT 4) narrated that:

I have also observed a very negative issue of children losing interest for school and wishing to become farmers because of the monies their parents are making. Because parents use these school going children in farming activities, they give them money to celebrate after selling the tobacco and for

young ones to receive big amounts of money, they forget about school and wish to become tobacco farmers as well.

A non-tobacco farming parent (NTFP 5) said that:

Tobacco farming has a negative impact on learner school attendance because young ones get disturbed by the long time celebrations tobacco famers do after selling their tobacco. They go for beer drinking and local parties up to the time their money finishes. During this period the villages are characterized by noisy activities where even the primary school going children participate without thinking about going to school.

A learner from a tobacco farming home (L9) when asked about the school benefits he gets from tobacco farming said:

I get money for my school fees and my parents also give me a lot of money after they sale tobacco so that I can buy anything I want and encourage me to keep on helping them so that next time we make more money than we have this year.

4.3.3 Tobacco Farming Promoted Child Labour

With regards to tobacco farming promoting child labour as one of the ways through which it negatively affects learner attendance, most of the respondents stated that it was very difficult for children involved in child labour to have a good school attendance.

One Class teacher (CT 6) responded like this:

There is a lot of child labour going on in this community as a result of this same rampant tobacco farming. Very young school going boys and girls are exposed to hard jobs such as grading and hooking of tobacco leafs whole day. The tobacco management company (JTI) does not allow the use of young ones in any tobacco farming related activities especially those who are in school but there is no serious monitoring being done hence most of the famers expose their children to child labour since it is cheaper. Because of this their school attendance is affected negatively.

A non-tobacco farming parent (NTFP 3) had this to say:

There is a lot of child labour in this community because of tobacco farming and this has impacted on primary school learner attendance negatively. Even children whose parents are not involved in tobacco farming like me have ended up in child labour because they engage themselves in short term working contracts in the farms so as to make money. Some tobacco farmers have a tendency of giving piece works to children such as for collecting the tobacco leaves from the fields to the hooking shelters because young ones are easy to manipulate when it comes to payments.

4.3.4 Tobacco Farming has Promoted illicit Behaviors

From the non-tobacco farming parents and Class Teacher's perspective, the study established that one of the effects that tobacco farming has on primary school learner absenteeism was the promotion of illicit behaviors. To support this, one parent (NTFP 9) said:

There are a lot of illicit activities which take place in this community because of this same tobacco farming. Very young children engage themselves in beer drinking because of the money they get from the piece works they do. These days I see very young children smoking and one of the driving forces to this is because tobacco is readily available to them anytime they want it.

Another parent (NTFP 7) stated that:

There is also an increase in teenage pregnancies and child marriages because of these boys who move from one place to another and camp for tobacco contracts. When they get paid they confuse the young school going children into sex relationships which eventually lands them into pregnancies. This impacts negatively on the school attendance of these girls and in most cases they even drop-out of school for marriage.

A tobacco farming parent (TFP 6) had this to say:

The only way I can say I see tobacco farming impacting negatively on the school attendance of our children in this community is through us parents giving them money when we get paid without guiding them on what to do with it. We are mostly happy when we make profit and we want to appreciate the tireless help our children give us during the farming period by giving them money. Since they are just children, they end up misusing the money on illicit

activities such as beer drinking forgetting about the need for them to go school.

4.3.5 Tobacco Farming helped Learners meet their Educational needs.

Some of the participants mentioned that tobacco farming helped learners meet their school requirements. Most of the responses on this theme were from the tobacco farming parents. One participant (TFP1) stated that:

Tobacco farming helps me to buy all my children need for them to be able to attend school. It is from the money I get after selling tobacco that I buy them school uniforms, books and other things that they need for school. In this way I feel tobacco farming promotes the education of my children.

When asked if she wanted her parents to stop tobacco farming, learner 2 (L14) had this to say:

I don't want my parents to stop tobacco farming because it is the only way they raise money to buy me all the school requirements. If they stop I may also stop coming to school because they will not be able to pay school fees and buy me uniforms.

4.4 Suggested Measures for Addressing the Problem of Primary School Learner

Absenteeism in Nkeyema District.

The third objective of this study was to devise measures for addressing the problem of primary school learner absenteeism in Nkeyema District. Participants gave out various suggestions as shown in table 7 below:

Table 7 : Response Frequency on Measures for Addressing learner School Absenteeism.

Responses on Measures for Addressing Learner Absenteeism	Frequencies of participants					Percentage of the participants (%)
	Teachers	TFP	NTFP	TFL	NTFL	
Parents to Provide Learners with Educational Requirements	5	8	10	7	7	84

Sensitize Parents and their Children on the importance of regular School Attendance	8	4	8	5	8	75
Child Protection Unit to Engage Tobacco Companies on the Need to stop Child Labour.	5	6	9	2	4	59
Tobacco Companies to work with School Administrators and Community Leaders to stop child labour.	6	6	9	4	5	68
Increase Parents –Teachers Collaboration on Matters Affecting Learners	6	5	8	6	7	73
Schools to Start Awarding Good Attendants and their Parents.	5	7	8	4	5	66

Source: Field data (2020).

4.4.1 Parents to Provide their Children with Educational Requirements.

It was established that there was need for parents to meet educational requirements of their children so as to encourage them attend school regularly. To support this, a learner (L11) had this to say;

Absenteeism can end if only our parents can provide us with what we need for school such as books, uniforms, shoes and food for eating during break time. Other learners fail to attend school because they are afraid of being laughed by others that they don't have shoes and uniforms.

Another learner (L 16) added his voice by saying that:

The problem of absenteeism can be ended if all our parents provide us with basic school requirements. Most of us walk long distances to come to school and it makes us tired most times. If our parents could buy us bicycles, we are going to be motivated to attend school regularly because there will be no distance burden.

A parent (NTFP 1) contributed on the need for parents to provide their children with school needs if the problem of absenteeism can be curbed by stating that:

We parents have a big role to play if this problem of learner absenteeism is to end. We have to make sure that we meet the educational demands of our

children as a way of motivating them to attend school regularly. You cannot expect a child to be comfortable and happy to attend school on bare feet when others have shoes. Such issues are among other things which demoralize these children from attending school regularly.

4.4.2 Sensitize both Parents And Learners on the Importance of Regular School Attendance

Attendance

Participants explained that there was need for serious sensitization of both parents and learners themselves on the importance of regular school attendance in order to end the problem of learner absenteeism in Nkeyema District. In line with this, a class teacher (CT 7) said:

There is serious and argent need for community sensitization on the importance of regular school learner attendance. Most of the parents do not seem to know and understand the value of education on their children and that is the reason they cannot play a role of encouraging them to attend school always. These parents should be sensitized by either the ministry of education officials or the tobacco companies themselves so that they do not stop school going children from attending classes for their farming or home based activities.

Another class teacher (CT 4) added her voice by stating that:

The government through its various authorities should come to the aid of these children by initiating sensitization and awareness campaigns programs for both parents and children themselves so that they are made aware of the importance of regular school attendance and education as a whole. When these parents begin to value education, they will not be using their school going children in the farms at the expense of their school attendance. It is through this that we can end the problem of learner absenteeism in this community.

In line with what class teacher 4 said, a parent (NFTP 5) had this to say:

There is need for having meetings aimed at educating us together with our children on the importance of learners attending school regularly because most of the parents do not understand the importance of education to their

children. If parents are made aware of the need for good attendance of their school going children, they will not be engaging them into other activities such as working in the farms during school time and this is how we can curb the problem of learner absenteeism in this community.

4.4.3 Child Protection Unit to Engage the Tobacco Companies on the Need to end Child

Labour.

Teachers responded that there was need for the government to engage tobacco companies operating in the District on the need to end child labour. A class teacher (CT 6) responded like this:

Since child labour emanating from rampant tobacco farming is contributing negatively to learner school attendance, there is need to end it. The government through child protection unit should put the tobacco companies to task of making sure that school going children are not used as labourers in the farms. These companies should have a follow- up mechanism of ensuring that, the famers adhere to the school going child protection policies and only those who can manage to do away with child labour should be allowed to continue growing tobacco.

Another class teacher (CT 2) said this:

There is need for serious monitoring of these tobacco farmers to ensure they do not rely on their school going children as a source of labour in their farming activities. The tobacco companies do not allow the use of children in the farming of tobacco but they do not monitor the famers to ensure that this policy is followed. Another important issue which needs attention is that, some farmers do not use their children directly in tobacco activities but overload them with all house chores during the time they are doing the farming.

4.4.3 Tobacco Companies to work with School Administrators and Community Leaders to stop Child Labour.

The study noted that there was need for tobacco companies to work with school administrators and community leaders in order to help end the use of school going children as a source of labour in tobacco farming if the problem of learner school absenteeism in this community can be reduced.

The findings indicated that, since school administrators and community leaders stayed in the

villages where the farming took place, they could monitor whatever was going on. One class teacher (CT 8) had this to say:

All the tobacco companies operating in this district should have a sense of social cooperate responsibility when it comes to issues affecting the education of the children of their famers. They should have deliberate programs in collaboration with the school administrators to ensure that all the famers follow the school child protection policies. The school management should be reporting the famers who do not let their children to attend school regularly to their company so that punitive measures can be taken.

In line with this, a parent (NTFP 8) had this to say:

What I have observed is that these tobacco companies do not care whether farmers follow the school child protection policy or not because they are never on the ground to check. Famers cannot report each other therefore what is needed is for the companies to have representatives or work with the community leaders to help monitor what is happening closely. By doing this famers will stop using their school going children as a source of labour and this shall reduce on learner absenteeism.

4.4.4 Increase Parents –Teachers Collaboration on matters Affecting Learners.

The study established that one way through which absenteeism can be curbed is by increasing parents-teachers collaboration on all matters affecting learners. Most learners who participated in this study responded that teachers can help them by talking to their parents so that they reduce their workload at home. One learner (L 4) responded like this;

I want teachers to talk to my parents so that they should stop giving me a lot of work at home during the time I am supposed to be at school.

A parent (NTFP 3) said:

There is need for coordination between teachers and the parents of the learners in order for the problem of learner school absenteeism to be curbed.

Teachers have a big role to play and this is making follow-ups on learners who do not attend school regularly and find out what is causing the problem. If the parents are the ones stopping their children from attending school because of home based activities, the teachers should be able to offer counselling to the parents and at the same time we parents should also make sure that we check how our children are faring with school work.

Another parent (TFP 5) added on by saying that:

Parents and teachers should work hand in hand so as to promote good learner school attendance and put an end to absenteeism since what happens in the school affects the learner and at the same time what happens in the community affects the learner. Hence there is need for coordination between the two agents of the school and the community being the parents and the teachers respectively.

4.4.5 Schools to start Awarding good Attendants and their Parents.

Findings from this study also reviewed that another way through which learner absenteeism could be reduced was by awarding learners with good attendance and their parents so that others could be motivated to attend regularly as well. In line with this, a class teacher (CT 4) said that:

There is need for schools to start awarding deserving learners and their parents so as to motivate them. Learners whose attendance is good should be acknowledged during school assemblies and at the same time their parents also awarded during PTA general meetings. By so doing other parents will also emulate and start supporting their children to be attending school regularly.

4.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the study on stakeholders' perceptions on absenteeism among primary school learners from tobacco farming and non-tobacco farming homes in Nkeyema District. The findings have been presented using themes derived from the objectives of the study. The next chapter looks at the discussion of findings as presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Overview

The previous chapter presented the findings of the study. The present chapter discusses the findings. The discussion will be done under the following order as derived from the research objectives;

1. To analyse the factors which contribute to absenteeism of learners from tobacco and non-tobacco farming homes in Nkeyema district
2. To find out the stakeholders' perceived effect of tobacco farming on primary school learner absenteeism in Nkeyema district.
3. To device measures for addressing learner absenteeism in Nkeyema district.

5.2 Factors which Contributed to Absenteeism among Learners from Tobacco and Non-Tobacco Farming Homes in Nkeyema District.

Class teachers, parents and learners were asked to express their views on the factors which contributed to learner absenteeism and the indicated the following reasons.

5.2.1 Helping Parents in Tobacco Activities

The findings of this study revealed that helping of parents in tobacco activities was a contributing factor to learner absenteeism in Nkeyema District. Participants stated that Tobacco farming was the most practiced agricultural activity in the District and that most parents involved their children in the farming activities as a source of cheap labour. The tobacco farming activities they were involved in were said to be more stressful and time consuming, hence they couldn't manage to attend school regularly. This finding is in line with Reid (2008) who found that child labour which

includes farm work and heading cattle contributed to the absenteeism of learners in rural schools. This study found that tobacco farming demanded more labour and that most farmers did not employ farm workers because they were scared of the costs. Most farmers preferred using their own family members as a source of farm labour so that they do not have to pay any outsider at the end of the farming season in order to make more money. The findings further revealed that tobacco farmers mostly used the school going children to do some farm activities when they were under pressure such as during the leaf collection, selection and grading stages. It was also noted that tobacco farming did not only contribute to the absenteeism of learners from tobacco farming homes but also for those coming from non-tobacco farming homes in that their parents also were involved in part time works in the tobacco farms so as to raise money for their households. These parents justified the involvement of the school going children in the farm works by stating that it was from the same tobacco farming that they raised money to provide for the school requirements of their children. Most of the parents decided to use their own children in tobacco farming activities in order to avoid the costs which came with employing farm workers. This finding is also similar to Kabanga and Mulauzi (2020)'s research done in Nyimba District which showed that some pupils were withdrawn from school even during the term to help their guardians during the farming season. In the process of doing so, many pupils ended up absenting or dropping out of school.

It was also noted that the activities involved in tobacco farming were more tiresome and continuous than other farming activities such as those involved in maize, hence the reason tobacco farming was mentioned as a contributing factor to absenteeism. In his theory, Maslow stated that human beings need to achieve physiological needs if they are to progress to the next level on the pyramid of basic needs. This finding contradicts what Maslow stated in that parents mentioned that the reason they involved their children in the farming activities was to raise money to help them sustain

their households needs which included food and proper clothing. Food and and clothing are linked to to the learners' ability to either attend or miss school. A learner is more likely to attend school when they have proper food and clothing.

5.2.2 Doing House Chores

The current study revealed that another factor which contributed to absenteeism among learners from tobacco and non-tobacco farming homes in Nkeyema District was doing of house chores. Participants stated that most parents did not see anything wrong with the giving of house chores to their school going children at the same time they were supposed to be in school. Doing of house hold chores was viewed as a cultural obligation by most parents however it became a disadvantaging factor to the school progress of a child wen parents did not put into consideration the timing factor as well as the effect such obligations may have on the needs for for a child to attend school.

This study found out that doing of house chores was a contributing factor to absenteeism among learners from both tobacco farming and non-tobacco farming homes in Nkeyema District and at the same time noted that tobacco farming increased the problem of house chores. Most tobacco farmers did not directly involve their children in the farming activities but indirectly involved them by referring them to do all house chores which included cooking for the entire family and workers in some cases, fetching water from distant places and doing the laundry. These findings are in line with those of Wadesango and Machingambi (2011) who reported that learner's attendance were sometimes affected as they had to fulfil their home related obligations and provide for their personal and family needs since they were from poor family backgrounds. The current study revealed that learners whose parents were tobacco farmers were always occupied with house chores if not involved in the farm activities. Zahafs et al (2005) stated that, learner absenteeism in

rural areas may be due to the practice of child labour where families make their children work to subsidize the family income or perform extensive domestic chores when their parents are in the fields. Unlike the general part time house chores done by the learners whose parents were not tobacco farmers, it was found out that due to the continuous need to work in tobacco farms, school going learners were turned into full time housekeepers by their parents for some period of time so that they can concentrate on the farms without having to break for food preparation which they regarded as time wasting. It is very difficult for a child to refuse to do what the parents tell them to do at the expense of attending school because they need physiological needs as well as belonging needs in order for them to reach self actualization just as Maslow's theory of basic needs stipulates, hence these children ended up missing school because they had no option but obey their parents.

5.2.3 Long Distances from Homes to Schools

The study has revealed that long distances from homes to schools was another factor which contributed to learner absenteeism in Nkeyema District. Most participants in this study mentioned proximity of schools as serious factor affecting most children since most of the villages in the District were located far from schools subjecting learners to walk distances of about 10 kilometers in some cases. This finding is in line with what was reported in Kelly (1999) that children in rural areas did not regularly attend school due to the challenge of long distance. Because of long distance, most primary school learners were discouraged and the most affected were girls who were usually abused on the way. This study noted that the long distance from homes to schools factor was increased by tobacco farming. It was established that tobacco farmers practiced some form of temporal camping to facilitate the conducive environmental demands for the farming process. In the first and early stages of tobacco farming which is around October, farmers moved

with their families to the water logged areas for gardening (tobacco nurseries) purpose. These water logged areas may be far away from schools and it was due to this that once they shift from their usual residences, learners found it difficult to adapt to the new long distances between the school and the camp area resulting into their absenteeism from school. During the tobacco transplanting stage, farmers moved to other farming camps this time in the bush where there were availability of trees for to be used during the drying stage. The finding of this study revealed that, tobacco farmers could go and camp to far areas of about 20 kilometers from their usual residences during the tobacco drying stage. It is these long distances created by tobacco farming activities which made learners from tobacco farming homes to absent themselves from schools.

Kabanga and Mulauzi (2020) supported this finding by stating that, long distance from the villages to a nearby school caused many learners to be absent from school. Their study found out that, most of the villages in Nyimba District were over 10km away from the nearest school and this had made the pupils to cover long distances to school on foot and those who were not strong enough often stopped on the way or gave up school all together.

In relation to long distance, the research findings also showed that lack of proper road network from some farming camp areas to schools was another challenge that made learners from tobacco farming homes absent from school more than those from non-tobacco farming homes. Some farming camps where farmers went to were not well connected to the general community hence posing the problem of road network. During the rain season when the bushes are thick, children got scared of moving alone to school and this really affected their school attendance negatively. This finding confirms one in the UNESCO report (2009) that suggests that, because learners may have to walk long distances to school in rural areas where there is no proper transport, it may be the cause of learner absenteeism. The long distances between schools and farming settlements

created as a result of tobacco farming have really led to an increase in school absenteeism of pupils whose parents were tobacco famers. When connected to Maslows's basic need theory, this finding hinders the safety needs which is the second group of needs in the hierarchy towards self actualization. Children were exposed to unsafe environments with poor road network and far away from schools which hinderd their ability to move towards self actualization and ended up as absentees.

5.2.4 Lack of Encouragement from the Parents

The findings of the current study established that lack of encouragement from the parents contributed more to learner absenteeism in Nkeyema District. It was revealed that most parents especially those who were not educated did not offer any form of guidance on the importance of education to their children. This finding is in line with the findings of Kabanga and Mulauzi (2020) who stated that, pupil absenteeism was caused by parents/guardians' negative attitude towards school. This study further noted that some tobacco farmers did not encourage their children to value and attend school because for them tobacco farming was what led to success not education. It was noted that some parents did not value education as they saw nothing profitable in educating a child when they could make more money than educated people in their community through tobacco farming. Most tobacco famers did not see the need to encourage their children to attend school regularly, therefore their children could not value education because they believed money comes from tobacco farming. Because of this lack of valuing education by their parents, all what these children now wish and hope for is to become tobacco farmers not wasting time on going to school. It was established that parents needed to play a very cardinal role of encouraging their children to attend school if they were to have good school attendance. However, the study revealed that there was literally no form of encouragement given to the children by the tobacco farmers on

the importance of continued school attendance hence the reason for their more absenteeism. In line with Maslows, needs theory this finding lies on social needs. What parents see are the socio-economic outcomes on their current economic activities not what education will do their children.

5.3 Perceived Effects of Tobacco Farming on Learner School Absenteeism in Nkeyema

District

The findings of the study revealed that tobacco farming had mostly affected the ability of learners to attend school negatively because it contributed to absenteeism. Through the interviews and the focus group discussions, the participants stated the following;

5.3.1 Tobacco Farming made Learners lose Interest in Education

This study found that tobacco farming made learners lose interest in education. Most children no longer saw the importance of education because all they saw in the community was that tobacco farmers have money and were buying cars hence there was no need for them to waste time going to school. This negative effect of tobacco farming has contributed more to learner absenteeism in Nkeyema District because once learners do not see the importance of education, automatically they lose morale of attending school. This finding is similar to what Balfanz and Byrnes (2012) mentioned that students choose not to attend school because of external influence because either they or their parents do not see the value in school but marriage. In this case parents valued tobacco farming at the expense of education, hence they did not encourage their children to value education which led to poor school attendance and in the long run resulting into dropping out of school. In connection with Maslows' basic needs theory, learners need to have confidence in school if they are to attend regularly unlike what this finding states. Due to tobacco farming learners have lost self esteem in themselves for attending school because their parents have exposed them to tobacco

farming which they hold in high esteem than education, hence learners feel undervalued by the parents and this is what makes them lose interest in school.

5.3.2 Tobacco Farming Promoted Child Labour.

The findings of this study indicated that tobacco farming promoted child labour which in turn increased learner absenteeism. Most children were used on the farms as a source of cheap labour by their parents and in some situations children were also employed as temporal workers on the farms. These findings are similar to the findings of a study done in Indonesia by the International Labor Organization (2014) which states that most school going children were involved into tobacco farming related child labour. Work in tobacco farming interfered with schooling for some children. These children often said their families could not afford to put them through school. In the current study, the researcher noted that most farmers resorted to using their children as cheap in the tobacco farming activities so as to maximize profits. This finding is also in agreeable with the findings from a rapid assessment report by ILO (2014) on working children in tobacco growing communities in Kaoma District of Western Province Zambia which stated that, child labour in agriculture in general, and in tobacco-related activities in particular Kaoma District was a serious problem and affected both boys and girls of all age-groups. This finding links to the Maslows' basic needs theory which guided this study in that learners were forced into child labour by their parents who are supposed to provide them with physiological needs which forms the base of all other needs in the hierarchy. Children need shelter, food and many more from their parents, hence they cannot help but comply to what they are told to do.

5.3.3 Tobacco Farming Promoted illicit Behaviors

The current study found out that tobacco farming promoted illicit behaviors among school going children making them absent from school. Most teachers and parents who participated in this study

mentioned that, beer drinking and smoking were too common among young children and that one of the reasons was that there was too much readily available and cheap source of tobacco leaf to smoke. The participants further stated that, children did not need to think of where to get money in order to access tobacco because it was available where ever they step. Children whose parents are tobacco famers were exposed to smoking because they interacted with tobacco leafs most times. In line with this finding, there was also a common trend of child marriages and teenage pregnancies as a result of tobacco farming. Most young girls ended up being pregnant by the workers in the tobacco farms after they got paid. When learners became involved with alcohol and drugs they could end up addicted and have health problems. Smoking and other illicit activities affects the school attendance of learners negatively (Teasley,2004). It was noted that illicit behaviours were common among both learners from tobacco and non-tobacco farming homes. This therefore had a general bearing on the school absenteeism of pupils in Nkeyema District. Illicit behaviours are a hindrance to achieving safety needs on Maslows' hierarchy of needs such as good health which is a necessity for a learner to be able to attend school.

5.3.4 Tobacco Farming helped to meet Learners' Educational Needs

On the positive side, the only effect which participants in this study mentioned was that, tobacco farming helped learners meet educational needs. Most famers and learners from tobacco farming homes mentioned that tobacco farming was actually the only source of income for the school requirements. This finding is in contrast to one of the findings of Kabanga and Mulauzi (2020) who stated that some parents failed to provide the needed school requirements such as uniforms and books to their children due to poverty. This study revealed that tobacco farming supported the education of the young ones in that parents were able to pay school fees and buy uniforms for their children from the money they got from tobacco farming. Tobacco farming being the most common

practiced agricultural activity in Nkeyema District had raised most of the farmers' economic status. Some of the farmers who have improved through tobacco farming were able to buy school requirements for their children such as providing them with proper clothing and buying them books. Poverty leads to a number of factors which contribute to absenteeism such as failure to attain physiological needs which are the first class of basic needs according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. However, this finding clarifies that tobacco farming has helped reduce poverty levels of parents in Nkeyema District.

5.4 Suggested Measures for Addressing the Problem of Primary School Learner

Absenteeism in Nkeyema District.

Objective 3 of this study was aimed at devising measures to address learner absenteeism in Nkeyema District. Participants mentioned a number of ways through which primary school learner absenteeism among both learners from tobacco farming and non-tobacco farming homes can be reduced. The suggested solutions to absenteeism are discussed below;

5.4.1 Parents to provide their Children with Educational Requirements.

The findings of this study revealed that if absenteeism was to be reduced, there was need for parents to provide their children with the necessary educational requirements as a way of motivating them. It was noted that some children failed to attend school regularly because they did not have the necessary requirements such as a pair of shoes and uniforms. Such children were sometimes laughed at by others either for wearing a finished pair of shoes or for being bare footed and it was due to this fear of embarrassment that they decided to abscond school. Other children stayed very far from schools and needed to cover very long distances every day to school hence an easy mode of transport such as a bicycle was a requirement. Providing food for them to carry as they go to school is also a necessary requirement because once they leave home in the morning,

they can only get back in the evening making it difficult to stay the whole day without food. Other requirements which can motivate children to attend school include provision of umbrellas during the rain and hot sunny seasons. When parents strive to provide such requirements, children will feel cared for and hence feel the need to attend school daily because their parents are concerned about their wellbeing. This finding is congruent to that of Shoba (2013) who noted that some pupils lacked appropriate clothing to attend school and sit for an examination. Some parents fail to provide the school requirements for their children hence making it difficult for such children to have the morale of attending school as required. It is therefore important to always look at what children need in order for them to be able to attend school without too much challenges for example, if as a parent one sees that they are located far away from a school, they need to look for measures of reducing the distance burden by buying a bicycle for their children and put in place other measure such as providing their children with food to carry as they go to school. It is through these gestures by parents that children will have the zeal to attend school as needed for their good education progress. This finding applies directly to Maslows' needs theory which clearly states five levels of motivational needs ranging from physiological needs to self actualization. Just like the theory states, this finding also demands the need for parents to provide their children with necessary needs which will take them towards self actualization which in this case implies regular school attendance.

5.4.2 Sensitize Parents and their Children on the Importance of Regular School Attendance

The other suggested measure through which learner absenteeism can be solved in Nkeyema District by the findings of this study was that of the need to sensitize both children and their parents on the importance of regular school attendance. Some parents did not know the importance of their children's regular school attendance. They did not see anything wrong with their children missing

school for a few days because they were not aware of the negative effects which came along with it hence the need to educate such parents. In their study of understanding pupil absenteeism and its factors in rural primary schools of Nyimba District of Zambia, Kabanga and Mulauzi (2020) stated that learner absenteeism was in existence because of parents/guardians' negative attitude towards school. Some parents did not value education as they saw nothing profitable in educating a child.

Wadesango and Machingambi (2011) cited by Kabanga and Mulauzi (2020) reported that,

Students' attendance were sometimes affected as pupils had to fulfil their home related obligations and provide for their personal and family needs since they were from poor family backgrounds. It is unfortunate that the education system today is still battling with parents who do not understand the importance of school for children.

The study also revealed that children should as well be sensitized on the importance of their regular school attendance because some of them did not value education as a result of peer pressure and influence from others. This finding is in Lubeya (2012) who mentioned that, peer pressure contributed to pupil absenteeism during national practical examinations and that some pupils were not interested in school mostly due to peer pressure which in turn landed them into early marriages or early pregnancies due to poverty. Lubeya further stated that there was need to sensitize such pupils so as to make them aware of the importance of continued school attendance. The current study therefore suggested that there is need for continued guidance and counselling of young ones on the importance of education and attending school regularly in particular.

5.4.3 Child Protection Unit to engage the Tobacco Companies on the need to end Child Labour.

Since tobacco farming was found to be fueling the causes of learner absenteeism in Nkeyema District such as promoting child labour, the government through child protection unit under the Ministry of Community Development should engage Japan Tobacco International (JTI) the

tobacco company that operates in the district, on the need to put in place measures to stop the use of children in tobacco farms. The study revealed that there were a lot of school going children involved in child labour emanating from tobacco farming in Nkeyema District. Some children were forced into child labour by their parents while others voluntarily involved themselves as part time workers in order to raise money. For these children to attend school as required, there is need for eradication of child labour and the child protection unit has a major role to play and this is to put the tobacco companies operating in the district to task of ensuring that their farmers do not tolerate the use of young ones as a source of labour.

According to Kearney (2008), internationally there are studies that have proposed inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary measures that could be implemented to reduce learner absenteeism and these include legal issues, counselling, police involvement, increased outreach projects to the communities and many more. There is need to ensure that no child is involved into child labour and whoever engages a child into tobacco farming activities should be sanctioned by the company failure to which the police should question the company. The current study found out that the tobacco companies operating in the district do not allow the use of young ones in tobacco farming activities especially those of school age but the only challenge is that there is no proper follow-up or monitoring mechanism to ensure adherence hence the call for the government to engage and monitor these companies in order to promote zero tolerance to child labour which contributes to learner school absenteeism in Nkeyema District.

In line with this finding, the current study further suggested that there is need for the tobacco companies to deliberately work with the school administrators and community leaders to ensure that parents do not use their children as a source of labour on their farms but rather encourage them to attend school regularly. There should be deliberate programs aimed at enhancing learner school

attendance formulated by the tobacco companies operating in the district in conjunction with the school management, teachers and community leaders.

5.4.4 Tobacco Companies to Work with School Administrators and Community Leaders to Fight Learner Absenteeism

Another unique finding by this study was that, in order to reduce learner absenteeism there was need for tobacco companies to work with school administrators and community leaders in order to help end the use of school going children as a source of labour in tobacco farming. The study found that the tobacco companies operating in Nkeyema District had the capacity to sponsor educational activities such as the sensitization of parents on the need to stop the usage of children as a source of labour. In the same vein, some participants stated that the companies should promote less labour farming techniques and provide technologies to farmers so as to ease their farming activities which in turn shall reduce the usage of children in the farming activities. Through their social cooperative responsibilities, tobacco companies should work with the Ministry of Education to come up with mobile education activities so as to help address the distance barrier for learners in the tobacco farming camps. This is in line with what Kratli and Dyer (2009) suggested on the education of nomadic pastoralists in Kenya. There is need for alternative solutions (like mobile schools, alternative basic education and interactive radio instruction programmes) to be introduced at the periphery of the school system, on an ad hoc basis and in an auxiliary position. The mode of delivery may be different but the fundamental understanding of teaching and learning behind these programmes remains that of the classroom context. So far, this approach has taken many African countries substantially closer to achieving the goal of universal primary education (Kratli and Dyer, 2009) This shall help in taking learning closer to the children in the tobacco farming camps in Nkeyema District.

5.4.5 Increase Parents –Teachers Collaboration on Matters Affecting Learners

The findings of this study also indicated that there is need to enhance parents and teachers collaboration on matters affecting learners such as causes of absenteeism. Teachers should be able to offer counselling to both parents and children who seem not to understand the importance of regular school attendance. Parents also on the other hand should be cooperating with teachers by attending meetings when called upon to discuss and find solutions to the challenges faced by their children. By so doing there is a high likelihood of harmonizing the childrens' home/parent and school responsibilities without affecting them negatively. Teasley (2004) suggested that families and schools should work as one unit, schools need to support parents to be more vigorously in getting their children to school. The current study revealed that it is only if cooperation between the parents and teachers is promoted and aimed at enhancing the school attendance of children by eliminating barriers that learner absenteeism can be reduced.

Kabanga and Mulauzi (2020) stated that strong parental support is required to curb absenteeism in primary schools. Parental involvement in education is key to a childs' advancement in education. This is line with Musumpuka (2016) who stated that parental involvement in education is key to stopping pupil absenteeism. It is therefore very important to ensure that parents, teachers and any other stakeholders monitor the school attendance rates of school going children in Nkeyema District. It is through this monitoring and cooperation between all the parties that solutions to absenteeism shall be offered.

5.4.6 Schools to start Awarding good Attendants and their Parents.

One of the ways to reduce learner absenteeism as submitted by the findings of this study was for schools to start awarding good attendants and their parents as a way of motivating others. The findings of this study revealed that there is need to be acknowledging deserving learners and their

parents for having good attendance. This can be done during school assemblies and parents can be recognized during PTA meetings so that even other parents can learn from those who promote the school attendance of their children. This finding is in line with Katanga (2016) who stated that motivation plays an important role in reducing absenteeism. He further stated that in most advanced schools where attendance was good, learners were encouraged to attend by means of rewards and acknowledgement.

The current study indicated that schools should come up with deliberate programs aimed at acknowledging learners who perform well when it comes to school attendance. This should be done in conjunction with the PTA committees so that parents are also involved in decision making on issues affecting their children. This finding fits in Maslow's basic needs theory in that it demands for motivation of learners through awards. Maslow's theory has 5 levels of motivational basic needs which humans should achieve on the way to self-actualization. When awards are given to learners, they feel loved and this builds their self-esteem to higher levels which in turn makes them want to achieve more and more.

5.5 Summary.

In conclusion, this chapter was a discussion of the study findings presented in chapter four of this study. It discussed findings on the specific objectives of the study through the emerging themes. The next chapter gives a comprehensive summary for the whole study, the conclusion and the recommendations made by the study.

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Overview

The previous chapter discussed the findings of the study. This chapter presents the summary of the research findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

6.2 Summary of the Study

The study investigated absenteeism among primary school learners from tobacco farming and non-tobacco farming homes in selected primary schools of Nkeyema District of Western province Zambia. In this study the researcher was guided by the following objectives; to analyse factors which contribute to absenteeism among learners from tobacco and non-tobacco farming homes, to find out the stakeholders' perceived effects of tobacco farming on learner absenteeism and thirdly to device measures for addressing absenteeism in Nkeyema District. A descriptive research design was used in this study in order to address the above mentioned objectives. The target population was class teachers, learners from the selected two primary schools and parents comprising of tobacco famers and non-tobacco farmers fro the surrounding villages. The study had a sample of 44 participants who were chosen purposively and data was collected using focus group disscussions which was done with the parents and one on one interviews with the learners and class teachers. The collected data was analysed qualitatively through thematic analysis of the participants' responses.

The findings from the study have revealed a number of factors contributed to absenteeism of learners from both tobacco farming and non-tobacco farming homes in Nkeyema District. These were; working in tobacco activities, doing of house chores, long distances from homes to schools and lack of encouragement by parents. The study also found out that tobacco farming had a negative effect on absenteeism in that it increased the factors which contribute to absenteeism. Tobacco farming exacerbated the problem of long distances from homes to school through farm camping, tobacco farming promoted the over dependence on children to do house chores when parents were busy with farm works. Tobacco farming also promoted child labour a situation that

has led to a number of children even dropping out of school so that they concentrate on doing piece works on farms.

Finally the study suggested some remedies which can be used to reduce learner absenteeism in Nkeyema District. Among others, the following were highlighted: parents to start providing their children with educational requirements as a way of motivating them to attend school, sensitize both parents and their children on the importance of regular school attendance, increase parents-teachers collaboration on matters affecting learners. The study further suggested that the tobacco farming companies operating in Nkeyema District should work together with the school administrators in ensuring that children were not disadvantaged due to tobacco farming involvement.

6.3 Conclusion of the Study

It can be concluded from the study findings that absenteeism exists in primary schools of Nkeyema District and that there are many factors that are responsible. From the participants' views, absenteeism in primary schools of Nkeyema District was caused by a number of reasons not different from the ones highlighted in chapter two of this study. However the researcher notes that tobacco farming exacerbates those causes.

Despite various literature having suggested ways through which learner absenteeism can be reduced as shown in chapter two of this study, most of such ways were not implemented in Nkeyema District hence this study came up with specific measures which can be applied specifically to reduce absenteeism in Nkeyema District such as the need to engage the tobacco farming companies on the need to reduce adverse effects of tobacco farming on the education of the children. This has indeed filled the gap in literature which the researcher intended to.

From Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory used in this study, it was established that learners had no option than to miss school for some days so as to comply with their parents by helping them in the fields or doing house chores. In this case, learners needed to go to school but their parents who were supposed to provide them with the physiological needs such as food, water and safety wanted to use them for their tobacco farming activities. Maslow (1943) indicated that until physiological needs are satisfied to a degree to maintain life no other motivating factors can work. Children were not motivated to attend school by unsatisfied needs hence the study suggested that parents should provide their children with all the required educational needs in order to motivate them to attend school regularly. The main premise of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory is that people will not seek to satisfy higher needs such as self-actualization needs, unless the lower level needs – physiological, safety, love and esteem needs known as deficiency needs are met. In line with the findings of this study, it was established that learners will only attend school if their deficiency needs are addressed. These include proper feeding, school uniforms and school fees which can only be acquired if parents are economically stable and willing to put in their best to ensure that their children attend school.

There was need for all the stakeholders in the education sector to work together in ensuring that these interventions were put in place so as to reduce learner absenteeism which was a setback in achieving education for all.

6.4. Study Recommendations

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

1. The school guidance and counselling departments should sensitize parents and their children on the importance of regular school attendance in order to reduce absenteeism among learners.
2. Tobacco companies should work with the education administrators to introduce mobile education activities in form of outdoor class sessions to cater for learners who are in farming camps.
3. In order to reduce the negative effects that tobacco farming has on learner school attendance, the government, through child protection unit should engage the tobacco companies on the need to stop child labour by promoting less labour demanding farming techniques.
4. The tobacco companies to work with school administrators and community leaders to ensure that parents do not use their children as a source of labour for tobacco farming.
5. DEBS office to facilitate parents –teachers’ collaboration on matters affecting learners attendance negatively.
6. Schools to start awarding good attendants and their parents as a way of motivation and inspiration to those who absent themselves. Award giving activities should be done during the P.T.A general meetings where every parent is present.

6.5. Areas for Further Research

For future research, researchers may consider doing a quantitative study to measure the impact of tobacco farming on primary school learner absenteeism using a bigger sample

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Learners from Non-Tobacco Farming

Homes

TOPIC: STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS ON ABSENTEEISM AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS FROM TOBACCO AND NON-TOBACCO FARMING HOMES: A CASE OF NKEYEMA DISTRICT.

I'm a postgraduate student at the University of Zambia in the School of Education, department of educational psychology, sociology and special education. I am carrying out a research on absenteeism at primary school education in Nkeyema District looking at selected stakeholder's perceptions on learners from tobacco farming and non- tobacco farming homes. The information being collected is for academic purposes only.

Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Sishwashwa Nyumbu.

1. Demographical data of respondents.
2. What do your parents do for a living?
3. The class attendance register shows that you are absent most days from school. What makes you absent?
4. Do you help your parents in farming or any other activities?
5. If yes to question 4, what type of work and what time do you do the work?
6. Do your parents encourage you to attend school? Yes or No. Give reasons for answer.
7. Do you wish your parents were tobacco farmers? Yes or No. Give reasons for your answer.
8. What do you think can be done to reduce your school absenteeism?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COORPORATION

Appendix B: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Learners from Tobacco Farming Homes.

TOPIC: STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS ON ABSENTEEISM AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS FROM TOBACCO AND NON-TOBACCO FARMING HOMES: A CASE OF NKEYEMA DISTRICT.

I'm a postgraduate student at the University of Zambia in the School of Education, department of educational psychology, sociology and special education. I am carrying out a research on absenteeism at primary school education in Nkeyema District looking at selected stakeholder's perceptions on learners from tobacco farming and non- tobacco farming homes. The information being collected is for academic purposes only.

Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Sishwashwa Nyumbu.

1. Demographical data of respondents.
2. The class attendance register shows that you are absent most days from school. What makes you absent?
3. Do your parents have workers for tobacco farming? If yes do you think they are enough?
4. Do your parents require you to help them in tobacco farming or any other activities?
5. If yes to question 4. What type of work do you do and when are you required to do it?
6. What benefits for your school do you get from tobacco farming?
7. Do your parents encourage you to attend school? Yes or No. Give reasons for answer.
8. Do you wish your parents were not tobacco farmers? Yes or No. Give reasons for your answer.
9. What do you think can be done to reduce your school absenteeism?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION

Appendix C: Interview Guide for Non-Tobacco Farmers (Parents)

TOPIC: STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS ON ABSENTEEISM AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS FROM TOBACCO AND NON-TOBACCO FARMING HOMES: A CASE OF NKEYEMA DISTRICT.

I'm a postgraduate student at the University of Zambia in the School of Education, department of educational psychology, sociology and special education. I am carrying out a research on absenteeism at primary school education in Nkeyema District looking at selected stakeholder's perceptions on learners from tobacco farming and non- tobacco farming homes. The information being collected is for academic purposes only.

Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Sishwashwa Nyumbu.

1. Demographic data of respondents.
2. What do you do for a living?
3. Do your children help you in any farm work or other economic activities?
4. If yes to question 3, what type of work and when are they required to work?
5. Have you thought about involving yourself in tobacco farming? Yes/No. why?
6. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of not being a tobacco farmer on your children's school attendance?
7. How best do you think the problem of learner school absenteeism in this community can be solved?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COORPORATION

Appendix D: Interview Guide for Non-Tobacco Farmers (Parents)

Translated in Lozi.

Toho ya Taba: Bulofa bwa bana basikolo mwa likolo za primary mwa sikiliti sa Nkeyema: maikuto abatu kotalima banana babazwa kwa mandu alimiwa kwai nibabazwa kokusalimiwi kwai.

Nimu ituti fasikolo sesipahami sa Zambia. Nibatisisa litaba ze amana nibulofa bwa banalikolo zakwa primary mo mwa sikiliti sa Nkeyema kakotalima banana babazwa kokulimiwa nikokusalimiwi kwai.

Nimizibisa kuli litaba zelukaikambota fateni kizasikolo feela mi mabizo amina akapatwa akuna yaka ziba kuli mufile maikutyo afi kappa afi. Kuzwa fo hape amuhapilikezwi kuambola fataba ye haiba musalati shangwe.

Nikaitumela ahulu kwa swalisano yamina,

Sishwashwa Nyumbu

1. Kilikamani zemueza mwa bupilo?
2. Kana bana bamina bamitusanga mwa misebesi yemu ipilisa kayona?
3. Haiba bamitusanga, baenzanga misebezi mani?
4. Kana mwa itakaleza kulima kwai?
5. Amukatalimisisa kibufi bunde kappa bu maswe bobukona kuzwa mwa buliumi bwa kwai ku amana ni bulofa bwa bana bamina kwa sikolo?
6. Kilikamani zekona kueziwa kuli bulofa bwa bana ba likolo bukusufazwe mwa sikiliti mo?

Ni itumezi ahulu kwa swalisano yamina shangwe.

Appendix E: Interview Guide for Tobacco Farmers (Parents)

TOPIC: STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS ON ABSENTEEISM AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS FROM TOBACCO AND NON-TOBACCO FARMING HOMES: A CASE OF NKEYEMA DISTRICT.

I'm a postgraduate student at the University of Zambia in the School of Education, department of educational psychology, sociology and special education. I am carrying out a research on absenteeism at primary school education in Nkeyema District looking at selected stakeholder's perceptions on learners from tobacco farming and non- tobacco farming homes. The information being collected is for academic purposes only.

Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Sishwashwa Nyumbu.

1. Demographic data of respondents.
2. Do you have workers to help you in tobacco farming?
3. Do you involve your school going children in tobacco farming or any other activities?
4. If yes to question 4, what type of work do they do and when do you engage them?
5. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of tobacco farming to the education of your children?
6. Do you think your involvement in tobacco farming increases or reduces your children's school attendance? Give reasons for your answer.
7. What do you think is the main reason why your children sometimes absent themselves from school?
8. How best do you think the problem of learner school absenteeism in this community can be solved?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COORPORATION

Appendix F: Interview Guide for Tobacco Farmers (Parents) Translated in Lozi

Toho ya Taba: Bulofa bwa bana basikolo mwa likolo za primary mwa sikiliti sa Nkeyema: maikuto abatu kutalima banana babazwa kwa mandu alimiwa kwai nibabazwa kokusalimiwi kwai.

Nimu ituti fasikolo sesipahami sa Zambia. Nibatisisa litaba ze amana nibulofa bwa banalikolo zakwa primary mo mwa sikiliti sa Nkeyema kakutalima banana babazwa kokulimiwa nikokusalimiwi kwai.

Nimizibisa kuli litaba zelukaikambota fateni kizasikolo feela mi mabizo amina akapatwa akuna yaka ziba kuli mufile maikutyo afi kappa afi. Kuzwa fo hape amuhapilikezwi kuambola fataba ye haiba musalati shangwe.

Nikaitumela ahulu kwa swalisano yamina,

Sishwashwa Nyumbu.

1. Kana munani babeleki ba kwai?
2. Kana bana bamina kabelekanga kwa kwai?
3. Haiba kicwalo, kimisebezi mani yabaezanga?
4. Amukatalimisisa kibufi bunde kappa bu maswe bobukona kuzwa mwa buliumi bwa kwai ku amana ni bulofa bwa bana bamina kwa sikolo?
5. Kuli bulimi bwa kwai bwa ekeza bulofa kapa bwa kususufaza bulofa bwa bana ba sikolo?
6. kilikamani zetisanga kuli bana bamina bapalelwe kuya kwa sikolo mazazi amanw'i?
7. Kilikamani zekona kueziwa kuli bulofa bwa bana ba likolo bukusufazwe mwa sikiliti mo?

Ni itumezi ahulu kwa swalisano yamina shangwe.

Appendix G: Interview Guide for Teachers

TOPIC: STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS ON ABSENTEEISM AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS FROM TOBACCO AND NON-TOBACCO FARMING HOMES: A CASE OF NKEYEMA DISTRICT.

I'm a postgraduate student at the University of Zambia in the School of Education, department of educational psychology, sociology and special education. I am carrying out a research on absenteeism at primary school education in Nkeyema District looking at selected stakeholder's perceptions on learners from tobacco farming and non- tobacco farming homes. The information being collected is for academic purposes only.

Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Sishwashwa Nyumbu.

1. Demographic data of respondents.

What do you think are the implications of tobacco farming on primary school learner attendance at this school? If positive or negative, how?

2. Have you observed any differences in the levels of absenteeism between children from tobacco and those from non-tobacco farming homes?
3. If yes to question 4, which group of children absent themselves more and what do you think could be the reason for their absenteeism?
4. What are your suggestions towards the combating of primary school learner absenteeism at this school?
5. Is there anything else you would like to share with me concerning the problem of learner absenteeism at primary education in relation to tobacco farming at this school?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COORPORATION

Appendix H: Approval of Study



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES
RESEARCH DEPARTMENT
APPROVAL OF STUDY

1st December, 2020.

REF NO.HSSREC-2020-SEP-002

Nyumbu Sishwashwa
LUSAKA

Dear Mr. Sishwashwa,

**RE: “ABSENTEESM AT PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION: SELECTED
 STAKEHOLDERS’ PERCEPTIONS ON LEARNERS FROM TOBACCO AND
 NON-TOBACCO FARMING HOMES”**

Reference is made to your protocol dated 1st September, 2020. HSSREC resolved to approve this study and your participation as Principal Investigator for a period of one year.

REVIEW TYPE	ORDINARY REVIEW	APPROVAL NO. HSSREC-2020- SEP-002
Approval and Expiry Date	Approval Date: 1 st December, 2020	Expiry Date: 30 th November, 2021
Protocol Version and Date	Version - Nil.	30 th November, 2021
Information Sheet, Consent Forms and Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English. 	To be provided
Consent form ID and Date	Version - Nil	To be provided
Recruitment Materials	Nil	Nil
Other Study Documents	Questionnaire.	
Number of Participants Approved for Study		

Appendix I: Permission Letter

