



An Investigation of the Poor Academic Performance of Grade 12 Learners from
Open Learning Classes in Final School Leaving Examinations in Selected
Secondary Schools of Kafue District

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Hichibulo Ronald hereby declare that this dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in Educational Management, is original and is entirely my own work except where references to other sources have been indicated. I further certify that the document has not previously been presented by any person for a Degree to this university or any other higher institution for any similar academic award.

DEDICATION

I wholeheartedly dedicate this study to my late dad, Benard Hichibulo, my late brother Ledson, my late sisters Rosemary, Mediya, and Placcedes, for supporting and encouraging me to pursue education as a sure way of living happily and prosperously, also my late children Choolwe and Lweendo who would have been encouraged with this study. May the Almighty God rest my dear departed's souls in eternal peace, I will always salute you. I also dedicate this work to my children, Namoonga, Lushomo, my dear wife Angela Chitanti Hichibulo and my mother Maria Mutinta for being supportive throughout my study.

APPROVAL

This dissertation by Hichibulo Ronald is approved as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Educational Management of The University of Zambia in collaboration with Zimbabwe Open University.

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I feel gratified to the Almighty God who gave me strength to accomplish this work. This study has been completed due, in part, to a good number of people whom I am deeply indebted. Therefore it is a social product. However, it is not possible to mention each one of them by name. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all of them. I single out Dr. F. M. Hambulo my supervisor, who rendered his full professional support and guided me through each step of the dissertation. I will not forget his encouragements, critical comments, and intellectual stimulation. He maintained special interest in my work from its initial stages up to its completion. Thank you for your technical advice, as a supervisor, you pushed me to do what I thought was undoable.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CD	-	Coordinator
DEBS	-	District Education Board Secretary
ECZ	-	Examinations Council of Zambia
ESB	-	English Speaking Background
FG	-	Focus Group Interview/Discussion
GC	-	Career and Guidance Teacher
HT	-	Head Teacher
MoE	-	Ministry of Education
NESB	-	Non-English Speaking Background
OLC	-	Open Learning Class
PEO	-	Provincial Education officer
PP	-	Pupil
SES	-	Social Economic Status
SCH	-	School
TR	-	Teacher

ABSTRACT

This research was based on ‘an investigation of the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from Open Learning Classes (OLC) in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District. Its main purpose was to identify the factors and explore on how they contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District. The study was guided by the following main research question ‘How do the factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District?’ This question formed the main basis for the achievement of the study’s overarching purpose highlighted earlier. A qualitative methodology grounded in a case study design was utilized to gather data for this research. Data was gathered using semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews/discussions. Research participants included: the head teachers, OLC coordinators, teachers of OLC, career and guidance teachers and grade twelve learners from OLC.

The following findings resulted from the study: there are various factors that influence learner’s academic performance; there are basically three major factors that contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District; the various contemporary challenges experienced by OLC which are learner-based, school-based and home-based factors are responsible for the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District; OLC have experienced poor academic performance among learners in final school leaving examinations since their inception in 2011.

The main conclusion of the study was that the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District is linked to learner, school and home based factors.

To resolve the problem of the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from Open Learning Classes in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District, all study recommendations emphasized an implementation of OLC policies, close

supervision and provision of necessary and adequate learning requirements to learners from OLC to achieve desired academic results.

Key terms: academic, performance, learner, class, school, examination, secondary, district.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

In this chapter the researcher discussed the background of the study, statement of the problem and the purpose of the study. The researcher further discussed research objectives and questions before looking at the significance of the study. Thereafter, the theoretical framework was discussed, and finally, the researcher discussed the conceptual framework.

1.1 Background of the study

Education is a fundamental human right and a key to economic and human development (Todaro and Smith, 2002: 396). Todaro and Smith (2002: 413-414), further stipulated that education is an agent of transformation towards sustainable development as it increases people's capacities to transform their visions into reality. As a social institution, it is described as a process by which young adults develop abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to the society in which they live.

Like any other country, Zambia values education because it contributes to national development through the provision of appropriate human resource that help to stimulate productivity and eliminate hunger, poverty, disease and ignorance (Todaro and Smith, 2002:75). Kapinga (1992) supports the above statement by asserting that education liberates man from socio-political forces which weigh upon him and moulds a new personality on him at every level.

It is for this reason that Zambia has been investing in education at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. According to Ndoye (2007:3, 13), secondary education prepares a learner to meet global challenges in science and technology as well as organizations of production processes and markets. The preparation of a learner in education leads to faster growth for development and industrialisation. Thus, developing countries especially the Sub-Saharan Africa are now paying much attention to invest in education like their counterparts in developed countries to enhance development (Ndoye, 2007: 13).

In line with the sentiments above, the investment in education is in the provision of educational requirements and increased enrolment. Zambia increased the enrolment after independence at both primary and secondary level due to a huge demand for education for individual and national development (Mwanakatwe, 1968). The high demand resulted into over enrolment which compromised the quality of education; this further compromised productivity in work places (Walberg, 1984: 397). Quality became a great concern so that the country had to take in a new wider view of education programs that prepare individuals to be productive, self-reliant and ready to take up self-employment once they left school, more especially secondary school education (GRZ, 1966).

The country considered introducing programs that could accommodate many children and provide them with quality education. Open Learning Classes (OLC) were introduced in 2011 in most schools to address the problem of quality. The Ministry of Education also wanted to address the problem of a number of school age going children that were not in school. The program came as an important avenue for provision of quality education and as a way of increasing access to education to as many people as possible (Ministry of Education, 2011: 2).

Further, OLC as an opening for more people to access education is also evident in the SADC protocol of education. According to the Ministry of Education (MoE) Press Statement (2011:2), OLC removes many if not all unnecessary barriers to learning while aiming to provide learners with reasonable chance of success in education.

The Ministry transformed Academic Production Unit (APU), an educational avenue that operated without proper guidelines and supervision, into OLC (MoE, 2011:1). There were various reasons for the transformation. Apart from improved quality and increasing access to education, it was meant to have control on the program as APU was not under the control of the MoE but directly under individuals who charged exorbitant fees to the learners (MoE, 2011:1).

It was also noted that the running of APU was not uniform and so each school had its own management system, mainly basing the system on raising funds rather than providing quality education to learners. This was so because there were no educational guidelines on the running of the program from the MoE. Thus, the MoE developed open learning operational policy guidelines to help learners achieve the desired educational goals (MoE, 2011:2).

Further, according to the MoE (2011:2), press release on APU transformation, the government directed the schools to have the same rate of fees paid by learners in open learning classes and those in regular (morning) classes. The government guided the schools to use part of user fees paid by pupils from OLC to pay teachers teaching OLC as allowances for doing extra work.

The program gave chance to those children with full certificates who could not have been taken on by the regular (morning) classes due to limited places to have an opportunity to continue their education. Further, others who felt OLC was more convenient because of various reasons could be enrolled and attend classes at their convenient time of the day (MoE, 2011:1-2). The flexibility of the program allows more people access to education. However, depending on a number of factors, learners from OLC can either perform well or not (MoE, 2011:1-2).

With conditions almost leveled with regular classes, the OLC program has seen growth in the number of learners enrolled in secondary schools. The learner's population has grown in OLC. However, although there has been enormous growth in the number of pupils to be reached through OLC, the capacity to sustain immediate and rapid growth of the program has not been certain (MoE, 2011:2). One problem has been that of money with which to pay teachers. The teachers are paid per period from the money pupils pay as tuition. Unfortunately, some pupils are unable to make payments on time; sometimes they fail to pay anything at all. This negatively affects budgeting so that payments of teacher's allowances become erratic to a level that teachers are demotivated. Since OLC has run as a voluntary program where teaching OLC is attached to an allowance, there has been challenges in the teaching of learners from OLC.

The academic performance of learners from OLC has therefore been poor in grade 12 final school leaving examinations for a long time now as evidenced from the results analysis done by different selected schools in Kafue District in the past three years (ECZ, 2014: 30-34). Therefore, it is vital to investigate the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in the final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The academic performance of Grade 12 learners from OLC has been poor in final school leaving examinations as evidenced from the results analysis obtained from selected secondary schools of Kafue District in the past two years (ECZ, 2014: 30-34). The poor academic performance is

prevalent in the district, therefore, the study seeks to identify the causal factors and how they contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue district. More over there is no known study that has embarked on such a mission particularly in Kafue District hence the importance of this particular study to investigate the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.

1.4 Research objectives, questions

1.4.1 General research objective

The general objective of this study was to investigate the factors that contribute to poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in Kafue District.

1.4.2 Specific research objectives

The specific research objectives of this study were to:

1. Assess how learner-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.
2. Ascertain how school-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.
3. Establish how home-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.

1.4.3 Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District?
2. How do learner-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District?
3. How do school-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District?
4. How do home-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District?

1.5 Significance of the study

The study is important because it highlights various factors that contribute to poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary school of Kafue District. Some of the factors discussed include high enrolment levels, inadequate funding, teacher related issues, socio-economic status of learner's families.

The study also attends to how various learner-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District. Absenteeism, tiredness, psychological issues are among the many learner-based factors with detrimental effect on learner performance. It then shifts the attention to school based factors.

The study establishes how school-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District. Among the factors discussed are teaching and learning materials, inadequate infrastructure, and teacher commitment.

Home-based factors are also attended to; issues that include the parent's educational background, domestic work done by learners, parent's financial standing, and many other factors are discussed.

In line with the above, the study may familiarize the stake holders in the MoE as well as policy makers and educational planners on the challenges facing learners from OLC which could enable them take necessary measures for performance improvement among OLC learners in grade 12 final school leaving examinations in Kafue District.

The MoE may be advised on consequences of introducing some educational programs that may have a negative effect on learner's performance where there are no proper mechanisms to ensure the provision of quality education. With the information available, the MoE may ensure that necessary requirements for quality education provisions are put in place before starting any educational program as this could be the only sure way of guaranteeing learners with good performance in various national examinations. The study may also contribute to existing literature on how factors contribute to the poor academic performance of learners from OLC in Zambia

The findings of the study may provide valuable information to government, school administrators and teachers on how best to address problems related to learners' academic performance in schools with OLC. Therefore, to make this successful, the findings of the study may be disseminated to the District Education Board Secretary's Office and to all the secondary schools in Kafue District.

1.6 Theoretical framework

The study adopted social capital theory. The theory was adopted because the study is based on issues related to society. The poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations experienced in selected secondary schools of Kafue District since OLC's inception in 2011 are social related issues consisting of ideals borne by social institutions, that is, the OLC and the Ministry of Education (MoE) respectively.

According to the theorists Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert Putnam, the power of social networks enhances either positive or negative outcomes at personal and institutional levels

in society. These social ties can also influence educational provision in society. Thus, social capital in educational provision in society entails that social relationships or connections matter in enabling either positive or negative outcomes in learners (Giddens, 1984:14).

Further, when people make relationships or connections either in their personal lives or institutions and maintain them for a long time, they are able to cooperate to achieve great things they either could not achieve by themselves, or could only achieve with great difficulty. In other words, social capital is based on the assertion that the more people someone knows, the more they share a common out-look or common values and the richer their social capital, therefore, people may sometimes find that options are either enabled or constrained by the nature of the resources that they can get hold of through their connections (Field, 2008:1). Field (2008) in Hambulo (2016) states that, “the closest and highly valued ties often bring meaning and affirmation to our existence, for the same reason they can also prove to be the cause of deep pain or failure”.

In this study, immediate relationships of all members of all target secondary schools in Kafue District together with their wider set of relationships and values that allow them to pursue their goals will be analyzed using the concepts of social capital outlined above.

1.7 Conceptual framework

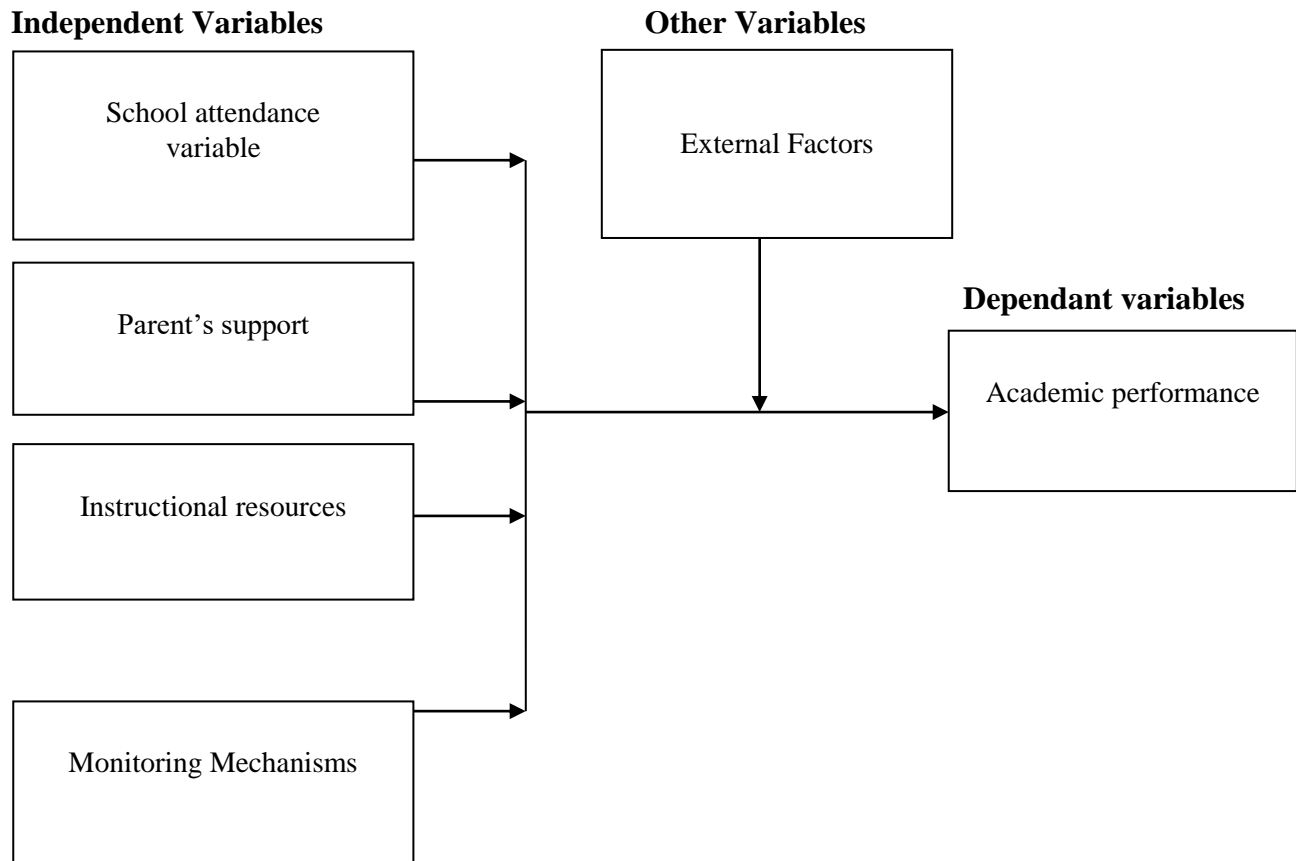
The study was guided by a conceptual framework that defines the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables on academic performance.

According to Musabila and Nalaila (2013), a conceptual framework consists of concepts that are placed within a logical and sequential design. It is based on specific concepts and propositions derived from empirical observation and intuition. The conceptual framework is important because it gives direction for the presentation of research questions that derive the study. The conceptual framework guided the presentation of the findings. In this case, it was based on factors that contribute to academic performance of learners in grade 12 final school leaving examinations. After identifying the factors, it focused its attention on how they influence academic performance among learners from OLC.

The study therefore conceptualizes the factors that contribute to academic performance of pupils in secondary schools and the extent to which they affect pupil’s academic performance in OLC.

It therefore follows that if all these variables are worked on, then, there would be harmony and pupils' performance improved.

Figure1. The Framework of the study on the established variables on factors contributing to academic performance of learners in open learning classes



1.8 Chapter summary

This chapter provided an exposition of the foundational basis of the study. In other words, the chapter categorically stated what the study is about. Foundational aspects of the study were provided in the background. The Chapter provided the insight for the study on OLC. This was followed by a discussion on the insight for the research. Forming a major part of the discussion in this chapter was also the aspect of concept clarification, where the key concept, Open Learning Classes (OLC), was clarified. Following this was a discussion of the ‘problem statement’ of the study. Attention was also granted to highlighting the purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, and the significance of the study before attending to the theoretical framework and the conceptual framework

The next chapter attempts to review literature on academic performance of learners from open learning classes focusing on the global, African and Zambian perspectives.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

The previous chapter looked at the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives and questions before shifting the attention to the significance of the study. It also addressed the theoretical framework and finally the conceptual framework.

This chapter reviews literature related to the current study. According to Ghosh (1992:198), in review of related literature, the researcher “should have the ability to pick and choose the best available material, discarding the useless and unnecessary ones”. In his thesis Hambulo (2016: 49) stated that literature review is central to any research study because it provides the logical rules, ideas or beliefs upon which the research is based. It also provides the researcher with the much needed insight into what has been done in the field or subject being studied, how it was done and what conclusions and recommendations were made. It also helps in identifying the weaknesses and strengths of the study. Additionally, a review of literature is important because it contextualizes the current study by placing it within the context of other similar studies in order to strengthen it and provide a significance or justification for it. Moreover, a thorough review of literature helps the researcher to avoid duplication of studies already done on a particular subject. Commenting on the centrality of reviewing literature Rwegoshora (2006:60) in Hambulo (2016), asserts that consideration of similar research works in the review of literature is useful because it acquaints the researcher with difficulties that were faced in similar studies, those to expect in the current study and the best research approaches to the current study. Perhaps the most important advantage of a review of related literature is that it enables the researcher to have further knowledge and skill in a specific field of study.

The current study is entitled ‘An investigation of the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from open learning classes in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District’. In building a logical framework for this research topic the chapter reviews literature at global, African and Zambian contexts with sub-topics emerging.

2.1 Global context of factors contributing to academic performance

There are various factors that contribute to academic performance of pupils in secondary schools in both developed and developing countries. The factors can either influence positive or negative academic performance among students. Among the school-related factors are unqualified and poorly trained teachers, inadequate facilities, and dilapidated instructional materials. Non-school factors include poverty, low educational attainment and illiteracy of parents and poor health and nutrition.

2.1.1 Teacher qualification

A study in Britain on the role of the teacher on student performance revealed that well qualified teachers contribute positively to student's academic performance. Akiri and Nkechi (2009: 110) greatly emphasized the importance of having qualified teachers in the field of teaching, and said that success of any program is conditioned by the ability of the teacher to teach. If there is failure at this point, the whole structure fails. Hence, the implementation, selection, preparation, and supervision of education will be affected. Moreover, Otien and Yara (2010: 126-132) mentioned that good teachers are constantly on the alert for methods and instructional materials that will make learning meaningful. With the wise selection and use of a variety of instructional materials or audio-visual materials, experiences may be provided to develop understanding.

Sentamu (2003: 4) further stated that when understanding is developed, thinking skills are enhanced. Thinking skills primarily affect student's learning abilities, therefore, teachers should help students develop the skills by catching their attention. If teachers do not know how to catch the attention of their students, students cannot make themselves attentive to that subject. The students get lazy because they have a subject that they think it is not so relevant to their program; nonetheless, they still study it. The performance among such children is usually low.

In Trinidad, a research was conducted among secondary school and nursing students of Benguet State University to determine the factors that contribute to the academic performance of learners. The results were meant to help in the improvement of the performance of teachers and students (Tucker et al, 2007: 477-480).

The result of the study was meant to benefit the students by allowing them to understand better the factors that can affect their academic performance. For the teachers, this study helped them to recognize problems encountered by the students that might pose an effect in their performance. It was an eye opener for them to find alternative actions on how to handle their students. For the school administrators, the study made them be able to promote thinking skills assessment in their school, letting their teachers understand the influences of their student's preferred learning styles that would promote adequate learning opportunities and effective instructions (Tucker et al, 2007: 480-488).

2.1.2 Social economic status

While teaching plays an important role in student's academic performance, other factors like social economic status (SES) contribute to academic performance. SES is mainly determined by the combination of parents' educational level, occupational status and income level (Graetz, 1995: 25). Various studies show that there is a relationship between family SES and the academic performance of children in schools. While there is disagreement over how best to measure SES, most studies indicate that children from low SES families do not perform as well as they potentially could at school compared to children from high SES families (Berk, 1997: 549). Most studies, however, compare students from across all SES backgrounds to reach the conclusion that low SES adversely affects a range of educational outcomes.

Considine and Zappala (2002:129-148) in their study of the relationship between social economic status of an individual and academic performance revealed that the influence of SES in the academic performance of school students in Australia found that families where the parents are advantaged socially, educationally and economically foster a higher level of achievement in their children. They also found that these parents provide higher levels of psychological support for their children through environments that encourage the development of skills necessary for success at school.

However, the study conducted in Brazilian education institutions found that students coming from disadvantaged socioeconomic and educational homes perform relatively better than those coming from higher SES. They called this phenomenal educational resilience. This could be true considering that different countries have different parameters of categorizing SES. What a

developed country categorizes as low social economic status may be different from the definition of low social economic status of a developing country (Portes and Macleod, 1996: 272).

Family income, according to Berk (1997: 549) has a profound influence on the educational opportunities available to adolescents and on their chances of educational success. Buckingham (1999: 9-10) added that due to residential stratification and segregation, low-income students in Norwegian educational institutions usually attend schools with lower funding levels, this has reduced achievement, motivation and has much higher risk of educational failure among learners. When compared with their more affluent counterparts, low-income adolescents receive lower grades, earn lower scores on standardized test and are much more likely to drop out of school.

Buckingham (1999: 9-10) was in agreement with Sentamu (2003:4) who argued that social class determines what school a child will attend and whether the child will pass the examinations. Considine and Zappala (2002: 38) found that children from families with low income are more likely to exhibit the following patterns in terms of educational outcomes; have lower levels of literacy, innumeracy and comprehension, lower retention rates, exhibit higher levels of problematic school behavior, are more likely to have difficulties with their studies and display negative attitudes to school.

Graetz (1995: 32-35) used parents' occupation as an alternative for income to examine the relationship between income and academic performance and found that children of farmers had fewer years of schooling than children of parents with white-collar jobs. They also determined that the schooling levels of both parents had a positive and statistically significant effect on the educational attainment of Peruvian children. They argued that how much education a child's parents have is probably the most important factor in determining the child's educational opportunities, more so performance in class. Further, they observed that the higher the attainment for parents, then the greater their aspirations for children (Asikhia, 2010: 229-242).

In addition, Sentamu (2003:4) observed that rural families and urban families where both parents had inadequate education, there was little or no effort to consider home study for their children, they fostered a poor study culture in their children since the parents themselves did not attend school or received inadequate education to create this awareness in them.

Hansen and Mastekaasa (2003: 277-291), argued that according to the cultural capital theory one could expect students from families who are closest to the academic culture to have greatest success. It is believed that low SES negatively affects academic achievement because low SES prevents access to vital resources and creates additional stress at home.

2.1.3 Type of school

As well as socio-economic status, research has shown the importance of the type of school a child attends in influencing educational outcomes. While research in the US found that SES variables continue to influence educational attainment even after controlling for different school types, the school context tends to affect the strength of the relationship between SES and educational outcomes (Portes and MacLeod, 1996: 270).

Similarly, research in Britain shows that schools have an independent effect on student attainment (Jensen and Seltzer, 2000: 23), while there is less data available on this issue in Australia, several studies using the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth have found that students attending private non-Catholic schools were significantly more likely to stay on at school than those attending state schools. Students from independent private schools are also more likely to achieve higher end of school scores (Jensen and Seltzer, 2000: 17-31).

Some researchers have held the view that school ownership and funding does indeed have an effect on performance of the student. Crosne, et al, (2004) found that school ownership (that is schools owned by private individuals and those owned by the government) is an important structural component of the school. They argued that private schools tend to have both better funding and small class sizes than public schools. They found that additional funding of private schools leads to better academic performance and more access to resources such as computers, which enhance academic achievement.

Sampson (2004) also noted that private schools across the world have alternative sources of funding, higher level of discipline, and are very selective and this is why they tend to have higher academic performance than students from public schools. While school-related factors are important, there is again an indirect link to SES, as private schools are more likely to have a greater number of students from high SES families, select students with stronger academic

abilities and have greater financial resources (Kimani, et al, 2013:2). The school effect is also likely to operate through variation in the quality and attitudes of teachers. Teachers at deprived schools are less motivated leading into low expectations of their learners, hence affecting the learners negatively which equally lead into poor academic performance among learners.

Considine and Zappala (2002: 129-148) also argued that the type of school a child attends influences the child's academic performance. In their argument, they stated that students' academic performance is greatly influenced by the type of school which the child attends or previously attended. They see the school as an institutional environment that sets the parameters of a students' learning experience. Depending on the environment, a school can either open or close the doors that lead to good academic performance or achievement.

Considine and Zappala (2002:132) cited Sparkes (1999) whose study in Britain shows that schools have an independent effect on student's attainment and that school effect operate through variation in quality and attitudes, so teachers in disadvantaged schools often hold low expectations of their students which compound the low expectations the students have, hence leading to poor academic performance by the students.

Kwesiga (2002) was of the view that school facilities determine the quality of the school, which in turn influences the academic performance and attainment of its pupils. Taal (1996: 16) added that schools influence learning in the way content is organized and in the teaching, learning and assessment procedures.

2.1.4 Absenteeism

Also related to poor educational performance is the level of truancy or unexplained absence among students. Truancy can be modeled both as an educational outcome and as a causal factor in explaining educational performance. Truancy tends to be higher among students from low SES backgrounds. Truancy, even occasional, is associated with poorer academic performance at school. The student who is not consistent with school work will have a lot of gaps in knowledge, hence poor performance (Sparkes, 1999). Thus a well managed school with all basic tools for testing adequacy of learners such as class registers, homework and tests, progress reports will overcome such challenges (Caliltz et al, 2002).

2.1.5 Ethnicity

The ethnic background or immigrant status of parents is also an important mediating variable on the influence of SES on children's educational performance (Graetz, 1995:28). Studies of the academic performance of second-generation school students in the US found that while their performance is also influenced by the SES of their parents and type of school, the student's national background plays a significant independent role in academic performance (Portes and MacLeod, 1996: 270).

However, Portes and MacLeod (1996:272) argued that the importance of education to an individual will not see migration as a hindrance to academic performance. The authors found that some first-generation immigrant parents, for example Cubans, Vietnamese, through the process of migration and subsequent incorporation in the host society, came to see education as a key means of upward mobility for their children, despite their own low levels of education and income as such more effort was put in education for possible success. Children from these communities did well despite coming from low SES backgrounds whereas the negative effects of SES were not ameliorated in the academic performance of children from immigrant communities with low levels of social capital like Haitian and Mexican.

Similar findings emerged within the Australian experience. While the children of immigrants were seen to be at a disadvantage up until the mid-1970s, the gradual introduction of multicultural policies in the classroom from that time might have improved the situation (Cahill, 1996).

A series of studies based on Census data suggested that the second generation, especially those of European, Indian and Chinese origin, achieved substantial educational mobility in terms of staying on at school, compared to those from British, German, Dutch and Australian origin (Dills, 2006). As a result, higher percentages of children from non-English speaking background (NESB) achieve tertiary qualifications compared to those from English-speaking background (ESB) (Dobson et al, 1996: 46-54).

As with the US research, there is a great deal of variation between different ethnic groups. Studies have found that it is more likely that people from Vietnamese, Chinese, Eastern

European and Korean backgrounds are in higher education than people from ESB, whereas those whose language group was Arabic, Khmer and Turkish were half as likely to be in higher education as those from ESB (Cahill, 1996).

2.1.6 Geographical location

According to Cheers (1990: 5-13) students from non-metropolitan areas are more likely to have lower educational outcomes in terms of academic performance and retention rates than students from metropolitan areas. Despite an adequate number of educational facilities in rural and remote Australia, school children from these areas remain disadvantaged by other factors.

Issues affecting performance and access to education in local areas include costs, the availability of transport and levels of family income support. In addition, inequity exists with regard to the quality of the education that rural students receive; often it is as a result of restricted and limited subject choice, usually determined by the specialization of subject teachers present at the school (Cheers, 1990: 5-13). Students may also have limited recreational and educational facilities within their school.

2.1.7 Residential area

Poor academic performance has also been found to be associated with children living in high density areas compared to those in low density areas. This may be due to the effects of overcrowding, poor access to resources and a lack of social networks, and in this sense, housing type may also be a measure of neighborhood influence (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000: 55). A recent Australian study based on 171 grade 12 students from 10 state schools, found that neighborhood effects were an important influence on students academic performance after calculating a range of individual and family socioeconomic characteristics (Jensen and Seltzer, 2000: 209-217).

Measures of the neighborhood included the level of neighborhood income, the unemployment rate, an index of educational attainment and the percentage employed in professional fields. This study was unable to identify, however, the precise transmission mechanisms for such neighborhood effects. Whether, for instance, they were due to spillover effects such as peer group influence, the presence or lack of job networks and role models or whether the

neighborhood variables were acting as proxies for school quality or housing type (Sparkes, 1999).

2.1.8 Communication skills

As already alluded to, research studies from both developed and developing countries show that pupils' performance depends on many factors. Harb and El-Shaarawi (2006) found that among many other important factors, the most important factor with positive effect on pupils' performance is pupil's competence in the official language used in the area. If the pupils have strong communication skills and have strong grip on the official language, it increases the performance of the pupils. Therefore, there is a positive relationship between communication and pupil performance.

2.1.9 Use of learning facilities

While communication is one of the key factors influencing academic performance, proper use of learning facilities is equally important. Sentamu (2003:4) found that pupils' performance is significantly correlated with satisfaction with academic environment that include the facilities of library, computer lab and so forth. A Study effort from student and the proper use of the facilities provided by the institution to the student positively affect the student's performance (Young, 1999: 199-200).

Young (1999: 201-207) further held the view that students' performance is linked with use of library and level of their parental education. The use of the library positively affected the student performance. In addition, academic environment is the effective variable for students and has positive relationship with fathers' education and grade level.

Where students face a lot of problems in developing positive study attitudes and study habits, guidance and motivation by both school personnel and parents plays an important role to their performance. Guidance is a very important factor through which a student can improve his study attitudes and study habits and is directly proportional to academic achievement. The students who are properly guided by their parents have performed well in the exams (Rich, 2000:89-91). The guidance from the parents and the teachers indirectly affect the performance of the students.

Furthermore, Noble (2006: 14) stipulated that student's stress, attendance in class, teacher-student ratio, and distance of school affect the performance of the students in class. He also observed that academic success of students is hindered if the optimal health related barriers are high.

2.2 African context of factors contributing to academic performance

In Sub-Saharan Africa Governments in particular, spend only 2.4% of the World public education resources, while the education budget of a single country like France, Italy or the UK outweighs educational spending across the entire Sub-Saharan African region (UNESCO, 2005). The little expenditure on education result into factors that lead to poor academic performance, factors such as unqualified and poorly trained teachers, inadequate facilities, and dilapidated instructional materials.

2.2.1 Hostile environment

In Africa especially Sub-Saharan Africa, the large part of the population is living under hostile situations of exceeded poverty, vulnerability with various infections including HIV/AIDS. Infrastructure of education in Africa is still facing many challenges and so development process is still stagnating. There are few schools, classrooms, libraries, and laboratories to support student learning, giving an adverse effect to student performance (Hansen and Mastekaasa, 2006: 277-291). Where these facilities are available especially in some Arab countries like Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, and Libya, students perform well in their academic activities. They are just negatively affected when their countries are faced with political hostility (Harb and EL-Shaarawi, 2006).

2.2.2 Poor investment in education

As a result of poor investment in education, Africa has problems in having enough trained teachers. This negatively affect teacher-student ratio, the situation is unmanageable. Teachers play an important role in education achievement of learners. The level of investing in education more so teacher training determines the student's performance levels (Asikhia, 2010: 229-242).

The challenges Africa faces in education achievements hinge more on economic problems. However, some countries are on course to quality education, for instance Kenya. The education system of Kenya is evolving steadily even though it is faced with a number of shortcomings. The country has put proper interventions in education which include provision of adequate teaching and learning resources. The country has its teaching and learning resource publishing companies to ensure adequate relevant materials are available in their learning institutions although the country still faces the problem of poor planning and corruption (Otieno and Yara, 2010: 126-132). Corruption is very common in most Sub-Saharan Africa and this has adversely affected student performance in learning institutions. Finances meant for education usually don't reach the end users.

2.2.3 Civil wars and political instability

The whole region of East Africa and the Great Lakes at large is trying to advance in education so that the livelihood of their people can be better but there are various obstacles that face the education advancement. These include civil wars and political instability especially in countries like Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Sudan. Other obstacles are climatic and economic problems. The combination of these problems has been in one way or another affecting academic performance at all levels of schooling as parents have been failing to assist their kids to attend school in sustainable ways. In most cases, students have stayed away from school because of these disturbances, this adversely affect them in academic work (Atieno, et al, 2002: 297-310).

While the demand on educational opportunities has continued to rise across Africa, the question for quality education is still very strong due to civil wars and political instability which lead into social economic problems. The continent faces problems on poor quality of teachers, inadequate teaching and learning material, weak financial support from the community, dilapidated, and infrastructure due to weak economies (Kimani, et al, 2013:2).

Further, academic performance of students at all educational levels in countries like Tanzania, Malawi, Mali, and many others across the continent is still low because teachers are demoralized by poor infrastructure especially the quality of buildings, play grounds, and the availability of teaching and learning materials. Teachers do not teach according to the required standard. In

some cases, the curriculum is lacking some relevance as such students and parents don't see the need for learning (Birdsall and Francois, 2006).

2.2.4 Parents' education level

Most parents in Africa have low education level. The level of education of parents is the degree to which parents have acquired some knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of informal and formal education. The study conducted by Prewittz in Kenya on parents' education showed that parents' level of education is very crucial for the performance of their children because educated parents understand the needs for education (Ezewu, 1988). Further, Ezewu (1988) found that educated parents provide adequate learning materials for their children, which stimulate them to learn and perform better in all subjects. These parents are concerned over their children's education and performance, which sometimes make them coach their children themselves or appoint part-time teachers for them. They send their children to the best schools which serve as sure gateways to success.

Owen (1999: 57) in her study exploring beliefs about academic achievement studied the relationship between parents' educational attainment and found that the educational attainment of parents have a relationship with educational achievement of their children. Therefore, Sentamu (2003:89-92) added that the educational attainment of parents determines the kind of schools to which their children go to. Such schools are near in kind to the ones their parents attended. This tends to lay a foundation for better performance of their children while at school.

Therefore, there is relationship between children's performance at school and the level of their parents' education, the more educated the parents are, the better the children's performance at school (Aremu, 2000: 106-108).

According to Eamon (2005: 163-175), parents' level of education influence pupil's performance in the sense that educated parents value education and they tend to encourage their own children to value and actively engage in receiving education. In a study conducted in Kenya by Ezewu (1988), it was found that the higher the levels of education of parents, the more likely it motivates children to learn and perform better. Aremu (2000: 106-110) found that home background has a significant influence on the achievement of children at school because

educated parents tend to offer more psychological, social and financial support to their children, thus giving them opportunity to excel in their studies.

2.2.5 Parents' marital status

Marital status of parents has both positive and negative effects on a pupil's performance at school depending on the organization of each family member. Polygamy is a common marriage arrangement across Sub-Saharan Africa. This is a marriage where one man marries more than one woman. Polygamous and extended families where income is low influence pupils' performance in a sense that a big number of children over burden the parents, therefore, they fail to support their children adequately. Further, homes where parents are quarrelsome, children are neglected hence affects their performance both in school and at home (Jeynes, 2002).

2.2.6 School climate

School climate also plays an important role in academic performance of pupils. Poor academic performance of pupils in that country is attributed to various factors that include teachers. Several teacher factors influence academic performance. These include teacher attendance in school, teachers' interest and motivation, and teaching effectiveness and methods of teaching. Teacher regularity in school is important in terms of both children's access to education and the nature of that access. A widespread problem of teacher absenteeism is likely to contribute to poor pupil performance. The prevailing evidence is that teacher absenteeism at primary school level in Ghana appears to have worsened in the last fifteen years (World Bank, 2004: 102).

The World Bank impact evaluation of basic education in Ghana found that, "in 2003, nearly 13 per cent of teachers had been absent in the past month, compared to just over 4 per cent in 1988" (World Bank, 2004: 101). It also observed that "in 1988, 85 per cent of schools did not suffer at all; whereas this figure has now fallen to 61 per cent, with 13 per cent of schools with over one-third of the teachers being absent for reasons other than sickness in the past month" (World Bank, 2004: 103).

The study also found absenteeism to be significantly worse in rural schools than in urban schools, and worse in public schools compared to private schools. Similarly the CARE International (2003: 18) report which looks at deprived rural areas in northern Ghana talks of

chronic teacher absenteeism which adversely affects the learning environment and further, CARE International talk about the low levels of professionalism in schools (especially low performing ones), with teachers having high rates of lateness, absenteeism and sometimes refusing to teach classes.

The World Bank (2004: 100-103) report put forward a number of reasons for the increasing teacher absenteeism. These included teachers living long distances from schools and experiencing transportation difficulties; teachers having to travel to town once a month to collect their pay, which may or may not have arrived; and, rural teachers engaging in farming activities. Although factors will be context-specific, multivariate analysis on teacher survey data also showed that teacher absenteeism was more likely to occur if the following factors were prevalent: poor working conditions, low morale, and high pupil-teacher ratio, living with spouse, being in their home district, and having good social relations (World Bank, 2004: 101).

In Lesotho, a study was conducted on investigating factors contributing to poor performance of grade 12 pupils. It was found that poor academic performance of pupils in that country attributed to various factors that include teachers. Tracy (2002: 21-30) argued that pupils have lost faith in teachers; they feel they are unfairly treated by teachers who care very little either about individual pupils or their teaching. Much of the problem, according to Calitz, et al, (2002) drive from the treatment pupils receive from teachers and unintended consequences of the school organization and practice.

In addition, Woessmann (2004:19) attributed poor performance of pupils in most schools to lack of parental involvement, an inappropriate curriculum, poor school management, a non-welcoming school climate, shortage of educational facilities and resources, second language as a medium of instruction, fear of external examinations, inadequate qualified teaching personnel, lack of discipline and poor school attendant by both the teachers and the pupils, a common trend in most African countries.

Akiri and Nkechi (2009: 107-113) are of the opinion that ineffectiveness of teachers in classroom interaction with the pupils could be responsible for the observed poor performance of pupils and the widely acclaimed fallen standard of education. They view that poor academic performance of pupils can be linked to poor teachers' performance in terms of accomplishing the teaching task,

negative attitude to work and poor teaching habits which have attributed to poor motivation. However, in most schools in Lesotho, ineffective teaching is due to lack of resources facilitating teaching and learning. Such conditions resulted into negative influence on the quality of instruction in schools. This translated into poor performance.

Further, various scholars have noted several factors that contribute to students' academic performance in schools. Tucker, et al, (2007: 477-488) reported that a teacher who does not have both the academic and professional qualification would undoubtedly have a negative influence on the teaching and learning of his/her subject. He further stated that a teacher who is academically and professionally qualified, but works under unfavourable condition of service, would be less dedicated to his work thus becoming less productive than a teacher who is unqualified but works under favourable conditions.

The teacher is 'increasingly becoming the focus of interest because of the key role that he or she plays in the delivery of quality education to the learner' (Taal, 1996:16). This seems to suggest that teachers are agents of change and as such are critical in the students' academic performance. Teachers are praised and rewarded for good performance. The government of Botswana introduced the rewarding system where teachers and students who excel in their external examination are given presents ranging from certificates of appreciation to sponsored trips abroad. This motivates both teachers and pupils to working very hard to have good results.

Such motivation plays an important role in pupils' academic performance. Most pupils perform below average in most African countries especially in the Sub-Saharan Africa due to lack of motivation. They are neither motivated to learn nor do they do what they are expected to do. Several researchers have suggested that only motivation directly affects academic achievement; all factors affect achievement only through the effect of motivation (Tucker, et al, 2007: 477-488).

In addition, Tracy (2002) stressed on supervision as a vital measure to better pupil's academic performance in national examinations. Supervision of instruction plays an important role in the quality of teaching and learning in a classroom as observed in the study of academic performance of pupils in selected schools in Ghana. It was found that students' academic performance is better in private schools than in public schools because there is more efficiency in

work supervision in private schools than in public schools. Further, the findings revealed that the shortage of teachers has proven to have a negative effect on efforts to improve the quality of education in schools (Buckingham, 2000:10).

The core business of schools is teaching and learning in order to give students' quality education. As an affirmation on the above, it is stated that; "one of the indicators of quality education being provided is cognitive achievement of learners" (Kimani et al., 2013:2). It has been said previously that school leaders, teachers and parents have a critical role in providing quality education for students. But it can be argued that for quality education to prevail all education stakeholders should take part in the translation, interpretation and implementation of policies regarding achievement of high standards of education, including students. Much is said about how to help students achieve their academic performance and little is mentioned about how the students themselves have impact on their own achievements. It should be noted that whatever effort that teachers exert to enhance students learning, the honours lay with the students. Hence the proverb 'you can lead a horse to the river but you cannot force it to drink.'

However, there is evidence from research which shows that students can play a critical role in improving academic performance (Tella, 2007:149). There are several ways in which students can have an impact on their academic achievement. Among others is students study habits. Study habits can be positive and negative. The positive study habit is when students attend to their school work, read books to search relevant information, schedule time for doing homework, attend tutorials and ask teachers questions where they do not understand the concepts taught. After tests have been marked students who work on teachers' feedback have high changes of improving their performance.

Another is when the students work in groups when they are given an assignment or topics for discussion. The intelligent students will help the low achievers to upgrade their grades and enhance their confidence. In a mixed ability class it has been proven that if students are not streamed according to the students capability have a higher overall attainment and equitable outcomes (Tella, 2007:149-156). The students involved in mixed-ability approach tend to have respect for each other. Students who value education as a means of obtaining survival skills

normally take learning serious. They do extra work with the assistance of their teachers. This ultimately proves their academic performance.

Negative study habit is when students have a negative attitude towards schooling, students' reluctance to learn and not preparing work before classes begin. Language barrier is also among many challenges which greatly affect students' academic performance in schools. Many students enter the classroom not fluent in the languages of instruction, the language which is used for testing students' mastery of subject content and used in the examinations (Tella, 2007:156).

2.3 Zambian context of factors contributing to academic performance

Although modern education begun in Zambia at the turn of the nineteenth century, when the British South African Company (BSAC) took political control of the country and was continued when the British Colonial government took over the country's administration from the company in 1924, education in the country continues facing challenges in terms of quality (Snelson, 1990:121-122).

According to Tucker, et al (2007: 477-488), there are a variety of factors that contribute to pupil's performance in any particular situation and can either contribute positively or negatively to the learner's performance. They include individual learner and situational differences and goals and purposes for learning. In this case, it can be said that learning works best when it is adapted to fit the uniqueness of learners and the learning situations, as long as they are in line with other factors that are present in the situation.

Notably among the various factors contributing to learner performance is inadequate funding, resulting into lack of enough textbooks and other teaching and learning materials, poor infrastructure, distance to school, over-enrolment, and teacher-related factors such as absenteeism, lack of enough supervision, non-giving of homework as well as the socio-economic status of the family the learner comes from (Otien and Yara, 2010:126-132).

2.3.1. Inadequate funding

Funding for Education institutions in Zambia is inconsistent and inadequate and that many of the difficulties experienced could be solved by allocation of resources to meet the needs including

purchasing of educational materials, appropriate training for staff and other school requisites. And this funding may come from public or private sector or even international and foreign aid to facilitate quality educational provision (Verspoor, 2006:1-7).

Due to inadequate funding of learning institutions the resultant scenario is that of failure by the school authorities to purchase enough textbooks, teaching and learning aids, develop infrastructure, this demotivates the teachers.

According to Mbozi (2008: 127), in his study of quality of education in selected schools in Livingstone and Kazungula Districts of Zambia, lack of enough textbooks affects academic performance of learners. According to his study, four classes of about sixty learners each shared only four textbooks amongst them, making it difficult for teachers to effectively use them during class lessons.

Further, non availability of proper school infrastructure is also a contributing factor to poor academic performance of pupils. The study carried out in Ghana indicated that a good learning environment has a significant impact on school attendance and learning outcomes. The absence of adequate school facilities such as desks, chalkboards, electricity and water sanitation has a negative effect on pupil attendance and learning outcomes. Therefore better learning occurs when learners have adequate needs for learning (Mulopo, 2010).

2.3.2. Over enrolment

Most Zambian schools are characterized by over enrolments and this has a negative impact on the quality of educational achievement by learners. Over enrolment result into higher teacher-pupil ratios, pupil-classroom ratios, pupil-book ratios and pupil-desk ratios; these factors make learning unpleasant due to over-crowdedness in the classroom and lack of enough sitting space (Mbozi, 2008:127). In turn this promotes absenteeism among the learners who are uncomfortable in the learning environment (Ndoye, 2007:3). Teachers are also unable to give individual attention to learners thereby disadvantaging the slow learners who would have benefitted from remedial and individual attention. Over enrolment in class make learners fail to concentrate while teachers fail to mark the books and avoid using group work mode of teaching (Bourice, 1986: 558-571).

2.3.3. Distance to school

The time learners take to get to school lowers their academic achievement because such learners are likely to arrive late and tired at school, and have less study time than their classmates who live near the school. They may also fail to do their homework when they arrive home due to tiredness as a result their performance is poor (Mbozi, 2008: 127).

Birdsall and Francois (1996) in their study investigating the relationship between location (distance) and school attendance in Mali; established that schools were far away from their villages, thus, many children could not be taken for enrolment by their parents or stopped on the way due to poor performance resulting from tiredness and absenteeism.

2.3.4. Teacher-related factors

Related literature consulted on this study revealed that apart from the above cited factors on learners' academic performance; there are also some teacher-caused ones. Babyegeya (2002:22) revealed a number of teacher related factors that contribute to students' academic performance in national examinations. One of the factors is how students actually learn or intend to learn and what teachers actually teach. In his view, other factors - like shortage of books and materials, teaching and teacher education affect students' academic performance in national examinations. He added that the type of teachers, their experience professional, qualifications and commitment to work may contribute to the students' achievements. In addition to his findings, he insisted on instruction time in which students spend in actual learning activities. The author contended that the more they understand the better they perform.

Mbozi (2008: 127) alluded to teacher-pupil interaction as another factor that affects academic performance of learners. By this he referred to situations where the teacher would use abusive language, threatening learners or shouting at them for various reasons. This resulted in the learners feeling out of place and inattentive in class due to fear or resentment for the teacher. Eventually such learners tended to abscond from school and perform poorly in the end.

The World Bank (2004: 101) stipulated that teachers are the custodians of the teaching and learning; hence, they should take time to learn how their learners learn best and take keen interest in them. The literature revealed that achieving quality education can easily be attained

when the teacher places the learner at the centre of their teaching plan. Therefore the teacher must have the learner at heart, plan adequately every time, report for work on time, be resourceful and innovative as well as avoiding absconding classes if learners are to have better results.

2.3.5 Socio-economic status of the family

Zambia is generally a low income country. Very few families meet human basic needs. This affects learners from such families. Often the learner's school attendance depends on the income of the family. Woessmann (2004: 19) reiterated that cost is a factor that contributes to a learner's failure to achieve quality and access quality formal education and in a variety of situations the school going children from low income-earning homes have to work for their livelihoods. In Zambia, children would rather go to market places or streets to sell so that they supplement the family's income rather than attend school. This trend has contributed negatively to academic performance of learners who find themselves in such situations because they miss school most of the time, arrive late at school when lessons have already begun and have less or no time to do homework.

According to studies carried out in Sub-Saharan Africa, children coming from larger households are less likely to drop out of school (Graetz, 1995: 25). This could either be attributed to the fact that the other household members seem to substitute for child labour so that the child can go to school or contribute part of their earnings to enable the younger members of the household pay school fees. However, children or young adults in smaller households are more likely to carry out household chores and thereby be over-worked. The resultant scenario is that of late-reporting for classes, too tired to concentrate in class and lack of enough time to do homework or study at home (Pridmore, 2007: 21).

Furthermore, socio-economic factor that is more likely to affect a learner's academic performance is the parents' educational background. Studies have shown that the children of more educated parents are more likely to perform well and progress further in school than children of less educated parents. Therefore pupils from developing countries are unlikely to progress further in their education because of high illiteracy levels among the adult population as

illiterate parents are less likely to encourage their children to work hard at school (Graetz, 1995: 28).

2.3.6 School fees

The social economic status of most children in Zambia is low, this negatively affect their payments of school fees. Although there has been enormous growth in the number of pupils to be reached through OLC, the capacity to sustain immediate and rapid growth of the program has had challenges (MoE, 2011: 2). The teachers of OLC are paid from the money pupils pay as school fees. However, due to poor social economic status of these pupils, some pupils are unable to make payments on time if not failing to pay anything at all. This negatively affects teacher's allowances. When allowances are not up to date, teachers are demotivated. As such there work input reduces; this in turn contributes to poor pupil performance in national examinations (Berk, 1997: 19-20).

Academic performance of OLC in national examinations has been poor as evidenced from 2010 to 2016 results analysis for different selected schools in Kafue District. Therefore it is paramount in this study to assess the factors contributing to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.

2.4 Knowledge gap

Various issues regarding pupils' academic performance have been explored in the literature reviewed. The reviewed literature has indicated that the issue of pupils' academic performance in final school leaving examinations is not a new experience in Zambia and the world in general. Such factors as the roles of teachers, physical facilities, distance to school, social economic status, over enrolment, teaching and learning materials, and time table are identified as among the appealing factors to pupils' academic performance.

However, none of the reviewed literature explains how these factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District. Various efforts have been taken by various stakeholders in addressing the problems facing pupils in these secondary schools but the

examination results of learners from OLC are still poor in the selected secondary schools of Kafue District. This has consequently created a need to conduct a research in the area in order to explore how the factors contributing to poor academic performance of OLC enhance learner's poor academic performance in the district. Therefore, there is need to study the performance trend to establish the 'what' and 'how' aspects of the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in the selected secondary schools of Kafue District in order to find possible future solutions to the problem.

2.5 Chapter summary

The chapter reviewed literature on Global, African and Zambian contexts. It brought out a number of issues which gave evidence that from its inception OLC formally known as APU in some sections of society in Zambia played an important role in growing the number of children in the secondary school age group acquire secondary school education world over and Zambia in particular. The chapter showed although not all that had been written about factors that contributes to academic performance of learners in final school leaving examinations.

From Global context, the chapter reviewed various factors that contribute to academic performance of learners in secondary schools in both developed and developing countries. As seen from the reviewed literature, the factors can either influence positive or negative academic performance among learners. Among the prominent factors reviewed are school-related factors that include unqualified and poorly trained teachers, inadequate facilities, and dilapidated instructional materials. Non-school factors include poverty, low educational attainment and illiteracy of parents and poor health and nutrition.

The African context started by reviewing the expenditure on education in Sub-Saharan Africa. It was evident here that the governments of Sub-Saharan Africa spent very little resources on education as compared to the educational needs and to their counterparts, the developed countries. For instance, Sub-Saharan African Governments in particular, spent only 2.4% of the world public education resources, while the education budget of a single country like France, Italy or the UK spends far beyond educational spending across the entire Sub-Saharan African region. The little expenditure on education result into factors that lead to poor academic performance, factors such as unqualified and poorly trained teachers, inadequate facilities, and

dilapidated instructional materials are among the long list reviewed. The African context further brings out factors such as hostile environment, civil wars and political instability, parents' educational level, parents' marital status and school climate as among factors that contribute to academic performance of learners.

Having reviewed the African context, the chapter shifted its review to the Zambian context where various factors were pointed out. Notably among the factors contributing to learner performance in Zambia were inadequate funding, resulting into lack of enough textbooks and other teaching and learning materials, poor infrastructure, distance to school, over-enrolment, and teacher-related factors such as absenteeism, lack of enough supervision, non-giving of homework as well as the socio-economic status of the family the learner comes from.

Finally, the chapter established the knowledge gap from the reviewed literature, 'none of the authorities explains how these factors contribute to poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.'

The next chapter focuses on the methodological approaches to the study. Special attention will be granted to description of the methods or approaches used in the study and justification for their usage in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

The previous chapter reviewed the literature of the study. The literature reviewed the global, African and Zambian contexts of factors that contribute to academic performance of learners in different situations. In this chapter the researcher discussed the methodology of the study. The researcher described the research design and the methods of data collection that was used in the study. The researcher further discussed research instruments that were used in the study, and finally, discussed data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research design

According to Hambulo (2016: 29-30) in his study, Catholic Secondary Education and Identity Reformation in Zambia's Southern Province, research design is a plan on how a study will be conducted. It can also be referred to as a detailed outline of how an investigation will take place. It provides a series of sign posts to keep one in the right direction. A research design specifies conditions and optimum research procedures to be followed when conducting a research study (Msabila and Nalaila, 2013).

The study was conducted using qualitative approach embedded in the case study design; this is because the design is suitable to give the state of affairs as they exist. The research design was arrived at because it would assist the researcher to establish facts that would result in proving knowledge about a particular problem and subsequently provide solutions.

3.2 Population

Msabila and Nalaila (2013) define population as a complete set of elements (persons or objects) that possess some common characteristics defined by the sampling criteria established by the researcher. The target population for this study comprised the head teachers, OLC coordinators, career and guidance teachers, OLC teachers, and pupils from OLC in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.

3.3 Sample size and sampling procedures

A sample is defined as a subset of the population that is selected for a particular study (Best and Khan, 2004). The sample or the target population is a representative of the main population from the group under discussion. A sample may as well lay down the number of items to be included in the sample. For instance, the sample size or the number of target population (Kothari and Garg, 2014).

Patton (2009:128) defines a sampling procedure as a definite plan for obtaining a sample from a given population. It refers to the technique or the procedure the researcher would adopt in selecting items for the sample.

This study targeted a total of fifty-two (52) people from four (4) secondary schools that have OLC. This comprised four (4) head teachers, four (4) career and guidance teachers, four (4) OLC co-ordinators, four (4) teachers teaching OLC and six (6) from OLC in each of the selected secondary schools in the district.

3.4 Research instruments

Interviews were used in collecting data in this study. Interviews are a common method of data collection in any qualitative study. This study used semi-structured and focus group interviews to collect data. Best and Kahn (1993:201) define an interview as the meeting in which a researcher asks somebody questions in order to find out his or her views. According to Kothari (2004) interview is a method of collecting data which involves presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral-verbal responses through personal interviews and telephone interviews. Interviews allows a researcher to ask the question, “Why?”. It is argued that the interview enables a researcher to explore some topics in depth and discover the reasons and motivations which make the participants act in a certain way. Hence, interview is systematic way of talking and listening to people.

Rationale for selecting interview method was based on the potential the method has to help the researcher obtain more information and in greater depth, through probing beyond the predetermined questions. Semi structured interview was selected because unlike the structured interview, the researcher is free to ask additional detailed questions that can explore more deeply

into the participants deep inner feelings, that means a researcher does not have to stick to the interview guide only. Therefore the researcher used personal interviews in collecting data from the administrators, career and guidance teachers, OLC coordinators, OLC teachers and pupils from OLC.

The objective of focused group discussion was to get high-quality data in a social context where people could consider their own views in the context of the views of others, and where new ideas and perspectives could be introduced. Powell, et al. (1996) define a focused group as a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience about the topic which is the subject of the research. Unlike the individual interviews, which aim to obtain individual attitudes, beliefs and feelings, focus groups interviews (discussion) bring out a variety of views and emotional processes within a group context.

The focus group interview enables the researcher to gain a larger amount of information in a shorter period of time, through use of an interview guide by a researcher. In this sense focus groups discussion are not natural but organized events. The present study used focus group discussion method for six (6) OLC students in each selected schools to explore their views on factors that influence poor examination performance in grade 12 final school leaving examinations.

The interviews were administered by the researcher; time and place were depending on the suitability for the participants (Best and Kahn, 1993:201).

3.5 Study area

This study was conducted at selected secondary schools in Kafue District of Lusaka province, Zambia. The district has many schools that have OLC. The district was selected because poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in the past three years is evident in selected secondary schools of the district. The district has schools that have the required target population as the high demand of education in the district make most schools enroll pupils in OLC. Therefore, the researcher was able to get required data related to factors that contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of the district.

3.6 Method of data analysis

The data that was collected in this research was analysed, presented and then interpreted using qualitative methods of data analysis. Methods are approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction (Cohen and Manion, 1994:38). Specifically qualitative thematic analysis was used in the study. Thematic data analysis is used when interpreting responses to open-ended questions, histories or conversations. As data is interpreted, particular themes are identified (Patton, 2009:128). Such themes are related to primary concerns or objectives of this entire study.

3.7 Limitation of the study

In this study information was obtained and generally social factors did not limit implementation of the study except information through tape recording where one teacher refused to be taped while being interviewed. Nevertheless the researcher took notes all along the interview. Due to many responsibilities among school heads, it was difficult to get them for interview. This meant visiting the schools more frequently than expected; which extended the researcher's timetable for accomplishing the field exercise. The target sample of teachers was achieved but one teacher in one school was too busy to give the researcher enough time to interview him. Time of the study was estimated to start in April, 2017 until end of July, 2017. However due to residential school and assignments for the last semester, data collection was only done in August, 2017. Data processing, analysis and report writing started during the third week of August, 2017 and ended during the last week of October, 2017.

3.8 Data analysis plan

3.8.1 Qualitative data analysis

Bogdan and Birklen (1982) define qualitative data analysis as working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others. Also, Marshall and Rossman (2006) in Hambulo (2016) describe it as a process of data reduction and interpretation. Data reduction means that the reams of collected data are brought into manageable chunks and interpretation brings meaning and insight to the words and acts of the participants in the study.

Much of the data reduction process occurs through segmenting and coding the data in a systematic way.

In this study data were analyzed as follows: Firstly, all recorded interview responses were dated, copied out and labeled according to when (days) it was collected. The written responses were read for grammar corrections. Secondly, the raw data were sorted by categories and research questions used as guide to generate a framework for the categories. Words, phrases or events that appeared to be similar were grouped into the same category. These categories were gradually modified or replaced during the subsequent stages of analysis that followed (Marshall and Rossman, 2006).

Thirdly, re-examination of the categories identified to determine how they are linked. The discrete categories identified were compared and combined in new ways as the researcher begun to assemble the big picture. Analyses of the themes were done strictly according to the issues pinpointed in the literature review and the theoretical framework. At this stage, large amount of unorganized data were reduced into a manageable and analytical meaningful body of data. Miles and Huberman (1994) in Hambulo (2016) argue that data reduction is logical part of data analysis in qualitative research because processing huge amount of data is difficult and time consuming.

3.9 Validity and reliability of data

Validity and reliability of data depends on the instruments used in the research (Kothari, 2004). Validity is the extent to which an instrument measures what is intended. In this case, findings must accurately describe the phenomena being researched and must ensure that the elements of the main issue to be covered in the research are a fair representation of the wider issue under investigation. In order to ensure validity of the data collected and reliability of research instruments, a study was conducted at 4 different selected secondary schools with OLC in Kafue District. Reliability of data was observed through triangulation method of data collection (one to one semi structured interviews and focus group discussions). In order to facilitate understanding between the research and participants, the research instruments were prepared in language that would be easily understood to respondents (Best and Kahn, 2006).

3.10 Ethical considerations

Ethical concerns were very important component to this social research. Cohen, et' al (2000, 219) holds that; ethical concerns encountered in educational research, in a particular study could be extremely complex and delicate and could frequently place researchers in a moral predicament which would appear quite irresolvable.

When conducting research, there were ethical issues considered. These were aimed at protecting those involved in the research some of whom are not able to represent themselves in the event that, they are misrepresented. This was particularly very important for this study since it was dealing with schools as organisations which had both local and national reputation and aspired to maintain their integrity in the dispensation of quality results in the education circles.

The ethical concerns that were taken into consideration in this study included: Confidentiality, all data that was collected during the study was kept strictly confidential and was not used for purposes other than the intended one; Consent, consent was sought from the respondents, head teachers; and ensured that participants participated voluntarily.

The researcher also maintained an open and honest approach and ensured that names of the respondents involved were protected to the end.

3.11 Chapter summary

It was stated at the onset of this chapter that the title of the current research is 'An Investigation of the Poor Academic Performance of Grade 12 Learners from OLC in Final School Leaving Examinations in Selected Secondary Schools of Kafue District'. In its endeavor to investigate the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District, the study had to consider the research design. This is because as indicated in the chapter, there is need for the researcher to devise a plan or strategy for any research or study owing to the various things a researcher needs to consider before embarking on research.

Among the various aspects that a researcher needs to consider in a research design are things such as: the underlying philosophical assumptions of the study, selection of respondents, data gathering techniques, data analysis and others.

Data collection was also granted attention, specifically pointing out what it is and the instruments employed in the study. Here, attention was given to the qualitative instruments or techniques used in the study, the interviews and focus group interviews/discussions. Limitation of the study, validity and reliability of the study were also given attention

The last aspect discussed in the chapter was the ethical considerations employed by the researcher in the study. A number of these were raised in the chapter and all of them were meant to ensure that the current study complied with acceptable research standards.

The next chapter will focus on the research findings. The chapter will specifically address the issue of the factors and how they contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.0 Overview

In the previous chapter, attention was given to the research design. This is owing to the inevitable need of every researcher to devise a plan before embarking on any research project. It was stressed that a plan or strategy for any research project was important because of the various aspects a researcher ought to consider before embarking on research such as; the underlying thoughtful assumptions of the study, selection of respondents, data gathering techniques, data analysis and others.

This chapter presents the findings of the study obtained through the utilization of qualitative data collection techniques namely; semi-structured interviews and focus-group interviews. The presentation of the findings are done to develop the understanding on the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools in Kafue District. Also forming a major part of the presentation the findings of the study is the utilization of ‘social capital’ theory because of its grounding in the power of social networks to enhance either positive or negative outcomes in the lives of people and social institutions (Giddens, 1984) in Hambulo (2016). Categorized under social institutions, OLC are among social aspects whose social dynamics can be presented, analysed, interpreted and discussed using social capital theory.

Data emanated from five (5) types of participants, which included twenty four (24) learners from OLC, sixteen (16) OLC teachers, four (4) OLC coordinators, four (4) head teachers and four (4) career and guidance teachers.

In order to enhance a logical presentation of research findings, this chapter was divided into two (2) parts. The first part was a demographic profile of the research participants/respondents. The second part was on findings from semi-structured interviews held with four (4) headteachers, sixteen (16) OLC teachers, four (4) OLC coordinators, four (4) career and guidance teachers. The second part comprised also findings derived from focus group interviews/discussion with twenty-four (24) grade 12 OLC learners from the selected secondary schools in Kafue District.

4.1 Demographic profile of the research participants/respondents

The researcher needed to ensure that all the research participants were the most appropriate people to be involved in the study. One way of doing this was to ensure that the research participants had sufficient information with OLC in selected secondary schools of Kafue District, hence the selection was purposive. Only participants well versed with information on OLC were selected as they were appropriate to provide informed answers and responses to the research questions. It is also important to note that the researcher also ensured a gender balance of the participants involved in the study. Therefore, the participant's adequacy of information about OLC was central in the selection of the most appropriate persons to involve in the study as research participants.

The data for the study were collected from a total of thirty-two (32) interviews and fifty-two (52) participants well versed in OLC schooling in selected secondary schools of Kafue District. Some interviews were semi structured open-ended interviews and others were focus group interviews. The semi structured open-ended interviews were conducted with the following research participants: four (4) secondary school head teachers (HT), sixteen (16) OLC teachers (TR), four (4) career and guidance teachers (CG) and four (4) coordinators (CD) from the selected secondary schools with OLC in the district. The focus group interviews/discussions (FG) were conducted with the twenty-four (24) grade twelve (12) pupils from OLC in the selected secondary schools of Kafue District. The interviews were conducted at four (4) different selected secondary schools of Kafue District. All participants in both semi structured interviews and focus group interviews/discussions were selected on the basis of being well versed in OLC owing to their experience with such kind of educational provision in the district as well as their suitability for the provision of informed data in line with the research questions.

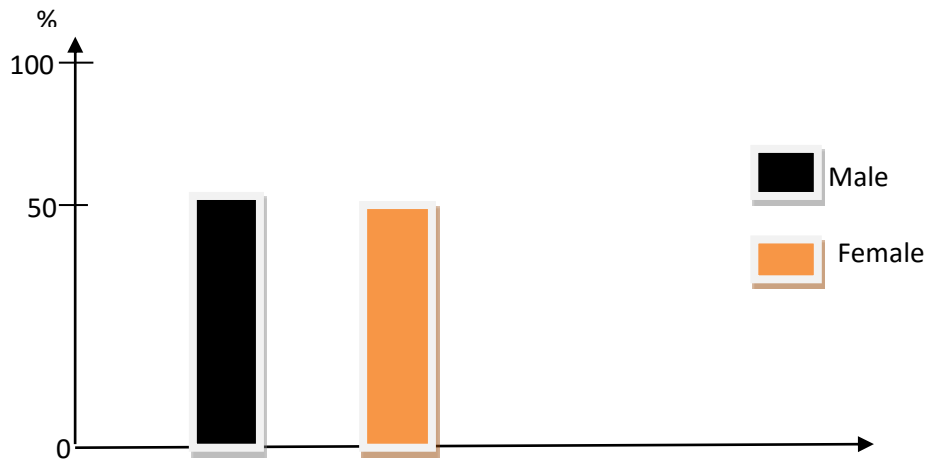
Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographics	Males		Females		Total no of Respondents	Total percentage
	No	%	No	%		%
Teachers	8	50	8	50	16	100
Pupils (PP)	12	50	12	50	24	100
Head teachers (HT)	3	75	1	25	4	100
Coordinators (CD)	2	50	2	50	4	100
Career & Guidance (CG)	1	25	3	75	4	100
Total	26		26		52	

Source: Field Data (2017).

From Table 1, 8 (50%) respondents were male academic teaching staff (TR) while 8 (50%) respondents were female academic teaching staff (TR). On the side of the student respondents, there were 12 (50%) of male student (PP) respondents and 12 (50%) female student (PP) respondents. There were 3 (75%) male head teachers (HT) and only 1 (25%) female head teacher (HT), 2 (50%) male coordinators (CD) and 2 (50%) female coordinators (CD). There were also 3 (75%) female career and guidance teachers (CG) and 1 (25%) male career and guidance teacher (CG). This is totaling to 52 respondents, the above data clearly shows that there were equal male and female respondents during the interviews. This information is graphically represented below.

Bar Chart 4.1: Graphical representation on the demographics



Source: Field Data (2017)

This chapter presents the findings that originated from the participants above. The findings were presented according to the themes derived from four research objectives. Data presentation was selective. It was not possible to present all the data. Stake (1995) in Rwegelera's (2010), commented that choice is inevitable although many researchers would like to tell the whole story. According to this study, choice and selection was made as well as decision on how much and on what to tell others according to the study purpose.

This chapter utilizes vital aspects from the data collection instruments employed in the study for the sake of reporting the findings of the study. These vital aspects are; selected summarized narratives and quotes from the semi-structured interviews. In addition to the above are some focus group interview scripts. For the sake of clarity and specification of the sources of data, this chapter uses the following symbols: HT 1-4 (Headteachers), TR 1-4 (OLC Teachers), CD 1-4 (OLC coordinators), CG 1-4 (Career and guidance teacher) and FG 1a-6a, 1b-6b, 1c-6c, 1d-6d (Focus Groups with grade 12 OLC learners 1a,b,c,d-4a,b,c,d). Note: As a research ethical concern, for the sake of anonymity of respondents in the study, it was not stated who these symbols represented. Table 2 overleaf shows symbols used in this chapter for all sources of data.

Table 2: Symbols used for the sources of data

SYMBOL	MEANING
HT 1-4	School head teacher
CD 1-4	OLC coordinator
CG 1-4	Career and Guidance Teacher
TR 1a-4a 1b-4b 1c-4c 1d-4d	OLC teacher a: first school b: second school c: third school d: fourth school
FG 1-4	Focus Group: school 1-4

Source: Field data (2017)

It is important to note that each one of the following respondents HT 1-4, CD 1-4, CG 1-4, came from the four target secondary schools in Kafue District. Respondents FG 1-4 consisted of only grade twelve (12) learners from OLC in selected secondary school in Kafue District. 50% of the participants were female while 50% were male.

As already alluded to in the previous paragraph, names of the participants and secondary schools visited are not mentioned due to confidentiality and research ethics. Interviews were tape recorded and also note books were used. Data was thematically sorted according to specific objectives of this study. The themes that follow will focus on presentation of findings on how identified factors contribute to poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.

Having provided the demographics of the research participants, the following part focuses on the presentation of research findings from semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews/discussions.

4.2 Presentation of research findings

4.2.1 Presentation of research findings from semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews/discussions

The researcher presents and analyses research findings in this section. These are findings originating from the semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews/discussions conducted with the fifty-two (52) participants of the study. The findings of the study are presented in line with the objectives as main themes and sub-themes are emerging from the data. The sub-themes are meant to illustrate the main-themes of the research findings.

4.2.1.1 Factors contributing to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC

When asked to state factors if any that contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District, most participants (HT-1, TR-2) pointed out that OLC is not given the attention it deserves in the selected secondary schools of Kafue District. In other words, the participants pointed out the factors contributing to the weak academic achievement of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District. Participants (CD 1-4) attributed the undesired results to among other reasons, the low discipline levels of learners from OLC, the inadequate teaching and learning materials. The following are verbatim quotations from the responses of the participants to support the findings above.

Participant HT 1: *Since the time of APU to the current OLC, the issue of indiscipline has been a challenge with OLC. Learners stay away from school without a good cause, some report late for school, and others sneak out before knocking off time (interviewed, 9th August, 2017).*

Participants TR 2: *Generally secondary schools have inadequate teaching and learning materials. Where a few materials such as text books are available, preference is given to pupils in morning classes who seem to be performing better than pupils in the OLC (interviewed, 9th August, 2017).*

Participant CD 4: *There are various factors that contribute to poor academic performance of learners from OLC at this school; the most prominent ones are absenteeism, poor*

communication skills, inadequate teaching/learning resources, and inadequate time for both the learners and the teachers to complete the syllabus. These factors and many others that I might have been left out have serious detrimental effect on learner performance in grade 12 final school leaving examinations (interviewed, 10th August, 2017).

Participant CG 2: There is over enrolment in OLC which makes teaching and learning difficult. Moreover the school has inadequate text books, no library facilities and has inadequate classrooms for learners to study from.

Information on performance trend was also provided by the career and guidance teachers from the four (4) interviewed schools as shown in the table below.

Table 3: Performance trend of learners from OLC in grade 12 final school leaving examinations

School	Year	No. of Candidates Sat	Divisions Candidates Passed									Pass Percentage	Fail %
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1 - 8	9
Kafue day secondary	2015	288	4	3	8	11	12	21	69	90	70	75.7	24.3
	2016	296	3	2	8	10	15	31	87	101	95	68.9	32.1
Naboye secondary	2015	347	6	5	10	10	12	32	85	83	102	70.6	29.4
	2016	326	5	4	12	21	14	48	116	100	96	70.6	29.4
Nakatete Secondary	2016	76	4	3	5	5	4	8	16	14	17	77.6	22.4
Shikoswe secondary	2016	81	5	4	5	6	6	10	12	20	17	79.0	21.0

Source: Field Data (2017)

Table 3 gives a summary of the academic performance trends of Grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in two consecutive years, 2015 and 2016. It classifies the four secondary schools into nine scoring ranks namely division one to nine. The students' scores of Kafue Day secondary schools shows that; out of 288 OLC candidates who sat for grade 12 final school leaving examinations for the year 2015, 218 candidates passed representing 75.7% and 70 candidates failed representing 24.3%. However, even if the pass rate was 75.7%, it is worth noting that many of the candidates obtained divisions 7 and 8 which are not good grades. The

trend continued in 2016 when there were 296 candidates who sat for the final school leaving examinations out of which 201 candidates passed representing 67.9%, 95 failed representing 32.1%, again the majority obtained divisions 7 and 8.

Naboye Secondary School had 347 OLC candidates in 2015, 245 candidates passed, representing 70.6% the majority who were in divisions 8 and 9. 102 candidates failed, representing 29.4%. In 2016, the school had a similar pattern where 326 candidates sat for examinations, 230 candidates passed, representing 70.6%, majority of which obtained divisions 7 and 8. 96 candidates failed, representing 29.4%.

Nakatete Secondary School had its first OLC grade 12 final school leaving examinations in 2016. The school had 76 candidates who sat for the examinations of which 59 candidates passed, representing 77.6%. 17 candidates completely failed the examinations, representing 22.4%. Similarly, Shikoswe Secondary School had its first OLC grade 12 final school leaving examinations in 2016. 64 candidates passed the examinations, representing 79.0%. 17 candidates completely failed the examinations, representing 21.0%. The trend was the same with other selected schools where the majority obtained divisions 7 and 8.

4.2.1.2 Learner-based factors contributing to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC

The researcher deemed it necessary for the purposes of the study, to bring out participants' views on whether there are learner-based factors and how they contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.

This was meant to confirm the view that learners are part to problem in their poor academic performance. This was also meant to find out from the participants, what they felt was the reason certain factors contribute to the poor academic performance among learners from OLC in the selected secondary schools of Kafue District. Participants that included head teachers, OLC teachers, career and guidance teachers, OLC coordinators and learners themselves pointed out that learners contribute also to the poor performance. Therefore, regarding the matter at hand, various sub-themes emerged from the participants' views.

4.2.1.2.1 High levels of indiscipline among learners from OLC

When asked by the researcher to provide an explanation whether OLC in the selected secondary schools in Kafue District experience challenges which have led to the poor academic performance of learners from OLC, participants (HT1-4, TR 1a-4a, CD 1-4) pointed out that the current high levels of indiscipline in OLC in selected secondary schools contributed to the poor academic performance of learners from OLC in grade 12 final school leaving examinations. According to the participants, because of the ever increasing levels of indiscipline in OLC, the learners' academic achievement levels have been poor. In relation to the aforementioned, participants also raised the consequences of increased levels of indiscipline in OLC experienced by their learners such as teenage pregnancies (females), dagger smoking and beer drinking which together are perceived as hindrances to academic achievement on the part of the learners. The following are participants' responses supporting these findings.

Participant HT 1: *Indiscipline has increased at this school to alarming levels among us the pupils because it is even causing many pupils to perform poorly in their school work and grade 12 final school leaving examinations (interviewed, 7th August, 2017).*

Participant TR 2a: *Poor discipline has caused a lot of bad things to the pupils at this school such as poor academic performance and sometimes even dropping out of school because of many things related to poor discipline (interviewed, 9th August, 2017).*

Participant CD 4: *High indiscipline levels make learners decide when to do school work or when not. The behaviour makes it difficult for teachers to teach them. Female teachers with short temper sometimes leave the classes in the midst of the lesson because of the conduct of the learners; this affects the learning process (interviewed, 9th August, 2017).*

4.2.1.2.2 Failure by learners to understand the language of instruction

One of the outcomes of the participants' endeavour to clarify their position that learners from OLC in selected secondary schools in Kafue District experience challenges leading to their poor academic performance in grade 12 final school leaving examinations they have been experiencing over the years is that most learners in OLC lack adequate understanding of the language of instruction, English. The removal of English as one of the requirements for passing

to grade 10 has a detrimental effect on learner performance. This contemporary challenge experienced by OLC in selected secondary schools of Kafue District greatly contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations. This is because English language forms a central part of learning in most schools in Zambia, more so, secondary education.

This existing challenge in OLC in the selected secondary schools in the district is exacerbated by poor English language foundation for learners who learn local language in the lower grades, 1-4. This frustrates the efforts put in by the teaching staff. Regarding the matter at hand, some participants (FG 1-4) pointed out their general lack of proper understanding of the language of instruction as a serious weakness; other participants blamed the lack of adequate understanding of English on government policy that introduces English in grade 5. Participants (TR 1b-4b) held the view that the poor academic performance of learner from OLC can be attributed to the growing numbers of learners who are unable to read, write and speak English. The following are verbatim quotations from the responses of the participants to support these findings.

Participant TR 1b: *Learners do not understand the language of instruction very well because this school does not emphasise on speaking English even when speaking English in school is on the school rules (interviewed, 8th August, 2017).*

Participant FG 4: *At this school, the teachers in most cases use the local language when teaching; this affects us in final examinations because all the subjects are examined in English (interviewed, 11th August, 2017).*

Participant TR 2b: *Some of the pupils are enrolled without English on their grade 9 certificates as per government policy that allows any pupil to cross over as long as they have 6 subjects. The poor language skills by learners from OLC generally impact on their academic work (interviewed, 9th August, 2017).*

Participant TR 3b: *Some pupils have been away from school for one to two years to assimilate the language as such they find it challenging to read, speak and write in English and you know we use English as an official language, so it is used during teaching and all papers are set in English in examinations apart from papers for Zambian language, so it is a serious problem teaching pupils from OLC (interviewed, 9th August, 2017).*

4.2.1.2.3 High levels of learner absenteeism to School

The issue of the high levels of learner absenteeism to school due to various reasons in Kafue District also featured remarkably in the responses provided by the participants in their justification of their stance that OLC in the selected secondary schools experienced challenges which caused poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations over the years. Absenteeism from class can occur for a number of different reasons which include failure to pay school fees, ill health, bereavement, learning deviance and other related activities. This challenge mainly affects academic performance of learners as the learners stay away from school. As a result the learner's levels of academic achievement have not been good. Learner absenteeism is a major problem confronting learners in public examinations worldwide. The following are verbatim quotations from the responses of the participants (CD1-4, HT 1-4) to support these findings.

Participant CD 3: *Absenteeism in any grade alters the academic trail of learners, which can have a prolonged effect on academic performance. Our records show that learners are absent more often in OLC, which has a significant impact on their academic performance in final school leaving examinations (interviewed, 10th August, 2017).*

Participant HT 2: *Absenteeism of pupils to school on whatever reason is one of the major challenges experienced by OLC, the vice negatively affect the flow of teaching and learning (interviewed, 10th August, 2017).*

4.2.1.2.4 Distance to and from school

The issue of distance to and from school featured prominently in the responses provided by the participants (FG1-4) in their justification of their position on poor academic performance of learners from OLC in the selected secondary schools experienced challenges which caused poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations over the years. Participants pointed out that distance covered by learners have a negative effect on learner performance. OLC pupils who mostly learn in the afternoon are not given priority for transport money by their parents as it is assumed they have enough time to walk to school. The following are verbatim quotations from the responses of the participants to support these findings.

Participant FG 2 : *Some of us cover long distances to and from school. Long distances make us tired especially some of us who walk to and from school. Sometimes we have to start off early if we are not given domestic work. It is bad in hot dry season. We get so tired that we lose concentration in class. Tiredness also contributes to our inconsistency in attending classes. This generally affects our class performance and this could affect our grade 12 final school examination results (interviewed, 10th August, 2017).*

Participant FG 4: *OLC pupils are just playful, some are well supported by their guardians in transport, school fees, and other school requirements, but they would rather walk, use the transport money for other things. This behaviour affects these pupils in their school work hence affecting their final school leaving examinations (interviewed, 11th August, 2017).*

4.2.1.3 School-based factors contributing to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC

For the purposes of this study, the researcher deemed it necessary to extract the views of the participants on school-based factors contributing to the poor academic performance of grade 12 OLC learners in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District. This was meant to shed light on how certain challenges caused poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations over the years. In line with this aspect, there are various sub-themes that have emerged from the data obtained from the participants which reflect the research objective.

4.2.1.3.1 Over enrolment in OLC

Revelations on over enrolment was prominent during the interview. The researcher thus saw it necessary to get views from participants on how over enrolment contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District following the alarming figures of enrolment experience in these schools. Participants (HT1-4, CD1-4) pointed out that over enrolment as one of the major existing challenges experienced by OLC in selected secondary schools in the district has negative effect on learner performance. They stated that the increase in the number of learners tremendously increased class sizes making them very large to teach effectively. Regarding the matter at hand, two participants emphasised that from the usual acceptable forty-five (45)

learners per class, OLC has instead an average of seventy (70) learners per class and in worse situations class enrolments are at eighty (80) and beyond. The participants also stated large classes in OLC increased teacher-learner ratios in class making it very difficult for teachers to give proper attention to each learner during the instructional process thereby further leading to poor academic performance among learners from OLC. The following are participant responses supporting the findings above.

Participant HT 3: *In terms of one of the existing challenges experienced by OLC at this secondary school, I can mention the issue of over-enrolment because the demand for secondary education in the district has doubled if not tripled over the years in both regular and OLC. It is very difficult for the schools to avoid admitting the very pupils they are meant to serve especially after 2011 when the government through the MoE directed schools to admit all learners in OLC with a full grade 9 certificate as a result, our classes are much larger than they are supposed to in an ideal situation (interviewed, 9th August, 2017).*

Participant CD 1: *If I think of one of the most pressing existing challenges experienced by OLC in this secondary school, what comes to my mind is over-enrolment because years back, the pupils could be around forty-five (45) in each class but today this has changed a great deal because, usually one finds about seventy to eighty-five or even more pupils in a class, making it hard for teachers to check pupils' work. Many schools consider this as a money spinner, so they can enroll as many they wish (interviewed, 11th August, 2017).*

4.2.1.3.2 Misconception that OLC is financially stable

When participants were asked to clarify their common position that OLC is financially stable in the selected secondary schools of Kafue District as perceived by the community, participants (HT 1-4) pointed out that actually finances are a challenge which caused poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in these schools. Participants stated that the issue of community's misconception that generally OLC are financially stable. Participants (CD1-4) added that generally the community believed that OLC were financially stable and that they did not need support on various aspects pertaining to how they are run or managed.

In their effort to further clarify the matter at hand, participants stated that this community misconception has weakened stakeholder's involvement in OLC educational provision especially

through financial contributions such as school fees which are central to the provision of quality education in the district. Therefore, this misconception has over the years proved to be a major obstacle to the efficient running of OLC mostly negatively affecting the OLC's academic achievement due to lack of adequate finances to purchase the much needed teaching and learning materials and paying allowances to the teaching staff. The following are exactly quotations from the responses of the participants to support the findings above.

Participant HT 2: *There is a wrong understanding by the community out there that in Kafue District, OLC are generally rich academic programmes which do not need financial assistance from external sources, therefore, parents are reluctant to pay school fees for their children (interviewed, 8th August, 2017).*

Participant CD 3: *This OLC program in schools finds it very difficult to collect school fees from parents because parents usually question why the school requests for financial help from them when the OLC program receives funding from the government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) after the government's pronouncement that it had taken over the running of OLC (interviewed, 7th August, 2017).*

Participant HT 1: *One challenge faced by this school is the misconception by parents that OLC programs are financially sound rendering them reluctant with regards to their role of paying school fees as important stakeholders of OLC program (interviewed, 8th August, 2017).*

4.2.1.3.3 Inadequate teaching and learning materials

Further probing of participants during interviews on the aspect of clarifying their stance that the selected secondary schools with OLC in Kafue District experienced some challenges leading to poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations revealed more interesting results. Participant (TR 1a-4a) responses revealed that there were inadequate teaching and learning materials in the selected secondary school. This negatively affected the academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in the district. Participants (TR 1b-4b) linked the current challenge at hand to the current inadequate and erratic funding received by these secondary schools from government as well as the difficulty associated with the collection of school-fees from the learners by the schools due to high poverty levels in households in Kafue District. In clarifying the issue at hand,

participants (TR 1c-4c, 1d-4d) further pointed out that the teaching and learning materials in OLC in selected secondary schools of Kafue District were below secondary school educational standards as the inadequacy of teaching and learning materials involved shortages of significant educational materials such as lab chemicals and equipment, text books and desks that enhance performance. The following are participants' responses supporting these findings.

Participants TR 4b: *The teaching and learning materials at this school are below acceptable standards for any level of education because there is a shortage of many important things such as lab chemicals and equipment, text books, charts, desks, and so on. The shortage of these materials affects our academic performance generally in all the subjects (interviewed, 9th August, 2017).*

Participant TR 1d: *OLC is not a school on its own, so whatever resources are available in school are used by both the regular classes and OLC. I belong to Mathematics Department that has serious shortage of books. The few books that are there are usually used by regular classes making it difficult for OLC to access them. I don't know why regular classes are given preference when it comes to books. It's like this is a common trend in our school. But teaching/learning materials including pieces of chalk, board rulers, and wall charts are available in our school and adequately used in both sessions (interviewed, 9th August, 2017).*

Participant TR 4c: *Here at this school I would say there is nothing! Nothing on business studies! We have no books and other resources to enable us teach Business Studies subjects, especially Principles of Accounts, only two teacher's hand books are available. I don't know may be it is because the school was just recently upgraded to a secondary school. The school has not ventured much in the purchase of books because I have heard other teachers teaching optional subjects from other departments also complain, especially those in Agricultural Science and Additional Mathematics. It's like the concentration is on infrastructure development (interviewed, 9th August, 2017).*

Participant TR 2b: *The school has received a lot of books by MK Publishers from the MoE although they are not in conformity with the new curriculum. So teachers rarely use them, in short, we have some books but there are not the right books we need in school (interviewed, 9th August, 2017)*

Participant TR 4c: *Infrastructure is a problem in our school. You might want to meet pupils from OLC in the morning to cover up some work and even do some remedial work, but classrooms and desks are usually occupied by morning classes. Further, there is over enrolment in these classes to organize remedial work in small rooms like offices. The school also has no library for the OLC pupils to come early and do their work; so it is quite a challenge to improve learner performance (interviewed, 9th August, 2017)*

4.2.1.3.4 OLC monitoring

In explaining their position on the monitoring of OLC in the selected secondary schools of Kafue District, participants (HT 1a-4a) stated that the failure by some administrators to implement the policies that govern the running of OLC in Kafue District was one of the reasons for the poor academic performance of learners from OLC in grade 12 final school leaving examinations. It was revealed from the responses of the participants that this contemporary challenge contributed to poor academic performance of learners from OLC. Since administrators such as coordinators in OLC are appointed mainly for the sustenance of OLC programs, they are supposed to monitor the program to enhance academic performance. This is a duty they are obliged to diligently undertake within academic circles on behalf of the MoE.

In providing further details of the matter at hand, a participant (HT 1-4) stated that activities of sports nature in the afternoon sometimes take precedence over those of academic nature hence the poor academic performance of learners from OLC. The other participant (CD 1-4) emphasised that the poor academic performance in the district should be blamed on the failure by both external monitors and local monitors to implement OLC educational policies to enhance academic performance because even when they have the monitoring program, they rarely implement. The following are participants' responses supporting these findings.

Participant TR 4a: *Some things have fallen apart in this school because I think the school administration is not playing its role of ensuring that things are running smoothly in OLC (interviewed, 7th August, 2017).*

Participant CD 2: *Nothing much has changed in the running of OLC from how it used to be when it was APU. I think the OLC administrators are not doing enough to improve the academic*

performance of learners from OLC in their grade 12 final school leaving examinations (interviewed, 8th August, 2017).

Participant CD 4: School standard officers from the Provincial Education Office (PEO) and District Education Board Secretary's Office (DEBS) only came to carry out a special monitoring to establish the implementation of the new education curriculum in 2014. They did not ask about OLC not even monitoring the teaching/learning process for morning classes. Their absence make teachers relax or not doing the right things in class (interviewed, 8th August, 2017).

Participant HT 1: External monitors from both the district and the provincial education offices monitored the school in 2013 but OLC were not monitored. Worse still, on that particular day, the session was disturbed. It was not taught because all the teachers gathered in the staffroom to discuss the findings by the monitors. School monitoring has an impact on learner performance in final school leaving examinations because it provides onsite teacher support, which improves teacher's teaching methods and practices (interviewed, 8th August, 2017).

Participant HT 3: School monitoring has an impact on learner performance. However, it does not only require external monitors to monitor, us here we use internal monitors; this is a team of teachers under the school head's supervision who monitor the teaching/learning process for both regular and OLC. The team monitors actual teaching in classes and the teaching documents. The teachers who are found to be weak are advised accordingly and follow ups are made to ensure proper procedures are adhered to. This in a way improves the performance of our school although OLC has always performed lower than the regular classes. Of course there are other underlying reasons for the discrepancy (interviewed, 8th August, 2017).

4.2.1.3.5 The negative perceptions about OLC

To clarify their position on the negative perception experienced by OLC in selected secondary schools in Kafue District, participants (FG 1-4) held the view that the negative perceptions on OLC as a program in secondary schools by some teachers, parents and learners formed one of the major reasons for the poor academic performance of learners from OLC in grade 12 final school leaving examinations. This is because, owing to this challenge, the OLC have been made weakened by receiving less support from the teachers, parents and learners themselves.

For various reasons attributed to the teachers, parents and the learners, OLC is not so appealing to some people in these secondary schools. Regarding this aspect, participants pointed out that some teachers take OLC so ordinary by considering it as a second class form of schooling merely based on satisfying government demands to take on all learners that make a certificate in grade 9 regardless of the marks obtained. They also added that it is perceived as nothing more than just a source of revenue within the school setting. It was further revealed from the participants' responses that, such a negative perception of the program by some teachers within these selected secondary schools renders the program less motivating to the learners as they always wish to be in regular classes where teachers are more committed. The following are word for word quotations from the responses of the participants to support these findings.

Participants FG 1: *As a program, OLC is not so appealing to us because even our teachers are not so excited or interested to teach us, they look at it as a program for second class learners. They usually encourage us to cross over to regular classes (interviewed, 8th August, 2017).*

Participants FG 2: *Since OLC is not taken seriously by some teachers in the school and even our parents who are our sponsors, as pupils we feel we are just in the program because we had no option since our pass marks were low (interviewed, 9th August, 2017).*

4.2.1.3. 6 Poor financial capacity of OLC

On the researcher's question on financial capacity of OLC, the participants' position was that it is an existing challenge that leads to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations. Participants (HT 1-4) pointed out OLC were in a state of a poor financial capacity. This challenge experienced by OLC negatively affected the learners' academic performance.

OLC programs in schools need a lot of money in order to run efficiently such that without financial resources a lot of things fall apart in the management of these education programs. Most participants held the view that OLC experience a lot of problems related to lack of adequate finances and that it is mostly due to such financial problems that OLC has failed to get the desired performance. Analysis of the responses by some of the participants revealed cognitive interpretations indicating that the poor financial capacity of the schools is responsible for the unfavorable teaching and learning environments in the program enhanced by among other

things, the lack of sufficient classrooms, office space, desks, text-books and allowances for the teaching staff. OLC programs in the selected secondary schools lack the financial capacity as revealed by participants to ensure a sufficient presence of all the educational necessities indicated above within the school settings especially that some are shared with regular classes. The following are verbatim quotations from the responses of the participants to support these findings.

Participant HT 3: *Most existing challenges experienced by OLC in this school are caused by the school's lack of adequate funds to help it meet most of its urgent needs such as adequate desks, buildings, text-books and others (interviewed, 7th August, 2017).*

Participant HT1: *If OLC programs in schools are to perform according to their expectation, both parents and government must step up their financial commitment to these schools by providing the financial obligation in a regular way and increasing them because one of the reasons for most of their problems is lack of sufficient financial resources to enable them achieve their educational goals (interviewed, 8th August, 2017).*

4.2.1.3.7 High levels of teacher and learner absenteeism to ‘Work and School’

The issue of the high levels of teacher and learner absenteeism to ‘work and school’ due to various reasons that include ill health, lacking commitment, school fees on the part of pupils, and many other reasons in Kafue District also featured remarkably in the responses provided by the participants (FG 1-4, HT1-4) in their explanation of their stance that OLC in the selected secondary schools experienced contemporary challenges which caused poor academic performance of learners in grade 12 final school leaving examinations over the years in Kafue District. This challenge mainly affects academic performance of learners as the teachers stay away from their duty of teaching and the learners also stay away from classes. As a result the school’s levels of academic achievement have been low since OLC’s inception in Kafue District. The following are verbatim quotations from the responses of the participants to support these findings.

Participants FG 1: *We are not sure if we are going to complete some of our subject syllabi because some of our teachers are frequently absent from work due to persistent illnesses and even just lacking commitment (interviewed, 8th August, 2017).*

Participant HT 2: *Absenteeism of both teachers and pupils to 'work' and 'school' due to whatever reason is one of the major challenges experienced by this school, the vice negatively affect the flow of teaching and learning (interviewed, 10th August, 2017).*

4.2.1.3.8 High poverty levels in Kafue District

To clarify their position, that OLC in selected secondary schools in Kafue District experience challenges which cause poor academic performance among grade 12 final from OLC in final school leaving examinations, participants (HT1-4) pointed out that one of such challenges is the high poverty levels in Kafue District. Like in the other districts of Zambia, Kafue District is not an exception to high poverty levels and the various problems associated with it. This challenge experienced in selected secondary schools in Kafue District contributes to the poor academic performance of learners from OLC. Regarding the matter at hand, participants stated that due to high poverty levels in the school's surrounding communities in Kafue District, the learners are forced to walk very long distances to school on hungry stomachs. Moreover, participants (FG1-4) also added that due to high poverty levels in their households, often parents were not adequately involved in their children's educational matters in preference for matters concerning the wellbeing of their households especially the aspect of looking for finances and food as they considered such issues much more important than their children's educational matters. In addition, some participants pointed out that they disliked school-fees because usually they struggled to pay them due to high poverty levels in their households. The following are participants' responses supporting these findings.

Participant HT 3: *The high poverty levels in the communities surrounding this school are one of the reasons why our academic achievement levels have been falling in the recent past (interviewed, 9th August, 2017).*

Participants FG 2: *We dislike the time when our school begins collecting school-fees from us because we struggle so much just to find the money to pay and it is so embarrassing to be sent back home to find the money by the school authorities (interviewed, 9th August, 2017).*

4.2.1.3.9 Teachers' lack of commitment to OLC

In clarifying their position that OLC in selected secondary schools in Kafue District had been performing poorly in academic over the years since its inception in 2011, participants (FG1-4) pointed out the teachers' lack of commitment to OLC. This challenge is one of the major contributing factors to the poor levels of academic achievement in OLC. They emphasised that some teachers in these schools are not serious with teaching. In addition, some participants stated that some teachers at their school lacked proper commitment to the work because mostly they were absent from class and when they were available, they did not totally commit to their work of teaching. The following are participants' responses supporting these findings.

Participants FG 1: *Some teachers at this school lack commitment to work; it seems they are just here for the sake of money because teaching is not their calling. They are quick to sign the teaching register but reluctant to teach (interviewed, 8th August, 2017).*

Participants FG 2: *Some of our teachers are not serious with their work at this school because they are absent from work most of the time and when they are there, they do not show commitment to their work because they will not cover the syllabus in good-time and they also take too long to mark our exercise books (interviewed, 9th August, 2017).*

Participants FG 3: *Teachers have an 'I don't care attitude' towards their work at this school. Even when they are in school, they get late to class and in some cases they just send over work for the pupils to do without an explanation (interviewed, 9th August, 2017).*

4.2.1.3.10 Time table

When the researcher asked the participants to clarify why they thought OLC had poor academic performance in selected secondary schools since its inception in 2011. Participants (HT1-4) indicated the table as one of the contemporary challenges they experienced. They highlighted the issue of inadequate time as a contributing factor to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools in Kafue District. Participants pointed out that there was inadequate time for OLC. Classes run from 12 55 to 17 05hours. The participants pointed out that classes have seven (7) periods per day with 35

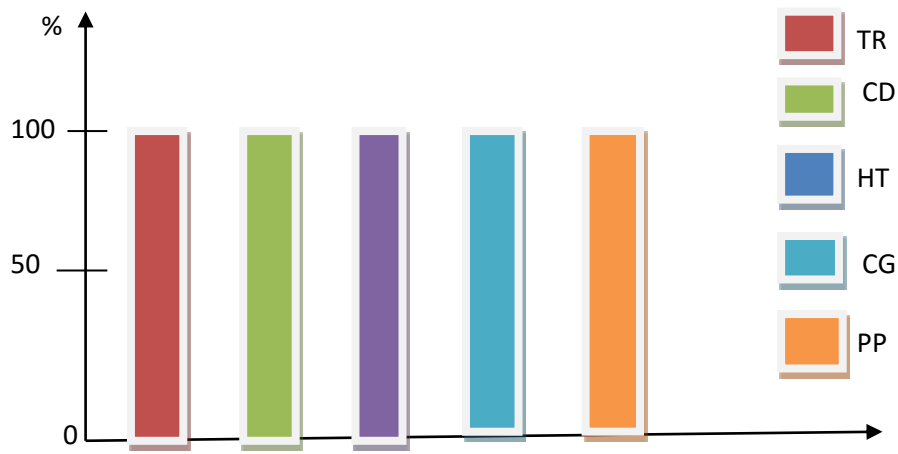
minutes per period. The following are verbatim quotations from the responses of the participants to support these findings.

Participant HT 1: *OLC have less contact time as compared to the education curriculum stipulated standard. For instance, Mathematics has six periods instead of the standard eight periods; social sciences subject like Geography, History, Religious Education and Civic Education have three periods each instead of four periods per week. This is below the curriculum standard to enable teachers/learners complete their syllabi (interviewed, 9th August, 2017).*

Participant TR 4a: *I teach 3 periods of history per week. With the change in the examining pattern in the subject, it has become practically impossible to complete the syllabus more so preparing the learners on examination techniques before they sit for their examinations. Three periods per week is not enough, I need adequate time to complete the syllabus and prepare the learners adequately (interviewed, 9th August, 2017).*

Participant TR 3a: *There is no enough time for OLC, I would like to administer proper homework on learners from OLC the way I do with the morning classes, but time is not enough. Sometimes I do give the pupils homework but time to mark the work is not there, days and weeks sometimes pass without going through pupil's work. This affects my work plan as the pace is so much affected to finish the syllabus. Failure to finish the syllabus results into learners facing challenges during the examinations (interviewed, 9th August, 2017).*

Bar Chart 4.2: Graphical representation on inadequacy of time responses



Source: Field Data (2017)

The bar chart 4.2 gives a representation of OLC time allocation responses as revealed by the participants during the interview. 16 teachers (TR) representing 100% said time is not enough for OLC learners. 4 coordinators (CD) representing 100% of respondents said time is inadequate for OLC. Also 4 head teachers (HT) representing 100% respondents and 24 pupils (PP) representing 100% all said time is inadequate for OLC.

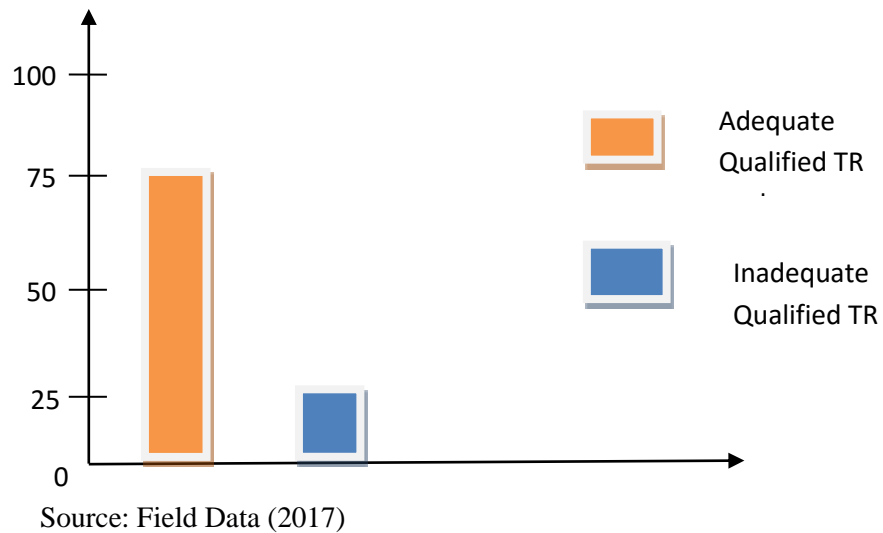
4.2.1.3.11 Teacher qualification

In expounding their position on teacher qualification, participants pointed out that most if not all teachers are qualified to handle OLC in the selected secondary schools of Kafue District. Participants (CD1-4) stated that many of the teachers are degree holders, this is supposed to be a good factor for producing better results in grade 12 among learners from OLC but other factors have negatively affected the performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District. However some teachers are diploma holders pursuing their first degrees. The following are participants' responses supporting these findings.

Participant CD 3: *Most of the teachers handling OLC are degree holders in the respective subjects they teach. However, there are a few who only have diplomas but they are all pursuing further studies (interviewed, 9th August, 2017).*

Participant CD 4: *There are available qualified teachers handling OLC at this school, but the attachment of teaching allowances to the program adversely affects teaching/learning. Teachers take the program as optional, so they can pull out any time, leaving the learners stranded for better money spinning programs. The trend is very common in the third term when payments of school fees are erratic and this is the time when learners especially those in examination classes really need teachers. I would wish the government could seriously come up with a mechanism that would ensure that learners from OLC are well attended to. The loose arrangement in teaching learners from OLC make teachers trade off certain days and periods for other programs that give them more money (interviewed, 9th August, 2017).*

Bar Chart 4.3 : Percentage responses on teacher qualification for OLC



The bar chart 4.3 gives a summary of the responses on availability of teachers teaching OLC as indicated by various respondents during the interviews. 39 out of 52 respondents said there are adequate teachers for OLC representing 75% while 13 said there were inadequate teachers teaching OLC representing 25%.

4.2.1.4 Home-based factors contributing to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC

4.2.1.4.1 Family's economic status

On the researcher's question on family background in line with the support learners receive from their guardians/parents. The participants' position was that it is an existing challenge that leads to

the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations. Participants (FG1-4) pointed out that some families experience hardships a reason that contributed to their children not doing well at grade 9, thus ended up in OLC. The hardships the parents experience affect their children's school attendance, consequently their academic performance as the children fail to pay school fees on time and even meeting other school requirements. This contemporary challenge experienced by some families negatively affected their children's academic performance. The following are verbatim quotations from the responses of the participants to support these findings.

Participant FG 1: *I usually stay away from school because of school fees related issues. My parents are not in formal employment; they have little or no steady income. Priority is usually given to food and clothing when a little money is made in the home. So I usually stay away from school, missing a lot of lessons. This affects my performance as compared to my brother who is in a morning class where they are not sent away as they do with us from OLC (interviewed, 7th August, 2017)*

Participant FG 4: *My parents have low education level and are not in formal employment. So the issue of education is not given the attention it deserves. We do piece works as a family and sometimes is done during school days, so I have to stay away from school. Sadly, the money we make does not even meet my school fees, so am usually chased, resulting into missing classes. This affects my class work and consequently might affect my grade 12 final school leaving examination results (interviewed, 8th August, 2017).*"

4.2.1.4.2 Domestic work

On the question on home responsibilities as a challenge affect the academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District. Participants (FG1-4) pointed out that the assignments they are given by parents/guardians before reporting for school have detrimental effect on their academic performance; they do non-school work at the expense of homework they are given by teachers. This reduces their assimilation on covered topics. The following are verbatim quotations from the responses of the participants to support these findings.

Participant FG 3: *OLC is just a bad program for some of us because we have to do a lot of domestic work in some cases piece work before reporting for classes. This makes us get tired and sometimes reach school late. Imagine you are late, the teacher punishes you; on top of being tired, you lose more time in terms of class work. This happens so often, thus many of us get affected in academic work (interviewed, 7th August, 2017).*

Participant FG 2: *Some of our guardians don't value education, they would rather you remain home looking after young ones instead of going to school. In most cases I have to fend for myself. I buy myself exercise books, pens, and sometimes even pay for my school fees through piece work. This affects my performance in class (interviewed, 7th August, 2017).*

Generally, respondents indicated that parental support has a great bearing on learner performance. Most of the respondents revealed that children who are supported by their parents/guardians are more likely to do better than those that receive little or no support at all. The table below shows analysis as given by the respondents in all the selected schools.

Table 4: Analysis on the influence of parental support on learner performance

Participant	Agree		Do Not Agree		Total No. of Respondents	Total Percentage
	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%		
Head teacher	3	75	1	25	4	100
Coordinators	3	75	1	25	4	100
Career and guidance	4	100	0	0	4	100
Teachers	11	70	5	30	16	100
Total	21		7		28	

Source: Field Data (2017)

From Table 4, 3 out of the four head teachers interviewed said parental support has an influence on learner performance representing 75%. There was only 1 head teacher who said there is no influence, representing 25%. 3 coordinators out of 4 also said parental support is imperative for learner performance, representing 75%. All the 4 career and guidance teachers said parental

support is paramount to learner performance, representing 100% and 11 pupils out of the 16 interviewed said parental support has influence on learner performance, representing 75%.

4.3 Chapter summary

This section presented and analysed findings from semi-structured interviews with four (4) secondary school head teachers, sixteen (16) teachers of OLC, four (4) career and guidance teachers, four (4) OLC coordinators and twenty-four (24) focus group members. A number of themes and their sub-themes emerged from research objectives. All the themes and sub-themes helped to explain the poor academic performance of learners from OLC in selected secondary schools of Kafue District. It was clear from the views of all the fifty-two (52) research participants in the semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews that various contemporary challenges in selected secondary schools in Kafue District have led to poor academic performance of learners from OLC over the years.

The findings of the study showed agreement among research participants that OLC in selected secondary schools had been experiencing poor academic performance in Kafue District since its inception. Different participants expressed the unpleasant performance among learners from OLC in the selected secondary schools of the district.

All the fifty-two (52) participants of the study unanimously agreed that there is poor academic performance among learners from OLC in grade 12 final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools in Kafue District owing to various challenges since OLC's inception in 2011. It was revealed through the findings that such challenges formed part of the reasons why learners from OLC have had poor academic performance in final school leaving examinations in the district. It is vital to point out that the various challenges experienced by OLC in selected secondary schools in the district contributed to their weak academic performance. Challenges experienced by OLC in the selected secondary schools in the district include over enrolment, misconception of stable financial status, inadequate teaching and learning materials in the secondary schools, the failure by the selected secondary school administrators to implement OLC education policy, the negative perceptions on OLC by some teachers, parents and learners, poor financial capacity, lack of sufficient understanding of language of instruction among other

challenges contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.

This section presented the findings of the study from semi-structured interviews and focus-group interviews/discussions. The next section focuses on the discussion of the research findings of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.0 Overview

The previous chapter presented the research findings. It presented findings from semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews/discussions based on learner-based, school-based and home-based factors contributing to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.

This chapter discusses the findings of the study obtained through the utilization of qualitative data collection techniques namely; semi-structured interviews and focus-group discussions. The discussion of findings is done to increase the understanding of the findings presented by participants on the topic, an investigation of the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District. The discussions of the findings follow the themes and sub-themes emerged in the findings.

5.1 Factors contributing to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC

The findings in this study showed that the schools interviewed had the similar performance trend as depicted from table 2. Table 2 has a summary of grade 12 final school leaving examinations academic performance trends for students from OLC in the years, 2015 and 2016. The performance trend seemed to suggest that learners from OLC perform poorly in their grade 12 final school leaving examinations because from all the interviewed selected secondary schools, there is poor quality of results as the majority of the candidates obtained grades 7, 8 and 9. As revealed by the participants, the performance is as a result of combined factors that emanate from learner-based, school-based and home-based factors.

The poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in the selected secondary schools of Kafue District is attributed to learner-based factors such as learner indiscipline, absenteeism, learner's inadequacy in the language of instruction and the distance some learners cover to and from school. The school-based factors include among other factors over enrolments, inadequate teaching and learning resources, poor monitoring, poor financial capacity, absenteeism by teachers and learners, teachers' lack of

commitment. Also home-based factors that dwell much on parental support as it brings out a lot of information on parent's backgrounds and the responsibilities and care learners receive from their parents/guardians in line with school.

5.2 Learner-based factors contributing to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC

5.2.1 High level of learner indiscipline

Learners are at the centre of educational activities in schools, they play an important role in their educational achievements. Participants that included head teachers, OLC teachers, career and guidance teachers, OLC coordinators and learners themselves pointed out that learners contribute greatly to their own performance. Indiscipline among learners from OLC in the selected secondary schools contributed to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations. Consequences of indiscipline such as teenage pregnancies (females), dagger smoking and beer drinking are a hindrance to academic achievement on learners. Indiscipline learners miss lessons which result to poor academic performance.

5.2.2 Language of instruction

Most learners from OLC have a challenge in the language of instruction, English. The inadequacy in this area greatly contributes to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations. This is because English language forms a central part of learning in most schools in Zambia, more so, secondary education. The challenge is exacerbated by poor English language foundation for learners who learn local language in the lower grades, grades 1-4. This frustrates the efforts put in by the teaching staff as this is a serious weakness where some learners cannot read, write and even speak language. Teaching at secondary school is done in English and even the examinations are written in English except for Zambian language. So this is a serious challenge for learners in passing the final school leaving examinations.

Findings on communication skills as per responses from respondents reveal that language of instruction plays an important role on learner performance. The language of instruction at secondary school level in Zambia is English, English language proficiency of learners influence

academic performance among grade 12 learners from OLC in their final school leaving examinations. The research indicated that about 40% of learner respondents were competent in English language while 60% of them were not; this is as per revelation by 100% of teacher respondents. Teacher respondents indicated that incompetence of learners to using English language reduces their efficiency in the academic works.

During the interview on this study one teacher indicated that although broken, English is spoken mainly during class sessions. He clarified by insisting that most of the learners from OLC are selected from the primary schools located in areas with ethnic languages like Chitonga and Chinyanja that are widely spoken in school. This affects language competence among learners in class. Incompetence of English language contributed to learners' poor academic performance because learners are unable to comprehend or understand what they read or learn, thus affecting their academic performance in final school leaving examinations.

It was evident as revealed by teacher respondents that difficulties in language skills make learners from OLC fail to get instructions during final school leaving examinations. Further, learners fail to understand questions to be able to answer questions correctly. For example, in the years 2014 to 2016 final school leaving examinations results, none of the selected secondary schools in the District exceeded 50% quality (grades 1-6) pass rate in OLC as shown in table 1.

This study is in line with that of Komba and Wilson (2012) who argued that one of the factors frequently mentioned as a cause of poor academic performance in examinations is the language of instruction, especially that it is usually a foreign language, that learners are not proficient in. This makes the students face difficulties in learning which lead into poor academic performance. Good competence in English language enhances effective communication with learners and eventually influences positive academic performance among learners.

5.2.3 High levels of learner absenteeism

There are high levels of learner absenteeism from school in OLC due to various reasons in the selected secondary schools of Kafue District. This challenge causes poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations. Absenteeism from class can occur for a number of reasons which include failure to pay school fees, ill health, bereavement,

learning deviance and other related activities. This challenge affects academic performance of learners as the learners stay away from school missing a number of lessons.

Missing school is serious business, and its impact on achievement has been greatly underestimated. 100% respondents stated that absenteeism is very detrimental in the learners' academic performance. From this result, it can strongly be contributed that absenteeism which entails missing of classes results into learners missing lessons and important concepts. It also reduces coherence in understanding and grasping concepts. For example, if a learner misses the topic Matrices in Mathematics, he/she will have challenges in understanding the topics Vectors and Transformation, thus, affecting their general performance in the subject, in turn perform poorly in the subject. Absenteeism also reduces learner to learner and learner to teacher interaction. Staying away from school adversely affect learner's academic performance.

The findings are in line with the study done by Balfanz et al. (2008) who observed that absenteeism harms more than the individual and his/her prospects. High absence rates affect the achievement of the learner overall performance, it slows the learner's rate of receiving instruction, which harms the learner. It is also, in line with Heeyoung (2010) who observed that being absent from class decrease a learner's ability to learn. It is very challenging to succeed if a learner misses too much school work, because it is hard to catch up. Absent learners lose interest in schooling which results in low academic performance.

5.2.4 Distance to and from school

The issue of distance to and from school featured prominently in the responses provided by the participants in their justification of the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District. Long distance covered by some learners has a negative effect on learner performance.

The study findings showed that distance from and to school has implications on academic performance of learners. While the schools under study are found within Kafue town, some learners find school places far away from their residence because of low grade 9 results they obtain. For instance, some children from Kafue Estate where Naboye Secondary School is find school places at Nakatete Secondary School, a distance of about seven kilometers. Long distances make learners tired to concentrate in class. Learners also reach home tired and late to

study, more especially that many of them walk to and from school due to low economic status of their families as revealed during interviews.

5.3 School-based factors contributing to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC

A school as an institution where learning takes place also contributes to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District. Schools have certain challenges that can influence negative learner's academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations. This is explained in the sub-themes below.

5.3.1 Over enrolment

Most classes in OLC are over enrolled. Instead of the usual acceptable forty-five (45) learners per class, OLC have an average of seventy (70) learners per class and in worse situations class enrolments are at eighty (80) and beyond. According to the findings over enrolment contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District. Over enrolment as one of the major existing challenges experienced by OLC in the selected secondary schools in the district has negative effect on learner performance. The large sizes of classes make teaching ineffective. Large classes in OLC increased teacher-learner ratios in class making it very difficult for teachers to give proper attention to each learner during the instructional process thereby further leading to poor academic performance among learners from OLC. Remedial work is not administered and even homework is not given to the learners because of the fears of teachers to have extra huge work. This reduces opportunities for learners to receive individual attention and having extra practice. The result of this is the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.

Study findings from all the respondents apart from one showed that there were over enrolments in OLC in all the schools. A big teacher/pupil ratio of 1: 80 is challenging when teaching especially subjects like mathematics which require exercises, marking and correcting every period. It is very difficult for a teacher to attend to individual needs and conduct remedial work.

Class control is difficult; therefore it is time consuming for the teacher to complete the syllabus, more so completing planned work. This is frustrating to teachers as it derails progress.

Over enrolment affects certain methods of teaching, for example, group work. This limits the teaching methods which is boring to both the teacher and the learner. In addition, marking of learner's work can be strenuous, so learners' work is rarely marked and corrected. Over enrolment also reduces sitting space for learners to write and read comfortably for possible better academic performance.

However, on the contrary, a few respondents stated that over enrolment has an opportunity of having a good number of learners with different ability groups in a class. The variation gives an opportunity to teachers to take advantage of fast learners to help out slow learners so as to increase the teaching/learning process, slow learners benefit from their fast learner counterparts for possible completion of work ahead.

5.3.2 Misconception that OLC is financially stable

The misconception that OLC is financially stable as perceived by the community has a detrimental effect on the academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District. The community's misconception that OLC are financially stable has made the community believe that OLC were financially stable and that they did not need support on whatever aspect pertaining to how they are supposed to be managed.

The community's misconception has weakened their involvement in OLC educational provision especially through financial contributions such as school fees which are central to the provision of quality education in the district. Therefore, this misconception has over the years proved to be a major obstacle to the efficient running of OLC mostly negatively affecting the OLC's academic achievement due to lack of adequate finances to purchase the much needed teaching and learning materials and paying allowances to the teaching staff.

5.3.3 Teaching and learning materials/resources

Teaching and learning materials are important in the teaching and learning process. The selected secondary schools have generally a challenge of inadequate teaching and learning materials/

resources originating from erratic funding received by these secondary schools from government as well as the difficulty associated with the collection of school-fees from the learners by the schools due to high poverty levels in households in Kafue District. This challenge leads to poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools in the district. The teaching and learning materials/resources were below secondary school educational standards to enable the teaching and learning process run smoothly. The schools have shortages of significant educational materials such as lab chemicals and equipment, text books and desks that enhance performance. The few text books available were usually given to the pupils from morning classes. The pupils from OLC have little or nothing to use for practice.

The findings in this study indicated 100% of the target schools have inadequate teaching/learning materials in their schools, a serious factor that contributes to poor academic performance of learners. Surprisingly, in all the schools, it is a common trend that preference to the few available teaching/learning materials is given to the learners from regular (morning) classes.

The results in this study showed that the relationship between availability of teaching/learning materials and poor academic performance is not statistically significant. But, the revelations from the respondents showed that availability of teaching and learning materials for OLC at secondary school level such as text books, mathematics geometrical sets, charts, and models are important for teaching and learning process. Availability of such resources enhances the effectiveness in teaching and learning process in schools. These are basic things that can bring about good academic performance among learners. The opposite happens when there is scarcity of these materials and facilities in schools; the teaching/learning process becomes difficult. Delivery of even simple concepts take long, this derails the completion of the topics and the syllabus in general. Since examinations are set from the syllabus it entails that learners write their examinations ill prepared. This affects the performance of learners in grade 12 final school leaving examinations.

Further, absence of teaching and learning material has made teachers use rote learning instead of making learners understand and recall easily what they see than what they hear. Poor pupil book ratio on the few available books in some schools affects practicing among learners, practice

makes perfect, and therefore if learners don't practice they are likely not to do well in the examinations.

On library facilities, the findings in this study showed that libraries were a great problem in the selected secondary schools. About 75% of respondents indicated that there were no libraries at their schools. Library forms one of the most important educational services. It is an important facility that inculcates in the learners' reading behaviors in order to have a wide knowledge in various subject areas. Learners from the selected schools except one school which also has fewer books in the library have limited resources for consultation, more so, limited access to internet services. Therefore, having Library facilities could help to improve the OLC learning environment and would eventually make them get better results in their final school leaving examinations as learners would be reporting early, study and do their home in these educational conducive facilities to up their performance.

The findings are in line with the study done by Kipkoech (2012) who observed that the availability and quality of textbooks in a secondary school library is an essential factor in teaching and learning process, it is strongly related to OLC learners' academic achievement in the District.

Ola (1990) also observed that secondary school library in whatever form, has replaced the traditional method of 'chalk and talk' in imparting knowledge to students. A well-equipped library is a major facility which enhances good learning and achievement of high educational standards regardless of one's program, whether OLC or regular class. The chief purpose of a school library is to make available the learning facilities to the learners. These facilities include books, periodicals and other reproduced materials which are of interest and value to academic performance.

5.3.4 OLC monitoring

Monitoring is an important aspect of teaching and learning. Monitors ensure that the rules and regulations that govern good lesson delivery are adhered to through spot checks. However, OLC in the selected secondary schools of Kafue District does not receive the monitoring it deserves to ensure good performance. The failure by some administrators to monitor OLC has contributed to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving

examinations in the selected secondary schools of the district. Since administrators such as coordinators in OLC are appointed mainly for the sustenance of OLC programs, they are supposed to monitor the program to enhance academic performance. This is a duty they are obliged to diligently undertake within academic circles on behalf of the MoE. School monitoring has an impact on learner performance in final school leaving examinations because it provides onsite teacher support, which improves teacher's teaching methods and practice. The monitors' absence make teachers relax or not doing the right things in class

5.3.5 The negative perceptions about OLC

Negative perception on OLC has negative effect on the performance of learners from OLC. Some teachers, parents and learners themselves have a negative perception on OLC. Owing to this challenge, the OLC have been made weak by receiving less support from the teachers, parents and other learners from morning classes. This formed one of the major reasons for the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.

On various reasons attributed to by the teachers, parents and the learners, OLC is not so appealing to some people in these secondary schools. Regarding this aspect, some people take OLC so ordinary by considering it as a second class form of schooling merely based on satisfying government demands to take on all learners that make a certificate in grade 9 regardless of the marks obtained. Respondents revealed that OLC is perceived as nothing but a source of revenue within the school setting. Such a negative perception of the program make teachers not committed to the program. Respondents stated that the program is less motivating to the learners who always wish to be in regular classes where teachers are more committed. The perceptions lead to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.

5.3. 6 Poor financial capacity of OLC

The state of poor financial capacity by OLC in the selected secondary schools of Kafue District is a challenge that leads to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations. Every learning program needs money, actually enough money to run the program efficiently. The poor financial capacity of the schools make many things fall

apart in the management of OLC. Most participants held the view that OLC experience a lot of problems related to lack of adequate finances and that it is mostly due to such financial problems that OLC has failed to get the desired performance.

Analysis of the responses by some of the participants revealed cognitive interpretations indicating that the poor financial capacity of the schools is responsible for the unfavorable teaching and learning environments for OLC. The lack of sufficient classrooms, office space, desks, text-books and allowances for the teaching staff has a negative effect on learner performance. The shared resources between OLC and morning classes have always been a privilege of the morning classes. The poor financial capacity of OLC affect the provision of adequate quality education to learners as necessary materials/resources are difficult, this leads to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.

5.3.7 High levels of teacher and learner absenteeism to ‘Work and School’

The issue of the high levels of teacher and learner absenteeism to ‘work and school’ due to various reasons that include ill health, lacking commitment, school fees on the part of pupils, and many other reasons in the selected secondary schools of Kafue District contribute to the poor academic performance of learners in grade 12 final school leaving examinations.

Teachers stay away from work sometimes because they do not receive the teaching allowances they expect to receive at the end of the month. This challenge affects academic performance of learners as the teachers stay away from their duty of teaching and the learners also stay away from classes. The absenteeism means both teachers and learners fail to finish the syllabi where examinations are set. This in turn contributes to the poor academic performance of learners in grade 12 from OLC in final school leaving examinations. As a result the school’s levels of academic achievement have been low since OLC’s inception in 2011.

5.3.8 High poverty levels in Kafue District

The selected secondary schools draw most of their learners from within Kafue District. The community from which the learners are drawn from has high poverty levels. The high poverty levels have a negative influence on the performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in the final

school leaving examinations. High poverty levels in the school's surrounding communities in the district entails that learners are forced to school go to school on hungry stomachs. Further, because of the high poverty levels in some households, parents are unable to adequately support their children's education. This means, learners will not meet the requirements such as school fees, calculators, exercise books and so on. Preference is given to food and clothing.

In addition when parents fail to pay school fees, teachers will not be given the teaching allowances, there will be no purchase of teaching and learning resources that help in the lesson delivery. More so, children will be sent away from class. This contributes to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations.

5.3.9 Teachers' lack of commitment to OLC

A teacher plays an important role in the teaching and learning process. Where teachers are not committed, there is high likelihood for the learners not to perform well. The participants in the study revealed that some teachers lack commitment to teaching OLC. This challenge is one of the major contributing factors to the poor levels of academic achievement in OLC. Some teachers lack seriousness to work, they are mostly absent from class and when they are available, they just send work which is not even explained to the learners. The attitude of teachers makes the teachers themselves and learners not finish the syllabus. This problem has contributed to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in the selected secondary schools in the district

5.3.10 Time table

A time table is a programmed schedule of teaching and learning process in an educational institution. The effect of using a time table in teaching and learning makes it possible to attend to learners equitably.

The findings in this study show that inadequate time allocation on the time table was statistically significant thus causing poor academic performance among learners. The time table can influence poor academic performance. The graph 4.3 indicates that 100% of the respondents stated that learners in OLC were allocated less number of periods with fewer minutes as compared to the standard time tabling as per education curriculum requirement. For instance, all

the respondents from the selected secondary schools revealed that OLC have seven periods per day instead of a minimum of eight periods as per required standard. 100% stated that even when the number of periods is less, the periods have also less minutes; the periods have 35 minutes instead of normal 40 minutes each.

Less periods and fewer minutes per period reduces contact time for learners. This affects both the teachers and learners on the possible coverage of the syllabus within the stipulated period. Failure by the learners to complete the syllabus makes them write the final school leaving examinations before covering all the topics. This consequently made learners attain lower scores on their grade 12 final school leaving examinations. It has also been learnt that reduced time for learners can adversely affect problem-solving tasks such as those in mathematics which require solving skills. The limited time disadvantages the learners from OLC who are already weaker since they are picked on second selection.

This study is in line with Ross (2010) who observed that offering students the right subjects and time help learners develop adequate skill and wide understanding of subject matter to do well in their final school leaving examinations.

5.3.11 Teacher qualification

On teacher qualification, an important aspect of teaching, most if not all teachers are qualified to teach the OLC in the selected secondary schools of Kafue District. Many of the teachers are degree holders in the respective subjects they have been teaching while a few are diploma holders pursuing the first degrees. This is good however, there are other factors that negatively affect this qualified personnel, the attachment of allowances to the teaching of OLC

The findings of the study revealed that most of the teaching staff is well qualified to handle OLC at senior level. The study findings summarized on the bar chart indicate that 75% of head teachers and 75% of coordinators stated that there were enough qualified teachers in their schools while 25% of head teacher respondents and coordinators stated that there were inadequate qualified teachers in their school.

However, while there are available and qualified teachers in these selected secondary schools, the attachment of teaching allowances to the program adversely affected the teaching and

learning process of OCL. All the selected secondary schools run the program as optional for teachers. There is no serious mechanism put in place to ensure that learners from OLC are well attended to apart from monitoring on period registers and payments of teaching allowances. The loose arrangement make teachers trade off certain days and periods if they have somewhere else they can make more money. This is more common in the third term when payments of school fees become erratic; teachers decide to pull out of teaching. Worse more, this is the period when pupils are supposed to be given the exam tips to see them through without challenges in their grade 12 final school leaving examinations.

High absenteeism by teachers as revealed by program coordinators affects learner performance even if they are well qualified. Period registers in all the interviewed schools indicated that teachers usually stay away from class. This absenteeism by teachers makes OLC learners fail to complete the syllabus, thus, get low scores in their final school leaving examinations.

Further, the findings revealed that even when these teachers attend to OLC, they are already tired to teach effectively since they are the same teachers handling the regular classes in the morning as stated by 100 % of the respondents from all the interviewed secondary schools interviewed. Teachers fail to plan adequately for their OLC, thus give learners less work for practice and in most cases fail to give remedial work. This vice has a negative impact on the academic performance of learners from OLC.

5.4 Home-based factors contributing to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC

There are various factors that contribute to poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in the selected secondary schools of Kafue District. Each factor has a way it contributes to the poor academic of grade 12 learners from OLC.

5.4.1 Family's economic status

The family's economic status or financial background is a common challenge that leads to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations of Kafue District. Some families experience hardships to support a child to school. The hardships the parents have affected their children's school attendance, consequently their academic

performance as the children fail to pay school fees on time and even meeting other school requirements. This challenge experienced by some families negatively affects their children's academic performance.

The results in this study show that the relationship between income and poor academic performance is significant. Low income status of parents has a greater contribution to poor academic performance. Most if not all respondents during the interview indicated that there is great relationship between academic performance and parent's income. The study showed that the majority of learners from OLC have parents with low income to support their children. Most of the parents as revealed by the coordinators and the learners themselves are not in formal employment.

Parents are responsible for taking care of their children's education expenses. They are obligatory to have adequate resources to sponsor their children not only to cover education expenses but also making provision of basic needs to their families. According to the study low income of parents may have an impact learner performance because cost sharing in the education system of Zambia demands that parents/guardians buy learners uniforms, books, pay school fees, and provide any other school requirements needed for learners. If these are not met by the parent/guardian, the learner may be sent away from school, this affect learning to the learner.

This finding agrees with the findings of Johnson (1996) who stated that poverty of parents has rigid effects on their children's academic works. It causes them to lack enough resources and funds to sponsor their education. A learner without education support material such as books will miss out in writing and wide reading for possible adequate understanding of subject matter in various topics/subjects.

Poverty is an important factor accounting for differences in performance and achievement across society. Study findings show that a student from a family of low economic status plays a huge role in their own education. He/she works with parents often for longer hours to earn their small income before reporting for school. This makes the learner get tired to concentrate in class, thus, their academic performance is adversely affected. As the saying goes, "a tired mind is ineffective mind," an already tired learner fails to perform to the expected standard.

However, other respondents observed that learners from parents with high poverty levels perform better. These OLC learners tend to work hard to prove the point and move out of poverty cycle. Sclafani (2004) noted that parent's income correlates with negative school outcome but, it is not always true that lower-income parents are neglectful parents, but it is easy to slip into that label under extreme pressure.

5.4.2 Parents' educational background

The study results given by respondents in table 4 indicate that learners whose parents attained higher level of education tend to work hard than those whose parents did not go far in education. According to the findings, 75% of the head teachers, coordinators and career and guidance teachers revealed that parents have the primary responsibility of instilling ethics of hard working and educational achievements in their children. Participants from the selected secondary schools in the District pronounced that, inadequate awareness of parents leads to insufficient support of their children's education achievement. Further, as revealed by teachers and learners, the data from the study area revealed that 70% of parents with low education level could not provide adequate encouragement and other educational support to their children resulting into children's poor academic performance. The implication of the study result is that education level of parents has linkage to academic performance of their children.

The study is in line with Oloo (2003) who observed that, children whose parents are of high educational scales have a far better statistical chance of passing well in their final school leaving examinations. Also, parents with high level of education greatly enhanced learners' academic achievement. From this study, low level parents' education negatively influences academic achievement of their children. It is more evident that, parents' education and encouragement are strongly related to improved learners' academic performance. This also agrees with social network theory which states that the stronger the ties the higher the possibilities of a learner doing well, the loose the ties, the lower the chances of learner performance.

5.4.3 Domestic work

Work at home is quite as a big challenge affecting the academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District. Some parents/guardians give their children heavy work before reporting for school. The

work makes some children get tired before they get into class. Tired mind is very detrimental to learner performance. This reduces their span of attention, affecting the performance in academic work negatively, more so, in final school leaving examinations. 75% of the teacher, headteacher, pupil, and coordinator respondents revealed that such none school assignments learners are subjected to at home, affect their academic performance in grade 12 final school leaving examinations. 100% career and guidance teacher respondents as obtained from Table 4 agree to the negative effect of domestic work on OLC learner's academic performance.

5.5 Chapter summary

The chapter discussed the findings of the study. The findings were on the topic, 'an investigation of the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from open learning classes in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.'

The study was investigating the factor and how they contribute to poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District. The research findings were obtained from, learner-based, teacher-based and home-based factors.

The learner-based factors include learner indiscipline, language of instruction, and learner absenteeism. Having explored learner-based factors attention was shifted to school-based factors that included over enrolment, misconception of OLC's financial stability, teaching and learning materials, monitoring, absenteeism by teachers and learners, high poverty levels in the district, teachers' lack of commitment, time table and teacher qualification. Finally, discussion of home-based factors was given attention where family's economic status, parent's educational background and domestic work were discussed. The next chapter discusses the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Overview

The main intention of the study was to investigate the factors and how they contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations from selected secondary schools of Kafue District for the period of two years, 2015-2016. The study of poor performance for the period under review has generated interesting findings pertaining to how the factors contribute to the poor performance. While the study is obviously limited in scope, its outcomes may prove most informative when interpreted together with those from previous studies undertaken by other researchers.

6.1 Conclusion of the study

This study investigated how various factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations. Research has established that the integrity of any education system and the qualifications thereof lies in the acceptable practices in teaching/learning. Findings have disclosed that grade 9 examinations provide a basic qualification for senior secondary education and have a great bearing on grade 12 learners in their final school leaving examinations, more so, learners from OLC.

Learner-based factors such as inability of the learners to use the language of instruction due to poor foundation, absenteeism which is mainly caused by learners' failure to pay school fees, tiredness due to walking because of parents' failure to support their children, among many others have a negative bearing on learner's academic performance on grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations.

The findings also revealed that there are various school-based factors that negatively affect the learner performance among the learners from OLC. Inadequate teaching and learning resources, lack of teacher commitment, inadequate time, poor monitoring are among factors that contribute to poor performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in the selected secondary schools of Kafue District.

Home-based factors which are more to do with parental care, ability or responsibility also adversely affect learner performance in OLC. The family's economic status, parents' educational background and workloads learners are given before reporting for class, have a negative effect on learners' performance in OLC. On the aspect of workloads, these learners are given domestic work before reporting for school since they report in the afternoon, by the time they get to school; they are already tired to concentrate in class.

It has also been revealed that the administration and management of OLC by various schools starts with the crop of pupils enrolled at grade 10, availability of teaching/learning materials, teacher qualification and commitment to handle OLC, time allocation to the learners, availability of infrastructure among other things and subsequent appointment of coordinators in order to enhance efficiency and proper management of these classes.

The research findings revealed that the OLC experienced daunting challenges in the management and administration of the session to the extent that learners are taken as second class. Judging from the strength of the psychological and sociological factors on poor academic performance of learners from OLC in grade 12 final school leaving examinations obtained from this study, the improvement of the teaching and learning conditions such as availability of teaching/learning materials, adequate and early payment of teaching allowances, improved infrastructure, merit learner enrolment, ability to listen to stakeholders' suggestions and many other factors would be highly useful. The activation of these conditions would improve academic performance among learners from OLC.

6.2 Recommendations of the study

Based on the findings discussed above, the following recommendations are made:

1. All learners that proceed to grade 10 in OLC should have passed in at least 6 subjects with good grades, English inclusive.
2. Tuition fees should not be an impediment to learners from OLC as this contributes to inconsistency in learner attendance to classes.
3. The teaching and learning materials should be made available to both teachers and learners to make teaching and learning easier.

4. Adequate time should be allocated to the learners from OLC to be able to finish the syllabus on time.
5. Schools in the district should introduce sessions for teachers, for instance regular class session and OLC session so that learners are taught by teachers fresh from home.
6. Stakeholders should be actively involved in decision making in the management and administration of OLC.
7. Teaching staff of OLC needs to be more proactive, courteous, and supportive of the learners from OLC in the course of discharging their assignments, this would boost the morale of the learners.
8. School administration should accord equal recognition to learners from OLC as those in the regular classes to avoid making them feel inferior over their counterparts in regular classes.
9. The teaching staff, administrators and other stakeholders engaged in OLC need to demonstrate more commitment, responsiveness, and professionalism in view of the strategic role they play notwithstanding the various sociological challenges confronting them.

6.3 Chapter summary

The conclusions and recommendations were grounded in the entire study. The conclusions brought out factors that contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from Open Learning Classes in final school leaving examinations in Kafue District. It further explained how learner-based, school-based and home-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in the district before giving recommendations that underpin how these factors can be addressed.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

Interview Guide for Pupils

Topic: An investigation of the poor academic performance of Grade 12 learners from Open Learning Classes in final school leaving examinations in kafue district

1. How would you rate your academic performance during the end of term tests?
2. If the performance is not good, what could be the contributing factors?
3. What learner-based factors do you think contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations?
4. How do learner-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations?
5. What school-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations?
6. How do school-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations?
7. What home-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations?
8. How do home-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

Appendix II:

Interview Guide for Teachers

Topic: An investigation of the poor academic performance of Grade 12 learners from Open Learning Classes in final school leaving examinations in kafue district

1. How many classes do you have for OLC?
2. How has been the general academic performance of learners from OLC during the end of term tests in the past three years?
3. How is the academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations?
4. What learner-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations?
5. How do learner-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations?
6. What school-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations?
7. How do school-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations?
8. What home-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations?
9. How do home-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

Appendix III:

Interview Guide for Head Teachers, Coordinators, Career and Guidance Teachers

Topic: An investigation of the poor academic performance of Grade 12 learners from Open Learning Classes in final school leaving examinations in kafue district

1. How many OLC classes do you have in your school?
2. How has been the performance of Grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations in the past two years?
3. If the performance has not been good, what are the contributing factors?
4. What learner-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations?
5. How do learner-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations?
6. What school-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations?
7. How do school-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations?
8. What home-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations?
9. How do home-based factors contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from OLC in final school leaving examinations?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

Appendix IV

Application Letter for Permission to conduct the study – DEBS

Ronald Hichibulo,

Kafue Day Secondary School,

P.O. Box 360086.

Kafue.

The District Education Board Secretary,

Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education,

P.O. Box 36093,

Kafue.

6th August, 2017.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Request for permission to conduct research in Kafue District

My name is Ronald Hichibulo. As part of my studies to obtain the degree of Master of Education in Educational Management, I am doing a research entitled, an investigation of the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from Open Learning Classes in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District. My supervisor is Dr F. M. Hambulo he is in the Department of Religious Studies, in the School of Education at the University of Zambia.. We are requesting for your permission to conduct research at selected secondary schools in Kafue District. The purposefully selected secondary schools are; Naboye Secondary School, Kafue Day Secondary School, Shikoswe Secondary School and Nakatete Secondary School.

The aim of the study is to investigate the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from Open Learning Classes in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.

The study will entail the involvement of headteachers, teachers of OLC, career and guidance teachers, OLC coordinators and grade twelve learners from OLC. All the other participants highlighted above apart from the grade twelve learners will be involved in the study through separate interviews based on the research topic above lasting approximately 45 minutes each. The grade twelve learners will be involved in the research through focus group interviews also lasting approximately 45 minutes and based on the research topic above.

The benefit of the study to education is the improvement of OLC learner academic performance through identification of challenges experienced OLC in Kafue District.

There are no foreseeable risks to all research participants in this study. The feedback procedure will entail the researcher inviting all research participants at the end of the research at different forums where he will be sharing interesting findings of the research. The researcher will workshops, Continuous Professional Development (CPD), and seminar presentations arranged by the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education and Parents meetings in schools to share the findings of the research with the research participants above.

The participation of selected secondary schools in this study is voluntary. Therefore, the secondary schools may decline to participate or may withdraw from participation at any time. Refusal or withdrawal from participation in this research will not affect the target secondary schools in any way as there is no penalty for such an outcome.

Through your office, the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education may allow or decline our request to conduct this research in Kafue District. Whichever position you may decide to take vis-a-vis our request, will not in any way affect the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education or the target secondary schools in Kafue District. If you need more details concerning the research, the following are my contact details: mobile: 0977823003 or 0965230477 and email: ronaldchoongo@gmail.com., farrellhambulo@yahoo.co.uk.

Yours faithfully,

Ronald Hichibulo (student number: 715805956).

Appendix V

Letter Requesting Parental Consent for Participation of a Minor Grade 12 Learner (Less than 18 years) in the study

Dear Parent

Your child is invited to participate in a study entitled ‘An investigation of the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from Open Learning Classes in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District’. I am undertaking this study as part of my masters’ degree research at the University of Zambia in collaboration with Zimbabwe Open University. The purpose of the study is to identify factors and establish how they contribute to the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from Open Learning Classes (OLC) in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District. The possible benefits of the study are; the improvement of the academic learner performance in OLC in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District, an exposition of the challenges faced by OLC and suggestion of possible ways of how to rectify them.

I am asking permission to include your child in this study because having spent a long time in a OLC, she/he has been purposefully selected to take part in a focused-group interview. This is because her/his long experience in OLC makes her/him well versed in different issues concerning her/his school. I expect to have five (5) other children participating in the study from her/his school.

Together with five other grade twelve (12) learners, I would like your child to form part of a group of six (6) grade twelve learners. The group involvement of your child in the study will be through a forty five (40) minutes interview session where together with the other grade twelve learners your child will be required to answer the researcher’s questions relating to the title of the research indicated above.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission. His or her

responses will not be linked to his or her name or your name or the school's name in any written or verbal report based on this study. Such a report will be used for research purposes only.

There are no foreseeable risks to your child by participating in the study. Your child will receive no direct benefit from participating in the study; however, the possible benefits to education are as indicated in the initial stages of this letter (paragraph-one). Neither your child nor you will receive any type of payment for participating in this study.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal or refusal to participate will not affect him/her in any way. Similarly you can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty.

The study will take place after regular classroom activities or specifically in the afternoon during Prep-time or reading time. This will be done with the prior approval of the school and your child's teacher. However, if you do not want your child to participate, an alternative activity will be available.

In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in the study and you and your child will also be asked to sign the assent form which accompanies this letter. If your child does not wish to participate in the study, he or she will not be included and there will be no penalty. The information gathered from the study and your child's participation in the study will be stored securely on a password locked computer in my locked office for five years after the study. Thereafter, records will be erased.

If you have questions about this study please ask me or my study supervisor, Dr F.M. Hambulo, School of Education, the University of Zambia, mobile: 0976216702 or 0967604442 and email: farrellihambulo@yahoo.co.uk. My contact number is 0977823003 and my e-mail is ronaldchoongo@gmail.com.

You are making a decision about allowing your child to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow him or her to participate in the study. You may keep a copy of this letter.

Name of child:.....

Sincerely

.....
Parent/guardian's name (print)	Parent/guardian's signature:	Date:
.....
Researcher's name (print)	Researcher's signature	Date:

Appendix VI

Letter Requesting Assent of Grade 12 Learners Less than 18 years to participate in the study

Note: This letter was used to request assent from all grade twelve learners aged less than 18 years to participate in a focus group interview. Only the names of the learners were changing on the letter.

Title of study: An investigation of the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from Open Learning Classes in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.

Dear

I am doing a study on “An investigation of the poor academic performance of grade 12 learners from Open Learning Classes in final school leaving examinations in selected secondary schools of Kafue District” as part of my studies at the University of Zambia in collaboration with Zimbabwe Open University. Your headteacher has given me permission to do this study in your school. I would like to invite you to be a very special part of my study. I am doing this study so that I can find ways that your headteachers, OLC teachers, OLC coordinators, career and guidance teachers as well as you can use to improve the academic performance of grade 12 learners from Open Learning Classes in final school leaving examinations. This will help you and many other learners of your age in different schools.

This letter is to explain to you what I would like you to do. There may be some words you do not know in this letter. You may ask me or any other adult to explain any of these words that you do not know or understand. You may take a copy of this letter home to think about my invitation and talk to your parents about this before you decide if you want to be in this study.

Together with five other grade twelve (12) learners, I would like you to form part of a group of six (6) grade twelve learners. Your group involvement in the research will be through a forty five (45) minutes interview session where together with the other grade twelve learners you will be required to answer the researcher’s questions relating to the title of the research indicated above.

Your responses or answers to the researcher's questions will only be known by the researcher and will not be shared with your headteacher, teachers, parents or anybody else.

I will write a report on the study but I will not use your name in the report or say anything that will let other people know who you are. You do not have to be part of this study if you do not want to take part. If you choose to be in the study, you may stop taking part at any time. You may tell me if you do not wish to answer any of my questions. No one will blame or criticize you. When I am finished with my study, I shall return to your school to give a short talk about some of the helpful and interesting things I found out in my study. I shall invite you to come and listen to my talk.

If you decide to be part of my study, you will be asked to sign the form on the next page. If you have any other questions about this study, you can talk to me or you can have your parent or another adult call me at: 0977823003. Do not sign the form until you have all your questions answered and understand what I would like you to do.

Researcher: Ronald Hichibulo. Cell number: 0977823003

Do not sign written assent form if you have any questions. Ask your questions first and ensure that someone answers those questions.

Appendix VII

‘Confidentiality Agreement’ for all study participants

I.....grant consent/assent that the information I share during the group discussions (focus group interviews) may be used by the researcher, Mr. Ronald Hichibulo, for research purposes. I am aware that the group discussions will be digitally recorded and grant consent/assent for these recordings, provided that my privacy will be protected. I undertake not to divulge any information that is shared in the group discussions to any person outside the group in order to maintain confidentiality.

Participant’s Name:

Participant Signature:

Researcher Name:

Researcher Signature:

Date: