

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDREN'S INITIAL LITERACY
LEARNING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MUNGWI DISTRICT, ZAMBIA**

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Declaration:

I **KASAKULA, MAUREEN C.** do solemnly declare that this dissertation is a representation of my work and that it has not been submitted for the award of any degree at this or any other university and that to the best of my knowledge, all the information that has been gotten from other sources have been acknowledged.

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Approval

This dissertation by Kasakula, Maureen C. is approved as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree Master of Education in Literacy and Learning at the University of Zambia.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my dearest parents Mr. Wilbraod Mubanga Kasakula (Late), Mrs. Aurelia Mubanga Kasakula and Mrs. Aida Elena Reccio whose cooperation in God's Divine plan defined my academic destiny.

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I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. D Banda my Academic Supervisor for his unwavering guidance, patience and support throughout my study. Even when I began to lose confidence in myself, you were there to raise my hope.

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To you all, may God's Love abide.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

EGRA-	Early Grade Reading Assessment
CPD -	Continuous Professional Development
CDC -	Curriculum Development Centre
DESO-	District Education Standards officer
DRCC -	District Resource Centre Coordinator
MESVTEE-	Ministry of Education Science Vocational Training and Early Education
MoE-	Ministry of Education
MoGE-	Ministry of General Education
NBTL-	New Break-Through to Literacy
NGO-	Non-Governmental Organisation
PI -	Parental Involvement
PEO	Provincial Education Office
PTA -	Parents and Teachers Association
PRCC -	Provincial Resource Centre Coordinator
SACMEQ -	South African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SCPP -	School Community Partnership Program
SCPC -	School Community Partnership Committee
SITE -	Step-Into English
SNV -	<i>StichtingNederlandseVrjwilligers</i> (Netherlands Development Cooperation)
SESO -	Senior Education Standards officer
TED-	Teacher Education Department
USAID-	United States Agency for International Development
UNZA-	University of Zambia
DEBS-	District Education Board Secretary
ROC-	Read on Course
RTS-	Read to Succeed
RSNDP-	Revised Sixth National Development Plan

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to establish how primary schools ensured that there is Parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools. The following objectives were addressed in the study: 1.to establish how primary schools ensure that parents have opportunities for involvement in the literacy learning of their children. 2. to ascertain how primary schools provide access for parents to participate in capacity building opportunities that aim at improving their children's literacy skills 3.to establish whether or not school organised Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meetings include components that facilitate involvement of parents in their children's initial literacy learning 4. to ascertain if there are any aspects of PI in the primary teacher training literacy syllabus that address how teachers can involve parents in their children's literacy learning 5.to establish what policy or policies primary schools have that foster PI in children's initial literacy learning. The study utilised a qualitative data collection research design methodology. Data was collected through document analysis, conducting interviews and focus group discussions with 104 respondents who included 4 school administrators, 15 teachers, 40 parents and 40 grades 3 and 4 children drawn from four primary schools, 2 officials from the Provincial Education Office (PEO) and 2 from the District Education Board Secretary's (DEBS) office drawing participants from the Standards office and Teacher Education Department respectively. 1 Head of Department (HoD) from a College of Education was also included.

In this study, it was established that in teacher training college syllabuses, there were no deliberate methodological strategies aimed at equipping teachers with skills that would help them involve parents in the initial literacy learning of their children. The study further established that the policy that could guide teachers on how to involve parents in their children's initial literacy learning was incorporated in the National Homework Policy developed by the Ministry of Education for all subjects across the curriculum although DEBS and PEO officials appeared not to be aware of this. The study also established that school organised PTA meetings did not facilitate PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools. However, in many primary schools, PI in children's initial literacy learning was only achieved through the strategies put in place by some cooperating partners working with the schools such as Read To Succeed (RTS) a Non-governmental organisation (NGO) supported by USAID. The study further established that with the help of cooperating partners such as RTS, some parents and teachers were able to have access to knowledge, information and material support used in the initial literacy teaching programs. That way, parents were able to actively get involved in their children's initial literacy learning. Some of the recommendations this study makes are that teacher education should seriously consider including components on PI in the college literacy syllabus to facilitate teachers' involvement of parents in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools; DEBS and PEO officials should acquaint themselves with what the National Homework Policy says on PI in children's Literacy learning for them to coordinate and reinforce PI in children's literacy learning in primary schools. PEO and DEBS offices should take a leading role in fostering PI in children's literacy learning to enhance sustainability in primary schools

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Overview.

This chapter presents the background to the study. It includes the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, main and specific research questions, main and specific research objectives, significance of the study, limitations of the study, and delimitation of the study, theoretical framework and the operational definitions of terms used in this dissertation. The last section is the chapter summary.

1.1 Background to the Study

Research has shown that parents have a critical role to play in literacy acquisition of their children (Henderson and Mapp, 2002; Desforges & Abouchaar 2003). Early involvement of parents in their children's literacy practices produce profound and longer lasting results such as improved attitude of learners to their studies, improved behaviour, improved school performance, decrease in dropout rates and positive attitude towards education (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004; Patrikakou, Weisberg *et al.* 2005, Mullis & Mullis *et al.*, 2004). Parent-child interactions in the primary school age range is also known to have more influence on children's behaviour and achievement than other factors such as socio-economic status and family size (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003).

From the early days of formal education in Zambia, the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) view parental involvement (PI) in children's learning as a critical aspect of quality education (MoE, 1977). The ministry acknowledges that children start developing language skills at home and continue building upon them when they enter school (MESVTEE, 2013). Besides, PI has been cited as one of the strategies for "creating effective schools" stating that families have particular responsibilities to support and reinforce the education of their children (Kelly, 1999 p.263).

In the 1996 Education Policy (*Educating Our Future*) (1996), the ministry states that involvement of parents in their children's education is significant because the first

responsibility for the education of children lies with the parents and the wider community (MoE, 1999). This was also reflected in the 2007 Ministry of Education Strategic Plan which pointed to the participation of parents in education as one of the means to greater access and quality in education (MoE Strategic Plan 2003-2007).

In 1998, '*The Zambia Primary Reading Program*' developed by the Ministry of Education with the assistance of Britain's Department for International Development (DFID) recognised the importance of home-school partnership in promoting literacy in schools (DFID/MOE, 2000). The program which comprised the New Break Through to Literacy (NBTL), Read on Course (ROC), and Step into English (SITE) outlined ways in which teachers could involve parents in their children's literacy learning which included (a) inviting parents on parents' day, (b) inviting parents to school on open day, (c) inviting parents to read or tell stories to learners in class and (d) to show parents how they could improve the reading environment at home (MOE, 2002).

In the 2000s, UNICEF ran a 'Family Pac' program whose general objective was to inform, involve and share responsibilities of educating boys and girls with parents and other members of the community (CDC, 2005). The program had the following objectives:

- a. To build parental/household support for children in schools especially girls.
- b. Increase the degree of parents' involvement in the education of their children especially girls.
- c. Demonstrate to parents some simple techniques in reading as used in schools to enable parents to assist their children at home and with homework whenever given by the school.
- d. To setup comfortable opportunities for the interaction of parents, teachers and pupils on issues to do with teaching and learning, for example, balancing home roles for children.
- e. To seek the support of parents especially in areas where children require enough practice (CDC, 2005 p. 5).

These objectives helped to define parental involvement (PI) in children's learning thereby by setting the ground for what could be done to ensure that there is PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools.

To enhance the meeting of its objectives, the Family Pac program outlined the roles which parents were supposed to play some of which included:(i) discussing the value of books with the children, (ii) helping children in all academic problems including homework, (iii) supporting the children with all educational materials, (iv) monitoring children's progress in school work, (v) talking to children on educational matters and (vi) giving children enough time to do homework (CDC, 2005 p. 4).

The program also gave guidelines on how parents were supposed to be involved in their children's homework and these were as follows: (a) giving one's child enough time to do homework and also helping where possible, (b) checking one's child's homework book and signing on each completed homework session, (c) praising one's child for good performance in his or her homework, (d) discussing with the teacher when the child does not perform well in his or her homework and (e) demanding extra homework for your child if not given (CDC, 2005 p. 4).

The Family Pac program went further to provide specific guidelines on how parents could help their children develop and improve reading skills. These guidelines ranged from (a) parents reading to their children, (b) parents listening to the child read, (c) asking one's child to write or point out selected words in the passage and read, (d) asking the child to retell the story read in English, (e) rewarding the child for a successful reading attempt, (f) labelling the items or objects in the home, (g) providing the child with any other reading materials by creating a home library or reading corner, h) encouraging your child to play reading games such as snakes and ladder and (i) organising group reading with other parents in the community (CDC, 2005 p.7). The guidelines provided a basis of what primary schools could do to ensure that parents were involved in their children's literacy learning.

However, the efforts made through the Family Pac program appears not to have increased the involvement of parents in their children's literacy learning as recent

studies such as Kabali (2014) continue to record low parental involvement in children's literacy learning. This study, therefore, sought to establish what primary schools were doing to ensure that there is PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools.

Generally, the Parents Teachers' Association (PTA) forms part of the formal structure through which parents participate in the education of their children. The assumption is that through this structure, children's learning can be enhanced (World Bank, 2008). In 2010, the Minister of Education's policy statement to parliament committed the ministry to continuing engaging parents and communities to actively participate in actual learning of their children by focusing on the actual teaching and learning processes (MoE, 2011). Although the statement did not focus on literacy learning in particular, literacy learning is one of the education concerns that can be enhanced by PI.

Generally, it was hoped that the guidance provided in the Family Pac program together with the Ministry of Education's commitment to continue involving parents in the actual learning and teaching of their children (*Ministry of Education Policy Statement*, 2011), would help schools to strengthen PI in children's literacy learning. In 2013, however, MESVTEE observed that one of the key reasons for poor literacy performance of Zambia's school going children was lack of PI in children's literacy learning. This raised an interest to establish how primary schools ensured that there is PI in children's literacy learning.

Thus, this study is primarily focused on what primary schools were doing to ensure that there was PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools in Mungwi District. Primary schools in this study includes school administrators and teachers, Teacher Education at pre-service and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) levels and Standards offices at District Education Board Secretary's (DEBS) office and the Provincial Education's Office (PEO). It was hoped that a study on Parental Involvement in children's initial literacy learning would help provide valuable information to stimulate correct interventions. Consequently, PI in children's learning would serve its intended purpose of improving literacy achievement levels in Zambia. As to whether this or not can be achieved is what this study intended to establish.

A number of studies such as Mubanga (2010), Ndlovu (2008) and Nzala (2006) had earlier been conducted on PI involvement in education in Zambia in general. Some related studies include a study by Kangombe (2013) which focused on home-school partnerships that facilitate literacy development and in particular, strategies or techniques teachers used to partner with parents to help develop the literacy skills of Grades 5-7 pupils in Lusaka's high density area. While Kangombe's study looked at school-home partnership that facilitate literacy development in the upper primary grades (Grades 5-7) in an urban district, this study focused on what primary schools were doing to ensure that there was PI in children's initial literacy learning in the preparatory grades (grades 1-4) in a rural district.

A study by Kabali (2014) focused on the role of home environment in the acquisition of reading skills in Zambia. This study, however, looked at PI in children's initial literacy learning by focusing on what primary schools were doing to ensure that there was PI in children's initial literacy learning. Other studies that linked literacy to home environment had a bias on emergent literacy (Musonda, 2011; Zimba, 2012; Kaunda, 2013). While the previous studies reviewed the potential of home environment in enhancing literacy skills and thus provided a basis for PI in children's initial literacy learning, this research sought to extend past research by focusing on what primary schools were doing to ensure that there was PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Zambia, lack of parental involvement (PI) in children's literacy learning is noted to be one of the "chief" causes of poor literacy attainment levels of school going children (MESVTEE, 2013 p.11). However, PI in school cannot materialise without concerted efforts, time and commitment of schools themselves (Harris and Goodall, 2007). What this study intends to establish in question form is "**What are primary schools doing to ensure that there is parental involvement (PI) in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools?**"

1.3 Purpose of the Study

According to Creswell, (2009), the purpose statement in research conveys the overall intent of the study in a sentence or sentences. In this study, the purpose was to establish how primary schools ensured that there was parental involvement (PI) in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools in Mungwi District.

1.4 Research Objectives

This study attempted to address the following objectives:

1.4.1 Main Research Objective

To establish how primary schools ensured that there is PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

1. to establish how primary schools ensure that parents have opportunities for involvement in the literacy learning of their children.
2. to ascertain how primary schools provide access for parents to participate in capacity building opportunities that aim at improving their children's literacy skills
3. to establish whether or not school organized PTA meetings include components that facilitate involvement of parents in their children's initial literacy learning
4. to ascertain if there are any aspects of PI in the primary teacher training literacy syllabus that address how teachers can involve parents in their children's literacy learning
5. to establish what policy or policies primary schools have that foster PI in children's initial literacy learning

1.5 Main Research Question

The study sought to answer the question: "How do primary schools ensure that there is parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools?"

1.5.1 Specific Research Questions

1. How do primary schools ensure that parents have opportunities for involvement in their children's initial literacy learning?
2. How do primary schools provide access for parents to participate in capacity building opportunities that aim at improving children's literacy skills?
3. What components of school organised PTA meetings facilitate parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning?
4. What aspects of PI in the primary teacher training literacy syllabus address how teachers can involve parents in their children's literacy learning?
5. What policy or policies do primary schools have that foster PI in children's initial literacy learning?

1.6 Significance of the Study

PI in children's initial literacy learning is critical to literacy achievement by children. Therefore, this study may generate knowledge and provide valuable information which may inform policy makers, teachers, school administrators and parents on correct interventions to be taken. Besides, the study may enhance practices which may eventually help parents increase their commitment to PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools. In addition to this, findings in the study may help open other avenues for further research on the topic which in due course would continue to raise awareness on the massive benefits of PI in children's initial literacy learning.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework can be defined as a set of related assumptions that guides the research argument on a given research topic (Tayakoli, 2012). It defines the logic behind a given argument in one's research area. Basavanthappa (2007) adds that theoretical framework guides the researcher to be systematic enough to identify logical and precisely defined relationships among variables. This study on PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools was guided by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995; 1997; 2005) model of the parental involvement process. According to

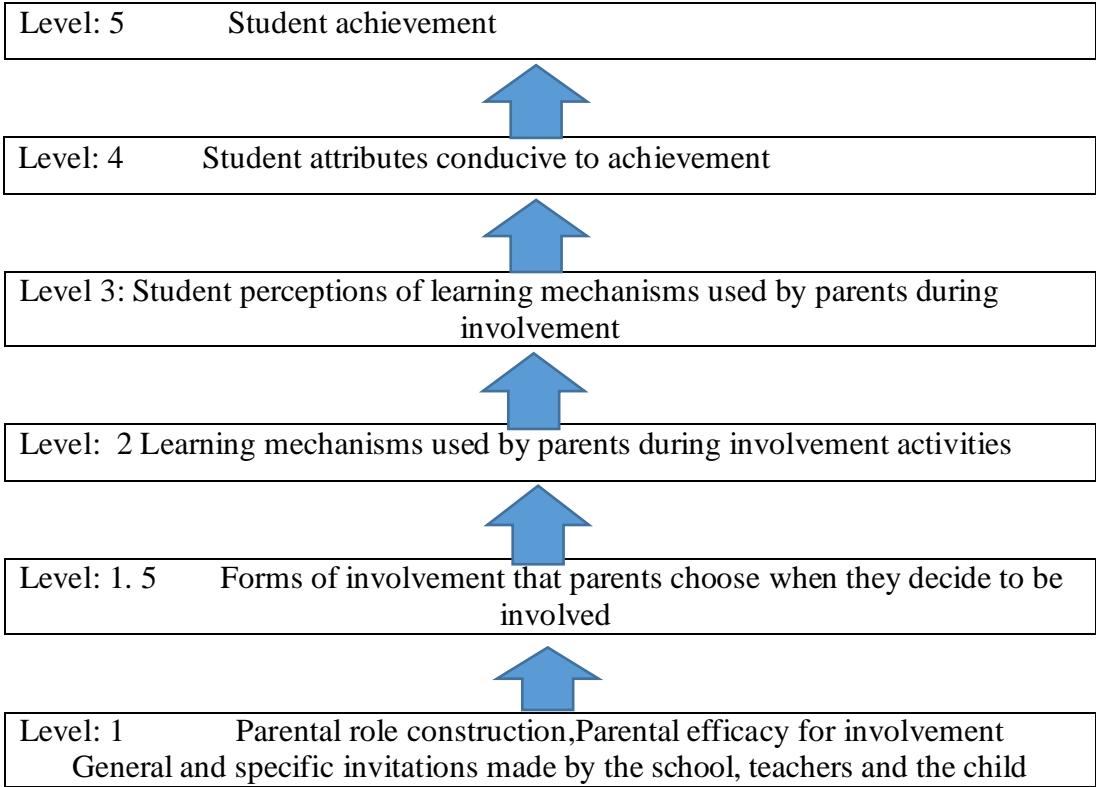
Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, successful PI in education calls for an understanding of the psychological variables that motivate parents to be involved in their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; 1997; 2005). With a basis on theory and research, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of the parental involvement process tries to answer three essential questions: (1) why parents become involved in their children's learning, (2) what parents do when they are involved and (3) how parents' involvement makes a positive contribution to learners' success (The Parent Institute, 2012).

The model is divided into five levels. Level 1 of the parental involvement process addresses factors that motivate parents to be involved in their children's education. This level is subdivided into another level (1.5) which brings out the forms of involvement that parents may choose to be involved in. Level 2 looks at learning mechanisms that parents engage in during their involvement in their children's learning. Level 3 has a focus on how learners perceive their parents' involvement in their education/learning activities while Level 4 addresses important learner's learning outcomes that are influenced by parents' involvement in their children's learning. Level 5; which is the last level looks at learner achievement; the end result of PI in learning. Of particular interest to this study was Level 1 which comprises three major constructs that motivate parents to be involved. According to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995; 1997; 2005), there are three major constructs that make parents become involved in their children's education. These are: (1) parents' construction of their parental role in their children's learning (2) parents' sense of self-efficacy for helping the child to succeed in school, (3) general invitations, opportunities and demands for PI presented by the child, the teachers and the child's school.

According to Hoover-Dempsey, (2010), the ability of the school to support the effective involvement of parents lie in their understanding of the context and processes of involvement. This is important to this study as it may suggest that primary schools' staff on their own without undergoing any training may not effectively involve parents in their children's literacy learning. They may require some form of training to acquire

the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude required in the involvement of parents in their children’s initial literacy learning in primary schools which this study sought to establish. Therefore, the parental involvement process proposed by Hoover-Dempsey may explain what primary schools teachers need to know to ensure that there is PI in children’s initial literacy learning in primary schools. The following is a diagram showing the parental involvement process.

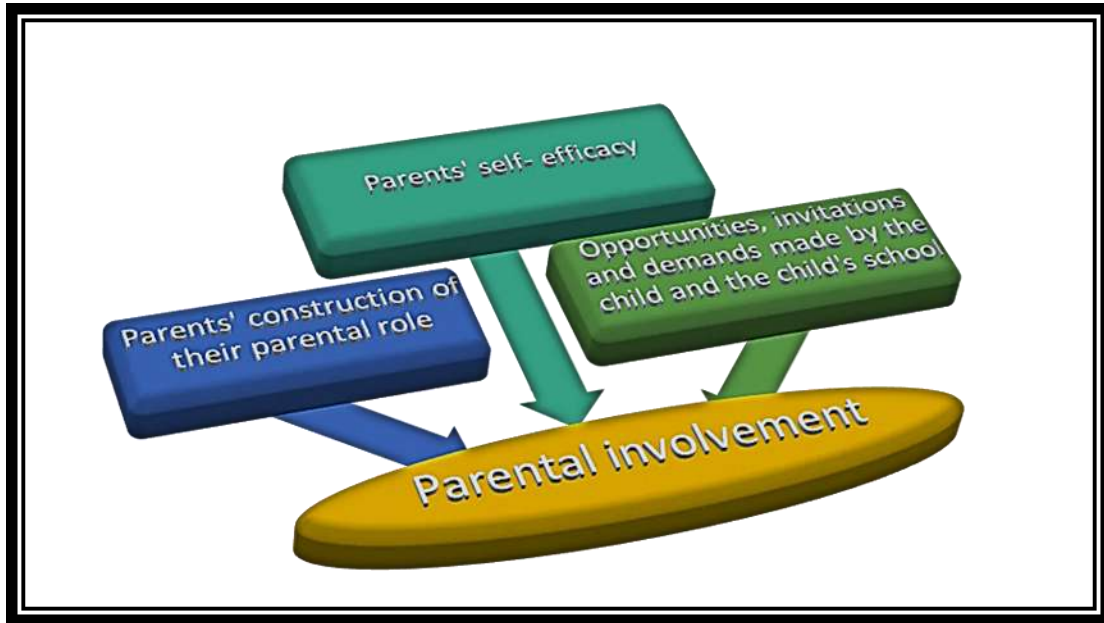
Figure 1: The Parental Involvement Process



Adapted from Hoover-Dempsey (2010)

According to this model, the three factors complement each other to determine the form and frequency of PI in children’s education (The Parent Institute, (2012). Although this is the case, the focus of this study is on how each of these may work as a single entity to influence parents’ involvement in their children’s initial literacy learning not disputing the idea that each of these is affected by the other. Below is the diagram showing how each of the three constructs can lead to parents’ involvement in their children’s learning.

Figure 2: Constructs that Motivate Parents to be Involved in their Children's Learning



Adapted from Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Model of the Parental Involvement Process (1995; 1997; 2005).

1.7.1 Parents' Construction of their Parental Role

According to the model, the parents' decision to be involved in their children's learning is influenced and determined by what they believe to be their role in their child's education and progress (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997). With reference to psychology and educational research, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler suggest that what parents believe to be their role in their child's education has a likelihood of being influenced by general principles that govern their understanding of parental role, beliefs they hold about child development and upbringing and their beliefs about "appropriate home-support roles" in their child's education (p.9). For example, if parents believe that their role is to take the child to school, buy a uniform and provide books and leave the rest to the school, the parents would find it difficult to participate in the child's learning both at home and at school. Therefore, it is important for primary schools to make clear the roles that parents are supposed to play in relation to their child's learning. The more the school makes parents understand their role in their children's

learning, the more successful parental involvement in children's learning becomes. This means that perceptions that parents have about their children's learning would seem to be the most important aspects that influence parents to be involved in children's education. This has implications on what primary schools should do to ensure that there is PI in children's initial literacy learning.

1.7.2 Parents' Sense of Self-Efficacy

Parents' self-efficacy for helping their child to succeed in education is concerned with whether parents believe that their involvement can bring positive outcomes in their child's learning. According to Desforges and Abouchaar (2003), self-efficacy is the extent to which an individual is able to make a difference. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) explain that 'Self-efficacy beliefs are concerned not with skills but with beliefs about what one can do with the skills that one possesses'. Eccless and Harold (1993) explain that parents' self-efficacy is composed of three variables which are parents' (a) confidence that they are capable of helping the child with his/her school work, (b) parents' views of their competence to help, (c) and their belief that they can influence the school through school governance. This means, although parents might have skills and potential to influence children's learning as has already been established in earlier studies such as (Zimba, 2012; Kaunda, 2013; Kabali, 2014), the beliefs that parents hold on their ability to help improve children's literacy outcomes would determine their decision to be involved. Therefore, the school has an obligation to empower parents to strengthen their self-efficacy for involvement in their children's initial literacy learning in primary schools. While the study is on literacy learning, the theoretical framework is on learning in general and, therefore, makes it more informative than the case could have been if it was limited to literacy learning alone.

1.7.3 Invitations, Demands and Opportunities presented by the Child and the Child's School

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995; 1997) model of parental involvement (PI) posit that opportunities, invitations and demands made by the child and the child's school are the factors that influence parents to be involved in their child's learning. According to

the revised 2005 model, level one talks about the need for schools to welcome and respect parents with the aim of helping to motivate them to get involved in their children's learning, helping them feel invited to participate and respecting the factors that affect PI in children's learning (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 2005). The child's school as well as the child himself or herself ought to invite his or her parents to be involved in his/her literacy learning. Equally, the school environment must be inviting and teachers' behaviour should be welcoming and facilitative for PI (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). This is significant in establishing how primary schools ensure that there is PI in children's initial literacy learning. However, what primary schools in Mungwi district were doing to ensure that there was PI in children's initial literacy learning is what this study aimed at establishing.

1.8 Limitation of Study

According to Basaranthappa (2007), limitations of a study are "...conditions beyond the control of the researcher that may place restrictions on the conclusions of the study and their applications to other situations" (p. 195). For Burns and Groove (2007), limitations of the study are "restrictions in a study that may decrease the credibility and generalisability of the findings" (p. 37). With this in view, the following were the limitations of this study:

The study only sampled four primary schools in Mungwi District and hence, findings may not be generalised to other schools within and outside the district. Besides, the generalisation of the results was also restricted by the nature of the design. According to Marshal and Rossman (2006), qualitative studies are not generalisable in a 'probabilistic sense'. However, their findings may be transferable.

1.9 Delimitations

According to Msabila & Nalaila (2013), delimitation of the study refers to the setting of a boundary of the study which can be based on 'geographical location, sex, age, population traits, population size or other similar considerations' (p. 21). It defines what the study will be focused on and the reasons for that particular focus. For the purpose of this study, the following delimitations were set:

This study was on parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning with a focus on how primary schools ensured that there was PI in children's initial literacy learning. The study targeted initial literacy and it only involved four primary schools in Mungwi district.

1.9 Operational Definitions

- a. *Access*- having opportunities or chances to do or obtain something
- b. *Capacity building*- empowering someone with skills, knowledge, and attitude needed to accomplish certain goals
- c. *Capacity*-having skills, values, motivations, efficacy and opportunities to do something successfully
- d. *Initial Literacy*- learning basic reading and writing skills in early grades.
- e. *Involvement*- taking an active role in doing something. In this study, the term 'involvement' is synonymously used with engagement, partnership, participation, collaboration or cooperation.
- f. *Literacy* - ability to read and write
- g. *Meaningful involvement*- serious, useful and outcome based involvement.
- h. *Parent* - in this study was operationally used to include biological parents, guardians, caregivers and other family members who help children
- i. *Parental involvement* - act of allowing parents or any family member or fictive kin to take part or participate in some tasks in the interest of children. In literature, the terms 'involvement' 'engagement' collaboration and 'participation' have been used interchangeably.
- j. *Self-efficacy*- belief in one's capabilities to do something successfully
- k. *Read To Succeed*-A USAID-funded project that supports early grade reading

1.10 Summary of Chapter One

The chapter has addressed the introduction to the study. The topic concepts in the study have been defined for the purpose of providing a discourse meaning to the study. The chapter has also covered the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study and the objectives. It has also brought forth research questions, the significance of the study, limitations, delimitation and the theoretical framework. The next chapter presents a review of literature related to studies on parental involvement in children's literacy learning both in Zambia and other parts of the world.

1.11 Organisation of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organised as follows:

Chapter One looks at the background of the study, states the statement of the problem, purpose and, the objective of the study. It also outlines research questions which are followed by the significance of the study, delimitation and the theoretical framework. Next are the definition of terms and the chapter concludes with the Chapter Summary.

Chapter Two reviews different literature related to the research topic. The first is the general literature followed by studies conducted outside Africa and next are studies conducted within Africa and lastly, those done in Zambia. Various parental involvement dimensions are discussed. The last part is the Chapter Summary.

Chapter Three covers the research methodology. It starts with an overview followed by the study area after which comes the research design followed by the research method, target population and, the study sample. Next is the sampling procedure followed by research instruments, validity of instruments, construct validity, reliability of the study, data collection procedures, and data analysis methods. Thereafter, the chapter addresses data collection strategies after which comes ethical considerations followed by the Chapter Summary.

Chapter Four presents findings of the study. All the responses given by the respondents are appearing under this chapter. Related themes also appear as subtitles to avoid repetition in the data presentation.

Chapter Five discusses the findings of the study. It brings out what the results mean in relation to what other researchers and scholars have written. Different authors, names, and individuals whose work related to this study are coherently discussed. The chapter ends with a summary.

Chapter Six brings out the summary of findings and recommendations which ends with a conclusion.

The last parts have the references followed by appendices of the research instruments which were used to collect data together with other relevant documents.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

The Previous chapter dealt with the introduction to the study. This chapter is a review of literature related to parental involvement (PI) in children's literacy learning. According to Burns and Groove (2007), literature review "documents the current knowledge of the problem under investigation" including the sources that were used in developing the study and interpreting the findings (p.46). Msabila and Nalaila (2013), explain that literature review deals with "identification, location and analysis of documents" (p.65) with information related to the problem under investigation.

For the purpose of this study, literature was reviewed to establish an in-depth understanding of the problem under investigation, inform the development of research instruments and provide the context for the study as well as the rationale for focusing on initial literacy. To achieve this, the review was guided by themes which were generated from the literature review itself. These included definition of the concept 'parental involvement', typologies of parental involvement, and PI in the children's initial literacy in the context of Zambia's "*Vision 2030*", PI and literacy success in the early years, the role of the school in enhancing PI, PI and teacher training, capacity building and related components, policy on PI, communication and homework. Basically, the review targeted general literature and empirical research studies on PI in literacy learning within and outside Africa. Essentially, different documents from UNZA library, the net and other documents were reviewed.

The chapter begins by looking at the general literature on parental involvement after which it looks at some empirical studies on parental involvement (PI) in literacy related learning conducted outside the African continent. Thereafter, it looks at studies conducted in other African countries and lastly, those conducted within Zambia. The chapter ends with a summary of Chapter Three.

2.1 Definition of parental Involvement

In literature, there seems to be no consistent definition of the term 'parental involvement'. Different scholars have tried to define the concept using different points of view. Some view parental involvement (PI) as being aware of and having an achievement in school work, while others view it as having an understanding of the interaction between parenting skills and learner success in school and still others as a commitment to consistent communication with educators about learner progress (Pate & Andrew; 2006, Mncube; 2010). Understood thus, PI has implications on what teachers and schools should do to ensure that there is PI in children's initial literacy learning. According to Holloway *et al.* (2008), PI is the initiation of family behaviours such as monitoring of homework, providing a literacy-rich environment, reading to children with cognitive stimulation being at the centre as well as participating in other school-based activities.

Although Holloway *et al.* (2008) does not openly state that PI is centred on improving learner outcomes, they seem to agree with Myeko(2000) who contended that PI is a process through which parents meaningfully participate in different educational activities of their children and that PI is goal oriented. Hence, it should be purposely sought. As to what primary schools were doing to ensure that there is PI in children's initial literacy learning is part of the question this study sought to answer.

From the foregoing definitions, responsibility for initiating PI activities seem to be placed on teachers and schools. However, Weiss *et.al* (2009), seem to present a different view. For them, PI is a co-constructed responsibility. They further explain that meaningful and effective involvement does not just include parents, care givers, teacher's behaviours, practice, attitudes and involvement with institutions children find themselves in, but also these institutions' expectations, outreach, partnerships and interactions with families. This demands a collaborative relationship where parents provide teachers with information concerning their child's strengths and weaknesses as experienced in the home at the same time enabling teachers to share their knowledge of the child's strength and weakness in the classroom and school setting (Cowan *et al.*, 2004). This is in line with Emerson *et al.*(2012) who state that family engagement is a

shared responsibility of families, schools, and communities which continues from birth to young adulthood and which occurs across multiple settings where children learn. Whether this is the case in Mungwi is part of what this study was intended to establish.

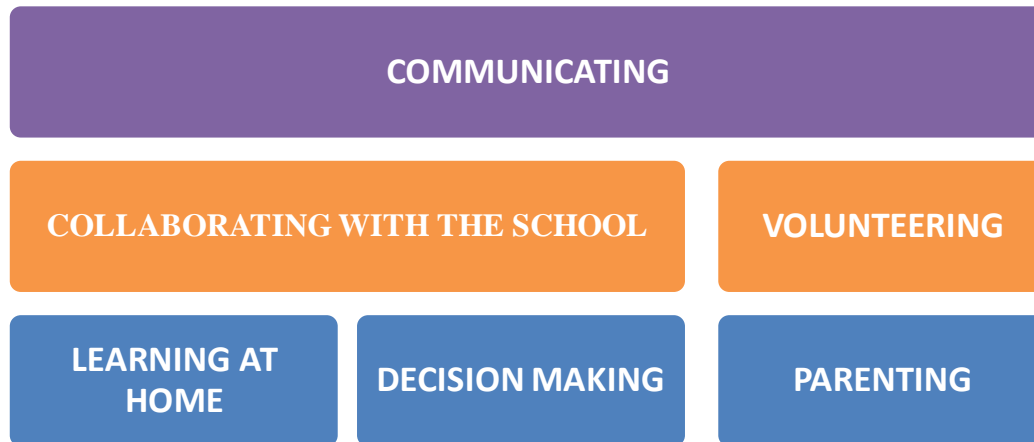
Botha *et al.* (2006), view PI as the participation of parents in a wide range of school activities with the aim of improving their children's education. This is consistent with Ngozi (2012) who views it as the participation and support that parents engage in at school or at home which has a direct and positive impact on their children's educational performance. This according to Harris and Goodall (2007) may entail harnessing what parents can do to help the school realise its outcomes. However, for some people the term 'parental involvement' refers only to parents' participation in activities such as volunteering, meeting with teachers, attending school events and parent-teacher meetings within the school (Hill & Taylor, 2004). For the purpose of this study, PI encompasses activities parents engage in, within and outside the school, that are focused on improving literacy outcomes for children in the lower primary grades. As to whether or not this is what goes on in schools is what this study sought to establish.

2.2 Types of Parental Involvement

Parental involvement in children's learning can take various forms that serve as opportunities through which parents get involved in their children's learning. According to Harris and Goodall (2007), PI in children's learning can include all activities parents engage in with or within the school. However, Harris and Goodall (2007) note that activities that have no direct relationship with children's learning have little impact on learner achievement. This may not be so with activities that can enhance early literacy or numeracy development in children. Desforges & Abouchar (2003) identified two types of PI that have an impact on pupils, namely; school-based involvement and home-based involvement. The two were further divided into school communication and school participation. The school communication is aimed at maintaining contact between parents and school personnel with the intention of sharing information on the progress of a child and discussing emerging problems; while school participation involves attending of school functions and participating in school

governance (Desforges and Abouchaar 2003). Epstein (1995) proposed six types of parental involvement in education. Below is the figure showing these types:

Figure 3: Epstein’s Forms of Parental Involvement in Children’s Learning

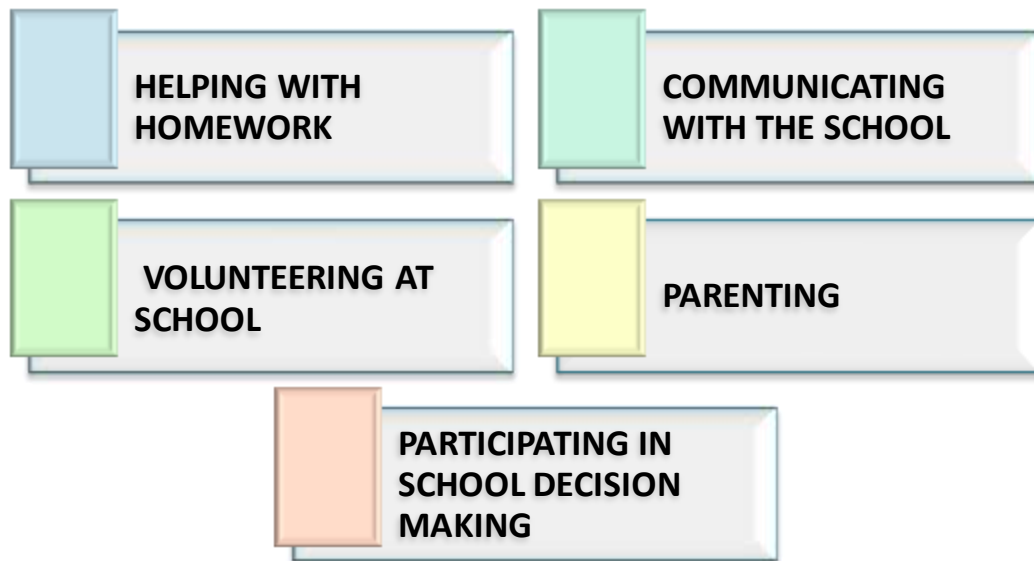


Adapted from Epstein, (1995).

- a) *Parenting*, for example, schools may help the parents to improve their parenting skills by giving them information on how children grow as well as how they can organise the home environment to enhance children’s literacy learning at home.
- b) *Communicating*, for example, sharing the child’s performance in literacy with the parents as well as seeking information about the child by providing opportunities for parent-teacher interactions.
- c) *Volunteering*, for example, parents visiting their children’s classrooms and offering suggestions on how to enhance literacy learning of children.
- d) *Learning at home*; where parents show their children how to tell a story or play a particular game.
- e) *Decision making*, for example, parents being included in school committees that looks at the welfare of the school.
- f) *Collaborating with the school*; where parents share their ideas with teachers.

Georgiou (2007), also proposed five types of PI in children’s education which seem to be in agreement with Epstein’s typologies. Below is the diagram showing the five types of involvement.

Figure 4: Georgiou’s Forms of Parental Involvement in Education



Adapted from Georgiou (2007)

However, Georgiou brought in the aspect of homework as a unique type of involvement which Epstein may have included in the learning at home typology and left out homework. This for Georgiou may mean that learning at home is restricted to parent’s involvement in children’s homework. On the contrary, research such as that of Serpell *et al.* (2005), have shown that at home learning has various dimensions and homework may just be one of them. Thus, limiting parental involvement (PI) at home to participation in children’s homework may limit the various benefits that come with the various dimensions of home-learning, for example, parents reading to their children, storytelling and playing of games that enhance literacy learning. As for what form of PI primary schools were practicing in Mungwi District is the answer that this study sought to bring out.

There is empirical evidence showing that PI is context based (Patrikakou, 2008; Riley, 2009). In view of this, Heneveld and Craig (1996), identified five important categories of parental and community support to children’s learning that are relevant in sub-Saharan Africa. These are:

- i. Parents ensuring that children come to school prepared to learn. For example, being provided with exercise books in which to write and meals to enhance their attention in class.
- ii. Parents providing financial and material support to the school in the form of fees for school requisites and educational materials such as literacy books.
- iii. Frequent communication between the parents and the school. For example, informing parents on how their children are progressing in literacy.
- iv. Having a meaningful role in school governance; for example, occupying positions in the school committees, such as, being members of the parents' teachers associations.
- v. Parents and community members preparing children to learn and assisting with instruction.

All the categories stated above suggest that schools must be involved to facilitate active participation of parents in the education of their children, more so in literacy learning issues. In Mungwi District however, it was not known if primary schools were giving parents opportunities for involvement in their children's initial literacy learning as suggested above and this is what this study intended to establish.

2.3 Parental Involvement in Initial Literacy Learning in the Context of Zambia's 'Vision 2030'

Zambia's Economic agenda '*Vision 2030*' has a focus on transforming Zambia into a middle-income country by 2030. The '*Vision 2030*' has its goal and strategic focus on attaining a lifelong education and training for all by 2030 (RSNDP, 2014). The realization of this goal is largely dependent on the quality of education (Yinusa and Basil, 2008) Zambians are receiving. According to Misra (2006), development whether personal or social is dependent on education. However, education success has its foundation on literacy ability of learners (Gove & Cvelich, 2011). Literacy is known to be fundamental to the education outcomes and life opportunities for learners and to the social and economic development of any country. It provides access to personal enrichment through literature, culture, and social interaction. Literacy enhances further

education, training and skilled employment which in turn provides access to material enrichment and personal wellbeing (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 2009).

Research on education and economics has also revealed that the degree of learner achievement has a direct link to a country's economic growth. For example, Hanusheck&Woessman, (2009) in their study on '*The Role of Cognitive Skills in Economic Development*' found that a percent increase in learners' attainment of basic literacy skills translates into a 0.3 percentage point increase in annual growth rate of a country's economy. This entails that transformation of Zambia into a middle income by 2030 could also depend on the level of literacy of its citizenry. This could explain why literacy is one of the key competencies and core learning areas of the curriculum at a lower primary level in Zambia (MESVTEE, 2013). The Ministry of General Education acknowledges that literacy is a tool that society uses in the "social, economic and political development" (MESVTEE, 2013 p.18). In the 2013 Curriculum Framework, the Ministry of Education noted with concern that one of the reasons learners were failing to learn content materials is that many were not able to read and write (MESVTEE, 2013). This task cannot be achieved by teachers alone. Parents may need to support their children but to do this, they may need some encouragement and guidance from primary schools the issue this study focused on.

In view of this, the Sixth Revised National Development Plan (SRNDP) (2014), indicates that emphasis on the education sector would be put on ensuring that children acquire literacy and numeracy skills in the early grades. This is consistent with Dearing *et al.* (2006) who advanced that well-cultivated literacy abilities are critical in the development of other intellectual and social domains in children. De Beer (2004), also suggested that for the sake of human future, development and cultivation of a comprehensive literacy that enables people to perform necessary skills and live full and meaningful lives is what is desperately needed. This is the case for Zambia whose literacy attainment levels have in the past gone down as can be seen in recent study reports on reading levels which indicated that many children exit primary education

without acquiring basic literacy skills to enhance their productivity on the labour market (World Report on Education 2010/2011; MESVTEE, 2013; RSNDP; 2014). The role parents play in such situations is not known as the blame is often put on teachers and this study intended to find out how primary schools facilitate PI to enhance the achievement of initial literacy learning among children in primary schools.

In the Grade 5 National Assessment Survey of 2006 and 2008, reading achievements were below 40 percent in both English and Zambian Languages (35.3% and 39.4% respectively). Another Grade 5 National Assessment Survey and the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) Survey for 2010 also showed poor reading and writing abilities among learners. Equally, the South African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ III) of 2010 noted that among Grade Six learners that were tested in reading, only 27.4 percent were able to read at a basic competency level (MESVTEE 2013). Although these studies did not focus on Grades one to four (Lower primary level), the results could be a reflection of poor foundation in the early grades. In support of this, a 2012 pilot study on Early Grade Reading Assessment also reviewed that about 90 percent of second graders tested were not able to ‘read or recognise a single word even in their mother tongue (RSNDP; 2014).

This is not without a number of interventions such as the Primary Reading Program (PRP) through which the New Break Through to Literacy (NBTL) was introduced in a bid to help children learn to read fluently and write easily and accurately in a local language. The NBTL course was followed by a course that was termed ‘SITE’ (*Step into English*) and was aimed at helping learners to read and write in English in grade two. This was followed by a course called ‘*Read on Course*’ (ROC) which was meant to consolidate the reading and writing skills acquired in Grades one in Zambian Languages and two in English. However, despite these and other interventions such as Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs that teachers undertake at school level and other higher institutions of learning, no significant improvement in reading has been recorded as attested to in the recent studies (Matafwali 2010, Banda, 2012, Mubanga 2012, Mwanza, 2012; Folotiya-Jere *et al.* 2014). This study sought to

investigate the role parental involvement (PI) in children's initial literacy learning could play to reverse the trend and whether or not parents were involved in literacy learning of their children in primary schools.

2.4 Parental Involvement and Literacy Success

One of the principles on which Zambia's literacy Framework is based is that "All learners with appropriate support can read and write" (MESVTEE, 2013 p.8). PI is one of the support strategies that can enhance literacy achievement in school going children. Epstein (2009) stated that although teachers and schools influence children's learning, parents could remain influential in the development of literacy. According to the Harvard Family Research Project(2007), supporting literacy is one of the responsibilities of parents and families because they influence children's performance by modelling, providing emotional attachment to learning and enhancing their learning achievement. For example, when parents read to their children, they help their children appreciate the value of reading and so gain the encouragement to learn how to read so that they can become independent readers.

Bonci *et al.* (2010), observed that the family and home environment of children have a powerful impact on children's educational achievement especially in language and literacy development. This is consistent with Desforges & Abouchar (2003) who contends that parent-child interactions in the primary school age range have more influence on children's behaviour and achievement than other factors such as socio-economic status and family size. The National Literacy Strategy for all in Malta and Ngozo 2014-2019 records that PI in children's early years of education is an essential criterion for successful literacy achievement. Harris and Goodall (2007) also observe that there is a strong relationship between PI in learning activities at home and children's cognitive achievement, particularly in the early years.

In a research conducted on behalf of the Harvard Family Research Project, Dearing *et al.* (2006) found that family involvement in school learning activities predicted an increase in literacy achievement for low income families and that it was important for children in high risk situations. The study also revealed that children whose families

were not initially involved improved in literacy when they got involved. Thus, PI in children's initial literacy seems to be critical in redressing the poor literacy attainment levels experienced in Zambia's schools. This study, therefore, looked at what primary schools were doing to ensure that there is PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools.

Studies on strategies for building school-parent relationships have shown that the earlier parents get involved in literacy learning activities of their children the better the results and the longer the effects lasts (Mullis, Mullis, *et al.*2004; Mc Coy & Cole, 2011). Studies on early reading have also reviewed that early grade reading enhances academic success (Gove & Cvelich 2011; Smith *et al.* 2013). According to Lesniket *al.* (2010), fluency in third grade reading is highly predictive of children's long term success in school performance as well as college enrolment. Thus, PI in early grade literacy learning is meant to enhance early literacy acquisition in order to secure future literacy attainment and education success. While this is the case elsewhere, we do not know if the same could be true in Mungwi District, hence the focus of this study.

Empirical evidence such as Patrinos & Velez (2009), show that early grade literacy attainment is critical to learner retention in school and academic success in later years. The impact caused by different levels of PI in children's learning in the primary school age range is bigger than other differences linked to variations in the quality of schools (Goodall & Vorhaus, 2010). Research on literacy acquisition also supports the need for early interventions by observing that the more limited the child's experiences with literacy is, the more likely he or she will have difficulty in learning to read (Strickland and Riley – Ayers, 2006). This is in agreement with Zambia's 1996 National Policy on Education (*Educating Our Future*) which states that the goal of lower primary education is to ensure that pupils acquire essential literacy and communication skills. In the same way, the 2013 Curriculum Framework, devote much time at Grade one and two to teaching initial literacy so that learners acquire the competencies for further learning (MESVTEE, 2013). This makes PI in children's early years of literacy learning to be critical in strengthening children's foundation in literacy learning thereby

enhancing successful literacy attainment. As to whether or not primary schools in Mungwi District give parents opportunities to be involved in the initial literacy learning of their children was what this study intended to establish.

Besides, research on early grade reading has shown that failure to attain a certain level of reading fluency by grade four increases learners' higher chances of relapsing into illiteracy (USAID, 2011); a situation primary schools can prevent by involving parents to supplement their efforts in children's initial literacy teaching and learning. Although in some cases it is possible to have children who did not attain a certain level of fluency at Grade four attain fluency in later grades, this can only be attained with extra effort and commitment of teachers and parents as noted by (Gove & Cvelich, 2011). In most cases, this becomes extremely difficult due to large number of children in particular classes of most public schools in the Zambian situation. In addition to this, children who do not attain reading skills at the primary level would have challenges in advancing in their education; a situation which may hamper economic advancement (USAID, 2011). This study was in part aimed at establishing how primary schools collaborate with parents to enhance early acquisition of their children's literacy skills.

Studies on PI and student achievement have also revealed that PI in which enough time was given to communicating and or reading with the child including parenting style and parental expectations greatly impact on learner achievement in literacy (Jeyness, 2005). This is consistent with Enemu & Obidike (2013) who stated that activities in which parents engage their children on a daily basis help them build their understanding of reading, writing, listening and speaking. However, parents may need the support of the schools for them to know and understand what they can do to enhance their children's literacy learning. Whether or not primary schools have put up measures to empower parents with knowledge and skills needed for them to get involved in their children's initial literacy learning is what this study focused on.

However, Domina (2005), wrote that parental involvement does not on its own improve children's learning but that some activities in which parents are involved do prevent behavioural problems. This does not in any way underrate PI's influence on learning

achievement of young children because there is extensive evidence of literacy achievement resulting from PI. For example, combined results for intervention studies which represented 1, 340 families indicated that PI yielded positive results on children’s reading acquisition (Senechal& Young, 2008). Lemmer *et al.* (2006) also advanced that parents are directly or indirectly instrumental in shaping their children’s value system and orientation towards learning. In support of this, Goodall and Harris (2008) argued that the influence of the role of parents in their children’s learning should not be underestimated. They further stated that it is what parents do either at school or at home that makes the difference in the achievement of learners. Although all these views expressed here are about, learning in general, one would conclude that such efforts by parents would for sure support initial literacy learning in particular especially that initial literacy could also be said to be anchored on emergent literacy, which is the literacy a child comes along with to school from home. This is the main reason why this study sought to establish what primary schools were doing to enhance PI in children’s initial literacy learning in school activities in Mungwi District.

2.5 How Parents Promote Children’s Literacy Learning

There seems to be a broad consensus that parents greatly influence the literacy development of young children through the interaction they share with them. Serpellet *al.* (2005) summarised parents’ promotion of literacy in the following activities:

Table 2.0: How Parents Promote Children’s Literacy Learning

1	Engaging in shared book reading
2	Providing frequent and varied oral language experiences
3	Encouraging self-initiated interactions with print
4	Visiting the library regularly
5	Demonstrating the value of literacy in everyday life
6	Promoting children’s motivation for reading
7	Fostering a sense of pride and perceptions of competence in literacy
8	Communicating with teachers and being involved with the school

Adapted from Serpellet *al.* (2005)

This study was set to find out if primary schools in Mungwi District were doing anything to make parents become aware of their need to engage in the above activities to enhance their children's initial literacy learning of their school going children as usually the practice of many parents is to leave everything to teachers to accomplish and blame them in an event that the children do not break through to literacy as suggested by Banda (2012).

However, it must be noted that forms of family involvement may differ in different contexts. Obviously an average Zambian child may not be exposed to all the outlined experiences above but there are other culturally related practices such as story-telling and literacy related games that parents can use to stimulate their children's learning of literacy as shown in the previous studies (Zimba, 2012; Musonda, 2011; Kabali, 2014; Mubanga, 2012, Tambulukani, 2015). What seems to be the guiding principle is that parents may need the guidance and orientation by the school to make them aware of the resources within their reach and what they can do to enhance their children's learning of literacy as Serpellet *al.* (2005) put it, "...we cannot assume that schools and families share a set of beliefs about what success is and how best to foster it (p.220). This is the reason why this study sought to establish whether or not there is PI in the programmes and activities in the selected schools and how such activities would be said to be supporting the learning of initial literacy.

2.6 Teachers as Initiators of Parental Involvement in Children's Literacy Learning

Successful PI in children's initial literacy learning is largely dependent on teachers who form the link between parents and schools (Patrikakou, 2008; Sanders & Sheldon, 2009). However, Desforges & Abouchaar (2003) argued that:

Schools and their teachers are not the only sources with potential to nurture or inhibit fruitful connections between parents and teachers. Children could well play a dynamic role in this process as they are known to do in other aspects of their experience and development (p.46).

While it is true that children have the potential to nature or inhibit fruitful connections between parents and teachers, school-related actions of children are largely dependent

on what teachers do to prepare children to work with parents. According to Goodall *et al.*(2011), teachers form a conduit through which parents have access to involvement in their children's learning. Glasgow and Whitney(2009) also states that how much parents get involved in children's learning is dependent on how often schools reach out to parents. This may suggest that schools have the mandate to devise ways that enhance PI in children's learning, for example, Lumpkin (2010) suggests that it may be effective for schools to conduct regular orientation sessions with parents during which teachers can explain to the parents how they can provide meaningful support to their children. This is consistent with Adelman and Taylor (2007) who argued that meaningful involvement of parents requires specialised expertise which if not attended to may reduce the level of involvement. Meaningful involvement cannot come on its own. Schools must play a role to enhance it. Therefore, this study sought to establish what roles schools play in enhancing such involvements by parents.

Epstein a renowned scholar on PI also stated that teacher practices that encourage and guide parents to become involved in their children's learning are the strongest and most consistent predictors of parents' involvement in their children's learning (Epstein, Centre on School Family and Community Partnership at John Hopkins University (no date). However, Price-Mitchell (2009) stated that the leadership of the school is key in establishing and developing relationships between families and the school although Anderson &Minke (2007) maintained that teachers have the largest effect on PI at home, in school, and in Parent-Teacher Associations. For example, activities such as Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meetings and school open days provide opportunities which facilitate parent teacher and parent-parent interactions. Milly (2010) stated that schools can promote PI by providing opportunities for parents to come into schools. Whether or not such PTA meetings and school open days are there in the selected schools and whether or not such activities have a window to support the learning of initial literacy by pupils was the focus of this study.

2.7 Enhancing Parental Involvement through Teacher Training

Parental involvement in children's initial literacy is enhanced when teachers have the necessary knowledge and skills. A study by Desforges and Abouchaar (2003), revealed that the reasons family involvement programs were often not fully implemented were a lack of staff training in skills related to working with families. This is consistent with Goodall & Vorhaus (2010) who advance that teachers require training and coaching in order for them to effectively engage parents in their children's learning especially when working with parents whose background is different from theirs. According to Mapp and Kuttiner (2013), initiatives for the involvement of parents must include efforts to increase focus on building the capacity of adults in ways such as pre-service training, professional development for educators, workshops and seminars, work-place training, or as an integrated part of parent-teacher partnership activities. This is in agreement with Patrikakou, (2008), who stated that empowered teachers would be able to empower parents who would in turn support their children's learning. This may suggest that components of PI in children's initial literacy learning is critical in teacher training. Whether teachers in Mungwi District had any training on PI to enhance their involvement of parents in their children's initial literacy learning was in part the interest of this study.

Research on PI strategies has shown that having access to continuous professional development activities which include training and workshops on PI help prepare teachers to work with parents (Agronick *et al.*, 2009). Benson & Martin (2003) also suggests that there is need to conduct professional development activities that expand teachers and school administrators' knowledge on PI. It is access to training that enables teachers to know and understand the various dimensions of PI and what can be done to maximise the benefits. Emerson *et al.* (2012) added that schools should ensure that PI forms part of the agenda for staff meetings, professional development and the induction of the new staff. This is consistent with Goodall *et al.* (2011) who recommended the need for teachers to receive training on PI through initial teacher training and or continuous professional development. In Mungwi district, however, it

was not known whether parental involvement (PI) formed part of the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs conducted in schools as a way of enhancing teachers' involvement of parents in children's initial literacy learning.

2.8 Enhancing Parental Involvement in Children's Literacy through Parent Training

The need for training does not only apply to schools and teachers as initiators of PI in children's initial literacy learning only, parents also need some training in skills they need to meaningfully support their children's literacy learning. However, teachers may sometimes assume that parents know how to help their children a situation which may limit or hamper parents participation in their children's learning. Serpell, *et al.* (2005) in their research in *The Baltimore Early-Childhood Project* observed that teachers rarely accepted that some parents, especially those with low social economic status, could not know how to support their children's learning and may need special guidance. Studies on good practice have shown that programs that are effective have trained parents on how to create a literacy-rich home environment (Lawler, 2009). This is in line with Clark (2007) who declared that it was important for parents and care givers to be aware of how they can support their children's learning.

Defining roles that parents are supposed to play in teaching their children is critical in that it enhances parents' confidence in their support role in children's learning. In support of this, Serpell, *et al.* (2005) stated that parents' and teachers' agreement about the need to share responsibility in their children's learning does not necessarily entail an agreement on the roles each will have to play, hence, the importance of specifying parental roles. Although parents may not necessarily have to teach their children formally, they need to understand how their daily literacy practices such as having a good reading culture, providing a reach literacy environment as well as good parenting behaviour enhance children's early literacy development and what they are supposed to do facilitate literacy learning. In Mungwi District, however, it was not known if teachers in primary schools were providing training and guidance on parents'

involvement in their children's initial literacy learning and this study intended to establish this.

2.9 Volunteering as a Parental Involvement Strategy

Saunders & Sheldon (2009) suggested that one-way schools can increase PI in children's learning is by recruiting volunteers to increase parents' participation since volunteering enable families to become aware of school rules and processes as well as opportunities for informal interactions between homes and schools (Epstein, 2009). This can be done through allowing parents to share their knowledge and skills such as reading, playing games and story-telling in class. In Mungwi District, it was not known if PI in children's initial literacy was enshrined in the school program; hence this study.

2.10 Policy as Essential for Enhancing Parental Involvement in Children's Learning

Basile and Henry (1996) stated that strong and comprehensive parental involvement (PI) can only be undertaken if the school has a working policy which defines PI efforts. According to Bronfenbrenner (1986), a PI policy is a policy that explains how the school supports the role of parents in their children's education. This may imply that a policy on PI would cover a range of issues ranging from what would be done by the school as well as defining parents' rights and responsibilities, the mode of communication the staff would use to communicate with parents and the procedure for interaction on matters of concern. Harris and Goodall (2007), recommended that PI must be enshrined in teaching and "...learning policies to enable parents become an integral part of the student's learning process" (p. 68). However, having PI policies do not in themselves guarantee their realisation unless school policies take into consideration children's parents as well as their immediate environment (Twum-Danso, 2009). In view of this, Bronfenbrenner (1986) recommends that policy formulation should be collaborative with the parents being actively involved in the process. As to whether primary schools in Mungwi had policies on PI in children's initial literacy and whether these policies had taken into consideration children's parents and their environment is what this research sought to find out.

2.11 Parental Involvement and School Communication

Serpellet *et al.* (2005) pointed out the need for parents to have an “understanding of how well their child is progressing” for them to effectively support their child’s learning (p.226). According to Desforges and Abouchaar (2003), school communication, they explained, is aimed at maintaining contact between parents and school personnel with the intention of sharing information on the progress of a child and discussing emerging problems. Hoover-Dempsey *et al.* (2005) also suggested that parents should be provided with information on the importance of their involvement in their children’s learning as well as knowledge and skills on the range of activities they can be involved in to support their children’s learning. I strongly agree with this view as not all parents would do this without being oriented or guided and more so that an average Zambian parent thinks teachers are employed to do everything for them and would proudly blame teachers if their children do not break through to literacy.

According to Gorman (2004), collaboration between parents and the school requires good communication, conflict resolution skills and sensitivity to relationship boundaries. This may mean that teachers should understand the culture of the community in which they are working. Wright and Stegelin (2003), suggest that two-way communication strategies must be used to allow the parents to engage in verbal and written exchange with teachers and schools since it is believed that successful home-school communication has its basis on uniqueness and characteristics of each particular family involved. Ferrazo (2011) also writes that a school that strives for parent engagement will have to listen to the parents’ views, aspirations, and fears. To establish if this was a reality in primary schools in Mungwi district was in part the interest of this study.

Botha *et al.* (2006) recommended that schools should continuously send and receive messages to and from parents so much that they establish communication channels. Emmerson *et al.* (2012) explains that the main reason for continued communication and building relationships between schools and families is to familiarize parents with the

school and the way the school operates so that they are free to interact with teachers. In support of this, Wyk & Lemmer (2009) state that schools that are effective communicate with parents using the language that makes sense to them by providing opportunities appropriate for parents to have access to their children's work and talk about their progress and by providing advice that is practical and in support of the learning of their children. This is critical as it can help remove some barriers to communication which may inhibit parents' meaningful involvement in their children's initial literacy learning. Patrikakou (2008) added that good communication between the school and the parents of children is critical as it enables the parents to keep abreast with their children's education needs and success. To establish how primary schools were communicating with the parents in regard to literacy learning of their children was the focus of this study.

Katyal & Evers (2007) also support the need for regular communication maintaining that systematic and organised gathering of information on learner's performance and the promotion of a two-way communication between the home and school is important in the modern era where more learning takes place outside school. According to Patrikakou (2008), systematic planning of parent-teacher conferences and report card collection days can be good opportunities for teachers and parents to share particular information about a child. However, Van Wyk & Lemmer (2009) suggest that teachers should consider literacy levels of parents to enable the parents to understand information communicated to them by the teachers. This means, it may be important to personalize communication in order to meet needs of parents as individuals. In support of this, Patrikakou (2008) observed that although the use of general types of communication is a necessary component, it does not sufficiently meet school-parent communication needs. Whether or not primary schools were personalizing communication was what this study intended to establish.

2.12 Homework as a Parental Involvement Strategy

Among the activities that provide a link between the children and the school is homework. According to Epstein & Van Voorhis (2001), home –work can be planned

purposely to enable teachers to inform and involve parents in their children's learning activities. Therefore, teachers can enhance parents involvement in their children's learning by giving children homework that demands interaction with their parents (Duckworth *et al.*, 2009). In essence, giving children home-work can be a form of an invitation for parents to get involved in their children's learning. According to Van Wyk & Lemmer (2009), home-work plays an integral part in the learning process and it is the reason why parents' guide and oversee home-work activities. Besides, the involvement of parents in their children's homework can promote parents' appreciation of the need to be involved in their children's learning (Blazer, 2009). As to whether teachers made use of homework to facilitate parents' involvement in their children's initial literacy learning in Mungwi district is part of what this study sought to establish.

However, the purpose of homework which is learning can be defeated if parents take over the whole process. Blazer (2009), warns that parents should only be involved in some way but not to do everything for the children. This can only be achieved if the school has a policy which defines how far parents should go in supporting their children's learning. Van Voorhis (2004), suggested that schools must devise a policy which should specify the role that parents, teachers, and children are supposed to play. In this regard, there may be a need to train parents on how to help their children with home-work. Research on home-work as a tool for facilitating parent-child interactions has shown that training parents on how to assist their children in homework enables the children to spend more time on home-work, improve in accuracy and obtain higher grades (Bailey, 2006). This study therefore sought to answer a question on whether primary schools provided parents with training on how to help their children in homework.

2.13 Capacity as a Basis for Parental Involvement in Children's Learning

Studies on good practice have shown that meaningful PI in children's learning can only develop and thrive if stake-holders have the capacity (Adelman & Taylor, 2007; Warren & Mapp, 2011; Mapp & Kuttiner, 2013). In education, the term 'capacity' is used to refer to skills, abilities and expertise required to accomplish a specified task

(Hidden Curriculum, 2014). The capacity of an individual is generally enhanced by having access to capacity building opportunities. Capacity building may be understood as a process through which local actors are helped to acquire and use information to perform a specified task (OECD; 2012). The key elements in capacity building are access to information, the ability to use the information efficiently and to reinforce desired changes in behavior (Ibid. OECD; 2012). This means that; school may need to have established programs specifically designed to empower parents with skills, knowledge, attitude and motivation to enhance their involvement in their children's initial literacy learning. As to whether this was the case in Mungwi district is what this study sought to establish.

In a presentation on parental involvement at a College Board Conference, Christy (2014) emphasized the importance of access to capacity building opportunities stating that capacity building at home, school and community is essential for sustained student learning. In support of this, Mapp and Kuttner (2013) observed that lack of attention to training and capacity building of parents and teachers make well-intentioned partnership fail. UNICEF (2007) adds that meaningful involvement of parents especially those from poor communities would require some training and equipping stating that when parents or caregivers are not equipped, they fail to participate in the education of their children and this diminishes their children's chances of gaining access and remaining committed to education.

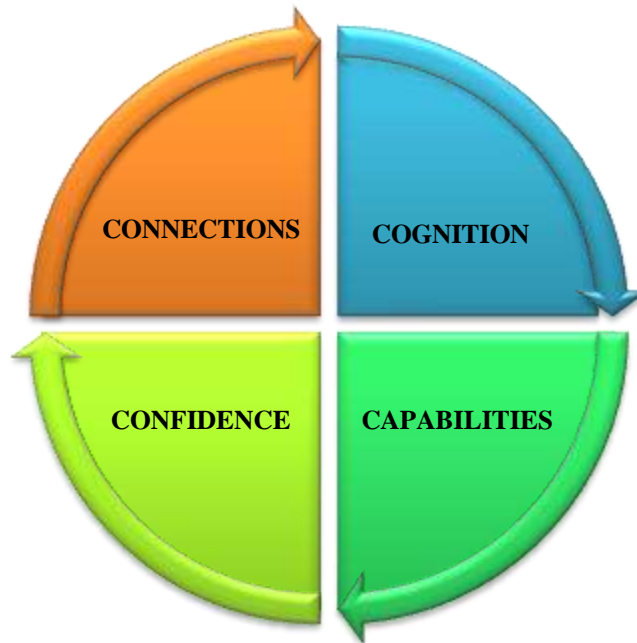
Research on PI in children's acquisition of literacy skills has also revealed that children learn more from their parents when parents are trained to use specific exercises to teach reading to their children as well as when parents receive training on how to listen to their children read (Darling & Westberg, 2004). A research review on *Improving Student Outcomes with School; Family and Community Partnership* with a focus on parent training workshops confirmed this assertion in showing that parents who were assisted to become more effectively involved in reading related activities engaged more in interactions on reading with their children and the learners improved their reading and writing skills (Sheldon, 2009). Studies such as Lawler(2009) and Musonda (2011) have also indicated that programs that are effective have trained parents on how to

create a literacy-rich home environment. This is in line with Clark (2007) who declared that it was important for parents and care givers to be aware of how they can support their children's learning by creating a stimulating environment for them. Thus, provision of training and guidance to parents may be critical in ensuring that there is parental involvement in children's literacy learning. This is in line with the results obtained in the meta-analysis on parental involvement activities at home which revealed that the amount of training for parents yielded positive results on home literacy activities on children's early literacy skills (Seneschal, 2008; Jeyness, 2012). This explains why access to capacity building opportunities is critical for parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning. In Mungwi district, however, it was not known if teachers in primary schools were providing capacity building opportunities to enhance parents' involvement in their children's initial literacy learning.

2.13.1 Essential Aspects in Capacity-Building for Parents

In any endeavor, there are critical aspects that lead to success. Equally, capacity building has essential components and aspects which should be addressed before parents would successfully and meaningfully be deemed ready to contribute to literacy success. Mapp and Kuttner, (2013) suggest that before an effective partnership of schools and parents can be meaningfully established and sustained, there are four components of capacity which must be enhanced among the district, school staff and the families. These four components are:

Figure 5: Essential Components of Capacity Building



Adapted from Mapp & Kuttiner, 2013.

The four are explained below:

1) *Capabilities* in terms of knowledge and skills about children's learning and how schools work. This is consistent with Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) who recommended that parents should be provided with information on the importance of their involvement in their children's learning as well as knowledge and skills on the range of activities they can be involved in to support their children's learning. Dharmadasa (1996) quoted in Siririka, (2007) in an eight-week program that sought to improve literacy skills of low income uneducated mothers proved this assertion by observing that the mothers capacities to help develop their children's language competencies increased especially in the areas of listening and speaking (Dharmadasa, 1996). This shows that parents' skills can be improved to enhance their involvement in their children's initial literacy learning.

2) *Connections* that link parents to social capital (organizations that offer social services) through strong and cross-cultural networks that have their basis on respect and trust. These may include forming family teacher relationships, parent to parent relationships as well as establishing links to community agencies and services. This is

in line with Bitsko et al (1997) who suggest that schools can help parents support their children's learning by linking families to support programs such as health, nutrition and other related services that advance the well-being of children.

3) *Confidence* to help them perform support roles with self-efficacy (parent's personal conviction of their capabilities to support children's learning). Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1995) states that parents' belief that they can successfully make a contribution to their children's learning and the knowledge of what they should do is what motivates them to be involved in their children's learning. Mapp and Kuttner (2013) adds that capacity building opportunities when utilised help build knowledge, attitude and skills of stakeholders to engage in partnerships that supports learner achievement and development. This means, if schools make parents aware of these facts and their abilities to help their children, parents may get involved in their children's literacy learning. The key question is "Do primary schools play such roles; an issue this study pursued.

4) *Cognition* enhancing parents' beliefs on the roles they can perform to support children's learning. When parents believe that they have the knowledge and skills to support their children's learning and that their children value their contributions, their involvement in children's learning is enhanced (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). This is important because efforts aimed at building the capacity of parents give participants a chance to view themselves differently as well as their responsibilities as stakeholders in their school and community (Warren & Mapp; 2011). As to whether schools give parents access to the essential aspects of capacity building listed above was what this study sought to find out.

2.13. 2 Opportunities for Capacity Building

Building capacity of parents require opportunities that can be accessed by parents. Capacity building opportunities for parents have their place in school structures and processes such as training and professional development, teaching and learning, curriculum and community collaboration through which they are connected to school activities (Weiss et al. 2011; Mapp and Kuttner, 2013). For example, parents open days

and PTA meetings are good opportunities during which teachers can hold discussions with parents to help them understand their role in their children's learning and development. This can help parents to gain confidence and develop an interest in learning about their children's needs in the learning of literacy. This is in line with Dearing et al. (2006) who stated that involvement of parents in school activities such as open days and parent-teacher conferences as well as volunteering makes a positive contribution to literacy achievement of learners. To establish if this was obtaining in Mungwi district is what this study sought to establish.

2.13.3 Benefits of Access to Capacity Building Opportunities

Access to capacity building opportunities enables parents to have knowledge, skills, attitude and motivation for meaningful involvement in their children's learning. Results of studies on parent training workshops have shown that parents who are assisted to become more effectively involved in reading related activities engage more in interactions on reading with their children and the learners improve their reading and writing skills (Sheldon, 2009). On this basis, this study sought to establish what was being done in primary schools in Mungwi District to ensure that there was parental involvement in school programmes which support children's initial literacy learning. Parental involvement in school activities such as those supporting initial literacy learning in primary schools has already been identified in this chapter as one of the ways of pursuing measures that ensure that children acquire literacy skills from the early grades a stance well aligned with the education sector's strategic focus for the attainment of the '*Vision 2030*'.

2.14 Studies on Parental Involvement in Literacy Learning outside Africa

In 2005, the Government of the Republic of Scotland conducted a study with a focus on parents' views on improving parents' involvement in the education of their children. The study reviewed that parents had a lot of challenges in their effort to be involved in the education of their children worse still in their classroom related learning. Prominent among the findings were difficulties in finding time in the case of working and single parents, lack of techniques and knowledge of the subject content and methodology of teaching, the problem in creating a home environment suitable for reading, and

unwelcome attitude for teachers. However, providing parents with knowledge and skills can make them change their attitude and increase their motivation for involvement; the tasks schools can do. While the Government of the Republic of Scotland looked at education, in general, this study focused on PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools.

In New York, Milly (2010) conducted a study to determine the relationship of children's literacy success and the parental involvement and support they receive in the primary school learning years. The study which utilised questionnaires, observations and the documentation of time spent reading and doing homework revealed that the more involved parents are in their children's academic work, the more successful are the children. The study also revealed that involvement of parents in their children's literacy learning also helped children to be more prepared for schools and their transition from home to school was smoothly done. To establish if primary schools in Mungwi were involving parents in their children's literacy learning to enhance their success, was part of what this study intended to establish.

In the Philippines, Ealdamaet *al.* (2013) conducted a study which examined the non-formal education experiences of parents of reading at risk grade two pupils from an urban poor community in the Philippines. The study which utilised focus group discussions, individual interviews, and participant observation to collect data, reviewed that through their non-formal education experiences, parents participants took on new identities such as storytellers, tutors, and fun makers. The parents in the study ended up becoming story tellers not only to their children but also to other children and as such, they became effective tutors in developing literacy and numeracy skills at home and in the community. Eventually, all parents involved in this study became transformed into fun and effective parents who no longer resorted to coercion or violence in helping their children with school work. However, parents may need to be made aware of the skills they have and how they can use the same skills to improve their children's initial literacy skills; a role schools can perform. To establish what primary schools were

doing to ensure that parents were involved in their children's initial literacy learning, regardless of their literacy status, was what this study intended to establish.

A study review by Goodall *et al.* (2011) on best practices in parental engagement found that engagement of parents in learning related activities is enhanced when parents receive 'clear, specific, and targeted information' from schools. They further observed that training of parents had significant outcomes which included parents' realisation that a problem exists, the gaining of knowledge and skills to influence children's behaviour as well as confidence and empathy for effective use of the skills. Besides, Goodall *et al.* (2011) concluded that intervention programs whose efforts had a focus on aspects of literacy such as training parents to teach reading skills to their children was more likely to be effective than efforts focused on aspects such as encouraging parents to listen to their children reading. This seems to suggest that it is necessary for schools to empower parents with skills needed to assist their children in learning specific literacy skills. In Mungwi District, however, it was not known if parents were empowered with skills to assist their children in learning specific literacy skills.

2.15 Studies on Parental Involvement in Children's Literacy Learning in Africa

In Namibia, Siririka (2007) conducted a study on the involvement of parents in their children's literacy development in Ngeana rural community. Results indicated that parents were not effectively involved in their children's literacy skills. The reasons given were that parents were not adequately empowered to support their children's literacy learning. Besides, there were no environmental literacy programs within the community and materials for literacy support were in short supply. This entails that the involvement of parents in literacy may demand to assist them with literacy materials such as story books, crayons and pencils. Besides, parents may need to be linked to socio-support programs which offer literacy skills for them to build their literacy skills to meaningfully support their children's initial literacy learning. Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) in their study on *Transformational Leadership and Large Scale Reform* found that parent engagement is strengthened when parents believe they have the skills and know how to make meaningful contributions to the schools efforts in the learning of

their children. In Mungwi however, what primary schools were doing to empower parents to be involved in their children's initial literacy learning was not known.

In Rwanda, a study by Ruterana (2009), which focused on home literacy practices among Rwandan families reviewed that many parents did not realise the value of engaging in literacy practices in relation to their children's learning. However, the realisation of the value of engaging in literacy practices to support children's learning is not an instinctive act that should be left to chance. Newman and Roskos (1997) findings in their study on literacy knowledge in practice reviewed that it is necessary to provide opportunities, information and support for parents regarding their children's early literacy development and their role as the most important teachers. This is consistent with Hattie (2009) who concluded that there was a need for parents to be educated in the language of the school to enable the school share in their expectations and to prevent the child from living in two worlds. In Mungwi district, it was not known if primary schools were sensitising parents on the values of engaging in literacy practices to support their children's learning.

In another study that looked at factors that influence PI in the development of children's literacy in South Africa, Primrose (2010), found that among other challenges faced were parents' lack of understanding of their role and absence of guiding documents and illiteracy. However, these challenges can be reversed by parents' access to empowerment in terms of knowledge on PI as a desirable practice, empowerment in terms of skills which may include techniques and strategies parents can use to support their children's initial literacy learning and empowerment in terms of resources which may include assisting parents with learning materials that they may need in the process of supporting their children's initial literacy learning. In Mungwi district, however, there remained a question on whether primary schools were empowering parents by providing access to capacity building opportunities on PI in children's initial literacy learning.

In Nigeria, Oyetunde & Muodumogu (2010) conducted a study which looked at the extent to which Josmetropolis parents were involved in their children's literacy

development. Results of the study indicated that the percentage of parents who read aloud to their children on a regular basis was very low. Besides, the study reviewed that some parents did not provide good literate models due to limited knowledge and skills. Nevertheless, many parents engaged in listening and talking to their children regularly. These results seem to suggest that parents may have lacked the capacity to be involved in their children's initial literacy learning. The study pointed to the need to provide guidance on how parents could be meaningfully involved in their children's literacy development. This is consistent with the idea that meaningful PI in children's learning can only develop and thrive if stake-holders have the capacity (Adelman & Taylor; 2007, Warren & Mapp; 2011, Mapp & Kuttner; 2013). However, the study did not look at what teachers and school administrators were doing to ensure that there was PI in children's literacy development. This study sought to look at that as well.

Enemuo and Obidike (2013) conducted a study to examine the level of PI in the literacy development of children in Anambra state in Nigeria. It also focused on assessing the extent gender and type of parents determined the level of involvement. Results of the study revealed that there was low PI in children's literacy development and that no significant difference existed between male and female parent's involvement. The study recommended among other things that there was a need for the government to ensure that parenting education programs were enshrined in the school curriculum to enable parents to become better parents and teachers of their children. It also recommended the need for teachers to empower parents by giving them some training to make them become mentors and homework supporters. The study further raised the need to engage serving teachers in in-service programs to provide them with relevant knowledge on PI skills and strategies. In the case of primary schools in Mungwi district, it was not clear whether parents were subjected to parenting education programs and training and empowerment to enhance their involvement in their children's initial literacy learning. It was also not clear if serving teachers were engaged in in-service programs to facilitate their involvement of parents in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools.

In Tanzania, Ngorosho (2011) conducted a study which looked at the role of home environment in literacy skills of Kiswahili speaking primary school children in rural Tanzania. The study which among other aims sought to identify home environmental variables which significantly relate to and predict children's phonological awareness, reading and writing ability in the Tanzanian rural context revealed that fathers and mothers education level, house wall material, light source and the number of books in the home formed the home environment that could have an influence on the literacy skills of children. This pointed to the need to help parents understand home variables that can enhance literacy learning. To establish if this was obtaining in Mungwi district, was, in part, the interest of this study.

In Kenya, Murungiet *al.* (2014), conducted a study which focused on the possible strategies that could be put in place to enhance parental involvement in the acquisition of literacy skills among pupils in primary schools. In this study, it was concluded that the schools were not making enough effort to enhance PI in children's acquisition of literacy skills. In view of this, it was suggested that school administrators needed to formulate clear policy guidelines on the involvement of parents in the acquisition of literacy skills and to conduct regular workshops for parents to guide them on how they could be helping their children to acquire literacy skills, for example, sensitising them on the "importance of reading to children, listening to children read as well as checking of their children's homework. In Mungwi district, a question remained on whether primary schools had a clear policy on parental involvement, hence the study.

In another study in Kenya, Murungi&Muthaa (2015) conducted a similar study on PI in the acquisition of literacy skills with a focus on establishing the extent to which parents were involved in literacy activities such as reading to children, listening to children read, provision of a literacy-rich environment and direct literacy interaction. The results of this study revealed that there was low parental involvement (PI) in the acquisition of literacy skills among the children in Akhiti District of Kenya. Besides, the study revealed that parents were not adequately informed of parental activities that could influence children's acquisition of literacy skills. It was, therefore, suggested that

parents needed to be sensitised on the importance of their involvement in their children's literacy learning and on how to assist their children in the acquisition of literacy skills. Whether primary schools in Mungwi district sensitise parents on the importance of their involvement in their children's initial literacy learning, and how to assist their children to acquire literacy skills is what this research sought to establish.

In the United Arab Emirates, Midraj&Midraj(2011) conducted a study which looked at PI and Grade 4 Students' English Reading Achievement. The study among other things found that significant predictors in comprehension and accuracy achievement include parents' provision of resources and tutoring and taking part in literacy activities at home. This is consistent with Epstein (2009) who concluded that parents have the greatest influence on the achievement of young people by supporting their learning at home than supporting activities at school. Whether or not primary schools sensitised parents on the need to provide children with learning resources and tutoring as well as the need to take part in children's literacy activities at home was what this research wanted to establish.

2.16 Studies Related to Parental Involvement in Children's in Literacy Learning in Zambia

In 2011, the USAID conducted a study on Early Grade Reading for pupils in grade three and four. The study which drew a sample of 800 pupils in 40 schools of the four Bemba speaking provinces; Luapula, Northern, Copperbelt, and Central reviewed that only 31 percent of school administrators and 21 percent of the teachers were satisfied with parents involvement in their children's learning; with only 12 percent of parents having been found to have been reading stories to their children. This indicated how low parents' involvement in their children's learning is. However, it appeared that no research had been conducted to establish what primary schools were doing to ensure that there was PI in children's initial literacy learning. Hence, this study sought to look at what primary schools were doing to ensure that there was PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools.

Kang'ombe (2013) conducted a study in Lusaka high-density area to establish strategies primary school teachers used to partner up with parents and the constraints that were faced. The study reviewed that the greatest constraint was inadequate communication and high illiteracy levels of parents. The study recommended that there was a need to conduct sensitisation of both teachers and parents on the importance of literacy development. This study, however, sought to extend this research by taking a multi-dimension view which included teacher-training on PI at both initial and continuous development levels in a rural district; Mungwi.

Kabali (2014) also conducted a study which focused on the influence of home environment on the acquisition of reading skills in Zambia. Results of the study confirmed that a child's home environment in Zambia was influential in exposing children to literacy practices. The study further observed that literacy practices to which children are exposed at home by the parents foster their interest in reading and knowledge about reading. However, there was low parental involvement (PI) in children's learning. However, Kabali (2014) did not look at what primary schools were doing to ensure that there was PI in children's initial literacy learning. Thus, this study sought to extend this research by focusing on what was happening in teacher education and higher level management at Provincial Education Office (PEO) and District Education Board Secretary's (DEBS) office.

2.17 Summary of Chapter Two

This chapter focused on literature review on literacy and parental involvement. Essentially, empirical studies reviewed in this literature have shown that there is low parental involvement in children's literacy learning. However, it brought out a number of activities that can be done to enhance parental involvement in children's literacy learning. This seems to suggest that with relevant support, all parents could be meaningfully involved in their children's literacy learning. In this regard, this study sought to extend past research by looking at what critical stakeholders such as teacher education, management at the School, Provincial and District Education levels were

doing to ensure that there is PI in children's initial literacy learning. The next chapter outlines the methodology that was used in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This previous chapter reviewed the literature related to the topic. This chapter looks at the methodology that was used in the study. It covers the study area, the design, target population, study sample, and sampling. Data collection instruments and procedure, data analysis as well as ethical considerations have also been addressed.

3.1 Study Area

The research was conducted in Mungwi District, Northern Province, Zambia. The study targeted four public primary schools which were conveniently selected and categorised as rural and urban on the basis of their distance from the District Education Board Secretary's (DEBS) office. For the purpose of this study, an urban school was one located within the radius of 12 km from the DEBS office where-as a rural school was one located beyond 12km radius from DEBS office. Hence, two rural and two urban schools were included in the study. The combination of rural and urban schools was not meant for comparisons but to make the study more representative.

3.2 Research Design

According to Msabila and Nalaila (2013), a research design is a detailed description of how the study would be conducted. In this study, a qualitative research design was used as it is known to be credible in constructing meaning from the perspective of the actors (Flick, 2009; Huberman and Miles, 2002; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). A qualitative research design involves the investigation of human experiences in their natural settings in order to find meaning that defines a theory, practice and the formulation of instruments and further research (Lobiondo-Wood & Judith, 2006). This study had a focus on what primary schools were doing to ensure that there was parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools.

3.3 Research Method

According to Creswell (2009), research methods or strategies of inquiry are types of qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods designs or models aimed at providing specific direction for procedures in a research design. For the purpose of this study, a case study was used. Lippincott & Wilkins (2004), define a case study as an “...in-depth investigation of a single entity or a small number of entities” (p.219). Creswell (2010), explains that “The focus of a qualitative study may be a specific issue or issues with a case or cases to illustrate the issue” (p. 243). In this study, four primary schools were chosen to help establish how primary schools ensured that there was parental involvement in children’s initial literacy learning. A case study was preferred as it is a suitable qualitative inquiry method that identifies and describes practices, beliefs, attitudes as well as “...perceptions, opinion, feelings, and knowledge (Patton, 2002 p. 4). Therefore, it was believed that a case study would help the researcher gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences being studied.

3.4 Target Population

According to Lobiondo-Wood & Judith (2006), a population is “a well- defined set that has certain specified properties” (p. 26). In this study, population included all primary schools in the District, School Administrators of primary schools and Grades 1-4 pupils and teachers, the entire Parents Teachers’ Association (PTA) membership of the primary schools, the District and Provincial Education Offices, Resource Centre Coordinators at both District and Provincial levels as well as lecturers teaching methods in literacy and language in a College of Education.

3.5 Study Sample

The sample for the study was conveniently drawn as the researcher wanted two urban schools that were within the radius of 12 kilometers from the District Education Board Secretary’s (DEBS) office and two rural schools beyond 12 kilometers from the total number of schools in Mungwi district. At school level, 4 teachers teaching Grades 1-4 were chosen, 10 grades three and four children were included in the sample together

with head teachers of each of the selected schools. This translated into 16 teachers, 40 pupils and 4 head teachers in the study. The study also included 2 standard officers from the DEBS and Provincial Education Officer's (PEO) offices respectively. One (1) District Resource Centre Coordinator (DRCC), 1 Provincial Resource Centre Coordinator (PRCC) and a Head of Department (HOD) teaching language and literacy in one primary college of education were also part of the study. This brought the number of participants from teacher education to 3.

Two (2) parents from the Parent Teachers' Association (PTA) top leadership positions and 8 parents of pupils in Grades 1-4 were included in the sample. **The choice of parents was based on the number of children recruited in the study.** This translated into ten parents per school and the total number of parents in the study came to 40. The expected number of participants in the study was 105. However, one teacher was out of the station at the time of the research. Below is a distribution of respondents according to categories:

Table2: Distribution of Participants

CATEGORY OF PARTICIPANTS	NUMBER
School Administrators	4
Teachers of Grades 1-4	16
Parents	40
Pupils	40
Teacher Education (PRCC, DRCC, Lecturer)	3
Standard Officers (DESO, SESO Languages)	2
	TOTAL: 105

3.5.1 Sampling Procedure

Sampling is the process that “selects representative units of a population for the study” (Lobiondo-Wood & Judith, 2006 p. 287). In this study, purposeful sampling was used. This is in line with Creswell (2009) who stated that behind the qualitative research is the idea to “...purposely select participants or sites that will best help the researcher

understand the problem and research question” (p.178). McMillan & Schumacher (2010) explains that purposeful sampling involves the selection of information-rich cases. It includes a random selection of cases (sampling by case) which has higher chances of eliciting the required information and snowball sampling (network) where one participant identifies the next person with the required information.

In this study, both sampling by case and snowball sampling were used. Initially, the researcher had planned to use sampling by case which involved a random selection of participants. All teachers teaching Grades 1-4 were purposefully recruited in the study. However, interaction with the District Education Standards Officer (DESO) and the Senior Education Standards Officer (SESO) who were selected on the basis of their offices as academic implementers brought to the fore the need to also contact the District Resource Center Coordinator (DRCC) and the Provincial Resource Centre Coordinator (PRCC) respectively. This is because; the two offices are under Teacher Education and so it was believed that the two would provide information that was needed and reliable for this particular study. This brought in snowball sampling. The change of sampling procedure in the field was according to Creswell (2009), who stated that “qualitative research process is emergent” explaining that the “initial plan for the research cannot be tightly prescribed and all phases of the process may change or shift after the researcher enters the field (p.175-176).

Similarly, Grades three and four children were included in the study after conducting a pilot study which indicated that it was necessary to involve the children to answer questions on opportunities that the school gave to their parents for them to be involved in their children’s initial literacy learning. This is according to Creswell (2009) who further stated that “...individuals studied and the site visited may be modified” (Ibid) in qualitative research. The researcher picked on Grades 3 and 4 children because the pilot study showed that they were able to articulate issues more clearly and convincingly than those in Grades 1 and 2.

In order to select the children, the researcher separated boys and girls in a particular class after which she asked each of the pupils in the two categories to pick a bottle top

from a bag which had coloured bottle tops with only 5 of them being white. This helped the researcher to come up with 5 boys and 5 girls making the number 10 needed in the study. In regard to age, the children were in the range of 8-9 years.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

In order for the researcher to get views from respondents, a number of instruments were used. This is according to Creswell (2009) who stated that it is typical in qualitative research to gather data through different strategies such as interviews, document analysis, and observations. In this study, an interview guide was used for heads of primary schools, the District Education Standards Office (DESO), District Resource Centre Coordinator (DRCC), Provincial Resource Centre Coordinator (PRCC), college lecturer and for Grades 1-4 teachers in the targeted schools. A focus group discussion guide was used for selected parents of Grades 1-4 pupils and selected Grades 3-4 pupils. The researcher also used a document check-list to examine records for PTA meetings held in the last four years and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities conducted at primary school level in the last two years. This was also used to analyse the teacher training literacy syllabus to check for content on parental involvement in children's literacy learning. A document check-list was also used to determine the kind of invitations primary schools used to invite parents to participate in their children's literacy learning.

3.6.1 Validity of Instruments

According to Msabila and Nalaila (2013), the validity of research instruments refers to the degree to which the instruments can elicit data as required in a particular study. In this study, the researcher ensured the validity of instruments by undertaking a pilot study which allowed the researcher to make some adjustments to the instruments.

3.7 Construct Validity

Construct validity is concerned with the adequate coverage of a topic (Upagande and Shande, 2012). In this study, the researcher tried to attain construct validity by using

various sources of information which included, interviews with different stakeholders, focus group discussions, and document reviews.

3.8 Reliability of the Study

Reliability of the study was ascertained through the use of multiple sources of data; individual interviews, focus group discussions and review of documents (Creswell, 2009).

3.9 Data Collection Procedure

Before undertaking the research, a pilot study was conducted to determine the suitability of the instruments. This was done to help the researcher make adjustments to the research instruments where necessary. It also helped the researcher in understanding one-self as a researcher. Once this was done, necessary adjustments were made (Refer to 3.5above).

To collect data, the researcher started by visiting schools to make prior arrangements with school administrators. During the visit, the researcher explained what kind of people would be required, the number and the documents that the researcher would want to look at so that these could be prepared in advance. Identification of the parents and children to take part in the study was done with the help of class teachers. This was arranged in such a way that the same children who were to take part in the study were the same children whose parents were recruited for the study. This enabled the researcher to easily obtain the consent of the children's parents.

3.10 Data Collection Strategies

Data was collected through individual interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. The researcher conducted four focus group discussions with respect to the parents of Grades 1-4 pupils and four for selected Grades 3 and 4 pupils. This means that eight focus group discussions took place in the study. Focus group discussion was used as a data collection strategy because it uses open-ended questions which enables participants to respond freely (Creswell, 2009). Besides, the focus group discussion was used as it utilises group dynamics to elicit new and additional data (Marshall and Rossman, 2011).

A document check-list was used to examine Parents' Teachers Association (PTA) record of meetings that had been held in the past four years and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities that had been conducted at school level in the past two years. The document check list was also used to analyse the literacy syllabus for teacher training to check for methodological content on PI in children's literacy learning. The same was also used to analyse invitation letters schools were using to invite parents to school.

3.10.1 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted face to face with heads of primary schools, teachers of Grades 1-4, the District Education Standards Office (DESO), Senior Education Standards Officer (SESO) Languages, District Resource Centre Coordinator (DRCC), Provincial Resource Centre Coordinator (PRCC) and the college lecturer. Collecting data through interviews was advantageous for interviews are known to be reasonably objective (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010) and flexible (Patton, 2002). Besides, semi-structured interviews leave room for probing (Hancock, *et al.* 2007) thereby allowing for clarity and detail. For all participants, the interviews took place at their places of work (offices) except for one who opted to be interviewed at home for convenience purposes. The following process was followed to conduct the interviews:

The researcher started by welcoming the participants and introducing herself as a way of calming the participants. Thereafter, the researcher introduced the research to the participants explaining the topic and the reason for the research with adherence to ethical guidelines (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). After participants had given their consent, the researcher began the interview starting with the more general questions to allow participants open up and provide answers in full (Richie & Lewis, 2003) and then coming to specific ones.

During the interview, the researcher made hand written notes verbatim coupled with recording in the case of participants who permitted the researcher to tape record. The researcher made an effort to enhance an in-depth elicitation of information by trying to frame the questions clearly and by probing. Towards the end of the interview, the

researcher notified the participants that the interview was coming to an end to ease the atmosphere and return to normal interactions (Richie and Lewis, 2003). The interview ended with thanking the participants for their participation and reassuring them that data collected would be put into safe custody and that it was purely for academic purposes.

3.10.2 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions were conducted for parents and children. The focus group was suitable for this group of participants as it is socially oriented and it allows the researcher to obtain data in a more natural way, thereby increasing the validity of information (Creswell, 2007). Besides, the use of focus group discussions enabled participants to expand the responses of others thereby bringing up ideas that may have otherwise remained undisclosed (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Each of the focus groups comprised 10 people; a number that the researcher felt was small enough to warrant participants' adequate sharing of views and big enough to warrant divergent views (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Like for the interviews in 3.10.1 above, the researcher began by introducing herself and the topic of the research as well as its purpose. The participants were also taken through the ethical guidelines after which they gave their consent in willingness to take part in the study.

All focus group discussions were conducted in Bemba since it was the language that all participants were fluent in. Later, the responses were translated to English by the researcher as she understands the language. During the process, the researcher was mindful of group dynamics knowing that some people can dominate the discussion (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). This helped the researcher to involve everyone. Individual participants were given a chance to "express their views without any interruption" in the way their responses were coming out (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005 p. 145). All the responses were recorded verbatim.

3.10.3 Document Analysis

In the case of documents, the researcher checked and analysed the Literacy syllabus used in primary teacher training, records of the Parent Teachers Association (PTA)

meetings, records of the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) meetings conducted at school level and invitation letters used to invite parents to school. Each particular documents was analysed with a particular focus. Document analysis was advantageous in this research as it enabled the researcher to obtain the words and expressions of participants. Besides, the researcher was able to access the documents at her convenience (Creswell, 2009).

The literacy syllabus used in teacher training was checked and analysed to establish whether it included any topics related to parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools. This also obtained for the records of continuous professional development activities that had been conducted at the school level. The researcher was availed with the School Inset Record Book (SIR book) which was checked and analysed for content on parental involvement in children's literacy learning. The idea was to establish whether teachers had access to training on parental involvement as a way of facilitating the involvement of parents in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools.

The PTA records of meetings in the four schools were checked and analysed for the inclusion of issues related to parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning. Invitation letters that teachers used to invite parents to go to school to discuss issues related to their children's learning were checked and analysed to establish if the invitations made were specific or general.

3.11 Data Analysis

Data analysis can be understood as a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to a volume of data. It involves searching for general statements regarding relationships among categories of collected data (Marshall and Rossman, 1995).

In line with the design, qualitative data analysis was utilised. Data was thematically analysed by coding significant themes in the participants' thoughts and reflections (Patton, 2002; Clark, 2006, Kombo & Tromp, 2006). According to Kombo & Tromp, (2006), themes refer to "...topics or major subjects that come up in discussions". Since

the research was qualitative, analysis began during the data collection process. After each day's exercise of collecting data, the researcher took time to read through the collected information to make sure that the information was correctly recorded and also to get some impressions in relation to the topic. The data collected was then arranged in themes according to the research questions. This was done to establish the trends and enhance easy interpretation of data.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

In research, ethics are principles of right and wrong acceptable to a particular group of people (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). According to John & Christensen (2008), research ethics are a set of guiding principles that assist researchers in conducting ethical studies. For the purpose of this study, the researcher took the following steps to uphold research ethics:

Before undertaking the study, the researcher obtained permission from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Zambia. (See Appendix 3.0). Permission to conduct the study in Northern Province and Mungwi District was sought from the Permanent Secretary; Ministry of General Education, (MoGE) (See Appendix 2.0). To that effect permission was given and the relevant offices were accordingly informed. (See Appendix 2). The head teachers in the target primary schools were also notified. This also obtained for the college principal and the parents of the children.

Before undertaking the study, the researcher reviewed her identity to the participants and explained the nature and purpose of the study (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). After that, participants were informed verbally and in writing that any information obtained from the study was by no means going to be released to any unauthorised person in whatever circumstance both during and after the study (Creswell, 2007). The researcher further assured the participants that should the work be published, their identities would still be kept confidential. Furthermore, participants were informed that participation in the study was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw if they wanted and that no consequences were to follow. Similarly, participants were told that they were free not to respond to some questions if they so wished.

For those who were able to read and understand English, the researcher gave them consent forms asking them to read and ask questions where they were not clear which they did. For those who were not able to adequately understand English, the researcher provided a Bemba version (See Appendix 3.1) which was read to them step by step and where they did not understand, they were free to ask questions and clarifications were made accordingly. All the participants in the study gave consent by signing a consent form before participating in the study. For the children, their parents consented on their behalf. During the study, the views of participants were respected and kept confidentially.

3.13 Summary of Chapter Three

This chapter looked at the methodology that was used in the study. It covers the study area, the design, target population, study sample and sampling, data collection instruments and procedure, data analysis and ethical considerations. The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Overview

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The Findings are presented according to research questions as reflected in Chapter one:(1) how do primary schools ensure that parents have opportunities for involvement in their children's initial literacy learning? (2) How do primary schools provide access for parents to participate in capacity building opportunities that aim at improving their children's literacy skills(3).What components of school organised PTA meetings facilitate parental involvement (PI) in children's initial literacy learning? (4)What aspects of PI are incorporated in teacher training literacy syllabus to enhance primary school teacher's involvement of parents in their children's initial literacy learning? (5)What policy or policies do primary schools have that foster PI in children's initial literacy learning?

4.1 How Primary Schools Ensure that Parents have Opportunities for Involvement in their Children's Initial Literacy Learning

The study found that PI in children's initial literacy learning was only achieved through the strategies put in place by some cooperating partners such as Read To Succeed (RTS) a Non-governmental Organisation (NGO) supported by USAID. The strategies included formation of School Community Partnership Committee (SCPC) in each school, invitation of parents to participate in literacy events at school, encouraging parents to attend their children's literacy learning sessions, engaging parents in the preparation of reading materials for use in the teaching and learning of literacy, giving children homework, sharing children's literacy performance and problems with their parents and monitoring children's work and teacher preparations. These strategies are outlined and explained below:

a) School Community Partnership Program

The study established that each primary school visited had a School Community Partnership Program (SCPP). A SCPP was an initiative of Read To Succeed (RTS) through which primary schools were linked to the community as one teacher put it;

“We have the School Community Partnership Program which links us to the community”.

Most participants revealed that invitations of parents to participate in various literacy related activities both at school and at home were done through the SCPP One school administrator put it this way:

Through the SCPP, parents are invited to see how the children are learning. Under the same program, we have plans to construct a reading shelter within the school where parents can come and read stories to their children.

The study also revealed that under the SCPP, each school visited had a School Community Partnership Committee (SCPC) which spear-headed PI in children’ learning. According to the terms of reference availed to the researcher, one of the responsibilities of the SCPC was to ensure that educational interests and the welfare of children are given priority at all times in the areas of reading and writing. The committee met every month to plan and review PI activities in children’s learning. One school administrator said this in support of this view:“A SCPC is in place and is in the forefront to spear heard PI activities”.

b) Invitation of Parents to Participate in Literacy Events at School

Invitation of parents to participate in literacy events at school included those requesting parents to attend Parents’ Open Day and International World Literacy Day (IWLD) celebrations, Reading Circles (reading competitions) on closing day or any other selected day as stated by one teacher:

We invite parents to celebrate world literacy day with the children. During the celebrations, parents have an opportunity to observe their children perform literacy activities such as reading and writing.

One school administrators also put it this way:

On World Literacy Day, we call parents to come and celebrate with the learners and during the process, they see how their children are reading.

Parents and children were also of the same view. Parents stated that teachers invited them to attend children's reading competitions, and International World Literacy Day (IWLD) celebrations during which they had a chance to witness their children perform reading activities. Children explained that on closing day, teachers asked them to go with parents to school so that they could attend their children's reading competitions. The same was the case for the IWLD celebrations.

The study also established that inviting parents to attend literacy events gave them an opportunity to read to the children as role models and to perform drama for the children. On this one, one school administrator had this to say:

We hold literacy day celebrations and ask parents to see pupils reading. During Open Days, we ask parents to come and read in front of pupils as models. We also engage parents in poetry and drama performance during open days.

One parent in a focus group discussion also said:

*Tulasangwakoukoabanabalecimfyanyamukubelengapampelaya term.
Icicilatupelakoakashitakakumonai fy oabanabalebelenga. Ngakuli open
day,
balatupelakoinshitayakubelengelaabananokwangalakoifyangaloi fyalola
kukufundaabanaubukankalabwabamukwishibaukubelenganokulemba.*

English:

We attend reading competitions at the end of the term. This gives us a chance to observe how children are reading. During school open days, we are given a chance to read to our children and perform some drama to teach children the importance of reading.

However, participants did not state how primary schools prepared parents to participate in such events apart from giving them formal invitations to attend the events.

The study also revealed that asking parents to attend literacy events at school also gave them an opportunity to see how their children were progressing in their literacy learning.

c) Engaging Parents in the Preparation of Children's Reading Materials.

The study established that this was another strategy primary schools used to ensure that parents had opportunities to be involved in their children's initial literacy learning. The

study further established that parents also greatly contribute learning and teaching materials in support of literacy lessons. For example, the study established that teachers and school administrators asked parents to come up with words which primary schools used during reading competitions. The study further established that parents were also asked to compose traditional stories and take them to schools for use in the learning and teaching of literacy in primary schools. On this one, one school administrator had this to say:

We ask parents to write story books in local languages and bring them to school. Sometimes, we request parents to prepare words for reading which children read during reading competitions and children who read well are rewarded.

The parents and children were also of the same view as expressed in one focus group discussion:

*Bakafundishabalatupelaumulimowakupenyaamashiwiayakubeleengaaba
namufyakucimfyanyaukonaiwfetusangwanokumonakoukoabanabaleebel
eengaayayenemashiwi. Limo
balatwipushaukuleembaututabotwamalyashinokuleetakusukulupakutiab
anabalebelenga [Parent]*

English:

Teachers assign us work to come up with reading words for children to use during reading competitions which we also attend and see how they are reading. Sometimes, they ask us to write story books and bring them to school so that children can be reading.

However, some parents stated that they did not know how to write and as such they could not participate in the preparation of reading materials. For example, one parent in a focus group discussion had this to say:

*Nangubakafundishabatwebaukulembautumalyashinanguamashiwiyakub
elengaabana,
tulafihwapamulanduwakukanaihibaukulembanaukubeleenga. Ecimo
cine
namufyakubelengaiifyobakafundishabapeelaabanaiyakubabelengela.
Cilefwaikwabakafundishaukumonangakutibatwisiwilaikoiukululyamwash
ibukenipakutwafwakoukusambililaukubelenganokuleemba.*

English

Even though teachers ask us to write stories for the children to read, we fail to write because of illiteracy. This also applies to reading materials that teachers give children for us to read for them. There is need for teachers to consider opening adult classes to help us learn how to read and write.

The study also revealed that some parents were not responsive to the request. For example, one school administrator said, “We invite parents to come up with stories but the response is not very good”.

d) Encouraging Parents to Attend their Children’s Literacy Learning Sessions at School

The study also found that primary schools encouraged parents to attend their children literacy learning to observe how their children were learning. Most of the participants indicated that this was done through the SCPP. However, some participants said that this was done through Family Pac; a program that had been rolled by United Nations International Children’s Education Fund (UNICEF). In this program, parents were asked to attend their children’s learning sessions during which they witnessed their children learning as put by one PEO official:

Teachers are asked to follow what was in Family Pac where they invited parents to be in class and discern if there are any difficulties.

Parents and children were also in agreement with this idea. Parents mentioned that they sat in class and observed their children learning as the teachers were teaching. They also stated that primary schools gave them freedom to visit the school and observe their children learning any time they felt like as stated by one parent:

*Kusukulubakafundishangabaleefundatulekalatuleumfwaifyobaleefunda.
Twalikwatainsambushakuyakusukuluiinshitailiyonsenokuyamonai fyoba
nabalesambililaukulembanaukubeleenga [parent]*

English:

At school when teachers are teaching, we sit and listen to what they are teaching. We are free to visit classes any time we like and observe how children are learning how to read and write.

One child also put it this way: “*Baleetaabafyashimukumonai fyoleembanefyoubelenga mu class*”. “They (teachers) invite our parents to see how we read and write in class”.

The study further established that parents were not only expected to sit in class and observe their children’s learning but were also expected to make some contributions in form of praise and suggestions with regard to their children’s literacy learning.

The study also found that invitations of parents to attend their children’s initial literacy learning helped parents to learn and appreciate how traditional games and stories could be used to teach children how to read and write. Others reviewed that observing children learning in a local language helped them to develop confidence that they could also teach their children at home. On this, a parent in a focus group discussion had this to say:

*Ukusangwaukoabanabalesambiliacilatwafwilishakokusambililaifyoifya
ngalonautushimifingabombamukufundaabanaukubelenganaukuleemba.*

English

Attending children’s learning sessions helps us to learn how traditional games and stories can be of help in teaching children how to read and write.

In another focus group discussion one parent put it this way:

*Ukumonaukobakafundishabalefundaabanaukusomanokuleemba mu
Cibembakulatwafwakoukumfwaukutinaifwekutitwafundaabanabesumumayanda.*

English

Observing teachers teaching our children how to read and write in Bemba helps us gain the confidence that we can also do the same at home.

However, some teachers, school administrators and, some parents who were members of the School Community Partnership Committee (SCPC) pointed out that some parents did not bother to see their children learning. For example, one school administrator said, “Even when they (parents) have been asked to be visiting classes to check on how their children are learning, they do not come”. One parent; a member of the SCPC also put it this way:

*Lyonsetulasosaukutiabafyashibaleeisapakutibasangwakonombakubafyas
hikwalibaumuleele.*

English

We often talk about the need for parents to come and attend but there is inertia on the part of parents.

The study also found that some primary schools had put some measures to ensure that parents attended their children's literacy learning sessions. These included asking parents to log in the parents visitation book and write their observations, putting a penalty on parents who did not want to see their children learning and asking teachers to record their interaction with parents.

e) Communication with Parents

Communication involved inviting parents to discuss with them their children's literacy performance, showing parents their children's literacy progress and discussion of children's literacy-related problems with parents.

On inviting parents to discuss with them their children's literacy performance, one teacher had this to say:

We invite parents to school to come and share with them their children's performance in literacy. We invite parents when a child performs poorly in literacy.

Parents in a focus group discussion were also in support as seen from what one parent said:

Bakafundishalimolimobalatwitamukulanshanyapafyoabanabesubaleebo mba mu literacy. Balatulangaifyoabanabaleeyapantanshi.

English:

Sometimes teachers invite us to discuss with them how our children are performing in literacy. They show us how our children are progressing.

As for discussion of children's literacy-related problems, one teacher had this to say on behalf of others:

We call the parent if a child has a problem and we try to identify areas where they can help by discussing together. When a child is absent, you call parents to find out because absenteeism is a serious cause for poor literacy and so we call parents so that they help us ensure that their children attend school regularly.

It was also found that primary schools mainly used general invitations to invite parents to school and not necessarily an invitation for literacy activities per se. The study established that all schools used development of the school as the reason for inviting parents to school and not to attend literacy-related activities. The findings showed that the language used in the invitation letters was collaborative in that parents were addressed as partners as seen in the sample sentence below:

We invite you to come to school so that we can discuss some developmental issues concerning our school.

f) Giving Children Homework

The study found that all schools gave children literacy homework to be done with the help of parents at home. This included word building from sounds learnt in class, composition of stories and construction of sentences. On this one, one teacher had this to say:

When teaching new sounds, I ask parents through homework to help their children identify and formulate words with that particular sound.

Another teacher with a similar view put it this way:

When learning a particular sound, learners are told to ask parents to help them make words that are related to that particular sound. For those in Grade four, they even make stories.

It was also found that teachers asked parents to sign in their children's literacy homework as a way of acknowledging their involvement. However, the type of homework exemplified was focused on literate parents. Teachers did not state how they involved illiterate parents in homework and how such parents were supposed to acknowledge involvement in their children's homework.

Parents had similar views with the teachers. They also stated that teachers gave pupils homework which included giving children books for parents to read to them at home and asking parents to check their children's exercise books. They also reviewed that their children also asked for help from them in their literacy activities such as teaching them how to read and to tell them stories. However, some parents felt that children did

not regularly ask their parents for help with literacy learning activities. They stated that Grade ones were the ones who asked more often.

However, some parents mentioned that sometimes they did not know how to help in homework. They explained that they sometimes told their children to ask other people to help. Asked as to whether they had received any training on how to help their children in homework, all the parents declined that they did not.

Children also mentioned that teachers gave them different homework activities as a way of involving parents in their children's initial literacy learning. They had this to say:

*Ba teacher ngabatupela homework limbi
ukupaangimiseelabatwebaatiabakung'andabayemwafwako. Nga ba
teacher batupela home-work,
batwebaatitakulikuyaisangilauyeebaabakalambaboobebakwafweko.*

English:

When teachers give us homework such as making sentences they tell us that people at home should help you. When teachers give us homework, they tell us not to go and answer by ourselves but to go and ask your elder brothers/sisters to help you.

However, the children also mentioned that sometimes their parents told them that they did not know how to help as expressed in the following:

*Nshishibeifyakucita, wipushebamunonkonanguabanobe.
Nshaishibaukubelenga. Finshimwacisambilila.
Nafikosa, bushetabacimipelako example?*

English:

I do not know what to do, ask your brothers and sisters. I do not know how to read. What did you learn? It is difficult. Where you not given an example?

Asked on how teachers prepared them (children) to interact with their parents in home work, the children had different views some of which were:

Batwebafyeatimuyeebaabakungandabamwafweko.

English: They merely ask us to tell people at home to help us.

Balandaatinganawishibauisangilewemwine.

English: They say, “If you know, find answers on your own”.

Balandaatitakulikulekaabafyashibakulembele. Kubepushafyebakulangakoifyakulemba.

English: They say, “do not let parents write for you but just ask them to show you how to write”

Balandaatimwikalenomunobemusange.

English: They say, “Sit with your friend and work out the answers”.

Some teachers felt that they were not doing much to ensure that parents had opportunities for involvement in their children’s initial literacy learning. For example, some teachers responding to a question on what they did to give parents opportunities to be involved in their children’s literacy learning simply stated that not much was being done. Asked why they were not doing much, some said that parents had negative attitudes where as some said that they did not have enough knowledge on PI.

g) Monitoring of Pupils’ Literacy Exercise Books and Teachers’ Preparations

It was found that School administrators monitored teacher preparations to ensure that teachers included teaching aids to stick in classes for the inspiration of parents. Teachers monitored children’s exercise books to check for parents signatures which guaranteed parents’ participation in their children’s literacy homework. One school administrator had this to say:

We monitor pupils’ books and the preparations of teachers to check for homework on literacy. We encourage teachers to design good teaching aids to stick in class for the inspiration of parents when they visit classes. We also check for parents’ signatures under the given work in pupils’ books.

However, not all the parents were able to sign in the pupils’ exercise books to guarantee their participation in their children’s homework.

For the PEO official from Standards office, PI in children's initial literacy learning was achieved by embracing the efforts of cooperating partners as expressed in the following:

We are open to the initiatives of cooperating partners such as Read to Succeed. Teachers are also asked to follow what was in New Break Through to Literacy (NBTL) Family Pac where they invite parents to be in class and discern if there are any difficulties.

It was also found that some officials at the Provincial Education Office (PEO) and the District Education Board Secretary's (DEBS) office worked in collaboration with Read ToSucceed (RTS) to monitor what was going on in primary schools. For example, responding to a question on what mechanisms had been put in place to ensure that there was PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools, one PEO official from the Teacher Education Department (TED) said, "Monitoring is done through the RTS Program". The same idea was also expressed by a DEBS official from a similar office in this way, "Through RTS, monitoring is done to see what is going on in schools".

However, there was a mismatch on the views of officials from Standard Office at PEO and DEBS office and those from TED in the same offices. Some officials from Standards office at DEBS believed that PI in children's initial literacy learning was the responsibility of TED and the Planning office at DEBS. For example, responding to a similar question on mechanisms the district had put in place to ensure that there was PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools, the standards officer at DEBS had this to say:

The office is not doing anything. Issues to do with PI in children's learning are not under this office. The work is done by planning and teacher education. They are the ones working with RTS. For us, we have very little.

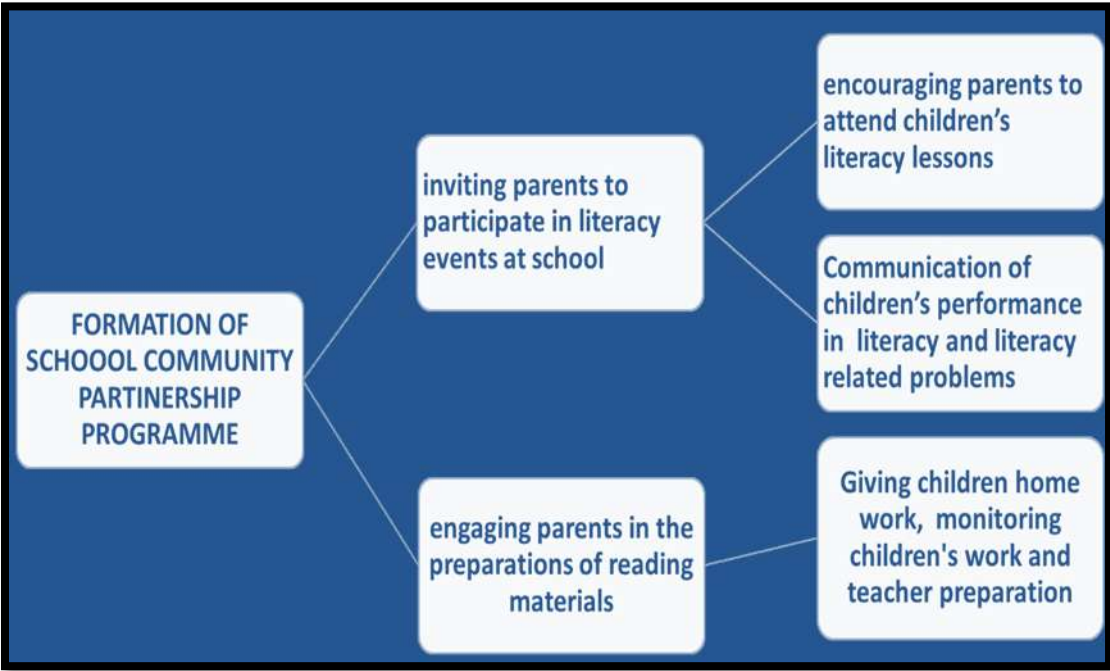
On further probe on what was being done in regard to monitoring by Standards office, the same DEBS official gave the following response, "We do not have contacts with schools. We have never done any monitoring".

It was also found that the Standards Office felt left out in what was being done to ensure that there was PI in children’s initial literacy learning; a situation they believed to be a hindrance to the sustenance and success of PI in children’s literacy learning in primary schools. For example, a standard officer from DEBS office put it this way:

The program spearheading PI, for example, RTS leave out the department that is supposed to implement academic and curriculum delivery”. Sustainability is at stake because the District Education Standards Office (DESO) is left out. Because we are not involved, there is a gap. There should be a system flowing from the DEBS office.

See the figure below giving a summary of findings on what schools do to involve parents in literacy learning of their children.

Figure 6: Summary of Findings on What Schools do to Ensure that Parents Have Opportunities for Involvement in their Children’s Initial Literacy Learning



Source: Field Data

However, it was also found that primary schools were facing a number of challenges in ensuring that parents had opportunities for involvement in their children’s initial literacy learning. Some of the challenges mentioned were (a) negative attitude of

parents and teachers, (b) wrong interpretation of policy, and (c) lack of material resources.

Some school administrators, teachers, parents and some officials from DEBS and PEO office mentioned that negative attitude of teachers and parents was a challenge in ensuring that parents had opportunities for involvement in their children's initial literacy learning. For example, one school administrator said,

Some teachers and parents have a wrong attitude towards PI. No matter how you try, they remain indifferent. Some parents are not responsive to the invitation to see their children learning in class. Parents think it is the teachers' responsibility to do everything for their children.

On wrong policy interpretation, one school administrator put it this way:

There is wrong policy interpretation; the policy on free education to some parents means parents should not buy anything for the child. Parents say it is free education. Children are supposed to find everything at school especially reading materials.

As for the lack of resources, some teachers stated that there were limited reading materials to lend to children so that parents could help them. A PEO official from the Standards office indicated that efforts towards ensuring that there was PI in children's initial literacy learning was also limited by lack of transport indicating that most of the trips made to schools were made through the efforts of the RTS project as put: "Mobility is a problem. Had it not been for Read to Succeed, it will be difficult to reach the schools".

4.2 How Primary Schools Provide Access for Parents to Participate in Capacity Building Opportunities that Aim at Improving their Children's Literacy Skills

The study found that primary schools managed to create parents' access to capacity building mainly by working with cooperating partners. With the help of NGOs such as RTS and World Vision, some parents and teachers were able to have access to knowledge and information. This included sensitisation of parents on the importance of PI in children's literacy learning, sensitisation of parents on literacy promoting behaviours such as the need to give children time to read at home, good parenting and

Read To Succeed which supports early grade reading talk about the need to give children time to read at home. Read To Succeed talks about children's absenteeism and its effects on children's attainment of literacy.

It was also found that sensitisation of parents on PI was not restricted to parents with school going children only, but was open to all members of the community.

In regard to showing parents their children's progress in literacy learning, school administrators, and officials from Teacher Education Department at PEO and DEBS offices stated that they showed children's literacy progress charts to parents to give them information on how their children were progressing in their literacy learning. Through this, parents were able to compare their children's performance in their school with the performance of children in other schools.

It was also found that with the help of cooperating partners, primary schools were able to provide material support such as exercise books and readers to individual pupils through their parents and schools as a whole. For example, one school administrator stated that World Vision had given them a Television Set (TV) which parents were supposed to watch with the children. The parents also mentioned that World Vision was helping them with children's exercise books.

It was further found that parents' access to material support was also achieved by teachers lending children literacy books. For example, a teacher in one schools said,

We give children story books for parents to read to them. If the child is in yellow, I lend children books for parents to read to him or her.

This view was also shared by some parents who said, "*Limolimobakafundishabalapeelaabanaamabukupakutitulebabelengelakomumayanda*" "Sometimes teachers give children books for us to read for them at home.

However, it was established that teachers did not visit children's homes to interact with parents. Only 1 out of 15 teachers agreed to have regularly visited children's homes as a capacity building strategy with one indicating to have visited the child's home only once when the child stopped going to school. The rest stated that they did not visit

children's homes to interact with parents. For example, responding to a question on whether teachers were visiting children's homes to interact with parents on their children's initial literacy learning, one teacher had this to say: "Not really. Only once when the child stopped coming to school". The rest simply indicated that they had never visited children's homes to interact with parents.

Parents also made the same observation that teachers did not visit children's homes to interact with parents. They explained that teachers only visited villages as a group and only when called by the headman to attend community events.

4.3 Components of School Organised PTA Meetings that Facilitate Parental Involvement in Children's Initial Literacy Learning in Primary Schools

The study found that generally, primary schools did not use PTA meetings to facilitate PI in children's initial literacy learning. Many teachers and school administrators indicated with emphasis that there was no deliberate inclusion of PI issues in school organised PTA meetings unless something came up on any other business. They stated that they only discussed learner performance and how best they could improve it.

However, teachers and school administrators in one school agreed that PI issues were discussed in PTA meetings. On further probe of what components were being included in PTA meetings, the school administrator said:

We talk about the need for parents to assist their children in literacy and the need to encourage learners to attend classes regularly.

A teacher from the same school put it this way:

During school organised PTA meetings, we talk about children's progress in literacy, using a progress chart we have introduced and give parents results to compare their child's with other children's results.

Parents from three schools were also in agreement that PTA meetings did not cover PI in literacy learning. Some felt that PTA executive committee members had more access to information than ordinary members. In one school, however, parents were of the view that PI was being included in school organized PTA meetings. They stated that

teachers showed them their children progressed (in literacy). They also stated that teachers talked about how they could help their children learn how to read and write.

The document analysis guide was another instrument used to check for inclusion of PI issues in the PTA record of meetings that had been conducted in the previous four years. Out of the four schools sampled in the study, only one school had evidence showing components of PI in children's literacy learning in only one of its PTA meetings that had been held the previous year in four years from the time of the study. Nevertheless, the records had detailed and diverse components on PI in children's literacy learning and the topics covered were as follows:

- i. Showing of Grade 2 Literacy Progress reports to parents;*
- ii. Explanation of things parents should do to support children's literacy learning;*
- iii. Encouraging parents to be coming to school regularly;*
- iv. Allowing children to do homework by giving them time;*
- v. Need for parents to listen to their children reading daily;*
- vi. Reading to the children;*
- vii. Writing stories for children*
- viii. The need for parents to buy story books for the children;*
- ix. Discussion of the importance of school with the children and*
- x. Participation in literacy-related activities at school.*

However, other meetings only addressed resource mobilisation for the development of the school, general performance of children and discipline. The school is the same one in which teachers, parents, and school administrators mentioned that PI in children's literacy learning was being covered in school organised PTA meetings.

4.4.Aspects of PI in the Primary Teacher Training Literacy Syllabus that Address How Teachers Can Involve Parents in their Children's Literacy Learning

It was found that the college literacy syllabus did not include any methodological components to empower student teachers with knowledge and skills for involving parents in their children's initial literacy learning in primary schools. The study has

further established that the literacy syllabus did not have any component related to PI involvement in children's literacy learning raising doubts as to whether or not teachers had the knowledge and skills needed to involve parents in their children's initial literacy learning. This doubt was further confirmed by one lecturer who said that as lecturers, they had scanty knowledge on parental involvement as expressed below:

Limited information is passively obtained from workshops and is not enough to make us understand the various dimensions of parental involvement. We only train teachers on how to teach literacy from grade one and simply make mention that teachers should avail information to parents [lecturer].

On whether or not teachers had the knowledge and skills needed to involve parents in their children's initial literacy learning in primary schools, one official from the DEBS office had this to say:

We invite teachers in the transition phase and try to sensitise them on the importance of involving parents in their children's literacy learning. We also conduct on-going sensitisation through grade meetings which are conducted at school or district level. Teachers have been trained and given a guideline on how to involve parents in homework.

The study further established that teachers had not received any training on PI in children's literacy learning from teacher training, workshops or CPD activities. Out of the 15 recruited in the study, only 4 reported having received some training through RTS program as stated by one teacher: "I did not learn anything during teacher training but through RTS I have learnt something". On further probe on what topics of parental involvement were covered by Read To Succeed, the same teacher said:

Read To Succeed emphasises giving home-work, inviting parents to see how their children are learning and giving children story books to read to their parents.

The study also established that non-inclusion of PI as a component in teacher training was seen as a challenge to PEO and DEBS officials, teachers and lecturers in ensuring that there was PI in children's initial literacy learning. For example, one PEO official said, "Teacher preparation is inadequate; Teachers have limited knowledge on PI in children's initial literacy learning". One teacher also put it this way:

As teachers, we do not have adequate knowledge on PI. Most of the things we do are on a trial basis. We know that PI is good. However, we were not trained on what is involved. But RTS has enlightened us a bit.

A PEO official from Standards office also expressed that lecturers did not have adequate knowledge. This idea was also expressed by a lecturer teaching literacy in a college of education who said:

Our knowledge as lecturers is equally limited. As a teacher trainer, I simply follow the literacy syllabus which has no component on parental involvement.

The document check-list was another instrument used to establish if teacher training included components on PI in children's initial literacy learning. According to the analysis, the content did not include any component on parental involvement in children's literacy learning.

4.4.1 Inclusion of Parental Involvement Topics in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Activities

The study found that CPD activities conducted in primary schools did not capture PI involvement issues to enhance teachers' involvement of parents in their children's initial literacy learning. All teachers in the study indicated that no components of PI in children's initial literacy learning were covered in CPD activities at school.

Officials from DEBS and PEO Offices felt that inclusion of Parental Involvement topics in CPD activities was the responsibility of teachers as stated by one official from DEBS: "It is the responsibility of teachers to identify their own needs". The findings revealed that for the past two years from this study, all CPD activities conducted in primary schools did not capture PI in children's literacy learning to facilitate teachers' involvement of parents. However, the study established that only one school's record of CPD meeting passively mentioned the need to set open days to facilitate interaction between parents and teachers and this was not pursued to define modalities of how this was to be done.

4.5 Policy or Policies Primary Schools Have that Foster Parental Involvement in Children's Initial Literacy Learning

Findings from this study reviewed that there was a mismatch in views on policy on PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools. Officials from DEBS and PEO offices and one school administrator out of the four believed that there was no policy that fostered PI in children's learning in primary schools. They stated that the National Homework policy designed by the Ministry of Education was meant for all subjects across the curriculum as explained by one DEBS official:

The homework policy is not aligned to parental involvement in children's literacy learning but it is connected to the improvement of learning in all areas and this follows guidelines from Ministry Headquarters.

The school administrator in agreement with the views of PEO and DEBS officials also explained that although the school had a homework policy, the policy did not focus on literacy but on all subjects in the curriculum.

DEBS and PEO officials from the standards office also stated that lack of a National Policy on PI in children's initial literacy learning inhibited them from taking an active role in fostering PI in children's literacy learning. For example, one PEO official said:

The curriculum is silent on PI in children's literacy learning. With no policy, we only come in when we see there is a problem in children's performance.

Another one from DEBS office said, "There are no guidelines to give us direction on what to do and so there is no system at District level".

However, many schools reviewed that they had a homework policy which enhanced PI in children's literacy learning. All the teachers interviewed and 2 out of 4 school administrators in the visited primary schools agreed that primary schools had a homework policy which worked as a strategy for involving parents in their children's initial literacy learning. For example, one teacher said, "We have a homework policy which says that every teacher is supposed to give homework in literacy every day". The same view was also expressed by one school administrator who said:

We have a homework policy which states that literacy home-work should be given daily and for grade fours give home work that should be done in forty minutes.

However, in one school, the school administrator's name of policy differed with that of teachers in the same school. While teachers stated that the school had a homework policy, the school administrator in this particular school referred to it as an attendance policy which required parents to inform teachers if their child was absent from school.

During the study, the researcher was availed with some documents on the National Homework Policy designed by the Ministry of Education for all subjects across the curriculum. The document showed that one of the important reasons schools give home-work is to engage parents in their children's work so that they can help their children and follow their progress (See Appendix 4.0). This together with the guidelines given on the implementation of the National Homework Policy reviewed that the National Homework Policy has a component on PI in children's literacy learning. One of the guidelines states that literacy homework for Grades 1-4 is supposed to be given every day in addition to another subject (Read to Succeed & MESVTEE, 2013). The guidelines further outlines some literacy homework activities that are supposed to be given to Grades 1-4 each according to a particular grade (See Appendix 4.1).

5.1 Summary of Chapter Four

This chapter has presented the findings of the study according to the research questions. It has presented the findings on how primary schools ensure that parents have opportunities for involvement in their children's initial literacy learning, how primary schools provide access for parents to participate in capacity building opportunities that aim at improving children's literacy skills. It has also presented findings on what components of school organised PTA meetings facilitate parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning, what aspects of PI in the primary teacher training literacy syllabus address how teachers can involve parents in their children's literacy learning and lastly, findings on what policy or policies primary schools have that foster PI in children's initial literacy learning. The next chapter discusses the findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Overview

This chapter discusses the findings. The findings are discussed under the objectives which were as follows: (1) to establish how primary schools ensure that parents have opportunities for involvement in their children's literacy learning, (2) to ascertain how primary schools provide access for parents to participate in capacity building opportunities that aim at improving their children's literacy skills (3) to establish whether or not school organized PTA meetings include components that facilitate involvement of parents in their children's initial literacy learning (4) to ascertain if there are any aspects of parental involvement (PI) in the primary teacher training literacy syllabus that address how teachers can involve parents in their children's literacy learning, (5) to establish what policy or policies primary schools have that foster PI in children's initial literacy learning.

5.1 Objective 1: How Primary Schools Ensure that Parents have Opportunities for Involvement in their Children's Initial Learning

Cooperating partners such as RTS were reported to be the ones who were meeting some of the critical aspects of PI in children's initial literacy learning. While this can be taken to be a positive side for, indeed, they played a big role in this aspect, it can be argued that this mode of involvement is short lived as sustainability of these efforts remained questionable since cooperating partners come and go. Ideally, they are only supposed to be supplementing the efforts already made by primary schools. In this study, however, cooperating partners appeared to be in the lead. One of the reasons could be that some practitioners such as teachers, school administrators, and officials at the District Education Boards Secretary's (DEBS) and the Provincial Education Office (PEO) lacked the knowledge and appreciation of PI as one of the strategies for enhancing literacy achievement levels of school going children as expressed in the literacy framework (MESVTEE, 2013). For example, some officials at DEBS and PEO offices viewed PI in children's literacy learning as an initiative of Read To Succeed (RTS). This may suggest that some officers were not aware or did not appreciate PI in

children's literacy learning to be an initiative of Ministry of General Education (MoGE) for redressing poor literacy attainment levels of school going children. This can be a hindrance to PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools.

Another reason could be a lack of understanding of the role of cooperating partners within DEBS and PEO offices. This was seen in the difference in views from officials from Teacher Education Department (TED) and those from the Standards office at both DEBS and PEO offices. While officials from TED appeared to be aware of and fully involved in what was going on in primary schools, those from the Standards office appeared to be passively involved or left out in the whole process. The question that arises from such a scenario is whether enhancing PI in children's learning is the responsibility of cooperating partners or cooperating partners only come in to support the efforts being made within the ministry. The 1996 Education Policy (*Educating Our Future*) clearly states that effective partnership involves giving attention to the roles that cooperating partners can play, formulating policies to guide the partnership and establishing strategies that facilitate it (MoE, 1996 p.130). This may seem to suggest that some PEO and DEBS officials did not clearly understand the role of cooperating partners.

One more reason could be that PI is not institutionalised. To some, PI appeared to be a 'by the way' activity championed by cooperating partners. This may also explain why there was a mismatch between what officials from TED and the Standards office at DEBS and PEO said on this matter. Although discussing administrative efficiency in regard to PI in children's literacy learning is not the interest of this study, it is important to mention that ensuring that there is PI in children's initial literacy learning in part requires the attention of the Standards Office at DEBS and PEO offices given that standard officers have a mandate to "establish, evaluate and promote" the highest standard of quality education provision (MoE, 1996 p. 152). PI as a strategy for redressing the poor literacy attainment levels may equally demand the highest standard if benefits are to be maximized. Therefore, it may be imperative for the Standards office to be fully involved in supplementing the efforts of other offices such as TED,

school administrators, teachers and cooperating partners working along different lines of approach for the same cause.

In regard to the strategies used by Read To Succeed (RTS) to ensure that parents had opportunities for involvement in their children's initial literacy learning, the formation of the School Community Partnership Program (SCPP) was a good initiative as it set in motion PI in children's initial literacy learning. Most participants stated that PI activities were done through the SCPP. Through this program, primary schools were able to meet one of the objectives for community participation which is "strengthening community linkages" (MoE, 1996 p. 131) that is primary in as far as PI in children's initial literacy learning is concerned. In this regard, the SCPP enabled primary schools to reach out to the community and initiate PI activities in support of children's initial literacy learning. This is in conformity with Holloway *et al.* (2008) who view PI as the initiation of family behaviours that support children's learning.

In addition to this, the existence of the School Community Partnership Committee (SCPC) under the SCPP was indicative of primary schools' commitment to PI in children's initial literacy learning at the grass-root level. According to the findings, the committee met once every month to plan, implement and review PI activities in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools. This entails that primary schools had an established structure under which PI in children's initial literacy learning was spearheaded. This is critical as it can enhance commitment to PI in children's initial literacy learning. By holding regular meetings, the committee was able to come up with various strategies through which primary schools reached out to the parents and involved them in various activities that supported their children's initial literacy learning. These findings are consistent with Glasgow and Whitney (2009) who stated that how much parents get involved in children's learning was dependent on how often schools reached out to parents. For primary schools in Mungwi, District, this was made possible through the SCPC which devised various strategies for PI in children's literacy learning.

Invitation of parents to participate in literacy events such as the celebration of the International World Literacy Day, Parents Open Days, and Children's Reading Competitions gave parents a range of opportunities for involvement in their children's initial literacy learning. These included, seeing how their children were progressing in literacy, reading to the children as role models, and performing drama. Through such activities, parents were able to make a positive contribution to their children's learning as Dearing *et al.* (2006) found in their study (See Literature Review Chap. p.20). Besides, the invitation of parents to participate in literacy events at school helped schools to instill a sense of worthiness in the parents thereby strengthening their self-efficacy to engage in activities that support their children's initial literacy learning both at school and at home.

As for the engagement of parents in the preparation of children's reading materials, primary schools enabled parents to use their expertise to contribute to their children's initial literacy learning. In this way, primary schools managed to do what Harris and Goodall (2007) referred to as harnessing what parents could do to help the school achieve its goal which in this case is enhancing children's initial literacy learning. This is critical as it can enhance parents' role construction in their children's learning as advanced by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005). By asking parents to write stories and words for use in children's literacy learning activities, primary schools created an opportunity for parents to see themselves as partners in the learning of their children contrary to the view that schools should do everything. This is even more so when parents see their own work being used by the school in the learning and teaching of children as was the case in this study. Therefore, engagement of parents in the preparation of reading materials was one way through which primary schools helped develop and strengthen parents' beliefs on roles that they can perform to support their children's literacy learning.

However, lack of responsiveness to the invitation to prepare literacy materials on the part of some parents could be a result of illiteracy as noted in the presentation of the findings in Chapter 4. In this study, engagement of parents in the preparation of literacy

materials appeared to have had a bias on literate parents. The type of literacy materials that primary schools asked parents to come up with only involved writing stories and words for reading. This may imply that illiterate parents were not part of this engagement. On the contrary, there is empirical evidence showing that parents who are unable to read and write can have other literacy skills which they can also be invited to share as shown by Ealdama *et al.* (2013). With help, for example, parents can be asked to make models depicting animals, people, houses and other things which can be used in the teaching of sounds, words, sentence construction and story building as reflected in the literacy syllabus developed by Room to Read; Zambia, (2012). Therefore, failure for some parents to participate in the preparation of reading materials could be due to illiteracy.

Another reason could be a lack of training on how this can be done. In this study, primary schools did not mention how they helped parents to engage in the preparation of literacy learning materials for children. Even if parents knew how to read and write, they may not find it easy to write reading materials suitable for use in early grades. They may require the guidance of teachers to know how this can be done as already discussed in the literature section of this study. Therefore, lack of training may have inhibited some parents from engaging in the preparation of literacy learning materials in primary schools.

Teachers' inconsistency in engaging parents in the preparation of literacy teaching and learning materials may be due to limited knowledge and understanding of the importance of involving parents in the preparation of literacy materials. Many teachers cited lack of or limited knowledge on PI to be one of the challenges they faced in involving parents in their children's initial literacy learning. Although negative attitude was also cited by some school administrators, teachers, DEBS and PEO officials, inadequate knowledge on PI in children's initial literacy teaching and learning could be the main reason.

The encouragement of parents to attend their children's literacy learning sessions can be taken to be one way through which primary schools created an open, inviting and

welcoming environment for PI in children's initial literacy learning as advanced by Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, (1997). Many parents stated that they felt free to attend their children's literacy learning sessions any time they wanted. This was important as it did not only create parents' opportunity for involvement in children's literacy learning but also enabled parents to have access to capacity building as capacity building opportunities are known to be embedded in teaching and learning (Weiss *et al.* 2011; Mapp & Kuttiner, 2013). By attending their children's initial literacy learning sessions, parents were able to have an experience of how literacy supporting behaviours such as singing and story-telling can be used to enhance children's initial literacy learning at home. Some parents stated that attendance of their children's literacy learning sessions helped them understand how to use traditional stories and games to teach children how to read and write. Others felt that literacy teaching in a local language (Bemba) helped them to develop confidence that they can also teach their children at home. In this way, PI in children's initial literacy learning was enhanced.

The measures which required parents to log in parents' visitation book and teachers to record their interactions with parents during their attendance can be looked at as a form of reinforcement used by primary schools to create demand for PI in children's literacy learning. However, asking parents to make comments and suggestions on what they observe during their attendance of literacy learning may not guarantee parents' support for literacy learning. Parents' comments and suggestions can only enhance children's literacy learning if parents have some knowledge and skills on children's learning as advanced by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005). In this regard, it may be desirable to give parents clear and specific guidelines as suggested by Goodall, *et al.* (2011). In this way, parents' contributions may meaningfully contribute and positively impact on children's initial literacy learning.

Besides, parents' attendance of their children's initial literacy learning may be made more useful and supportive of children's initial literacy learning when parents are allowed or given some opportunities to make classroom presentations on the literacy skills they possess such as reading to the children, telling stories and playing traditional

games. This can enable parents to develop and strengthen their self-efficacy; one of the major constructs that motivate parents to be involved in their children's learning (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997). However, this may require adequate preparations of parents on what they are supposed to do. In this regard, it may be critical for teachers to conduct regular orientation sessions during which they can explain how parents can make classroom presentations in support of their children's literacy learning as suggested by Lumpkin (2010). This would make parents' attendance of children's initial literacy learning more effective and supportive to children's literacy learning.

Communication of teachers with parents which involved discussion of children's literacy performance created an opportunity for teachers to inform parents about weaknesses and strengths of children in literacy learning and also to obtain information on the weaknesses and strengths of children as learners and persons at home. In this way, teachers were able to engage parents in a collaborative relationship targeted at enhancing children's initial literacy learning. This is critical as it can enhance individualised support that can address particular needs of children as individuals as recommended by Benson & Martin (2003) already discussed in the literature review section of the study. Through communication with parents, teachers were able to provide parents with practical advice. Some parents stated that communication with teachers helped them make decisions to make their children repeat their grades. This is one way through which teacher's communication with parents' enhanced children's initial literacy learning.

The idea that communication of parents with teachers on the performance of their children had in some cases helped them obtain material and social support from their children's teachers seem to make communication with parents an all rounded strategy for enhancing PI which if utilised can enhance children's initial literacy learning in many ways. For example, one parent shared how a teacher helped her get employed as a domestic servant after sharing how much she struggled to meet the material needs of her children in Grades one and two. Such kind of support, although not directly linked to literacy learning can help address some social economic problems such as hunger

and health which can sometimes affect children as a result of their parents' socio-economic status and consequently, have a negative impact on their literacy learning as noted by Kabali (2014). In this regard, communication with parents remains critical to enhancing PI in children's initial literacy learning.

Giving children homework was a form of demand, opportunity, and invitation to PI in children's initial literacy learning. The fact that homework was given to induce PI in children's initial literacy learning was a positive stand. This is critical as it can help schools communicate to the parents what children are learning in school and also promote parents' appreciation of their involvement in their children's learning as suggested by Blazer, (2009). The findings are in conformity with earlier studies such as Epstein & Van Voorhis (2001) which upheld purposeful preparation of homework to enable teachers to inform and involve parents in their children's learning activities.

However, the need to be trained on how to help children with homework expressed by the parents and children is vital and the researcher is also in agreement with this. This finding is consistent with Bailey (2006) who contend that training of parents on how to assist their children in homework helps children's to spend more time on homework, improve in accuracy and obtain higher grades as discussed in the Literature Review Section of this study. Basically, this should be the focus of PI in children's literacy homework. Therefore, training of parents on how to assist their children in homework may be critical in enhancing children's initial literacy learning in primary schools.

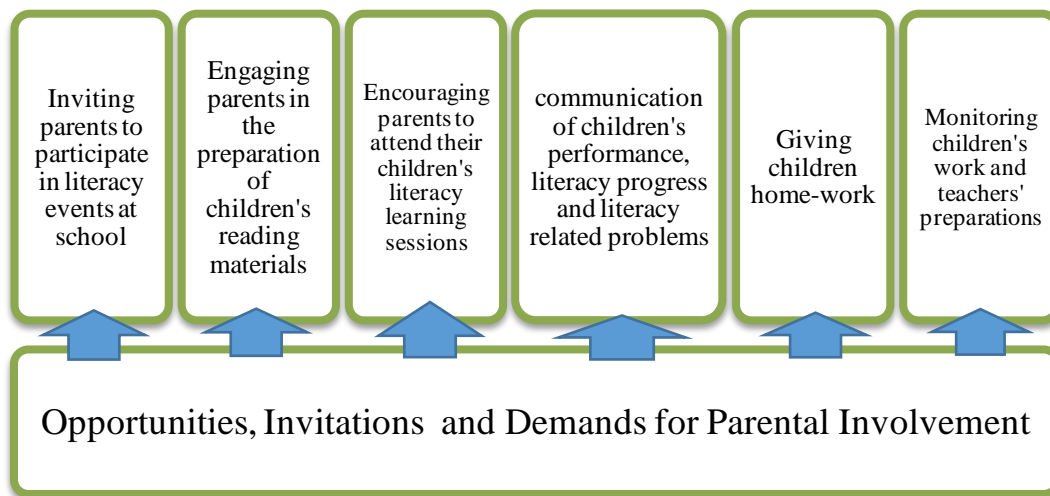
Monitoring of teacher preparations and of children's exercise books was another way through which primary schools created demand for PI in children's initial literacy learning. The fact that teachers monitored pupil's books to check for parents' signatures to ensure that parents helped children in the homework activities given and that School administrators on the other hand also monitored teachers' preparations to check for inclusion of homework in literacy lessons and that officials from the TED at DEBS and PEO were also conducting monitoring to see what schools were doing to enhance PI in

children’s learning suggest that monitoring was used as a reinforcement to compel teachers to involve parents and parents to be involved in their children’s initial literacy learning. This is consistent with Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s (1997) construct which say that demands created by the child and child’s school is what motivates parents to be involved in their children’s learning.

However, the signing of children’s exercise book as a guarantee for parents’ involvement in their children’s initial literacy learning seemed to have been biased towards literate parents. Participants did not state what they did on the part of illiterate parents. The reason could be a lack of consideration or sensitivity to the reality that not all parents of children are able to read and write.

The diagram below shows how strategies used to involve parents’ in their children’s initial literacy learning fit into some of Hoover-Dempsey’s and Sandler’s (1997) major constructs that motivate parents to be involved in their children’s learning.

Figure 6:How Strategies used to Involve Parents Fit into Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s Constructs for Parental Involvement



Adapted from Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, (1997)

5.2 Objective: 2. How Primary Schools Provide Access for Parents to Participate in Capacity Building Opportunities that Aim at Improving their Children’s Literacy Skills

Working with cooperating partners was in itself a capacity building opportunity through which parents had access to capacity building on PI children’s initial literacy learning.

Through sensitisation meetings held by Read to Succeed (RTS) in collaboration with primary schools, some parents were able to have access to capacity building which empowered them with some knowledge, skills, and information to help them get involved in their children's initial literacy learning. This is consistent with Mapp and Kuttner (2013) who concluded that utilisation of capacity building opportunities help build knowledge, attitude, and skills of stakeholders to engage in partnership that support learner achievement and development.

However, primary schools appear to have limited parents' access to capacity building by non utilisation of other capacity building opportunities available within the structure of the school and its routine. For example, activities such as PTA meetings, School Open days, school opening and closing days can be good capacity building opportunities that primary schools can utilise to create parents access to capacity building as advanced by Weiss *et al.* (2011) & Mapp & Kuttner, (2013). Although most of these activities were already taking place in all the primary schools visited, it appeared that teachers and school administrators were not aware that such activities could be used as access points for capacity building of parents. One of the reasons could be limited knowledge and information on how activities that fall within the school structure can be used as capacity building opportunities for parents. In most cases, schools may want to look for time and resources outside the structure of the school and this is usually difficult and in some cases impossible. In this case, there may be need to make teachers and school administrators aware of this reality.

The Barnardos National Children's Resource Centre (2006), has proposed some strategies that schools can use to create parents access to capacity building. These strategies outlined and explained below can also be used in the Zambian situation:

- Engagement of schools in social gatherings with parents and the wider community during which parents and teachers can build trust in each other.
- Having sessions with parents on children's entry into school in order to provide them with information on how they can help their children manage the

transition from home to school as well as providing an insight on how parents can support their children's literacy learning.

- Holding discussions with parents to help them understand their role in their children's learning and development both at home and in school. This can help parents to gain confidence and develop an interest in learning about their children's needs in the learning of literacy.
- Explaining to the parents how children benefit from collaborative learning between stakeholders and how children learn through play by "exploring parent's experiences".
- Getting parents informed on policies that affect parents and children (for example, the use of familiar language for initial literacy) as well as discussing the needs of parents in the area of education and parenting.

In this way, parents' access to capacity building can be enhanced. This conforms with Lumpkin (2010) who suggests that it may be effective for schools to conduct regular orientation sessions with parents during which teachers can explain to the parents how they can provide meaningful support to their children.

In terms of creating access to material support, primary schools were able to link parents to social support programs such as World Vision, the Churches Health Association of Zambia (CHAZ) and other cooperating partners. Through these linkages, parents were able to access material support such as uniforms, exercise books, and other literacy support tools. These findings are in line with Bitsko *et al.* (1997) who suggest that schools can help parents support their children's learning by linking families to support programs that advance the learning of children. Although support such as uniforms may seem not to be directly linked to literacy learning, lack of good uniform and books can have a negative impact on the motivation of the child to attend school regularly and this can in due course impact negatively on a child's literacy learning. Therefore, any support that enhances children's literacy learning indirectly or directly can have a positive impact on children's initial literacy learning in primary schools.

However, it may be important to identify the kind of support suitable in a particular environment. Some of the support that some schools had received did not serve the intended purpose due to other factors. For example, the TV donated to one school so that parents could watch with their children could not be used due to lack of electricity in the area. Some schools also indicated that some of the books (readers) schools received were advanced for the level and could not be lent to the children so that parents could read to them. This means attention was not paid to the form of support suitable in that particular context. On the contrary, PI is context based (Patrikakou, 2008; Riley, 2009). It may, therefore, be necessary to undertake a needs assessment for a particular area to determine the suitable support that can enhance children's literacy learning. Heneveld and Craig's (1996) categories of parental support to children's learning suitable in the sub-Saharan Africa may in this regard be of help in coming up with suitable support. This does not mean that primary schools should not be open to other support strategies and methods. For example, the new technological advancements such as mobile phones which are accessible by most people in this age and time can be instrumental in enhancing PI in children's initial literacy learning. What is important is to assess the practicality of the proposed support.

5.3 Objective: 3 School Organised PTA Meetings Inclusion of Components that Facilitate Involvement of Parents in their Children's Initial Literacy Learning

Failure to include topics on PI in children's literacy learning in school organised PTA meeting appeared to limit parents' access to information on children's initial literacy learning in primary schools. Some parents believed that PTA executive members had more access to information than ordinary members. Out of the four schools visited, only one primary school showed evidence of including PI in children's initial literacy learning issues in one of its PTA meetings in four years with one school only making a mention of some aspect of PI in one of its meetings. The other two schools did not have anything at all. Contrary to this, Patrikakou (2008), suggested that systematic planning of parent- teacher conferences can be good opportunities for teachers and parents to share particular information about a child. In this regard, the absence of PI topics on the agenda of the school organised PTA meetings rendered these meetings to be missed

opportunities which consequently curtailed PI in children's initial literacy learning. Therefore, primary schools may need to include topics on PI in school organised PTA meetings to help increase parents' involvement in their children's initial literacy learning.

In addition to this, non-inclusion of topics on PI in children's initial literacy learning in School Organised PTA meetings limited parents' access to capacity building and involvement in their children's initial literacy learning in primary schools. Contrary to these findings, Ealdama *et.al.* (2013) suggest that PTA meetings can be used as an opportunity for training and increased parent participation in children's learning. Using Hoover-Dempsey's and Sandler's major constructs that motivate parents to be involved in their children's learning, it can be argued that primary schools did not use school organised PTA meetings to create demand for PI in children's initial literacy learning as components of the agenda did not have anything to facilitate PI in children's initial literacy learning (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1997). While resource mobilisation for the development of the school, general performance of children and discipline can indirectly enhance children's initial literacy learning, particular focus on some aspects of PI in children's initial literacy learning may create opportunities and strengthen demand for PI in children's literacy learning. Therefore, deliberate inclusion of topics related to PI in children's initial literacy learning in PTA meetings may enhance PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools.

Nevertheless, the non-inclusion of topics on PI in school organised PTA meetings can in part be attributed to lack of knowledge on how school organised PTA meetings could enhance PI in children's initial literacy learning or lack of appreciation of the role PI plays in the initial literacy learning of children. Critical in all this is the role played by school administrators. Although Anderson & Minke (2007) observed that teachers have the largest effect on PI at home, in school, and in Parent-Teacher Associations, school administrators are in this case the key players in ensuring that PI in children's literacy learning topics are captured on the agenda for school organised PTA meetings. This is in line with Price-Mitchell (2009) who stated that the leadership of the school is key in

establishing and developing relationships between families and the schools. Hence, it may be necessary to conduct workshops, seminars and CPDs for school administrators to help them know and understand how school PTA meetings can be used to enhance PI in children's literacy learning (Benson and Martin, 2003). In this way, PI in children's literacy learning can be enhanced through PTA meetings.

However, the study appreciated PI topics that were found to have been included in one of the School organised PTA meetings. According to the responses from parents, the topics appeared to have made an impact although they were only covered in one meeting. The topics which included showing of Grade 2 Literacy Progress reports to parents, explanation of things parents should do to support children's literacy learning, encouraging parents to be coming to school regularly, allowing children to do homework by giving them time, need for parents to listen to their children reading daily, reading to the children, writing stories for children, need for parents to buy story books for the children, discussion of the importance of school with the children and participation in literacy-related activities at school reflected a wide range of topics which if consistently covered can enhance meaningful involvement of parents in their children's initial literacy learning. This finding is in conformity with Hoover-Dempsey *et al.* (2005) who suggest that parents should be provided with information on the importance of their involvement in their children's learning as well as knowledge and skills on the range of activities they can be involved in to support their children's learning.

Besides, the topics are a reflection of the guidelines given in the Family Pac program (CDC, 2004) which if utilised can provide good content for school organised PTA meetings. In this regard, it may be necessary to review the Family Pac Programme to identify topics that can be considered for inclusion in school organised PTA meetings. The literature on the Family Pac Programme was still available in primary schools as evidenced in some schools visited during the study. Needless to say that some schools still referred to the same program as a basis for what they were doing in regard to PI in children's initial literacy learning. This is an indication that Family Pac was still

appreciated and, therefore, its contents can be utilised to enhance PI in children's literacy learning through school organised PTA meetings.

The use of Literacy Progress Charts to explain to the parents the performance of their children in comparison with other children in other schools was an effective way of providing parents with tangible evidence that could be seen, weight and evaluated for practical solutions. However, the Literacy Progress Charts may not satisfy the individual needs of parents who may be interested in seeing their children's results as individuals unless schools have some other means through which children's individual progress are communicated to parents. The Literacy Progress Charts used by primary schools to communicate children's literacy progress to parents only reflected the collective progress of individual schools in comparison with other schools within the Zone or District. This is contrary to Serpellet *al.* (2005) who suggested that there was a need for parents to have an "understanding of how well their child is progressing" (p.226). To have an understanding of how well one's child is progressing may demand bringing out information on the performance of individual children. Therefore, it may be desirable to make individualized literacy progress reports for children if parents' support is to be enhanced.

5.4 Objective 4. Aspects of PI in the Primary Teacher Training Literacy Syllabus that Address How Teachers can Involve Parents in their Children's Literacy Learning

The absence of methodological components on PI involvement in children's initial literacy learning in primary teachers' college of education meant that teachers came out of the college with little or no knowledge to enhance their involvement of parents in their children's literacy learning. This may explain why the instructions teachers gave children on homework did not provide much information on what parents were supposed to do as shown in the responses from the children. On the contrary, research on good practice as already discussed in the literature section of this study indicate that teachers require training and coaching in order for them to effectively engage parents in their children's learning (Goodall & Vorhaus, 2010; Mapp and Kuttiner, 2013). This means that non-inclusion of methodological components on PI in teacher training was a

hindrance to PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools. Therefore, inclusion of methodological components on PI in children's initial literacy learning may be one of the critical components of PI in children's literacy learning.

Besides, non-inclusion of methodological components on PI in children's initial literacy learning meant that lecturers had no obligation to train student teachers on PI in children's literacy learning. This means, college lecturers were inhibited from equipping their students with knowledge and skills to facilitate their involvement of parents in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools. According to the lecturer who took part in the study, the absence of components of PI in children's literacy learning made them not to give any serious attention to PI in children's literacy learning but to simply make a mention that teachers needed to avail the performance of children to parents. Contrary to this, Adelman & Taylor (2007) found that meaningful involvement of parents requires specialized expertise which if not attended to may reduce the level of involvement. In this regard, it may be important to infuse some methodological content on PI in children's literacy learning in the primary college literacy syllabus to enhance effective preparation of teachers on PI in children's literacy learning in primary schools.

The study appears to suggest that absence of components on PI in teacher training also inhibited teachers' involvement of parents in their children's literacy learning and access to capacity building. This is because teachers form a link through which parents are involved in their children's learning (Patrikakou, 2008; Sanders & Sheldon, 2009). Generally, PI in children's initial literacy learning is dependent on what teachers decide to do and not to do at home, in school and in Parent Teacher Associations (Anderson & Minke 2007). Therefore, it may be unrealistic to expect teachers to meaningfully involve parents in their children's initial literacy learning without paying attention to their training (Adelman & Taylor, 2007). This is consistent with Mapp and Kuttner (2013) who observed that lack of attention to training and capacity building of parents and teachers make well-intentioned partnership fail. However, capacity building of parents can also be hampered by the absence of methodological components on PI in

children's literacy learning in primary colleges of education (Weiss *et al.* 2011; Mapp & Kuttiner, 2013). Therefore, teacher training may remain critical in ensuring that there is PI in children's literacy learning in primary schools.

Equally, the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities which are supposed to complement knowledge acquired in colleges did not capture any PI issues to enhance teachers' involvement of parents in their children's initial literacy learning. Although officers from teacher education at PEO indicated that teachers had been trained and given guidelines on how to involve parents in homework, the records of meetings and the interview with teachers could not show any evidence. This could mean that training although done may have only been given to a particular group of teachers who may not have been part of this study and that the training was not consistently done to capture all the teachers that were teaching in primary schools. On the contrary, research has shown that having access to continuous professional development activities which include training and workshops on PI help prepare teachers to work with parents (Agronicket *al.*, 2009). Martin (2003) also recommended that there is need to conduct professional development activities that expand teachers and school administrators' knowledge on PI. In this regard, PI in children's initial literacy learning may be a critical component for consideration in CPD activities.

However, the inclusion of PI in CPD activities may depend on whether teachers understand and appreciate the importance of PI in children's initial literacy learning. Nevertheless, understanding and appreciation of something may depend on the knowledge and information that one has on something. In this study, however, teachers' lack of or limited knowledge on PI in children's initial literacy learning came out strongly. Most teachers, school administrators and some officers at DEBS and PEO indicated that teachers had limited knowledge on PI in children's literacy learning. As a matter of reason, one would like to think that teachers on their own may not see the need to cover methodological issues of PI in children's initial literacy learning in their CPD meetings because they may not be aware of their needs. Hence, it may be necessary for TED officials at DEBS and PEO to get involved than to entirely leave

teachers to identify their needs as the case was. This also explains why the inclusion of methodological components on PI in preservice training of teachers remain critical to enhancing PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools.

The limited source of knowledge on PI in children's literacy learning on the part of lecturers indicates that lecturers had little or no knowledge to adequately prepare teachers for effective involvement of parents in their children's initial literacy learning. Information lecturers obtained from workshops whose main focus was not on PI in children's literacy learning may not be sufficient enough to enable lecturers to address critical and diverse components of PI that may be desirable in the training of teachers. On the contrary, PI in children's learning can only thrive if stakeholders have the capacity (Adelman & Taylor, 2007; Warren & Mapp, 2011; Mapp & Kuttiner, 2013). By virtue of their role in teacher preparation, lecturers are among the major stakeholders whose position is critical in enhancing PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools. Therefore, their lack of or limited knowledge on PI in children's literacy learning rob them of the capacity to effectively prepare teachers in the area of PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools. Consequently, PI in children's initial literacy learning may continue lagging behind.

Additionally, lack of or limited knowledge on PI in children's literacy learning by lectures can have far reaching consequences in regard to PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools. There seems to be a strong link between what goes on in teacher training and what happens in schools. In this regard, teachers cannot be expected to meaningfully involve parents in their children's initial literacy learning in primary schools. This view is in line with Patrikakou (2008) who stated that empowered teachers would be able to empower parents who in return would be able to support their children's learning. In this case, professional development on PI in children's literacy learning may be critical for lecturers teaching literacy in primary colleges of education. Seminars and workshops specifically designed for PI in children's literacy learning may also help build the capacity of lecturers to prepare

teachers for effective involvement of parents in their children's initial literacy learning. In this way, meaningful PI in children's initial literacy can be facilitated.

5.5 Objective: 5 Policy or Policies Primary Schools Have that Foster Parental Involvement in Children's Initial Literacy Learning

Although officials at DEBS and PEO stated that there was no policy on PI in children's literacy learning, the National Homework Policy developed by the Ministry of Education for all subjects across the curriculum had components that foster PI in children's initial literacy learning. This was seen in the policy implementation guidelines which defined the roles different players are supposed to play and the nature of homework that is supposed to be given in literacy homework for Grades 1-4 who were the target of this study (See Appendix 4.0 & 4.1). The guidelines given on administration of homework to grades 1-4 appeared to have met the required specification for a policy on PI in children's initial literacy learning as suggested in the literature review (refer to p. 28). This is in tandem with what the Ministry of Education (2008) in its document; *'Our Family Pac Teachers' Guide*, stated; "You should have a well-defined policy on homework spelling out where, when and how homework should be done and the role of the parents and teachers" (p.7).

Contrary to the perception of some DEBS and PEO officials, the National Homework Policy had clear guidelines on the role DEBS office was supposed to play in regard to its implementation. The roles which included sensitisation of head teachers and class teachers on the importance of home-work, monitoring home-work in school and ensuring that the guidelines for implementing home-work were posted to schools makes one wonder whether DEBS and PEO officials were not aware of the existence of these guidelines or they did not pay attention to the details of the guidelines. Their views on policy on PI in children's literacy learning seemed to suggest that they were not conversant with what the National Home-work policy said on PI in children's literacy learning. However, there could be many factors that may lead to this.

One of the reasons could be a lack of follow-up by the Ministry of Education higher management officials concerned with policy making and implementation to ensure that

all players understand what is expected of them. The other reason could be that Ministry of Education had not publicised its position on PI in literacy learning of school going children thus; making some officials within DEBS and PEO offices look at it as a ‘by the way’ concern. Poor communication within the ministry and amongst ministry officials could also be one of the reasons for which DEBS and PEO officials appeared not to be conversant with the National Homework policy guidelines on PI in children’s literacy learning. In this regard, it can be said that non-involvement in PI activities by PEO and DEBS officials from the standards office was not caused by non-existence of policy on PI in children’s literacy learning but by lack of or limited information or lack of attention to what the National Homework policy says on PI in children’s literacy learning.

However, primary schools at grass root level appeared to be well aware of the existence of homework policy as a strategy for PI in children’s initial literacy learning. This was seen in their ability to name the policy and to express some of its contents on the involvement of parents in children’s literacy learning. They also appeared to appreciate the policy to be an essential component for enhancing PI in children’s initial literacy learning. The views of teachers, children and parents on homework showed that primary schools at grass root level (school administrators and teachers) were more acquainted with the National Homework Policy guidelines on PI in children’s literacy learning than were PEO and DEBS officials. The reason could be that Read To Succeed (RTS) took the time to sensitise parents and teachers on what the National Homework Policy says on PI in children’s literacy learning during the School Community Partnership Program’s activities conducted in primary schools. Nonetheless, information would be expected to flow from PEO and DEBS office down to the grassroots given that the policy was developed at the highest level.

The differences in opinion on the name of the policy and its linkage to PI in literacy learning between some teachers and school administrators can be attributed to many factors some of which may be due to changes in school administrators or wrong interpretation of the National Home-Work policy for subjects across the curriculum.

Another reason could be misinformation which Newman (2011) may refer to as unintended falsehood which could have been caused by participants not being sure of what was obtaining on the ground. However, this can be detrimental to PI in children's initial literacy learning as holding different views can affect coordination and implementation efforts of those concerned. This is also the case for PEO and DEBS officials.

However, primary schools were able to utilise the National Homework Policy Guidelines on PI in children's literacy learning. This was seen in teachers' literacy homework files which showed that teachers were following the policy in giving children homework as per specification. Parents also appeared to be satisfied that homework facilitated their involvement in their children's literacy learning. Equally, pupils had books specifically reserved for literacy homework and this was also attested to by the responses from children which indicated that giving children homework was one of the most outstanding strategy used by teachers to involve parents in their children's literacy learning. This is in line with Kangombe (2013) whose findings in a study that had a focus on home-schools partnerships that facilitate literacy development also found that Basic Schools of Lusaka high-density area had a home-work policy which enhanced parents' involvement in their children's literacy learning. This indicates that homework policy is instrumental in enhancing PI in children's initial literacy learning. Hence the need to uphold it.

5.6 Summary of Chapter

This chapter has discussed the findings in line with the objectives of the study which included to establish how primary schools ensured that opportunities are created for parents to get involved in the literacy learning of their children to establish whether or not school organised PTA meetings include components that enhance involvement of parents in their children's initial literacy learning, to establish whether or not school organised PTA meetings cover topics on PI to enhance involvement of parents in their children's initial literacy learning, to ascertain if there are any aspects of PI in the primary teacher training literacy syllabus that address how teachers can involve parents in their children's literacy learning and lastly to establish what policy or

policies primary schools have that foster PI in children's initial literacy learning. The next chapter looks at the conclusion and recommendations. It also brings up some topics for future research

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Overview

The previous chapter discussed the findings of the study. This chapter gives a conclusion to the study. It is important to state here that this study was aimed at establishing what primary schools were doing to ensure that there was PI in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools. The assumption of the study was that with concerted efforts from Teacher Education, Standards office at District Education Board Secretary's office (DEBS) and Provincial Education offices (PEO), school administrators and teachers, PI in children's learning can be enhanced.

6.1 Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that PI in children's initial literacy learning was only achieved through the strategies put in place by some cooperating partners such as RTS; a Non-governmental organisation (NGO) supported by USAID. Strategies put in place by these NGOs enabled parents and teachers to work together and that way, parents were able to be involved in their children's initial literacy learning.

Equally, parents' access to capacity building was mainly made possible with the help of NGO's such as RTS and World Vision. With the help of such NGOs, some parents and teachers were able to have access to Knowledge, information and material support necessary for the teaching and learning of literacy. In this way, some parents were able to be involved in their children's initial literacy learning. However, primary schools did not utilise other capacity building opportunities available within the structure of the school to create parents' access to capacity building. This limited parents' access to capacity building. The reason could be that teachers and school administrators lacked

knowledge and information on how the school structure could be used to create parents' access to capacity building.

Primary schools did not use PTA meetings to facilitate PI in children's initial literacy learning. Generally, School Organised PTA meetings did not capture topics that could enhance involvement of parents in their children's literacy learning. This rendered School Organised PTA meetings to be missed opportunities which reduced parents' access to capacity building and involvement in their children's initial literacy learning.

Teacher training did not equip teachers with knowledge and skills to facilitate their involvement of parents in children's initial literacy learning. This showed a mismatch between teacher preparation and the MoGE expectations in improving literacy achievement levels of school going children. This also affected teachers' inclusion of PI issues in their CPD activities. Therefore, teacher training did not enhance teacher's involvement of parents in their children's initial literacy learning in primary schools.

The National Homework Policy developed by the Ministry of Education for all subjects across the curriculum had components that foster PI in children's initial literacy learning although officials at the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) and Provincial Education Office (PEO) officials appeared not to be aware of this. This inhibited PEO and DEBS offices from full involvement in parental involvement activities. However, primary schools at grass root level appeared to be well aware of the existence of homework policy as a strategy for PI in children's initial literacy learning and were implementing it; thanks to the efforts of the Read To Succeed Project.

Based on the findings, the study concluded that efforts towards ensuring that parents were involved in their children's initial literacy learning in primary schools in Mungwi district were largely limited to the initiatives of cooperating partners such as RTS. This means, efforts to facilitate PI involvement in primary schools were not concerted. In this regard, PI may not be expected to make a meaningful contribution towards redressing the poor literacy achievement levels of Zambia's school going children. Although working with cooperating partners appeared to have met some of the critical

aspects of PI in children's initial literacy learning, sustainability of these efforts remain questionable as NGOs come and go. Therefore, this study identified teacher training as critical to PI in children's initial literacy learning if Zambia is to maximise the benefits associated with PI in regard to redressing the poor literacy achievement levels of school going children. Otherwise, Zambia's attainment of the vision 2030 may be affected.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following were recommended:

- Teacher Education should seriously consider including methodological components on parental involvement in the literacy syllabus to facilitate parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools.
- DEBS and PEO officials should acquaint themselves with what the National Homework Policy says on PI in children's Literacy learning for them to coordinate and reinforce PI in children's literacy learning in primary schools.
- There should be a deliberate policy to ensure that school organised PTA meetings and CPD activities include topics on parental involvement to enhance parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools.
- MoGE should come up with a comprehensive in-service program to empower lecturers with knowledge and information on PI in children's literacy learning to enable them to prepare teachers for effective involvement of parents in their children's initial literacy learning in primary schools.
- MoGE should ensure that PI in children's literacy learning is embedded in the curriculum to enhance the commitment of teachers and school administrators.
- Primary schools should devise strategies that they can use to ensure that illiterate parents participate in children's literacy learning in primary schools.
- Primary schools' staff should make use of capacity building opportunities available within the school structure to create parents' access to capacity building.
- PEO and DEBS offices should take a leading role in fostering PI activities to enhance sustainability in primary schools.

- MoGE should conduct an awareness campaign for teachers, school administrators, and lecturers and other relevant offices at PEO and DEBS on the need to seriously embrace PI as one of the key strategies for redressing poor literacy attainment levels of school going children.
- Sensitisation of parents on the importance of literacy and their involvement in children's initial literacy learning should be ongoing in primary schools.
- The school Community Partnership program rolled by Read To Succeed Project should continue.
- There is need to introduce Adult literacy classes in primary schools for illiterate parents to learn how to read and write.
- Schools should help difficulty communities by taking advantage of gatherings such as Munada (Monthly market) to sensitize parents on the need to be involved in their children's literacy learning.
- Primary schools should come up with a deliberate policy to talk about PI issues in every meeting.

6.3 Implications for Further Research

- Need to conduct the same study on a larger sample.
- There is need to conduct a comparative study between Mungwi District and another district where Read To Succeed has not run its project.
- Conduct a study to establish what primary schools can do to improve the involvement of illiterate parents in their children's homework activities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1.0

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

1. What is your understanding of parental involvement in their children's initial literacy learning?
2. At your school, what opportunities do give parents to be involved in their children's
3. What policy does your school have on parental involvement when it comes to children's learning especially on initial literacy?
4. What classroom related activities in initial literacy does your school invite parents to participate in?
5. As school manager, what do you do to ensure that teachers involve parents in their children's initial literacy learning?
6. What capacity building opportunities does your school provide to ensure parents have the capacity to be involved in their children's initial literacy learning?
7. What components of school organised PTA meetings helps parents gain knowledge and skills needed for involvement in the children's literacy learning?
8. Apart from invitations to attend PTA meetings, what other activities does your school invite parents to participate in to support their children's initial literacy learning?

9. At your school, do you have programs such as open days that invite parents to read to their children or tell stories or play games with them?
10. What topics of Parental involvement in children's literacy learning does your school include in CPD activities conducted in your school?
11. How do you make your classroom corridors talking walls for children to practice reading and for inspiration of parents to do the same at home?
12. What do you do to compel parents to buy materials and books that support children's initial literacy learning?
13. What policy does your school have on parental involvement in in children's initial literacy learning?
14. At your school, what programs have you put in place to prepare parents to be involved in their children's initial literacy learning?
15. As a school, what NGO's are you working with to support parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning?
16. What challenges does your school face in trying to involve parents in their children's initial literacy learning?
17. What do you think should be done to ensure there is more parental involvement in children's literacy learning at your school?

Thank you very much.

Appendix 1.2

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR GRADES 1-4 TEACHERS

1. What do you know about parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning?
2. How do you involve parents in their children's literacy learning?
3. What components of parental involvement in children's literacy learning were covered in your pre-service training?
4. What classroom related activities in initial literacy does your school invite parents to participate in?
5. What initial literacy related activities do you involve parents in at home?
6. Do you sometimes visit your children's homes to discuss issues related to their children's initial literacy learning?
7. What policy do you have on parental involvement in children's literacy learning?
8. As initiators of initial literacy, what programs have you put in place to prepare parents to be involved in their children's initial literacy learning?
9. What opportunities do you give parents to interact and talk to you about their children's literacy learning?
10. During school organised PTA meetings, what components of parental involvement in children's literacy learning do you include on the agenda?

11. How do you make specific invitations to encourage parental involvement in children's literacy learning?
12. Apart from invitations to attend PTA meetings, what other activities does your school invite parents to participate in to support their children's initial literacy learning?
13. What topics of Parental involvement in children's literacy learning does your school include in CPD activities conducted in your school?
14. How do you make your classroom corridors talking walls for children to practice reading and for inspiration of parents to do the same at home?
15. What do you do to compel parents to buy materials and books that support children's initial literacy learning?
16. What policy does your school have to support parental involvement in children's in children's initial literacy learning?
17. What capacity building opportunities do you give parents to enhance their involvement in their children's literacy learning?
18. How do you prepare pupils to interact with their parents over home-work
19. As a teacher, what challenges are you facing in ensuring that parents are involved in their children's initial literacy learning?
20. In your opinion, what do you think should be done to ensure that there is more parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning?

Thank You.

Appendix 1.3

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR STANDARDS OFFICERS DESO/SESO (LANGUAGES)

1. What is your understanding of parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools?
2. What policy does the District have for your schools on parental involvement in children's learning in Primary schools?
3. What mechanisms has the district put in place to ensure schools involve parents in their children's learning?
4. How do you ensure that CPD activities conducted in primary schools facilitate parental involvement in children's literacy learning?
5. What has the district put in place to make teachers become aware of socio-support programs working in the district as a way of facilitating parental capacity to support children's initial literacy learning?
6. How does your district ensure that primary schools create opportunities to involve parents in their children's initial literacy learning?
7. What challenges does your district face in ensuring that there is parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning?
8. What do you think should be done to ensure schools involve parents in their children's initial literacy learning?

Thank you very much.

Appendix 1.4

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL RESOURCE CENTRE COORDINATORS (DRCC/PRCC)

1. What is your understanding of parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools?
2. What policy does the province have on Parental involvement in children's literacy learning?
3. What has the province put in place to make teachers become aware of socio-support programs working in the district as a way of facilitating parental capacity to support children's initial literacy learning?
4. What mechanisms has the province put in place to ensure schools involve parents in their children's learning?
5. How do you ensure that CPD activities conducted in primary schools facilitate parental involvement in children's literacy learning?
6. What has the province put in place to make teachers become aware of socio-support programs working in the district as a way of facilitating parental capacity to support children's initial literacy learning?
7. How does your province ensure that primary schools create opportunities to involve parents in their children's initial literacy learning?
8. What challenges does your province face in ensuring that there is parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning?

9. In your opinion, what do you think should be done to ensure primary schools involve parents in their children's initial literacy learning?

Thank you very much.

Appendix 1.5

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR PARENTS

I would like to talk to you.

1. Tell me what you know about parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning
2. What opportunities for involvement in your children's literacy learning does the school give you?
3. What activities involving your children's literacy learning do teachers invite you to participate in at school?
4. When teachers invite you to talk about their children's learning at school, what do they usually talk about?
5. What social support programs for children which can promote reading and writing for your children has the school linked you to?
6. During school organised PTA meetings what things do teachers talk about which can help you to assist your children learn how to read and write?
7. What literacy home-work activities for you children do you participate in?
8. If any, how easy do you find it to help your children with homework in literacy?
9. What advice do teachers give you concerning organisation of the home environment to promote your children's engagement in literacy activities at home?

10. How do teachers make invitations for you to meet them at school?
11. Apart from attending PTA meetings, what other activities does the school invite you to participate in to support your children in learning how to read and write at school?

Thank you very much.

Appendix 1.5

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR PARENTS- (BEMBA VERSION)

Kutinatemwaukulanshanyanaimwe.

1. Ngaabafyashi,
njebenikoifyomwaishibapopafyomwingafwakoabanabenuukusambililaukubele
nganokulemba?
2. Bushemusangonshibakafundishabamipelelamoinshitayakutinaimwemwaafwak
oukufundaabanabenuukubelenganokulemba?
3. Bushefintunshifimoifyobakafundishabamitakoukusangwakokusukuluifyalola
mukwafwilishaabanamumisambilileyakubelenganaukulemba?
4. Ngabakafundishabamitakusukulumukulanshanyanaimwepamisambilileyabana
benufinshimakamakabatemwaukulandapo?
5. Bushetubungwenshinangulaifilonganinoifyafwilishamumisambilileyakubelen
ganaukulembaukomwingapokaubwafwilishonangulaamasambililoyakwafwilis
hakoabanabenumumisambililebakafundishabamilanga?
6. Nga kuli PTA meeting pasukulu,
fintunshifimoifyobakafundishabalandapoifyalolakukwafwilishaabanabenuuku
sambililaukubelenganaukulemba?

7. Fintunshiifyalolamukusambililaukuleemba no
kubelengaifyobakafundishabapelaabanamuli home-work
pakutimwabafwilishako?
8. Bwafyanshimusanga pa
kwafwilishaabanabenuukubombapafyobakafundishabapelamufyakubelenga
nanguukuleembakunganda?
9. Finshibakafundishabamifundapopafyomwingacitamumayandapakwafwakoaba
naukutemwaukubelenganaukuleemba libilibili?
10. Musangonshibakafundishababomfyapakumitaukutikusukulumukulanshanya
pa misambilileyabanabenu?
11. Ukucilapakusangwaku PTA meeting,
finshifimbiifyobakafundishabamitakoukusangwakoifyakumakumisambilileya
bana?
12. Bushefintunshiabanabenubamwipushaukubafwakonanguukubacitilaifyalolam
ukusambililaukuleembanaukubelenga?

Appendix 1.6

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR CHILDREN

I would like to you.

1. Apart from your teachers who else teaches you how to read and write?
2. What do these people do to help you learn how to read and write?
3. What literacy activities do your teachers ask your parents to participate in at school?
4. How other literacy activities do your teachers ask you to do with your parents?
5. When teachers give you home-work in literacy, what instructions do they give you?
6. How do you ask your parents to help you learn how to read and write?
7. What other literacy related activities do you ask your parents to do for you?

8. What would you like your teachers to do for your parents to help them to support you in literacy learning.

Thank You.

Appendix 1.7

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR COLLEGE LECTURER TEACHING LANGAUGE/LITERACY METHODS

1. What is your understanding of parental involvement in children's literacy learning in primary schools?
2. As a teacher trainer in literacy teaching, what role do you play in ensuring that there is parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools?
3. What components of the teacher training literacy syllabus address issues on parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning?
4. Would you say that teachers are adequately prepared to involve parents in their children's initial literacy learning in primary schools?

5. What limitations do you have as a teacher trainer in preparing teachers to involve parents in their children's initial literacy learning?
6. In your opinion, what would you say should be done to ensure that teachers are empowered to involve parents in their children's initial literacy learning during pre-service training?

Thank You Very Much.

Appendix 1.8

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS GUIDE FOR PTA MEETINGS COVERAGE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDREN'S LITERACY LEARNING ISSUES.

Status of School:

Rural/Urban.....

1.	Do school organised PTA meetings/ activities include components on Parental Involvement in Children's Learning?		
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">YES</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">NO</td> </tr> </table>	YES	NO
YES	NO		
2.	What issues are related to parental involvement in children's literacy learning?		
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

7.
8.
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19.
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Appendix 1.9

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS GUIDE FOR INCLUSION OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN TEACHER TRAINING SYLLABUS.

1. Does the Syllabus include content on Parental Involvement in Children’s Literacy Learning?	YES	NO
2. What topics are related to Parental Involvement in children’s’ literacy learning?		
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

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Appendix 1.10

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS GUIDE FOR COVERAGE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT TOPICS IN CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

1. Do CPD activities conducted at school level in Primary Schools include components on Parental Involvement in Children’s Literacy Learning?	YES	NO
2. Topics Related to Parental Involvement children’s literacy learning Coverage.		
1.		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

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Appendix 11

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS FOR INVITATION LETTERS SCHOOLS/TEACHERS WRITE TO PARENTS

Invitation	Content of Invitation Letter	Language used

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Appendix: 2.0

REQUEST TO CONDUCT THE STUDY

The University of Zambia
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Great East Road Campus
P.O Box 32379

LUSAKA

20th October, 2015.

The Permanent Secretary
Ministry of General Education
LUSAKA

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN IN NORTHERN PROVINCE

I am a post graduate student at the University of Zambia on field research in partial fulfilment for the award of the degree 'Master of Education in Literacy and Learning'. The theme of my study is '*Primary Schools' Enhancement of Parental Involvement in Children's Initial Literacy Learning in Mungwi District, Zambia*'. The study is aimed at establishing how primary schools ensure that there is parental involvement in children's initial literacy learning in primary schools.

The research is intended to capture data with regard to my research topic. The outcomes of this study will be purely for academic purposes in fulfilment of the partial requirements for the award of the said degree.

I therefore, request your good office for permission to conduct my research in Northern Province; in particular Mungwi District and other relevant departments in the province.

Your favourable response to my request will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Sr. Kasakula, Maureen.


STUDENT, UNZA.

Appendix: 2.1

All communications should be addressed to
The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of General Education
Not to any individual by name

Telephone: 260856/251315/251283
251293/211318/251291
251003/251319

In reply please quote
No. _____



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

MINISTRY OF GENERAL EDUCATION

P. O. BOX 50082
LUSAKA

6th June, 2016

Sr Kasakula

C/O University of Zambia
School of Graduate Studies and Research
P.O. Box 32379
LUSAKA


**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND DEPARTMENTS IN
NORTHERN PROVINCE**

Your letter of even reference dated 20th October, 2016 refers

I am glad to let you know that permission has been granted for you to do your research in Northern Province as long as you follow Ethical Issues raised by your directorate.

By copy of this the Provincial Education Officer and District staff are hereby notified to cooperate and render support wherever possible in your work.

I wish you a pleasant research.



Christine Mayondi (Mrs)
Acting Permanent Secretary
MINISTRY OF GENERAL EDUCATION

Appendix 3.0

ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER FROM THE RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

Telephone: +260 -1- 290258/291777 Ext. 2208
Fax: +260-1-290258/253952
E-mail: drgs@unza.zm

P O Box 32379
Lusaka, Zambia

5th May, 2016

Sr. Kasakula, Maureen Chishala
DAG 23
University of Zambia
P.O Box 32379
LUSAKA

Dear Sr. Kasakula,

RE: EXEMPTION FROM FULL ETHICAL CLEARANCE

With reference to your research proposal entitled:

"Parental Involvement in Children's Initial Literacy Learning in Primary Schools in Mungwi District, Zambia."

As your research project does not contain any ethical concerns, you are hereby given an exemption from full clearance to proceed with your research.

ACTION:	APPROVED
DECISION:	5th May, 2016
EXPIRATION DATE:	4th May, 2017

You are however, advised to factor in a token of appreciation to be given to the respondents, and you need to warm them up as the interview process would take time. This is due to the fact that the number of questions involved is too many to cause fatigue among the respondents as well as to utilize much of their time.

Please note that you are expected to submit to the Secretariat a Progress Report and a copy of the full report on completion of the project.

Finally, and more importantly, take note that notwithstanding ethical clearance given by the HSSREC, you must also obtain authority from the Permanent Secretary of the appropriate Ministry before conducting your research.

Yours sincerely,


A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. M. Namafu'.

Prof. C. M. Namafu
ACTING CHAIRPERSON
HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

cc: Director, Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies
Assistant Registrar (Research), Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies

Appendix 3.1

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET



HSSREC FORM 1a

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES
HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

<i>Telephone:</i>	+260-211-290258/293937	<i>P O Box:</i>	32379
<i>Fax:</i>	+260-211-290258/293937	<i>Location:</i>	Lusaka, Zambia
<i>E-mail:</i>	<i>drgs@unza.zm</i>		

**HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

TITLE OF RESEARCH: Parental Involvement in Children's Initial Literacy Learning in Primary Schools in Mungwi District, Zambia

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: The purpose of the study is to establish how primary schools ensure there is parental involvement in children's initial Literacy learning

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AND YOUR INVOLVEMENT: This study is purely academic. The researcher is a student at The University of Zambia pursuing Master of Education Degree in Literacy and Learning. The research is a major requirement for the completion of the programme. You have been chosen to participate in the study because of your position which enables you to provide information related to the topic under investigation.

CONFIDENTIALITY: All the information collected from this study will be treated with utmost confidentiality. All the names of the participants will remain anonymous even after the exercise is completed.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL: Participation in the study is voluntary and participants are free to withdraw any time if they so wish with no consequences.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: Participants may feel tired in the process of answering questions. In regard to benefits,

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS (Names, addresses and phone numbers of the following):

1. **Principal Investigator**
Sr. Kasakula, Maureen Chishala
C/O Department of Language and Social Sciences Education
University of Zambia
P.O Box 37379
LUSAKA
2. **Dr. M. Nkolola-Wakumelo**
Chairperson, Humanities and Social Sciences, Research Ethics Committee,
University of Zambia
P O Box 32379
LUSAKA
3. **Prof. I.A. Nyambe**
Director, Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies
University of Zambia
P O Box 32379
LUSAKA

APPENDIX: 3.2

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (BEMBA VERSION)

UMUTWE: *Ukwafwilisha Abafyashi Ukuibimba Mumisambili yakubelenga no kuleembakwa abanabaabo: Ukulolesha Pafyo Amasukulu Yacita*

ICISHINTE **CA** **MULANDU:** *icishinte ca mulandukwishibai fyomasukuluyacitapopakushininkishaukuti abafyashibaleei bimbamu misambili yakubelenga no kuleembakwa abanabaabo.*

UBULONDOLOSHI BWA UKU KUFWAILISHA (RESEARCH) NO MULANDU MWASANGILWAMO

Ukukufwailishai comucisungubeetaukuti research kwamasambili lofyetakulolelekucintucimbiiyoo. Abaleefwailishabasambilila pa isukulu ilikalambailiya University of Zambia apobaleekoonka amasabili loyakalamba mu cipani icilolesha pa ifyoukwishibaukubeleenga no kuleembafya ampanapamo no kusambilila. Ukukufwailishakwaba pa fintu ifywa ikwapakupwililisha ayamasabililonandilepopakubala. Mwalisalwaukusangwamuli ukukufwailishapamulandu wakutinga abafyashibabaa nakuti mwai shibapofimopamulandutuleloleshapo.

IMFUNDATO:

Fyonse ifyo ifika fuumamuli ukukufwailishafikasungwamunkamaukwabulaukusokololaaka ntunangukamokumuntunanguumo. Amashinaya abo bonseyakashalaukwabulaukwishibikwainshitayonse ukulundapofyenapanumayakupwau kufwailisha.

UKUIPELA UKUSANGWA MUKUFWAILISHA NO KUFUMAMO:

Ukusangwamuli ukukufwailishakufwilekwabafyeukwakuipeelawemwine. Kabilinamukwatainsambushakufumamo no kuleekangamulefwayaukwabulaukupatikishiwanguukupanikwa.

AMAFYA MWINGASANGA NEFYO MWINGASEKELAMO:

Kutimwaumfwaukunakailyomuleasukaameepusho. Ifyakumwenamopamongaumuntuu wasangwamuli ukukufwailishatakwingabaukucilapak uti lafyeukusangwakwenumuli ukukufwailishakutikwa afwilishakoukutwalaimisambili leya banamunocaalocesupantanshi.

UKO MWINGALEEMBELA NGA CAKUTI MULI NA IFYAKWIPUSHA:

1. Sr. Kasakula Maureen C.
C/O Department of Languages and Social Science Education
University of Zambia
P.O Box, 37379
LUSAKA

Dr. M. Nkolola, Wakumelo
Chairperson, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee,
University of Zambia
P.O Box 37379,
LUSAKA

Prof. I. A Nyambe,
Director, Director of Research and Graduate Studies

APPENDIX 4.0

GUIDANCE NOTES ON HOMEWORK MEVTEE, REP. OF ZAMBIA

WHAT IS HOMEWORK?

Homework is any task or activity assigned to pupils to be completed after class hours

Homework should be designed to help children continue learning outside the class

Homework is part of:

- The instructional process: It gives the child more time to learn
- The formative assessment process: It gives the teacher and parents information on the child's progress

Homework is a requirement in all Zambian schools according to the Homework Policy of the MEVTEE.

HOW SHOULD HOMEWORK BE DONE?

- Homework should be scheduled across different learning outcomes or areas and subjects.
- Homework should be linked to the pupils' lessons

Frequency and quantity of homework

- Homework should be commensurate with the level of student attention span; hence the size and durations for the work differ from grades 1 to 4:
- Kindergarten, Grade 1: 10 minutes per day
- Grade 2: 20 minutes per day
- Grade 3: 30 minutes per day
- Grade 4: 40 minutes per day

Checking of homework

- Homework should always be checked, either
- Verbally: Asking individuals or the class specific questions related to their homework
- In writing: Reviewing written homework and giving written feedback

WHY IS HOMEWORK IMPORTANT?

Homework provides an opportunity:

- For the teacher to gauge learners' difficulties and address them by changing instruction
- For the learner to engage in additional practice, to reinforce recently-learnt concepts or skills, and to go beyond what was taught in the classroom
- For the parents to engage in the pupils' work, to help their child, and to follow his or her progress.

ILLUSTRATION

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF HOMEWORK?

- Grade 1: Drawing and tracing letters at home
- Grade 2: Writing words that use letters, combinations or blends introduced in class
- Grade 3: Reading stories at to family members at home and discussing their meaning
- Grade 4: Writing sentences and short stories
- Others? (to be generated by workshop participants)

Appendix: 4.1

