

**FACTORS AFFECTING POOR ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS IN JUNIOR  
SECONDARY LEAVING EXAMINATIONS IN  
SELECTED DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN  
MWENSE DISTRICT, LUAPULA PROVINCE.**

**By**

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

**The University of Zambia**

**Lusaka**

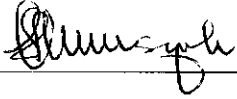
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**2016**

## DECLARATION

This research project is my own clear testimony of my personal effort and experience during field research and that it has not been previously submitted for a master's degree in any other university.



Date: 09 | 08 | 2016

Allan Chileya

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## CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This research report of Allan Chileya is approved as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the master's degree in educational management by the University of Zambia.

Signed.....Date.....

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

- ADEA - Association for the Development of Education in Africa
- DEBS - District Education Board Secretary
- HODs - Heads of Departments
- MOGE - Ministry of General Education
- NPE- National Policy on Education
- SSA - Sub-Saharan Africa
- TAAS- Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
- U.S. - United States

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my beloved children: Allan, Tricia, Michael, Clarice and my caring wife Hellen who gave me full encouragement and support as I went through this programme. To these people I remain their servant.

## ABSTRACT

Many studies are carried out to investigate factors affecting pupils' academic performance. The focus of this research is that pupils' performance in junior secondary leaving examinations in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District leaves much to be desired. The Ministry of General Education has always wanted to get to the bottom of the matter and establish ways in which academic performance can be enhanced. However, academic performance of pupils in junior secondary leaving examinations in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District has gone down in the past two years (2014 - 2015). This study aimed at establishing factors that affect poor academic performance of pupils in junior secondary leaving examinations in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District, Luapula Province. Descriptive survey design was employed and a sample of 3 head teachers, 9 heads of departments, 30 grade 9 pupils, 30 subject teachers and 1 District Education Board Secretary participated in the study. Microsoft Excel, thematic and quick impressive analysis were used to analyse the data obtained.

The findings of the study show the following as factors affecting poor academic performance of pupils in junior secondary leaving examinations in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District: teacher/pupil absenteeism, lack of teacher/pupil motivation in schools, inadequate internal and external teacher monitoring in schools, abnormal teacher work load, non-parental involvement in the learning process of their children, late reporting for lessons by both teachers and pupils, schools and communities working in isolation, inadequate syllabi coverage, inadequate qualified human resource, insufficient teaching and learning materials in selected day secondary schools.

The following recommendations were made: school head teachers to abide by the Ministry of General Education's directive for schools to be using 20% of all user fees collected from pupils to procure teaching and learning materials with emphasis on text books, the District Education Board Secretary to mobilise the Education Standards officers and ensure they intensify regular teacher monitoring, heads of departments and school head teachers to follow suit, parents and teachers to work collaboratively in matters relating to improving pupils' educational standards, government to deploy enough qualified teachers to these day secondary schools, parents to be educated on the importance of education to their children and urge them to be providing basic learning materials to them, MOGE to equip head teachers with managerial skills. The study is likely to give a picture to policy makers, education providers, researchers and all other key players to focus on the identified weaknesses and chart a way forward.

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In a nutshell, the researcher owes everyone who played a role during my research process

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the Background of the study, Statement of the problem, Purpose of the study, Objectives of the study, Research questions, Significance of the study, Limitations of the study, Delimitation of the study, Theoretical framework and Definitions of Operational terms

### 1.1 Background Information

Sometimes it makes the general populous wonder why certain government schools fail to produce good results in public examinations while others manage to consistently impress the general public by yielding admirable results. A good number of scholars on institutional effectiveness, including Edmonds (1981), Scheerens & Bosker (1997), Lezotte, Skaife & Holstead (2002), and Daggett (2005), revealed that government schools can miraculously produce admirable results despite having majority of learners from poor backgrounds. The researchers in question postulated that the good performing schools have modalities put in place to complement their efforts that encouraged all the learners learn with minimal difficulties (Kirk & Jones, 2004).

It is hardly difficult to understand why some schools consistently perform well in examinations while others consistently perform poorly despite schools having teachers with similar qualifications and trained in same colleges and universities.

A group of school effectiveness researchers, including Edmonds (1981), Scheerens & Bosker (1997), Lezotte, Skaife & Holstead (2002), and Daggett (2005), demonstrated that public schools can make a difference – even if their pupil body comprised of pupils whose families had disadvantaged backgrounds. These researchers discovered that the successful schools have unique characteristics and processes, which helped all children, learn at high levels (Kirk & Jones, 2004).

A number of studies have been carried out to establish what it takes for acceptable academic achievement or rather academic proficiency. Edmonds (1981) was the leading researcher in school reform in the 1970s, and his work is still highly respected by education leaders. He initiated what is now known as the Effective Schools Model. Edmonds' (1981) research

noted the following characteristics of successful schools: strong administrative leadership, focus on basic skills, high expectations for pupil success, frequent monitoring of pupil performance, and safe and orderly schools. Other similar characteristics identified by Sheerens and Bosker(1997) included the following: monitoring of pupil progress, focus on achievement, parental involvement, creating a safe and orderly climate, focused curriculum, strong leadership, cooperative working environment and time on task.

Other characteristics observed in effective schools include: commitment to high academic expectations, small learning environments, structure learning around career/pupil interest, professional development focused on instruction, tying out-of school learning to classroom learning, career and higher education counselling, flexible, relevant segments of instruction, assessment of what pupils can do, partnerships with higher education, and support for alliances with parents and community. This was published in a report by the U.S. Department of Education (1999).

Another outcome of the effective schools research was published in a report by the U.S. Department of Education (1999). For this report, a team of researchers studied the 300 most comprehensive school reform research studies done in the previous five years. The common characteristics they identified were: Recently Lezotte picked up leadership on the effective school research that Edmonds started in the 1970s. In his recent book, *What Effective Schools Do*, Lezotte (2010) noted the following as the most important characteristics of effective schools: strong instructional leadership, clear and focused mission, safe and orderly schools, climate of high expectations for success, frequent monitoring of pupil progress, positive home-school relations, and opportunity to learn. Lezotte (2010) argued that these seven Correlates of Effective Schools are powerful indicators of successful places where all children learn, regardless of socioeconomic status or ethnicity.

Facing the other side of the coin, the American Federation of Teachers (2000) established that low performing schools are characterized by lack of academic standards, high levels of disruptions and violence, high rates of pupils and staff absenteeism, high dropout rates, high rates of staff turnover, and an overall negative school atmosphere where parents are hardly involved in school programmes and activities. Research on effective schools has also been conducted in Africa. For instance, Verspoor's (2006) research on what determines education quality in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) identified the following: classroom factors (time, grouping procedures, and instructional strategies) are key, school factors (leadership,

emphasis on academic achievement and staff development) enable and reinforce, system factors (vision, standards, resources, relevant curriculum, incentives) provide direction, and community factors (home environment, support for education) ensure local relevance and ownership. The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA, 2006) notes that in addition to these quality-affecting factors, improvements in education quality and better learning achievements of pupils in SSA will ultimately be determined in classrooms by motivated teachers who have the skills and resources to respond effectively to pupils' learning needs. ADEA (2006) continued to say that effective schools are schools that create a supportive environment for such teachers and for classrooms where all pupils have the opportunity to learn and acquire the knowledge, skills and the attitudes specified in the curriculum. Therefore, as noted by Verspoor (2006), moving towards an in-depth understanding of how schools in Africa can be helped on the path towards effectiveness is thus a central element of the continuing quest for quality.

Carrim and Shalem (1999) reported findings of two school effectiveness research projects conducted in the Johannesburg area of the Gauteng province in South Africa. Their findings demonstrated that schools in South Africa operated in complex and sometimes contradictory contexts, though the schools may have similar socioeconomic backgrounds. The authors argued for a shift from educational production function emphasis to qualitative approaches to capture "the nuances and differences in contexts, diversities of school actors" perspectives and interests, and the plurality of tensions and conflicts in the social relations of the school" so as to better understand the intricacies of everyday school realities and various issues surrounding school effectiveness.

In Burundi, Eisemon, Schwille, Prouty et al. (1993) employed the model of school effectiveness using path analyses to establish what contributed to effective instruction at classroom level. Their findings demonstrated that the most powerful feature of school effectiveness had to do with school management in terms of school director visits, the direct impact of visits on learning outcomes as well as the indirect impact through teacher punctuality. Some instructional practices such as providing extra hours of instruction had a relatively weak impact on learning outcomes, both directly and indirectly as estimated through path models (Eisemon, et al., 1993). On the other hand, Edmonds (1981) established that low performing schools in Tanzania were characterised by high teacher-pupil ratio which led to teachers being overworked and high rates of indiscipline among pupils. In Kenya, a few researchers have reported findings on what accounts for effective schools. For instance,

Lloyd, Mensch & Clark (2000), based on a study of primary schools in Kenya, established that there is more to school effectiveness than the development of academic competency, and there is more to the quality of the school environment than time to learn, material resources for the basic curriculum, and pedagogical practices. Other Kenyan researchers have shown that academic performance is affected by a number of factors, including pupil-related factors like: willingness to learn (Magiri, 1997); school-related factors like adequacy of resources and facilities (Musoko, 1983; Kunguru, 1986); teacher-related factors like teacher morale, teaching methods and job satisfaction (Nkonge, 2010); and school administrators' leadership traits (Anyango, 2001; Orina, 2005) among others. A study by Lloyd, Mensch & Clark (2000) in Kenya found out that low performing schools were characterised by inadequate school facilities, lack of active participation of pupils in the teaching-learning process, and poor overall school atmosphere in terms of organisation, rules and pupil-to-pupil interaction. This study aimed at furthering research on the area of academic performance by advancing the effective schools research in Mwense district so that low performing schools can also start performing well academically.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Education is one of the most important aspects of human resource development. Failure in the national examinations spells doom for the pupils whose life becomes uncertain and full of despair. Junior secondary leaving examinations performance determines whether the pupils will proceed to grade ten and later to university or to other tertiary institutions. Therefore, a pupil's life is determined by academic performance in the national examinations. It is for this reason that secondary school managers or rather administrators are persuaded to improve the grades attained by pupils in junior leaving examinations so that pupils have a strong foundation as they go to senior secondary. Public pressure on school administrators and teachers to improve pupil academic performance has led to schools coming up with various performance improvement strategies including extra supplementary tuition, reward and punishment systems for well performing and poor performing pupils, forced grade repetition among others (Bray, 2000). In Luapula province, there are secondary schools that consistently perform well in junior leaving examinations, while others persistently perform poorly. This situation raises the question about the depth understanding of factors affecting poor performance of pupils in day secondary schools in Mwense District. The important question to address is therefore, what is the cause of the continued poor academic performance of pupils in day secondary schools, despite identifying several strategies of

improving performance? Is the blame to be put on teachers, parents of pupils themselves? The study therefore sought to identify factors accounting for such poor performance in junior leaving examinations at Mutima and Kashiba day secondary schools in Mwense district of Luapula province.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that influence academic performance of pupils in selected day secondary schools in Mwense district of Luapula province.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study were:

1. To find the role school environmental factors play in pupils' poor academic performance in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.
2. To identify teacher factors that contributes to the poor pupil academic performance in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.
3. To identify pupil based factors that contribute to poor academic performance of pupils in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District
4. To ascertain home based conditions that account for poor pupil academic performance in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What role do school environmental factors play in pupils' poor academic performance in day secondary schools?
2. What teacher factors affect pupil academic performance in day secondary schools?
3. What pupil factors contribute to poor academic performance of pupils in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District?
4. What home conditions do affect poor pupil academic performance in day secondary schools?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study is very significant and as such has implications to policy makers, school administrators, teachers, Ministry of General Education officials, pupils, and the community

at large in various ways. First, the study could allow the policy makers to see the patterns of junior secondary leaving examinations performance within the country, province, districts and different categories of schools. The study brings forth factors affecting pupil academic performance, which can be a basis of looking into ways of improving overall performance countrywide.

To school administrators, who include head teachers, deputy head teachers and heads of departments, the study provides data that could be used to improve management practices for improved academic performance. By identifying the strategies employed by well performing schools, poorly performing schools could learn lessons that could enable them improve academic performance of their pupils.

Day secondary school pupils could benefit from the study because findings reveal the way pupils in well performing schools interact with other members of the school community and the school environment. Through this, pupils in poor performing schools could be encouraged to adopt strategies employed by well performing schools in order to improve academic performance. The study is also significant to the community in that their investment in education is expected to translate to quality education, and the findings show how this can be achieved. The study also adds to the existing body of knowledge on determinants of academic performance.

### **1.7 Limitation of the study**

The study had a number of limitations. First, it was not possible to explore all the day secondary schools in the District where academic performance was poor in junior leaving examinations. The study was also limited by the fact that it also used a self-rating questionnaire to obtain data from respondents. This means that respondents could have overrated themselves because, as Webster, Iannucci & Romney (2002) established, respondents tend to overrate themselves on positive traits. To overcome this, the researcher looked for any contradictory data among responses. Another limitation was that some schools may have had recent changes of leadership which may lead to change of management structures and strategies.

## **1.8 Delimitation of the study**

The study was carried out in Mwense which is a rural district in Luapula province. The study targeted only three day secondary schools in the same rural district, due to logistical and time factors. The schools included Mutima, Kashiba and Mukumbwa all day secondary schools.

## **1.9 Theoretical Framework**

The study was based on the Effective Schools Model by Lezotte (2010). According to this model, an effective school is a school that can, in measured pupil achievement terms, demonstrates the joint presence of quality and equity. According to Lezotte (2010), there are seven correlates of effective schools - strong instructional leadership, clear and focused mission, safe and orderly schools, climate of high expectations for success, frequent monitoring of pupil progress, positive home-school relations, and opportunity to learn/time on task. According to Lezotte (2010), strong instructional leaders are proactive and seek help in building team leadership and a culture conducive to learning and professional growth. In the effective school, the head teacher and others act as instructional leaders and effectively and persistently communicate and model the mission of the school to staff, parents, and pupils.

Having a clear and focused vision and mission means everyone knows where they are going and why. A clear focus assists in aligning programs and activities for school improvement. To effectively determine a specific focus, school leadership and stakeholders use a collaborative process to target a few school goals and then build consensus around them. A safe and orderly school is defined as a school climate and culture characterized by reasonable expectations for behaviour, consistent and fair application of rules and regulations, and caring, responsive relationships among adults and pupils (Lezotte, 2010). Classrooms are warm and inviting, and learning activities are purposeful, engaging, and significant. Personalized learning environments are created to increase positive relationships among pupils and between pupils and their teachers. Pupils feel that they belong in the school community, and children are valued and honoured; their heritage and backgrounds are viewed as “assets,” not deficiencies.

In a climate of high expectations, the mantra “all pupils can learn” must be followed by instructional practices and teacher behaviour that demonstrate that teachers believe in the pupils, believe in their own efficacy to teach pupils to high standards, and will persist in

teaching them. Teaching advanced skills and teaching for understanding together with basic skills are required for all pupils to achieve at high levels.

Frequent monitoring of teaching and learning requires paying attention both to pupil learning results and to the effectiveness of school and classroom procedures (Lezotte, 2010). Learning is monitored by tracking a variety of assessment results such as test scores, pupil developed products, performances, and other evidence of learning. Teaching is monitored by teachers themselves through self-reflection and by supervisors for program and teacher evaluation. Assessment results are used for planning instruction for individual pupils as well as for school-wide decision making and planning. Classroom and school practices are modified based on the data.

According to Lezotte (2010), family and community involvement is a general term used to describe a myriad of activities, projects, and programs that bring parents, businesses, and other stakeholders together to support pupil learning and schools. Families and other adults can be involved in the education of young people through a variety of activities that demonstrate the importance of education and show support and encouragement of pupils learning. These are legitimate approaches for involvement and do not necessarily require adults spending time at the school site. Opportunity to learn and pupil time on a task simply means that pupils tend to learn most of the lessons they spend time on. Time on task implies that each of the teachers in the school has a clear understanding of what the essential learner objectives are, grade-by-grade and subject-by-subject. Once it is clear what pupils should be learning, they should be given time to learn it. In an effective school, teachers allocate a significant amount of classroom time to instruction on the essential skills. Pupils of all abilities, races, gender, and socioeconomic status have equal opportunities to learn (Lezotte, 2010).

The theory was relevant to this study in that it clearly highlights on how school effectiveness can be achieved. For example, by having effective leadership in the part of the school administrators. This is in line with Sullivan and Glanz (2000) assertion that a prime task of school leaders is to exercise instructional leadership of the kind that results in a shared vision of the directions to be pursued by the school, and to manage change in ways that ensure that the school is successful in realizing the vision. By identifying the correlates of well performing schools in Kenya, the study tests Lezotte (2010) Effective Schools Model, and

also suggests measures that low performing schools can take to improve academic performance.

## 1.10 Definition of Terms

**Day secondary school** – This refers to a school which runs from grade 8 to grade 12 without boarding facilities. Learners walk from home to school and back on daily basis.

**Academic performance** – This refers to the ability to study and remember facts, being able to study effectively and see how facts fit together and form larger patterns of knowledge, and being able to think for yourself in relation to facts and being able to communicate your knowledge verbally or down on paper.

**Effective learning** – This refers to pupils' being available, focused and committed to undertake learning willingly.

**Effective school** – This refers to a school whose educators are responsible for producing acceptable results, by putting emphasis on instructional leadership, focus on vision and mission, school safety and orderliness, communicating high expectations for success, monitoring of pupil progress, home-school relations, and creating an opportunity to learn for each pupil.

**Effective teaching** – This refers to helping pupils to learn by providing adequate context and content, and involving the learners in the process of responding to questions, summarizing findings and discussions and research and report on unanswered questions.

**Poor performing schools** – This refers to day secondary schools in Mwense District that consistently produce small number of pupils selected to go to grade 10 after writing junior secondary leaving examinations

**Well performing school** – This refers to a secondary school that consistently produce a high number of pupils going to grade 10 after writing junior secondary leaving examinations with pass grades ranging between 1 and 3.

**School environmental factors**- This refers to the quality of the physical environment classroom infrastructure and facilities

**Home based factors**- this refers to the provision of educational resources in the home also whether homes provide a stimulating environment conducive for learning

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter reviews literature on the factors that affect academic performance of pupils which has been done by other researchers who have tried to address the issue world over. The reviewed literature has been discussed under the following headings: causes of poor academic performance in learning institutions and strategies that help improve pupil academic performance.

#### **2.1 Factors contributing to poor academic performance**

A good number of factors have been pointed out for poor pupil academic performance. Kanyika (2000) postulates that learning is a product of formal schooling, communities, families and peers. Learning can be influenced by social-economic and social cultural forces hence influencing learning and consequently pupil academic performance

##### **2.1.1 Pupils' Indiscipline on Academic Performance**

Ovell (2001) noted that discipline in schools is essential for effective learning, good teacher relationship and peer adjustment. A democratic form of discipline leads to a healthy classroom environment that in turn promotes respect for education and a desire for knowledge. Reports on the problem of indiscipline and unrests in schools have been a common feature in the media for a long time. For instance Babbie (1973) in his article 'Pupils face life in prison over strikes' gave a chronological account of protests and destruction in public schools. The issue of unrests and indiscipline in schools is of great concern and it has become a worrying trend in that it has evolved from simple protests to the destruction of property and burning of prefects. The upshot is that pupil disturbance is negatively affecting academic performance. Lewis and Ubogu (2004) emphasize that if the educators themselves are well disciplined and understand their work as well as their learners and possible challenges, there could be only good results in academic achievement. They further asserted that if educators are exemplary and know their work and understand the learners, then the learners will be in a good position to achieve academically. Sonn, Fisher and Bustello (1998) stress the fact of self-respect and respect to others. If self-respect prevails in the school

situation, learners will learn self-discipline. If there is self-discipline, there are more chances of having direction in the fulfilment of the learners' goal so positive academic achievement is possible which translates to good academic performance. If the school has good facilities and the needs of the learners are well catered for, there will be good academic achievement. This can also be improved by the availability of resources, relevant educators, enough learning space which is conducive to learning, relevant teaching style and clear code of conduct.

Williams (1982) stated that discipline involves all stakeholders, programmes as well as personality and school climate. Charlton and David (1993) assert that if there is no proper family environment social differences and learners are from disadvantaged social areas; this could lead to bad discipline and negative results academically. However, if the family background is not good, different social classes are present in the school, school is located in a socially disadvantaged area and there is bad influence of peer groups it will have a negative effect on discipline so academic achievement will also be negatively affected. Discipline is essential particularly during the early years in secondary schools. It is not only the key to good academic performance, which all parents, students and teachers cherish and aspire but also a preparation for success throughout life. In fact, it has been observed that good academic qualifications without good foundation of self-discipline, the individual is useless to him/herself, family and the society. Every school is expected to have a standard code of conduct which every student is supposed to adhere to willingly without compulsion. The schools also need to provide the vital support services through guidance and counselling in order to instil in students a sense of responsibility and curb incidences of ugly and destabilizing student's indiscipline in schools. Where there is disobedience, it is expected that the necessary disciplinary measures will be taken according to the laid-down regulations in education act. School discipline is a powerful emotive subject since it is one of the main determinants of students' success in their academic work, and it is an issue that has generated public concern (MOE, 2001). Most people equate falling academic standards in schools to low standards of students' discipline (Griffin, 1994). It is on this basis that the role of the head teachers and teachers within the school's administrative and instructional services becomes crucial.

### **2.1.2 Library facilities and academic achievement**

The other contributing factor to poor academic performance in most learning institutions at different levels world over is the absence of library facilities. Libraries play an important role

and contribute to excellent academic performance. Hornby (2010) described a library as a building or room in which collection of books, tapes, newspapers, journals; and articles are kept for people to read study or borrow. A library is an essential factor in the teaching-learning process. It forms one of the most important educational services. The educational process functions in a world of books. The chief purpose of a school library is to make available to the pupil, at his easy convenience, all books, periodicals and other reproduced materials which are of interest and value to him but which are not provided or assigned to him as basic or supplementary textbooks.

The importance of a library has been demonstrated by the government when she expressed in the National Policy on Education (NPE) that every state Ministry needs to provide funds for the establishment of libraries in all here educational institutions and to train librarians and library assistants. As a resource, it occupies a central and primary place in any school system. It supports all functions of school-teaching and provides service and guidance to its readers.

Ahmed (2003) posited that provision of educational facilities like availability of library facilities in school enhances good academic performance of pupils. He adds that such school facilities provide educational resources that facilitate effective teaching and learning in schools. Educational facilities contribute to a skilful teacher to achieve a level of instructional effectiveness that far exceeds what is possible when they are not provided. Ahmed (2003) adds that in most of the nation's secondary schools teaching and learning takes place in a most uncondusive environment, lacking the basic materials like books and thus hindering the fulfilment of educational objectives.

Fowowe (1988) further emphasised that a library must be up-to-date and at the same time have older materials. It must be properly supported financially to fund materials and services among others. He concluded that a well-equipped library is a major facility which enhances good learning and achievement of high educational standards. In his words, Farombi (1998) reiterated that school libraries may not be effective if the books therein are not adequate and up-to-date. Its impact may only be meaningful if the library could always be opened to the students for a considerable length of time in a school day. With all the above mentioned facts, it is sad to know that many schools operate without libraries (Shodimu, 1998).

Additionally, using data from schools in seven countries in Florida, Drever (1991) also found school libraries to have a measurable effect on pupil performance achievement. At the elementary and middle school levels, approximately 4 percent of the variance in Texas

Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) scores was attributed to school libraries, while the figure more than doubled at school level, reaching 8.2 percent. Library variables outweighed the effects of other school variables including computers per student and teacher experience.

Ogunseye (1986) had earlier noted that the total absence of an organized school library would continue to spell a doom for thousands of secondary school students. This statement clearly implied that many schools operate without libraries and this had affected the academic performance of their students. Moreover, Fuller (1985) identified a school library as an instructional resource which may significantly influence pupils' achievement after controlling for pupils' family background. He found out that one effect of library size and its activity have been positive in 15 out of 18 analyses. Those schools with well-equipped library normally maintain high academic performance. In another study on raising school quality in developing countries, Fuller (1985) found out that collection of books kept for reading in the library is related to performance.

### **2.1.3 Learner-Teacher absenteeism**

Kasanda (2003) in the National Assessment Survey carried out in Zambia in 1999 and 2003 attributes poor pupil academic performance to learner absenteeism as well as teachers. When pupils miss lessons they find it very difficult to catch up with learning because they miss many concepts in different lessons which are vital in their learning. The end result of the practice is poor academic performance when such learners are presented for national examinations. Teacher absenteeism is also identified in a survey as a factor attributing to the poor academic performance. Most are the times when pupils in classes are left without teachers on the pretext of teachers to have gone for their salaries. In some cases a teacher may go away for a week without attending to his or her learners. Consequently such teachers fail to catch up with time and in the end syllabi coverage in their respective subjects is highly affected.

### **2.1.4. Proximity to the learning institution**

Distance from home to school is yet another cause of pupil poor academic performance. Kanyika (2000) and Mbozi (2008) argue that when pupils travel long distances to school there are high possibilities of such pupils reporting for school late and very tired reducing their level of concentration when learning is in progress. The vice does not only contribute to

such pupils missing first lessons but also make them inattentive during lesson delivery by teachers. This later adversely affects their academic achievement.

Kelly (1999) also agreed that long distances to schools affected pupil school attendance. He emphasised that by the time pupils arrived at schools, they were too tired to concentrate on school work, girls were less able than boys to negotiate physical hazards, like swollen rivers, or dangerous escarpment paths which they encountered on the way to school. In Nigeria, Fatunwa (1969) found that school home distance affected pupils' academic performance.

### **2.1.5. Homework policy and academic performance**

Copper (1989) in Germany established that schools which implemented the home work policy enhanced academic achievement and pupils in such schools performed better in class tests. Beattie (1987) also noted that homework is not just given to learners, there are always rules regarding the amount of homework that was to be given to pupils of particular ages. Homework manifested only if it was given in right amounts and taken in the right spirit. It was not good to burden children with home assignments and expected them to do well in their studies. Homework should be proportionate to their age and mental ability. Berger (1991) in Finland established in his 50 studies that, time pupils spent on homework correlated with their achievement. The studies showed that pupils who had chance to do homework achieved good academic performance in various subjects were educational instructors gave home regularly. Similarly, Kelly and Kanyika (2000) reveal that there is a positive relationship between learning achievement and frequency of homework. The Ministry of Education policy insists on homework being given to learners at least twice a week in all the subjects (Kasanda, 2003). Some schools performed poorly because of teacher related factors such as, inadequate teacher preparation and teacher's lack of dedication to duty.

In Asia, Beattie (1987) equally discovered that homework correlate with academic performance. He stated that homework bore a positive relationship with learning outcomes provided it was relevant to the set learning objectives, given regularly in required amounts, with clear instructions. Whenever, homework was given, learners' homework books were collected and reviewed during class time and that was used as an occasion for feedback to pupils.

### **2.1.6 Instructional Leadership and Academic Performance**

One major emphasis in education in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century has been the continuing demand for greater accountability for the improvement of pupil performance. Both the local community and national expectations require schools to ensure that all pupils achieve mastery of the curriculum. As a result, effective school head teachers focus on teaching and learning especially in terms of measurable pupil progress while ineffective school managers never mind of finding ways of improving pupil academic performance. Instructional leaders would concentrate on building a vision for their learning institutions, sharing leadership with teachers, and influencing schools to operate as learning communities. This however is overlooked by school head teachers who have no vision on how best they can drive their learning institutions to higher heights in terms of academic excellence. A great deal is required of an effective instructional leader. As an instructional leader you should be able to lead your teachers in improving learning. You should be aware of curriculum requirements and pedagogical techniques. You should be able to work with teachers to strengthen their skills. You can collect, analyse and use data to improve academic performance. You should have the skills needed to rally pupils, teachers, parents, and other community residents and partners around the common goal of raising pupil performance. And, you demonstrate the leadership skills and knowledge to apply these ideas in your daily work.

Contemporary educational reform places a great premium on the effective instructional leadership and management of schools. The logic of this position is that an orderly school environment, that is efficient and well managed, provides the preconditions for enhanced pupil learning. Effective instructional leadership is generally recognized as the most important characteristic of school administrators (Hoy & Hoy, 2009; Lezotte, 2010).

According to Lezotte (2010) instructional leadership is one of the tenets of effective schools. Effective instructional leaders are proactive and seek help in building team leadership and a culture conducive to learning and professional growth. For the effective school to be effective, the head teacher, deputy head teacher and Heads of Departments (HODs) should act as instructional leaders and effectively and persistently communicate and model the mission of the school to staff, parents, and pupils.

Effective instructional leadership has been shown to result in school improvement and effectiveness (Scheerens & Bosker, 1997; Lezotte, Skaife & Holstead, 2002; Lezotte, 2010). The indicators of schools having effective instructional leaders have been shown through

research to include factors like teacher morale and satisfaction. In the absence of teacher morale and satisfaction from the superordinate, teaching and learning is compromised to some extent.

Schools need effective instructional leaders to communicate the school's mission and vision. By persistently reinforcing the school's mission, the head teacher creates a shared sense of purpose and establishes a set of common core values among the instructional staff. Having common core values and a shared sense of purpose helps guide all members of the instructional team and avoids individuals straying from the intended goals (Kirk & Josnes, 2004). Additionally, instructional leaders are able to build and sustain school vision. Some scholars argue that if you are not sure of where you want to go, how will you ever get there? Furthermore, how will you know when and how to take corrective action along the way? And how will you know when you have arrived at the destination? A successful school administrator must have a clear vision that shows how all components of a school will operate at some point in the future. Having a clear image of the future helps school administrators avoid being swamped by the administrative requirements of their jobs. School administrators may need two types of vision: one vision of their schools and the roles they play in those schools and another vision of how the change process will proceed.

Portin Schinieder, Dearmond & Cundlach (2003) consider that school leaders have many roles. All schools need head teachers to exercise their roles as instructional leaders who ensure the quality of teaching. Thus good heads spend time in classrooms observing the process of teaching and learning while also balancing other needs such as pupils' safety and parent relationships. Fulfilling these multiple responsibilities well requires head teachers to possess an inner compass that consistently points them towards the future interests of the school, never losing sight of their schools' vision, missions and goals.

### **2.1.7 Summary**

The literature reviewed in this section shows that academic performance can be influenced by a number of factors. The literature shows that distance from the school has a negative bearing on academic performance of pupils. Non availability of libraries in schools is also identified in the cited studies as a factor contributing to poor performance in schools so is teacher-pupil absenteeism. Poor instructional leadership is equally spelt out as hindrance to academic achievement. The above are said to cause pupil academic performance to be poor and limit them from joining the tertiary level.

However, these studies have not clearly indicated determinants of poor academic performance of pupils in rural day secondary schools hence, the need for this study. The next chapter discusses the study methodology

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the research methodology of the study. The chapter highlights the research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection techniques, validity and reliability of instruments and

#### **3.1 Description of the Study Area**

This study was conducted in Mwense district of Luapula province. Mwense is a rural district with seven secondary schools of which five are day secondary schools while two are boarding. The district in question is located on the north of Luapula province about 107 km from Mansa district, the provincial headquarters. The district is divided into two constituencies namely Mukumbwa and Mwense.

Mwense district shares its borders with Chipili district on the south-east, Mansa on the south, Mwansabombwe on the north and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) on the west. Mwense borders Luapula river with Democratic Republic of Congo.

The district was selected for the study because of the alarming rate of failing at junior secondary leaving examinations from 2014 to 2015 in the existing day secondary schools. The area also offered proximity advantage to the researcher, consequently providing easy accessibility especially that the same day secondary schools are all located along the Mansa-Mwense road.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

Kombo and Trompo (2006), describe research design as something which can be thought of as the structure of research. They further say it is the glue that holds all of the elements in a research project together. Orodho (2003), defines it as the scheme, outline or plan that is used to generate answers to research problems

The study used descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals (Orodho, 2003). The survey was chosen because it employs the use of questionnaire or interviews to collect data (Johnson and Christensen, 2004). This research design was chosen

because of the advantages it has over the other designs. For example by the use interviews the researcher (interviewer) can explain the purpose of his investigation, and can explain more clearly just what information he wants. If the subject misinterprets the question, the interviewer may follow it up with a clarifying question. At the same time he may evaluate the sincerity and insight of the interviewee. It is also possible to seek the same information in several ways, thus providing a check for the truthfulness of the responses (Kulbir, 2014).

### **3.3 Study Population**

Kombo and Trompo (2006) define population as a group of individuals, objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement. Population can also refer to an entire group of persons or elements that have at least one thing in common. Population also refers to the larger group from which the sample was taken. In this study, the population consisted of three selected day secondary schools, the District Education Board Secretary, all head teachers in the same selected day secondary schools, all heads of department, all subject teachers and all pupils in the three selected day secondary schools in Mwense District

### **3.4 Target Population**

The target population for this study included head teachers from Mutima, Kashiba and Mukumbwa day secondary schools, all heads of department, all the subject teachers and pupils of the three day secondary schools in question. Furthermore, the District Education Board Secretary was also used in the study. The researcher deemed it fit to use the respondents in question because they were in schools where academic achievements were declining hence the researcher thought they were the right people to provide the required information on the subject under investigation.

### **3.5 Sample Size**

The sample consisted of 1 District Education Board Secretary, 3 head teachers from Mukumbwa, Mutima and Kashiba day secondary schools respectively, 9 heads of department (3 from each school), 30 teachers (10 from each school) and 30 teachers (10 from each school). This gave a total of 73 respondents. The summary is shown in the matrix below.

**Table 1: Composition of the Study Sample**

Table 1 shows the composition of the Study Sample

Institution	DEBS		Head teachers		Heads of Depts		Teachers		G9 pupils	
	population	Sample Size	population	Sample size	Populatio n	Sample size	Populati on	Sample Size	population	Sample size
DEBs Office	01	01								
Mukumbwa			01	01	07	03	30	10	80	10
Mutima			01	01	07	03	26	10	100	10
Kashiba			01	01	07	03	25	10	90	10
Total	01	01	03	03	21	09	81	30	270	30

**Source: Field data 2016**

As shown in table 1, there are 81 teachers in the three day secondary school of which 30 were sampled ( 10 from each school), 21 heads of department in total of which 9 were sampled (3 from each school), 270 grade nine pupils. Out of this number 30 were sampled (10 from each school), 3 head teachers (1 from each school) and 1 District Education Board Secretary. This gives a total number of 73 respondents and these are the ones who were interviewed as well as filling in the questionnaires.

**Table 2: Distribution of participants according to Gender**

Gender	Head teachers		HODs		Subject Teachers		G9 Pupils		DEBs	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Male	03	100	08	88.9	19	63.3	15	50	01	100
Female	00	00	01	11.1	11	36.7	15	50	00	00
<b>Total</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field data 2016**

Table 2, shows that 100% (3) of the school head teachers were men implying that there was no female head teacher in the three day secondary schools. 88.9 % (8) represented male HODs while 11.1% (1) were female.63.3% (19) were male subject teachers while 36.7% (11) were women. Pupil participation was at par 50% (30) boys and 50% (30) girls

### 3.6 Sampling Technique

According to Kombo and Tromple (2006), sampling technique is the procedure a researcher uses to gather people, places or things to study. It is a process of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements of the characteristics found in the entire group.

Simple random sampling and purposeful sampling were used in this research to select participants or rather respondents. Simple random sampling is referred to as simple random sampling because no complexities are involved. All you need is a relatively small, clearly defined population to use this method (Kombo and Tromp 2006). Additionally, in simple random sampling, each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected and the member is not affected by the selection of other members.

The researcher decided to use Simple random sampling to select pupils from the three day secondary schools, teachers and heads of department from the same day secondary schools, because the population of study was small and this procedure is usually used when the size of the population is small and each member of the population has equal chance of being selected. In this research, two types of paper marked 'Yes' and 'No' were put in a box for teachers and pupils to pick randomly, according to gender. Those who picked 'Yes' pieces of paper were selected to participate in the research.

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that is used to select individuals from a given population who have unique characteristics and hold specific information desired for the study. The power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information rich-cases for in-depth analysis related to the central issues being studied (Kombo and Tromp, 2006).

For this reason, the researcher used purposive sampling to select poor performing day secondary schools in Mwense district. Three head teachers from the same three affected day secondary schools were purposefully selected to participate, because they were equally key in the study. The District Education Board Secretary was also purposefully selected since was the overall boss for education in the district where the study on poor academic performance was conducted.

### 3.7 Research Instruments

In this study, the researcher used questionnaires and an interview guide to collect data. There were three sets of questionnaires, one for head teachers and one for teachers and HODs. On the other hand, the interview guide was used to conduct interviews with the District Education Board Secretary. Details about the instruments are as provided below.

#### 3.7.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaires were used to collect data from the pupils, head-teachers, head of departments and subject teachers. The use of the questionnaire was arrived at because it helps create rapport, explains the purpose of the study. Questionnaires are sharply limited by the fact that respondents must be able to read the questions and respond to them. In addition the availability of many respondents at a time made it possible for the researcher to collect data within a short period of time, get a high response rate and also reducing the financial expenses. In fact the use of the questionnaires was chosen since studies by Bowling (1999) revealed that as an instrument for collecting data, questionnaires used in a survey increased the external validity of the study done in a natural setting. The questionnaires had different sections. The first section of the questionnaire contained information on particulars of the respondents (Bio data) while the other section of the questionnaire contained multiple choice and open ended questions on the factors that affected the performance of pupils in junior leaving examinations in selected day secondary schools in Mwense.

The questionnaires were distributed to the following respondents: 3 head teachers in the selected secondary schools, 30 subject teachers, 30 pupils from the same day secondary schools and 9 heads of departments from the schools in question. The table below shows the distribution pattern.

**Table 3 Distribution and return of questionnaires by respondents**

Questionnaire	G 9 pupils			Subject teachers			HODs			Head teachers		
	F	M	%	F	M	%	F	M	%	F	M	%
No. distributed	15	15	100	11	19	100	01	08	100	00	03	100
No. returned	15	15	100	11	19	100	01	08	100	00	03	100
No. not returned	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00

Source: Field data 2016

Table 3, clearly indicates that all the questionnaires which were distributed to respective respondents were all returned back. This gave a 100% respondent turn out.

### **3.7.2 Semi –Structured interviews**

According to (Kombo and Tromp, 2006), focused interviews are based on use of interview guide. The guide is in form of a written questions or topics that need to be covered by the interview.

The researcher used semi-structured interviews to gather data from head teachers and heads of departments. The questions were designed in such a way as to elicit subjective views of the research participants. Where it was noticed that the questions were falling short in some areas and not bringing out desired responses, probes were used so that the interviewee could open up and share a lot more. The information helped create and bring out the social reality of what was being sought.

The interview questions were carefully constructed to bring out the desired information sought. These questions were not exhaustive but only guided the flow and course of the interview. In some instances, the interview would bring in information that was not sought, however, when this happened, such data was politely discarded and the interview was steered back on course.

The researcher had to be cautious of the data collected as some information was cosmetic and was given for the sake of impressing him. Others said some things out of malice and frustration. The interpretation and analysis had to take into consideration the mood, gestures and time of the day when the information or responses were elicited. In addition, the responses were, at analysis stage, grouped according to the topic or the subject they discussed.

It is worth mentioning here that the interviewees were given the chance to fully express themselves with very minimal intervention. The researcher only interjected when the discussant went beyond what was expected. This control helped save on time.

### **3.7.3 Focus Group Discussion**

This approach was used because it is a very cheap method in capturing the views of a large sample. This approach is equally interactive and provokes participants to think and look at other options available.

Bryman (2008) defines the focus group method as, A form of group interview in which: there are several participants (in addition to the moderator/facilitator); there is an emphasis in the questioning on a particular fairly tightly defined topic; and the accent is upon interaction within the group and the joint construction of meaning.... thus the focus group method appends to the focussed interview the element of interaction within groups as an area of interest and is more focused than the group interview.

The focus group discussions were very beneficial as not all participants agreed to one school of thought but most of them had divergent views. This method was useful as Nupon and Wangenge – Ouma (2009:88) stated, “... is useful for ascertaining respondents’ thoughts, perception, feelings and retrospective accounts of events.”

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedure**

(Kombo and Tromp, 2006), define data collection as “gathering specific information aimed at proving or refuting some facts. In this vain the researcher must have a clear understanding of what they hope to obtain and how they hope to obtain it.

Before the commencement of the study the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Director of Research and Graduate Studies for Postgraduate at the University of Zambia. This introductory letter from the higher learning institution, where the researcher was pursuing his studies by distance learning was to be used to get final authority of entry into research premises. The letter in question was given to the researcher in March,2016 during a residential school. The researcher then presented the same introductory letter to Mwense District Education Board Secretary for permission to enter the three selected day secondary schools in the district and carry out research.( Mutima, Kashiba and Mukumbwa day secondary schools)

The District Education Board Secretary wrote an introductory letter for the researcher to present before Mutima, Kashiba and Mukumbwa day secondary school head teachers for possible permission to carry out research into their premises. The introductory letter was presented before the three head teachers and possible arrangements for the research commencement were made.

Before the main study was carried out, a pilot testing of both the questionnaires and interview guides was done to ensure the validity of the instruments. Pilot testing of an instrument gives the researcher a chance to check the respondents' understanding of the meaning of the items and determine the reliability of the instruments to be used. Three day secondary schools were piloted. 10 subjects teachers from the target population participated in the study (5 from each school) .A total of 12 grade 9 pupils were piloted on (6 from each school). 2 HODs from each of the two day secondary schools took part in the piloting study. Those who took part in a pilot study were not allowed to participate in the final study. Nunnally (1970) argues that a pilot study should be conducted on the sample of subjects similar to the group with which the final study is to be conducted. In a related development, Babbie (1973) postulates that the pilot samples should be chosen in exactly the same fashion as is intended for the final survey.

### **3.9 Reliability of the Instruments**

Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) define reliability as a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. In order to improve the reliability of the instrument, an assessment of the consistency of the responses on the pilot questionnaires was made to make a judgement on their reliability. Test-retest technique of reliability testing was employed whereby the pilot questionnaires were administered twice to the respondents, with a five days interval, to allow for reliability testing.

### **3.10 Validity of the Instruments**

Validity is defined as the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). Face validity refers to the likelihood that a question will be misunderstood or misinterpreted, thus, the pilot study helped to iron out ambiguity. Pre-testing a survey is a good way to increase the likelihood of face validity. According to Borg and Gall (1989), content validity of an instrument is improved through expert judgment. Content validity refers to whether an instrument provides adequate coverage

### **3.11 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical issues are cardinal in research world and should be observed fully when one is carrying out a research. Ethical issues in research are connected with beliefs and principles about what is right and what is wrong.

In conducting this research the researcher observed a number of ethical issues regarded in research. For example, before the commencement of the study, the researcher had to seek permission from responsible officers to allow him entry into their premises and conduct the study. When getting permission the researcher also explained the kind of study he was carrying and why he had picked on such places and not others.

The researcher also informed all the participants that the information that he was going to collect from them was for educational purposes and he would maintain confidentiality at all times. This was evident in the manner the questionnaires were designed. There was total anonymity as no names were required when filling in the questionnaires.

Participants' rights during the research process were exposed to them or rather made known. The researcher informed respondents that they were at liberty to withdraw from participating from the study at any point whenever they felt uncomfortable to continue as research respondents. In compliance to the above withdrawal right of participation, the researcher made it clear that an informed consent was going to be signed and their participation was purely voluntary. The informed consent had clear guidelines revealing all participants rights during their participation in study.

### **3.12 Data Analysis**

Data analysis refers to examining what has been collected in a survey or experiment and making deductions and inferences (Kombo and Tromp,2006)

This study generated both qualitative and quantitative data; hence both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used to analyse the data obtained. Data analysis consisted of quick impressive analysis to analysis focus group discussions and item analysis of the questionnaire responses. Thematic analysis was used in analysis qualitative data from interviews which led into categorisation of data into imaging themes. While quantitative data was analysed using Microsoft office excel which allowed presentation of data in tables and figures to generate frequencies and percentages.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings of the study in accordance with the research objectives which were as follows:

1. To find the role school environmental factors play in pupils' poor academic performance in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.
2. To identify teacher factors that contributes to the poor pupil academic performance in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.
3. To identify pupil based factors that contribute to poor academic performance of pupils in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District
4. To ascertain home based conditions that account for poor pupil academic performance in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.

#### **4.1 School-Based Factors that Contribute to Poor Performance in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District**

Objective number one sought to find the role school environmental factors play in pupils' poor academic performance in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.

In view of the above objective various school based factors were identified as contributing to poor performance in junior secondary leaving examinations in selected day secondary schools in Mwense district. These included: Commencement of learning, adequacy of teaching and learning materials, quality school administration, and frequency checking of teachers' lesson plans as well as frequency observation of lessons by heads of departments. These were the emerging themes under which objectives findings were presented in line with each objective.

##### **4.1.1 Commencement of Learning**

The researcher asked subject teachers on the week teaching normally start after school holiday. Teachers disclosed that normal teaching starts in week two when majority of the pupils report back from long holiday. The subject teachers who participated in the study as

respondents informed the researcher that in week one very few pupils come to school and the trend restrain them from entering into serious teaching with fear of repeating same topics taught when the majority of pupils report back from holiday in week two. The claim by the subject teachers was substantiated through the information extracted from the class attendance registers as. The registers revealed that a good number of pupils start coming to school in the second week of opening.

**Table 4: pupils reporting trend after school holiday in selected day secondary schools**

Reporting week	Mutima		Kashiba		Mukumbwa	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Week 1	31	31	13	14.4	20	25
Week 2	63	63	73	81.1	58	72.5
Week 3	6	6	4	4.4	2	2.5
Total	100	100	90	100	80	100

**Source: Class Attendance Registers 2016**

Table 4, shows the reporting trend of pupils in the three day secondary schools in Mwense district where the study on poor pupil academic performance was conducted. The reporting pattern shows that in week 1 of school opening pupils in the majority are still not in school. For example at Mutima in the opening week the grade 9 attendance register showed that 31 pupils out of the total number of 100 report in week 1 giving 31% of the reporting rate. At Kashiba 14.4% (13 pupils) out of 90 pupils had reported in week 1. For Mukumbwa 25% of the total population of grade 9 pupils had reported. Results obtained indicate that reporting pattern improved in week 2 with Kashiba recording 81.1% , Mukumbwa 72.5% and Mutima with 63%

#### **4.1.2 Adequacy of Learning Resources**

The adequacy and use of teaching and learning materials affects the effectiveness of a teacher's lesson. Teaching and learning resources enhances understanding of abstract ideas and improves performance. The study sought adequacy of learning resources like essential text books and reference books as revealed in table 2 below.

**Table 5: Adequacy of Learning Resources**

Text books	Pupils		Pupils		Teachers/HODs		Teachers/ HODs	
	Adequate		Inadequate		Adequate		Inadequate	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Course books	3	10	27	90	00	00	39	100
Reference books	5	16.7		83.3	00	00	39	100

**Source: Field data 2016**

From table 5, it is clear that there is a huge crisis in terms of course books or rather syllabus recommended text books for use in the three day secondary schools. Heads of department and the teachers in separate interviews disclosed that there was big short of essential text books in day secondary schools in Mwense district. Eight teachers drawn from three different selected day secondary schools that were among the respondents echoed in a separate interview that in some cases teachers were sharing a text book when making lesson preparations. This consumed a lot of valuable time when preparing lesson plans claimed the teachers.

The researcher also learnt from pupils that they had no access to text books as they were not available in their respective schools. One pupil from the three selected day secondary schools had this to say, *“Our learning entirely depends on the availability of the teacher in class and what we get from him or her. Otherwise in their absence learning is proved impossible as there are no text books to use for research”*

One head of department in an interview disclosed to the researcher that he had even lost hope on improving learning results at junior secondary leaving examinations. Each time he presented to the school head teacher on the need to procure essential text books for the department, the response was always that the school had no money. Meanwhile, whenever there was a meeting for head teachers, subsistence allowance was always available for him. How can results improve when controlling officers cannot prioritise the needs for the school? When one talks about money he/she is shut down and told that his/her time will also come to enjoy the privileges.

From such comments from the head of department, the researcher deduced that school managers were hardly concerned with providing the needed teaching and learning resources that would enhance learner performance.

### 4.1.3 Quality School Administration and academic Performance

The quality of school administration plays a vital role in academic performance as it is concerned with pupils, teachers, rules, regulations and policies that govern the school system. In establishing the efficiency of school administration, the researcher considered the following aspects: Frequency of staff meetings, frequency of checking teachers' schemes of work and lesson plans, adequacy of teachers' prior preparation, frequency of class observation by the head teacher and heads of departments.

### 4.1.4 Frequency of Staff Meetings in a Term

Table 6, shows the number of times meetings were held in respective schools.

**Table 6: Frequency of staff meetings in a term**

No of times staff meetings are held	Teachers/HODs		Head teachers	
	F	%	F	%
Once	3	7.7	00	00
Twice	35	89	2	66.7
More than two	1	0.03	1	33.3
Total	39	100	3	100

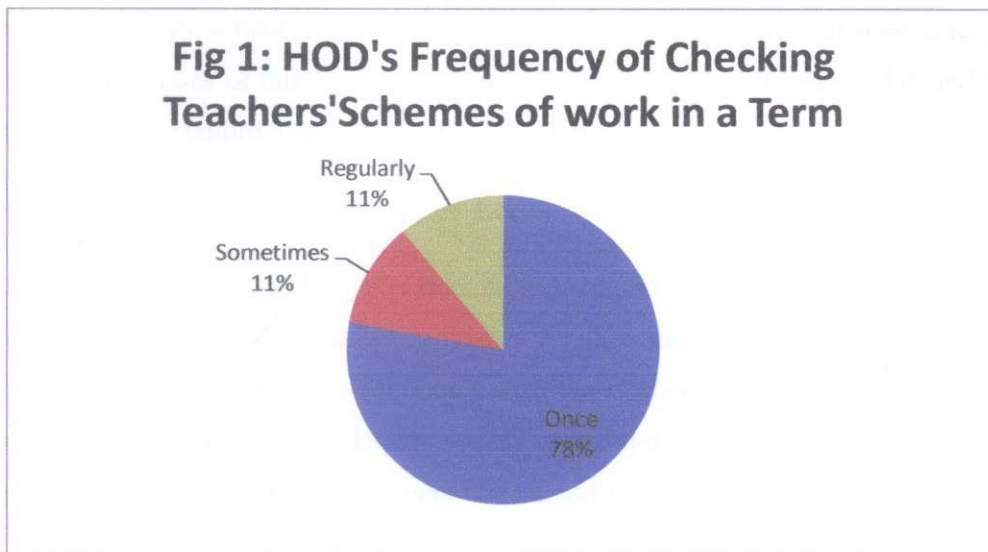
**Source: Field data 2016**

Table 6, Shows data obtained from the field. It reveals that majority of the respondents (89%) agreed that staff meetings are held twice a term, 7.7% indicated once only in a term and 0.03% indicated that they hold staff meetings more than twice in a term. Staff meetings can be a better place for schools to discuss pertinent issues affecting them and collective resolutions can be reached on how best such issues can be resolved. Few staff meetings may lead to less co-ordination of curriculum implementation.

#### 4.1.5 Frequency of Checking Teachers' Schemes of Work

Heads of departments have the duty to check teachers' schemes of work from time to time to check syllabus coverage. The figure 1 shows how the checking of the document in question by HODs progressed.

**Fig 1 HODs Frequency of Checking Teachers' Schemes of Work in a Term**



**Source: Field data 2016**

The responsibility of checking the professional documents like teachers' schemes of work and lesson plans lies in the hands of the head of department. This may be done in person or he may delegate to the head of section. Preparation and use of schemes of work by the teachers enhances sequential teaching and results to improved achievement. Basing on the above facts the researcher asked the 9 heads of departments from the three selected day secondary schools to state how often they checked teachers' schemes of work to ascertain level of syllabi coverage.

Figure 1, the results show that majority of heads of departments (78%) (7) in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District check teachers' schemes of work once in a term. 11% (1) of the HODs' interviewed indicated that they checked their teachers schemes of work regularly. When the researcher pursued HODs further as to why Schemes of work were not regularly checked, one head of department openly said that teachers prepare schemes of work in respective subjects once per term and submit for endorsement to the head of department. In

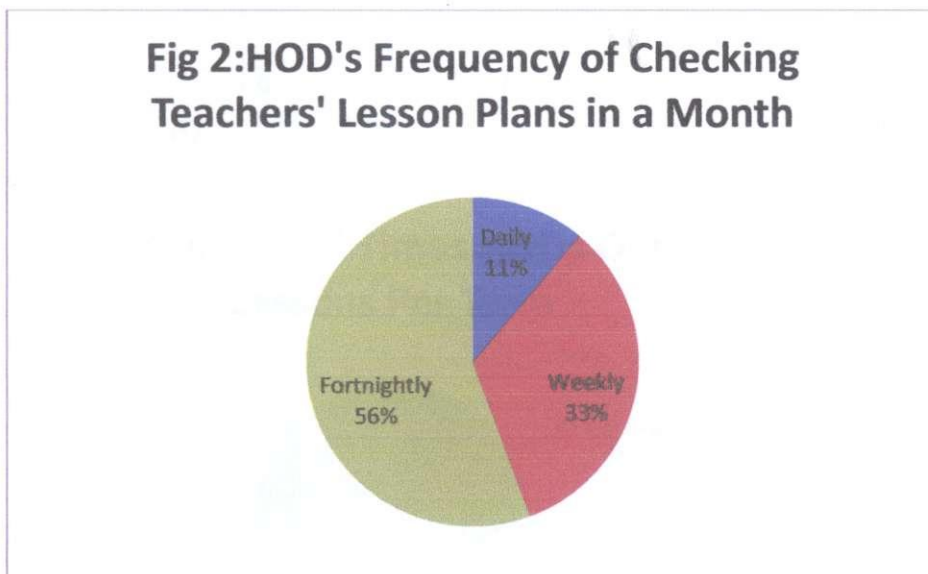
this respect there was no need to check the schemes of work once it was approved by the head of department, clarified the respondent.

In respect of the data obtained, concerning the checking of schemes of work by heads of departments, the reflection is that heads of departments in the three selected day secondary schools do not do any follow on curriculum implementation during the course of the term. Hence, the researcher concluded that majority of the heads of departments in the three selected day secondary schools were unable to monitor syllabi coverage of their teachers in respective subjects. Lack of this close monitoring would make some teachers relax and fail to complete the syllabus before presenting learners for national examinations.

#### 4.1.6 Frequency of Checking the Teachers' Lesson Plans

Teachers' lesson plan is a professional document prepared by teachers for the purpose of presentation of a lesson. The teacher indicates whether the lesson has been taught and objectives achieved; if the lesson is not taught, then the teacher indicates the reason why and when he intends to cover it; if the lesson objectives are not achieved, the teacher plans for remedial lesson in order to make the concept understood by the pupils.

**Fig 2: Frequency of Checking Teachers' Lesson Plans in a Month**



**Source: Field data 2016**

Fig 2, shows that majority of the heads of departments (56%) in the selected day secondary schools in Mwense district check teachers lesson plans fortnightly a month and 11%

indicated that they are checked daily while the remaining 33% indicated weekly in a month. Heads of departments should monitor lesson plan preparation frequently so as to give professional advice on erring teachers; otherwise when teachers go to teach without adequate preparation they will not deliver much to the learners.

Adequate prior preparation before a teacher goes to class promotes sequential presentation of concepts by the teacher to the learners.

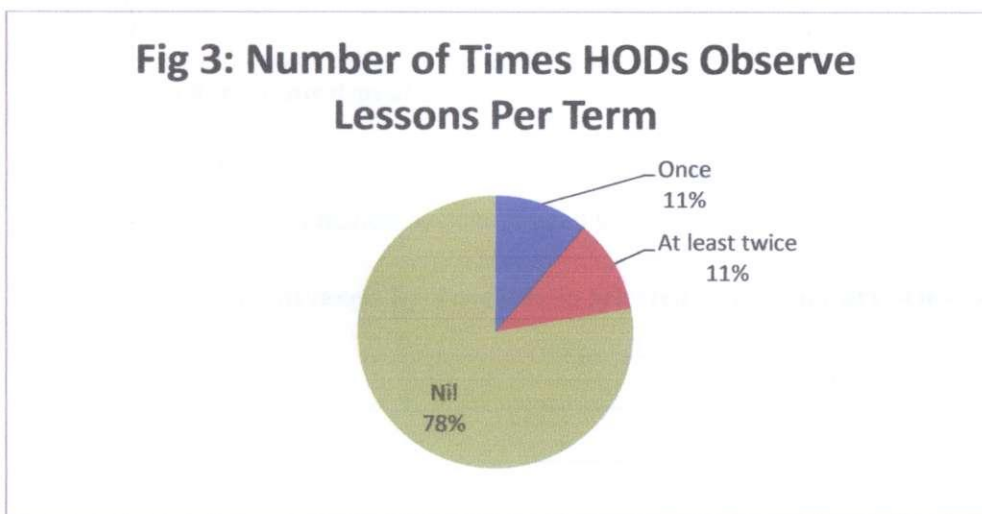
#### 4.1.7 Lesson Observations by HODs

One of the roles of the head of department is to carry out internal monitoring of curriculum implementation in his/her department. This involves physical observation of teachers' lessons in progress. Results from table 7 show the frequency at which the heads of departments observed classes conducted by their teachers in the three selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.

**Table 7: Class Observation by HODs**

Number of times per term	F	%
Once	1	11.1
At least twice	1	11.1
Nil	7	77.8
Total	9	100

Source: Field data 2016



Source: Field Data 2016

The collected data in table 7 and fig 3 respectively, show that majority of the HODs (77.8%) do not at all observe classes conducted by the teachers in a given term. One of the head of department's role is regular class monitoring of teachers under his/her charge in order to promote curriculum goals. When the researcher interviewed the 9 heads of departments from the three selected day secondary schools in Mwense district majority of them pretended to be conducting lesson observations but when the researcher asked for monitoring reports it was discovered that 11.1% translating in 1 head of department was able to monitor teachers in lesson delivery in class once in a term. Similarly, another head of department proved to have monitored teachers in class at least twice.

From the above background there is need for heads of departments in all three selected day secondary schools to intensify teacher lesson delivery monitoring in their respective subjects. The habit would provide room for heads of departments to give professional advice to teachers under their jurisdiction.

#### **4.2.0 Teacher-Based Factors**

Objective number two sought to identify teacher factors that contribute to the poor pupil academic performance in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.

Teacher-based factors are factors within the teachers that could hinder or promote academic performance of pupils in their schools. As the objective indicate above the study sought to identify teacher based factors in the three day secondary schools through the following aspects: teacher commitment, teachers' frequency of absenteeism, teachers' motivation and teachers' work load.

#### **4.2.1 Teacher Commitment Level**

Table 8, reveals teacher commitment levels in the three selected day secondary schools in Mwense District, as indicated by school head teachers of the same schools.

**Table 8 commitment levels by Teachers in selected day secondary schools.**

Commitment	F	%
High	00	00
Moderate	3	100
Total	3	100

Source: Field data 2016

Table 8, reveals that all head teachers in the three selected day secondary schools (100%) (3) described teachers' commitment as moderate. No teacher was rated as having high commitment to work. However, it is important to realise that good performance is as a result of high commitment levels by the teachers.

### **Frequency of Absenteeism among Teachers**

Teachers' rate of absenteeism was looked into and all three head teachers (100%) (3) in the three selected day secondary schools in Mwense rated them as moderate. When asked through interviews what contributed to teacher absenteeism, they gave several reasons. Most teachers leave their work places for their salaries since most of them get their salaries through Zambia National Commercial Bank which has no branch in the district (Mwense). Indicating that during pay days most classes remain without teachers to attend to pupils. Furthermore, a good number of them are doing studies by distance learning upgrading themselves to either diploma or degree level. In the process they leave their classes concentrating on writing assignments. At times they go to their classes while their concentration is mainly on their assignments. Teacher presence however, is cardinal in an effective school to provide academic guidance to his or her learners. Absenteeism by teachers reduces the amount of instructional time and this result in the syllabi not being completed. This in return results to lower output of work by the pupils.

#### **4.2.2 Teachers' Motivation**

When asked in the questionnaires how the three head teachers in the three selected day secondary schools motivated their teachers, the responses indicated that all of them did not motivate their teachers. One of the responses was that if schools can be heavily funded by government teachers can be appreciated in a way. But as long as funding from government continues going down teacher motivation will remain a night mare continued the respondent. In a related development another head teacher had this to say, *"Teachers are paid by government for the services they provide to the nation, and as such with or without motivation they should just offer what they are paid for"*. These strong but careless statements made the research to deduce that teachers in the three selected day secondary schools were hardly motivated hence reducing their concentration consequently compromising academic standards. Satisfied teachers would concentrate hence enhancing academic performance.

### 4.2.3 Teacher Turn-over Rate

The teacher turnover rate in the last two years was also looked into. Results obtained indicate that transfers were there especially that these three selected day secondary schools were just upgraded from primary school status to day secondary school status. This necessitated the transfers in most cases so that human resource is not misplaced. In this process the same had a bearing in causing so kind of a disturbance to the learners. In fact the same three selected day secondary schools are still in short of qualified teachers at different levels. The same is what is causing teacher transfers.

### 4.2.4 Teachers' Workload

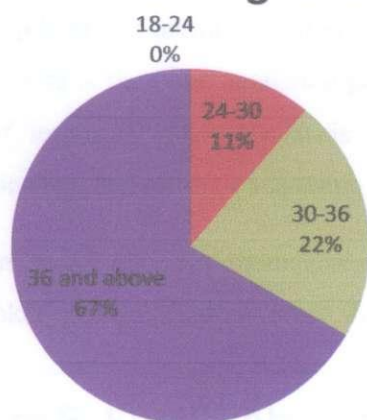
Teachers work load shows the number of periods a particular teacher has per week. If a teacher is over loaded it becomes difficult for such a teacher to prepare lessons adequately. Table 9 gives an over view of teaching loads for teachers in the three selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.

**Table 9: Showing teachers workload per week**

periods per week	F	%
18 -24	0	00.0
24-30	1	11.1
30-36	2	22.2
36 and above	6	66.7
Total	9	100

Source: Field data 2016

**Fig 4: Teachers' Teaching Load Per Week.**



**Source: Field data 2016**

Figure 4, shows the number of periods, respective subject teachers take per week out of the possible 40 periods. A good number of heads of departments (66.7%) (6) indicated that most subject teachers had periods between 36 and above while a small percentage 22. 2% (2) had periods between 30 and 36 periods out of the possible 40 periods. This implies that most teachers in the three selected day secondary schools are overloaded hence; their output in terms of national examinations performance would be affected in a way. The over load in most cases came as a result of using same teachers teaching the primary section and crossing over to secondary.

#### **4.3.0 Pupil-Based Factors**

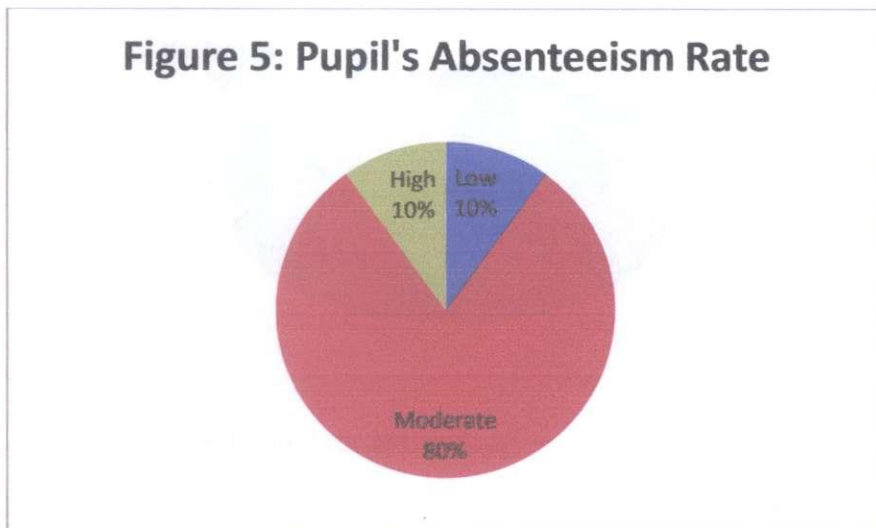
The objective under pupil-based factors was to identify pupil based factors that contribute to poor academic performance of pupils in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District

Pupil-based factors are the factors within the pupils that could enhance or hinder their academic performance. In the pupil based factors; the researcher considered the following aspects finding the pupil based factors that contribute to poor academic performance in selected day secondary schools among others: pupils' rate of absenteeism and pupils' lateness to school.

### 4.3.1 Pupils' Frequency of Absenteeism

It is believed that when pupils attend lessons regularly, their academic performance is likely to improve. But if the opposite is the case, academic performance is negatively affected due to continuous missing of important concepts. It is therefore, important that pupils are encouraged to attend lessons regularly if their academic achievement is to improve.

The aspect of how frequent pupils absented themselves from school in the three selected day secondary schools was looked into and findings were shown in figure 5.



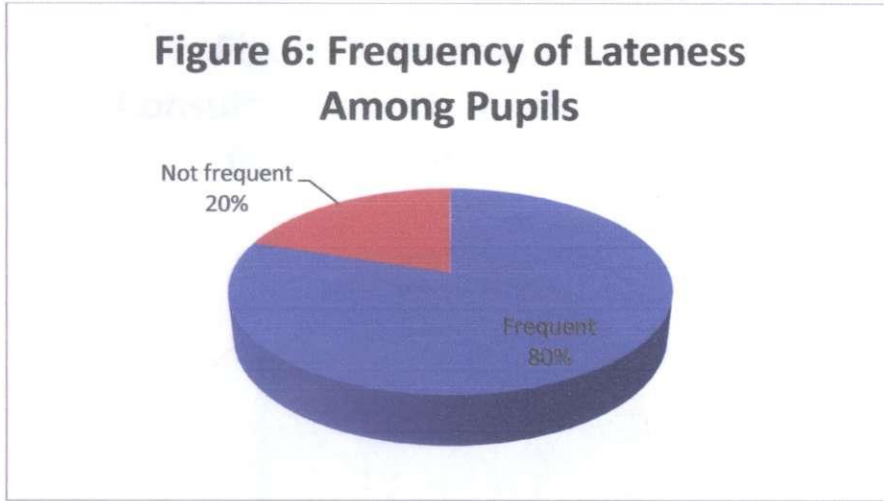
**Source: Field data 2016**

Figure 5 results show that 80% (24) of the pupils moderately miss school, 10% (3) indicated their rate of absenteeism as being high and 10% (3) indicated low. When pupils absent themselves from school, they tend to lose many concepts and definitely may not do well in national examinations. The findings were attested by pupils in the three selected day secondary schools in Mwense district who participated in the study. The results were compared from the pupils' answered questionnaires and the class attendance registers. Findings showed moderate attendance.

The effect of absenteeism and irregular school attendance is that materials taught is difficult to understand when studied on one's own. Continued loss of classes results in loss of content and knowledge. Assignments and exercises would not be properly and correctly done leading to poor performance. From the analysis above, quite a number of pupils absent themselves from school and therefore this could be a factor contributing to poor performance.

### 4.3.2 Pupils' Lateness

Schools have their day-to-day routines under showing when learning is expected to commence and end for a particular day. Both learners and teachers are expected to observe the routine. Failure to which would result in loss of learning hours. Figure 6 shows pupils reporting trend for lessons on daily basis.



Source: Field data 2016

Figure 6, shows majority of teachers (80%) (27) Indicated pupils' rate of lateness as frequent. This would definitely lead to poor performance in examinations. Findings of the study showed that majority of the pupils were subjected to covering long distance from respective homes to school due to the abolishment of basic schools by government. The vice resulted in pupils reporting late for lessons making them miss some important concepts in various subjects.

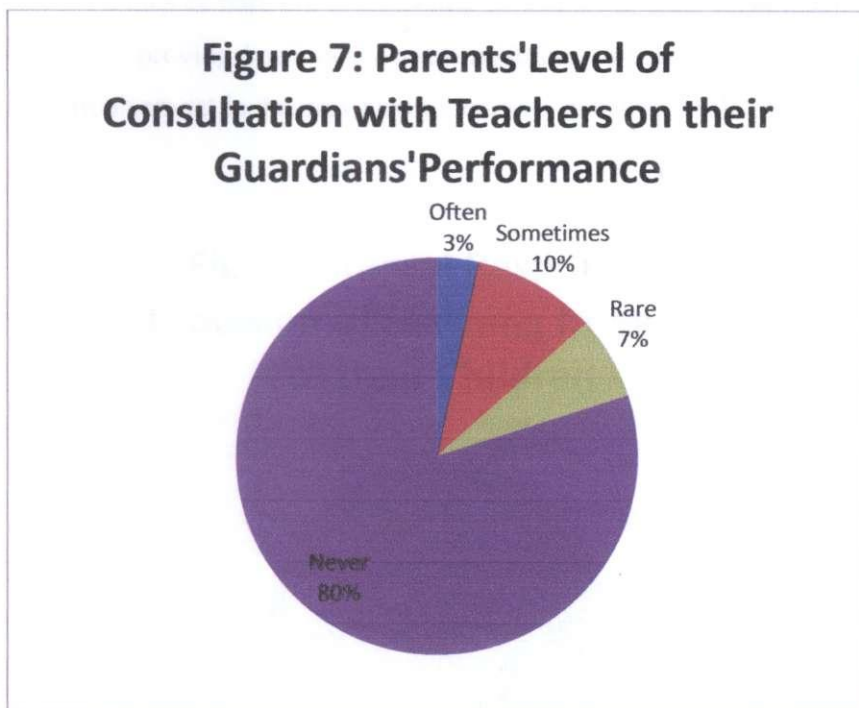
### 4.4.0 Home-Based Factors

Objective number four the study was attempting to ascertain home based conditions that account for poor pupil academic performance in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District

Home- based conditions are factors within the community that impede or enhance pupils' academic performance. In analyzing the community based factors, the researcher considered the following aspects; parents' consultation with teachers, parental response to provision of learning materials and assistance pupils get at home,

#### 4.4.1 Parents' Consultation with Teachers

Parents and teachers are partners in the provision of quality education to the learners and as such should work collaboratively. Figure 7 shows the level of parent- teacher partnership in providing education to learners in the three selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.



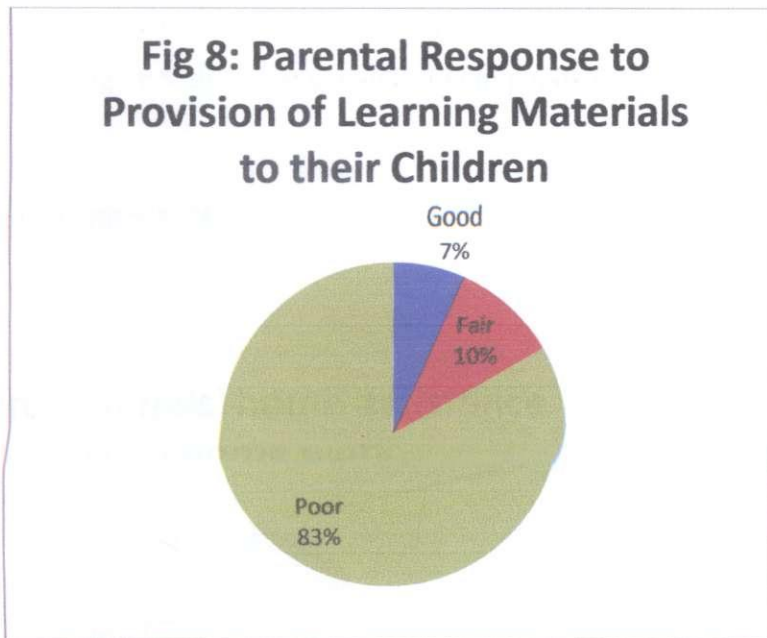
Source: Field data 2016

Good performance is realised when parents work in consultation with the teachers in order to understand their children better. The study therefore sought to find out how often parents consult the teachers on matters pertaining their children's education. Data obtained from figure 7, indicate that majority of parents (80%) (24) never consult teachers on education matters of their children, 10% indicated they sometimes consult and 4% do often consult but 7% rarely consulted teachers. This is an indication that most parents were not so much concerned about education of the children. These findings were analysed from questionnaires answered by 30 teachers who participated in the study. The situation is saddening as parents' interaction with teachers is of paramount importance. Their continuous presence in school through regular visits would put pupils on alert and concentrate on school work with fear that their parents would be told about their academic performance by school management or

respective subject teachers. The practice would help a child improve on educational achievements

#### 4.4.2 Parental Response to Provision of Learning Materials

Learning involves self- discovery of information from various sources such as journals, text books among others. It's not always that the school provides all these materials. Parents as partners in providing education to their dependants must take an active role in proving basic educational materials to their children. Figure 8 shows parental involvement in the provision of learning materials to their children.



Source: Field data 2016

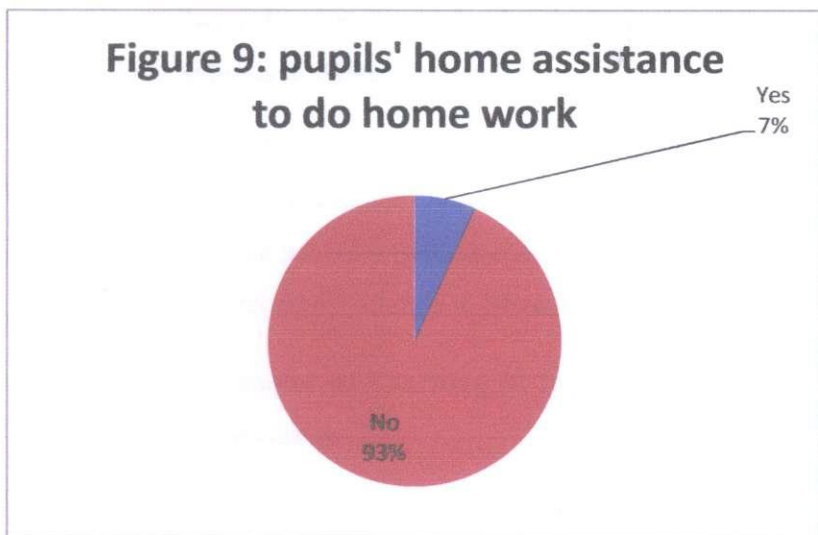
Figure 8, shows pupils' responses on their parents' concern on the provision of learning materials like essential text books, mathematical sets, exercise books, graph papers among others. The findings by researcher from the 30 pupils who filled in the questionnaires are that 83% (24) are not provided with learning materials by their parents, 7% (2) children responded that their parents were able to provide them with needful learning materials and 10% (3) indicated parents' response to provision of learning materials as satisfactory. The researcher's analysis from the findings is that parents in the majority are not proving their children with essential learning materials in the three selected day secondary schools in Mwense district. The practice is not ideal as it does not provide a conducive study

environment for the learner. The situation entails that learning in such instances only takes place when the teacher is before the pupil in class in his/her absence the book to consult is not available. The teacher in this case is the fountain of knowledge and in his/her absence learning cannot take place. Very dangerous development unearthed in the three selected day secondary schools in Mwense district. This prevailing situation would contribute to poor academic performance in junior secondary leaving examinations in the three selected day secondary schools in Mwense district.

#### 4.4.3 Assistance Pupils get at Home

Learning does not just end in school. When pupils are in school their learning centres on the teacher and fellow pupils for consultation. When they go home assistance is expected to come from parents. Figure 9 show the amount of help pupils receives at home to do school work.

**Fig 9. Pupils' home assistance**



**Source: Field data 2016**

Findings from figure 9 show that majority of the pupils (93%) (28) in the three selected day secondary schools did not get assistance to do homework at home and only 7% (2) received some assistance to do homework from the people they stayed with at home. Those pupils who do not receive assistance at home to do homework end up performing poorly in national examinations.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings of the study based on the data collected from the field and of course guided by the study objectives. The study had the following research objectives.

1. To find the role school environmental factors play in pupils' poor academic performance in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.
2. To identify teacher factors that contributes to the poor pupil academic performance in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.
3. To identify pupil based factors that contribute to poor academic performance of pupils in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District
4. To ascertain home based conditions that account for poor pupil academic performance in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.

#### **5.1 School Based Factors Contributing to Poor Academic Performance in Selected Day Secondary Schools in Mwense District**

Each objective had imaging themes under which the factors where discussed. For instance, the first objective under school based factors affecting poor academic performance of pupils was to find the role school environmental factors play in pupils' poor academic performance in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.

##### **5.1.1 Commencement of Learning in the Three Selected Day Secondary Schools and Academic Performance**

The time allocated for teaching and learning is a factor influencing pupils' academic performance in junior secondary leaving examinations in the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District. There are three school terms every year with holidays in between in the months of April, August and December. The findings obtained indicate that majority of pupils in the selected day secondary schools of Mwense District start learning in the second week after school opens and a few more after the second week of the school term. This indicates that there is a lot of time wastage before learning begins. Eshiwani (1983) also noted that most schools loose many teaching/ learning hours at the beginning of the term, and

the wastage leads to less work being covered and syllabi not being completed on time hence, contributing to poor performance in junior secondary leaving examinations. This is exactly what was observed happening in the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District. Results at junior secondary school leaving examinations in the same selected day secondary schools in the district were in conformity of Eshiwani's comment. They were poor.

Findings further revealed that a good number of pupils in the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District were unable to report in the first week of opening on grounds that their parents were still sourcing for their money to pay as school fund. From the above background, the poor performance in junior secondary leaving examinations in the selected day secondary schools could have been attributed by the tendency of pupils reporting late each time a term begins. The vice is detrimental to good academic performance as observed by Lezotte. Lezotte(2010) emphasised that instructional time allocated for each subject must be adequate enough to ensure syllabus is covered and learning takes place. However, this emphasis was not adhered to by the pupils in the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District consequently affecting their academic performance in junior secondary leaving examinations.

### **5.1.2 Adequacy of Learning Resources in the Selected Day Secondary Schools**

The adequacy and use of teaching and learning materials such as essential text books, reference books among others affects the effectiveness of a teacher's lesson. Teaching and learning resources enhances understanding of abstract ideas and improves performance. In this regard learners should be exposed to these essential books which they can consult as they make self-discovery of information. The practice would reduce the pupil-teacher dependency syndrome.

From the findings, it was discovered that there was a very big margin in terms of availability of teaching and learning resources in the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District. It was saddening to learn that 51 years after independence there are still day secondary schools that cannot afford providing a text book to the teacher for his/her lesson preparations. Findings showed that some teachers in the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District were sharing a text book when preparing their lessons. The interpretation to this scenario is that pupils in such schools have no access to text books to support their studies. Hence, making learning very difficult to the pupils and this could be a factor contributing to poor performance in junior secondary leaving examinations in selected day secondary schools in

Mwense District. In line with the above findings, Schneider (2003) found out that school facilities have a direct effect on teaching and learning. Text books enable the pupils to follow the teacher's sequence of presentation and aids in understanding of lessons (Ubogu, 2004).

### **5.1.3 Quality of School Administration in Selected Day Secondary Schools.**

The quality of school administration plays a vital role in academic performance as it is concerned with pupils, teachers, rules, regulations and policies that govern the school system. In analysing the efficiency of school administration a number of issues emerged. These included the frequency of staff meetings schools held in a term, how often heads of departments checked the schemes of work from their teachers to monitor syllabus coverage in respective subjects so that those moving at snail's pace can be advised to double their efforts.

After schemes of work checking was looked at, checking of teacher lesson preparation by heads of departments was looked into in depth so as it could be established if heads of departments performed their daily routines among which was checking lessons prepared by teachers frequently unless or otherwise.

Lesson observation by heads of departments was the last aspect which was focused on among the things that come out under quality of school administration in selected day secondary schools.

### **5.1.4 Frequency of Staff Meetings in a Term**

From the findings, it was discovered that the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District were seldom holding staff meetings during the term. Most respondents disclosed that they had either an opening staff meeting or close staff meeting. Few staff meetings may lead to less co-ordination of curriculum implementation. Findings by Kathuri (1986) asserted that the first aspect of administration is staff meetings as they facilitate co-ordination of various activities in the school. This implies that there was less monitoring and reporting of the progress of the schools activities to the teachers in the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District and this could be a factor contributing to poor performance in the junior secondary leaving examinations in the same schools.

### **5.1.5 Frequency of Checking Teachers' Schemes of Work**

The responsibility of checking the professional documents like teachers' schemes of work and lesson plans lies in the hands of the head of department. This may be done in person or

he may delegate to the head of section. Preparation and use of schemes of work by the teachers enhances sequential teaching and results to improved academic achievement (Reeves, 2003)

The frequency of checking teachers' schemes of work was therefore looked into and findings indicated that most heads of departments only checked the document in question on the very date respective teachers submitted the same documents for checking and endorsement. They claimed that it was unnecessary for them to check the schemes of work more than once since its prepared once every start of the term and once approved it means all was well. This reflects that majority of heads of departments (78%) in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District do not do any follow up on curriculum implementation during the course of the term. Checking of teachers schemes of work should be done frequently to allow the head of department monitor curriculum implementation. Lack of this close monitoring could be a factor contributing to poor performance in junior secondary leaving examinations in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.

#### **5.1.6 Frequency of Checking the Teachers' Lesson Plans**

In a related development teachers are expected to prepare lesson plans and have them checked by their respective heads of departments before going to deliver such lessons. Teachers' lesson plan is a professional document prepared by teachers for the purpose of presentation of a lesson. The teacher indicates whether the lesson has been taught and objectives achieved; if the lesson is not taught, then the teacher indicates the reason why and when he intends to cover it; if the lesson objectives are not achieved, the teacher plans for remedial lesson in order to make the concept understood by the pupils.

From the findings it was established that teachers' lesson plans were not checked on daily basis by respective HODs in the selected day secondary schools. Most heads of departments in the questionnaires indicated that lesson plans were checked fortnightly (56%). This is not a good practice. A lesson plan in an ideal situation is supposed to be checked before the teacher goes to class to deliver a particular lesson so that in case of identified mistakes are corrected there and then. With this practice there are chances of teachers not preparing their lessons adequately. There is equally enough room for the teacher to go to class without preparing the lesson plan until when they are almost due for submission to the head of department (HOD).Its however, cardinal to note that adequate prior preparation before a teacher goes to class leads to systematic delivery of concepts to pupils and enhances good performance by

the pupils. This promotes sequential presentation of concepts by the teacher to the learners. Hence the need for heads of departments to emphasise on adequate lesson preparation by teachers under their charge.

Heads of departments in the selected day secondary schools should monitor lesson plan preparation frequently; otherwise it may lead to continued poor performance in junior secondary leaving examinations in the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.

### **5.1.7 Lesson Observations by HODs and Academic Performance**

In addition to the above findings, the researcher established that most heads of departments (78%) in the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District were not doing enough in performing their supervisory role of lesson observation in class, to ascertain the extent to which teachers delivered their lessons in respective classes. In view of the above (Watkins, 1992) articulates that, One of the roles of the head of department is to carry out internal monitoring of curriculum implementation in his/her department. This involves physical observation of teachers' lessons in progress (Wilson, 2005). However, study findings indicate that most heads of departments in the selected day secondary schools hardly monitored their teachers in classes to observe their ability of delivering lessons. A good number of HODs (78%) 7 out of the 9, who participated in the study attested to the fact that a term could end without monitoring a single teacher. As a result of the above, syllabi coverage in most subject areas was not adequate. Some teachers can only do the right thing at the right time when they are closely supervised (Watkins, 1992). This HODs' attitude can also be a factor affecting poor performance in junior secondary leaving examinations in the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District. The reason is simple syllabi coverage in most subject areas is inadequate for the learners to face the national examinations and perform well.

## **5.2 Teacher-Based Factors Affecting Pupil Performance in Selected Day Secondary Schools**

Objective number two sought to identify teacher factors that contribute to the poor academic performance of pupils in junior secondary leaving examinations in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.

Teacher based factors are the factors within the teachers that could hinder or promote academic performance of pupils in their schools. To identify teacher based factors that contributed to the poor pupil academic performance in selected day secondary schools in

junior secondary leaving examinations in Mwense District, the following aspects of teacher based factors were looked at: teacher commitment, teacher's frequency of absenteeism, teacher's motivation and teacher's work load.

### **5.2.1 Teacher Commitment Level**

Good performance is as a result of high commitment levels by the teachers. Findings from school head teachers in the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District indicated that teachers' commitment was moderate and no single school head teacher in the schools in question recorded a high committed member of staff. This fact is worrying because teachers should be enthusiastic in order for them to teach effectively there by making their learners learn well. In view of the above Ubogu (2004) also asserts that teachers who lack enthusiasm are unable to teach effectively, making pupils not to learn well. And this sentiment from Ubogu is evident enough to say low commitment by the teachers in the schools in question could be a contributing factor to poor performance by the pupils in junior secondary leaving examinations.

Teachers in the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District need to change their attitude towards work and cultivate a positive goal oriented attitude. Head teachers should therefore, play their leadership role and ensure that they hold staff appraisal meetings regularly to discuss strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for academic improvement. This can lead to academic excellence. The school managers in these selected day secondary schools in Mwense where performance is at stake should create a shared sense of purpose and established set of common core values among the teachers. This help in promoting high commitment in workers who in turn are geared to discharge their services to their customers with diligence (Lezotte, 2010).

### **5.2.2 Frequency of Absenteeism among Teachers**

On the aspect of absenteeism among teachers, study findings indicated that teacher absenteeism in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District was also moderate. Only a small fraction of showed indicate low absenteeism in teachers. Head teachers had a common answer in explaining what contributed to the moderate rate of teacher absenteeism. The justification was that a good number of teachers in the schools under study were pursuing studies by distance learning to upgrade themselves to either diploma status or first degree. This fact made some teachers to be getting permission to enable them do assignments given

to them. In some instances such teachers could pretend to be in a particular class teaching and yet their presence makes no difference in that they are there for writing their assignments at the expense of teaching. Hence such teachers were regarded absent despite being in a particular class. In addition, to the above findings, school head teachers for the same schools added that most of their teachers draw their salaries through Zambia National Commercial Bank which has no branch in Mwense District. This implies that during the pay week a good number of some teachers have flock to Mansa to get their hard to earn dues leaving their classes without anyone attending to their respective classes.

The above prevailing situation as indicated in the study findings has a negative bearing on pupil performance in junior secondary leaving examinations in the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District. In tandem with what is obtaining on the ground Ubogu, (2004) asserts that when teachers absent themselves from school frequently, pupils go unattended and do not do well in examinations. Absenteeism by teachers reduces the amount of instructional time and this results in the syllabi not being completed. This in return results to lower output of work by the pupils. End result is mostly poor performance which is the case for the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.

### **5.2.3 Teachers' Motivation**

On the aspect of teacher motivation in selected day secondary schools, study findings showed that majority of the school head teachers were not motivating their teachers. It was however, noted that a small percentage of head teachers indicated as motivating their teachers in some way. World Bank Report (1986) acknowledges that teacher satisfaction is generally related to achievement. Satisfied teachers would concentrate hence enhancing academic performance of their pupils. In this regard it is pertinent that head teachers in the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District devise a system of motivating their members of staff if results are to improve in the affected day secondary schools of Mwense District.

### **5.2.4 Teacher Turn-over Rate**

The aspect of teacher turn-over is cardinal in an effective school. Frequent changing of teachers does not help improve academic achievement in most cases. This is so because a new teacher needs to settle down to the new class and environment, get acclimatised to the pupils until the teacher finally knows the speed at which he/she should drive his pupils. The same is the case with the learners. They are also anxious to know the likes of the new staff. In

the process the limited time allocated for learning is lost. Findings on this aspect were that some staff transfers were observed in the selected day secondary schools. Teachers with right qualifications were being sourced and taken to the schools in question. The idea is to take people with qualifications in these day secondary schools in Mwense. While the idea is appreciated it is disturbing in the process not until all is finally done. According to Schneider (2003) high teacher turn over forces schools to devote attention, time and financial resources attracting replacement of teachers. As the school is looking for a replacement such classes where such a teacher is needed would continue suffering.

### **5.2.5 Teachers' Work load**

Teacher workload is yet another important factor that needs attention in the quest to improve academic achievements. In an environment where a teacher is given more periods to handle it becomes very difficult for such a teacher to make adequate lesson preparations. This is so because the time he/she is supposed to do such a task is attending to another class. At the end of the day the teacher is tired and fails to look for materials which can provide suitable concepts to give to his/her learners.

Teacher work load is the last aspect under teacher based factors in this study. Findings on this aspect from the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District indicated that a good number of teachers have between 36 and 40 periods per week a situation which is not ideal. This entails that some teachers are occupied from period one up to the last period. This condition is not favourable for a secondary school but a primary school where a teacher has to teach all the subjects alone since the entire class say grade 2 is allocated to one teacher. In a related development study findings revealed that some teachers are given to teach subjects they are not qualified to teach, transferring their difficulties to the learners. How can results improve in such horrible conditions?

This implies that since most teachers in the selected secondary schools are overloaded, their output in terms of national examinations performance should not be very good. This explains the poor results prevailing in junior secondary leaving examinations in the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.

### **5.3 Pupil-Based Factors and Academic Performance**

Objective number three sought to identify pupil based factors that contribute to poor academic performance of pupils in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.

Pupil-based factors are the factors within the pupils that could enhance or hinder their academic performance. In pupil based factors, the study looked into the following aspects: pupils' rate of absenteeism and pupils' lateness to school.

### **5.3.2 Pupils' Frequency of Absenteeism**

The aspect of how frequent pupils absented themselves from school was looked into and the study finding was that a good number of pupils are in school during the first two weeks of opening on pretext that their parents are still sourcing for their school fund. Some even report in week three. This fact on frequent absenteeism especially in the first two weeks of opening was even confirmed in the class attendance registers. In the questionnaires some pupils indicated that they were unable to report in school in the first two weeks of opening as they were still in fishing comps catching fish from which they could realise school fees. Others also indicated their parents had taken them in farm fields to uproot cassava from school fees could be generated after selling. These were the prominent factors that were established and contributed to most pupils' absence in school especially in the first two weeks of each term.

However, it is important to note that when pupils absent themselves from school, they tend to lose many concepts and definitely may not do well in exams. Ubogu (2004) also established that the effect of absenteeism and irregular school attendance is that materials taught is difficult to understand when studied on one's own. Continued loss of classes results to loss of content and knowledge. Assignments and exercises would not be properly and correctly done leading to poor performance. From the analysis above, quite a number of pupils from selected day secondary schools in Mwense District absent themselves from school and therefore this could be a factor contributing to poor performance in junior secondary leaving examinations in the same schools.

### **5.3.3 Pupils' Lateness**

Schools prepare class teaching time tables which indicate when the first period should commence. This is expected to be followed seriously by both teachers and pupils so that time allocated for each subject is not lost. This would also afford pupils opportunity to learn. Opportunity to learn can only be achieved if schools ensure that pupils and teachers attend schools and are punctual to the largest extent possible, and ensuring that instructional time allocated for each subject is adequate to ensure syllabus is covered and learning takes place. Findings on pupils' punctuality when reporting for lessons revealed that the rate of lateness in

reporting for lessons was frequent and high among the pupils. When asked why the trend was like that, pupils indicated in their questionnaires that they were covering long distances from their respective homes. Teachers when asked about the same during an interview also confirmed that a good number of pupils were coming from distant places. This definitely is among the factors that have contributed to poor performance in junior secondary leaving examinations in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.

#### **5.4. Home-Based Factors and Academic Performance**

Home based factors or rather community based factors are factors within the community that impede or enhance pupils' academic performance .The objective here was to ascertain home based conditions that account for poor pupil academic performance in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District.. In analysing the community based factors, the following aspects were looked into; parents' consultation with Teachers, parental response to provision of learning materials and academic performance

and home- pupil assistance and academic performance

##### **5.4.1 Parents' Consultation with Teachers**

Good performance is realized when parents work in consultation with the teachers in order to understand their children better. The study therefore sought to find out how often parents consult the teachers on matters pertaining their children's education. Data obtained indicate that majority of parents never consult teachers on education matters of their children, only a small fraction indicated they sometimes consult them (teachers). This is an indication that most parents were not so much concerned about education of the children. Ubogu (2004) indicated that parents' interaction with teachers enables them to know what their children are encountering in school and what could be done to deal with the problems. It would also put pupils on alert and study in school as they would know that their parents would inquire about their performance. Parents may not be able to provide much guidance and help their children's performance improve when they are ignorant of what happens in school.

Findings of previous studies indicate that pupil achievement improves when parents become involved in their children's education at school and in the community (Steinberg, 2006). A previous study by Snow, et al. (2001) also revealed that when parents are formally involved in parent-school activities such as PTA participation and attending school activities their children performance improves.

Theuri (2006) also established that some parents withdraw their children from school and engaged them in wage labour, which had resulted in reduced retention rates and poor *academic achievement*. *As reported by the DEBS who was interviewed, parental involvement* and strong home-school relations play a role in determining academic achievement of pupils.

Hence the researcher believed that the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District which never involved parents in discussing the pupils' school affairs could not perform very well in junior secondary leaving examination due to the vacuum created. Parents are major stakeholders which the school should embrace to work with if the school is to achieve good academic excellence.

#### **5.4.2 Parental Response to Provision of Learning Materials and Academic Performance**

Pupils are not entirely in school. They go and after learning time is over come back home. This entails that learning should not only take place when pupils are in school but continues at home. This becomes possible and effective if parents are responsible enough in providing learning materials to their children.

Study findings indicated that majority of parents never bothered to provide basic learning materials to their children. This was revealed when the researcher requested each pupil to list down essential text books provided for them to support their studies by parents. To the amazement of the researcher out of the thirty pupils who filled in their questionnaires only two indicated the few text books parents provided for them. The two pupils were discovered to be teachers dependants. This condition discovered in the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District were not ideal for good academic performance. The interpretation is that pupils entirely depended on what they learnt in school and not what they would discover from consulting other books to supplement what was acquired in school. Ubogu (2004) asserts that lack of basic school needs like learning materials could not provide a stable mind and conducive environment for the pupils to study. Lack of learning materials contribute to poor performance in national examinations.

#### **5.4.3 Home- Pupil Assistance and Academic Performance**

The teacher is perceived as a fountain of knowledge especially in villages. This creates a vacuum when pupils get back home. At home parents are expected to check what children learnt in school in various subjects and find a way of helping where need arises. In reality

children spend more hours with their parents at home and limited hours in school where they also do other extra curricula activities not related to class work such as preventive maintenance, sports among others.

Study findings from the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District indicated that pupils in the majority never received any form of assistance from their parents to do homework given to them. This was revealed during results analysis from the questionnaires filled in by pupils who participated in the study. This entails that a good number of parents in the selected day secondary schools hardly know learning challenges that their children encounter in school. Hence, those pupils who do not receive assistance at home to do homework may end up performing poorly in junior secondary leaving examinations.

Through homework pupils can develop a good number of skills such as enquiry skills, communication skills, self-discovery skills among others all these skills are very supportive to pupils' educational achievement.

When a teacher gives homework he/she is trying to keep his/her learners occupied with school work even when they are at home. In the case where pupils cannot give feedback to the teacher by submitting back the homework book, it becomes difficult for the teacher to know the progress of a particular pupil and how to help such a pupil. This contribute to poor academic performance of pupils in junior secondary leaving examinations and is the in the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study findings, conclusions drawn from the study, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

#### 6.1 Summary of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the factors that influence poor academic performance of pupils in junior secondary leaving examinations in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District. This study was guided by the following specific objectives: to find the role school environmental factors play in pupils' poor academic performance in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District, to ascertain home based conditions that account for poor pupil academic performance in day secondary schools in Mwense District and to identify teacher factors that contributes to the poor pupil academic performance of the pupils in day secondary schools in Mwense District.

The following is a summary of the major study findings of the study.

From the first objective the findings of the study indicated that pupils lost a lot of learning time because of their usual habit of reporting back late from vacation holiday. A good number of the pupils were reporting in week two some even week three each time a new term begun. This made them loss a lot of their learning time hence failing to complete the syllabus in respective subjects. The other major finding under the first objective was inadequate teaching and learning resources in the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District. This made pupils to have no access to essential text books for studying consequently relied entirely on what they got from the teacher in class regarding him/her to be the only source of information and knowledge. Meaning in the absence of the teacher learning was on halt. The third major finding on the same objective was lack of teacher monitoring from the immediate supervisors such as head of departments. Some heads of departments in the selected day secondary schools in Mwense District could end a term without monitoring any teacher in class so as to ascertain the extent to which their teachers where delivering lessons to pupils.

The second objective was on teacher based factors. On this aspect the major findings of the study indicated that there was rampant teacher absenteeism in the selected day secondary

schools in Mwense. A number of teachers were upgrading their qualifications and as such devoted most of their time writing assignments at the expense of teaching leaving their classes unattended to. Sometimes they would pretend to be in their respective classes teaching while they were there doing their own business other than teaching. It was also discovered that teacher commitment in the schools under review was very low.

Objective number three was based on home based factors that affect pupil performance in the schools under review. Findings from the study were that there was a big gap between parents and teachers in terms of communication. Parents hardly contacted teachers on issues pertaining to performance of their children. This was not ideal in the sense that it hides the weaknesses of either the teacher or the pupil. If the pupil has a parent who is in constant touch with the school on his/her performance that pupil will always strive to work hard with fear of being rebuked by the parents. Similarly findings of the study revealed that there was no trace of parental involvement in assisting children with assignments given to them in form of homework by their teachers.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

In line with the findings of this study on factors affecting poor academic performance of pupils in junior secondary leaving examinations in selected day secondary schools in Mwense District, performance at junior secondary level has been poor from 2014 to 2015. This study therefore concluded that the poor performance could be attributed to a number of reasons which if remain unchecked the situation may even worsen. Firstly the reporting attitude of pupils when school opens leaves much to be desired. The two weeks consistently missed each school term by most of the pupils go without recovery resulting in inadequate syllabi coverage subjecting them to massive failing in the junior secondary leaving examinations. Performance would remain poor if schools in question take no active role in the procurement of essential teaching and learning materials. Intensifying teacher monitoring by responsible officers would arrest the situation to some extent. Professional advice will be time and again provided where need arises to ensure learners are given quality and standard lessons for better results.

Supervising officers in the schools under review need to devise workable systems that would motivate the teaching staff. Teachers need to cultivate the attitude of hard work and self-supervisory to reach the desired goal of good pupil performance in junior secondary leaving

examinations. Teachers should equally observe prudent time utilisation and syllabus coverage.

Schools and communities should have sound rapport and work together with the common good. Working in isolation and yet they are stakeholders would not improve the welfare of pupils in these learning institutions in question. Parents equally have a major role to play on the education of the child. Taking a child to be enrolled in school is just a starting point. Parental assistance in school assignments is vital and would go a long way. Parents should come on board and encourage their children to do homework given to them. Even when they cannot give guidance on how to go about the same work, checking through what the child has learnt in school would motivate the child to do more in school.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends that:

1. School head teachers should implement the permanent Secretary's directive of using 20% of all the user fees collected in school to procure teaching and learning materials. These teaching and learning materials include text books, equipment and materials for the specialised rooms like Science laboratories, home economics rooms, Design and Technology rooms. etc.
2. Heads of Departments to ensure that all teaching and learning materials in their departments are secure and well accounted for. Any teacher or learner who loses a book should be made to replace within the shortest possible time.
3. Both internal and external monitoring should be intensified in all schools.
4. Schools to ensure that teachers are managed properly in order to improve the quality of education
5. Cases of both teacher/pupil absenteeism not to be condoned in all schools.
6. Government to quickly send more qualified teachers in all affected secondary schools.
7. Schools to sensitise communities on the importance of education so that the issue of parents withdrawing pupils from schools to accompany them into farming and fishing camps can come to an end.
8. Educational policy makers in the Ministry of General Education should ensure that schools are equipped with all the necessary physical and material resources. The Ministry of General Education should ensure school administrators and teachers are

offered in-service training on the factors influencing school effectiveness and develop monitoring tools to evaluate school effectiveness.

9. The parents and the general community should be informed through public meetings and Parents- Teachers Association meetings of the need to support the teaching/learning process and offer moral support to teachers and the school administration. The schools should ensure they hold academic clinics at the beginning of each term with parents of pupils who perform poorly to explore possible measures.
10. Teachers should always discuss academic progress with individual pupils as a form of monitoring progress. The teachers should ensure they adequately communicate expectations for success to pupils and ensure prudent time management for syllabus coverage.
11. Government to deploy adequate qualified teachers to the selected day secondary schools where staffing is not only inadequate but also unqualified.

#### **6.4 Suggestions for Further Studies**

1. Similar study should be conducted in selected rural day secondary schools to establish factors that affect academic performance of pupils in school certificate examinations
2. In order to find out whether the effective schools model is applicable to all day Secondary schools in Zambia, similar study should be conducted in other parts of the country.

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**APPENDIX 1: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

The University of Zambia,

P.o. Box,

**LUSAKA.**

**1<sup>st</sup> April, 2016.**

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: STUDY ON FACTORS AFFECTING POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS IN SELECTED DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MWENSE DISTRICT.**

The above subject refers.

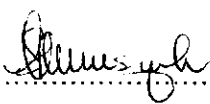
I am a master of education student in Educational Management from the University of Zambia. I wish to request for your permission to allow me carry out a research on Factors influencing academic performance at junior leaving examinations.

I hereby kindly request you to fill in this questionnaire which will enable the researcher to obtain important information for the research.

The information offered will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and will not be unduly disclosed. The information will only be used as pertaining to this study and not otherwise.

Your positive response regarding the above will be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Signature.....

**ALLAN CHILEYA**

## APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS

### THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA IN COLLABORATION WITH ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY

#### SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data on factors affecting academic performance in day secondary schools. The researcher assures you that the information gathered will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for academic purposes only. Please tick (✓) where appropriate or fill in the required information.

#### Section 1: Bio Data

1. Your gender Male [ ] Female [ ]
2. Level of education

#### Section B: Factors Affecting Academic Performance in Selected Day Secondary Schools

1. When school opens in which week do you normally report?  
1<sup>st</sup> week [ ] 2<sup>nd</sup> week [ ] 3<sup>rd</sup> week [ ]
2. Do you normally manage to report for lessons in time?  
YES [ ] NO [ ]
3. How far is your home from school?  
Less than 1km [ ] more than 5km [ ] 10km and above [ ]
4. Does your school provide you with basic learning materials such as essential text books?  
YES [ ] NO [ ]
5. Do majority of your subject teachers punctual when coming to your class to teach?  
YES [ ] NO [ ]
6. Do your teachers give you home work in various subjects?  
YES [ ] NO [ ]
7. If YES in 5. Above, how often?  
Regularly [ ] ONCE PER WEEK [ ]
8. Does anyone help you with working out homework at home?  
YES [ ] NO [ ]
9. Does your guardian provide you with basic learning materials like text books etc?  
YES [ ] NO [ ]

10. If YES in 8 above list them:.....  
 .....
11. Does your guardian visit the school to discuss your academic performance with your subject teachers?  
 YES [ ] NO [ ]
12. If YES in 10 above how often?  
 Regularly [ ] ONCE PER TERM [ ] More than once per term [ ]
13. How would you describe the general performance of pupils at junior secondary leaving examinations in your school?  
 Excellent [ ] Good [ ] Fair [ ] poor [ ]

**Section C: give brief explanations to the following questions**

14. What are some of the things that make pupils not do well in national examinations?  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....
15. What measures should the school put in place to improve pupil academic performance in your school?  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....
16. What role should you play as a pupil to improve your academic performance?  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**THANK FOR YOUR TIME**

**APPENDIX III: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA IN COLLABORATION WITH ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY**

**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data on factors affecting academic performance in day secondary schools. The researcher assures you that the information gathered will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for academic purposes only. Please tick (✓) where appropriate or fill in the required information.

**Section 1: Bio Data**

- 1. Your gender Male [ ] Female [ ]
  
- 2. Level of education  
Masters [ ] Bachelor's Degree [ ]  
B. Ed [ ] Diploma [ ]  
Certificate [ ]  
Others (Specify).....
  
- 3. Designation Teacher [ ] HOD [ ]
  
- 4. Years of experience a teacher .....years.

**Section B: Factors Affecting Academic Performance**

In the tables below, indicate the extent to which you engage in the activities provided as head of department. Use the scale below to respond.

**A - Always****S - Sometimes****R - Rarely****N - Never**

	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>N</b>
Making sure teachers keep updated professional documents (schemes of work, lesson plans and records of work)				
Visiting teachers in class to supervise teaching				
Involving teachers to decide on best strategies to improve teaching and learning				
Providing all the teaching and learning resources needed for improved performance				
Supervising teachers to ensure they complete the syllabus on time				
Building teamwork among teachers to ensure they support one another				
Holding regular departmental meetings to discuss academic progress				
Holding staff appraisal meetings to discuss strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for academic improvement				
	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>N</b>
Inviting parents to discuss performance of their children				
Involving teachers to identify ways of improving discipline in the school				
Ensuring that the school climate is conducive for teaching and learning				
The department has all the necessary material resources				
Providing guidance and counselling to pupils on education achievement				
	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>N</b>
Clarifying the department vision and mission to teachers, students and parents				
Ensuring teachers set achievable and realistic academic performance goals for their subjects				
Ensuring that teachers are working towards realization of their goals				
Encouraging students to set academic performance goals at the beginning of each term				
Reminding students of their core business in the school and encouraging them to remain focused				
Setting overall departmental goals with the teachers and motivating them towards attainment of the set goals				
Ensuring that all stakeholders (teachers, students, parents) participate in setting school goals and objectives				

	A	S	R	N
Making it clear to students that the school has high hopes that they will perform well in junior secondary leaving exams				
Assisting teachers to identify threats that may hinder academic success				
	A	S	R	N
Inviting parents to discuss academic progress of their children				
Ensuring all parents attend school meetings				
At the beginning of each term, holding „academic clinics’ with parents of students who perform poorly to explore possible measures				
Advising parents on home environment factors that promote learning of their children				
Reminding parents of their duty in ensuring students are disciplined academically				
Parents providing all the necessary support materials (e.g. textbooks) to the students				
Monitoring of pupils progress				
	A	S	R	N
Ensuring there are regular continuous assessment tests to monitor pupils’ progress				
Supervising teacher-made exams to ensure they are of high quality				
Ensuring teachers revise all exams with students after marking				
Discussing academic progress with individual pupils				
Holding meetings with teachers to discuss students’ progress on specific subjects				
	A	S	R	N
Ensuring that instructional time allocated for each subject is adequate to ensure syllabus is covered and learning takes place				
Ensuring that teachers attend schools and are punctual to the largest extent possible				
Monitoring school attendance and punctuality by pupils to ensure that they do not miss classes				
Ensuring that there are adequate instructional materials per pupil, both for learning at school and at home				

**Section D: Open Ended Questions**

1. What other factors affect academic performance of the pupils in your department/subject?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2. What measures would you recommend your department to take to improve academic performance?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME**

## APPENDIX IV: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SUBJECT TEACHERS

### THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA IN COLLABORATION WITH ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY

#### SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data on factors that affect academic performance of pupils in junior secondary leaving examinations in selected day secondary schools. The researcher assures you that the information gathered will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for academic purposes only. Please tick (✓) where appropriate or fill in the required information.

#### Section A: Bio Data

1. Your gender Male [  ] Female [  ]
2. Level of education Masters [  ] Bachelor's Degree [  ] B. Ed [  ] Diploma [  ]  
Certificate [  ]  
Others (Specify).....
3. Years of experience in Subject Teacher .....years.
4. How many pupils are there in your class Boys..... Girls.....  
Total.....

#### Section B: Academic Performance of the School

1. Do you set academic targets for your class in terms of junior leaving examinations improvement? Yes ( ) No ( )
2. How do you rate the school in terms of achieving academic performance targets?  
[  ] Very Satisfactory [  ] Satisfactory [  ] Unsatisfactory [  ] Very Unsatisfactory

### Section C: Factors Affecting Academic Performance in Selected Day Secondary Schools

In the tables below, indicate the extent to which you engage in the following activities as a subject teacher. Use the scale below to respond.

**A - Always S - Sometimes R - Rarely N - Never**

	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>N</b>
Making sure you keep updated professional documents (schemes of work, lesson plans and records of work)				
Involving yourself to decide on best strategies to improve teaching and learning				
Resourcefulness in providing all the teaching and learning resources needed for improved performance				
Self-supervisory to ensure you complete the syllabus on time				
Building teamwork among other teachers to ensure you support one another				
Attending departmental meetings to discuss academic progress				
	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>N</b>
Discussing pupil's discipline with parents				
Involving yourself to identify ways of improving discipline in the school				
Ensuring that the class climate is conducive for teaching and learning				
Providing guidance and counselling to pupils				
	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>N</b>
Ensuring you set achievable and realistic academic performance goals for your subjects				
Ensuring that you are working towards realisation of your goals				
Reminding pupils of their core business in the school and encouraging them to remain focused				
Setting overall class goals with the pupils and motivating them towards attainment of the set goals				
	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>N</b>
Making it clear to pupils that the school has high hopes that they will				

perform well in junior secondary leaving exams				
Assisting pupils to identify threats that may hinder academic success				
	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>N</b>
Inviting parents to discuss academic progress of their children				
At the beginning of each term, holding „academic clinics’ with parents of students who perform poorly to explore possible measures				
Advising parents on home environment factors that promote learning of their children				
Reminding parents of their duty in ensuring pupils are disciplined				
	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>N</b>
Ensuring you prepare continuous assessment tests to monitor pupils’ progress				
Ensuring there are regular continuous assessment tests to monitor pupils progress				
Ensuring you revise all exams with pupils after marking				
Discussing academic progress with individual pupils				
	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>N</b>
Ensuring that instructional time allocated for your subject is adequate to ensure syllabus is covered and learning takes place				
Ensuring that you attend school and are punctual to the largest extent possible				
Monitoring school attendance and punctuality by pupils to ensure that they do not miss classes				

**Section D: Open Ended Questions**

1. What other factors affect academic performance of the pupils in your subject?

.....

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.....

2. What measures would you recommend the school to take to improve academic performance?

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.....  
.....

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME**

## APPENDIX V: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEAD TEACHERS

### THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA IN COLLABORATION WITH ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY

#### SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data on factors that affect academic performance of pupils in junior secondary leaving examinations in selected day secondary schools. The researcher assures you that the information gathered will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for academic purposes only. Please tick (✓) where appropriate or fill in the required information.

#### Section A: Bio Data

1. Your gender Male [ ] Female [ ]
2. Level of education Masters [ ] Bachelor's Degree [ ] B. Ed [ ] Diploma [ ]  
Certificate [ ]  
Others (Specify).....
3. Years of experience in headship .....years.
4. How many teachers are there in your school? Female teachers..... Male teachers..... Total.....
5. How many pupils are there in your school Boys..... Girls.....  
Total.....

#### Section B: Academic Performance of the School

1. Do you set academic targets for the school in terms of junior leaving examinations improvement? Yes [ ] No [ ]
2. How do you rate the school in terms of achieving academic performance targets?

[ ] Very Satisfactory [ ] Satisfactory [ ] Unsatisfactory [ ] Very Unsatisfactory

### Section C: Strategies for Improving Academic Performance

In the tables below, indicate the extent to which you engage in the following activities as a school head teacher. Use the scale below to respond.

**A - Always S - Sometimes R - Rarely N - Never**

	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>N</b>
Making sure teachers keep updated professional documents (schemes of work, lesson plans and records of work)				
Visiting teachers in class to supervise teaching				
Involving teachers to decide on best strategies to improve teaching and learning				
Providing all the teaching and learning resources needed for improved performance				
Supervising teachers to ensure they complete the syllabus on time				
Building teamwork among teachers to ensure they support one another				
Holding regular staff meetings to discuss academic progress				
Holding staff appraisal meetings to discuss strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for academic improvement				
	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>N</b>
Discussing pupil's discipline with parents				
Involving teachers to identify ways of improving discipline in the school				
Ensuring that the school climate is conducive for teaching and learning				
Ensuring the school has all the necessary physical and material resources				
Providing guidance and counselling to pupils				
	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>N</b>

Clarifying the school vision and mission to teachers, students and parents				
Ensuring teachers set achievable and realistic academic performance goals for their subjects				
Reminding pupils of their core business in the school and encouraging them to remain focused				
Setting overall school goals with the teachers and motivating them towards attainment of the set goals				
Ensuring that all stakeholders (teachers, students, parents) participate in setting school goals and objectives				
	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>N</b>
Assisting teachers to identify threats that may hinder academic success				
Making clear to teachers that the school administration has confidence in them that they can lead pupils to academic success				
Ensuring that all teachers have a no child left behind attitude, that is, all students can do well irrespective of their entry behaviour				
	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>N</b>
Inviting parents to discuss academic progress of their children				
Ensuring all parents attend school meetings such as PTA meetings				
At the beginning of each term, holding „academic clinics with parents of students who perform poorly to explore possible measures				
Advising parents on home environment factors that promote learning of their children				
Reminding parents of their duty in ensuring students are disciplined				
Parents providing all the necessary support materials (e.g. textbooks) to the pupils				
Parents offering moral support to teachers and the school administration				
	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>N</b>
Ensuring there are regular continuous assessment tests to monitor pupils' progress				

Ensuring there are regular continuous assessment tests to monitor students' progress				
Supervising teacher-made exams to ensure they are of high quality				
Ensuring teachers revise all exams with students after marking				
Discussing academic progress with individual students				
Holding meetings with teachers to discuss pupils' progress on specific subjects				
	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>N</b>
Ensuring that instructional time allocated for each subject is adequate to ensure syllabus is covered and learning takes place				
Ensuring that teachers attend schools and are punctual to the largest extent possible				
Monitoring school attendance and punctuality by students to ensure that they do not miss classes				

**Section D: Open Ended Questions**

1. What other factors affect academic performance of the pupils in your school?

.....  
.....  
.....

2. What measures would you recommend your school to take to improve academic performance?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME**

## **APPENDIX VI: HEAD TEACHERS INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA IN COLLABORATION WITH ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY**

#### **SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

The purpose of this interview is to collect data on factors that affect academic performance of pupils in junior secondary leaving examinations in selected day secondary schools. The researcher assures you that the information gathered will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for academic purposes only.

1. For how long have you been at this school?
2. When were you substantively appointed in your current position?
3. How would you describe the staffing situation at your school?
4. How do you ensure that teachers cultivate positive attitude towards work?
5. How do you involve your teachers in decision making?
6. Briefly talk about the general academic performance of pupils in junior secondary leaving examinations for the past two years (2014 – 2015)
7. What could be the possible factors contributing to the performance described?
8. What measures have you put in place if any to arrest the situation?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME**

## **APPENDIX VII: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE DEBS**

### **THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA IN COLLABORATION WITH ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY**

#### **SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

The purpose of this interview is to collect data on factors that affect academic performance of pupils in junior secondary leaving examinations in selected day secondary schools. The researcher assures you that the information gathered will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for academic purposes only.

1. What is your experience with the running of the schools in your District regarding the following issues?
  - (a) Physical facilities
  - (b) Human resources
  - (c) Financial resources
2. What in your view are the factors influencing academic performance in the schools in your district?
3. What are the salient characteristics of effective schools in your district that poor performing schools can adopt?
4. How does your office seek to assist schools improve academic performance of the pupils?
5. What do you propose could be done by the schools, the Ministry of General Education, the government and the Community to improve academic performance of the schools in your district?

**THANK FOR YOUR TIME.**

## **APPENDIX VIII: TEACHERS' FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**

### **THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA IN COLLABORATION WITH ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY**

#### **SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

The purpose of this focus group discussion is to collect data on factors that affect academic performance of pupils in junior secondary leaving examinations in selected day secondary schools. The researcher assures you that the information gathered will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for academic purposes only.

1. How has been the general performance in junior secondary leaving examinations in this school for the past two years (2014-2015)?
2. What are some of the common factors that affect your pupils' academic performance in junior secondary leaving examinations?
3. How as teachers do you relate with the community?
4. As teachers are there any measures that you have put in place to arrest the situation of pupil performance at this school?

**THANK FOR YOUR TIME**

**APPENDIX IX: RESEARCH TIMEFRAME**

Development of Research topic -----	April 2016
Literature review-----	May 2016
Writing proposal-----	May 2016
Data collection-----	June, 2016
Data Analysis-----	June, 2016
Thesis compilation-----	July, 2016
Thesis Submission-----	August, 2016

**APPENDIX X: RESEARCH BUDGET**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>QUANTITY</b>	<b>TOTAL COST</b>
Lap top computer	1	K 7,500 .00
Printer	1	K 1,000.00
Flash disk	1	K100.00
Stapler	1	K 65.00
Ink for the printer	2	K450.00
Printing paper	2 realms	K120.00
Internet Services		K2,000.00
Report binding	4	K650.00
Transport		K2,500.00
Food		K1,000.00
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>K15,385.00</b>