

**INDIGENOUS MUSICAL PLAY GAMES AS CULTURAL RESOURCES FOR THE
COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT PROMOTION IN ZAMBIAN CHILDREN: THE CASE OF
WESTERN PROVINCE**

BY

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LUSAKA

OCTOBER 2022


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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

My wife, Mrs. Mukela, Akatwala Lukonga, and my children Kozwana, Namakau, Inonge, Mwakamui, Namboo, and Mashebe, and my grand children.

It is also dedicated in memory of my dear parents, Mr. B. Mukela. Mashebe and Mrs. Namakau Silwend as well as my grandmother Mrs Mukatimui Chibozu Muleta Silwendo, whose upbringing I will forever cherish.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to explore the substantive themes, values and practices underlying the Lozi children's indigenous musical play games in order to understand their cognitive, socioemotional and educational implications. Conducted in seven districts of Western Province, the study was undertaken because of the realisation that indigenous musical play games as educational resources were given the least attention in the school curriculum. In order to generate data, an ethnographic study with a purposive sample of 144 participants mostly school children, music teachers, college students and music lecturers and expert village musicians, was undertaken. A follow up one day teachers' workshop was also conducted. Data for the study was coded into themes and analysed using Braun and Clarke thematic approach. The results obtained revealed that indigenous play games were potentially relevant for promoting the nurturance of the most prized Lozi sociocultural core values such as respect and social responsibility. The cultivation and nurturance of these values in the socialisation process of children was an important intellectual milestone in the development of the philosophy of '*butu*' or being human and was seen as a means of preparing children for fitness in the adult Lozi society. Indigenous play games were also found to be beneficial for promoting the acquisition of survival skills deemed necessary to live and protect the ecocultural environment of the Lozi people. Apart from their social and ecocultural values, indigenous play games were found to be rich educational resources that were underpinned by various intellectual and academic benefits potentially relevant for enhancing children's acquisition of emergent literacy and numeracy skills of counting. Participation in story and riddle activities had the potential to promote the acquisition of literacy skills of listening and speaking while playing various indigenous board games involving the movement of seeds or stones in dug out holes had the potential to bolster children's numeracy skills. Notwithstanding their educational benefits, indigenous musical play games remained largely neglected in the school curriculum while most teachers expressed a negative attitude towards them.

The implications of the study outcomes revealed that, although these rich cultural resources were educationally valuable, and could be used as entry points to the teaching and learning of various subjects in the school curriculum, they were under utilised. Teachers lacked knowledge of these teaching resources, while the contents of such materials were largely lacking in the school text

books. The study challenges the Zambian school curriculum that has ignored and neglected children's indigenous musical play games in preference for borrowed Western games, and recommends for the inclusion of indigenous ones. The study recommends for further research undertakings to establish how such valuable materials could be adapted to yield more positive results, and ensure their preservation from extinction.

Acronyms

AIDS-Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome

BSA –British South Africa

CPD- Continuing Professional Development

DEBS- District Education Board Secretary. This is the principal education officer in the district.

DEBO- District Education Board Office

DESO- District Education Standards Officer

DRCC-District Resource Centre Coordinator

ECE- Early Child Education

ECD- Early Childhood Development.

ESO-Education Standards Officer

FDGs- Focus Group Discussions

HIV-Human ImmuneodeficiencyVirus

HOD- Head of Department

IKS-Indigenous Knowledge Systems

MI-Multiple Intelligences

MOE-Ministry of Education

MOESVTEE- Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational and Training and Early Education.

NBTL-New Breakthrough to Literacy

NGOs-Non Governmental Organizations

PEO - Provincial Education Officer

PTAs-Parent Teacher Associations

SACMEQ -Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality

UNZA-University of Zambia

SDA-Seventh Day Adventist

SESO- Senior Education Standards Officer.

TEK-Traditional Environmental Knowledge

ZPC- Zambia Primary Course

ZPD- Zone of Proximal Development

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0.

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview of the chapter

Human perception and cognition are largely products of their own ecocultural system. This process of cognition also has implications on the type of activities that are performed in different ecocultural settings including children's indigenous musical play games. The observation by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) that our physical interactions with our environments condition the way we understand the environment, is also true of the Lozi people. In this respect, the different selected forms of indigenous musical play game repertoires explored in different contexts in this thesis are intended to provide the reader with a lens through which the cultural values of the Lozi people can be understood but which has largely been ignored or neglected in the school curriculum.

1.2. The study area - Western Province (Barotseland)

Western Province (formerly Barotseland), where this study was conducted, is situated in the South West side of the Republic of Zambia, Central Africa. It is about 600 kilometres away from Lusaka, the country's capital city. The province shares its boundaries with Angola to the West, and Namibia and Botswana to the South. The Province has sixteen administrative districts namely: Mongu, which is also the provincial headquarters, Senanga, Sesheke, Kalabo, Kaoma, Lukulu, Shangombo, Sioma, Mulobezi, Mwandu, Nalolo, Limulunga, Sikongo, Nkeyema, Luampa, and Mitete as shown in the map below.

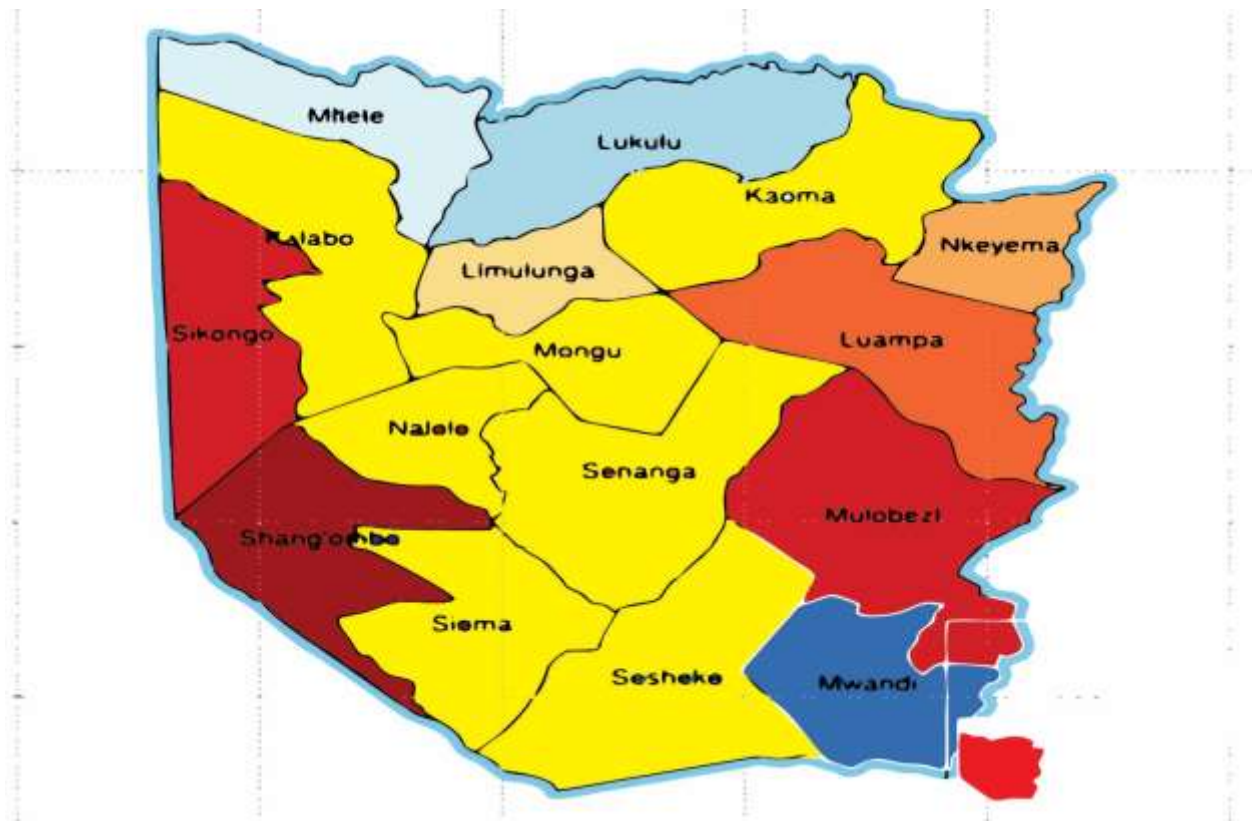


Fig. 1: Administrative districts of Western Province of Zambia (Source: simple.wikipedia.org)

Geographically, the great Zambezi River (the fourth largest river in Africa) passes through this province on its tortuous way to the Indian Ocean. It passes through a flood plain that “stretches from the Zambezi’s confluence with the Kabompo and Lungwebungu Rivers in the north, to a point about 230km south above the Ngonye falls” into Sioma district (Stirke, 1922, Mainga, 1973). The Zambezi River covers an area of 550,000 square kilometres and is considered as “one of sub-Saharan Africa’s critical aquatic agricultural systems (Rajaratnam et al, 2015, p.8, cf. Hogan, 2014).” Because of its ecological value as a wetland, the Zambezi flood plain is a designated Ramsar site (National Heritage Conservation Commission, 2009)¹ because of the following reasons:

¹ Ramsar is a city in Iran where the UNESCO convention on wetlands was signed in 1971.

- Cultural landscape that bears a unique and exceptional testimony to a living cultural tradition. The *kuomboka/kufuluhela* ceremonies have been taking place in this landscape for over 200 years with the Litunga promoting unity in diversity.
- Cultural landscape with an outstanding example of traditional human settlement and land use representative of a culture and human interaction. The environment has resulted into various kinds of adaptation by the people of Barotseland.

This plain also locally known as *libala la Bulози*, is annually inundated in the months of January to May thereby forcing the plain dwellers to move to the upper land until the floods recede. Though floods are generally perceived to be an enemy to humans in most parts of the world, the situation in Barotseland is different where they are a most welcome phenomenon. Floods are seen as a commemoration event for the Lozi speaking people (Namafe, 1992; Sibetta, 1996). Thus by the nature of their ecological environment, the Lozi are riverine people² (Turpie, et al., 1999; Flint, 2008), and they fondly signify this metaphorically by calling themselves *mambumbwe a Lyambai* or ligneous reeds. They have become part of their ecosystem over hundreds of years (Flint, 2008). This has had a significant effect on their way of life. *Mambumbwe* (ligneous reeds) are resistant to floods, and by implication, the Lozi people are resistant to floods. This is an indigenous epistemology by which the Lozi people identify and define themselves in relation to their ecological landscape as well as their culture.

The Zambezi River is central to the Lozi people and provides them with water for their survival and virtually sustains their socioeconomic activities such as fishing, agriculture, transport, and cultural activities. Because of the critical role that the Zambezi river plays in supporting and sustaining the daily and annual activities, it has been given indigenous fond names such as ‘*Yunene*’ (big one), ‘*Lyambai*’ (one that talks evil). The latter name is in reference to the destructive tendencies of the annual floods when the banks of the river burst with water to fill the Bulози plains (Lisimba, 2000). The flood plain (*Libala la Bulози*) is fondly known as ‘*Ngulu*’ (sweet potatoes), *Mbunga* (many people), and ‘*Lyondo*’ (weapon). The plain offers a natural affordance to the Lozi people as a strong weapon against many odds stemming from natural disasters such as hunger and mortal enemies. The Zambezi flood plain is referred to as ‘the life blood’ (Flint, 2008), and the ‘heart’ of Bulози (Mainga, 1973).

² Mupatu (1978) observes the affinity and skill that the indigenous people have for water and refers to it as their ‘play game’ or *papali* (p.37).

The indigenous Lozi agricultural calendar year is divided into thirteen months. Mainga (1973) observes that “the length of the month is calculated according to the waxing and waning of the moon” (p.6). The beginning of the agricultural activities [usually in September] coincides with the beginning of the year. The thirteenth month of the Lozi calendar is known as *sikwetikweti*. The upland or forest margins of the floodplains of Western Province offers temporary asylum to the people living in the plains during periods of inundation from January to June. During this period, the *kuomboka*³ ceremony (which simply means to get out of water) or annual transhumance takes place. The Litunga⁴, who is the king of the Lozi people, together with his subjects, move to the upland. The *kuomboka* ceremony has become one of the most spectacular annual traditional ceremonies in Zambia drawing both international and local support. It also has a lot of economic incentives for the Lozi people. Namafe (2006) and Banda et al (2015) observe that the plains people’s way of living has been greatly influenced by the flooding regime of the Zambezi River. Gluckman (1951) observes that the Lozi calendar is largely defined by the state of the floods. There is a strong bond between the Lozi people and their natural environment that makes them to be extremely proud of their region⁵.

Agricultural activities are predominantly of small scale. Simwinji (1997) observes that the agricultural economy of the flood plain hinges on herding, cropping, and fishing activities where 60 percent of households are involved in fishing activities. In short, fishing is by far the most widespread activity in the province in which men, women, and children engage. Children actively engage in work through most play related activities. The line between work and play for Lozi children is a porous one. While the natural and cultural resources such as the annual *kuomboka* have received great attention from scholars, very little attention has been given to children’s indigenous musical play games as a component in the sociocultural milieu of the Lozi people.

In recent years, Western Province has been classified as one of the poorest provinces of Zambia. Agricultural food production is largely dependent on small scale farming. According to Rajaratnam et al., (2015), 80 percent of people live in poverty and 60 percent experience extreme

³ This is the annual movement of the Lozi people out of the flood plain. After the floods have receded, the kufuluhela ceremony takes. The people get back to their permanent residences in the plain.

⁴ Litunga is the title of the Lozi king and simply means ‘world’ in reference to the land occupied by the Lozi people. He is at the centre of all Lozi unity and promotes unity in diversity of all the ethnic tribes in Western Province.

⁵ David Livingstone once observed that “[t]he Borotse when removed from their valley mourn after it as the Israelites did after Egypt” (Livingstone, Private Journals, p.210, cited in Hogan, 2015, p. 46).

poverty. Yet, the province is endowed with an abundance of natural resources that have not been fully harnessed (Flint, 2008). The Barotse flood plain is ranked the second largest after Bangweulu, with abundant fish and bird species, while the Liuwa national park wildebeest annual migrations is the second largest on the continent.

Western Province is not only one of the poorest provinces in Zambia (2010 Census of Population and Housing, Rajaratnam, 2015) but has the second lowest literacy rate for adult population of 15 years and older at 72.5 percent against the national rate of 83 percent (2010 Census of Population and Housing). Similarly, the province has a poor record in educational performance in the national examinations at grade 7, 9, and 12, as well as higher absenteeism rates in the national examinations (Examinations Council of Zambia, 2013). The province is equally grappling with the HIV/AIDS problem and official statistics identify it as being the second highest in terms of infection rates.

Flint (2008) has observed that the socioeconomic challenges that the Provinces faces could be explained in terms of politico-economic processes that have been exacerbated in recent decades by a deliberate state and government policies of neglect.

1.3. Ethnic groups

Western Province has thirty eight⁶ (38) estimated ethnic groups all of whom are unified under the siLozi language as their lingua franca (Kashoki, 1978). The Silozi language is a dialect of Southern Sotho that resulted following the Kololo conquest over the Luyana in 1840. According to Lisimba (2000), the Lozi language is 75 percent Southern Sotho (Kololo) and 25 percent indigenous Luyana. However, the use of Sesotho has been modified due to contact with the indigenous Luyana (Mbeha, 2017). Although Gluckman (1951) cites twenty-five groups, the consideration of other small ethnic groups seems to have been overlooked in his listing and documentation. Langworthy (1972) on the other hand approximates the number of ethnic groups to be higher than that suggested by Gluckman. Langworthy approximates the number to be between 25 and 35. Over time, the Lozi people intermarried with other ethnic groups they came into contact with. Gluckman (1951) makes the following observation regarding claims to pure Lozi blood:

⁶ Induna Mukulwakashiko's historical lecture during a meeting in Sioma on 25/08/20 organised by the Western Power Company with the Barotse Royal Establishment (BRE) led by Minyolui (Ngambela) or Prime minister of Barotse land in attendance.

“Today the Lozi themselves say that there is practically no Lozi who is a pure Luyi. Almost all of them point without shame to Nkoya, Kwangwa, Subiya, Totela, Mbunda, Kololo and other blood in their ancestry” (pp.7-8).

The old Siluyana survives in ceremonies, songs, and rituals at the Litunga’s court (Kashoki, 1978), and is still spoken by the Kwangwa, Kwandi, and Nyengo among other dialects.

1.4. Traditional belief system- the creation myth

The Lozi people, just like other tribes have their philosophical understanding on how the world was created. Mbiti’s (1969) view that an African is notoriously religious is also true of the Lozi people. The Lozi view is that Nyambe⁷ or god created the world and everything including man or *Kamunu*⁸, and that Nyambe and his wife Nasilele lived on this earth in the great Barotse flood plain (Jalla, 1909, Stirke, 1922). *Kamunu* or man distinguished himself from all that Nyambe had created. For instance, when Nyambe constructed a dugout canoe, *Kamunu* also managed to do this, and when Nyambe forged an iron tool, *Kamunu* also surprised Nyambe by doing the same⁹. *Kamunu* became intelligent through his keen observations. Using a spear he had made, *Kamunu* started killing the animals that Nyambe had created. Because of *Kamunu*’s disobedience and destructive tendencies, Nyambe ascended to heaven or *litooma* using the spider’s web and left *Kamunu* behind. The spider’s eyes were gorged out to prevent it from assisting *Kamunu* from following Nyambe to his heavenly abode or *litooma* in the sky. Death followed *Kamunu*’s destructive actions on Nyambe’s creation. *Kamunu*’s futile attempts to reach Nyambe after all this failed.

Closely connected to the creation myth, the Lozi people have developed many cultural practices and religious beliefs on how to appease Nyambe and evade punishment after death. Some of these cultural practices have taken the form of dances, songs, and plays. For instance, the cultural practice of making *matumbekela*¹⁰, though an indigenous play form common to adolescents, was performed because it was believed that whoever had no such marks on his or her arms would be

⁷ The reader is referred to Jalla (1909), ‘The history and legends of the Lozi people’ and Stirke (1922) for an elaborate account of this mythic story.

⁸ It should be pointed out that this creation account as recorded by Jalla had no external influences that could have arisen due to Western contacts. Missionaries who came to Barotseland (Western Province) found this myth long before their arrival. Scholars in the disciplines of religion and theology would find some elements this story to correspond to the Biblical account in Genesis.

⁹ These practices (canoe making and forging iron implement for fishing purposes) are still highly cultural practices among the Lozi people.

¹⁰ This is a play form that requires participants to make small tattoo marks on their arms using small flames of fire. A small piece of cloth or string is placed on the arm and allowed to burn completely leaving a small wound that will be a scar after complete healing.

subjected to eating flies in heaven after his or her death. The presence of the moon at night especially when the first crescent appeared heralded the appearance of Nyambe's wife Nasilele. During the first moon appearance, the Lozi people in the past would not do any work but would engage in some form of recreation through such dances as *ngomalume* (men's dance) or *liwale* (for women) during such periods of relaxation and rest (Stirke, 1922). In the Lozi conceptualization of the divine, the rising sun represents the arrival of Nyambe as coming from his hide-out in the sky and the people would pray to him (Lisimba, 2000). This practice is still common in some rural places especially when the naming ceremony of a newly born baby is done. In this respect, the Lozi people's beliefs are consistent with the other African Traditional Religions that have viewed God's withdrawal from man as punishment for man's disobedience (Mbiti, 1970).

Other beliefs whose subtle focus was on protecting the forests and animals, the rivers and fish included the belief in *Mwendanjangula*, also known as *Njangwa-Muloti* or *Mwendalutaka*, believed to have a half head, one eye, half a nose, one arm, and one leg. This creature according to the myth was very strong and was master in medicinal herbs and magic. The mysterious creature was believed to be a great wrestler. The rivers and lakes were believed to be occupied by a great snake locally known as *lingongole*. Only great wrestlers could outwit *Mwendanjangula*. The myth about *Mwendanjangula* helped in deterring people from engaging in excessive hunting for both animals and birds. Marks (1976, 2017) made a similar point about some of the taboos observed by the Bisa people in the Luangwa valley. However, these indigenous myths of the Lozi people present valuable insights on how indigenous ontologies serve as rich sources of 'funds of knowledge' (Moll et al 1992) upon which modern school curriculum can benefit. Because of such indigenous beliefs, the forests and rivers, the wild animals, birds and fish were all well protected in a sustainable manner. My focus in this section is that indigenous epistemologies should not be neglected and dismissed but should be used as pedagogical and instructional tools in the school curriculum. Simwinji (1997) argues that indigenous practices among the Lozi people helped to conserve the local environment.

1.5. Indigenous musical play games and dances due to contacts with other ethnic groups

The Lozi people have had contacts with other ethnic groups such as the Makololo people who conquered the Lozi people and subjected them to their rule. The Makololo language, culture and

influence found its way among the Lozi people in this respect. Some common indigenous musical play games were also introduced among the Lozi children. For instance the term ‘*ku bapala*’ (to play) is a term borrowed from Sesotho which has been in use since the Makololo conquest. The tongue twister ‘*kulu puta tupa, tupa puta kulu*’ (tortoise twist the whip, whip twist tortoise) recorded by Ntsihlele (2003) is a common tongue twister among Lozi children. The Lozi play game of pretend play (*mangongwe*) gravitated to the Sotho and Venda versions of *mantloana* and *mahundwane* respectively and a corrupted Lozi version of *mandwani* seems to have emerged. Dances such as *sinjonjo* and *simanjemanje* that were popular at some point in time in Western Province came about through the labour migrations of the Lozi men to the mines of South Africa (Nzewi, 2007).

The coming of the Mbunda and Luvale speaking people from Angola into Barotseland also brought new innovations in children’s indigenous musical play games and dances. For instance the practice of including mask characters (*bikishi-kishi*) common among the Lozi in story narratives seems to originate from the Mbunda people, while the indigenous game called *ñela* seems to have originated from contacts with the Luvale people where it is known as *nyela*. *Ñela* appears to be Lozi corrupted version of *nyela*. In the south, contacts with the Subiya, Shanjo, and Totela resulted in the incorporation of the *sipelu* dance. In his linguistic grouping, Kashoki (1978) classifies the Subiya, Shanjo, and Totela as belonging to the Tonga speaking people of Southern Province.

1.6. Significance of Western Province to the present study

Educationally, Western Province has provided invaluable contributions to the history of the modern state of Zambia and its educational system. The first school in the country was established in Western Province in 1883. King Lewanika of the Lozi people is on record in granting permission to various missionaries to establish schools among the Tonga and Ila tribes of Southern Province in Zambia (Snelson, 1974, Ragsdale, 1986). Politically, the signing of the infamous Lochner treaty in 1890¹¹ between King Lewanika of the Lozi people and the British South African Company led to the establishment of the BSA Company rule in Northern Rhodesia. In short, Western Province (Barotseland) played a seminal role in the political and

¹¹ Frank Lochner, the BSAC representative “had not stated accurately to Coillard the relationship of the BSAC to the [British] crown” (Ragsdale, 1986, p.21). “The fact remains that he [Coillard] assisted Lochner in obtaining the concession that helped to establish the BSAC in Northern Rhodesia” (ibid).

educational history of Zambia. Ironically, although the province has a documented historical account of being the first place to have its doors open to Western education in 1883 (Snelson, 1974), the only college of education in existence was established by the Roman Catholic Church. Secondly, although plans in the recent past have been put underway to construct a university, the progress for the undertaking has disturbingly been very slow.

1.7. My musical life journey: an autobiographical account

This auto-ethnographic account is intended to provide the reader with insights that have led to the choice of the research topic. As a *mulozi* myself, who hails and was socialised in Western Province, I witnessed the performances of the dances in their natural settings both at home and at school¹² as a child and later on as an adult. Additionally, I loved to hear stories from my grandmother and aunties in the evenings, and I participated in riddle challenges with other children. My grandfather was a skilled and renowned master drummer in the local area. My father was a skilful musician who played both traditional and Western instruments that included the xylophone (*silimba*), guitar and accordion. Through constant listening to his lovely touch of the guitar and xylophone (*silimba*), I learnt the art as well though I could not match his skill. My mother was a singer whose lovely singing of lullabies was always fascinating. I enjoyed listening to her during the moments she would sing to one of my younger siblings. She knew how to switch on from one female voice to the other thereby creating a captivating melody. Later on as I grew up, she encouraged me to join the church choir at the local congregation where we used to go and this helped to nurture my musical talent.

I learnt to make my own guitar from empty metal containers of cooking oil that were common in the 1970s and started playing first on two strings, then three and then four. Sometimes, I played on my father's guitar when he was out for work. However, these maneuvers sometimes landed me in some serious trouble especially if one string accidentally snapped as I tried to tune it. I successfully managed to learn to play six strings and provided entertainment to my friends during our leisure moments. When I was in grade seven, my father got worried that my playing of the guitar would affect my school performance and therefore, he discouraged me from making or playing the 'empty tin container' guitars by constantly breaking any that I carelessly left.

¹² Schools in the 1970s and 1980s were well known for their cultural activities. Many schools in Western Province made recordings with the national studios. Unfortunately, this practice is no longer conducted resulting in the stifling of talent in many schools.

However, things changed after my impressive performance to form one in 1981 after the grade seven national examinations of 1980 which earned me the right to freely play his acoustic guitar.

In secondary school, I desired to study music formally but it was not offered as a subject at any school in the province. I got basic knowledge in music notation from interactions with friends that I sung with in a quartet as members of the Seventh Day Adventist church (SDA). When I completed my secondary school education, I enrolled for a primary school teacher certificate and had an opportunity to do a course in music education. I easily learnt how to play the piano perhaps because of my earlier mastery of the *silimba* (xylophone) which requires a similar pitch application when playing. I also developed a lot of interest in the courses in Educational Psychology¹³. My music lecturer observed my ability to read music and play some musical instruments and therefore encouraged me to consider going for a diploma course after completing my primary teacher certificate programme. After teaching at primary school level for three years, I made some reflections on the advice given to me by my former music lecturer at college and enrolled for a diploma programme in secondary school music education at Evelyn Hone College of Applied Arts and Commerce in Lusaka. After graduating, I was posted to a secondary school in Western Province where my desire was to teach music but I suffered one major setback; I could not introduce music at this school on the grounds that the school curriculum was already overcrowded to accommodate an extra subject. Given this situation, I was advised to offer English only till there would be some space for music. Unfortunately, this opportunity never came to pass for me. Music was only introduced after a protracted struggle by one other teacher who came after me following my admission for a degree programme at the University of Zambia. At the time I went to the University of Zambia, music as a degree programme was not offered and I had no option but to take other disciplines, a situation that reflected the neglect of arts and music education in particular then at the University towards arts education.¹⁴ Currently however, the university has a degree in music education.

While doing my master's degree programme at the University of Zambia, I had the opportunity to interact with Professor Robert Serpell who was the course coordinator in child and adolescent psychology and later became my research supervisor. After learning of my life journey in music,

¹³ This was the first time I came to learn about the cognitive developmental theory of Piaget.

¹⁴ When I was enrolled at the University of Zambia, I learnt that the late Mr. John A. Mwesa, one of the leading music lecturers had left the University and opted to offer music courses at the University of Baraton in Kenya.

he encouraged me to focus on children's indigenous musical play games when I presented my dissertation research topic. He introduced me to the seminal works of the late professor Mtonga Mapopa on 'Children's games and play in Zambia.'¹⁵ I found Mtonga's work conducted in the 1980s mostly in the Eastern Province of Zambia 'where the sun first rises from', to be stimulating and insightful to me who lived in the Western Province of Zambia 'where the sun sets.'¹⁶ This formed the basis for personal reflections of my musical journey as a child, as a pupil and student, as a long time serving teacher, an Education Standards Officer in the Ministry of Education, and District Education Board Secretary. My interactions with the late John Mwesa who was then lecturing at Rusangu University and one of Zambia's leading pioneers in music education introduced me to the ethnomusicological work of John Blacking in South Africa among the Venda children. For my doctoral programme, I embarked further on documenting some selected indigenous musical play games among the Lozi people as a way of broadening my earlier master's study, as well as preserving such forms of play from disappearing completely due to the corrosive effects of modern trends and lack of documentation (Mtonga, 2012). Mtonga also took inspiration from his childhood experiences as a performer of music, as testifies on pages 8-9 of the book "Children's games and play in Zambia." Many Lozi academics such as Mufalali (1974), Mbikusita - Lewanika (1979), Kakuwa (2005), Lubasi (2009), Lilemba and Matemba (2015) and more recently Kakoma (2017) have noted with concern the degree to which the indigenous play games of the land are disappearing and have called for scaled up efforts to salvage the situation.

1.8. Some lessons from my personal reflections

Firstly, different ecological niches that are embedded with rich cultural values systems are the strong pillars for developing and supporting human abilities and talents. The rich musical background I was exposed to as a child first from my family members, the community and institutions were instrumental in developing my musical abilities in life. This is consistent with the view by Super and Harkness (1997) that, "...there is a general acknowledgement that children shape and are shaped by experiences within their developmental niches" (p.276).

¹⁵ Professor Mapopa Mtonga was a distinguished ethnomusicologist in Zambia. His book was published in 2012 by the University of Zambia Press.

¹⁶ Courtesy of NTNU for providing for my air ticket and accommodation during my short stay in Ethiopia

Children in local traditional societies develop and nurture their potentials which are necessary for adulthood.

Secondly, cultural values are practiced and appreciated by people who understand their significance in the social milieu in which they are practiced. As a child, I listened to stories, and played with others most of those games that reflected the educational values of the community. For instance, I learnt how to play the *silimba* (xylophone) through observations of master players in the village that included fellow children and some adults and won the approval of the community when they observed my skill in the process. Rogoff (2003) observes that children’s learning and development occur through participation in the sociocultural activities of their communities. Gardner (1983) provides useful insights on the role of culture in the learning process of children,

Culture makes it possible for us to examine the development and implementation of intellectual competences from a variety of perspectives; the roles the society values; the pursuits in which individuals achieve expertise; the specification of domains in which individual prodigiousness, retardation, or learning disabilities may be found; and the kinds of transfer of skills which we may expect in educational settings (pp.57-58).

This observation is also consistent with the studies of Ng’asike, (2014) in Kenya and Ejuu, (2015) in Uganda who have cited learning as best occurring in a cultural context. However, while indigenous activities and practices in rural communities are valued as constituting an important dimension in the development of children, communities found in towns and other urban areas have different value systems. For instance, when my family relocated to an urban setting, I noted that children mostly listened to recorded music in their homes. Although they also engaged in indigenous musical play games, the general perception was that children who engaged in such activities were likely to perform poorly at school. Popular school mockery songs like the one transcribed below orchestrated such negative perceptions:

| Lozi | English |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Caller: <i>Simasiku</i> | <i>Simasiku</i> (name of a person) |
| Respondents: <i>Silimba si mutenguzi</i> (Repeated several times as desired) | He is addicted to the xylophone |

The lyrics of the above song demonstrated the negative attitudes that had developed overtime towards music in social contexts where preference for academic achievement was emphasised. Mundumuko (1990) has attributed such negative attitudes to missionaries and the Western education they brought that looked down on African values. In the rural areas, participation in music related activities was valued because it was perceived as a preparation for fitness into adult activities of the community. Although children went to school, they were also allowed to engage in valued community activities. In the urban areas, the situation was different as could be noted from the absence of indigenous musical instruments such as xylophones and drums in local high density residential areas. Children were expected to excel in academic activities at school and this was perceived as the best means of preparing children for fitness in the world of work.

Another aspect drawn from my reflections of my musical journey centres on how transfer of learning can occur. Transfer of learning happens easily when an individual encounters similar situations or experiences to the ones he/she is familiar with. Learning to play the piano proved easy to me because of the similar patterns of scales and tonal arrangement with the *silimba*. In classroom situations, providing children with rich indigenous materials that are embedded in their ecological niches could easily help transfer of learning to occur. In the case of music, music literacy to the clapping or notation systems can easily be transferred to other subjects such as mathematics. This is the view opined by Schlaug et al (2008) when they noted that “Mathematical skills may well be enhanced by music learning because understanding rhythmic notations actually requires math-specific skills, such as pattern recognition and an understanding of proportion, ratio, fractions, and subdivisions...” (p.226). The observations by Muthivhi and Kriger (2019) provides useful insights on how participation in music instruction could benefit primary school children’s early reading abilities through transfer of learning.

Music is one subject that has received the least attention from the curriculum specialists and government at large in preference for other subjects. My experience as a trained music teacher and work experience as an education standards officer has helped me to mingle with the music teachers and observe how the subject is viewed by most education administrators. For instance, one young male teacher almost dropped his university degree programme in music education when his District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) told him that he would not process his study leave because music as a subject was not the priority for the district. This explains why

even the teaching of music related activities such as children's indigenous musical play games in schools is less emphasised.

1.9. Theoretical framework

The study adopted a multidimensional approach for its theoretical framework anchored mainly in the sociocultural perspective of Vygotsky (1978), and propounded and advanced by eminent scholars like Bruner (1966/1996); Greenfield (1976), Cole (1996); Rogoff (2003), Serpell (1993a), and Nsamenang (1992) among many others. The theory of Multiple Intelligence (MI) postulated by Gardner (1983) and Moll et al's (1992) Funds of knowledge theoretical framework were used in this study as lens to contextualise learning as a shared social cultural process. In providing justification for this undertaking, I was mindful of the fact that there was no single theoretical framework that could best articulate and account for the complex nature of human development especially as it fundamentally relates to the learning process (Nsamenang, 2005). Secondly, the choice of the aforementioned theories was by no means meant to relegate other theories as being insignificant, but by the nature of the study, the theoretical perspectives chosen were deemed to be closer to what was being explored. A case in point in this regard is Piaget's influential epistemological theory of cognitive development that arose in the 1930s and 40s, and popularised in the English speaking world in the 1960s by leading American psychologists such as Flavell (1966); Bruner (1966); Ginsburg and Opper (1969), and Furth (1969). In the recent past however, the Piagetian school of thought has received criticisms as being too narrowly focused to account for cross cultural differences (Greenfield, 1976,). It emphasises individual construction of knowledge without paying attention to the role of more capable others in society (Forman et al.1993, p), and is incapable of explaining other forms of intelligences existing in different cultural contexts (Gardner, 1983; Davidoff, 1987, Rogoff, 2003).

The three theoretical frameworks on which this study is grounded are discussed in the section that follows.

1.9.1 The sociocultural theory of Vygotsky

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory posits that a child's cognitive development happens as a result of the social and cultural interactions and constructions (Vygotsky, 1978). The theory emphasises that the social construction processes are derived from apprenticeships provided by

cultural experts who include both adults and peers (Greenfield et al. 2003), and that “individual development must be understood in, and cannot be separated from, its social and cultural-historical context” (Rogoff, 2003, p.50). Sociocultural theorists maintain that an individual’s participation in social interactions and culturally organised activities is important for development (Dillon, 2005). This development encapsulates the cognitive developmental processes as well. According to Makumba (2005),

The thought of a particular people cannot be understood without first appreciating and understanding their cultural background. It is only the delusion of cultural supremacy that will attempt to make a particular mode of cognition the standard measure of all other modes (p.8).

In this perspective, culture and individuals are not separate entities that can act independent of each other, but as Rogoff (2003) maintains, “...people contribute to the creation of cultural processes and cultural processes contribute to the creation of people. Thus, individual and cultural processes are mutually constituting rather than defined separately from each other (Rogoff, 2003, p.51; cf Cole 1996). Human activity is mediated by the use of tools and signs for communication and making sense of the world. Language is one of culture’s tools. Commenting on the value of language as a significant component in the thinking process, Rogoff (2003) observes that,

Language systems are tools of thinking that both channel and result from community wide ways of thinking and acting. Concepts that are easily expressed in the language system of a community provide a tool for thinking (p.267)

Language and music are inherent cultural tools. There is no human society that does not possess these tools. Children in all cultures make an extensive use of these tools when they are involved in play activities.

- **The Zone of Proximal Development**

An important concept that is embedded in the sociocultural theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky defined this concept as “ the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86). Litowitz in Forman et al (1993) observes that

“it is the difference between what the child can do on her own and that which she can do in collaboration with a more knowledgeable other” (p.185). For a child who is not yet an expert (novice) to achieve mastery in a given activity or task, the child needs the assistance of a more knowledgeable person (mentor) to assist them. The assistance that the novice receives is, in sociocultural perspective, likened to the use of scaffolds in building constructions. Although Vygotsky himself did not coin the concept of scaffolding, this theoretical concept was coined by Bruner (1983) together with other scholars (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Keenan, Evans and Crowley (2016) express the metaphor of scaffolding as

an interactive process in which adults adjust both the amount and type of support they offer to a child, leading to eventual mastery of the skill being taught (p.184)

When operating in the zone of proximal development, adults or peers encourage the child or novice to perform a given task at the level of the child’s ability until mastery of the task is achieved. The educational implications of Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development according to Keenan, Evans, and Crowley (2016) are that social interactions with more experienced others are essential for education as they foster cooperative learning where peers work together for a common learning goal. Adult mentors or ‘the more knowledgeable other’ may vary the type of tasks they provide to the learner to enhance learning .The zone of proximal development in this respect promotes child to child, or adult to child interactions where the knowledgeable others work effectively with the less knowledgeable ones to achieve common learning goals. Vygotsky’s sociocultural perspective as seen through the concepts of the zone of proximal development and scaffolding emphasises collective participation and involvement of the community members in the process of knowledge generation and acquisition. For Cole (1985), the zone of proximal development is significant because this is where culture and cognition create each other. It is the meeting point for the mentor who is armed with what culture values, and the novice who should learn the cultural values and later transmit them again to others so that there is continuity.

The above view has some important implications on the teaching and learning processes in the current classroom situations today as well as the medium of instruction that may be in place. Schools are expected to encourage child to child interactive learning opportunities in the classroom setups. During play moments, children mostly learn by observing from others and

then receive appropriate feed back when they try to learn a particular game until mastery in that particular game is attained. When applied to indigenous musical play games, children's play activities mostly take place in the outskirts of the village under the guidance of more knowledgeable others. When they graduate from such outskirt activities, they assume the adults tasks with less difficulties and receive more mentorship from their parents in particular tasks such as cooking or building.

1.9.2 Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligence (MI)

Gardner's (1999) theory of Multiple Intelligence (MI) contends that Music is a form of intelligence capable of helping an individual to achieve his/her goals. According to Gardner (1983), a study of musical intelligence is relevant in creating an understanding on music's relation to other forms of human intellect. Intelligence is defined as "the capacity to solve problems or to fashion products that are valued in one or more cultural settings" (Gardner & Hatch, 1989). Gardner further observes that each culture has its own symbol system, its own means of interpreting experiences. He identified seven intelligences namely: Linguistic; Musical; Logical-Mathematical; Spatial; Bodily-Kinesthetic, the Personal intelligences that include Interpersonal, and Intrapersonal intelligences (Gardner, 1983). More recently, Gardner has added an eighth dimension which he calls the naturalist intelligence. Accordingly, naturalist intelligence is "the human ability to discriminate among living things (plants, animals) as well as sensitivity to other features of the natural world (clouds, rocks, configurations)" (Timmins, 1996,p.3). The development or stagnation of these intelligences largely depends on the experiences with different cultural domains.

The theory of Multiple Intelligences is relevant for this study and provides useful insights on how educational programmes can be structured in relation to different cultural practices as noted earlier on in this section. According to Dolati and Tahriri (2017), Gardner's theory has two important educational implications. Firstly, the theory advocates for ways in which educational programmes should be designed to enhance students' self actualisation of their potentials, and secondly, the theory helps teachers to plan their lessons in ways that take into account the different intelligences of children. Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences largely complements the sociocultural perspective of Vygotsky because of its positive approach to cultural related processes. Different cultures have different approaches to what they consider

valuable. This view extends even to how intelligence is conceptualised in different cultures. For instance, Nketia (1999) opines that one of the cardinal roles of music is to communicate the social and cultural values of the society. To a large extent, this is often not considered in the school curricula programmes of most African states, Zambia inclusive. Gardner's (1983) theory argues that,

Culture makes it possible for us to examine the development and implementation of intellectual competences from a variety of perspectives: the roles the society values; the pursuits in which individuals achieve expertise; the specification of domains in which individual prodigiousness, retardation, or learning disabilities may be found; and the kinds of transfer of skills which we may expect in educational settings (pp.57-58).

Rogoff (2003) contends that children derive their understanding from direct engagement in cultural practices. Most children's indigenous plays games in Africa are usually accompanied by songs (Acquah et. al, 2015), and are in most cases imitations of adult activities. By participating in the musical activities of their societies, the children acquire valuable knowledge in the process.

1.9.3. Moll et al. (1992) 'Funds of Knowledge'

This theory asserts that by capitalising on household and other community resources, classroom instruction can best be arranged to offer quality learning as opposed to subjecting learners to mere rote learning (Moll et al., 1992). The theory further argues that households and communities contain ample cultural resources with great potential for classroom instruction. I found this to be an appropriate means for exploring ways of enriching the Zambian school curriculum through the lens of Lozi children's indigenous musical play games. My personal experience as noted earlier helped me to understand how such cultural resources are absent in modern classrooms. Learning as articulated by Ausubel (1968) should employ the use of what a learner is familiar with to offer meaningful learning. Unfortunately, school instruction in most cases neglects the incorporation of what children know (Heath, 1983) and focuses exclusively on what they do not know. A case in point relates to the findings obtained in a study in the United States where the provision of rhythmic music and the opportunity for movement expression significantly enhanced learning for low-income Euro-American children (Allen & Boykin, 1991, cited in Serpell and Boykin, 1994). However, in a more recent study in Zambia (Serpell &

Mukela, 2019) found that children's indigenous musical play games were not utilised for learning purposes in some schools. Such neglect of indigenous cultural resources in Zambia has in the recent years attracted advocacy for the use of indigenous play resources for learning (Mtonga, 2012, Banda, 2010, Mukela, 2013, Kalinde, 2017, Kakoma, 2017).

1.10. Statement of the problem

Children's indigenous musical play games are given the least attention in the Zambian school curriculum while a strong orientation to using Western play songs and games still persists. This situation has created a mismatch between the policy in place where learning using a familiar local language is stressed (MOE, 2013), and the implementation process where the scarcity or absence of indigenous play materials exists due to lack of documentation, or teachers' lack of knowledge. Teaching using a familiar local language in the school curriculum implies using local related materials such as children's indigenous musical play games as well. MOE (1992) provides a caution on the perpetual use English at the expense of the local ones;

The use of English to the exclusion of local languages, as the medium of instruction in schools leads to a downgrading of these languages. The "English equals education" mentality does little to foster an appreciation for one's cultural heritage. This stress on English from the beginning of school also serves to enshrine the isolation of the school from the community (p.28).

Unfortunately, this caution seems to exist on paper only and has lacked any translation. The introduction of the Revised Curriculum in 2013 in the Zambian schools was seen as one landmark achievement to attaining the use of teaching using a familiar local language especially in the early grades in line with the national policy of 'Educating Our Future' (MOE, 1996). However, the existing situation in the Zambian school curriculum in general and Western Province in particular continues to suffer major setbacks on this dimension. Most teachers express negative attitudes towards indigenous musical play games and see no benefits in using such readily available resources. Due to this existing gap on documentation and teachers' lack of knowledge on the benefits of using indigenous musical play games, this study was undertaken as a means of providing grounds for their use and incorporation.

1.11. Purpose of the study

The focus of this thesis was on documenting and contextualising children's indigenous musical play games for educational purposes in order to generate a bridge between the formal school system and the local communities from which most rural children receive their primary socialisation. In line with the current perspective of the Zambian school curriculum where learning and teaching using a familiar local language is underscored, the study sought to explore the educational potential underpinning indigenous musical play repertoires as 'funds of knowledge' (Moll et al., 1992) for possible incorporation in the school curriculum. One of the major weaknesses of education and research and practice in Africa in general and Zambia in particular is what Matos (2000, cited in van Wyk and Higgs, 2011) described as a "systematic attempt to dismiss the intrinsic value of African culture, language, customs, and practices from the curriculum" (p.177). Children's indigenous musical play games are a rich source where such indigenous cultural practices are demonstrated. My explorations of the existing literature and Google search on indigenous musical play games among Lozi children revealed that there was very insignificant work done on the topic under investigation.

1.12. Study Justification

In undertaking this study, I drew inspiration from the seminal work of Mtonga (2012) on 'Children's games and play in Zambia.' It was observed that there were few studies from the Zambian perspective on children's play and games despite the rich potentials that these activities had to offer to developing children. Mtonga (2012) had observed that:

Every national, ethnic, and cultural group had its own wealth of children's play and games which had great educational values but which [unfortunately,] were in danger of being lost or distorted due to swift social changes (p.1).

Further, Mtonga had succinctly argued that through music, dance, poetry, play and games, intelligence in different indigenous people was conceptualised and a sense of identity achieved. While the study by Mtonga was conducted many years ago mainly in the Eastern Province of Zambia among the Chewa speaking people, no known study of such a magnitude had been done in the Western Province of Zambia among the Lozi speaking people. Apart from some existing anthropological and historical accounts of the province, many valuable aspects of the province

including children's indigenous musical play games remain poorly documented. This observation has received international acknowledgement as noted from Timberlake (1998) in his report for Biodiversity Foundation for Africa where he argues that the quantity of resources available in the Upper Zambezi wetlands are little known in terms of documentation.

On the international level, Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) and indigenous educational practices are on the global agenda (Mutekwe, 2015). Using indigenous musical play games has been associated with positive developmental outcomes capable of integrating children into their social roles (Seroto, 2011). Further using indigenous musical play games has equally been reported by various studies as being capable to provide positive teaching and learning outcomes especially at the foundation levels of formal education (Mosimege & Ismael, 2004; Nabie & Sofo, 2009; Mudaly, 2018, Nxumalo & Mncube, 2019). This realisation prompted me to make reflections of the existing Zambian school curriculum both past and present, and led to the conceptualisation of the research topic.

1.13. Research objectives

1.13.1. General objective

The general objective of this study was to explore how participation in indigenous musical play games would enhance cognitive development in children and enhance the enrichment of the Zambian school curriculum.

1.13.2. Specific objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- To articulate the substantive cultural themes, values, and practices underlying Lozi children's indigenous music and games for possible incorporation in the school curriculum
- To document the perceived intellectual outcomes and socio emotional practices underpinning Lozi children's indigenous musical game songs
- To investigate teachers' perceptions regarding the use of children's indigenous musical play games in the school curriculum.

1.14. Research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- What are the substantive cultural themes, values, and practices underlying the Lozi children's indigenous musical play games in the study that could be incorporated in the main stream Zambian school curriculum?
- What are the perceived intellectual outcomes and socio-emotional processes involved in participating in the Lozi children's musical play games?
- What are the teachers' perceptions regarding the use of children's indigenous musical play games in the school curriculum?

1.15. Significance of the study

It is hoped that the study will demonstrate the relevance of community cultural resources mobilisation that have largely remained neglected but which, if incorporated would enrich the school curriculum. Firstly, the research findings will highlight the importance of synchronising indigenous cultural resources on the teaching and learning process in order to contextualise the education system. The current approach in school tends to place a heavy focus on English, Mathematics and Science with the expressive arts almost 'dying out.' Secondly, by documenting various indigenous musical play games, the findings from the study will highlight the benefits of learning from indigenous pedagogies and approaches to improve effective teaching and learning strategies among school children. It will also serve to preserve cultural resources that are perceived to be on the decline. Children's indigenous musical play games are a readily accessible and sustainable manifestation of indigenous culture. Lastly but not the least, the study will generate information on a topic that has not been much researched and thus contribute to the body of existing knowledge.

1.16. Scope of the study

The study was carried out in seven (07) selected districts of Western Province. These districts included Sioma, Sesheke, Senanga, Nalolo, Mongu, Kaoma, and Kalabo. Except for Sioma district established in 2013, the other five districts were among the first seven mother districts existing before the 2013 presidential directive that resulted in the creation of sixteen districts (see map on p.2 at the beginning of this section). Although Lozi is the lingua franca of the province, different districts have different ethnic groups in whose nomenclature of some indigenous musical play games bear different names. These indigenous musical play games however differ in names only while maintaining the same principles of form and rules governing them. As such

the choice of the five mother districts was envisaged to be representative of all the sixteen (16) districts that were in existence in the province. In short, almost all the districts were conveniently represented in the study design by virtue of those chosen districts.

1.17. Limitations of the study

The study may have some limitations arising from my role as a researcher and a senior official in the Ministry of Education. It is mostly likely that my position might have affected the ways in which some of my respondent teachers reacted in the process of data collection. However, I was mindful of such social desirability occasions and I tried to inform my participants that I was in the field collecting data for academic purposes. Their participation in the research process would not in any way be construed to affect their professional duties. For instance, my lesson observations were not to be taken as those that would constitute part of my office reports. I stayed long in most schools visited and this in itself helped to create mutual bonds of friendships with the concerned teachers, administrators and school children. The second limitation was that most of the data collected were mostly collected from the indigenous musical play games from the rural children in the selected districts in the province with few samples from urban areas. Lastly, the samples comprising the adult participants where information regarding some indigenous games was mostly gleaned from a few selected elderly informants.

1.18. Structure of the thesis

This thesis has six chapters structured as follows:

Chapter one provides the reader with the general background to the study area that includes its environmental landscape, historical antecedents and provides the reader with a bird's eye view of the social cultural context where the study was conducted. The chapter highlights the socioeconomic, educational challenges and political landscape of the province to provide grounds why the study area was chosen. This chapter also includes an autobiographical account of my musical journey to show the negative attitudes that music as a subject receives. The research objectives of the study and the overarching theoretical frameworks in which the study is anchored are discussed.

Chapter two ushers the reader to the corpus of literature on children indigenous musical play games beginning with some Western practices viewed from the ancient Greek music education philosophy. The chapter contrasts the early studies on children's indigenous musical play games with those that later followed whose aims were mainly experimental in nature. The chapter also shows how the preoccupation by Western developmental psychologists to determine the intellectual values of engaging in indigenous musical play games contrasts sharply with the African values of socialisation and enculturation through participation in such indigenous processes.

Chapter three provides the reader with the philosophical framework on which the study was grounded in terms of its methodology and why a qualitative approach using ethnography was preferred for the present study.

Chapter four provides the reader with the research findings that take into account how indigenous play games constitute a body of knowledge to Lozi children. It begins with different stages in the developmental process of Lozi children and how they interact with musical practices in the process of knowledge generation. Nsamenang's (1992/2005) seven stages Africentric developmental model is used to show how the socialisation process through engagement in music related activities is achieved. This chapter is divided in three parts –A, B, and C. Each part provides the reader with the research findings based on the three objectives that guided the study.

Chapter five discusses the research findings and implications in the light of their social cultural values and intellectual benefits to the modern Zambian school curriculum.

Chapter six presents the summary, conclusion, and recommendations. In its conclusion, the chapter argues and concludes that indigenous musical play games as interpreted from an indigenous cultural perspective provide strong justification for their inclusion in the Zambian school curriculum.

1.19. Operational definition of terms

Affordance-The term is adapted from Gibson (1979), and has mainly been used in this study to imply how information about how an object/aspect of the environment can be used as a resource for action.

Barotseland- The place and land occupied by the Lozi speaking people comprising the sixteen administrative districts of Western Province

Basic Education- The Primary level in the Zambian education system.

Cognitive development-Intellectual development that characterizes an individual's acquisition of knowledge to learn and function within a given environment

Expert- As used in this study, the term refers to a participant chosen on account of his/her reputed skills in music.

Indigenous music- Traditional music as practiced in the local area.

Music- As used in this study is synonymous with children's indigenous play games.

Play games- Used synonymously with children's games accompanied or not accompanied with songs

Silozi-The lingua franca spoken in Western Province.

1.20. Chapter summary

The chapter provided the reader with the contextual background information on the nature of the study area in terms of its geographical landscape and historical accounts as potential cultural resources in the socialisation processes of the Lozi children. The arguments advanced in the chapter were that there were valuable cultural practices among the Lozi people that deserved appreciation in the school curriculum to create meaningful bridges for learning.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Overview

This chapter presents a literature review to establish the extent to which gaps exist between Western philosophical approaches to music education and the broader indigenous African perspective. The focus of the review is on children's indigenous musical play games and their influence on children's cognitive and socioemotional development. The review first begins with the Greek music education philosophy and ends with the Zambian situation with Western Province in particular. To address the existing gaps in the topic under review, various online books and journals, paper presentations and dissertations/ theses have been cited. Through these reviews, I will argue that the widespread relegation of children's indigenous musical play games in the present school curriculum is mostly as a result of strong preferences for the Western oriented ideals of education that have little regard for the sociocultural values most espoused by indigenous rural communities in developing countries like Zambia.

2.2. Music in the ancient Greek world

In the preface to the fourth edition of *Music Education: Source Readings from Ancient Greece to Today*, Mark (2013) observes that "...music has been a part of every culture and society [and] has served a variety of functions, including religious, social, entertainment and educational" (p.xii). Children all over the world including the ancient Western world have always been active participants in indigenous musical play games. In this section, focus on ancient Western civilisations of the Greeks is discussed because of its contributions to modern education systems that continue to be reflected even in non western countries' education systems including Zambia. As observed by Andreu-Cabrera et al (2010), most of the ancient Greek games are still played today.

2.2.1. Music education in Greece

Music and dance was important for the ancient Greeks and it was part of every activity in their lives. In the ancient Greek society, music, alongside poetry, was highly valued in the curricula of the two cities of Sparta and Athens because "it was intended to influence both the body and soul

to develop citizens capable of participating in Greek society and worthy of receiving its benefits” (Mark, 2013, pp.4-5). According to Stamou (2002), the general belief among most ancient Greeks was that music had the power to affect people’s thoughts and actions in several ways. Stamou further notes that singing and speaking were close components of the Greek music culture and were coupled or used interchangeably. The Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle, whose ideas “strongly influenced philosophical thought on music education in the later Western world and have often been used [...] in the advocacy for music education” (Stamou, 2002, p.4) have remained strong advocates of music education. Lodge (1947) argues that, “the school [was] only one of the social institutions concerned with educating the rising generation” (p.12), where “teachers [were] qualified to train the children in elementary techniques: to play games, to read and write, [and] to make a little music” (p.12). Clearly, the goal for teaching musical play games through this form of education was meant to enhance the intellectual abilities of children to be functionally literate in the wider Greek society.

Both Plato and Aristotle recognised the role and value of music in the education system of the ancient Greeks (Schoen-Nazzaro, 1978). For instance, Plato recognised the role that lullabies played in the emotional well being of children. He argued that they had the potential to develop good habits and taste and indirectly prepared the intellect by “disposing the listener towards moral virtue and so predisposing him for learning” (Schoen- Nazzaro, 1978, p. 265). He observed that from infancy, mothers were to engage in singing and dancing with their children to enhance the well being of the child. His pedagogical approach was that teaching of concepts was to be conveyed to children through terms that were easily understood such as play and song (Stamou, 2002). This realisation has important implications for education today. Children’s indigenous musical play games are important avenues through which simple concepts can be channeled in the process of teaching.

Unlike Plato who advocated for early childhood education, Aristotle, who was a student of Plato, had divergent views regarding the age at which music education could begin. Aristotle believed that:

music instruction should not begin before the age of fourteen, because...young children are not able to understand music sufficiently in order to derive pleasure or edification from listening to it when they become older (Stamou, 2002, p.9).

For Aristotle, music provided pleasure and influenced character. Music provided pleasure by way of providing amusement and relaxation. In his view, music education for children was important because: “one of its ends [was] disposing towards moral virtue [and] giving intellectual enjoyment” (Schoen- Nazzaro, 1978, p.269). Despite their divergent views, both Plato and Aristotle believed that music was relevant for children of different ages.

In ancient Greece, it is noted that the games played by children were those that were related to the values of the society. For instance, children in Sparta were mostly engaged in games such as wrestling, discus, and the javelin which were essentially training processes for war (Andreu-Cabrera, 2010). In Athens, children played such games as ball games, the spinning top, hide-and-seek, and tug of war mostly as part of their athletics. Most of these games as observed by Andreu-Cabrera (2010) have their analogies with games played to this day, and most of these games were accompanied by songs.

Music in ancient Greece was also valued for the development of the intellect in mathematics education. According to the great mathematician Pythagoras, music and arithmetic were integral to each other. Pythagora argued that music,

was governed by the same mathematical laws that govern the universe which can be understood through knowledge of its mathematical proportions. One who understood musical proportions could understand the harmony of the universe (Mark, 2013, p5).

The indigenous Greek games were promoted because of the associated cultural values that they enhanced in children. Play and music activities were associated with sports for training Greek citizens in political and military leadership (D’Angour, 2013). Both play and music had rules governing them which were seen as essential in sharpening the intellect of individuals. It should however be pointed out that although the primary roles of play and music education among the ancient Greeks were to facilitate the intellectual development of children, the ultimate goal was to train them for military fitness. In the case of the indigenous Lozi society which is the focus of this study however, most of the games and music related activities were related to hunting and fishing activities as will be shown in the course of this chapter.

2.3. Research evidence on children’s musical play games in the modern Western world

The seminal work of the Opies (1959) on the ‘*Lore and language of school children*’ in England is credited to be one of the pioneering masterpieces of literature on children’s indigenous musical play games. Since then, music education has received considerable attention in most Western countries. For instance, Young and Irari (2018) make the following observation:

In a number of industrialised countries, national guidelines now set out requirements for general early years practice that are mandatory and that shape environments in which musical opportunities are included. These guidelines may include varying levels of specification and expectation for children learning in music. In the United Kingdom, for example, the national drive towards raising standards in language skills, spelled out in early years policy and guidance, pulls music in the services for communication and language development” (p.59).

In Sweden, Ehrlin and Gustavsson (2015) observe the importance that is attached to music education in early childhood school curriculum, “The Swedish national curriculum [...] states that music, art and drama should serve both content and method in preschool activities” (p.33). In Ireland, the government policy document released in 1999 outlined the major areas of concern for the inclusion of music in the Irish school curriculum. This document clearly spells out the central role of music education in a balanced curriculum as one that aims to develop the “whole spectrum of the child’s intelligence [for] [i]t involves learning in the major domains of knowledge, skills, attitudes and feelings, and the senses” (p.11). The policy document further noted that while listening to music, the child “develops skills in discrimination, concentration and reflection that are necessary for understanding in all disciplines” (ibid). The primary focus for such an approach is mainly because of the perceived intellectual benefits associated with music education as the following section shows.

2.4. Studies on music education and cognitive development

Piaget’s theory of cognitive development in children remains one of the most influential theories in psychology, and has had a significant effect on educational and practice. The theory focuses on how children’s intelligence develops. The theory assumes that there are clearly marked universal stages that all children pass through in their thinking process. In as far as play is

concerned; Bayrak (2019) observes that the theory asserts that children are interested in the type of play that suits their development level.

One of the influential theories in the field of educational psychology that explicitly linked music to intellectual development is Gardner's (1983) theory of Multiple Intelligences. According to Mills (2000), Gardner himself did not posit this theory with the intent that schools would embrace it as a basis for comprehensive school reform. Gardner theorised that there are eight intelligences in existence of which one is the musical intelligence. Musical intelligence is conceptualised as the capacity to perceive, discriminate, transform, and express musical forms (Armstrong, 2009). This intelligence includes sensitivity to rhythm, pitch or melody, and timbre or tone colour of a musical piece. Children's musical intelligence during play is mostly demonstrated in the way they coordinate their body movements to the rhythm of the song and the way they are able to discriminate pitch, or other musical elements. Gardner (1983) considers the musical elements of pitch (melody) and rhythm as the most central aspects of musical intelligence, an observation that I support too. Gardner's theory has remained one of the most influential theories in educational circles because of its emphasis of the way learning programmes and instructions should be structured to enhance students' achievements.

In the field of music education, following the seminal study by Rauscher and her colleagues (1993), several experimental studies in the Western countries have documented that participation in music related activities stimulates intellectual abilities in early childhood. For instance, in her seminal study on 36 undergraduate college students on the effects of listening to music and adult spatial abilities, Rauscher et al., (1993) found that there was a significant relationship between listening to music and performance in the spatial reasoning and mathematical abilities. These college students were allowed to listen to a Mozart sonata for two pianos in D major for 10 minutes and were thereafter tested on spatial intelligence tests to determine whether there was any correlation to listening to music and actual performance on a spatial – temporal reasoning task. The finding obtained showed that College students who listened to the Mozart sonata for 10 minutes increased their performance on subsequent spatial- temporal tasks when compared to control conditions (Rauscher, 2003). Because of the noted performance resulting from listening to the Mozart sonata, the term 'Mozart Effect' was coined. Since then, there has been a sustained interest among researchers and educators to prove or disprove this claim, and this has resulted in

an endless academic and scholarly debate. However, a noticeable gap in the study by Rauscher and her colleagues was that the study focused on college students and not on children especially those in the early childhood level.

A ripple wave following the ‘Mozart Effect’ triggered numerous studies in the Western world in many academic areas of learning. A comprehensive corpus of studies on this topic has been provided by Werner (2005) in a Master’s thesis - ‘Is early music education necessary to reach a professional level?’ What follows here are only selected pieces for and against the claim that music enhances intellectual development of children. In a study conducted by Bolduc (2009) on a sample of 104 Franco-Canadian kindergarten children to determine the effect of a music training programme on the development of phonological awareness, it was established that the experimental music training programme proved to be more effective when it came to developing phonological skills. The educational implications of this study showed that music was instrumental in enhancing phonological skills among preschool children. Further, Montgomery and Smith (2014) have argued in support of the value of music for emergent literacy. According to Montgomery and Smith, a child’s emergent literacy process can be achieved through real-life engagement with oral language and print. These scholars have observed that engaging preschool/ kindergarten aged children in specific musical activities that include singing songs, clapping rhythms was a “springboard for the development of phonological awareness” (p.29). In their action research in a large Western Canadian city, 96 families whose children were drawn from both private and public schools constituted the sample where the researchers were interested in attempting to learn more about singing and literacy practices. The outcomes of this study revealed that musical engagement was an excellent partner for supporting growth in rhyming, syllable segmentation, blending, and phonemic awareness among preschool/kindergarten children. The researchers thus noted:

A substantial body of research has indicated the value of engaging preschool/kindergarten aged children in specific musical activities (eg. singing songs, clapping, rhythms etc) as a springboard for the development of phonological awareness. (ibid).

Studies in support of music’s role for enhancing phonological awareness especially among preschool children have been on the increase (Schlaug et al, 2005; Baker et al., 1995; Anvari et al., 2002; Bolduc, 2009; Bradley & Bryant, 1978; Hargreaves, 1986; Hetland, 2000; Vaughn,

2000; Murphey, 1992; Wilcox, 1995). In short, these studies have established that both phonological and vocabulary proficiency can be greatly enhanced through participation in music related activities.

However, other strands of Western research have shown that empirical research designed to test the claims of music's effects on children's cognitive development have yielded mixed results, ranging from strong confirmation to disconfirmation. Rauscher (1999) is of the view that despite the replications made by several researchers, there have also been disconfirmations by other researchers who have been unable to reproduce the findings. According to Rauscher (1999), the Mozart Effect was studied only in adult college students and lasted only a few minutes, and was only for spatial-temporal reasoning. Citing Mekelvie and Low (2002), Rauscher (1999) quotes:

In fact, no scientific evidence supports the claim that listening to music improves children's intelligence. Two related studies tested the Mozart Effect with 103 children ages 11 to 13 years. The researchers found no experimental support for the effect in children, concluding that it is questionable as to whether any practical application will come from it (p.241).

The claim was only made in contexts that were familiar with the music of Mozart and could not be generalised. Despite the general disagreements, among various researchers on the music phenomenon, volumes of literature have since been in circulation on this topic triggering more research. Of particular interest for this study have been the positive effects of music on general development for both the intellect and social domains. In this regard, I support the view by Hodges (1999) who has observed that whether or not music instruction improves academic performance, it has value in and of itself. In the African context, music pervades almost all aspects of life and not necessarily academic as portrayed in some literary works from the Western world as I argue in the following section.

2.5. Criticisms of the Western studies on music and cognitive development

A number of gaps emanating from the Western dominated literature on music and children's play education have been identified. For instance, Western theories have been criticised for their tendency to ignore the developmental patterns of the non Western world (Nsamenang, 2004), and that most of such theories have a biased tendency of perceiving early childhood play activities in terms of intellectual developmental milestones rather than their social cognitions

(Nsamenang, 2008). The theories tend to overlook the artistic merits of children's play and games (Odero, 2016). It has also been pointed out that results from most of the Western studies are "based on observations and experiments involving a very narrow range of samples, usually children of a middle class sociocultural background studied in nurseries and schools" (Segall et al., 1990, Rogoff, 2003). Samples from such studies according to Morelli et al. (2003) are often treated as the universal norm.

When it comes to the cultural practices of other non western societies where elements such as social competence including social responsibility are emphasised, such indigenous values and practices in most cases have been overlooked and lacking in Western psychological theories of child intelligence (Nsamenang & Lamb, 1998). Mtonga (2012) concludes that "Western psychological theories and methods are products of Western culture and hence are inappropriate in the analysis of the culture and behaviour of others" (p.31). A number of African scholars have maintained the same view (Jahoda & Lewis, 1988, cited in Nsamenang, 2006; Serpell, 1993; Pence & Nsamenang, 2008; Mtonga, 2012; Serpell & Nsamenang, 2014; Ng'asike, 2014; Nsamenang, 2007; Kreutzer 2001; Nyota and Mapara, 2008). Blacking (1988) has challenged the narrow Western conceptualisation of cognitive development that neglects the affective culture of musical processes. Therefore, although there are useful things that can be learnt from them, they should not be used as a universal standard yardstick.

2.6. Indigenous musical play games from the African perspective

The studies that follow are drawn from cultural settings that are outside the domains of Western tradition. Since cultural psychology and anthropology are closely related in methodology and approach, a brief overview of the research undertakings from anthropology drawn from the ethnographic studies by Schwartzman (1978) are presented first to provide a basis on how music and dance practices accompanying children's indigenous musical play games enhances cognitive development from a social cultural perspective of Vygotsky's (1978) theory. Shabani et al. (2010) notes that cognitive development is seen not as unfolding in a biological sequence, but as emerging as a result of interactions within a cultural and historical context.

In her book '*Transformations: The anthropology of children's play*,' Schwartzman (1978) cites numerous ethnographic studies conducted in most parts of the world and shows play as a

widespread phenomenon of children everywhere, one that is necessary for children's socialisation processes. In Africa, these early ethnographic studies include descriptions of studies in West Africa done by Fortes (1938) among the Tallensi of Ghana; Lancy's (1974/1975) descriptions of how play serves an enculturation function among the Kpelle of Liberia. In Central Africa, particularly in Zambia, Schwartzman cites the works of K.E. Read (1959) among the Ngoni children and those done by Leacock (1972) for urban Zambian children. Ethnomusicological studies in Southern Africa trace their genesis to the seminal work of Blacking (1967) among the Venda speaking children. The work of Blacking constitutes one pillar in cross cultural studies on the variations of how cognitive development among children occurs in a social context through the medium of music and dance, and will therefore be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

An analysis of the extensive study presentation made in Schwartzman's volume reveals that most of the exhaustive research studies conducted in most parts of the globe including Zambia was pioneered by Western scholars. In fact, this in itself presents a gap in the sense that the researchers might have had some linguistic and cultural challenges in understanding the clear implications and meanings of what they were studying. Sometimes, these researchers enticed children to play near their residences by building play shelters as in the case of Dennis (1940) among the Hopi children in North America as cited in Schwartzman (1978).

Globally, children of every society, culture and religion engage in some form of singing games and therefore, these musical activities are a universal phenomenon among children (Brodsky & Sulkin, 2010). Merriam (1964) observes that musical activities that include game songs, counting songs, language songs and many others are specific to children, "although as he [she] grows older, the child gives up these songs special to age and move either abruptly or gradually into the spheres of adult music" (p. 247). Music, according to Mc Pherson (2016), is a means of playing with others. Children's participation in such musical activities is a means of promoting collaboration and cohesiveness within friendship groups (Marsh, 2008; Mc Pherson, 2016). In her study among the Ghanaian children, Addo (1996) has argued that singing games in Africa provides a window and lens through which various cultural expressions common in society are also learnt and shared by children although they may not be aware of doing so. In short, singing

games are the chief ways through which African children are socialised in many cultural experiences of their communities.

2.7. African conceptualisation of music

In Africa, the existing body of research has revealed that the term ‘music,’ as understood in its application and usage, pervades many social activities that include ‘dance, songs, and play. Trehub et al., (2015) makes this point clear by noting that terms for music frequently includes other activities such as dance, game, or even reference to ritual. In short, the African words for music sometimes also refer to play. For instance, Mans et al., (2003) provides the following elaborate analysis for the term music in relation to play or dance:

in Namibia the Oshindonga word ‘*okudhana*’ means to dance or to play, and ‘*uudhano*’ is the generic noun that includes Aawambo children’s music and dances; in Nigeria, the word ‘*nkwa*’ among the Ibo refers to play in terms of song; in Kenya the Kiswahili word ‘*kucheza*’ means to play, [while] the Luo word ‘*tugo*’ means play in general and embraces children’s game songs as well as other forms of play; in Ghana the Akan word ‘*agoro*’ for play and music are one and the same (p.196).

Among the Sotho people, ‘*kubapala*’ means to play but can also mean to dance or play a musical instrument (Ntšihlele’s (2003). This Sotho word ‘*kubapala*’ is the same word for the Lozi people of Zambia and Namibia (Zambezi district, formerly Caprivi) whose languages are similar in many respects. The word ‘*kubapala*’ or to play refers to children’s play but can also refer to adult forms of amusement. The indigenous Siluyana word for play among the Lozi is ‘*mabebo*.’ As noted in chapter one, this observation helps to show the cultural influences that the Lozi people received during their contacts with the Sotho speaking people. As used in this study, the word music also refers to children’s play and game activities that are often accompanied by musical activities such as body movements, handclapping, and chants.

Children’s musical play games, according to Marsh (2008), encompasses many different forms and usually involves text, movement, rhythmic elements. Playing these activities entails incorporation of music otherwise they cannot be played. Other playlore of children such as jokes, taunts, and riddles, as observed by the aforementioned scholar, feature texts only. Play games such as chasing games, and hide and seek involve movement. As part of the larger playlore for

children among the Lozi people, a wide range of them still exists as will be shown in chapter five where only a selection of such play forms (*lipapali*) will be discussed. Play has been found to be a fundamental way of learning, engaging both intellect and affect (Brodsky & Sulkin, 2010). This is because through play, children come to grips with reality within the framework of their given environment. Through an interactive process among the children themselves, and with the local environment, children's cognitive, social, and emotional dimensions develop (Rogoff, 2003; Rogoff et al. 2015; Nsamenang, 2006, Wadende, 2016).

In Southern Africa, scholarship on children's indigenous musical play games received systematic research attention following the pioneering work of Blacking (1966) among the Venda children. As observed earlier, systematic research in children's indigenous musical play games has had a long history in the Western countries with little or no attention given to non-Western musical traditions (Winner, 2006), including Africa. However, in his ethnomusicological studies of Venda children's musical play repertoire, Blacking (1967) clearly demonstrated that African children were creative thinkers in their musical play activities. Blacking discovered the complex, unique musical system of the Venda children and used this as a springboard to understand music making within a given cultural context (Emberly, 2003, McPherson, 2016). In his studies of the Venda children's music making culture, Blacking (1988) observed the much neglected aspect of the affective culture on cognitive development. He argued that music and dance were not supposed to be relegated to the periphery but were important affective cultural processes necessary for an individual's cognitive development. Affective culture as defined by Keali'inohomoku (1979) cited in Blacking (1988) refer to:

Those cultural manifestations that implicitly or explicitly reflect the values of a given group of people through consciously devised means that arouse emotional responses and that strongly reinforce group identity (p.92)

Blacking argued that the cultural performing arts of music and dance in particular provided powerful symbols of ethnic identity and castigated psychologists for ignoring them. He argued thus:

Psychologists recognise that affects are primary motives, which have profound effects on cognition and action, and yet they often ignore the influence of affective culture on individual development (Blacking, 1988, pp.92).

Blacking's observation cited above is significant in understanding children's indigenous musical activities in the African context in which they are played. Following Blacking's work among the Venda children, Mtonga (2012) sought to explore the same phenomenon among the Tumbuka and Chewa children of Eastern Province in Zambia. Concerning the role of music and dance as they influence the cognitive processes of a developing child in a cultural context, Mtonga observed and wrote:

Children start to learn and appreciate music and dance at a very early age. Right from the cradle to the time they start to walk, various musical sounds and the rhythms are registered in their unconsciousness through the body. But during this period, the whole of the child is possessed by organic forces of growth and its states of body and mind are entirely different from those of an adult. The child may appear not even to hear the sounds or music, but they enter so deeply within him that the forces of growth are affected and perhaps weakened or impaired (p.10).

The child's musical experience is much the result of his or her encounter with cultural practices of music which have a profound effect on the psyche. Thus children end up engaging in spontaneous musical activities during their play time because of the musical processes they have internalised.

Three decades after Mtonga's work among the Tumbuka and Chewa children of Eastern Province in Zambia, Mukela (2013) sought to examine the same phenomenon among the Lozi children of Western Province in Zambia. The outcomes of this study revealed that the indigenous musical practices of children's play and games were potentially relevant for enhancing the cognitive and socio-emotional development of the Lozi children. Apart from the explored rules underpinning most of the games studied, Mukela also found that the indigenous musical play games had rich educational benefits especially for preschool children. In a related study conducted earlier among Ghanaian children, Addo (1997) argued that children's indigenous games were also found to be processes of intellectual development because during the process of playing, children deliberately taught one another games and learnt from one another, and as they did this, they thought and expressed ideas while playing singing games using such cognitive processes as observation, listening and memorisation.

2.8. Indigenous musical play games as a component of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)

Tracey et al., (1965) define indigenous African music as “that which solely, or primarily of African origin sometimes known as the traditional music of Africa” (p.2). In the same vein, indigenous play games are those play games that are of African origin. The Greek meaning for ‘tradition’ according to Edwards (2012) is derived from the word ‘trado’ meaning to hand over or to give up, and this is “the action by which elements of a culture is delivered from one generation to the next” (p.7). Indigenous Africa music which has a subset of indigenous musical play games is imbedded in the overarching cultural wheel of Indigenous Knowledge. Hangartner-Everts (2013) defines indigenous knowledge as the local knowledge that is “unique to a given culture or society. It contrasts with the international knowledge system generated by universities, research institutions and private firms” (p.4). From an Africentric approach, Dei (2015) defines the term ‘indigenous’ as local cultural knowledge that draws on the interconnections of society, culture, and nature. This form of knowledge as articulated by Nakata et al., (2005)

tends to be collectively owned and takes the forms of stories, songs, folklore, proverbs, cultural values, beliefs, rituals, local language, and agricultural practices, including the development of plant species and animal breeds (p.10).

In recent years, advocacy for the recognition and inclusion of traditional knowledge or Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in the formal education systems as a legitimate form of knowledge generation and transmission has received overwhelming scholarly attention. Scholars in North America for instance have argued convincingly that indigenous epistemologies and indigenous knowledge systems should constitute a legitimate and comprehensive central programme for modern formal education systems instead of being pushed to the margins or periphery (Battiste, 2002; Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2005). Barnhardt and Kawagley have criticised Western knowledge and education system as one tending to:

emphasise and compartmentalise knowledge that is so often decontextualised and taught in detached setting of classroom or laboratory [while]indigenous people have traditionally acquired their knowledge through direct experience in the natural world (p.11).

Senanayake (2006) laments that most of the indigenous knowledge disappears due to the intrusion of foreign technologies and development concepts that promise short-term gains or solutions to problems without being capable of sustaining them. He further cautions that the tragedy of the disappearance of this knowledge system is most obvious to those who have developed it and make a living through it. Included in these indigenous forms of knowledge acquisition are play games, also known as children's poetry (play songs, nursery songs, nursery rhymes, and games) (Nyoni & Nyoni, 2013). They also include oral literature such as riddles, jokes, proverbs, stories and story songs, among others. Pedersen (1993), a poet, writer, singer and song writer argues that these should have a place in the school curriculum.

The iceberg analogy model presented below helps to show the various forms of indigenous knowledge acquisition processes as imbedded in many cultural forms. According to the iceberg model, the surface only presents a small proportion of what lies at the bottom. In order to understand the meaning of what takes place on the surface in such things like children's songs and indigenous musical play games, it is necessary to explore how such activities are connected to the unseen realities of society that lie at the bottom, how participation in society's activities provide meaningful experiences to the participants.

- **The Iceberg Analogy**

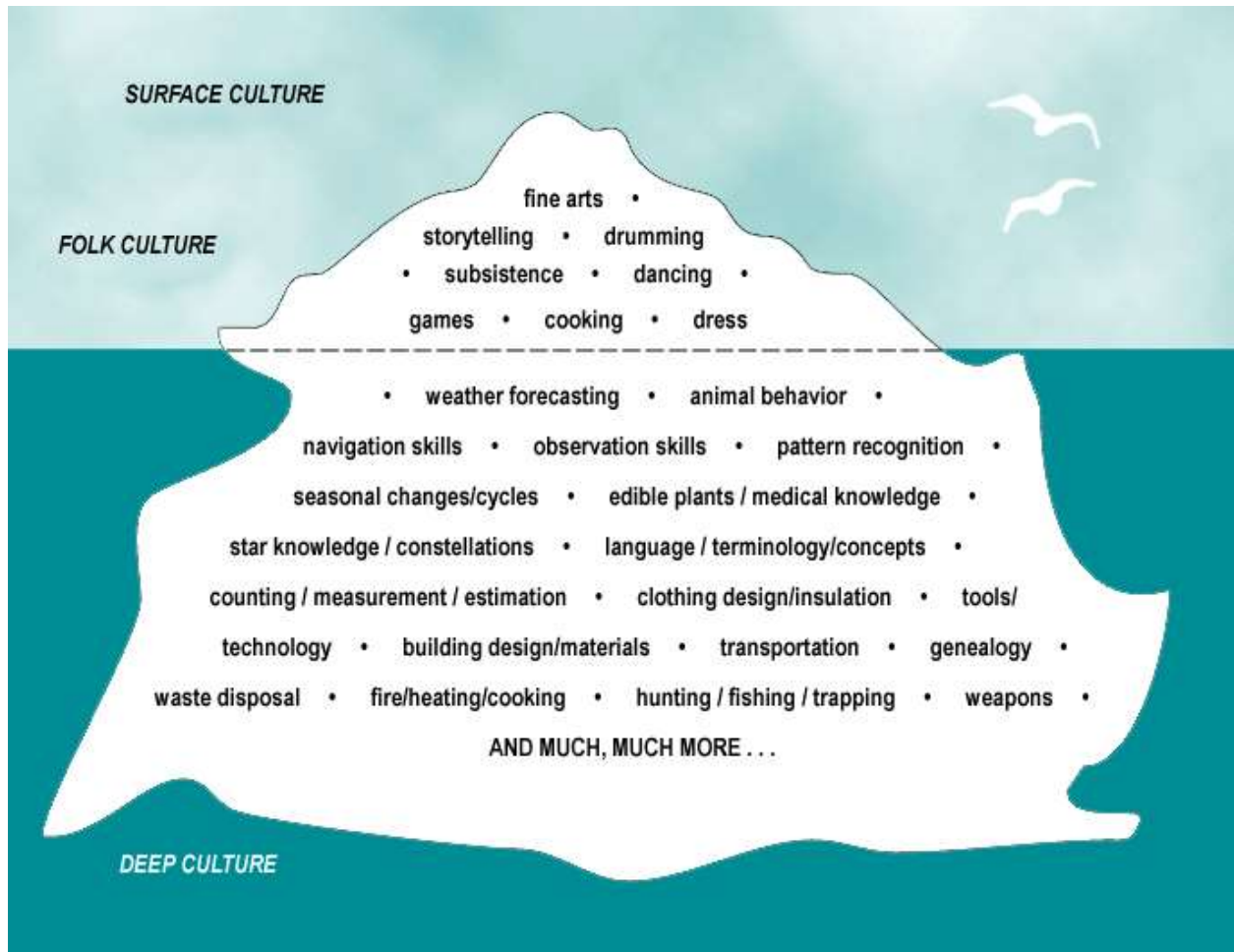


Fig. 2: The iceberg model-Indigenous people are defined by their culture. Most people outside the culture recognize certain aspects of the Indigenous people. Those aspects are the tip of the iceberg. There is so much deep knowledge embedded in the culture that it does not appear on the surface. This model was developed by the Lower Kuskokwim School District. (Accessed from <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/IKS/Iceberg.html> cited in Banda et al, 2015).

In Africa, scholars have criticised the Western research system for being hypocritical towards African Indigenous Knowledge System as correctly observed by Hangartner-Everts (2013):

With the exception of the medicinal use of plants infused into early Western scholarship through indigenous knowledge long ago, indigenous knowledge has been shunned by research and practice in the industrialised world (p.4).

Although some scholars have argued against the use of the term as being pejorative and sneering according to Mawere (2015), it is nevertheless an established knowledge system that is peculiar to any given people. Mawere (2015) views indigenous knowledge as “a set of ideas, beliefs, and practices...of a specific local people that has been used by its people to interact with their

environment and other people over a long period of time” (p.59). Indigenous pedagogies embedded in such aspects as folklore and traditional songs are important avenues of teaching and forms of transmitting knowledge (Namlomo & Sosibo, 2016).

While there is evidence on the validity of indigenous knowledge systems as a legitimate form of knowledge that merits recognition and inclusion in the curricula of African schools, there is also a section of some scholars who are opposed to the whole idea claiming it is retrogressive form of education. Some scholars in child play have observed that different forms of play related activities have various associated benefits that go along with them. For instance, Wood and Attfield (2005) are of the view that engaging in sand and water play among early preschool children has the potential to provide opportunities for scientific learning, while acquisition of literacy competencies could be enhanced by socio-dramatic forms of play. While such observations could be most welcome and embraced by some preschool teachers for the enhancement of scientific learning and thinking among preschool children, other scholars have voiced concerns that children’ participation in such play activities as sand and water risks being overshadowed by parental fears on the grounds that children were likely to get dirty or soil their clothes (Singer et al., 2009).¹⁷ However, integration of play in most school curricula especially in developing countries has suffered major setbacks. In one study, Wood and Attfield (2005) for instance, found that parents objected to the successful integration of play in the school curriculum “because of its trivial, anti-work connotations” (p.16). In the recent past, most government efforts to integrate play related activities in Africa and Zambia in particular have been stifled as most parents opt to take their children to schools that are seen to be seriously involved in learning and teaching and not playing. Wood and Attfield (2005) have however advanced a pertinent caution to such negative forms of thinking when they note that:

Children do not just play with objects and materials: they also play with meanings, ideas, roles, rules and relationships, and can make significant cognitive leaps and transformations. The ability to think in quite sophisticated, abstract ways is an undervalued aspect of children’s play. Imitation, make- believe and symbolic activity are complex cognitive and social processes which are not always understood by practitioners in terms of their relationship to learning (p.43).

¹⁷ Mothers in Africa and Asia according to this study were the most affected ones.

This point of view contrasts sharply with the attempts by some Western scholars to mostly confine and compartmentalise knowledge to the findings of research conducted in laboratory settings (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). Further, this view challenges attempts to generalise and universalise findings drawn from the minority Western countries to be applicable to all (Gaskins, 2013, Nsamenang, 2008). What is played by children in most cases stems from what is valued and treasured, and this is consistent with the observation by Super and Harkness (1977) that “children shape and are shaped by experiences within their developmental niche” (p276). Further, the observation that humans are products of their own environments is true of the various forms of play that children perform. Wood and Attfield (2005) have observed that these complex forms of play may be a neglected resource.

Thompson et al. (2014) have observed that when traditional indigenous games are played and learnt, their social sustainability and cultural importance are greatly enhanced. According to these scholars, this social sustainability and cultural importance provides a strong rationale for their inclusion in schools. The implications of the views of these scholars are that, as long as traditional indigenous games are not given due attention in schools by way of incorporating them, then they risk being overlooked in terms of their cultural relevance and social sustainability. Emanating from these observations, the crucial and significant role that schools have in preserving indigenous games cannot simply be ignored. Unfortunately, as elsewhere in Africa, school curricula in developing countries like Zambia are still replicas of their former colonial masters where the relegation and neglect of such rich cultural resources is common. Kelly (2006) explains the inherent weakness of Zambia’s curriculum at independence as one which was an instrument of intellectual and cultural servitude since it was inadequate and irrelevant to the needs of the local people. Tchombe and Lukong (2016) have warned of the devastating implications in terms of erosion of cultural values if such trends are left unchecked in modern educational systems:

[t]he neglect of such cultural tools for knowledge transmission is a threat and could result to total disappearance of cultural values attached to these indigenous modes of socialisation (p.93).

Culture, according to Owusu-Ansah and Mji (2013), is the lens through which a person perceives, interprets and makes sense of his or her reality. In the typical Lozi tradition as in other

traditional African societies, informal education prepared children for their responsibilities as adults in their communities (Boateng, (1983). And as Tiberondwa (1978) observes concerning the value of children's play in this type of education:

When children were allowed to play with others or to be present when certain activities were being performed, parents often had certain objectives in mind. They knew that their children would acquire certain skills and experiences, but they did not necessarily make these objectives known to their children (p.7).

2.9. Marginalisation of indigenous African musical play games – a historical perspective

Children's indigenous musical play games have largely remained a subject of marginalisation despite their inherent sociocultural benefits in the socialization and enculturation process of children. For instance, Western missionary and colonial masters frowned upon such practices, and the legacy of such negative attitudes have to a large extent remained in the education systems of most African countries including Zambia. Missionaries "condemned all aspects of tribal society as sinful" (Snelson, 1974, p.6). To them "the whole culture was rotten [...] and had to be replaced, root and branch" (p.11), yet this type of culture with its established education system ensured that children were socialised into the norms and lore of society (Carmody, 2004). This socialisation process occurred through participation in play related activities. Western attitudes channeled through the introduction of their games and sporting activities were aimed at civilising the primitive indigenous people. Crego (2003) provides this evidence from an Australian White attitude to the local Aborigines:

As a form of socialisation, many of the natives were encouraged to adopt European values and beliefs. As a result, several British games were adopted and mastered by formerly subject people. However, many traditional sports and games that were definitive of native cultures were discouraged, suppressed, or wiped out. Indigenous sports that continued to exist were often preserved by isolated cultures that were not touched by Western influence (p.2).

In Zambia, Snelson provides lucid explanations on the motives behind such negative approaches as, "[a]ll too often, missionaries' aim [...] was to produce people "African in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinion, in morals and intellect" (p.v). In the section that follows, I argue

why traditional African children's songs and games deserve to be accorded a significant place in the curriculum of African primary schools.

2.10. Relevance of indigenous musical play games in the school curriculum

Children's indigenous play games and songs deserve to be accorded a significant place in the school curriculum because of their socialisation benefits. Andango (2012) opines that the introduction of indigenous music into the formal education system is beneficial to children's understanding of their immediate surroundings and socialisation with peers. Ng'andu and Herbst (2004) provide a strong justification for this socialisation process through the African traditional practice of storytelling which is part of children's play,

African stories came about because the African community needed, designed and performed them to achieve certain ends in the process of organising, maintain and modeling life and behaviour. Storytelling was and still is a practice used to express and transmit norms and values, traditions and social goals, as well as duties and obligations of members of the community conducted within the overall rhythm of community life (p.42)

Indigenous play games were a means of socialising the African children (Abarry, 1989). Apart from their socialisation processes, indigenous play games were a means of teaching and impressing important truths upon the minds of the young children. Songs and dances were acceptable means through which important messages were communicated. Commenting on the value of Chewa folklore, Banda and Morgan (2013) observe that folkdances accompanied by songs with messages were designed to teach, advise, ridicule, warn and praise community members. Songs and dances were a powerful means of disseminating messages and easily cut across all ages (Mbikusita-Lewanika, 1979). Songs and dances still remain a powerful means of communing important messages on global cross-cutting issues such as HIV/AIDS and politics (Banda & Mambwe, 2015).

Children's indigenous play games have been singled out to be an effective means of achieving and appreciating cultural identities. For instance, during their play times children imitate most of the cultural activities in their communities. Namafe (2006) observes that "music, games, dance, traditional ceremonies as well as approaches to water and flooding" (p.13) are all rich cultural resources for teaching and learning purposes. Furthermore, children's indigenous musical play

games are also a means of enhancing the acquisition of valued cultural skills such as playing some musical instruments. Bongwong (2017) observes that activities such as playing some traditional instruments such as xylophone and drums have positive implications for the acquisition of skills and values within a local community. I find this observation to be consistent with the explanation provided by Gardner (1983) on what constitutes intelligence as fashioning products accessible within one's local community.

In terms of their intellectual values, indigenous musical play games are inherently rich both in terms of content and pedagogy. On an academic level, it has been shown that play songs are instrumental for the development of both literacy and numeracy. Indigenous musical play games as noted from studies mostly conducted in the Western countries has been singled out as a tool that can improve linguistic competences among early school children when used as a pedagogical tool (Millington, 2011; Murphey, 1992; Sloboda, 1985). African scholars on the other hand have demonstrated the value of music and children's game songs as valuable teaching resources (Abarry, 1989; Ntsihlele, 2003; Nyota and Mapara, 2008; Mtonga, 2012; Mukela, 2013). According to Namlomo and Sosibo (2016), folktales and traditional children's songs are capable of supporting early literacy development (emergent literacy) among preschool children. These indigenous oral language literacies are always readily available.

Various studies that have been conducted on African riddling processes (Gachanja & Kebaya, 2013; Banda & Morgan, 2013, Shuaibu, 2014) have revealed several significant cognitive benefits that riddles provide to children. For instance, Gachanja and Kebaya (2013) have argued that the search for solutions to the riddles makes participants to think broadly by making inferences from known things within the local environment and in the process this broadens the intellect of an individual. In this respect, I concur with Allan Dundes (1964) who has argued that African children's riddles have been marginalised due to some misconceptions that they are childish in nature without establishing their intellectual benefits.

In the following section, I argue that the marginalisation process of the indigenous African games and songs is also promoted by the negative attitudes of many contemporary teachers in Africa in general and Zambia in particular.

2.11. Negative attitudes of some African teachers towards indigenous musical play games

While indigenous musical play games have been singled out as pedagogical tools that can improve linguistic competences among early school children as noted in the previous section, this important curriculum resource has to a large extent been neglected in most African school curriculum system. For instance, some studies conducted in Ghana and Kenya have shown that most teachers have a strong preference for using English songs and games over the indigenous ones (Acquah et al., 2015; Andango, 2012; Obeng, 2018). In some instances, indigenous music was still perceived to be antithetical to Christian principles. Achebe (1959) evokes how some Africans converted to Christianity perpetrators of marginalising the African values when he notes, and I quote:

our own brothers who have taken up his [Christian] religion also say that our customs are bad. How do you think we can fight when our own brothers have turned against us? (p.124).

Arising from the negative attitudes brought about by European mental colonisation, Wanderi (2011) laments that such attitudes even among some teachers has led to the rejection of all that is valuable in preference for Western ideals:

“Unfortunately, Kenyans today have increasingly become absorbed in pursuit of all the ideals and glory of modern games with no regard at all to their indigenous games and sports” (p.ix).

Thus, in most African schools, there is little of indigenous resource materials in terms of indigenous musical play games in use. The people that are largely responsible for the mutilation of the African values seem to be mostly the educated elite. Akuno (2015) laments that there is no evidence of such rich material being appropriated to the learners’ advantage while Harrop-Allin (2010) has castigated African teachers for failing to realise that children are potential resources who should contribute knowledge generation instead of placing knowledge exclusively in textbooks.

In Zambia, several studies found that teachers had strong orientations towards Western nursery songs for teaching (Ng’andu, 2009, Kalinde, 2017). Most teachers had negative attitudes towards traditional music because it was seen as being backward and outdated (Kalinde, 2010; Mukela, 2013, Musakula, 2014). Mukela (2013) further noted that most of those affected in this regard were young teachers. This lack of knowledge by the teachers was further exacerbated by the lack

of inclusion of indigenous materials in the teachers' handbooks and institutions of learning (Mwila, 2015, Serpell & Mukela, 2019). In some cases, this was due to deeply entrenched Christian attitudes (Mwesa, 2005). On the other hand, a study by Mumba (2000) noted that music was among the subjects that received least attention from the teachers in one rural school in Zambia.

English nursery songs such as 'London Bridge is falling' and 'Baa baa black sheep' have been criticised as being culturally irrelevant to the African children. For instance Ng'andu (2009) cites a case in point in the Ministry of Education (1971) document where Marjory Davidson was appalled to find teachers at Chalimbana college of education teaching 'London Bridge is falling' when such teachers were surrounded with indigenous local songs of children from the Soli people of Chongwe district in Lusaka, Zambia.

2.12. Missionary and colonial education negative attitudes

Missionary and colonial administrators' attitudes towards indigenous forms of education were characterised by utter condemnation and a strong desire to change and civilize the Africans. African music and practices were condemned as devilish. They condemned all aspects of traditional African life as sinful (Snelson, 1974). Snelson aptly states their negative attitudes towards the Africans in the following quotation,

They regarded the people as immoral, lazy and drunken, steeped in superstitions and witchcraft, and doomed to spiritual damnation. There could be no question of grafting the Christian message on to the traditional culture. *That whole culture was rotten, in their view, and had to be replaced, root and branch* (p.11) (Emphasis in italics mine).

In the northern region of Namibia that shares its boundary with Western Province, and was once part of the great Barotseland kingdom, Mans (1996) reports that missionaries taught that the dance and drumming of the local area were inappropriate and barbarous. In Barotseland, indigenous dances such as *Sipelu* were banned by the colonial administrators (Gluckman, u.d. in Rhodes- Livingstone Museum Occasional Paper, No.2, 1936). The Missionary form of education strongly advocated the use of Western musical forms in school and sought to change the 'pagan' practices of local people (Mans, 1996). In the case of Barotseland, the missionary Coillard of the

Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) emphasised more singing in his educational approach and ridiculed the Lozi way of singing as pointed out by Snelson (1974),

But I attach great importance to singing, and in my eyes it is second only to the Bible. Thus even though the Barotse sing like crows, we sing and sing a great deal (p.44)

In other parts of Zambia, missionaries condemned and regarded dancing as immoral and considered that drumming was likely to arouse passion and lead to licentious behaviour” (p.18). Recent studies in Zambia have shown how the missionary and colonial legacies have continued to influence the school curriculum. These studies have shown that while singing was a common phenomenon in most schools and colleges of education, dancing and drumming were the least appreciated (Mumpuka, 2009; Musakula, 2014; Mwila, 2015). In short this shows the negative attitudes that some Zambian teachers attach to music especially dancing and playing indigenous musical instruments while attaching great preference for Western musical instruments (Mukela, 2013, Mubita et al, 2005). However, in challenging the missionaries’ narrow conceptualisation of indigenous African ways of knowing and education system, Zulu (2006) observes and argues that it involved understanding education as a means to an end where processes such as social responsibility, poetry, riddles, story-telling, dance, music, proverbs, and environmental education were key components of the system of education.

Recent observations in Western Province have shown that most schools do not have indigenous musical instruments such as xylophones or drums as noted in an earlier study by Mukela (2013). School programmes that tend to receive more support are those that have some Western vested interests. For instance, during the 1990s, Zambia was a beneficiary of an educational programme called Action to Improve English, Mathematics, and Science (AIEMS). While science and mathematics are relevant for technological advancement, music is also relevant for local cultural promotion. The argument here is the need for an even allocation and distribution of resources. By promoting English, mathematics, and science, there is a perceived subtle tendency of promoting the Western values that underpin such subjects. Kaya and Seleti (2013) have critically accused governments and higher education systems of perpetual dependence on their former colonial masters when planning and implementing educational programmes:

Reforms in African education are still conceived and implemented within the framework of the relationship [with former colonial powers], by marginalising the integration of African cultural

values and indigenous languages into the education system at all levels (Smith, 2002, Walter, 2002) cited in Kaya and Seleti (2013, p.32).

Both Serpell (1993) and Nsamenang (2008) have criticised this negative approach that neglects promotion of local cultural resources in the school curriculum in preference to those that are alien. Serpell (1993) has argued,

When a school curriculum is designed in a manner which is alien to the cultural assumptions informing other socialisation practices to which its students have been exposed, discrepancies are liable to arise between the goals of that curriculum and the cultural goals of the society (p.2).

And Nsamenang (2008) has clearly shown the hidden civilising agenda underpinning most donor aid, and I quote,

Donors, experts and advocates who prescribe decontextualised “best practice” condemn and exclude Africa’s developmental theories and educational praxes from ECD and school curricula, rather than seeking to understand and improve them. The failure to “modernise” Africa as rapidly as the “civilising mission” anticipated stems largely from the neglect, if not refusal, to blend Africa’s indigenous systems with those imported to “civilise” the continent” (p.144).

2.13. Relevance of indigenising the Zambian school curriculum

Calls for the inclusion of indigenous play songs and the related indigenous games as ways of indigenising the school curriculum in Africa, and Zambia in particular are on the increase (Marfo & Biersteker, 2011; Nsamenang & Serpell, 2014; Ng’asike, 2014, Ejuu, 2019 ; Oppong, 2018; Mtonga, 2012; Mukela, 2013; Serpell & Mukela, 2019). Kaya and Seleti (2013) are of the view that “when people disregard their own knowledge [usually preserved in play forms], it slowly gets lost and can easily be misappropriated” (p.33). Awopegba et al, (2013) lists some strategies through which knowledge was acquired in indigenous education system as poetry, reasoning, riddles, praises, songs, storytelling, proverbs, folktales, games, dance, music and tongue twisters among others. Further, Majasan observes that ‘most of these context- based pedagogic strategies used to occur within the family, and peer groups activities but could be adapted and integrated into the school curriculum’ (Majasan,1974, in Awopegba et al, 2013, p. 21). Mbangwana (2011) argues that “[a]ny lesson can be taught and illustrated with the use of a song to improve learning” (p.392). Most of the indigenous musical play games that children engage in are usually

accompanied by the songs that Zambian children perform in their everyday activities. Traditional indigenous play games are embodiments of the cultural values of any society. For Roux (2006), indigenous games are likely to find meaningful expression when formally institutionalised in classroom situations.

It has been observed that the relationship that exists between play and music in the development of children has not always been understood (van der Linde, 1999). This lack of understanding especially on the part of teachers has in most cases resulted in stagnated forms of learning. Scholars such as Barton and Hamilton (1998) have cautioned educationists in child literacy acquisition programmes not to be tied to lettered alphabetic literacies only but to incorporate local literacies emanating from homes such as storytelling, songs, riddles and proverbs to create effective language learning environments. Moll et al. (1992) have pointed out that home environments constitute a rich source of ‘funds of knowledge’ for enhancing language learning and proficiency for children. These scholars have however argued convincingly that in classrooms, teachers rarely draw on the ‘funds of knowledge’ of the child’s world outside the context of the classroom. In Zambia, scholars have shown how indigenous cultural resources could be used to foster emergent literacy and numeracy skills in children (Mtonga, 2012; Mukela, 2013, Kalinde, 2017; Kakoma, 2017; Kasonde, 2017, Serpell, 2020a). Clearly, these indigenous activities deserve inclusion in the Zambian school curriculum.

2.14. The case of Western Province in Zambia

In Western Province, studies that have focused on documenting the indigenous musical play games were found to be relatively very few. A case in point on sociodramatic play or *Mandwani* among the Lozi children revealed that it was least explored. Most of those who had attempted to provide some insights on this indigenous childhood activity provided insufficient data or simply glossed over it. For instance, accounts provided by Mbikusita-Lewanika (1979); Stirke, (1922); Holub (1878), Mupatu (1959), and Lubinda (2001) lacked significant details on the enculturation and socialisation processes as well the cognitive process underpinning this childhood pastime activity.

As earlier noted, Lozi academics have bemoaned the lack of research and documentation of indigenous play games in the region. For instance, Mufalali (1974) laments on the scarcity of documentation of the indigenous play games,

These songs and dances were unfortunately not recorded. We now regret that through this ignorance we lost not only the games and dances but also their history, principles and original methods. It is hoped that the present generation will try to preserve *Imipukumo* and *Masha ya mukulu* of the Bemba, *Chitelele*, *Nyau* and *Zayibabaza* of the Ngoni, *Likumanga*, *Liyemboka*, and *Kayowe* of the Lozi, *Kamando* and *Imbuno* of the Batonga. These should be taught in schools, teacher training colleges and all institutions of education so that they will be remembered (p.5).

Earlier, Mufalali had listed other games such as *butongwe* (hide and seek), *kumangana* (wrestling), swimming, canoeing, imaginary crocodile games as some of the common games in Western Province. Engaging in these indigenous games had the benefit of training to enhance problem solving skills accurately as well as promoting the socio-emotional well-being of children. It is the gap noted in the documentation of intellectual benefits of the indigenous play games that necessitated this present study.

2.15. Chapter Summary

This chapter has shown that, from a Western perspective, the overriding purpose for incorporating music and children's indigenous musical play games is academic, aimed at stimulating children's intellectual processes. However, the sociological basis of music and related indigenous musical play games have often been overlooked (Kelly, 2012). The functional roles of indigenous musical play games in the enculturation and socialisation processes of children have been demonstrated (Merriam, 1964, Blacking, 1967, 1988, Mtonga, 2012). The underlying argument in the corpus of the literature reviews is that indigenous musical play games have survival, aesthetic and educational benefits that could be linked to the existing curricula and should therefore not be relegated altogether. They are relevant 'funds of knowledge' (Moll et al., 1992) in the education processes of children. The literature review has shown serious gaps in the manner in which indigenous play games are marginalised or neglected in the Zambian school curriculum in preference for Western play forms that continue to dominate the school curriculum.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Overview

This chapter presents the research methodology and design under which the study was grounded. It discusses the philosophical assumptions underpinning the study, and the methods adopted to generate the data to the research objectives and questions. Justification for the choice of the research methodology has also been provided. The chapter further discusses the data collection techniques used, and the associated benefits gained in using such techniques, as well as the selection criteria for both participants and sites. Furthermore, issues of ethical considerations and credibility for the research undertaking are also addressed.

3.2. Research design

This was a qualitative research design whose approach was grounded in ethnography. My choice for grounding this study in ethnography was prompted by the realisation that the phenomena under investigation required me to observe participants in their natural setting. The goal here was to understand how children drew meaning-making from participating in indigenous musical play game activities (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010; Whitehead, 2005). According to Whitehead (2004), ethnography involves the study of socio-cultural contexts, processes, and meanings in cultural systems. Socio-cultural processes tend to reflect the realities and behaviours of participants being observed. Hammersley (2002) observes that the goal of ethnography is to discover and represent faithfully the true nature of social phenomena. In the case of this study, the social phenomena under investigation were children's indigenous musical play games. Since the phenomenon under investigation was an imbedded cultural practice, I situated the study under the interpretive paradigm for both its ontological and epistemological underpinning assumptions. This was on the understanding that children's indigenous play games to a large extent were products and reflections of the ideals and cultural values of the communities in which they were practiced (Sutton-Smith, 2008). Therefore, such play forms constituted an important avenue in the learning process of children (Addo, 1995, Nyota & Mapara, 2008). Creswell, (2003) observes that in the interpretive paradigm, researchers rely on the views of participants in a situation being studied.

Apart from grounding the study in ethnography, I utilised autoethnography to complement my research methodology as a way of appreciating the choice of my research topic as alluded to in chapter one. According to Chang (2013), “autoethnographers carefully examine how they have interacted with other people within their socio-cultural contexts and how social forces have influenced their lived experiences” (p.107). As a trained music specialist, I found my personal reflections to be part of the raw data through the process of participant observer. Chang argues that “accessing and utilising personal data enables autoethnography to make distinctive contributions to understanding of human experiences within social-cultural contexts” (p.108). Through this process of research, I gained some deep insights of my own culture. As observed by Nethsinghe (2012), autoethnography helps the researcher to achieve his or her own identity construction in relation to the phenomenon being explored as will be observed in chapter four of this thesis.

3.3. Rationale for the qualitative interpretive approach

The rationale for adopting ethnography was based on the realisation that the phenomenon under investigation had received little attention and lacked comprehensive documentation. As a result, I needed to adopt a naturalistic approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to access the required information in terms of raw data. A point of interest taken in the selection of this methodology was that ethnography is responsive and not fixed and rigid in approach (Whitehead, 2004), as is the case with most Western psychological tests on human behaviour. Human behaviour is complex and cannot be adequately investigated using tightly controlled experiments.

In making preference for such an epistemological assumption for this study, I concurred with Serpell (2020b) who argues that the primary goal of applied developmental research should not be on testing the generalisability of a particular theory but on cooperative communication that is generated in the process. This point of view is shared by other African scholars such as Nsamenang (2005), Mtonga (2012), Oppong (2015), and Ejuu (2015) who have questioned the legitimacy of tightly controlled experiments that tend to overlook the cultural contexts that underpin the development and nurturance of human behaviour. Secondly, ethnography was noted to be very close to ethnomusicological research designs that attempt to understand music making in the context of human behaviours and is concerned primarily with the role, functions, and concepts behind music behaviour (Merriam, 1964, Blacking 1974). Ethnography was found to be

extremely useful when attempting to understand the social context of children's participation in indigenous musical play games especially during out of school moments. For instance, my experiences with the children when playing pretend play or when engaged in fishing or swimming was richly rewarded through ethnography. As children performed such activities during their play times, it was easy to assess the degree of creativity in such mock staged performances and the level of understanding and meaning making they drew from them. Blacking's (1967) ethnomusicological study in South Africa helped to provide useful insights on the choice of this methodology. For instance, in order to engage participants more fully in the study, I sometimes created deliberate mistakes in my preliminary interpretations of the views expressed by children to get their full explanations.

In Zambia, the studies by Leacock (1972), Serpell (1993), and Mtonga (2012, Kalinde, 2017), influenced the choice of the ethnographic research methodology adopted for this present study. The choice of ethnography greatly aided these scholars to explore children's play repertoire in detail and such results could not have been achieved in the way they did if they had utilised controlled experimental approaches. Mtonga's (2012) ethnographic approach in particular has had profound implications for the choice of the research topic and the methodology for the present study.

3.4. Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted in the two districts of Senanga and Sioma in which four schools participated. I took three months to complete this important task in my research undertaking. Undertaking a pilot study had some advantages that included among others getting advance information where the main research project could fail, or where proposed instruments could be inappropriate (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). Two schools in each district were purposefully sampled to assess the suitability of the research instruments and apply preliminary findings for practical purposes before embarking on the main research project. A number of lesson observations were undertaken in order to assess the best approach to elicit what I wanted to observe and avoid superficial lesson presentations from the teachers, and the time frames for interview schedules with the participants were determined. During these interview schedules, I made adjustments on the time frame for interview. I noted that children required less time. I also reduced the number of questions to be more focused. My earlier interview guides had several

questions. However, after the pilot study, both the number and duration of interviews were reduced. I analysed and examined my questioning techniques to find whether they were clear to the respondents. For instance, most respondents tended to mix contemporary play games and the indigenous ones. After the pilot study, I learnt that I needed to explain to my respondents what I meant by indigenous musical play games. I also reviewed the gadgets such as my Smart phone that I intended to use for recording and the quality of sound and pictures. I noted the picture and sound qualities were good. Another important aspect during this time was to ascertain my role as a standards officer and researcher to avoid social desirability bias.

3.5. Data collection techniques

Braun and Clarke (2013) assert that there is no single pathway to reality; therefore multiple methods are essentially relevant when conducting research. For this study, the following methods of ethnographic data collection were used:

3.5.1. Participant and non participant observations

Participant observations as used in this study were mainly achieved by learning from the participants on the range of indigenous musical play activities at school and during their free times at home. For instance, by eliciting explanations from pupils on the rules underpinning different games, and the ways such indigenous musical play games or songs were performed, I became an active participant. Sometimes, I engaged some parents on the nature and type of games they played when they were young and whether they found some differences in performance on such play and games. In this way, I gained more insights on the types of games I was documenting, taking into account some major transformations in such activities. I also managed to enlist children's active participation in their play and games activities without disrupting the activity itself. I used this approach where spontaneous and natural play or work activities were taking place such as during pretend play (*mandwani*) which was extensively observed, or when playing other indigenous games presented in chapter four such as *muyato* and *mulabalaba* among other games.

Non participant observation involved moments when I watched children engaged in ecologically and socio-culturally situated activities such as fishing; swimming; paddling; ploughing; looking after cattle in the open fields; performing some *makishi* (mask) dances; or when observing some

lessons in the classroom. Non participant observations were done after obtaining informed consent procedures from the participants or their parents. Such observations were mostly done on outdoor play activities by children in the school grounds or village settings. Performance of stories and riddles in classrooms or village evening settings also received my attention as a non participant observer.

3.5.2. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the key informants who included children, teachers, and village experts renowned for their knowledge about children's indigenous musical play games. In an attempt to win the confidence of the participants, I created rapport with them (Marvasti, 2004). The interviews were mostly conducted in the local siLozi language on a face to face basis and were conducted in line with the research protocol. Participation in such interviews was voluntary and participants were allowed to withdraw without giving any reasons for such an action. Fortunately for this study, all the interview schedules were completed as planned. In terms of social desirability as one challenge in interviews in qualitative research (Anyan, 2013), I explained to my participants that the views they would express were most welcome as there were no "standardised correct" answers to the questions. I further explained that what I was exploring was based on my observation that the school curriculum should be responsive to the local aspirations and concerns of the local communities.

I used semi-structured interviews only as guides consistent with the views by Gill et al. (2008) that these should be used to explore furtherance of some key questions during the whole process of data collection. I found this approach to be flexible and created an interactive process that was key to making follow up questions. The interviews were usually conducted in the homes or schools depending on where the interviewee was located. In the case of home interviews, I was always mindful not to prolong the interviews to make it easy for further follow up questions as well as allowing the respondents to attend to the normal home duties. The interviews were mostly exploratory in nature and I always considered the ages of the interviewees. For instance, interviews with adults lasted between one hour to one hour thirty minutes, while those with children lasted between thirty to forty minutes respectively. This was done considering the attention span of each age group.

In taking note of the follow up questions, I sometimes made deliberate mistakes as a means of eliciting further explanations on the question under discussion. For instance, I would deliberately insist that girls played toy drums during children's mock staging of some village activity. Girls would refuse and explain that women did not play drums among the Lozi people because it was not a traditional practice for them to do that. I found Blacking's (1967) style of interviewing children useful not only with children but adults as well. Once the interview was concluded, I requested for further visits in case there were other afterthought areas that needed clarifications.

3.5.3. Lesson observations

Lesson observations were conducted in four districts namely, Kalabo, Senanga, Sioma, and Kaoma. The four districts in the province served as the main venues where I conducted focus group discussions and I found it prudent to establish evidence of teachers incorporating indigenous musical play games in their teaching or lesson plans. Lesson observations were conducted after consulting the teachers involved, and after such teachers had agreed to be observed. In the course of carrying out lesson observations, I remained at the designated place given to me by the teachers in the various lessons that I observed without disturbing the lessons. Only my recording mobile phone remained in use but placed on silent mode. In the classes, I was introduced as one who had come to see how children learnt. I spent two weeks in each district. I also checked the teachers' teaching files to make observations on the extent to which indigenous play games were included in their scheme of work and lesson plans. During the days when I had no lesson observations, I utilised the time to observe a range of outdoor activities mostly performed when pupils were free especially during break time.

After the lesson observations, I had interactions with the teachers who were being observed. The interactive discussions I held with the teachers on how best children's home based funds of knowledge could be utilised in the classroom always found acceptance by the teachers. For instance, I tried to find out from the teachers on the various outdoor play activities that were common on the school grounds and the extent to which they were utilised in the classrooms. Discussions that followed were usually centred on what key concepts could be derived from such play activities and how these could be included in the school curriculum or actual teaching and learning. Class observations were mainly those at the lower primary sections from the preschool to grade four.

In Sioma district, a similar trend was followed. The school chosen there was not far from my work place. Unlike in the other three districts mentioned above, my time frame for observations was quite lengthy because Sioma district was also my place of work.

3.5.4. Focus Group Discussions

Three focus group discussions were held in three districts namely: Kalabo, Senanga, and Kaoma, while a one day workshop was conducted in Sioma. There were 5-6 members in each focus group. Elliott and Timulak (2005) define Focus Group Discussion as “a group format in which participants share and discuss their views of a particular topic, allowing access to a large number of possible views and replication of naturalistic social influence and consensus processes” (p.150). These were conducted in the District Resource Centres since these rooms were easily accessible within the districts.

The discussions were recorded and transcribed verbatim before being coded. In most cases, the group compositions were gender balanced to allow for equal representation of the issues under discussion. Sometimes, participants took the opportunity to demonstrate key indigenous play games during such interactive meetings. In terms of time frame, they took slightly long from one hour thirty minutes to two hours. The teachers who participated in the Focus Group Discussion were 30 years and above with considerable teaching experience (usually ten years and above). I found this to be appropriate because such teachers had seen the development of earlier curriculum implementations in the course of their teaching profession. I found the input of most experienced teachers to be very relevant in addressing the key questions in the study. My role during these discussions was to guide the flow of the discussions to avoid getting out of the topic as well as ensuring that there was group participation as opposed to domination by a few participants.

3.5.5. Organised demonstrations

These were conducted upon my request with the schools that participated in the study. They involved only some selected numbers of pupils for purposes of demonstrations. Three schools in three districts (Sioma, Senanga, and Nalolo) were involved in the process of these demonstrations. Like in the other video recorded instances, these were recorded and the main themes emanating from them were noted and analysed. They also served as occasions where

most local people attended. Most local people were easily attracted by such activities. In Sioma for instance, I used the school demonstrations on two occasions; the first one where the school demonstrated the famous Lozi *kuomboka* ceremony and the second when one school demonstrated different indigenous play games at a local preschool. In both cases, many parents and other interested people came in large numbers to watch the performances by children. In Nalolo district, a selected group of participants demonstrated the local war dance known as *muzumba* in which the chameleon moving style dance was used as fighting strategy. In all these demonstrations, I found them to be ideal in validating certain cultural practices and tools that could provide useful information on the cultural affordances of indigenous musical play games for enhancing social cognitive processes in children. The social values of music for the socialisation and enculturation processes of Lozi children were easily noted and documented.

3.5.6. Audio Visual Aids (AVAs)

3.5.6.1. Videography

In order to gain access to children as an adult, I befriended them through friendly comments of appreciating what they were doing. I found Smorholm's (2005) strategy in her Ng'ombe study in Lusaka of befriending children to be very helpful. Entry into children's out-of-class activities was achieved by enlisting their willingness to be photographed while they played. Permission to do this was granted by the parents of the children. This afforded me the opportunity to get first hand information from a natural setting. I found video recordings more rewarding in terms of engaging participants in the course of data collection. The method received similar responses from the participants and I found the views of Marsh (2008) that the lure of the video camera should not be underestimated in an ethnographic research undertaking (cf. Mukela, 2013). The method proved useful in many ways. It was the easiest means of 'jumping over into the children's world' (Marsh, 2008). For an adult to easily find his or her way into children's indigenous musical play games have a number of challenges. Firstly, the cultural restrictions had implications for such endeavours. For instance, among the Lozi culture, an adult is not expected to be found playing with children for this would be explained as being not normal. But after winning the approval of most parents who consented to have children video recorded for purposes of research, such cultural restrictions were not a factor in this study. Secondly, I found the method more friendly to use with most participants not only children but even the adults. For

children, they expressed their willingness to be filmed by such expressions as “*Mu kayo luswanisa hape? Luna ni ze n̄wi lipapali*” (Are you going to get some pictures of us? We have some other indigenous musical play games.) The method was also a means of recruiting participants. I found this method to be fruitful in that as a researcher, the method proved to be one means through which I could easily ask children some questions and they would answer back irrespective of their ages. Thus, even the shy children could easily be engaged in research conversations using this method. Some of the more experienced participants were easily recruited through this method by way of snowballing. This was found to be consistent with Marsh (2008) who observed, “Children also reported other friends or groups known to perform the games and would bring them to me for recording” (p.47).

In terms of data analysis, the method was very helpful in providing me with the opportunity of seeing the recorded events in a more relaxed manner and took note of the most important aspects on the phenomenon being explored. Both the video and audio recorded materials could be analysed carefully before any transcriptions were done. In this way, I was able to transcribe the materials and compared them with my field notes. Important observations in the field notes were analysed through an elaborate process of the reviews of the recorded materials.

3.5.6.3. Audio recordings

I utilised my Smart phone for audio recordings especially during the interviews or focus group discussions. Positioning the mobile phone on the centre of the group on a table, I was able to capture the full discussions that were recorded accurately. Sometimes, as members relaxed and took their refreshments, playing back the recorded materials helped to get fresh comments from the participants on a point of discussion or interview. In this way, I was able to capture the views of participants.

3.5.7. Document analysis

A range of existing documents from the different school libraries, District Education Board Offices (DEBO), Mongu College of Education, and the University of Zambia (UNZA) special collection section that were accessed proved very instrumental for data collection. Some of such documents were the Silozi anthologies that I found in Senanga district at Senanga Secondary School. I was privileged to access these books because I once worked at the Secondary School as

a teacher in the Languages, Social, and Expressive Arts departments, and later as Head of Department for Social Sciences (HOD). Based on this personal experience, I was familiar with the type of relevant literature the school had for this study. Other relevant materials were accessed at Sioma Secondary School in the languages department. Local Silozi materials cited and used in this study have been translated by me for readership. The first set of the Zambia Primary Course (ZPC) Teachers' Guides were accessed in different school libraries in Sioma and Senanga districts. By comparing and contrasting the contents in these books and the ones in current use, I was able to identify points of similarity and departure in the implementation of the Zambian School Curriculum where the inclusion of indigenous local materials was concerned. The feedback I received from the teachers who had served long in the Ministry of Education proved very useful too.

Other documents included the policy books that I accessed from most of the District Education Board Secretaries during the data collection period, more especially in Sioma district where I worked as an Education Standards Officer, as District Education Standards Officer, and later as District Education Board Secretary. I was able to get access to most of the school libraries upon request to the Head teachers for some books on indigenous play materials. Findings for this study have been presented in chapter four.

3.6. Rationale for selected research sites

My field work was conducted in seven districts of Western Province, and included the following: Sioma, Senanga, Mongu, Sesheke, Nalolo, Kaoma, and Kalabo. Western Province has sixteen (16) administrative districts which were created in 2013. Prior to that, the province had only seven (07) districts that included Kalabo, Mongu, Senanga, Sesheke, Shangombo, Lukulu, and Kaoma. In my sample, five districts, namely; Kalabo, Senanga, Mongu, Kaoma, and Sesheke were part of the original seven districts, while Sioma was initially part of Shangombo district.

The districts in the sample were found to have a diverse range of indigenous cultural activities which I was already familiar with as one who grew and lived in most of these places. Therefore, they were seen to be an adequate representation of all the sixteen districts. Kombo and Tromp (2006) opine that when choosing a research site, issues of accessibility should be considered. Choice of the schools as research sites was done in consultation of the District Education Board

Secretaries' offices within the respective districts. Thus, a random sampling that took into consideration accessibility was always done by the respective districts.

3.7. Sampling techniques

According to Elliott and Timulak (2005), qualitative research designs tend to “sample broadly enough and to interview deeply enough that all the important aspects and variations of the studied phenomena are captured in the sample” (p.151). For this study, purposive and snowball strategies were used. This selection process was flexible and not rigid (Williamson, 2006). I used purposive sampling where I knew the music teachers especially in the districts that I was familiar with but this was always done after engaging the school administration. These districts included Kalabo and Senanga where I spent most of my childhood, while Sioma district was my work place. In these research areas, I was privileged to get the required information from participants who were knowledgeable in the subject under exploration. For instance, my choice of some music experts in Sioma district was influenced by my personal observations of the teachers' vast knowledge, experience and skills. I had interacted with these teachers in and out of class situations in my capacity first as an Education Standards Officer (ESO), as a District Education Standards Officer (DESO), and later as District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) for the period I worked in Sioma district in the Ministry of Education as explained earlier. In the areas where I was a complete stranger like in Mongu, Kaoma, and Sesheke, I relied on the guidance from the school administration in the selection process. The selection of children, and classes that were observed was equally achieved using the same criteria. In such districts, I received useful guidance from my colleagues in the Ministry of Education with knowledge of staff.

I used the snowballing technique once a considerable number of participants had been recruited. This was especially useful when enlisting school children. It was easier especially for teachers and children to identify the most competent people to include both within the school locality and in the villages where reputed village experts in children's indigenous musical play games could be located. In the villages, I was interested in the indigenous musical play games that were perceived to be popular and those that were perceived to have been once popular but now on the decline. The village experts were asked to describe the indigenous musical play game. In this way, the process of snowballing tended to lead to more participants especially where songs accompanying such games were involved. The process of snowballing helped me to be in touch

with those who were grounded in the information that I required. In the villages, I sought the indulgence of the village headmen for permission since these were the gate keepers (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010) to the sources of knowledge. Once their permission was granted, I relied on their guidance on the choice and selection of ideal village participants.

3.8. Sample size

This study involved a total number of 144 participants who were recruited using purposive and snowballing techniques. Those who were recruited included seventy (70) children aged between 5- 15 years from both the pre-primary and the primary school levels, and sixty three (63) primary school teachers aged between 35 and 55 years old. The sample also included seven (07) village music experts aged between 50 and 75, two college music students aged between 20 and 25 years, and two male college lecturers aged between 48 and 54. As indicated earlier in this section, the choice and selection of such participants was arrived at after wide consultations with the other key stakeholders in the Ministry of Education and the villages that participated in the study. The choice of teachers with long service in the teaching profession was found necessary because of the vast knowledge and exposure to various curriculum reforms that such teachers were previously exposed to. They proved useful in their analysis of the school text books and personal experiences with the phenomenon under consideration. The table below shows the distribution of the research participants by type and gender:

| SN | Research participants | Gender | | Average age | Total |
|----|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| | | Male | Female | | |
| 1 | Preschool children | 11 | 13 | 5 | 24 |
| 2 | Primary school children | 22 | 24 | 11 | 46 |
| 3 | Teacher Focus Group Discussions | 12 | 10 | 45 | 22 |
| 4 | Teachers in-depth interviews | 08 | 09 | 45 | 17 |
| 5 | Teachers involved in workshop | 10 | 14 | 45 | 24 |
| 6 | Village music experts | 03 | 04 | 62 | 07 |
| 7 | College students | 01 | 01 | 22 | 02 |
| 8 | College lecturers | 02 | - | 51 | 02 |
| | | 69 | 75 | 20 | 144 |

Table 1: Characteristics of the research participants. One of the female music experts was a princess from the royal establishment.

Apart from the participants that comprised the sample presented above, I had the opportunity of interacting with some children, villagers, and other Ministry of Education officials during my tours of duty where I gathered personal and valuable information for the study.

3.9. Data analysis

This study adopted both the thematic and content approaches to data analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) have defined thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data”. This method has some perceived advantages that include allowance of some degree of flexibility and enabling the researcher to provide a rich and detailed account of the data. According to Braun and Clarke (2013), thematic analysis involves “searching across a data set –be that a number of interviews or focus groups or a range of texts-to find repeated patterns of meanings” (p.86). For this study, the procedures suggested by Braun and Clarke’s (2006) guide to the six phases or steps of conducting thematic analysis were used to analyse the qualitative data based on the relationship established to come up with the major themes from the study. I was equally mindful of the fact that qualitative data analysis required the researcher to immerse himself or herself in the data to be familiar with the patterns he or she is looking for (Kawulich, 2004). Through a repeated process of replaying the recorded video and audio materials, I was able to generate themes in accordance with the guidelines and steps suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) for dealing with thematic analysis. Identification of substantive processes and values for any particular group of people in qualitative research is critical because such processes explain particular aspects of social life and why importance is attached to them in a particular cultural context (Marvasti, 2004).

The six steps I used in this study as adapted Braun and Clarke (2006) are presented in the table below.

| Phase | Description of the process |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. Familiarising with the data: | Transcribing data, reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas. |
| 2. Generating initial | Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| codes: | across data set, collating data relevant to each code. |
| 3. Searching for themes: | Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme. |
| 4. Reviewing themes: | Checking in the themes work in relation to the coded extracts emanating from Level 1 and the entire data set drawn from Level 2, generating authentic 'map' of the analysis. |
| 5. Defining and naming themes: | Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme. |
| 6. Producing the report: | The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis. |

Table 2.. Phases of Thematic Analysis adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006).

I also received constructive feedback in terms of analysis of some indigenous play games from my workmates in the Standards Section especially during our tours of duty. They were quick to note some important nuances whenever we came across such play activities in the schools in the district.

Data analysis of the taxonomies of indigenous play games was based on the South African Indigenous Games Research Project of 2001/2002 (Burnett & Hollander, 2004). I found the South African model of classification to be more inclusive even on the indigenous games that were done by Mtonga (2012) in Zambia from which this study drew insights in terms of methodology. Additionally, I found Gowlett (1971) and Gwavaranda and Masaka (2008) analysis of riddles relevant for the analysis and classification of riddles in this study. In my consideration of the taxonomies adopted for this study, I took note of the observation by Sutton-Smith (1972) that challenges were likely to arise in attempting to classify play and games into appropriate categories because of the complex nature of games. However, the classification adopted for this study was based on the cultural and intellectual values and the educational implications that the indigenous play games had and not necessarily on their sports benefits. Thus, from a Zambian perspective, though Kakuwa (2005) approached the topic from a Physical

Education (PE) point of view, I found his classification to complement what I was investigating. I concur with Mapara (2009) who opines that in coming up with a taxonomy of these indigenous games, South Africa has become a pioneer to showcase to other African countries including Zambia the need to value and include the indigenous games in the school curriculum.

3.10. Community volunteer participation

Towards the end of the study, I concentrated my activities in the implementation of the indigenous play games within the small town of Sioma at a local preschool. The rationale behind this undertaking was to use the opportunity as a pilot implementation process of some of my recommendations on the relevance of including local materials or ‘funds of knowledge’ (Moll et al, 1992) into the school curriculum. I engaged a volunteer from the community to undertake this task as a means to establishing school community relationships in the process of including local materials in the school curriculum. I came to know about the community volunteer after some inquiries from the local community people because she was very much involved in drama sensitisation activities on HIV/AIDS in the small town of Sioma. Permission to undertake such a move was sought from my supervisor at my work place.

3.11. Teachers’ workshop

This was conducted in line with the research plan towards the end of the data collection programme and was conducted in Sioma district. This was meant to be a platform through which the research findings were to be disseminated. Twenty four participants representing nineteen primary schools were present for the one day workshop. The workshop acted as a springboard for some teachers to demonstrate to their colleagues how they had benefitted from the research outcomes of the present study as well as to elicit further additions the phenomenon under investigation. The teachers deliberated on various issues based on their local school curriculum. They also had an opportunity of sharing their views on the state of the school text books as reference points. This workshop in a way was an eye opener to the many opportunities embedded in the cultural resources. Following this organised workshop, the teachers drew up an action plan in which they complemented the documentation of some games and play songs that I had also documented. The documented indigenous play games and songs were added to the ones I had

collected. Demonstrations of how various games and play songs were performed and sung were done much to the satisfaction of the workshop participants.

3.12. Credibility

In this section, I present ways in which credibility of this study was achieved. Lincoln and Guba (1985) view credibility as the degree to which the research represents the actual meanings of the research participants or the “truth value.” Credibility in this study was achieved in several ways. In terms of the selection and qualification of the participants, those that were selected for this study were knowledgeable in the topic under investigation. In this manner, I was able to incorporate participants whose knowledge in the subject matter was credible. In terms of methods, I used multiple data collection techniques to triangulate my research findings. For instance, the use of interviews in the study was corroborated by focus group discussions and lesson observations. Through the lesson observations, I was provided with rich insights of data on the extent to which teachers utilised children’s indigenous musical play games as rich cultural resources in their classrooms, and made comparisons to the teachers’ responses during interviews and focus group discussions.

Another important aspect that provided credibility for study was the lengthy time period devoted for both data collection and data analysis. Lincoln and Guba (1985) opine that having a prolonged engagement for a study especially one that is grounded in ethnography is a strategy for ensuring credibility. I became familiar with the participants and established trust with them in their various contexts. This means that the participants were able to provide credible data for the study because of the rapport that I had created with them. I was able to capture data for the study in different settings and seasons. Of significance during this period of data collection was my residence in Sioma which was close to a village setting. This provided a natural setting for my ethnographic studies of children’s various games. Here, I was welcomed in the nearby village because they knew me as one who was a worker at the Ministry of General Education office, and one who visited some homes for interviews with some members of the village. I interacted with the villagers in moments of joy and sadness. I witnessed puberty village rites of passage celebrations for adolescent girls, and village installations of indunas as moments of happiness. I witnessed how children engaged in various play forms that demonstrated their appreciation of the various cultural practices of the indigenous people in their local communities. Children’s

moonlight games were clearly heard from this vantage point. Sometimes I made deliberate attempts into the village to observe what games children were playing and this helped me to note with certainty what I have presented in chapters four regarding the social processes of indigenous play games. I was able to cross check my work against numerous reference points for the reliability of the research findings. In this way, I was able to make valid judgements when analysing the data.

In order to enhance further credibility to the study, I made rich descriptions of the participants' verbal responses and observations in their natural setting. This was mainly achieved by the use of the recording gadgets. I followed Braun and Clarke (2006) steps to thematic analysis. To do this, I took much time to familiarise myself with the data by reading and re-reading the transcripts I had made and reviewed the video clips several times to generate codes and identify emerging themes. Since the study was ethnographic, I adopted a manual process to data analysis so as not to overlook important connections in the process. Where I had limited understanding or doubts on the data being analysed, I made efforts to contact the participants either physically or through mobile phone calls for further clarifications. This was mostly done with the teacher music experts.

3.13. Ethical considerations

In undertaking this study, I received ethical clearance and approval from the University of Zambia research ethics committee to proceed with the data collection process. This was followed by a formal application for permission from the Ministry of Education to conduct the study in Western Province of Zambia which was subsequently granted. All the protocols from the Ministry of Education to the Provincial Education Officers, the District Education Board Secretaries in the districts and schools where I planned to conduct the study were provided with the letters of approval. The process was necessary to act as entry points to the various research sites where the study was to be conducted. It acted as a formal entry point to the actual gate keepers in the schools and villages. This was in line with the research requirements for ethnography (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010).

Participants who were recruited for the study were requested to sign the formal consent forms as part of the research protocol and were informed of all the nature of the study (see appendices A-

E). The Head teachers were instrumental in linking me to the parents of the children who were involved in the study as well as identifying key informants among the teachers. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and were at liberty to withdraw whenever they were unable to continue. I assured the participants of their privacy and confidentiality. Although the study had no elements that were likely to harm the participants in terms of their health, it was still necessary to explain to them and get their willing assent to participate.

3.14. Chapter summary

This chapter presented the whole process of the qualitative research design upon which the study was grounded. As an interpretive descriptive research, the study adopted ethnography for its approach because the phenomena under investigation could best be studied in a naturalistic environment. This had the benefit of understanding the deeply embedded cultural processes that were closely connected with such children's repertoire. In order to achieve its intended objectives, different methods were used to generate the data from a purposeful sample of participants that included school children and adults. The research data for the study were found to be credible because of the various steps that were undertaken as explained in the last section of the present chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0. PRESENTATION OF STUDY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Overview

This chapter presents the findings in relation to the three objectives that guided the study. The chapter is divided into three parts namely; A, B, and C. Each of these parts addresses a specific research objective. However, prior to the presentation of these key parts, a presentation of the indigenous musical play games of Lozi children is made to show how children get socialised in social context during different stages of child development. The indigenous musical play games that have been considered are those from infancy to preadolescence.

4.2. Indigenous musical play games of Lozi children.

Music in the traditional Lozi society occupies a central role in almost all the activities of everyday life in rural communities. This section provides insights on the different types of indigenous musical play games (*lipapali*) that children engage in from infancy to preadolescence. Through exposure to various musical activities and indigenous games, the children got their early socialisation. To do this, I have used Nsamenang's (1992/2005a) theoretical framework which presents human development as partly determined by the social ecology in which the development occurs and by how African children, especially in sibling and peer settings, learn from each other in peer culture. This theoretical framework is presented below.

| Serial Stage | Social Ontogenetic Stage | Developmental Task(s) |
|--|--|--|
| First Social stage <i>Neonatal</i> | The newborn period. Happiness for safe delivery and divine gift. A project-progress. Projection of personality to emerge in the newborn. | Biological indices noticed. Neonate as reincarnated or free born Social markers of development. Induction into human community through a naming ceremony |
| Second Social stage <i>Infancy</i> | Infancy period Pre-social priming | Responding to multiple social cues Tolerating multiple caregivers |
| Third Social stage <i>Childhood</i> | Social apprentice, novice | Recognise social roles Acknowledge self in connectedness. Peer group interaction and work |

| | | | |
|--|--------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Fourth stage Puberty | Social | Social entre'e | Recognise and adjust to changes. Perform domestic chores/duties. Participate in rite of passage, if any. |
| Fifth <i>Social stage</i> | | Probation and 'socialised' internship | Visualize self, complete training. Poised for adult roles. Junior partner as proto-adult |
| Sixth Social stage <i>Adulthood</i> | | Adulthood | Marriage. Responsible parenthood Productivity/Societal reproduction |
| Seventh Social stage <i>Senescence/death</i> | | Old Age | Wisdom/comportment exudes hope. Accept death as part of life. Reassure significant others with impending death. |

Table 3: Adapted from Nsamenang (1992/2005a).

In addition to Nsamenang's theoretical framework, I found Mtonga's (2012, pp.41-51) seven stages of child development and Mbikusita-Lewanika's (1979) postulation of chronological age sequence to be useful in complementing Nsamenang's sociogenesis theory despite their different theoretical focus. Mbikusita-Lewanika's (1979) chronological age sequence shows the different activities that Lozi children were exposed to during their development. According to Mbikusita-Lewanika (1979), seven stages constitute the process of child development among the Lozi people¹⁸. These include: (i) *bumbututu*¹⁹ (infancy) from birth to about two years, (ii) *linguya*²⁰ (early childhood) from two years to five, (iii) *banana*²¹ (childhood) from six to ten, (iv) *mitangana*²², *bo nalutiyo* (pre-adolescents and adolescents) between 11-15, (v) *likalibe, micaha*²³: *manyalo* (young adults: marriage), (vi) *babahulu-macembele* (adult life-old age), and (vii) *kusupala, matuku ni lifu* (aging, diseases, and death).

Among the Lozi people, parents often encourage their children to play with others through such expressions as '*zamaya uyo bapala ni babañwi*' (go and play with others). A child who constantly sticks to the mother is usually referred to as '*yanani lukakatela*.' However, from a traditional point of view, adults are not expected to play with children as this is considered

¹⁸ These stages were used for convenience of classification as clarified by my personal communications with Dr. Lewanika herself (16/03/20).

¹⁹ *Bumbututu* is plural; singular is *mbututu* The Siluyana term is *lukeke*.

²⁰ Singular form is *nguya* meaning not knowing much (Mbikusita-Lewanika, 1979)

²¹ Singular form is *mwanana*

²² Singular is *mutangana* or pre adolescent boy; *nalutiyo* is a pre adolescent girl

²³ *Kalibe* is singular meaning a young lady while *micaha* is singular for a young gentleman

abnormal although children can engage in adult forms of play such as singing and dancing. A child who manifests skills in such traditional activities is praised as an avid dancer ‘*sinengela*’ and singer ‘*munembo*’ respectively.

4.2.1. Lullabies

These songs known *locally as lipina za limbututu* (songs for babies), are songs sung from birth to about two years. In this category of songs, the songs include those that mothers or care givers sing to the babies to calm them or lure them to sleep, or allow the mother to perform her assigned chores, or those that babies and children sing to entertain themselves. Singing to babies is a common practice among Lozi mothers during the period of seclusion known as *siyopu*. This constitutes a period of training and mentorship for a young mother from the elderly and experienced women of the village. It is an indigenous maternal school in which young mothers are tutored on baby care and appropriate breastfeeding practices. Other practices during this period include training in various songs meant to calm babies. Only some selected songs and chants in this section have been provided.

- ***Mbumbu wa lila* (The baby is crying)**

This is a popular and common song among mothers and care givers, and even toddlers. When the baby cries, the mother or care giver brings it close to herself and sings gently to soothe and possibly to lure it to sleep. Sometimes most of the lullabies tend to have meaningless repeated lyrics.

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>A aiye, a aiye</i> | , (These words are meaningless) |
| <i>A aiye, a aiye</i> | |
| <i>Mbumbu wa lile, ubata kunyanye</i> | The baby is crying, it wants to suckle |
| <i>Mbumbu wa lilee, ubata lizwelee</i> | The baby is crying, it wants the breast |

The other lullaby below demonstrates the feelings that mothers of caregivers develop when babies fail to calm down. Mothers could sometimes develop feelings of anger or frustration over such baby acts.

- *Wena mwanana , ulila hahulu (Baby, you cry too much)*

| <i>Lozi lyrics</i> | English translation |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>Caller: Wena mwana</i> | <i>Caller: Baby</i> |
| <i>Response: Ulila hahulu</i> | <i>Response: You cry too much</i> |
| <i>Caller: Bona ndataho</i> | <i>Caller: Look at your father</i> |
| <i>Respondent: Hana mutanga</i> | <i>Response: He has no servant</i> |

The chant below is usually extended to toddlers to entice them to walk.

- *Ndende²⁴, chipili²⁵*

Ndende, chipili

Ndende, chipili

4.2.2. Play songs/chants, and games in early Childhood: Three years to five

In this section, a chant has been provided to show the challenges that children experience in the process of growing up.

- **Chant on loss of first milk teeth**

This chant is performed when a child loses his/her first milk teeth and such occasions are usually characterised by great fun for children. Fun comes if a child does not say the chant according to the prescribed order. This twist would arouse a lot of laughter among the curious children. The friends would tease him/her that he /she would remain with a gap the rest of his/her life. But this is just part of childish fun and is one way of helping them to understand the natural processes and overcome frustration. Performance of this childhood ritual requires a child to get a dry ash and

²⁴ This is just used to invite the toddler to walk while *chipili* seems to suggest *musipili* or journey. The implication in this chant seems to suggest that child growing up is a life journey that requires the support of all community members.

²⁵ Motherise word for journey (*musipili*)

place the tooth on the ash²⁶, and facing the western direction, he/she should say the following chant:

| Lozi lyrics | English translation |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Lishala, lishala uyelele...</i> | Ash, ash go for good |
| <i>Liino, liino uyo kuta...</i> | Tooth, tooth, come [do] back |

After this ritual, the child is expected to throw away the tooth and ash. This is a child ritual because of the beliefs attached to it namely, the chanting and throwing away of the tooth with ash while facing the western direction where evil or bad things are believed to go²⁷. Sometimes laughter follows where the child might make a mistake while saying the chant because of language challenges or fear of not saying the chant correctly, for instance;

Lishala, lishala, uyo kuta... (ash, ash, come back)

Liino, liino uyelele.... (tooth, tooth go for good)

However, children learnt to control their emotions even when they were teased. They also learn to engage in some cultural practices in a playful manner.

4.2.3. Childhood play songs and chants: Six to nine years

Bed wetting is another common challenge to most children in the process of growing up. Those who struggle with such challenges are sometimes mocked by their peers.

- **Song on childhood bed wetting problems**

This is one common song meant to discourage children from bed wetting while sleeping:

| Lozi lyrics | English translation |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Caller: <i>Silutela mwandu</i> | Bed wetter |
| Respondents: <i>Taka ya luna</i> | Our own age mate ²⁸ |

²⁶ Several children who were interviewed revealed that this childhood practice was still common among children.

²⁷ Among the Lozi people, the west is considered as a bad direction where evil things should go.

²⁸ Children below six are the ones mocking those above six having such challenges.

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| (Repeated as desired) | |
|-----------------------|--|

This play song in the process had the potential to help children learn to overcome some growing challenges such as bed wetting which is a common childhood phenomenon. In short, the song taught children to learn to control their emotions of crying when they were being mocked by their friends and had some potential in developing emotional intelligence. Children learnt not fight their friends but played with them even when they were mocked.

- **Chants based on bird sounds**

Lozi children especially in the rural areas have a common practice of imitating different bird sounds in different seasons. One bird sound common during the rainy season is *Tunwe*, whose sound is interpreted as shown below,

| Lozi version | English translation |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Kunwa, kunwa, kunwa, kunwa</i> | Drink, drink, drink, drink |

During the cold season, the chirruping sound of *lungumba* also locally known as *Simafuwa* (standard wing night jar) signifies the approach and presence of the cold season and children imitate the sounds as:

| Lozi lyrics | English translation |
|----------------------------|---|
| <i>Call: simafuwa,</i> | <i>Simafuwa</i> (standard wing night jar) |
| <i>Res:ndetele mulilo,</i> | Bring fire to me |
| <i>Call:Simafuwa,</i> | As above |
| <i>Res: ndetele mulilo</i> | As above |

- ***Sakacompole***

One bird that interests Lozi children is the pied kingfisher, locally known as *mutangalati* or *sakacompole*. Children prefer to call this bird as *kanamucompolile*. Usually when this bird has

spotted a fish and intends to swoop it with its beak, it balances itself, and for the Lozi children, they imagine it as singing a balancing song whose lyrics are transcribed below:

| Lozi lyrics | English translation |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Caller: <i>Kanamucompolilo</i> | <i>Kanamucompolilo</i> (nick name for the bird) |
| Respondents: <i>Compo</i> | Get |
| Caller : <i>Kanamucompolilo</i> | (As above) |
| <i>Resp: Compo</i> | |

The children here have a feeling that the song helps the kingfisher to balance and position itself to be able to catch the unsuspecting fish. Kingfisher is regarded as one the greatest fishing birds. Knowledge of different bird sounds gave children knowledge on the different behavioural patterns of birds within the local environment. They knew the different bird sounds as being peculiar to each season. Through such indigenous children’s practices, they learnt to appreciate their local environment and their place in it.

- ***Situtu sa tutuluka***

The game is played in a circular formation while participants hold their hands together. One player is selected to be inside the circle. The player inside the circle moves from point to point where the hands have been held together and feels the points which are weak for him/her to break. The player inside the circle is expected to mention the names of strong and weak trees in the process of identifying the weak spot. When he/she successfully breaks the circle, the person at the breaking point enters the circle and the play game begins again. The following are the accompanying lyrics of the song:

| Lozi lyrics | English translation |
|-------------|---------------------|
| | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Call: <i>Situtu sa tutuluka situtu...</i> | (these are nonsense words, there were no equivalents provided) |
| Response: <i>Sa tutuluka</i> | |
| Call: <i>Situtu sa tutuluka situtu...</i> | |
| Response: <i>Sa tutuluka</i> | |
| Chorus | |
| Call: <i>Ni pumele fa</i> | Can I break from here? |
| Response: <i>Ki fa mukakani</i> | That is a thorny tree |
| Call: <i>Ni pumele fa</i> | Can I break from here? |
| Response: <i>Ki fa muzauli</i> | That is a rose tree |

This play song is underpinned by the cultural value of keeping and preserving forests. Through this play song, children learnt the names of the local trees and learnt about their medicinal as well as domestic uses. The play song was found to be a rich cultural resource for promoting environmental traditional knowledge in natural resource conservation and management.

- **Chant based on fishing**

Fishing is not a play activity but a survival one. Lozi children engage in fishing activities from an early age. Both boys and girls participate with adults in this very important ecological activity and occupation. However, for most boys, chants often accompany this survival activity, thus making it a play form. Catching fish, especially the small white fish (*limbaala*) usually found in streams (*maabwa*) using line and fish hooks is sometimes accompanied by some chants.

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Lozi version | English translation |
|---------------------|----------------------------|

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| <i>Celee, celee, mwana mbaala, mwana mukubele</i> | Eat, offspring of barbus |
| <i>Celee...</i> | Eat |



Fig.3: Boys engaged in fishing in Senanga 15/03/17) Fig.4: School girls performing a fish catching dance in Senanga (16/05/12)

The chant above is an expression of happiness by those engaged in fishing on how different fish attempt to feed or eat the bait placed at their fish hooks and are caught in the process. Chants of this form usually come from those who happen to catch more fish than their colleagues during a fishing spree. In a show of fishing mastery, those who have this prowess will challenge their colleagues with the chant. Fishing is an art and a skill. Children also acquire indigenous fishing methods and fish traps that do not negatively affect the ecosystem. I recall from my early teens how my father rebuked me for spearing and killing a red breasted bream fish upon finding some tiny fingerlings in its gills. My father thereafter lectured me on good fishing practices to ensure the survival of fish species.

- **Chant on the first rains**

The onset of the rain season among the Lozi children is a period of much excitement; children brave the first showers while chanting the words below:

| Lozi version | English translation |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Pula, pula ineele, luce malaka</i> | Rain, rain, come, so that we eat cucumbers |
| <i>Pula, pula ineele, luce malaka</i> | Rain, rain, come, so that we eat cucumbers |
| <i>Pula, pula ineele, luce malaka</i> | Rain, rain, come, so that we eat cucumbers |

The Lozi conceptualisation of rain is that it is a big mysterious bird that is sometimes referred to as ‘*mulongwe*.’²⁹ According to the Lozi traditional understanding, *mulongwe* creates lightning and thunder when it spreads and flips back its wings. The rain bird also is believed to lay white eggs that can sometimes be dug by village rain makers. This traditional popular myth about the rain bird and eggs shows how local ecologies influence the thought process of children and the value that indigenous cultures attach to their local ecosystems.

- **Making toy objects from clay, trees, or stalks of maize**

Lozi children make different forms of play objects from clay, trees, or dry maize stalks. Making cattle from clay or ox-carts from dry stalks of maize is common. Girls on the other hand make dolls from shredded maize cobs.



Fig. 5. Toy cattle from dry maize stalks



Fig.6. Boys making toy-ox carts

By making toy objects closely associated with everyday community activities, children gained skills in animal husbandry and construction of ox-carts needed for later adult activities in a playful manner.

- **Making musical instruments from stalks of maize or grass or leaves**

For rural children where whistles are not easily accessed, grass or leaves as local resources are used to make flutes. Such childish instruments produce high pitches. Sometimes, local flutes are made from river reeds (*mataka*) with spider webs placed at the open ends to act as resonators.

²⁹ Lisimba (2000) notes that *mulongwe* is “euphemism for rain” (207).

Lozi children also usually make such musical instruments after observing how adults construct xylophone (*silimba*) resonators.

4.2.4. Work and dance songs in pre-adolescents: Ten to twelve years

In both pre-adolescents and adolescents, Lozi children engage less in childhood activities. However, parents especially mothers tend to discourage their daughters from engaging in most childhood play activities. During adolescence when girls enter into initiation, that marks the end of their association to childhood activities as they are considered adults. During day time, children are expected to work. Proverbs such as ‘*mwanuke u fune ilama isiyala bo ni ya mabila*’ meaning ‘child, learn to work hard, for what remains of your body [when you die] is food for maggots’ help to show the significance of work among the Lozi people.

- *Nabasitela bo Joni*

This is one common pounding song performed by both women and girls especially in the villages where hammer mills are not readily available. This mockery song was composed to ridicule lazy men. Young women learnt to prepare themselves for their roles as hard working wives.

| Lozi chants | English translation |
|---|--|
| <i>Naba sitela bo Joni</i> | (I am pounding for John...) |
| <i>Ba sali kunama bo Joni</i> | (who is just seated, and relaxing with legs out stretched) |
| <i>Ni mumba tuna bo Joni</i> | (with a big protruding pot bellied stomach) |
| <i>Inge lisheshi³⁰ bo Joni</i> | (that looks like a very big frog) |
| <i>Shipu, shipu, shipu, shipu</i> | (Imitating the pestle sound in the mortar) |

³⁰ *Lisheshi* (pl, *masheshi*) is a type of big frogs mostly found in Sioma and Shangombo districts of Western Province. Some ethnic groups that I came in contact with in these districts ate such type of frogs.

Pounding was a social activity in which young adolescent girls took delight. Young adolescent girls sang songs or listened to more educative work songs from the mature old women. The young women were provided with some sociocultural instructions through such occasions such as learning that it was a taboo to leave a wooden pounding mortar standing after using it. The mortar was expected to be laid or put mouth down because it was a symbol of woman and her woman hood. Leaving a mortar standing was considered improper and an insult, and was interpreted as being disrespectful (*kutokwa likute*). In the manner, children learnt the substantive cultural values of respect through work.

During work, mothers in most cases assign older children to take care of the young ones. However, the importance of a mother's attitude to work and child care is emphasised in the following story song. The lyrics of the story song illustrate the careless attitude of some mothers:

| Lozi lyrics | English translation |
|---|--|
| <p>Caller: <i>Kalima maundu woo (times2)</i> <i>Respondents: Ndetele mwanangu (times 2)</i> <i>Bonse balima bayakotoka, ndetele mwanangu</i></p> <p><i>Mene simbilu sabana balanda, ndetele mwanangu</i></p> <p><i>Asibinduka inge linjoko, ndetele mwanangu</i></p> <p>Chorus Caller: <i>Peke, peke</i>³¹</p> <p>Res: <i>Tuwabona mwapekela maiba,</i> <i>Tuabona</i></p> | <p>Tiller of land, Bring my child All the tillers have knocked off, bring my child</p> <p>When it turns round like monkeys³², bring my child (Imitation of the flapping of a bird's wings) We can see how the pigeons fly, We can see how pigeons flap their wings We see</p> |

³¹ This part of the chorus lyrics ridicules the lazy tillers of land, who take very little time at work and like pigeons, fly off. Such weak and lazy tillers of land are likened to a pigeon that flaps its wings for a short time only and relaxes.

³² Just like a baby monkey clings to its mother, the allusion here is an expression of a strong desire for the mother to see her child cling to her for breastfeeding.

This indigenous story song presents two important themes. The first theme centres on the mother's attitude towards care of the child. Babies, and of course children were expected to be provided with care and security even during work times. In modern times, this song is a rebuke to parents who are more preoccupied with work at the expense of the security and well being of their children. Secondly, laziness was frowned upon and the virtues of work were stressed and emphasised. But work also took the interests of children. In this manner, adolescent girls learnt the cultural values regarding the welfare of young children.

Part A

Cultural values of Lozi children's indigenous musical play games

This part presents the findings in relation to the first research objective that was guided by the following research question:

- What are the substantive cultural themes, values, and practices underlying the Lozi children's indigenous music and games in the study that could be incorporated in the main stream Zambian school curriculum?

Data was obtained through interviews, lesson observations, and focus group discussions.

4.3. Types of children's indigenous musical play games

Children's indigenous musical play games also locally known as '*lipapali za banana*' are a common feature among the Lozi people just like it is in other parts of the country. The findings obtained in this study revealed that Lozi children mostly engaged in free play without any undue interference from parents or adults. The study also found that the Lozi people had a variety of children's indigenous musical play games some of which were accompanied by songs. According to the music experts, children's indigenous musical play games were of two types: there were traditional and contemporary play games. Traditional or indigenous play games were games that had a cultural origin while contemporary games were "*play games in which children came up with their own vocabulary and language, and then made up those plays.*"³³ They observed that traditional games were connected with the ways of life of the people. My observations during the study were that some of the indigenous play games were largely dictated by seasonal appearances and varied according to seasons while others were played throughout

³³ Focus Group Discussion in Senanga held on 13/10/18 at the District Resource Centre.

the year. One such indigenous play engaged in throughout the year was pretend play or *mandwani*.

4.3.1. Sociodramatic play (*mandwani*) as a favourite indigenous play activity

Sociodramatic play or *mandwani* as the play game is indigenously known was found to be the most popular traditional play game during this study. Children mostly played *mandwani* at the periphery of the villages in the rural set ups or outside the houses in walled fenced houses in peri-urban and urban places. Played by both urban and rural children, *mandwani* revealed its strong socialisation grip on children especially those below twelve years. Those who were above twelve years were traditionally not expected to play such games because they were considered to be grown up. The adult informants all described *mandwani* simply as ‘children’s village’ (*munzi wa banana*). When these informants were asked to explain why *mandwani* remained a favourite indigenous play game for children in the midst of Western technologies such as computers and TVs, the following observations were advanced:

“The advantage of mandwani is that it is highly practical, and children live and play what they live. At mandwani, children play what they see their mothers or fathers do, and that is exactly what they do. Those in the villages will play the village activities and those in town will play the modern life activities such as making provisions for the TV sets in their mock homes.”³⁴

- **Lozi adult’s conceptualisation of *mandwani***

Mandwani is perceived to be children’s little village. In terms of everyday usage, the Lozi adults sometimes refer to *mandwani* as a metaphor for disapproval. For instance, when referring to some work that has not been done well or imperfect, they would refer to such as *mandwani* implying that it is childish- only a child could do such a thing. For instance, when one wants to disapprove of something, one would be heard saying, “*A ki mandwani e mu ezize*” (What you have done is nothing short of a child’s pretend play). Viewed in this context, *mandwani* is an imperfect stage relegated to children’s pastime activity. The Lozi adults’ general perception regarding pretend play is summed up in the following proverb, ‘*Mundi wa anuke lukonda ndima*

³⁴ Focus Group Discussions in Senanga.

kakukonda ngambolo,³⁵ meaning that children's little villages [*mandwani*] thrive mainly because of the cooking and the food they eat there and not due to serious and intelligent life discussions.

- **Adult informants' reflections about *Mandwani***

According to the community music expert in Senanga, *mandwani* was an informal school for Lozi children in terms of their socialisation and enculturation processes. Acquisition of the Lozi cultural values was an important socialisation process that *mandwani* enhanced in children as highlighted by the following views:

*"In mandwani there is the spirit of 'butu' (being a person). At mandwani, there were lessons; children learnt how to care for others. Whatever children saw in the homes or villages, they practiced these at mandwani. Some children became teachers and had their schools and pupils at mandwani. Others imitated the village witch finders. They would sing and dance to some popular known songs. For me, mandwani provided an important opportunity for learning among the Lozi children."*³⁶

What children learnt at *mandwani* would eventually make them into '*batu*'.³⁷ It is this aspect of '*batu* or *butu*' that was found to be the dominant theme where all other process hinged on. '*Butu*' is only perceived by others in terms of how one conducts himself or herself.

4.3.1.1. Sub-themes focusing on the cultural value of '*butu*'

The following were the sub-themes closely related to this important dominant cultural value of *butu* demonstrated from *mandwani* indigenous play game.

- **The cultural value of respect and obedience**

One outstanding element that this study found was the way children demonstrated the cultural value of respect or *likute* among themselves. Among the Lozi people, respect for someone is shown by the use of the prefix '*bo*' before the actual name of the person being called. During

³⁵ This proverb is also used in real life to refer to unstable villages where quarrels are most common.

³⁶ This interview was conducted with the princess in Senanga district during the series of interviews I had with her.

³⁷ *Batu* is the collective plural form meaning people where as *butu* or *mutu* is the singular form of the same word (noun).

their verbalisations, children addressed their fellow playmates in the typical Lozi traditional way as noted from a village expert's childhood reflections on respect at *mandwani*:

“Then after cooking, one parent would extend an invitation to the other saying ‘bo ma nto, a mutahe³⁸ luto ca hamoho’ (mother to so and so, come let’s eat together) Different families would meet and have a communal meal known as ‘silyela’ (eating together). Children whose meals have been well prepared and cooked would be praised, “hape wa mina buhobe³⁹ bwa hae ubu ezize hande” (your child has nicely prepared this food). These are the games that we played as children.”⁴⁰

The findings revealed how children imbibed important cultural aspects of ‘*butu*’ such as respect for elders exhibited through kneeling down and clapping of hands when receiving an item from another play mate, and not looking straight in the eyes of another play mate assigned the role of an elderly person. Children at *mandwani* were assigned tasks like going on a simple errand to get something for the surrogate mother and completion of such a task was seen as a sign of respect and obedience. Grown up children taught the young ones on correct social behaviour:

“We learnt our culture (sizo). For instance, when receiving an item from a fellow play mate, a child would be expected to kneel down and clap. We would rebuke such a child if he showed disrespect to a fellow play mate. Children are expected to be respectful and should not answer back an elderly person. When speaking to an elderly person, children are expected to lower their eyes and look down as a sign of respect.”⁴¹

Respect (*likute*) is considered as one epitome of Lozi culture and this is exhibited in many forms such as clapping of hands when receiving advice or an item from an elderly person, not looking straight in the eyes of an elderly person when talking to him or her, or waiting for the elderly people to pick their shares during a meal with them. When dining with the elders, Lozi children are expected to pick the plates and eat the remaining food away from the adults after the adults have indicated their satisfaction and stopped eating. The Lozi proverb of “*wamumona maoyo a tunda kwa aanu,*” (when you see a child showing respect (*likute*), then he or she is coming from

³⁸ In Lozi, the phrase *bo ‘ma nto’* and word *‘mina’* are all forms of addressing someone in a polite and respectful way. They have been put in bold to emphasize this point.

³⁹ Hard porridge prepared from maize grain

⁴⁰ Interview with a 73 year old community music expert in Nalolo district.

⁴¹ Interview with a teacher music expert at Namalangu Primary School in Senanga district.

people) underscores the cultural significance of respect (*likute*) among the Lozi people. Among the Lozi people, a person who is less knowledgeable in the cultural practices is termed as ‘*muñete*’ meaning a person who does not know his or her own cultural values. The Lozi conceptualisation of *muñete* implies one who has not been ‘schooled’ in the expected traditional and cultural practices, one deficient or illiterate in cultural literacy despite his or her level of educational attainment in the formal education systems.

Findings obtained during this study revealed that the cultural aspect of respect was lacking in many ways. For instance, children were seen in most lesson observations receiving their books from the teachers without clapping their hands. On the other hand, some teachers wanted their pupils to look at them when giving an explanation for a wrong done. This was found to be a mismatch and at variance with what children learnt at home or during *mandwani* indigenous play games. The implications were that many school children were cultural illiterates when measured on the traditional scales of the Lozi traditional and cultural indigenous knowledge systems. Later in the thesis, I argue the position that schools should take. Children who were lacking in the area of respect and obedience were often left to play alone. In order to instill discipline among players, children who were perceived to be arrogant or were bullies were ostracized through the following song:

| Lozi lyrics | English translation |
|--|--|
| Caller: <i>Timbokee, timbokee, uka bapala ni sitoho sa hao</i> | Caller: Ostracized, ostracized, you will play [alone] with your head, |
| Respondents: <i>Timbokee, timbokee, uka bapala ni sitoho sa hao.</i> | Respondents: Ostracized, ostracized, you will play [alone] with your head. |

Important lessons from this indigenous play song reveal that respect and obedience in the typical Lozi society was emphasised.

- **The cultural value of sharing**

Children demonstrated the cultural value of sharing through communal meals at *mandwani*:

*Different families would meet and have a communal meal known as 'silyela' (eating together)*⁴². Through the field observations conducted, I frequently found children actively involved in this aspects of sharing things including food. Small children would pretend to go on errands of asking for salt from the other players. They also shared their play objects. However, while such activities were common at *mandwani*, my personal observations in the preschools that I visited in Sioma revealed that this principle of sharing and eating meals together was not promoted. During their meal times, children ate their meals individually without any regard for those who did not have any. Although children played and sang action songs together in class, their actions changed to individual focus when it came to meal times. Similar observations were revealed by some teachers in Senanga where preschool children objected to sharing their food with others. The outcomes of this behaviour forced some children from less privileged homes to stop attending preschool classes.⁴³ However, nothing in the school curriculum addressed this indigenous aspect of sharing.

- **The cultural value of caring**

Children were sometimes instructed to be socially responsible to their own fellow playmates in a family play circle. For instance, the mother would instruct the older child to leave some food for their brother or sister who was away for play. The verbatim response below illustrates this point:

*“After cooking, the mother would tell the older child to leave some food for her young brother; ‘usiyele kwa teni munyana’ hao ya sa ile kwa kubapala,” (leave some food for your young brother who is still out playing).”*⁴⁴

An analysis of these verbal instructions revealed that children received such instructions from their parents in real home settings. This cultural element of older siblings being socially responsible for the wellbeing of their young ones is common among the Lozi people as observed even during play times at *mandwani*. Children learnt to be their own brother’s or sister’s keepers. The Luyana saying of ‘*minowe ni munu,*’ your young sibling is also a person’ was expressed and enacted even at *mandwani* indigenous play games. Unfortunately, such cultural values were not

⁴² Interview with the 73 year old informant in Nalolo district.

⁴³ Interview with a preschool teacher in Senanga district.

⁴⁴ Interview with a 73 year old village informant in Nalolo district.

emphasised in schools. For instance, in the lesson observed in this study, when the class registers were called out, there were no deliberate efforts by teachers to assign pupils to find out on the wellbeing of their colleagues who had not come to school. Roll call in class registers were done and lessons immediately started without any due consideration for those who were absent.

4.3.1.2. Other cultural values gained from playing *mandwani*

This study also found that there were other cultural values that children gained from participating in *mandwani* such as:

- Parenting and parenting styles
- Cooking skills
- Building skills
- Leadership skills

Common expressions made by the interviewees were:

“Children imitate the different parental styles they see in their parents. For instance, for those parents who are harsh with their children, children will dramatise the same harshness to their children at mandwani. In fact, if you want to know how you relate towards your children just hide yourself and observe them during mandwani and you will be surprised to hear how they will imitate your voice and that of your husband. I was shocked one day when I came from work and found my own children imitating my voice. What our children play at mandwani are actually the things they see in us.”⁴⁵

“It so happened that children used to do excellent cooking once they graduated from mandwani. It was a very good school for children”⁴⁶.

“We used to build nice grass thatched small huts at mandwani. Others would get married and get into those huts while others were chosen to be dogs, cocks and would bark and crow while others slept in the small huts. Others were chosen to be hyenas, lions, and cattle. People would wake up and cook. And then, we would choose some indunas to judge cases.”⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Focus Group Discussions in Senanga held at the District Resource Centre.

⁴⁶ Interview with a 73 year female informant in Senanga district.

⁴⁷ Interview with an 82 year male informant in Senanga district.



Fig. 7: Children near their grass play huts



Fig. 8: Children cooking in their play tins

A critical analysis of the above verbatim reflections made by the community music experts reveal that *mandwani* was a more practical form of informal learning when compared with the modern school system. Children gained skills necessary for fitness in the actual adult society. They performed those activities that were considered valuable in their different home settings and as they applied in real life. Cooking formed an important aspect at *mandwani*: However, my strong observations were that *mandwani* was an important peripheral school for imbibing the relevant cultural literacies necessary for adult life.

- **Children’s perceptions of *mandwani***

For the children, *mandwani* provided them with a sense of being adults, where they could practice what adults were capable of doing in the real world.

- **Appreciation of the cultural values and practices**

At *mandwani*, children demonstrated their appreciation of the existing cultural values and practices through play. For instance, children expressed their appreciation of the traditional cultural practices such as girls’ initiation ceremonies, playing musical instruments, fishing and hunting, and cooking food. The following verbatim responses were noted:

“Sometimes we imitate big village celebrations like siyemboka⁴⁸ where we dance and sing songs that we have seen from the village activities but in which we are not allowed to participate.”⁴⁹

⁴⁸ A celebration performed to mark the passing out of a girl who was undergoing initiation period called *sikenge*

⁴⁹ Field interviews in Nalolo district, 14/07/17

“*Bashimani bona ba yo yambanga litapi kwa liabwa. Ha ba fita lwa ape ha ni kuca*”⁵⁰ (Boys go for fishing at the stream. When they come back, we cook and eat).

“*Fo kuñwi kwa hae wa kona kusoka munya, mi bashemi hao ba ka kuhanisa kusoka. Kono ha u yo kalela kwa mandwani ha kuna ya kuhanisa.*”⁵¹ (Sometimes at home you can cook bad food and your parents will stop you. But when you begin from pretend play, no one can stop you). In this way, children also learnt their assigned gender roles.

Children admitted that they felt delighted when they mastered such skills. These are typical everyday adult activities that children observe in their parents.

As noted earlier, *mandwani* was mostly dominated by cooking activities. Children expressed their feelings of eating and sharing food as a source of satisfaction when playing *mandwani*:

| Mbunda lyrics | English translation |
|--|--|
| Caller: <i>Cibundu ca ku mangongo</i> ⁵² <i>kutoba...</i> | (Food prepared at pretend play is tasty) |
| All: <i>Cibundu ca ku mangongo kutobala...</i> | (Food prepared at pretend play is tasty) |
| All: <i>Ca bithenge ku shamuka, ca ku mangongo kutobala...</i> | (The one prepared at home isn't tasty) |

The food eaten at *mandwani* was tasty only because it was prepared by children themselves; it was their own finished product. Ownership of this food preparation was a hallmark of satisfaction and was congruent with the proverb: *Cibi ku bantu, kubanyina mafuta*⁵³ ([It is] bad in the sight of others but precious to the owners). Children’s indigenous play games as observed in this study are indeed prized by the children themselves. Though seen as pastimes activities, children cherish them. Studies that overlook this point are likely to miss the nature of the motivation of children to play.

⁵⁰ Interview with school children at Kalenga Primary School in Kalabo district

⁵¹ Interview with school children at Kalenga Primary School in Kalabo district.

⁵² Mbunda name for *mandwani* as narrated by school children at Kalenga Primary School in Kalabo district.

⁵³ A proverb of consolation by parents on account of a child who is perceived by some people to be ugly. This could be equivalent to the English proverb ‘one man’s meat is another man’s poison.’

During this study, findings obtained revealed that the cultural aspect of dances and singing was only done occasionally in schools when there were important state dignitaries visiting the respective districts. Children were asked to perform usually at short notice to meet the occasion. Music and dances were gap fillers to avoid monotony. In other instances, most schools visited did not have any musical instruments such as drums and *silimba* (xylophone). Children improvised drums by using large empty plastic containers for drums. Similar observations were encountered in my previous study (Mukela, 2013).

In terms of pedagogy, *mandwani* presents valuable insights for teaching that is based on child to child interactions. In the case of this study, children admitted they felt good when they performed most of the community cultural practices at *mandwani* because they had feelings of ownership of such practices just like their parents owned the actual village activities. Ng'andu (2009) observes that most children in the Zambian schools enter their early grades only to find that very little of their culture exists in the school curriculum. As noted in this study, classroom learning was more important than creating deliberate school programmes where children could share their talents and express their cultural elements in classroom situations.

4.3.1.2. Indigenous play songs demonstrating the cultural values

Apart from *mandwani*, there were some other indigenous play songs and games in the study that were also found to be underscored by the same cultural values of 'butu' as presented below.

4.3.1.2.1. Indigenous play songs associated with respect/obedience

The lyric of the play song below demonstrates the importance of respect as a cultural value:

- ***Tukatwale malonga kuli mwangana***

This is a Luvale play song which simply means 'let us take the plates, goats, and sheep to the chief'. According to my informant, "*These are tributes that subjects are expected to take to the chief as responsible citizens.*"⁵⁴. It was a traditional way of showing respect and care for leaders. Performance of the play song requires children to sit down and move forward on their knees as they imitate the traditional way of approaching a chief. As they do this, they pretend to be

⁵⁴ Interview with the music expert in Senanga.

carrying some objects on their heads as presents to be given to the chief. In this play song, the children learnt to internalise their expected roles as socially responsible citizens.⁵⁵

| Luvale | English |
|--|---|
| Caller: <i>Tukatwale malonga</i> Response: <i>Kuli mwangana</i> Call: <i>Pembe na mukoko</i> Response: <i>Kuli mwangana</i> | Let's take the plates To the chief Goat and sheep To the chief |

An analysis of this play song reveals that virtues of caring for those in authority especially the chiefs and king was no longer something those children were taught in school. When I asked the teachers in Sioma whether they have had any deliberate programmes in the past to visit the local chief in the area, I learnt that such programmes had not been done. Yet, in my observations during this study, school children had in most cases been made to travel longer distances to perform some traditional dances to political leaders while local chiefs were mostly sidelined. My argument here is that both the traditional and political leaders deserve equal treatment.

- *Shengelela, shengelela*

In performing this play song, children make a circle and clasp their hands together. The caller leads in the song while the others respond by performing the required action. Some participants during one FGD in Kaoma made the following observations:

“The game taught loyalty and obedience to the voice of authority.”

| Lozi (Luyana) lyrics | English translation |
|--|---------------------|
| Caller: <i>Shengelela...</i> (times 2) Respondents: <i>Shengelela...</i> (times 2) Caller: <i>Monde ikala</i> Respondent: <i>Shengelela</i> | Monde sit down |

⁵⁵ Interview with a music expert in Senanga. The song was in Luvale.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Caller: <i>Tukube ngombe</i>⁵⁶</p> <p>Respondent: <i>Shengelela</i></p> <p>Caller :<i>Ngombe ya lifuta</i></p> <p>Respondent: <i>Shengelela</i></p> | <p>We will give you a cow</p> <p>A pregnant cow</p> |
|---|---|

An analysis of the lyrics and play format as essential values underpinning this indigenous play song reveals that children were expected to be obedient when instructed to do so without questioning. While other cognitive processes such as selective attention are also enhanced through the play song, the cultural significance of obedience comes out strongly. Unfortunately, in the wake of human rights mostly imported from the Western countries and imposed on children in modern schools, children no longer subscribe to indigenous values because such values are perceived to be oppressive. However, this play song does not in any way show any violation of the children rights. In the play song, children’s obedience is rewarded. Additionally, a significant point in relation to the value of cattle keeping among the Lozi people emerges even in this popular play song although this play song refers to the cultural value of respect and obedience.

4.3.1.2.2. Indigenous play song associated with caring attitudes for others

The lyrics of the play song described below helps to demonstrate how the process of strengthening social relationships in the Lozi society in terms of developing caring attitudes for others and seeking their wellbeing was valued:

- ***Haneni kula***

This is a dance song and is an indirect rebuke to the people who have attitudes of negligence towards their own fellow family members. The lyrics of the song depict a suffering person in his or her last moments of life when family members bring all sorts of things which cannot help the patient any more. The message in the song is one of providing support to family members while they are still living instead of lavishing such gifts when they are dead and cannot see the gifts. It was echoed by the discussants that this was common especially for those that were affluent to

⁵⁶ *Ngombe* is a Siluyana general name for cow or ox.

buy expensive coffins and blankets for their beloved dead ones yet when those deceased family members were still alive, they were not helped in any way⁵⁷. The discussants revealed that virtues of being socially responsible were crumbling due to modern practices that were emphasised by Western education systems promoting nuclear family systems.

| Lozi lyrics | English translation |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Caller: <i>Haneni kula</i>, (times 2) Respondents: <i>Hakuna yanani shwela makeke</i> (times 2) All: <i>Habani bona na shwa, kona ba kala kulila</i> (times 2)</p> <p>2. Caller: <i>Chuki magelo</i>, (times 2) Resp: <i>Chukii, nahanile Chuki</i>, (times 2) All: <i>Nahanile Chuki, nahanile Chuki</i>,</p> <p>3. Caller: <i>Saba likishi</i>, (times 2) Resp: <i>Saba, saba likishi la mukanda</i>, (times 2) All: <i>Saba likishi la mukanda, lika ku limba wa shwa</i>, (times 2)</p> | <p>When I was sick, No one felt pity on me</p> <p>When they saw me dying, that's when they started crying</p> <p>Chuki, girls, Chukii, Chuki had refused, Chuki had refused, Chuki had refused</p> <p>Flee from the mask, Flee, flee from the mask from the mukanda Flee from the mask from the mukanda, when it pins you down, you will surely die</p> |

In my analysis of this song, three themes emerged. In the first stanza, the theme is a rebuke by the dying person to the negligent family members who only appear when he or she is almost dying. Their gifts are useless at such a time. The second theme refers to the vulnerability of the girl child when it comes to sexual matters. Although girls sometimes refuse any forms of inducements, their refusals in such matters are often not heeded. The third stanza suggests the circumstances that led to the victim's fate emanating from the vulnerability noted in stanza two. The metaphor of fleeing from a mask coming from a circumcision camp (*mukanda*) clearly points to what later happened to Chuki (name of the patient in the song) as could be analyzed from the phrase 'when it pins you down,' the result would be death. The patient is a victim of

⁵⁷ Focus Group Discussion in Kalabo

rape resulting in her being infected with the deadly HIV/AIDS virus. The informants revealed to me that this was a popular song among school children in the 1980s when cases of HIV/AIDS were first reported in Zambia⁵⁸. The song has since been digitalized and is accessible at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PPxxU73rFSw>.

4.3.1.2.3. Indigenous play songs associated with sharing attitudes with others

Only one selected play song has been given as an example as shown below:

- **The *Nakutambekela* game song**

This is an action performing game accompanied by a song which is sung to the rhythmic movement of the stone or any other movable object being passed or relayed from one participant to the other. The play song requires a sizeable number of 7 to 10 participants for it to be interesting.

Participants play this game in an open air area for more space while kneeling down in a bended or squatting posture in a closed ring formation. The participants play the game in a synchronised manner of relaying the stone from one participant to the other. As the tempo of the song increases, some participants end up failing to relay the stones. When the game is halted, those with heaps of piled stones in front of them are disqualified and the game begins all over again.



Fig.9: Children performing the *Nakutambekela* play game song.

The song lyrics are performed to the rhythmic movement of the stone or objects being passed on.

⁵⁸ Despite being readily available, teachers admitted having never used this powerful resource song during their lessons on HIV and AIDS. This is another clear example of how rich cultural resources such as songs and dances are neglected in the school curriculum.

| Lozi lyrics | English translation |
|---|--|
| <p><i>Nakutambekela sona sika se</i> <i>Usike wa fosa ueze sina na</i> (Repeated several times)</p> | <p>I am passing along this thing [stone] Do not make a mistake, do as I have done</p> |

- **Cultural implications of the play game**

While this game has important cognitive benefits such as concentration and a coordinated process between the brain, the eyes and hands to ensure that the receipt of the object and the relaying of the object are not disturbed or not halted (Mukela, 2013), it is also underpinned by important sociocultural values as elicited from the participants’ views⁵⁹:

“It teaches a child to pass on the good and learn to share. The concept behind the game is that we should not be rigid.”

“I used this game before at one time in my PE lesson but I did not see this deep cultural meaning of sharing and not being rigid as I have understood it from this panel discussion.”

“Among the Lozi people training of being generous starts early in infancy. A child is given something by the mother or care giver after which she would ask the child to give back the item again to the giver, and this process can be done in a play form with the child.”

It is clear that the cultural processes of sharing and value of generosity in society underpin this play game. Although the children play this game, they only come to understand its cultural significance when they grow up and become active members in the affairs of their own communities and practice the virtue of sharing.

The *Nakutambekela* play song was also found to be reminiscent of the highly coordinated process prevailing in the Barotse Royal Establishment (BRE) and demonstrated the social function of how information was shared and relayed from the king to the subjects without any distortion of the information. Mukela (2013) observed that the game song closely resembled the

⁵⁹ Focus Group Discussions in Kaoma.

way the Lozi establishment system was arranged. Information from the king was relayed to the subjects without incurring any distortions in the process. People that relayed the information did the whole process in a coordinated way. Coordination was also demonstrated in the way the royal paddlers during the *kuomboka* ceremony.⁶⁰ During this ceremony, the paddlers have a coordinated way of paddling without hitting on the royal barge. If a paddler failed to coordinate and hit on the barge, he would be thrown out of the barge into the water. Thus, the game song had some social cultural significance on how one should conduct himself/ herself in traditional activities.

4.4. Aquatic indigenous play games

Aquatic games (*lipapali za mwa mezi*) among the indigenous Lozi people were many because of the importance of water in the ecosystem of the Buluzi plains. As a result of this, the Lozi people have a strong affinity to water and metaphorically called themselves as *mambumbwe a Lyambai*,⁶¹ in reference to a resilient type of water plant that grows in the plains especially on the river banks and was never found in the forests. Mupatu (1959) makes this observation regarding Lozi affinity to water, “*Aluyana ku bona mezi ki papali*” (p.37)), for the Aluyana [Lozi], water is play game (Translated by Mukela). Nature provides strong lessons for the Lozi people. Games and play songs documented in this section were also found to be closely connected with children’s acquisition of traditional environmental knowledge (TEK) as a cultural resource for survival in the local ecological context. Such indigenous play games and play songs were primarily found to be inclined to enhancing survival skill values among children as a form of indigenous knowledge development.

- **Swimming**

As a game, swimming, also locally known as *kutapa silozi* involves participants reaching designated points in the river to determine the champion. Sometimes, this would involve crossing the river especially in rivers that were not infested with crocodiles. Because of the value attached to this skill, some of my informants told me that in the past, young children learning how to swim were usually told to swallow some tiny live fishes, known locally as *tumbala* or

⁶⁰ *Kuomboka* ceremony is an annual traditional ceremony of the Lozi people when they move from the flood plain to the higher land. The ceremony takes place in March or April and attracts thousands of spectators from within and outside Zambia.

⁶¹ These plants are only found in the plain. As a metaphor of the Lozi affinity to water, it simply means that a true Lozi is inseparable to the river.

tushiba, also known as *tuyowabelu*⁶² for one to quickly assimilate the art of ‘*kutapa silozi*’ (swimming). This was a childhood ritual in play form that was still common for both boys and girls to learn the art of swimming. Findings obtained from the interviews with the children revealed the deep significance of swimming among the Lozi people:

“If the canoe you are using to cross the river capsizes, you can safely swim to the shore”

“You can swim to the shore but when you realise that some of your friends cannot swim, you can also help them to swim to reach the shore.”⁶³

Different swimming styles were explored and included the following:

- **Swimming while standing (*Kucinka*)**

In this type of swimming style, the swimmer only uses his/her legs without making any noise. The swimmer appears as if he/she is just standing in water yet such a person is swimming. A swimmer using *Kucinka*, can easily shout for help while in water to call for help from those nearby if it happens that his boat capsized when trying to cross the river.

- **Swimming using both legs and hands (Front crawl)**

This type of swimming style involves the use of both one’s hands and legs while lying on one’s belly. It is a faster means of swimming. It is the commonest type of swimming style. However, a swimmer easily gets tired since he/she is using both legs and hands to swim.

- ***Ngalamina* (Back crawl)**

Ngalamina or swimming while lying on one’s back and looking upwards mostly involves the use of the swimmer’s legs. The swimmer gets much rest while using this type of swimming style. The only disadvantage is that a swimmer can sometimes miss the direction where he/she is headed to.

The study found that most modern swimming techniques and styles that feature prominently in the school curriculum were not compatible with the indigenous styles. For instance, most

⁶² Very tiny small fish usually seen on the surface of water. (*Tuyowabelu* siis a Luyana term that simply means to swim on the surface).

⁶³ Interview with some school children in Kalabo district.

children⁶⁴ who were asked if they found butterfly and dolphin swimming styles to be applicable to their local environments observed that in fast flowing currents of the Zambezi River, using the front and back crawls traditional methods were easier for one to use when attempting to swim across the river than some of those swimming styles they were taught at school. Modern swimming styles were best suited for swimming pools. The implications were that what schools were stressing through modern games were at variance with those that were useful for survival purposes in local communities like those of the Lozi people. Children drew more meaning from their own types of swimming styles.

- **Circular openings on floating grass (*libulo*)**

This game requires the players to make large circular openings in the floating grass (*matindi*), a type of grass that usually covers some parts of the rivers in most parts of Western Province. The description given by my informants helps to put the game into perspective:

*“The libulo was an opening made by players in the floating grass known as matindi. It is on this type of grass that an opening (libulo) was made and a player was required to dive into it and swim on the surface of the river or stream to the other end where there was another opening and was expected to come out from there. Sometimes accidents happened resulting in the loss of lives as some unfortunate players would miss the other end and got choked and drowned because of the strength of the matindi grass. This game helped us to make correct estimations when playing it despite the dangers involved.”*⁶⁵

The cultural value of this game was in its demand for the player to be brave, and to make correct estimations and judgements when attempting to escape from some danger. Escaping any dangers from the rivers especially in cases where canoes were attacked by hippos depended on an individual’s ability to get to the bottom of the river and escape to safety.⁶⁶The essence and value of this indigenous game seem to have a focus on training children to be brave and to venture into taking risks as part of life. Only the brave ones liked this game because of the associated risks.

⁶⁴ Interviews with school children in Senanga and Sioma districts.

⁶⁵ Interview with an expert music teacher in Kalabo district.

⁶⁶ During data collection in Sioma, I was informed of how one 19 year old boy was killed by a vicious hippo while his friend who was in the same canoe escaped by getting to the bottom of the river and swam to safety.

- **Paddling (*kufuluha*)**

Like swimming, this was reported to be more of a survival skill than just a mere game. Both boys and girls were taught paddling by those skilled in the art. Paddling became a game for children when they competed among themselves especially when they went fishing or were crossing their cattle to the other side of the river. In adult life, the skill was also reported to be a necessary requirement for paddling in the royal barge during the annual celebrations of the *kuomboka* traditional ceremony. In recent years, the Barotse Royal Establishment has added paddling contests known as regatta during the annual *kuomboka* ceremony as a means of promoting the cultural value of paddling among both youths and adults.

The Lozi people's conceptualisation of paddling was that it was the power-house of most of the economic activities of the indigenous people. Without a canoe and paddle, one was considered poor in the Lozi view. A canoe and paddle were likened to a camel in the desert.⁶⁷ The whole process of the *kuomboka* ceremony is dominated by exhibitions of paddling skills, and the royal paddlers metaphorically refer to this occasion as '*kutapisa namani ye tuna*' (to 'bath' the big calf).⁶⁸ Without paddling, the *kuomboka* ceremony itself would lose its aesthetic and cultural significance of '*kutapisa namani ye tuna*' earlier cited. All the indigenous activities like fishing and movement of people or cattle in water hinge on the paddle and canoe.

- ***Ku nwela mufumbo* (Suspended breath taking under water)**

Children competed amongst themselves by going down to the bottom of the river or lake for some time to find out who would take long without coming out from the water. Sometimes participants counted to determine the person having the highest score. The game trained Lozi children to control their breathing processes when attempting to escape danger in water.

- ***Mucupo***

This game was usually meant to test the breath control and strength of participants especially adolescents as well as helping the cowards and amateur swimmers to quickly learn the art of swimming and breath control in water. Wrestling in water was meant to train Lozi children to

⁶⁷ Field interviews in Kalabo district on 17/07/17

⁶⁸ The Lozi King (*Litunga*) is fondly known by many metaphorical praise names, one of which is a 'big calf' (*namani ye tuna*), implying the admiration and love that the people have for their King

fight for their lives in an event they were attacked especially by crocodiles. By learning how to control their breath under water as the play game demanded, children learnt how to escape from threatening situations by not swimming on the water surface but by going to the bottom of the river or lake and thus escape to safety.

- ***Butongwe* (Touch game)**

This is a touching/chasing game done in some deep water. Both boys and girls play separately. The one assigned to chase others is expected to touch any other participant for him/her to be cleared of the ‘bad luck’ associated with the game. During the chase, those being chased challenge their opponents by dodging, going down to the bottom of the river/lake, or by swimming very fast. The game enhanced the swimming skills that players had acquired. Sometimes the play activity could be accompanied by a mockery and teasing song for one who failed to catch others as shown below:

| Lozi lyrics | English translation |
|--|---|
| Caller: <i>Butongwe...</i> Respondents: <i>Bu ka ku bolela</i> (This would be repeated several times as desired) | Butongwe (used here to mean bad omen) It will stick over you |

- ***Muipato* (Hide and seek).**

This game was like *butongwe* except that in this game, players were mostly expected to hide themselves in water, usually where it was deep (*mandunga*) to avoid being easily spotted by the one who has been tasked to look for the others. Good swimmers usually go down to the bottom of the river to escape being caught. Both *butongwe* and *muipato* are indigenous games that are played during children’s free times at the lakes, streams, or rivers.

However, in modern times, some of the indigenous aquatic games perceived to be fraught with danger such as *libulo* and *mucupo* discussed earlier in this section are discouraged in the interest of children’s safety. On the other hand, other games such as paddling have been popularised and have become part of the annual traditional ceremony of *kuomboka*. For instance, regatta has

become a spectacular event on the eve of the *kuomboka* ceremony. Through this annual play activity, the Lozi people show cases their paddling skills as masters of the water.

4.4.1. Aquatic indigenous play songs (*lipina za lipapali za mwa mezi*)

These are indigenous musical play songs that sometimes accompany aquatic indigenous play games described above. The lyrics of the songs have been analysed to explore the deeper cultural themes that are attached to their performance. The Lozi people consider the annual floods brought by the Zambezi River as *patelo* or playing ground. The abundance of water in the plain provides the Lozi people with an affordance for many activities, hence the metaphor of *patelo*.

- *Musali kuyuba, muuna u itulezi*

The lyrics of this song were meant to ridicule a man who failed to paddle and stayed lazily in a canoe that was leaking and failed to scoop the water that was getting into the canoe. The wife was busy paddling while at the same time she scooped the water out of the canoe. Among the Lozi people, both men and women were expected to paddle. In this play song, children form a ring in water while they beat their palms on water to the rhythm of the song. On the chorus, they splash water on their bodies imitating a local known bird.

| Lozi lyrics | English translation |
|---|--|
| Caller: <i>Musali kuyuba muuna wi itulezi</i> (repeated twice) | A woman is busy scooping water out, the man is seated idle |
| Respondents: <i>We yaya kanyange kambuwa</i> (repeated twice) | (No known meaning for these words) |
| Chorus | Chorus |
| Caller: <i>Kupuu</i> (repeated as would be desired) | (These words are onomatopoeic) |
| Resp.: <i>Kanyange kambuwa</i> | (No known equivalent words) |

The song lyrics can sometimes be in the opposite in which case a woman may be ridiculed for her laziness during the paddling process.

- *Mezi, mezi, mulena'ka*

This play song is mostly played when the children have finished swimming (see Mukela, 2013 for details of this play song). According to the informants, although swimming can be done at any time, children normally prefer to swim in groups in the afternoons when they have finished their home assigned chores. Again, as noted earlier, children's activities among the Lozi people tended to foster group performance and participation as opposed to individual activities that modern school activities tend to promote. Participation of the play song involves children forming a ring or circle in the water, and following a synchronised rhythmic beating of their palms on water, the caller would begin as the rest respond. The transcription of the lyrics of the play song is provided below:

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Caller: <i>Mezi mezi mulena' ka kamuso na ta' mulena x2</i></p> | <p>Water, water my master, tomorrow I will come again</p> |
| <p>Respondents: <i>Mezi mezi mulena' ka kamuso na ta' mulena x2</i></p> | <p>Water, water my master, tomorrow I will come again</p> |
| <p>Caller: <i>Epu</i></p> | <p>equivalent to 'oh yes'</p> |
| <p>Respondents: <i>Kamundingili- ndingili</i></p> | <p>imitating the sound of a drum being beaten</p> |
| <p>Caller: <i>Epu</i></p> | <p>imitating the sound of a drum being beaten</p> |
| <p>Respondents: <i>Kamutekula mema</i></p> | <p>As we draw the water</p> |

- *Kwena ya mo, haina meeno*

This is a mockery song sometimes sung to an individual who does not manage to catch others in a touching or chasing game played in water. Because of his/her failure to succeed in performing the assigned duty, such a player is likened to a toothless crocodile that cannot catch anything. As children sing this song, they splash water to the person being mocked while he/she relentlessly tries to catch a victim. The implication of this aquatic play song is that the one assigned to catch other players has to be serious without showing favour to other players. Children are expected to be serious in the tasks they are assigned to do.

| Lozi | English translation |
|--|--|
| Caller: <i>Kwena ya moo</i> Group: <i>Haina meno</i> <i>(Repeated as may be desired)</i> | The crocodile that lives here It has no teeth |

A similar version of the play from the Mashi⁶⁹ speaking people was presented to me and has been transcribed below.

- ***Ngandu, ngandu***

In this song, children pretend to call the crocodile, and when the person pretending to be the crocodile comes, all the children run away by getting out of the water to avoid being caught. Boys and girls perform the play game separately. Below is the transcription of the song lyrics:

| Lozi lyrics | English translation |
|--|--|
| Caller: <i>Ngandu, ngandu no shimbe</i> | <i>Crocodile, crocodile come and get..</i> |
| Respondents: <i>Yowe wa shimba</i> | <i>You come and get</i> |
| Caller: <i>No shimbe</i> | <i>Come and get</i> |
| Respondents: <i>Yowe wa shimba</i> | <i>You come and get</i> |
| Chorus | <i>Chorus</i> |
| Caller: <i>No shimbe...</i> | <i>Come and get</i> |
| Respondents: <i>Yowe wa shimba di kola</i> | <i>Come and get one whom you like</i> |

⁶⁹ The Mashi speaking people are one of the indigenous Aluyana ethnic groups that were not influenced by the Kololo language.

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

In the case of this Mashi play game song, the children learnt ways of escaping from dangerous situations. The Kwando River where the Mashi people live was reported to be highly infested with crocodiles. This was one survival play game for them.

4.4.2. The cultural significance of aquatic indigenous play games and songs among the Lozi people.

Findings obtained from the study on the cultural significance of water and floods revealed the deep attachments the Lozi people had developed over the years of their existence in the flood plain. A year when no floods were experienced was referred to as ‘*sendabanji*’ meaning walking on the ground⁷⁰. *Sendabanji* appears to be an indirect feeling of suffering in terms of the non-availability of fish and easy transport means. All these revealed how the cognitive processes of the people had been influenced by the water phenomena.

Table 6 below has been constructed based on Namafe’s (2004) conceptualisation of Lozi months to the water phenomena:

| Month | Lozi name | Meaning | Main activity |
|-----------------|------------------------------|--|--|
| January | <i>Sope</i> | Flood is coming | This is the month of much new food of many kinds. The main work is gardening and weeding |
| February | <i>Yowa</i> | The flood comes * <i>Yowa</i> meaning to bath | Game and birds are enclosed on higher land and gardening work involves harvesting |
| March- April | <i>Liatamanyi- Lungu</i> | Full flood. * <i>Liatamanyi (Liatameyi)</i> means plenty of water that spreads all over. * <i>Lungu</i> means flood water remains stable or stagnant or <i>kuungumana</i> | This is the time when wedge –traps and other fishing methods are used. *The king leaves the plain in an elaborate ceremony known as <i>kuomboka</i> |
| May | <i>Kandao</i> | Flood turns and begins to fall | This is the time of weaving con-fishing traps. Also fish spears and scoop-baskets are used in public waters. |
| June | <i>Mbuwana</i> | Food has fallen | The king makes his ceremonial voyage to his plain capital with his people. A communal bird hunt and reed cutting occur during this month. Margin gardening also begin at this time |

⁷⁰ This is an indirect expression of discomfort the Lozi experience during dry spells when they are compelled to walk on the ground for longer distances and hours unlike they do during the floods.

| | | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|---|--|
| July | <i>Sikulu</i> | The plain begins to dry and water is confined | Fishing, bush gardening and trading in wild fruits occur |
| August-September | <i>Muyana-Muimunene</i> | The plain is dry and the hot months set in. | The centre of high fish surplus becomes concentrated in the mid-plain. |
| October-November | <i>Yenda-Njimwana</i> | The rains begin | These months are characterized by the killing of fish in shallows of pans as well as net-fishing and fruit supplies. Garden planting also takes place this time. |
| December | <i>Ng'ulule</i> | The rains set in and the rivers begin to rise in order to start flooding. | Gardening involves planting weeding and guarding crops from birds |

Table 4 showing different indigenous activities of each Lozi month (cf Ng'asike, 2014),table 3.1)

According to Namafe (2004), the 'garment' metaphor of flooding provides various ecological benefits and arguments. For instance, the Lozi people themselves see more benefits with flooding phenomenon while others especially in government circles see inherent dangers.⁷¹ The table above then helps to contextualise the various indigenous aquatic play games and songs and their cultural relevance to the Lozi children. Indigenous aquatic games such as swimming and paddling among the Lozi people were considered as cultural requirements because of the cultural value for survival attached to them.

Swimming (*kutapa silozi*)⁷² and paddling (*kufuluha*) were not only games but survival skills that one needed to acquire in this annually flood prone province. A Lozi child who mastered these skills was highly esteemed among his/her peers and adults. These skills are therefore very much emphasised by parents and adults to children who live and grow up in the plains as well as those who live at the forest margins.

The cultural significance of water is deeply rooted in the minds of the Lozi people and emphasised by the metaphor of '*mambumbwe a Lyambai*'⁷³ or floating matted plants. In viewing themselves in the metaphor of *mambumbwe a Lyambai*, the Lozi people attested to the affinity that they have for water to the extent that many attempts by government to persuade them to

⁷¹ The recent installations of flood sirens in Mbeta Island in the Zambezi River and Kasaya village in 2017 are examples of arguments against floods. The author's personal experiences and observations with the people of Mbeta Island revealed that floods were not feared but welcome phenomenon.

⁷²Lozi people especially those living in the Bulozo plain tend to think they are masters in swimming because of the abundance of rivers, hence their reference to swimming skills as *kutapa silozi* (lit. to swim like a Lozi). *Kutapa* simply means swimming.

Note: When the *kuomboka* ceremony takes place, the focus is on the Lozi king himself who is being taken to safety and the term *kutapisa namani* (see footnote 10 above) is metaphorically applied in reference to the care that skilled herd boys provide to calves in the process of crossing the river.

⁷³ *Mambumbwe* are flood resistant shrubs that grow on the banks of lakes and rivers. The metaphor of *mambumbwe* evokes the affinity Lozi people derive in living in the plain close to rivers and lakes.

relocate permanently to the forest margins have failed in the recent past because of their cultural orientation.⁷⁴ Floods are not a feared phenomenon among the Lozi but are referred to by different metaphors to show their value to the people. For instance, this study found that floods were referred to as ‘*saapalo*’ or ‘garment’ to be worn; as ‘*palisa*’ or ‘flower’ to be admired and appreciated, and as ‘*patelo*’ or playing ground where different cultural games could be played. In the words of a famous Lozi poet, this is noted in the poem ‘*Muunda mwa Bulozi* (Floods in Bulozi):

| Lozi (abridged form) | English |
|---|--|
| <p><i>Muunda kiwa luna,</i> <i>Wona mezi a ma –mezi kasibili,</i> <i>Muunda haluusabi.</i> <i>Muunda ki patelo ya mwanaa Mulozi.</i> <i>Hautile lulukisa Nalikwanda.</i> <i>Ki nako yetabisa mwa Bulozi.</i></p> | <p>Floods belong to us, -We mean the waters themselves it self We do not fear the floods Floods are a playing field for a Lozi child When the floods have come, we prepare the Nalikwanda It is an exciting time in Bulozi</p> |

(Sibetta, 1971, p.5. Translated by Mukela).

In my analysis on the significance of water as an ecological affordance for most of the cultural practices of the Lozi people, I found the play song ‘*mezi, mezi mulena’ka kamuso na ta mulena*’ to be all embracing and pregnant with meaning and cultural implications on the significance of water among the Lozi people based on the various periods of the Lozi annual calendar. In this section, I have also shown that the cultural conceptualisation of the significance of water among the Lozi people is so deeply rooted that children demonstrate it by a range of games and play songs. The metaphor of *mambumbwe a Lyambai* strongly shows the cultural orientation of the Lozi people to floods and their ecological setting as an affordance for survival.

⁷⁴ Personal interview with the village headman of Mbeta Island in the Zambezi River during the commissioning of a flood warning siren by the Vice President of Zambia in May, 2018.

Despite the existence of a variety of indigenous aquatic play games among the Lozi children, this study did not come across any activities in schools where children's abilities in such activities were strengthened or developed. Although Lozi children are excellent swimmers, divers, and paddlers, aquatic activities tailored to the development of children's skills were lacking in schools and the whole province. The province has no swimming pools for the advancement of such skills among children. The school curriculum books in subjects like Physical Education (PE) have topics related to swimming but the content of such activities were found to be unrelated and created mismatches to the indigenous activities of play known to children. For instance, the books have swimming styles that were not known to children. In the Lesson observations undertaken, when children were asked whether they knew such styles, children mentioned the indigenous '*kutapa silozi*' only. The implication of this is that there were very rare chances of children ever benefitting from such teaching materials.

4.5. Indigenous musical play games underpinned by value for hard work

Only one game and three songs have been provided as cases in point.

- ***Ñela* (Guessing game)**

This is an indigenous guessing play game and can be played by two players or more in a group and is played by children of both sexes. The game involves hiding of an item, for instance a maize grain or a small stone (a pebble) in the clasped hands while other players are expected to guess where the item is. Participants in *ñela* first begin by dividing themselves into two groups and subsequently choose their leaders.⁷⁵ Once the leaders had been chosen, each group tries to outwit the other by identifying the person having *ñela* hidden in his or her hands.

The cultural values that underpinned the play game were closely linked to the agricultural activities. For instance, after gaining some points the winning groups were often heard saying these words:

“Now we are preparing our fields of maize.”

⁷⁵ Field observations in one evening setting in Nalolo district on 14/07/17

*“We are now in the second phase of ploughing the fields with our oxen and are planting the maize. We are now weeding the fields or we are scaring the birds and monkeys away”*⁷⁶

This is what one of my informants noted,⁷⁷

“If you get a second or third point, you state those familiar agricultural activities common to your community. But if you miss a point, the other group then gains a point and is expected to follow the processes involved in the farming season. Children in most cases accompanied their parents during the actual daily performance of such agricultural farming activities in their local communities.”

An analysis of this indigenous play game reveals that the game is underpinned by local agricultural values. The game helped children to gain knowledge in the agricultural calendar and related activities of their communities as well as the roles they were expected to perform in such community activities. For instance, they learnt that it was their duty to scare away birds and animals such as monkeys from the maize or millet fields. These activities were performed by children as work play.

Indigenous agricultural activities are closely connected with the ability to engage in hard work such as cutting down trees and tilling the land. Hard work among the Lozi people was found to be one element that was emphasised in many sociocultural processes that included proverbs, various idiomatic expressions, stories and songs. For instance the proverb ‘*mwanuke ufune ilama isiyala bo ni ya mabila*’ (child, learn to work, for what remains of your body [when] you die is food for maggots), and the idiomatic expression ‘*u kaca masipa ali taka za hao*’ (lit. you will eat the ‘faeces’ of your age mates) were meant to discourage children from being lazy. Indigenous play songs underpinned by hard work as their major theme are presented below:

- ***Tandabale (Lazy one with outstretched legs)***

This is a play song performed by children mostly in the evenings after all the evening chores are completed. Performance of this play song involves children sitting down in a circular formation while stretching their legs. One child at a time is tickled and massaged on the knees by another

⁷⁶ Field observations in Sioma at Mwanambao School

⁷⁷ Interview with Mr. Mutelo Kandela, a community expert from Shangombo district. The Lozi agricultural calendar usually begins in August/September with the clearing of fields or cutting down of tress.

participant in an attempt to make them laugh. A participant who laughs due to the sensation that results from the tickling and massaging process is eliminated from the play. The massaging is symbolic of the entertainment provided by loafers, and laughing means one complies with what the loafer wants to achieve. Those who remain strong without laughing constitute the group of the hard workers and therefore remain in the group. On the other hand, those who laugh are excluded and are the idlers depicted by the indigenous play game. In common adult conversations, *tandabale* is used to refer to loafers who have a tendency of wasting their time doing nothing when others are busy with work.

| Lozi lyrics | English translation |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Caller: <i>Tandabalee...</i> | Sitting idle with outstretched legs |
| Respondents: <i>Wawaa</i> | Yes, yes |
| Caller: <i>Tandabale...</i> | Sitting idle with outstretched legs |
| Respondents: <i>Iwawaa</i> | Yes, yes |
| Refrain | |
| <i>Punge,punge kamaale</i> | (These are meaningless syllables) |
| <i>Pule, pule ma ipute</i> | |

When analysed on the basis of the Lozi proverb cited earlier, the play game instilled virtues of hard work among children in harmony with the Lozi saying ‘*Yasa sebezi a swaneli kuca*’ he who does not work should not eat. Children played and worked at the same time, and the line between play and work was a very thin one.

- ***Mbangumbangulenu***

This is a Luvale play song that recounts how a young lazy lady is taken back to her parents after the collapse of her marriage. The young lady was not properly brought up in terms of imbibing the cultural values of hard work and therefore she could not be accepted by the other family. All her weaknesses are disclosed through the lyrics of this Luvale game song.

| Luvale lyrics | English translation |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Call: <i>Mbangumbangulenu</i> (times 2) | (These are meaningless play words) |
| Response: <i>Mbangulasesa</i> (times 2) | |
| Call: <i>Kutemba tunanehe</i> (times 2) | We have brought back Kutemba |
| Response: <i>Mbangulasesa</i> (times 2) | |
| Call: <i>Meya kumuswicilee</i> | We have to draw water for her |
| Response: <i>Mbangulasesa</i> | |
| Call: <i>Zhikunyi kumucabilee</i> | We have to fetch firewood for her |
| Response: <i>Mbangulasesa</i> | |
| Call: <i>Malonga kumucoselee</i> | She cannot even wash the plates |
| Response: <i>Mbangulasesa</i> | |

When this play is analysed, it provides timely advice to the players on the value of hard work and its social significance in society. Laziness is not encouraged among community members. The laziness of *Chilombo* and any other name of a girl that the players choose is castigated and ridiculed through the song. Early child training in work related activities is emphasised for children to contribute meaningfully to society when they grow up.

Most of the indigenous subsistence agricultural activities of the Lozi people involve the use oxen. Oxen that exhibit strength in such activities are a source of pride and satisfaction and often orally praised (*kulokiwa*) or praised through songs (*kuopeliwa*). The song below is one such praise forms. Children looking after cattle sometimes imitate their parents by singing the same song.

- ***Liombolile komu yaka***

| Lozi lyrics | English translation |
|---|---|
| Caller: <i>Komu yaka, liombolile, komu yaka</i> (repeated twice) | (My animal, <i>liombolile</i> the calm one, (The calm one, |
| Respondent: <i>Liombolile</i> | (My animal |
| Chorus | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Caller: <i>Komu yaka...</i> | (My animal, |
| Respondent: <i>Liombolile, komu yaka, liombolile (repeated as desired)</i> | The calm one, my animal, the calm one. |

Cattle keeping have numerous benefits for the Lozi people. Cattle dung provides manure for the Lozi gardens and fire for cooking. Cattle hide is an indigenous means of making strings for building houses; it is used for making drums, and making stools for sitting. In the past, cattle hides were used for making blankets. Cattle provide meat and milk to the owners; oxen are used for ploughing and for transport and other related work activities such as fetching firewood. Above all, cattle are used for ‘*lobola*’ or bride price. Lending cattle to less privileged members of the community known as *mafisa* is a common practice among the Lozi people. This is an application of the cultural value of being socially responsible.

4.6. General findings

This section provides the findings on some local indigenous practices related to music and dance that could be instrumental in the development of children’s acquisition of their cultural values and affective cognitive development.

4.6.1. Schools as centres of excellence for promoting cultural values

During the focus group discussions, some teachers explained how children were likely to acquire and appreciate the cultural values of the Lozi people. The teachers observed that cultural activities in the school if promoted were likely to be sources of knowledge for children. The teachers made the following observations,

“Other cultural activities that we sometimes teach include how the Lozi siyemboka dance is done. Here we mainly teach or highlight how an initiate comes out from the function. We do not get into the details of what happens during the whole period since this would be considered a

violation of our social and cultural norms. We only show how the Lozi girl comes out for public appearance.⁷⁸

During my field trip and recordings in Kaoma district, I came across a similar cultural demonstration promoting rites of passage through the annual *Kazanga*⁷⁹ ceremony of the Nkoya speaking people. Here, children were incorporated in adult activities of dancing and singing to appreciate the cultural values of agriculture. Although this was a mere coincidence, I observed how children became active participants in adult activities through dance and music from an early age.

Another cultural activity of significant value that teachers noted during focus group discussions in Kalabo was the *kuomboka* ceremony which is at the heart of all traditional ceremonies in Western Province:

*“Children in some schools from Mongu district usually showcase their skills by imitating the Nalikwanda royal barge. In this way they are able to preserve their cultural heritage. From a play game of imitating the royal barge, the next step is actual paddling in the Nalikwanda royal barge itself.”*⁸⁰



Fig. 10: Girls dancing during Kazanga⁸¹



Fig 11 Ngomalume⁸² dance during NASAAZ inter-school activities⁸³

Performed as they were sometimes during inter-school activities, such activities had the potential to foster the promotion and appreciation of the cultural values among children. The teachers observed that participation in traditional activities where dancing was done was good for the

⁷⁸ This was based on the focus group discussion in Kalabo district. The group comprised three females and two males. Explanations were provided by the females.

⁷⁹ Kazanga is an annual cultural activity celebrating new harvest. Different cultural activities are usually performed.

⁸⁰ Focus Group Discussions in Kalabo district.

⁸¹ Kazanga is an annual harvest ceremony of the Nkoya people of Kaoma in Western Province. While in Kaoma, I witnessed this ceremony whose focus is on agriculture.

⁸² Ngomalume simply means ‘men’s dance’ and is performed during the *kuomboka* ceremony

⁸³ NASAAZ stands for National Schools Arts Association of Zambia These are annual school competitions school competitions

children. They noted that dancing was a skill that many people tended to overlook. They made a very strong observation that not all the children were likely to get into formal employment, as such children who were good at dancing or playing musical instruments could make their living in such professions and trades. In this way, children could easily explore their talents for self-sustenance and service provision to the community where they lived.

Part B

Intellectual values of Lozi children's indigenous musical play games

This part presents the findings in relation to the second research objective of the study that was guided by the following research question:

- What are the perceived intellectual outcomes and socio-emotional processes involved in participating in the Lozi children's musical play games?

To achieve the intended objective, a rich and thick description and analysis of each selected play game with a focus on the rules underpinning such indigenous musical play games, and who plays the game, has been undertaken in this chapter. Additionally, the contexts in which each game was played will be presented to establish its cognitive and socio-emotional processes and educational implications. Addo (1997) avers that children's indigenous musical play games are underpinned by various intellectual processes that include observation, listening, spatial relationships, sequencing, and memorisation. She further notes that as children engage in indigenous musical play games they teach and learn from one another as well as thinking and expressing ideas while playing such games.

4.7. Types of children's indigenous musical play games and their classification.

The taxonomies of indigenous musical play games that underpin this chapter were drawn from Kakuwa (2005), Mtonga (2012) and the South African Children 2001/2002 model (Burnett & Hollander, 2004). As explained in chapter three, I found the classifications of Mtonga (2012) and Kakuwa (2005) from the Zambian perspective to complement that of the South African model in many respects. The classification adopted for this study includes:

4.7.1. Games of physical challenge

- ***Tau (Lion)***

This was one among the many indigenous play games involving strategic thinking among participants and was mostly played on the village play grounds (*patelo*) during moonlight times in the evenings when children have completed their chores. There were no major variations observed during this study when compared with the earlier findings on the same play game (See Mukela, 2013 for a version of another similar game known as *pisi*).

Participants in this game first chose a player who was expected to call others to his/her side. When such a player had been chosen, the players made two circles about 25-50 meters apart. The caller occupied one circle while the all the other players remained in the other circle. As the caller called the other players, they were expected to respond. When the caller reached the last part, then the other players on the other side attempted to escape by running to where the caller was while the caller also approaches them to make a catch. Below was the way the process of calling was conducted:

| Lozi version | English translation |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Caller: <i>Bana ba kee,</i> | My children |
| Respondents: <i>Shaa</i> | Yes |
| Caller: <i>Amutahe,</i> | Come |
| Respondents <i>Lwa saba</i> | We are afraid |
| Caller: <i>Mu saba ñi?</i> | What are you afraid of? |
| Respondents: <i>Lu saba tau</i> | We are afraid of the lion |
| Caller: <i>Tau i shwile maloba ni mabani</i> | The lion died some two days ago |

When the caller reached the last part, the children were expected to scatter in different directions while the person assigned to chase them targeted those he/she believed would not make it to the other circle. Usually, the weak ones were the targets so as to increase the number as well as

deliberately making the strong ones get tired before they were targeted. When a victim had been caught, he/she was touched on the head as a sign of being captured and automatically joined the other group responsible for pursuing those that had escaped in previous episodes.

- **Cognitive benefits of the game**

A careful analysis of this game revealed that it had the potential to enhance strategic thinking among the players. By targeting the weaker ones, the players enlarged their numbers. Players involved in chasing made careful assessments and took note of those who were not faster runners as their targets and this increased the chances of capturing more players. Usually, this was done by targeting and isolating the weaker runners from the other participants. This process involved intelligent calculations for one to achieve such goals in terms of estimations of the speed to be used to cover the required distance before the targeted individual reached the other circle. On the other hand, players who were chased developed dodging strategies of escaping from the captors by being alert. The game also had the potential to develop listening and speech skills among the players. There was more verbalising involved in playing this game between those who called and those who responded.

In terms of its socio-emotional benefits, the game had the potential to enhance team spirit and cooperation among players. Children learnt the strategies that animals such as lions employ when hunting: team work; and therefore those that escaped tended to remain close to the others to avoid being caught. Usually, those who were captured easily changed roles and began to do the chasing. This enhanced the Lozi proverb that says '*Kopano ki maata*' (There is power in unity). The game also promoted adherence to warnings. Emotionally, participants got positive feelings of satisfaction after escaping from their captors, while the group that was chasing developed positive feeling of success after capturing some players to their side.

- ***Mbambangulube* (Pig and piglets)**

Players in this game first began by choosing two strong leaders. These then decided using verbal promises on what items they would offer to entice some players to join their sides. The two leaders then faced each other and began to clap their raised hands while the other players made a single queue and passed under the raised hands of these leaders. The last person in the line was trapped and asked to choose from the items the leaders had to offer. This was done in whispers to

prevent others from hearing the items on offer. As participants moved in a single queue while passing under the raised hands of the chosen team leaders, the following song was sung:

| Lozi lyrics | English translation |
|--|--|
| Callers: <i>Mbambamba</i> ⁸⁴ <i>ngulube nabana bendi</i> <i>ngulube x2</i> | Pig, with its children |
| Group: <i>Mbambamba ngulube nabana bendi</i> <i>ngulube x2</i> | Pig, with its children |
| Callers: <i>Salamunima zangama yaye, zangama</i> | <i>Last person, be clever, dear, be clever</i> ⁸⁵ |

After the callers (usually the two leaders) had sung the last part, the last person in the line was trapped, the words ‘*kweche*’ (trapped) would be used. After every one had made a choice, a tug of war followed. Players who crossed the line separating the two groups automatically joined the stronger team.

- **Cognitive benefits of the play game**

The cognitive benefits underpinning this game include making intelligent strategic decision on how best to be winners in the tug of war. The game develops making intelligent decisions regarding the items offered by the team leaders, hence, the indigenous caution ‘*zangama, yaye, zangama*’ (be wise, dear, be wise). Wrong decisions lead to joining a group with few followers. The game also helps participants to develop numeracy skills by counting how many members leave or join the group during the tug of war process depending on the strength of the group. On a social level, the game encourages team work and cooperation among members when they engage in a tug of war between the two groups.

As a teaching resource, the game could be used in Civic Education to teach the value of freedom of expression and choices in democratic government systems. Players trapped by the two leaders in the game were offered some alternative items to choose from and were left to make their own

⁸⁴ *Mbambamba*- These are meaningless syllables

⁸⁵ This was a caution to implore the last person in the line to choose wisely when his /her time to be trapped comes.

individual free choices without being intimidated or forced to do so. After making a choice, an individual joined the group that was represented by a particular item on offer. Through this game, children can be taught to embrace the good tenets and principles of democracy that could be useful for them in adulthood. The game also teaches children how making intelligent decisions can be a challenge in life.

4.7.2. Games involving physical skills and strategy

- ***Waida* (Wide)**

This game was one of the most popular rope jumping contemporary play games especially among girls in both the rural and urban areas. The name seems to be a corrupted version of the English word ‘wide.’ The majority of the participants observed were mostly girls aged between 6 to 14 years. *Waida* was played using a rope provided for the play game. When all the participants had agreed, the next stage in the play game was to mention numbers from 0 to 12 depending on the number of participants present at the time. Participants then jumped in and out of the stretched string and avoided their legs touching the rope. Points were gained at every successful jump and the string was adjusted to a new height. Those whose legs touched the rope when playing were disqualified from participating in the games. Other skipping games similar to *waida* but played either as a group or individually were common during the rain seasons when certain plants were also readily available.

- **Cognitive benefits of the game**

The game involved a lot of strategic planning; making correct estimations of the height of the rope and distance where they are starting from to successfully jump the rope. Coordination and concentration on the part of the participants to jump in and out of the stretched rope was needed. The game could be used when teaching estimations in mathematics.

- **Ball throwing play games**

Two types of ball throwing play games were observed during the study. The first type involved a sizeable number of about 5 to 7 girls as participants. They divided themselves into two groups. The first group stood at the opposite ends of the big rectangular box while the other group got inside the rectangular box. Those inside the box were expected to fill some bottles with sand and

empty the bottles without being hit by the ball thrown by those from outside the box. If they successfully managed to do so, then they gained points. The group outside the box threw the ball aimed at participants inside the box. When all were eliminated, the other group got inside and the activity proceeded as explained earlier.

The second form involved players throwing the ball aimed at hitting the player inside the rectangular box. During the intervals when those from outside failed to catch the thrown ball and rushed to collect it, the player inside wrote the letters of her name on the ground and if she successfully completed writing her full name, she gained points. Sometimes players counted instead of writing down the letters of one's name.

- **Cognitive benefits of the play game**

The play game was potentially relevant for developing dodging skills as well as making correct estimations when throwing the ball at the intended object among players. The activity also had the potential to positively influence the literacy and numeracy abilities of children. In writing down their names on the ground, children developed their writing and reading skills in a playful manner. Counting out some numbers while dodging the ball was also potentially helpful in impacting positively on the numeracy skills of children especially those at preschool levels. Therefore, this game was found to be relevant for promoting the literacy and numeracy skills of children and was therefore a relevant educational play game.

4.7.3. Group interaction games

Listening and speaking games

- ***Sica nja* (Eater of dogs)**

This was a speaking and listening play game. In this game, participants usually played in pairs. One player volunteered to perform the action while the other player called out the types of all the relish that were common among the Lozi people. The rules of the game were such that the player responding only performed the required action of shaking the palm of his/her hand if the relish was edible. No action was expected to be performed if the relish mentioned was not eaten by the Lozi people. The rhythmic pattern of the chant as analysed was in quavers, that is, it had a stable running tempo:

| Lozi words (chants) | English translation |
|---|--|
| <i>Sica tapi, sica tapi, sica tapi, sica komu, sica nja, sica nja, Sica puti, sica puti, sica noha, etc</i> | Eater of fish, eater of fish, eater of fish eater of cattle, eater of a dog, eater of a dog, eater of an antelope, eater of an antelope, eater of a snake etc |

As an action performing game, this indigenous play game is similar to the Western game known as ‘Simon says’ because of the emphasis placed on listening.

- **Cognitive benefits of the game**

This activity had the potential to promote concentration and attention skills among players. It also had the potential to help the listening and speaking skills of participants and respond accordingly by reacting within the expected time frame.

- ***Boma , boma* (Mother, mother)**

This play song is played in a ring formation while children clasp their palms on their knee caps in a bending position. One player moves around the circle while singing the song and is joined by the others. On reaching the phrase ‘*mbatwalumuke*’, which is the last phrase in the song lyrics, he/she touches one player on the back thus telling such a player to stretch up and take up the play relay.

| Lozi lyrics | English translation |
|--|---|
| <i>Boma, boma, (times 2) Bahelahela libala bome, babata toho ya mutu boma, babata kuishalula boma, mbatwalumuke (The song is repeated over and over again)</i> | Mother, mother, She is roaming the plain looking for a human head, she wants to eat it; Touch, rise up |

- **Cognitive benefits of the play game**

The play song has the potential to improve the memory processes of children by way of remembering the complex sentence pattern of the song. Children develop their singing skills as well as remembering the words in the correct order to be in harmony with others during play. This game also has the potential for the promotion of phonological awareness which is a key mediating process in early literacy acquisition.

- ***Linyunywani ze nsu ni ze sweu* (Black and white birds).**

This play game involves children playing in two groups while one child acts as a referee. The groups look in opposite directions separated by a considerable distance of about two metres from each other. When the referee mentions '*linyunywani ze nsu,*' (black birds), the group bearing that colour tag is expected to run away while the white birds give a chase. Whoever is tapped on the head during the chase automatically joins the chasing group.

- **Cognitive benefits of the play game**

This play game has the potential to enhance children's listening and speaking skills, memory, concentration and alertness, especially for those in the preschool years. The play game '*linyunywani ze nsu ni ze sweu*' (black and white birds) is similar in approach to 'Simon says' which is a common Western game played in most schools observed in this study. Children have to pay attention before taking the course of action demanded by the game.

- ***Kulu puta tupa* (Tortoise twist the whip)**

Children can play this tongue twisting game in pairs. The first participant begins by saying the words '*kulu puta tupa tupa puta kulu* (tortoise, twist the whip, whip twist the tortoise).' This is expected to be done in a fast manner. When one misfires, another one begins the process until a winner is determined.

- **Cognitive benefits of the play game**

The game has the potential to develop children's speaking skills as well as the promotion of phonological awareness relevant for literacy acquisition.

- **Verbal games of aggression (*mashendo*)**

Children engaged in these verbal aggressive games to determine which one could outwit the other by providing funny representation of the other opponent. The whole purpose was to make the listeners laugh. Usually, these games involved the use of similes. A few cases in point observed during the study are presented below:

| Lozi form | English translation |
|---|--|
| Opponent A: <i>Toho ya hae inge lubaka</i> | His head is like a slap |
| Opponent B: <i>Mu mubone ni mautu a hae inge buta</i> | Look at him with legs like a bow |
| Opponent A: <i>Toho ya hae inge mufinyani</i> | His head is like an axe head |
| Opponent B: <i>Ngo ya hae inge silwana</i> | His nose is like a stone for making sniffing stuff |
| Opponent A: <i>Mu mubone ni meto a hae inge sifi</i> | His eyes are like an owl |
| Opponent B: <i>Mazebe a hae inge sipakulo</i> | His ears are like a traditional wooden spoon |

Mashendo, among the Lozi people, were mostly associated with cattle herd boys who were renowned for using them because of spending most of their time with cattle⁸⁶. They were experts at these verbal expressions. However, the study found that even some parents especially mothers sometimes engaged in such verbal expressions when scolding a naughty playful child.

- **Cognitive benefits of the play game**

The cognitive processes of these verbal games relied heavily on making similes as forms of comparisons. The game has the potential to encourage quick thinking among participants to answer back to an opponent. Mbikusita-Lewanika (1979) observes that *mashendo* encouraged on the spot thinking, making up words and using them in style. The game has the potential to develop the listening and speaking skills of children as well as developing their vocabulary and grammar. Additionally, it encourages participants to be creative thinkers in formulating funny representations of their opponents. Emotionally, the play game had the potential to help

⁸⁶ In the past before the introduction of many schools in Western Province, herdboys spent most of their time looking after cattle away from their villages. They stayed at the kraals (milaka) and learnt many things. Milaka was one form of an informal school for Lozi adolescent boys (Mbikusita-Lewanika, 1979; Mundumuko, 1990).

participants to exercise emotional regulation by avoiding being angry and annoyed. Among cattle herd boys, one who could not control his emotions during such verbal play activities was disciplined. Laughing created feelings of happiness just like it is in the present-day comedy shows.

4.7.4. Rhythmic singing games

The study found many of these games and only some selected ones have been described below.

- ***Sinali, sinali sitalima kwa mulao* (Buffalo, buffalo look behind)**

This is an action performing play song. The lyrics of this play song are in reference to the cautious nature a buffalo should have to avoid being isolated by lions in the forest. It should always look back (*mulao*). Because of its huge nature and strength, the buffalo is herein referred as *sinali* (a huge and strong one).

- **How the game is played**

All the participants kneel on the floor usually in a ring formation. At the start of the song, participants beat their palms on the ground to the rhythm of the song. When they reach the chorus, the participants raise their heads and move them to the right and left in a synchronised manner. Those that make mistakes in failing to face the correct direction are eliminated from the play song.

| Lozi lyrics | English translation |
|---|--|
| Caller: <i>Sinali, sinali, sitalima kwa mulao, sinali</i> | Buffalo, buffalo is looking behind It is looking behind |
| Respondents: <i>Sitalima kwa mulao</i> | Chorus |
| Chorus | Buffalo |
| Caller: <i>Sinali</i> | It is looking behind |
| Respondents: <i>Sitalima kwa mulao</i> | |
| (Repeated as may be desired) | |

- **Cognitive benefits of the play game**

This action play song has the potential to help develop the speaking, listening and singing skills of children. In a typical music lesson, this play song could be used to teach the durational values of some notes such as crotchets and minims effectively. As a teaching resource, it could also be used alongside the common English rhyme of ‘I want to cross the road.’

- ***Ndindo-ndindo***

This is an action game song played by both and girls.

- **How the game is played**

Participants in this game form a circle and bend as they clap their hands. As the game progresses, accompanied by a song, the first and third players in the circle are expected to raise their heads and look at each other while the second in between them remains bending waiting for his/her turn too. During this brief moment, the two players are not expected to clap to the rhythm but hold their hand and waist while singing ‘yes, I have seen you, yes I have seen you’ before resuming the clapping with the rest of the group. This process of raising the heads of the first and third player at a time in a coordinated form makes the game to be full of fun. A player who fails to meet this expectation is disqualified. The lyrics of the play song are in Mbunda language.

| Mbunda lyrics | English translation |
|---|---|
| Caller: <i>Ndindo</i> ⁸⁷ - <i>ndindo ee yaa</i> x2, Group: <i>Ee yaa</i> x2 Chorus Caller: <i>Ndindo</i> Group: <i>Ee njakumwene, ee njakumwene</i> | <i>Ndindo</i> , repeated here, is the name of a person ‘yes’ Yes, I have seen you Yes, I have seen you |

- **Cognitive benefits of the of the play game**

Participants in the play song were expected to coordinate their paired way of looking at each other while the song proceeded. Those who failed were eliminated hence it involved a lot of

⁸⁷ Ndindo is a Mbunda song, Ndindo here refers to the name of a person

concentration to avoid being eliminated. Children also developed their musical abilities. By singing while clapping, they learnt the note values of the play songs especially when pairs of players were expected to look at each other and then join the rest of the group members. In a music class, this could be used as a learning and teaching resource for teaching different note values, for instance crotchets and minims and their accompanying rests.

4.8. Games of imagination

- **Stories (*Matangu*)**

Story telling forms among the Lozi are of two types as observed by Gowlett (1971); those accompanied by songs and those without song accompaniment. In this section, the reader is presented with the cognitive values and educational implications that stories provided to children as revealed by the study findings. The art of storytelling was found to be one unique element that compelled both the children and adults to enjoy listening to indigenous stories. Singing constitutes an important element of engaging participants in the story sessions, and the role of music in enhancing communication helps listeners to be active participants. An example is provided below.

In a certain village, there once lived a man and his wife. One day, this man and his wife decided to go and visit his in-laws who lived on the other side of the great river. The journey was long and by the time they were approaching the great river, they were very tired and thirsty. While they were walking in the plain, the man spotted a big lily tuber locally known as likwangala⁸⁸. He quickly picked it and gave it to his wife so that she could peel it for him to eat. The wife peeled the big tuber and decided to eat it instead.

When they reached the big river at the ferrying point, the man asked his wife for the tuber so that he could now eat it:

“Where is the lily tuber (likwangala) that I gave you to peel?”

“I have eaten it,” she replied. “I was feeling very hungry,” she further explained.

⁸⁸ Plural form is *Makwangala*. They are common delicacy for plain dwellers.

When the man heard this, he became extremely upset and angry with his wife. He grabbed her by her throat, got his little axe (kabanga), and cut off her neck. He took the body and threw it in the river to float away. While all this was happening, a little bird was watching.

When he had crossed the big river, the little bird began to sing the following song:

| Luyana song | English translation |
|---|--|
| <i>Caller: Kwenda, kwenda,</i> | Walking, walking, |
| <i>All: Kwenda kwa balume</i> | Men's way of walking |
| <i>All: Aluyo fita fa maalo, balu lema kabanga,</i> | When we reached the confluence of the river, |
| | they used a small axe to cut us, |
| <i>Kwenda kwa balume</i> | Men's way of walking |

The man was furious; he picked some sticks and threw them at the little bird but the little bird flew away to the village.

When the man reached the village, he was given a warm and big reception. However, the in-laws wondered why their daughter had not accompanied her husband. "Maybe she is not feeling well," they reasoned. While all the excitement and preparations of food was going on, the little bird that had perched on the roof of one house began to sing its song. The whole village was attracted and began to pay attention to this Luyana song from the little bird. The in-laws thus learnt that their daughter had been killed by her husband on the way at the confluence of the big river. The whole village rose up and pounced on the man whom they also killed. Let this burn away, and let that one remain, concluded the story teller.⁸⁹

Lozi story tellers do not ask questions after a storytelling session. This is a traditional practice. It was also imprudent and impolite to ask questions when elders were talking.

- **Cognitive benefits of the of the play game**

The cognitive processes involved in the story above include logical analysis of cause and effect. The cause of death of the wife and its effect is easily noted as arising from the man's greed and

⁸⁹ Story told by a village expert from Kalabo district.

the effect of such an action was death. Storytelling also has the potential to improve the listening, speaking, and singing skills of children. Additionally, stories create high levels of anticipation and imagination as well as evoking strong emotional responses in analysing, appreciating or criticising characters. Through the lyrics of the song, the villagers learnt what had transpired and killed the man too. Songs were meant to communicate powerful messages.

4.9. Mental testing indigenous play games

4.9.1. Stone movement board games

Indigenous play games that have been documented based on the findings from this study included those that involved problem solving and strategising skills when playing them on a designated board or simply in some holes. Games that will be presented in this section involved participants moving or throwing and catching small stones/seeds as playing objects in designated holes or points on a designated board. Board games, as this study prefers to call them, were mostly found to be outdoor activities for children. Board games as defined by Gobet et al (2004), “are games with a fixed set of rules that limit the number of pieces on a board, the number of positions for these pieces, and the number of possible moves” (p.2). According to Gobet et al, these games have attracted the attention of psychologists studying “perception, memory, and thinking” (p.2). Typically, board games involved two players at a time although there were some exceptional cases where more than two players were involved. Below is a documentation and description of some common indigenous board games among the Lozi people. Their cognitive underpinnings and educational implications are analysed and discussed later. For purposes of this study, only four types have been given as examples.

- ***Mulabalaba wa kuca* (Board game involving capturing of tokens)**

This game involves two participants sitting on a flat surface area on the ground facing each other with a board in the middle. In this type of *mulabalaba*, seeds or tokens of an opponent are captured (*kuciwa*) when the seeds being moved end in an empty hole where the seeds of the opponent direct face the empty hole. Seeds or tokens are usually referred to as *bana* (children), or *likomu* (cattle). One player moves his/her ‘children’ [seeds] until all these ‘children’ will be eaten up by the other player. The objective of this type of indigenous game is to capture more tokens than the opponent. The captured tokens were systematically taken out of the holes and

heaped on the side of the captor. Informants' perceptions were that the game was good because it taught strategy and problem solving skills. Players were expected to plan and strategise on how best they could capture the 'children' (*bana*) of the other player. For instance, if one player has 4 seeds in his hands and 10 in one hole, then he adds the seeds to make 14 and easily reaches to the hole of his opponent and captures those 'children' or seeds or cattle (*likomu*) depending on the players' preferences. One is declared a winner when he/she has successfully managed to capture all the seeds from the opponent's side. This play game helps one to be very careful with any movements he or she wishes to make when playing it. Seeds (*likomu/bana*) captured are kept by the captor.

- ***Mulabalaba wa Simbukushu/Sikulupata***

Findings from this study revealed that this game was called by different names in some regions of Western Province. Among the *Mbukushu* speaking people of Sioma and Shangombo districts, this was known as *Mulabalaba wa Simbukushu*, one that belonged to the *Mbukushu* people, while in other places such as Kalabo, Mongu, and Senanga it was known as *mulabalaba wa Sikulupata* (meaning a continuous form of play). According to the informant, the dugout holes could be extended depending on the number of players involved and this made the game to be exciting. Playing this game involved capturing the seeds (*bana*) or (*likomu*) of the other opponent and adding them to the player's already existing seeds. While the objective in this type of game was to capture the seeds of the opponent, the captured seeds were not taken out heaped on the side of the captor, instead, they were captured and placed or 'sowed' in the holes on the side of the captor by dropping them in the designated holes. Additionally, unlike in the other type of *mulabalaba* mentioned above, movements of seeds or cattle in the *Simbukushu* type could be done with two or more seeds only. The player was allowed to capture seeds that were opposite to him or her even when there was only one seed in the hole. On the other hand, the opponent player who only had one seed in each hole was not allowed to make any movement and that meant that he or she had lost the game. This principle underscored the Lozi proverb of 'one finger cannot crush a louse' or '*munwana ulimuñwi hau tubi nda.*'

- ***Mulabalaba wa kubulukela* (Board game involving capturing of tokens for safety)**

This type of *Mulabalaba* involved players keeping their captured seeds (*bana*) or cattle (*likomu*) in one or two designated holes only. In this type of game, the players were expected to drop the last seed during the process of ‘sowing’ in one of the designated holes thereby piling the captured seeds in those holes. When all the seeds from an opponent had been captured, then the opponent lost the game. This indigenous game was subtly underpinned by the Lozi proverb of ‘*belekela kamuso*’ or make adequate preparation for tomorrow. It encouraged the concept of making savings in a playful manner.

- ***Mulabalaba wa 12* (Twelve Men’s Morris)**

Unlike the previous types of *mulabalaba* described earlier in this section, this type of *Mulabalaba* is played as a board game, or simply drawn on the ground, and can be played by both boys and girls although boys play the game more than the girls. Among the Lozi, this type of *mulabalaba* is called ‘*mulabalaba wa 12*’ (*Mulabalaba* played using 12 seeds/tokens). A similar game called *mulabalaba wa 3* (Three men’s Morris) was observed during the study. According to Ntsihlele (2003), *marabaraba* derives its name from the words ‘*leraba*,’⁹⁰ which denotes a snare or trap, and ‘*raba raba*’ to ‘roam’ in a narrow circle or to fly around. The game is played by two players at a time and aims at blocking the other opponent from making further movements along the designated horizontal, diagonal, or vertical lines or junction on the board. As observed in this study, players used maize seeds or other tiny objects when making the movements along the horizontal, diagonal, or vertical junctions. These seeds, referred to as ‘cows’ (*likomu*), were alternated at a time with a view to blocking the other opponents along the designated horizontal, diagonal, and vertical junctions. Once three seeds were placed on the designated diagonally, vertically or horizontally aligned junction points, the player gained a point and captured any seed of his or choice. The player moved one seed or ‘cow’ at a time in a straight line, which could be either moving forwards, backwards, or diagonally to an empty space that was available in order to create rows of three seeds.

According to the informant, once a ‘cow’ has been captured, it could not be used in the play again. In order to make successful moves, the player had to form a line of three seeds or ‘cows’

⁹⁰ While the Sothos call this game *morabaraba*, in siLozi, which is a dialect of the Sesotho, it is called *mulabalaba* since siLozi does not have ‘r.’ *Leraba* (*lilaba*) also means a trap among the Lozi people.

in a row. When each player's 12 'cows' have been placed on the board, they could be moved from one unoccupied adjacent junction to another to create a row of three seeds or 'cows' which then allowed the player to capture or 'shoot' (*kunupa*) one of his opponent's 'cows.' The game ended when one player remained with only one 'cow' which could not make any more movements at all since 3 'cows' in a row are needed for a successful shoot out or capture to occur. As in the previous *mulabalaba*, the metaphor of cattle (*likomu*) comes out clearly.⁹¹

- **Cognitive benefits of the of the play game**

Cognitively, thinking and strategising on how best to outwit one's opponent were observed to be the cornerstones underpinning these different indigenous *mulabalaba* play games. Several cognitive benefits underpinned the different *mulabalaba* play games for instance, attention, memory and recall, concentration, planning, problem solving, and development of a clear foresight when making movements. Attention as a cognitive skill was achieved by taking note of the rules governing the play. Different *mulabalaba* had different rules. For instance, the *Simbukushu* rules could not be applied in the banking type of *mulabalaba* although they appear similar in the format of playing. Memory and recall processes in these types of *mulabalaba* were achieved by recalling the rules that applied in the patterns of performance for each *mulabalaba* types. Specific patterns of playing were also a product of memory and recall processes involvement in the playing of the games. While playing *mulabalaba*, players' concentration was observed from their facial expressions and different sitting positions. Movement of fingers on the playing boards revealed that planning of particular movements was attained. Problem solving skills during the various *mulabalaba* play games was achieved through the addition and subtraction processes. Here different strategic movements were aimed at solving the problem in anticipation of a win or loss.

⁹¹ While observing players engaged in all the types of *mulabalaba* described above during my field observations, players were often heard sounding their imaginary 'guns' with the sound 'tuuu' (imitating the sound of a gun) implying that they had shot down the cattle of their opponents. The game of *mulabalaba* has high levels of imagination and critical thinking.



Fig.12: Pupils at playing *mulabalaba wa kuca* (Mukela, 2013)



Fig.13: Kaanja pupils playing *mulabalaba wa 12*

The above types of indigenous play games (*mulabalaba*) were noted to be potentially valuable for enhancing addition and subtraction concepts among the players. Players were required to engage in more planning and organised and well calculated movements in the process. As observed among school children who participated in the indigenous play games, their facial expressions and movements of fingers were clear observable signs of making decisions on the planned movements while verbal expressions of imitating gun shots ‘*tuuu*’ as metaphors of shooting (*ku kunupa*) were clearly heard as participants interacted with each other.

The educational implications of the game were that they involved the internalisation of the mathematical concepts of addition and subtraction. Addition was attained by making calculations where the seeds or stones in any movement undertaken would end. The opponent suffered subtraction if his or her seed or cattle were captured. The cognitive and educational implications of the game are consistent with the observations by Rogoff (2003) who notes that “stones are moved according to a complex system of rules, requiring strategic planning and calculation” (p.267). This has also been observed by Serpell (1993); Mtonga (2012), and Mukela (2013). Emotionally, the indigenous games helped participants to respect each other by accepting the rules of the game. One who lost the game accepted defeat and aimed at doing better during the subsequent play sessions.

- **Stone throwing game (*Muyato*)**

This game was mostly played by children especially girls aged between 5 and 11 years. According to the informants, *Muyato* had the potential to help children to ‘read’ (*kubala*) meaning to count, before they went to school. Children used some seeds from different local

trees such as the *muzauli*⁹² tree which had seeds known locally as *mingandi* for playing the game. Usually, the number of seeds required was about 12. The game involved the digging of a sizeable small hole in which the seeds were put to be used for scooping. A fairly large stone or round object was used for throwing in the air in time for the scooped stones/seeds to be taken back and forth into the hole by the hand of the player. During the throwing intervals, the player took the required number of seeds into the hole and scooped them again until all the seeds had been transacted on.

When playing the game, the player was expected to focus on the object that was thrown in the air while her hands scooped a certain number of seeds in or out of the hole and this helped in the hand and eye coordination. The process of scooping the seeds in and out of the hole had the potential to help the player to pay extra attention or marshalling of one's thought processes (*ku iseza ngana*) to the number of seeds that were expected to be transacted on at a time. If one misfired (*kumbunja*), such a player willingly gave the throwing object to the other players. Making a mistake (*kumbunja*) means that the game had agreed rules in place which governed the game.

- **Cognitive benefits of the of the play game**

When analysed critically, *Muyato* as an indigenous play game presents the following cognitive skills that children are capable of benefiting from participating in it: concentration, planning, coordination, critical thinking, and spatial reasoning. Concentration is achieved by focusing on the object thrown in the air to prevent the same object from hitting on the ground. To achieve this, the player sometimes throws the object to a considerable height in time for her to scoop back the seeds and then receive the falling object in her hands. In every throw that the participant makes, there is a calculated process of planning before hand on how the seeds would be scooped out as well as how they should be taken back into the hole. Coordination while playing *muyato* is achieved through the eye and hand movements during the throwing of the playing object and the subsequent back and forth movements of the hands when scooping the seeds. Catching the falling object in mid air before it falls and hits the ground involves critical thinking and spatial reasoning processes.

⁹² During this study, *muyato* was found to be more of a seasonal play activity when seeds from trees such as *muzauli* (red rose) and *mukusi* (teak) were readily available.

Emotionally, when a participant successfully gains points in a row, this yields satisfaction on the part of the participant. When a participant makes a mistake, she willingly surrenders the playing object to the other participant. Turn taking is a symbol of cooperation between players and this also leads to respect of the rules agreed by the players. Players also learn to control their frustrations if they do not win but learn to accept the outcomes of the game.

- **The concept of subitising in *Muyato***

In terms of enhancing the educational values, the indigenous game promotes the skills of subitising. Subitising is recognising a collection (of objects, pictures, dots on dominoes etc) without counting, simply by looking. It is a skill that develops before counting and is fundamental in the development of number sense supporting the development of conservation, compensation, unitising, counting, composing and decomposing of numbers. When playing *muyato*, children tend to see the patterns of seeds on the ground first and then work out their movements back into the dugout hole according to the required rules. Subitising is a mathematical skill that learners develop in the process of playing *muyato*.

One important finding that the study established was that some games and play activities were common during some seasons. For instance, *muyato* was most common during the hot season especially when seeds of the teak tree (*mukusi*) blossomed. For three years the author observed this practice among school children in Sioma district. This practice was important because it helped children to gain knowledge of the yearly calendar and the various seasons and affordances that each season brought along with it. Games that involved drawing big rectangular boxes on the ground were observed to be very common during the rainy season when it was good to make such drawings because the sand was firm.

4.9.2. Riddles (*Mayumbo*)

Among the Lozi people, riddles, locally known as *mayumbo*, are a form of oral literature and are mental testing games played by both urban and rural children. The Lozi verb form ‘*yumba*’ means ‘to challenge’ as in a contest. *Mayumbo* is the plural form of *liyumbo* (*li-* is singular form) signifying the name or object form of the activity. Understood in this context, *mayumbo* is the name of a game that involves two or more individuals who are engaged in an activity where they challenge each other with a barrage of questions and answers. In this respect, *mayumbo* are a

verbal and oral activity meant to test each other's knowledge and understanding. *Mayumbo* (riddles) are an oral competitive form of game for children whose occurrence is initiated by the children themselves. In most cases, *mayumbo* are played in the evening around a big fire usually in a designated place of an elderly person after all chores have been completed. The game does not place any restrictions on how many should participate in it, and thus, the game could sometimes be played by even two people if they so wish. However, a big group of 4 to 5 participants makes the game to be full of fun and most entertaining due to the variations in terms of responses provided by the group members.

- **How the game is played**

In a typical game as observed during this study, the players divided themselves in two groups and began the game as follows:

Riddler: “*Ako*” (equivalent to ‘here it comes or are you ready for it?’)

Riddlees: “*Keye*” or “*akate*,” meaning ‘let it come’ or bring it on’

After this traditional call to order, the riddler then gives the riddle to which the riddlee must reply. If the riddlees failed to provide the correct answer, they were expected to admit their failure by saying: “*Pwa pwa*” (meaning “failed”).

- **Riddles and their classification**

The riddles presented in this section are a collection of the most common ones provided by the school children, teachers, and village expert informants. Due to the volume of the collected materials, only some selected riddles have been presented in this section as cases in point. The approaches to riddle classification by Gowlett (1966) and Gwaravanda and Maseka (2008) have been adopted for this study as they were found to be explicit and concise. The classification broadly includes the following:

- Natural Phenomena (sun, moon, stars, rivers, and lakes)
- Animals and anything pertaining to them
- Plant-life, food
- The human body and its attributes

- Buildings, Institutions, Paths,
- Manufactured Objects

A selection of some of these riddles according to their classification and cognitive benefits is presented below. Following are some examples where RP means Riddle Proposition, and S means Solution.

- (i) Riddle classification category- Paddle
 RP: *Kanwela ka tumuka* (It dips and leaps out)
 S: *Ki Silabo* (It is a paddle)
- (ii) Riddle classification- River
 RP: *Musali yo mutelele kalipaswana* (A tall brown woman with white stripes)
 S: *Ki nuka* (It is a river)
- (iii) Riddle classification- Human shadow
 RP: *Haka siiwi* (You cannot leave it behind)
 S: *Ki muluti* (It is a shadow)
- (iv) Riddle classification- Mushroom
 RP: *Ndu ya musumo ulimuñwi* (A house with only one pole)
 S: *Ki mbowa* (It is a mushroom)
- (v) Riddle classification- Egg
 RP: *Ndu ye sina munyako* (A house without a door)
 S: *Ki lii* (It is an egg)

As observed earlier, participants who provided some of these common riddles included children from the preschool section aged as young as 5 years and those from the primary section as old as 15 years. This finding is conclusive evidence that children like *mayumbo* and provides a strong justification for the inclusion of the repertoire in the school curriculum. They are a form of knowledge construction.

- **Riddles and sense of humour and the cognitive processes involved**

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner' dictionary (2015), humour is the quality in something that makes it funny or amusing; the ability to laugh at things that are amusing. The aspect of laughter becomes possible when what is read, listened to or seen is incongruous with

the existing cognitive maps in an individual. The ability to detect such incongruous processes involves the use of high mental powers of observations, analysis and evaluation. Some of the riddles that were obtained from this study revealed that they had considerable elements of humour in terms of their metaphorical propositional statements and solutions they elicited. Only a selection of a few riddles is presented in this section. Most of the riddles encountered and documented below were based on children's own modern versions of riddle making.

- **Riddle based on faecal matter**

Riddle Proposition: *Chopa hailula, masoja bailibelezi inge ba sweli kukambelela* (When the helicopter lands, the soldiers are waiting for it while clapping their hands)

Solution: *Masipa ni linzi* (Faeces and flies)

The allusion here is the likening of the helicopter to a stool while the approaching of soldiers to the helicopter is compared to flies seen clapping. The solution to this riddle is what makes it funny or humorous. Soldiers are known to obey orders from those above them. In this metaphorical case, the passing out of stool triggers simultaneous movements of flies that are attracted to it, and is a form of an order since flies are naturally attracted to anything that smells. The construction of this riddle shows some ingenuity on the part of the one posing it. The inherent tendency of flies to move their limbs is likened to the process of clapping, a common characteristic among the Lozi people to give respect to someone. The metaphor not only creates a sense of humour but also shows high levels of imagination made through careful observations of the behavioural patterns of flies when attracted to faecal matter. This process involves the mobilisation of one's intellectual powers to make such funny comparisons based on the actual occurrences common to children in both the urban and rural areas.

This riddle could be used as an entry point in a science lesson when dealing with common topics such as hygiene, environmental pollution, causes of sicknesses in the local communities. Community awareness and sensitisation to children on how to avoid communicable diseases such as diarrhea, cholera, and dysentery can easily be taught in a meaningful and relaxed way without stressing the learners.

- **Riddles based on gun**

RP: *Ndataho ha pinya wa saba* (When your father passes out air, you get scared)

S: *Tobolo* (Gun)

The allusion of the explosive sound made by a gun is compared to the passing out of air. In the second riddle below, the allusion of a howling hyena is compared to the passing out of air.

RP: *Sitongwani silila mwa hala malundu a mabeli* (A hyena howls in between two hills).

S: *Sipinya* (Passing out of air)

These riddles have humour in that among the Lozi children, such forms of riddles are only entertained when children are alone. It is ethically wrong to mention such things in the presence of adults as that is considered a form of being disrespectful. Children learn the appropriate and correct way of practicing culturally valued ways of doing things. However, children tend to release the tension of laughter they have arising from cultural restrictions when they engage in such riddles and this provides a sense of humour and entertainment to them in the process. In the classroom, laughter is created because the children know this riddle as one that violates ethical considerations and therefore expect the teacher not to entertain it. I found lesson demonstrations where *mayumbo* (riddles) were used to be more interesting and live in nature. All children including the shy ones participated actively.

- **Riddle based on nose phlegm**

RP: *Sisita unangela mwa windo* (Sister⁹³ is peeping through the window)

S: *Limina* (Nose phlegm).

Children have a tendency of not blowing their noses. The comparison of phlegm moving back and forth someone's nose creates a sense of humour when it is compared to a Catholic sister peeping through the window. Catholic sisters are known to wear white apparels but not to be peeping through windows. This mismatch in the riddle, deliberately created to deceive the

⁹³ The metaphor of a sister as used in this riddle connotes a Catholic nun in her white clothes.

listener has the cognitive potential of enlisting the listener to make inferences from the environment in order to give the correct solution.

- **Candle**

RP: *Muuna yo mutelele wa inyelakela* (This tall man messes himself).

S: *Kandela* (Candle).

This riddle proved to be funny for children because of the incongruence created in its propositional statement. The incongruence created is that it is only a child who is supposed to mess himself or herself and not an adult. When an adult is reduced to the behaviour of children, then children find such kind of behaviour to be funny, and hence, the sense of humour evoked by the riddle propositional statement.

The riddles that have been cited above also help to show that children attain their socialisation when they begin to identify what should be said before adults and what should be avoided. In this sense, the elements of humour singled out above are a clear manifestation of how children imbibe cultural values through indigenous play games such as riddles.

The riddles below and their metaphorical allusions help to reveal the cognitive processes that underpin them.

| S/N | Riddles (<i>Mayumbo</i>) | English translations | Metaphorical allusions |
|-----|--|--|---|
| 1 | P: <i>Fo ku icebulezi noha ye tuna</i> S: <i>Ki fa libetelo la mukolo</i> | Where a large snake has sloughed its skin It is where dug-outs are carved | The sloughed skin of the big snake is compared with the chips and shavings of the dug-out canoe |
| 2 | P: <i>U waye umane hau katabi</i> S: <i>Ndonga</i> | You may fish with a spear as many times as you like, you cannot stab it. It is a needle | This refers to the difficulty of threading a needle |
| 3 | P: <i>Ndu ya minyako ye minyako ye miñata</i> S: <i>Mbaula</i> | A house with many doors Brazier | The allusion is to the many holes that a brazier has |
| 4 | P: <i>Mulamu wabo kuku ki wa mibala-bala</i> | The walking stick of my grandparent is multi-coloured | The allusion is to the bright colours that a python has. (A stick is sometimes used metaphorically to |

| | | | |
|----|--|--|---|
| | <i>S: Mboma</i> | Python | mean a snake) |
| 5 | <i>P: Ndombe mwa nakatenge</i> <i>S: Kweli</i> | One barbel among small fish Moon | The allusion is to the appearance of the moon among the stars |
| 6 | <i>P: Sikankala ni mulo wa sona</i> <i>Ki masipa</i> | The contents of a vessel and its gravy It is faeces | The gravy refers to the urine which is often produced at the same time as stool |
| 7 | <i>P: Mushimani yo munwi ku mulumelisa, u kenya mazoho mwa pokoto</i> <i>S: Ki kulu</i> | A certain boy; you greet him (and) he puts his hands in his pockets It is a tortoise | This refers to the tortoise's habit of retracting its limbs when it is disturbed. |
| 8 | <i>P: Ndu ya Mulena ha i ci ni kamuta</i> <i>S: Hakuna ni lubyu mukwakwa kapa nzila ha lici</i> | The house of a king can never be burnt When there is a bush fire, the road or path is never burnt | The allusion is to the observation that bush fires can never burn a road. The appearance of road or path that cannot be touched by fire is likened to a king. |
| 9 | <i>P: Masole ba bupelezi mukuwa</i> <i>S: Meeno a potolohile lulimi</i> | Soldiers have surrounded a white man Teeth surrounding the tongue | The red colour of the human tongue is what represents a white man. Apparently, the tongue enjoys the protection of the teeth. |
| 10 | <i>P: Kashimani kao ka swana ni mutu kono a ka swaliwi ka mazoho</i> <i>S: Ndombe</i> | That little boy resembles a person, but he is not caught with hands It is a barbel fish | The allusion here is that a barbel has whiskers, a feature it shares with man, yet it is slippery and not easily caught with hands |
| 11 | <i>P: A mu looze litipa Samaemba wa shwa</i> <i>S: Lihapu</i> | Sharpen your knives Samaemba (Mr Pieces) is dying Water melon | The allusion is to the stripes that water melons have which look like pieces. |

Table 5 showing riddles and their metaphorical allusions

- **Riddles demanding the use of logic**

These types of riddles were characterised by a longer form of sentence demanding elaborate logical explanations. They are also locally known as *tukwaci* or puzzles. An example of such riddle forms is provided below:

RP: A man who had three items, a cat, a rat, and a bag of groundnuts was on a journey and reached a crossing point at a big river where he found a small dugout canoe that could only carry two items at a time. How would this man ferry the items and proceed on his journey with all the three items?

S: The first item to be ferried across the river would be the rat. This is because, even if a cat remains with the bag of ground nuts, it will not eat them since they do not constitute its food. On the second trip, the man would get the bag of ground nuts and leave it on the other side of the river and get the rat back to the other side where the cat remained. On reaching the side where the cat remained, the man would leave the rat and take the cat to the other side where the bag of groundnuts remained. After leaving the cat with the bag of ground nuts, then he would get back on his final trip to collect the rat, and thereafter, proceed on his journey with all the three items without any item attacking others during his absence.

This riddle solution involves a careful consideration on the food chain of the items involved. To do this, a child has to use his intellectual powers of analysis to ensure that none of the items takes advantage of his absence to feed on the other. This could be demonstrated as

A.....B....C where A is the Cat, B is the Rat, and C is the Bag of groundnuts. Removal of B in the equation solves the problem since A and C are not compatible.

This is the logical form of reasoning to solve the riddle.

- **Riddle propositional statements demanding for impossible solutions.**

The riddle presented here is in a form of puzzles and is an excerpt from Chalinga (1960).

RP: A king in a certain kingdom wanted to test the intelligence of two of his renowned experts in black smithing and leather turning. After inviting them to his capital, he gave papyrus reeds to the black smith to forge some spears for him. In like manner, he gave some crocodile skin hides

to the leather turner to make some royal blankets for him. Thereafter, he left the two experts to go ahead with the assigned tasks. The black smith did not realise that the task demanded an impossible solution. He threw one bundle after another into the fiery furnace until all the ten bundles of papyrus reeds were mercilessly consumed by the fire. Meanwhile, the second expert informed the king that he needed tears from the king's own queens to fill two calabashes for use in softening the cracked skin hides of the crocodiles before any work could commence. He earnestly requested the king to ensure that only the tears from his wives as the owner of the assignment were needed because he had special gadgets that were capable of ascertaining the source of origin of the required tears, detecting water in the tears as well as determining the correct required amount of tears for use.

In passing his judgment after the tasks were completed, the king informed the black smith that he had failed the test while the leather turner had satisfactorily met the requirements for passing the test. The king made the following observation regarding the leather turner expert:

"I have carefully examined and analysed the whole situation concerning the demands you made before the task could begin, and have come to the conclusion that it is not your own wisdom and intelligence (butali) that has enabled you to make such a highly placed request, but that someone wiser than you should have whispered to you on what to do. You have done well in solving my riddle .You realised it was an impossible riddle requiring an impossible solution" (Paraphrased by Mukela from Chalinga, 1960, p.21).

The above riddle demanded for impossible solutions, and the use of one's analytical powers were required to provide acceptable solutions.

- **Cognitive benefits of the game**

This section on riddles has shown that *mayumbo* helps learners to solve problems quickly and are underpinned by various cognitive processes that involve a lot of critical thinking, observations, imagination, analysis, and making deductions to provide acceptable solutions. Other cognitive processes include attention, creative thinking, and recall of facts. The traditional opening approach for the riddling contests shows how cognitive processes are mobilised. My observations on this traditional approach of calling participants to order revealed one cognitive element inherent in the game for eliciting high levels of attention and concentration from the

participants. Learners or participants develop analytical or inference skills as well as learning to develop critical thinking in making observations of objects in the local environment to provide correct responses. *Mayumbo* also have the potential to develop vocabulary acquisition and knowledge exploration among participants. *Mayumbo* or riddles as observed and analysed in their contextual play form are an intellectual activity. As shown in table 6 above, riddles are underpinned by various metaphorical allusions that require critical analysis.

As educational tools, riddles are naturally entertaining because of the inherent nature of humour that they possess. Because of this strong element, they can be used as entry points to teach various language activities without boring the children. Finnegan (1970) noted this entertaining dimension to riddles as one reason why they were mostly overlooked in research. However, entertainment and motivation are strong predictors of good learning.

4.10. Games of environment

The South African Children 2001/2002 model (Burnett & Hollander, 2004) has classified water and hunting games as belonging to games of environment. A selection of some indigenous action singing games in this category are discussed below to ascertain their cognitive values.

- **Indigenous play games associated with fishing/hunting**

Fishing is an important occupation among the Lozi people especially for flood plain dwellers while hunting characterises the livelihood of those living in forest margins. Children engage in play games associated with such indigenous occupations.

- ***Tindi***

The study findings on this play game revealed that it was once a play game more favoured by the plain dwellers than by those in the forest margins of Western Province mainly because of the fishing activities in the plain. An explanation provided by my informants helps to show who, how, and where *tindi* was played:

Tindi was a boys' play game and involved a circular disc made from a big tuber of an indigenous plant usually found only in the flood plains. It was from this tuber that the game derived its name. The participants stood in two single files or rows of about 5-6 participants but

separated by a considerable distance from each other. The players were provided with sharpened sticks known as *tusumpu*⁹⁴, and were expected to aim or target at a fast moving circular like disk object, *tindi*. The distance made between the two teams was meant to avoid accidents when spearing the *tindi* which was expected to be thrown on the ground by the opposing team at full force and speed. Playing *tindi* required a large surface area.”⁹⁵

Each team was required to select a strong person whose task was to make sure that the *tindi* was bowled on the ground at full speed and with much force to the opponents’ side so that it trundled past each player. The opponents were expected to stop the fast trundling *tindi* by transfixing their sharpened sticks through it, thereby gaining some points in the process.

- **Cognitive benefits of the of the play game**

According to the informants, the play game developed cognitive skills in fishing and hunting that involved making estimations on how far to throw the spear. Fishermen were expected to develop skills in making correct estimations when aiming at fast moving fish in water while hunters were expected to throw their spears at long distances without missing the animals. It was also established from the discussions conducted that Lozi people have various fishing methods and various fish species in the ecosystems many of whose names were known by children in such local environments and constituted their local knowledge system.

- **Indigenous play songs based on animal movements**

Indigenous play songs based on animal movements or behaviours demonstrated children’s appreciation and knowledge acquisition of the fauna within their local environments. The play song described below provided a case in point on how children developed such knowledge through keen observations.

- **Chameleon movement- *Cica congono***

The chameleon’s slow and majestic movement was the focus of this play song.

- **How the game is played.**

⁹⁴ Sharpened sticks made for the purpose of spearing the play object or *tindi*. *Tindi* is a large tuber like object that naturally grows in the plain. Once found where it has grown, it is uprooted and made into a large disk form, like a small wheel.

⁹⁵ Interviews with a village expert in Kalabo district.

Participants in this play song attempt to walk using their hands and legs. They raise their right hands by moving them back and forth and then alternate using the left hand imitating the way the chameleon moves.



Fig. 14 Pupils at Litoya Basic demonstrating the chameleon dance

The alternations of the hands synchronise with the rhythm of the song where certain words are stressed after which a change of hand movements should also follow.

| Lozi lyrics | English Translation |
|--|---|
| Caller: <i>Cica, cica congonoo (Times 2)</i> <i>congono ca mukacae</i> ⁹⁶ | (Cica is meaningless, congono means chameleon) |
| Respondents: <i>Cica, cica congono</i> <i>Cica, cica congono</i> <i>Cica, cica congono</i> | (The meaningless words are imitation of the chameleon’s slow and majestic movement) |

- **Cognitive benefits of the of the play game**

The game had the potential to develop observational and analytical skills in children. Children were also likely to develop a sense of awareness and appreciation of the creatures found in the local environment including chameleons. The chameleon is one creature with slow and elaborate

⁹⁶ The lyrics of this song seem to be drawn from the Mbunda speaking people as noted earlier in chapter one of this study.

majestic movements. Using this game as an educational tool, children were likely to understand that the Lozi people had interacted with their local environment and learnt many objective lessons. Through their close attachment to their environment, the Lozi people drew significant lessons from nature and developed powerful symbolisms.

As an educational tool, the teacher could use this play song as an entry point to teach the different survival mechanisms that animals use to protect themselves from their predators. In the case of the chameleon, changing of colours to hide from its enemies is one such mechanism since it cannot move very fast.

Part C

Lozi children's indigenous play games and their relevance in the school curriculum

The third research question addressed by this study was an exploration of teachers' perceptions on the possibilities for including indigenous musical play games in the Zambian school curriculum. Two sub-questions formed a nexus to this research question namely:

- How knowledgeable are the school teachers in indigenous play games?
- What evidence from the study supports the feasibility and relevance of including indigenous musical play games in the mainstream curriculum?

Four methods were employed namely:

- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and interviews with the school teachers.
- School and classroom lesson observations and lesson plans as well as organised indigenous musical play activities conducted by teachers themselves and by community participants.
- A documentary analysis of the Teachers' Guides.
- A one day organised teachers' workshop on how to use indigenous play songs and games as teaching and learning resources.

In order to obtain data on this question, teachers were asked to describe the extent to which Teachers' Guides included indigenous musical play games for children. The overarching theme of this chapter 'connecting bridges between home and school settings' is drawn from Moll et al.

(1992) where they argue that, “Teachers have much to know about their students or families or homes that could be helpful in the classroom situations” These scholars have observed that households contain ample cultural and cognitive resources with great, potential utility for classroom instruction. As teachers identify these cultural resources, then the teachers themselves become bridges in the sense that they are bridging between the students’ worlds; that is, the home and the school. Adding such cultural resources to the existing Teachers’ Guides would be one way of helping teachers to act as bridges in the teaching and learning process of children. In the first part of the presentation of the study findings, teachers working with the researcher in focus group discussions and lesson observations identified the missing links in their school teachers’ guide books.

4.11. Teachers’ perceptions of the school curriculum books

This section is based on several Focus Group Discussions held in the selected districts.

4.11.1. Lack of content in the teachers’ guides

Analysis of the Focus Group Discussions with teachers⁹⁷ revealed that there was a general perception that the teachers’ guides (TG) were lacking in content on the inclusion of indigenous play games. Where there was evidence of inclusion, it was noted that the content was inadequate. The following points came out strongly:

“Some of the teachers’ guides have play games but these are few. Many of the books that we have however do not have indigenous local songs and games. These play games are important because they remind the present of the ways of life in the past.”⁹⁸

“I think there is much that needs to be done with these current TGs in their inclusiveness of the indigenous play materials of children.”⁹⁹

The general perceptions of the teachers on this point were that the Teacher Guides (TGs) did not meet the aspirations of the teachers in the province. There was an inadequate representation of indigenous musical play songs in the school curriculum.

⁹⁷ Focus Group Discussions (FDGs) were conducted in Kalabo, Kaoma, and Senanga districts.

⁹⁸ Teacher workshop in Sioma district

⁹⁹ Focus Group Discussion in Kalabo district.

4.11.2. Teachers' limited involvement in curriculum planning

The teachers observed that most of the planning of the school curriculum was undertaken with little input from the teachers especially those from the rural areas. Teachers lamented that they were sometimes expected to implement programmes that did not reflect the things that most rural children were familiar with. They observed that some of the music books in their schools were not being used because the teachers did not know the songs that were in those books.

4.11.3. Failure to incorporate relevant pedagogies from past curricula

This study found that while curriculum reviews were necessary, there was a general tendency by curriculum planners to abandon everything in an old programme considered less effective once a new educational programme was put in place even if such an old programme had many positive components. The teachers singled out the Zambia Primary Course (ZPC) that had a lot of singing activities, and the New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL) approach as cases in point. Teachers then reviewed the 1993/1994 '*Paliso*' (Reading) books that were introduced under the New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL)¹⁰⁰ a programme that was borrowed from South Africa (Tambulukani, Sampa, & Linehan, 1999; Sampa, 2001; Meki Kombe & Herman, 2017). Teachers' general perceptions were that the NBTL books were far better in terms of inclusion of indigenous play materials than the books that they were using currently. Some of the teachers comprising some focus group discussions had been in the service for more than three decades and had witnessed the introduction and implementation of the successive curriculum programmes in the Zambian.¹⁰¹ They expressed their strong desires to have reprints of the *Paliso* books back in the schools as noted below:

“If we had the power to have the copies of the old books reprinted, we would gladly do so. The present ones ¹⁰²are just full of mistakes and language errors. It is a pity that when new programmes are introduced in the education system, there is a tendency to disregard useful teaching material in the old programmes.”

*¹⁰⁰ NBTL aimed at teaching reading in the local languages

¹⁰¹ Two research participants in Nalolo and Senanga districts who at the time of the study had been in the teaching service for 31 and 34 years respectively.

¹⁰² Most teachers cited the following books such as Ministry of General Education (2015) *Buka ya mwanaa sikolo*. Lusaka: MK Publishers Ltd

4.12. Teachers' lack of knowledge of the indigenous musical play games

In terms of knowledge of indigenous musical play games, most teachers in the focus group discussions and interviews conducted admitted that they lacked or had limited knowledge about such play games. Although there was a general perception by the teachers that indigenous musical play games were rich in content, it was also noted that there were instances where some teachers in the system had poor backgrounds in such indigenous related musical play activities. It was revealed that some teachers read out some songs instead of singing them, and this did not motivate children to engage in singing. The study found that some teachers ended up avoiding lessons that demanded them to use some indigenous musical play games because of their sense of incompetence and to avoid embarrassment before the children. Teachers' poor backgrounds in traditional indigenous musical play games resulted in such lack of confidence. Teachers' lack of knowledge and failure to use indigenous play materials in their lessons was also reflected in pupils' responses. On the other hand, when pupils were asked whether indigenous play games such as *mulabalaba* and *muyato* discussed earlier were utilised in the classes, the pupils responded that teachers never engaged them in playing *muyato* in class. Although *muyato* and *mulabalaba* were popular outdoor activities for pupils, they were never utilised in the classes by teachers.

4.13. Teachers' general failure to use songs during lessons

One key finding established through this study during the interviews with expert music teachers was that most of the schools were quiet for most of the time during learning times. This situation also applied at lower levels such as grades 1 and ECE. There was little music making in the classes. During the focus group discussions in Kaoma district, some of the music teachers who had been long in the teaching service made the following observations:

"I rarely hear songs being used at this school. You can be here from morning to the afternoon class session but there will be very few instances if any where you will get much singing as part of learning in the classrooms. The school is in most cases quiet. Learners learn well when they are singing and playing."

"In the past, it was quite often to hear classes singing because singing was part of learning. It seems teachers do not have strong backgrounds from colleges of education."

However, during break times, personal observations of children in most of the grades including the upper primary were seen actively engaged in out-door play activities many of which were accompanied by songs.

4.14. Negative attitudes towards music by teachers and administrators

Apart from the general lack of knowledge on indigenous play materials, the interviews and FGDs also revealed that some teachers and school administrators had negative attitudes towards indigenous musical play materials. The general effects of such negative attitudes were that those few teachers who were seen to be providers in most schools were perceived to be backward and lowly qualified. Young teachers especially did not want to be seen to be backward by doing things that were perceived to be backward. The teachers at some points in their discussion became emotional:

*“In some schools like ours here, we do not have some indigenous musical instruments such as drums. Our school administrators are not in support of the things that are traditional in nature, and therefore there is no way such administrators can support traditional musical play games in the schools. For instance at this school***, we were provided with some musical instruments but the head teacher refused to accept them because he wanted home management despite the school having no qualified home management teacher.”¹⁰³*

“Sometimes you even regret for having wasted your money on expressive arts when you realise you will not get anything at the end of it. I think it should not be left that way bearing in mind that we have different levels of intelligences.”¹⁰⁴

It was clear from the outcomes of the FGDs that the music teachers had serious challenges that impacted negatively on them. Some trainee teachers made the following introspections regarding their choices of music as a teaching career:

“I asked myself whether it was really worth it to have spent my money on my music training given the ridicule I received from my fellow teachers. Every time I met my colleagues, they would tease me as Mr. P.K. Chishala.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Focus Group Discussions in Kaoma

¹⁰⁴ Focus Group Discussion in Senanga

“For me, my parents did not want to pay for my tuition fees at the music college for the first year. I had to struggle on my own to look for money all because my parents did not want me to take music as a career.”¹⁰⁶

*“The remarks from my former teacher about the career I had chosen to do music left me almost confused. This teacher told me that at *** Secondary School where I came from music was no longer offered as a subject and wondered where I could go with that subject.”¹⁰⁷*

Teachers observed that negative attitudes from government were also responsible for the failure to promote local indigenous play materials and activities in schools.

4.15. Lack of connection between lesson contents and the songs

The findings obtained through lesson observations revealed that teachers mostly taught their lessons with songs that did not directly relate to the actual contents of the lessons. Songs were used for motivational purposes at the introduction of the lesson or during the lesson, or when the teachers were getting into a different subject. A number of other documented lesson plans in the teachers’ teaching file revealed a similar trend. While aspects of dancing and breaking off boredom were necessary ingredients for teaching, my observations from these lesson plans were that making connections between songs, dances, and the lesson contents was an effective way of enhancing the grasping of concepts among learners.

4.16. Teacher Training Colleges

The study found that teachers had inadequate acquisition of traditional play games from their teacher training colleges. This lack of a strong base and foundation in traditional play materials was noted by many teachers in the province. This point was confirmed by two trainee teachers who were interviewed and made the following observations:

“We did very little of indigenous activities at our former colleges of education. Lecturers in PE for instance only focused on indoor activities that were mostly Western games and not on the outdoor traditional play games.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ P.K. Chishala was one of the prominent blind musical artists in Zambia

¹⁰⁶ Focus Group Discussions in Senanga

¹⁰⁷ Focus Group Discussions in Senanga

¹⁰⁸ Focus discussions with teachers in Kaoma district

“At our college, we had a ‘wisdom tree’ where we learnt indigenous songs but there was nothing much that related to children’s indigenous songs.”¹⁰⁹

It is quite clear from the above findings that when teachers lack strong and robust programmes from their respective colleges of education, the tendency for such teachers is not to offer learning activities missing from their professional training.

Teacher training lecturers interviewed during the study revealed that most college students had negative attitudes towards music. Most students did not include indigenous play games in their lessons during teaching practice programmes. The lecturers attributed this partly on the type of college music curriculum which they felt did not adequately include traditional games in its content.¹¹⁰ According to the lecturers, the college music syllabus was shallow on this point. Lecturers observed that there was general apathy from most student teachers. This apathy was due to lack of support for musical activities in the schools where student teachers carried out teaching practices. In short, student teachers lacked any motivation from contacts with the practicing teachers in the schools. My observations of the trained teachers’ lesson plans during lesson observations confirmed the views of the lecturers. The findings obtained revealed that indigenous musical play games were not included in the lesson plans; they were lacking in such professional documents.

4.17. Document Analysis

A documentary analysis of the existing books has shown that the representation of indigenous games in the school curriculum was inadequate. A number of songs that were accessed during this study revealed that the pre and primary school curriculum leaned heavily on Western rhyme songs rather than the Zambian languages (See appendix I for some books accessed). Specific examples of some selected songs documented from the early Zambian school curriculum and the mismatches they are likely to give to rural children are given below:

| English nursery song | Zambian Version |
|---|--------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old MacDonald had a farm | Mr. Mwale has a farm |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • London bridge is falling down | I can run and I can jump |

¹⁰⁹ Focus discussions with teachers in Senanga district

¹¹⁰ Interviews with two lectures of music in Mongu

| | |
|---|--|
| • Frere Jacques | I hear thunder |
| • Here we go round the mulberry bush | -Yesterday I came to school -What are we doing -Monde is wearing a blue dress -In Zambia in the morning |
| • All day long | -When I saw him/her -Hop, hop, hopping -The wheels of the bus -I chop the wood |
| • Oh my darling, Clementine | Days of the week |
| • A hunting we will go | I want to cross the road |
| • The big ship sails | My little fingers |
| • Gathering nuts in May | What do you want from my store today? |
| • What shall we do with the drunken sailor? | What shall we eat and drink today? One little Zambian |
| • The three blind mice | Look at the hen |
| • There is a tavern in the town | Head and shoulders, knees and toes |
| • Happy birth day | Good morning to you |
| • One man went to mow | One man and a dog walking to Lusaka |
| • The big ship sails | My little fingers |
| • Hokey-Pokey-Cokey | Shake it all about |
| • Sowing in the morning | This is how we walk |

Table 6: English nursery rhymes

This study found that the lyrics of most of the play songs like the first one ‘Mr. Mwale has a farm’ were completely detached from any coherent conceptualisation of the indigenous funds of knowledge that children brought from their home enculturation. The concept of a farm for instance was alien to most rural school children and had no relevance to most of them. A farm in the Western sense meant a big piece of land where both animals (cattle, goats, sheep, and pigs), and birds (chicken, ducks, and geese) were kept. Additionally, agricultural activities of

cultivating different crops was another characteristic of a farm. In traditional subsistence pieces of land, this was not the case.

This also applied to the song ‘One man and a dog walking to Lusaka.’ Dogs for rural children were significant for hunting purposes, and the urban Western cultural practice of “taking a dog for a walk” was unknown to them. This only helps to explain how rural children tended to be disadvantaged in terms of learning when compared with the urban children. I agree with Nompula (2011) who argues with reference to similar features of the South African curriculum that,

Learners are not only confused by the wrong English translation, but also by the wrong language and musical accentuation resulting from translation. Uncertainty about what they are playing and singing about results in a lack of confidence, self-esteem and pride. The European tunes are applied to games that are not associated with the African cultural values and everyday experiences. The children are thus manipulated into a different world of musical involvement, and these learners are subject to a variety of disadvantages (p377).

Some of the Western play songs that I came across confirmed the above observation. On the other hand, some of the common songs such as the one transcribed below only helped to promote the Western values of reading and writing without any reference to the substantive cultural values noted in part A of chapter four that underpin most indigenous Lozi play songs:

| Lozi lyrics | English translation |
|--|--|
| Caller: <i>Ya hana kwa sikolo wa icawisa...</i> (twice) | He/she that refuses to be in school is missing a lot |
| Respondents: <i>Luna lwa ikola zende</i> (twice) | We enjoy many good things |
| Chorus <i>Kubala ni kuñoola, luna lwa ikola zende</i> (twice) | Reading and writing, we are enjoying good things |

Although reading and writing are important components of an education system, it is clear that children also miss out on learning many important substantive cultural values and practices presented in part A of the present chapter. Most children were likely to become misfits in society

later on life because the school system accorded lower status to indigenous knowledge systems (Nsamenang, 2008). It was noted in chapter two that the iceberg model revealed deeper surface cultural practices such as dancing and drumming which were underpinned by deeper knowledge system. Integrating such indigenous knowledge system in the school curriculum would benefit the children more than just focusing on writing and reading as the lyrics of the above song show.

4.18. Applying research to practice

In the presentation of the study findings in this section, specific focus is provided on the role that local community experts can contribute to the process of creating an enriched school curriculum. Two community experts were identified and provided relevant rich sources of information for the study.

4.18.1. Community participation in teaching indigenous musical play activities at an ECE centre.

The first case in the study involved a local community volunteer who was asked to teach at a local preschool¹¹¹. The involvement of the community music expert at the ECE centre proved very instrumental in creating collaborative links between the community and the school. The preschool timetable had two slots for music and storytelling time and I arranged with Ms Neta,¹¹² one of the local residents in the area with a reputation of being a music expert, to be visiting the ECE centre during those slots which were at 11:00 to 12:00 hours on Tuesday and Thursday every week. The programme lasted for 10 weeks. The activities included telling riddles, stories and local traditional dances that the community volunteer knew. Ms Neta had an endless stock of these activities. The ECE class teacher, the assistant class teacher (who was also a community supported personnel), and the community volunteer used to meet to agree on areas of interest to be given to the class by the community volunteer. The programme began in the second week after schools had opened for the second term in 2018.

In the first opening week for schools, some preschool pupils were reluctant to come to school on their own mainly because the weather was becoming cold. Most parents therefore needed to escort their children to the ECE centre. As the programme with Ms Neta progressed, there was a

¹¹¹ I made personal efforts to contact the community music expert after witnessing her performance during a public sensitization meeting organised by the Ministry of Health in Sioma district. She was a widow who worked for a religious organisation in Sioma as a casual worker.

¹¹² Not actual name

noticeable reduction in the parents' daily escorting of their children to the centre. Most of the children came on their own to the preschool in good time. The class teacher observed that most of the parents talked to were of the view that the activities at the ECE centre were a motivating factor to the progress in school attendance. As a researcher, I also tried to find out the views and impressions of some selected parents on the musical activities that had been introduced at the ECE centre to which some parents made the following observations:

“You see, my son had some challenges in coming to the centre. My husband and I had to struggle to bring him here. But I am surprised these days that he does not even demand for his toy car as he used to do.”

“My son always tells me, ‘mommy, I want to go school now and dance’”

“I was surprised to find out that my daughter knew some riddles and she would sometimes engage me in a riddle contest and every time she does this, I am reminded of the days when as a child we played mayumbo (riddles”).

During the story times with the children, I observed that Ms Neta adopted a traditional approach in which she always loved to sit with the children in a circular formation. This provided her with an opportunity to see everyone and made sure all the children were relaxed. This bond of closeness between the story teller and the children sitting on a large canvass tent helped her to control her class as most children jostled to sit close to her. After ending her story for the day, she always said it in the traditional formula of “*ka kayonge, ka ka siyale*” (let this one end, and let that one continue burning), after which she engaged in dancing with the children. Ms Neta regularly asked questions based on her previous stories to the children when she came back the following day. It was interesting to note how children easily remembered the details of the stories and sometimes even the accompanying songs.



Fig. 15: Telling a story to preschool pupils in a traditional way



Fig. 16: An assistant teacher demonstrating a dance to preschool pupils

My interviews with the class teacher revealed the following:

“My knowledge base of stories, dances, and songs has greatly increased. You know, although I can speak Lozi, I am not very conversant with everything but the coming of this madam Neta has really helped me to teach using some of her songs during the days when she is not with us. At first, I used to have very serious challenges because my belief was that there was no need to waste time on games and dances since children had much of these at home, but I now realise that that was a big mistake on my part.”¹¹³

In the course of these interactions, I asked the teacher to have the small *silimba* and drums¹¹⁴ in the class during the music and story time periods as a way of helping children to make their own music as they danced and played. There was much excitement as all wanted to try playing the musical instruments. I also shared with the class teacher and her assistant some of the videos on singing games that I had documented in the course of the study. The assistant teacher was a grade 12 hired community worker. Apparently, she was also good at some local dances especially those of the Tonga¹¹⁵ speaking people. We agreed to have the children perform some selected singing games alongside the ones the community Ms Neta provided. This was meant to equip the class teacher and to increase the level of participation by including more children so that learning in terms of musical activities were not scarce during the days the community volunteer was not present.

After 10 weeks, the community volunteer stopped coming to the ECE centre. Children continued dancing and singing the songs they had learnt from her. I continued visiting the centre and

¹¹³ Interview with the local ECE teacher in Sioma district.

¹¹⁴ I donated these indigenous musical instruments to the preschool since the school did not have any.

¹¹⁵ Tonga is one of the major languages in the Southern Province of Zambia. The assistant teacher was in fact Tonga by tribe.

observed that the class teacher and her assistant continued to incorporate the musical activities they had learnt from the community volunteer. There was continuity of the musical activities even after the community volunteer had left.

Themes that emerged from Ms Neta's participation in the ECE musical activities included the following:

- Incorporating traditional indigenous methods of learning has the potential to enhance class participation. The circular sitting format adopted by the community volunteer helped children to be relaxed. The community volunteer and the children were close to each other. This is different from the formal approach of standing some distance away from the learners.
- Well established school and community partnerships have the potential to provide lasting solutions to some existing school challenges. Before the coming of Ms Neta, the ECE did not have a robust music programme. The provision of the singing games by Ms Neta helped young children to attend school on their own, thereby relieving parents from the burden of taking the young ones to school. Secondly, when school activities prove interesting to the learners, learners will attach some value to such activities. Learning that is grounded in what children do at home has the potential to interest the children.
- Children like music related activities and they are not easily bored by such activities.

4.18.2. Sociodramatic play (*mandwani*) as a pedagogical resource.

The second case in the study involved a local community teacher¹¹⁶ who was engaged to teach at a preschool. During this lesson, the local community teacher demonstrated how the concept of the number five (5) could be introduced to the preschool children in a pre-numeracy activity using an indigenous play game of pretend play locally known as *mandwani*. Earlier in part A of chapter four, it was noted that the practice of *mandwani* was a favourite activity among children. After the song based on a local known tune¹¹⁷, all the pupils were invited to the front and sat on big rectangular local Lozi mat (*museme*) arranged for that purpose. She gave the following instructions to the pupils:

¹¹⁶ Hiring of community teachers is common in rural areas where there is a lack of trained teachers.

¹¹⁷ The song was composed by the same teacher using a local tune from the community.

“Kindly close all your eyes and listen to what I am going to do. I will clap and I want you to tell me how many times I have clapped.”

She clapped five times, and then she asked the pupils to open their eyes. The pupils were asked to state how many counts of claps they had heard.

The teacher then divided the class into three groups according to pupils’ preferences based on the local play game of *mandwani*. The first group of volunteers was to make blocks from some dry lumps of local clay (*lizupa*), while the second group was to engage in cooking. The third group of pupils comprised children who wanted to make a shop and sell items from there. These were allowed to occupy different and separate places in the classroom. All the pupils moved to the corners of their choices, the largest group being the one for cooking where most girls opted to go. After distributing some play materials, each group was told to make five items. Those at the shop had five types of items on sale which included tomatoes, sugar, bottles of cooking oil, salt, and soap. The shop and those who were cooking were close to each other because many small items for domestic use were needed by those in the cooking group.

After this, the mood in the class spontaneously changed to one where all pupils were preoccupied with activities of their own group. There were higher levels of child to child interactions while the teacher moved about seeing how the pupils were performing the assigned tasks. The boys in the construction corner were busy making their blocks from the wood provided, while those who were making cows from clay were busy with clay. Every child was occupied with an activity. As I moved around filming, the pupils were undisturbed by my presence. Of interest to me was to see how those at the shop were advertising their merchandise using a box that acted like a loudspeaker. I observed that the community teacher delivered her lesson in such an engaging localised manner that I did not notice how time passed.¹¹⁸

The teacher explained to me that from her observations, children learning in siLozi as a medium of instruction seemed to understand what they were learning because the language of communication was their own local language. The teacher later explained to me how she integrates numeracy and literacy in her use of the common pretend play of *mandwani*.

¹¹⁸ It was from this observation that I later invited the community teacher to attend the Teacher workshop to make a presentation on how to use *mandwani* as a cultural resource. She gladly accepted the invitation.

“Children play mandwani, they cook in small pots. Both boys and girls participate in the activity. When I want to teach numeracy for instance, the number five, I start by giving the concept. The children make the number of scones from sand and sell to others. Children learn well in groups when they interact with each other.”

This observation was important for this study in terms of identifying local pedagogies and learning strategies that could be used in modern teaching. In the traditional set up, learning is a group activity and is collectively owned as in the case of *mandwani* or socio-dramatic play. When the local teacher was asked to explain how she had learnt to integrate the traditional indigenous play game such as *mandwani* in her teaching, she mentioned having benefitted from a workshop in Mongu run by Save the Children International, a nonprofit making organisation. Unfortunately, this study did not come upon with a similar case where teachers were given workshops grounded in indigenous methodologies. Teachers interviewed revealed that most workshops they had attended were packaged with methodologies that lacked any inclusion of local materials. On the relevance of using play songs to teach children, the community worker made the following observation:

“Teaching young children requires one to do so because children learn better when they are directly involved in things that they already know. The teachers should therefore try to create or get as much of the local songs as they can afford. Children always look happy and it seems they always want to continue singing and dancing. They do not easily get tired. Even in terms of attendance, it is very good, only those who are sick may miss classes.”

According to the informant who was also a local hired school teacher, engaging children in things they already know has the potential to enhance learning and school attendance. Further, the teacher explained the intellectual benefits children get from engaging in play activities such as *mandwani* as noted during the lesson demonstration. The teacher made this observation:

I think children feel happy when they are allowed to do the things that they see or do at home. Children can easily count things that they make for instance, the slices of hard porridge (buhobe), they can be creative when they dramatise the village activities. They are able to mould clay animals and they have a sense of ownership of those animals. They can count how many animals they have made from clay; how many blocks they have made; how many packs of salt

they have sold, and so forth. Parents in *mandwani* imagine what their children in a household should eat, and also learn how to live and relate with others without fighting.”



Fig.17. Playing *mandwani* in class



Fig.18: Selling items during *mandwani* in class

The lesson had implications for the present study that included using a familiar indigenous play game to teach pre-numeracy concepts to pre-schoolchildren. The lesson was interactive and engaging without anyone feeling left out. Child to child learning has the benefit of creating an all inclusive learning atmosphere just as playing *mandwani* does.

The findings from this study on pretend play were consistent with those established by Morakinyo (1995) as cited by Serpell et al (2005) among low-income African American and European American families who were engaged in pretend play, where it was established that such play activities were essentially relevant for promoting emergent literacy skills among children. The implication here is that pretend play is not only a pastime child activity, but is potentially relevant for enhancing emergent literacy and numeracy skills among children. In my study, the children transformed the play activity as though they were outside the classroom and performed those simple tasks of buying and selling, advertising the toy merchandise, cooking, and making blocks all which were underpinned by some linguistic and mathematical concepts.

4.18.3. The teachers’ organised workshop

After several lesson observations during the course of this study, it was noted that teachers were failing to use local resources in their teaching. The challenge that most of the teachers had was that they were unable to integrate the indigenous musical play games since their Teachers’ Guide books were lacking in this respect. To overcome this challenge, one community teacher who had obtained some training organised by a Non-Governmental Organisation¹¹⁹ operating in Sioma

¹¹⁹ This Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) was SAVE the children -International

district was identified by the researcher as a potential resource person, and was invited to be a facilitator during the workshop.

The workshop was guided by the following two objectives:

- Integrating local musical play games in teaching and learning to promote an indigenised school curriculum
- Documenting known indigenous musical play games for an enriched school curriculum.

The teachers first identified common challenges in implementing the revised school curriculum that required them to teach using a familiar local language. The teachers observed that the revised curriculum had several challenges that included an inadequate availability of indigenous play materials. Common observations that echoed the feelings of many teachers¹²⁰ were noted as,

“But even the play games and songs that children perform these days are mostly Western in nature or coming from urban places. This means that even the language used in play games is not hundred percent siLozi.”

“Our own ECE centres are mostly filled up with Western forms of play materials.”

The presentation by the community teacher on how to incorporate and integrate pretend play (*mandwani*) as an indigenous play game brought new insights on the participants. Many admitted that though they had played the game during their childhood years, they had never thought that the indigenous activity could be used to teach the mathematics concepts of numbers among preschool children. As they took different roles during the demonstrative lesson that lasted for 40 minutes, they expressed delight for this new innovation:

“I have never imagined that mandwani could be used for teaching. All that we know is children of course like the game.”

“I have a strong feeling that my children will enjoy the lesson where mandwani will be used for learning.”

In groups of six, participants deliberated on various games that could be used to teach concepts of number. The teachers noted that *mulabalaba* and *muyato* were among the common games

¹²⁰ These were the teachers in Sioma district who were invited for a one day workshop.

enjoyed by children. The teachers who were knowledgeable in playing *mulabalaba* demonstrated how this indigenous play activity could enhance the addition and subtraction concepts. The teachers later engaged in actual lesson planning where *mulabalaba* could be used at the ECE and grade one level. Other games that were demonstrated were riddles (*mayumbo*) as language games. Group demonstrations provided excellent opportunities for those who had no knowledge of how some of the indigenous play games were performed. The participants also demonstrated how ball throwing games could be used in consolidating concepts of number when used as teaching resources.

Some play songs and dances were identified as being relevant when teaching other subjects like history, integrated science or simply to encourage learners to attend school regularly as the lyrics of the song below show.

| Lozi lyrics | English translation |
|--|---|
| <i>Haneniya kwa sikolo, na katana nyunywani, Hanili ni iswale, kiyale ya fufa.</i> | When I was going to school, I found a bird, when I tried to catch it, it flew away |

The teachers observed that this song could adequately be utilised to encourage the children to be in school especially in those rural places like Sioma where cases of absenteeism were high. Pupils could be encouraged to discuss both the literal and figurative elements of the song. The literal elements of the song related to actual objects in the natural environment like hunting birds when a child was supposed to be in school or going fishing during school times. The figurative elements of this song related to things like quitting school to go for marriage or being enticed by socioeconomic factors such as going into Namibia to seek employment.¹²¹

The other two songs could be used when teaching about the early Stone Age people in Zambia in history. The teachers noted that subjects like history were sometimes taught without any known songs accompanying most topics thereby lessening children's participation in the lesson.

¹²¹ Reports from the DEBO on causes of absenteeism during national examinations in Sioma confirmed this observation.

| Lozi lyrics | English translation |
|---|---|
| <i>Kale, kale baana, neba tina mabindo, A tu puti, Basali bona neli lingo, A tu puti basali bona neli lingo</i> | Long time ago, men used to wear small pieces of animal skins ¹²² from antelopes skins; Women wore full animal skins |

After the lesson presentation, the teachers suggested that pupils could draw pictures of some Stone Age using the indigenous lyrics of the Lozi songs. In this way, the contents of the lesson taught could easily be remembered by the pupils. Some teachers gave examples how certain Bible passages were easily remembered in subjects like Religious Education. The teachers observed that such indigenous songs were relevant in improving the memory of the learners.

The other indigenous play song that participants cited was an action song ‘*Seni tabilwe ki seto*’ (I have been pricked by a thorn). The lyrics have been presented below,

| Lozi lyrics | English translation |
|--|---|
| Caller: <i>Hani sa kona ku zamaya</i> (times 2) Respondents: <i>Se ni tabilwe ki muutwa</i> (times 2) Chorus Caller: <i>Acu</i> Respondents: <i>Mawee, mawee,</i> Caller: <i>Acu</i> Respondents: <i>Se ni tabilwe ki muutwa</i> | I can’t walk any more, I have been pricked by a thorn Chorus Oooch Mother, mother, Oooch I have been pricked by a thorn |

The action song had perceived advantages in that it could act as a motivation song since it required participants to imitate a person who has stepped on an object that ended up pricking him or her. According to the teachers, this action song could also be used as an entry point to

¹²² These small pieces of animal skins only covered the front part of men to avoid exposing their private parts.

teaching cross cutting topics like HIV/AIDS in health education. Like a person who has been pricked by a thorn making it impossible for him or her to walk, HIV/AIDS has impacted negatively on the lives on many people. Many were in pain as a result of the deadly global pandemic. Through the song, children could learn important lessons of abstinence from sexual behaviours likely to infect a person and devastate him/her.

The participants observed that the song had other important values attached to it such as the need to care for those who were affected by the effects of being pricked by thorns, in this case those affected by HIV/AIDS. The cultural values of helping those that were in need were singled out as important cornerstones of the indigenous action play song.

4.18.4. Teachers' views on capacity building workshop on indigenous play materials.

When the workshop ended, the teachers observed that they had learnt many things from the other teachers. This was mostly achieved through the interactive process of sharing the local traditional play games and songs that were demonstrated during the workshop. The teachers acknowledged that they lived with the indigenous and cultural knowledge within their local communities. The teachers observed that using the local play activities in their lessons was a perfect example of connecting the school and home environments. It was observed that there were many things in children's local home environments that were considered insignificant, yet they had they the potential to promote effective teaching and learning if they were utilised. The comments made by the teachers revealed their appreciation of the workshop outcomes as they acknowledged getting useful knowledge on integrating indigenous games in their lessons to make them more meaningful,

“The importance of this workshop on the use and incorporation of local traditional resources has made me to think outside the box in that I can involve the local people to access traditional local knowledge and use it in my lessons.”

“I have learnt how different local traditional games can be used effectively in my teaching and situate my teaching in a local context.”

“I wish this programme came much earlier. I have seen how games can be used in different subjects to bring about meaningful learning using local play materials that children are familiar with.”

Lack of documentation of the indigenous musical play materials was observed to be one among many gaps that led to the marginalisation of the local play games. The teachers resolved to document the games at their respective schools for use during their continuous professional development (CPD) meetings. They acknowledged the relevance of engaging expert community members in their learning as one way of connecting the indigenous play materials with specific learning areas.

4.18.5. Application of some selected indigenous musical play games to the classroom situation

Following the completion of a one day workshop with the school teachers, most of the lower primary school teachers at Sioma Basic School began to demand for the documented materials which were presented to them from the findings of this study, songs and dances, riddles and stories for use in their classrooms. Where the teachers faced some challenges, they consulted me or the other teachers for help. Our district administrative office was only a few metres from the school, so it became easy for the teachers to engage me on some issues they found challenging. I learnt new insights from the teachers’ interactive experiences with me.

We adopted, and adapted some old stories from the Zambia Primary Course Teachers’ Guide¹²³ books that I accessed and found many interesting indigenous stories there in addition to the ones I had already documented. This process also applied to riddles. Teachers made extensive use of these materials to corroborate areas that were lacking in such materials in the revised national curriculum. For instance, in line with the stress on both literacy and numeracy activities at both the preschool and the grade one and two classes, we adapted some of the pedagogical guidelines provided by Okrah and Boahene (2014), and incorporated those devised during the teachers’ one day workshop to suit the rural setting and context of Sioma, some of which came from the local music volunteer. For instance, the preschool section has since found it more rewarding to teach

¹²³ Where these books were found, they were not used and sometimes they were simply left to be eaten by termites in some school cupboards. In four groups, the teachers analysed the existing books and presented to them and those which they had carried. Lesson plans were drawn, and presentations were done.

using a ring formation where children sit on the local mats (*miseme*) as opposed to the small plastic chairs. The following are some of the selected indigenous games and songs that were found to be relevant.

4.18.5.1. Indigenous play games for emergent literacy and numeracy

The following two indigenous play games were found to be potentially helpful for developing emergent literacy and numeracy especially among preschool children.

- **Using indigenous games to teach literacy**

The teachers involved in the utilisation of these two indigenous play activities first identified the reading challenges that their classes had. After the workshop they had attended, they decided to use their innovations on the two games in two different schools in Sioma district. *Kañolo* (letter) and another local game known as *ñela* (a guessing game) were adequately demonstrated as indigenous games that could be used to teach reading activities. Two case studies involving two schools were observed in Sioma district.

- **Using indigenous *ñela* game to teach literacy**

During the first lesson involving *ñela* game, grade 2 children were first asked to master some letters from the alphabet. During the play activity pupils were allowed to engage in the guessing play game. The teacher drew a maze structure as shown in Fig 28. Points were gained by moving a pointer along the corners of the maze. The game was played in two rounds. In round one, the players were to make guesses to find out who was keeping the hidden object (*ñela*). In round two, the players were expected to read out the words given to each group. After tossing a coin, group B were expected to look for the *ñela* while group A was in receipt of the *ñela*. Each correct move was rewarded by a point. The second format of the game comprised selected words and each correct reading of the words was rewarded. After the game, the teacher gave five words as a spelling exercise to all the class members.



Fig. 19: Performing the guessing game



Fig. 20: Applying the guessing game to a literacy activity

- ***Kañolo* (letter)**

This indigenous game was conducted as an outdoor activity under a big tree. While the pupils were in the circle, one pupil at a time was given a piece of paper on which was written a name of a pupil to receive the letter. The rationale behind the game was to make the pupils read out the names of their fellow class members. Pupils participated in the game with lots of fun.

This is how the game was performed: children squatted in a circle while one child was chosen to deliver a letter to the player whose name was on the piece of paper. The player was expected to mention the following words as he/she trotted around other participants outside the circle before he/she finally reached the person who would receive the letter:

| Lozi words | English translation |
|--|---|
| <i>Ni ku ñolezi kañolo, kono a ki kahao, kapa yo, Kono ki kayo...</i> | I have a letter for you, it is not for this one, or this one , But it is for this one... |

When he/she reached the person earmarked to receive the letter, the player dropped the letter behind that person and ran round the circle while the recipient of the letter was also expected to run as fast as he/she could around the circle in the opposite direction to reach the spot where the person who received the letter squatted. The intention here was to compete for the place where the player in receipt of the letter was squatting. If the person delivering the letter successfully outwitted the person expected to receive the letter, then that person lost his/her place and had to

start the game and look for a place to sit by placing the letter behind another player of his/her choice.

- **Cognitive implications of the game.**

When this game was analysed in terms of its cognitive underpinnings, it was noted that it had the potential to develop participants' reading, listening and speaking skills especially among children in grade 1 and 2. In order to recite the words involved in the play game while touching the heads of the other players, the player carrying the letter was required to memorise the words. A participant was expected to read the name silently, then recite the words accompanying the game aloud in the hearing of all the other players and this had the potential to engage participants in much verbalisation while others were expected to pay particular attention in the process. Competitors in this game usually lost out due to failure to locate their target positions. Reading, speaking and listening were important emergent literacy skills that were likely to be achieved by preschool learners in a relaxed and playful manner.



Fig. 21: A grade 1 girl running with the letter or *kañolo* in her hand

- **Using indigenous games to teach numeracy**

The study found that there were some indigenous games that could be used to teach emergent numeracy among children.

- **Riddles and emergent numeracy**

The grade one class community school whose teacher had attended the workshop demonstrated how he had been teaching addition to the grade one pupils. The school was located in the

Silowana plains among the Shanja speaking people.¹²⁴ He first asked the pupils two simple known riddles. The riddles were used as his entry point for teaching

| Lozi riddles | English translation |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Teacher: <i>Ako?</i> | Here it comes |
| Pupils: <i>Akate/ (keye)</i> | Let it come |
| T: <i>Ndu ye sina munyako?</i> | A house without a door |
| Ps: <i>Lii</i> | An egg |
| T: <i>Komu i potoloha sileze?</i> | An ox goes round a muddy spot? |
| Ps: <i>Ki mukwenyana' hao</i> | It is your in-law (Meaning you cannot step on your in-laws just like an ox cannot step into a muddy sport). |

After the second riddle involving an ox, the teacher asked the pupils to tell him the number of horns an ox has. The pupils' hands were all up as they chorused 'two.' He later asked them how many legs it had, they gave him the correct answer as 'four.' He asked the class:

'How many horns do two oxen have?'

'Four,' answered one girl.

From there the teacher extended his number of horns to three, four, and five oxen. Pupils were very active in answering the questions. Children's participation was very impressive. For a class activity, he used both the legs and horns of oxen and pupils wrote the answers in their books. I found this to be an impressive and interesting way of teaching multiplication as repeated addition using riddles and objects that were very familiar with the children in their ecological settings.

According to Ishumi, (1980) cited in Kwadwo and Boahene (2014), riddles as learning resources could be likened to modern psychological tests that assess knowledge and creativity, and therefore capable of sharpening children's reasoning and logical thinking skills. For instance, one grade two teacher remarked how interactive her class became:

¹²⁴ Shanja is one small ethnic group among the Lozi speaking people. Shanjios are mostly pastoralists.

“I have found the approach to be very rewarding. When you just mention ‘Ako’ (here it comes), everyone stops whatever they are doing. I learnt that children have knowledge of riddles that we as teachers have failed to realise most of the times because we underrate them. Our riddle sessions extend into reading activities that have seen the participation of most of the children in class.”¹²⁵

In Senanga district, similar observations were reported on the use of riddles for literacy activities:

“I have managed to create different reading activities based on the letters and words that the scheme of work expects me to teach the children. Children learn in a very relaxed and happy manner as they laugh because of the nature of the riddles.”¹²⁶

These were some of the positive outcomes that teachers reported. Most of the class observations conducted especially in Sioma which became the main centre on the educational and pedagogical implications of the study outcomes revealed that an incorporation of indigenous play games contributed significantly to the attainment of the national educational policy. This was consistent with the observation that “critical thinking is best developed through one’s mother tongue” (Bhushan, 2016, p.134).

For games such as *mulabalaba*, teachers in grades one and two used the game by giving it a specific time frame to determine the winners. This approach adopted from the South African model was found to be educationally helpful in that pupils tended to increase their levels of speed when playing the game. This was an essential cognitive process for enhancing quick thinking among players.

4.19. General findings: Challenges in the implementation of an indigenous driven curriculum in Zambia

4.19.1. Lack of indigenous play materials in the schools

This study had established that in many of the schools visited Western Province, there were no indigenous play materials in existence. Most of the ECE play parks were decorated with Western

¹²⁵ Personal communication with a grade one teacher at Sioma Primary School.

¹²⁶ Interviews with a grade two teacher in Senanga district.

play materials such as swings, merry-go-rounds, tyre tunnels, football and netball pitches. Others included balancing bars. Most of these play materials were in bad shape. For instance, the Merry-go-rounds were broken down and non-functional. The implication of such scenarios meant that these Western play materials were hard to maintain and were costly to purchase especially for the poor rural schools. But policy demanded that such be found in place before any ECE centre could be opened (MOE, 2016). It was also clear that by supporting such play materials, the indigenous play materials would easily lose popularity in preference for the Western ones that received Standards and Evaluation Guidelines support. However, indigenous play materials tend to be cheaper and cost effective.

4.19.2. Staffing

In terms of staffing, most ECE centres lacked qualified teachers while others were overburdened with many pupils to attend to. For instance, at the time of this study, there were only 12 qualified ECE teachers in Sioma district against 44 established centres. In some cases, the ECE teachers were not competent in the local Lozi lingua franca making it even more difficult for the ECE learners to understand what the teacher was teaching. In such instances, teachers resorted to teaching using English and English rhymes and songs in the class. This in itself was a recipe for creating serious mismatches with the government policy of teaching and learning using a familiar local language in the initial grades¹²⁷. This was very common with some preschools observed in the study.

4.19.3. Procurement of teaching play materials in schools

This study found that there was an imbalance in the way teaching materials were procured and supplied. For instance, in physical education, expensive and large quantities of Western play materials were found in most Secondary Schools while the Primary Schools had nothing. There were chess and table tennis boards and no traditional *mulabalaba* boards. Similarly, costly Western musical instruments were found in the same Secondary Schools while Primary schools had nothing. While there is stress on using local materials in schools, one wonders how the production of these low cost materials from the local people could find their way into primary schools under such conditions of government ambivalence. Despite the fact that local materials

¹²⁷ Observations made at one school in Sioma. Recruitment and posting of staff members has been a challenge for the Ministry of Education during the recent economic recession.

are cheaper and easier to make, they were found to be missing in the schools visited. There were no traditional xylophones (*bilimba*)¹²⁸ and in some cases no drums yet Western piano keyboards and brass band instruments among others were in stock.



Fig.22: Urban schools with well stocked modern musical instruments

4.19.4. Failure by government to emphasise the value of local languages in both government and private schools

Government's position on this issue was found to be ambivalent. While government had put in place a policy framework that ushered in the use of local languages at the lower levels of the primary schools (MOE, 2013), most preschools that were privately run were found to offer English and more of Western play materials. For instance, during a visit to one private preschool in Sioma, the teachers interviewed revealed that children were mostly taught in English. When the proprietor of the school, a white man from South Africa involved in some religious activities, was asked why he did not comply with the government directive to teach using a familiar local language, he responded:

*“English is an international language. Your children here should learn that language right from the start for them to compete favourably on the world job market.”*¹²⁹

These privately run preschools have ended up attracting most parents who want their children to learn and speak English right from a young age. This view from one focus group participant echoed the views of many:

¹²⁸ Plural form of xylophone (*silimba*). In modern day harsh economic times, *silimba* is figuratively used to mean group cooperation where members contribute a certain amount of money and alternate receipt of such money to each member as a way of survival. It is a strong symbol of group unity and cooperation just like the indigenous Lozi xylophone is played by two cooperating partners to sustain a harmonious musical performance.

¹²⁹ Field visit to one private preschool during routine monitoring programmes in Sioma district.

“Even when it comes to our pre-school here, most parents these days would want to take their children to centres where they teach the children how to speak good English. For instance, at this centre, some parents have withdrawn their children because they feel their children just come here to play. There was one parent in the local community who used to lock his child in the house and left the TV on for the child to watch some programmes and learn how to speak English.”¹³⁰

This point helps to illustrate the alienation that young children who cannot decide on their own are usually subjected to. Because of the emphasis on Western games and lack of robust programmes to strengthen local initiatives by government, such initiatives only remain on paper. In a cultural orientation like that of the Lozi people that view play as a pastime activity, seeing children play tends to lead to the perception that children are simply wasting time. Decolonisation of minds of the local people to appreciate the value of play largely depends on the kind of efforts that a responsible ministry like the Ministry of Education attaches to the promotion and implementation of local and traditional materials in the school curriculum. Leaving such a task for individual teacher innovations as noted from the various focus group discussions gives the impression that inclusion of such materials is open to individual preferences.

4.19. 5. Teachers and modern innovations

The study found that most of the teachers were not innovative in using existing technology to their advantage when it came to teaching. For instance, when they were asked whether they made use of their mobile phones to record indigenous materials for their lessons, only very few teachers answered in the affirmative. It was clear from the responses received that teachers' innovations were lacking despite many of the teachers having good mobile phones. In Sioma district, none of the teachers present during the organised workshop had ever attempted to use their mobile phones for recordings. However, this is an issue that required teachers' innovations since mobile phones are personal properties. While it may be argued that this has an additional cost attached to it, simple recordings of everyday music activities of children may not need any money at all but the teacher's availability.

¹³⁰ Personal communication with a preschool teacher in Sioma district

4.20. Chapter summary

Part A of this chapter on the study findings was aimed at unearthing the significant cultural values underpinning indigenous musical play game activities to justify their educational implications. The indigenous play games and songs that the Lozi children engaged in were largely underpinned by inherent survival values dictated by their ecological setting as well as the sociocultural values. Children intrinsically embraced and imbibed those cultural values in their socialisation process. Values of hard work; values of appreciating one's local ecological environment; values of respect and obedience; values of caring and sharing things with others, and; and values of appreciating one's cultural heritage, were all subtly embedded in different indigenous musical play games for the education of the children. The salient cultural principles guiding children's participation in such indigenous play games were aimed at preparing them for fitness in the indigenous communities where they lived to function as responsible citizens. Unfortunately, despite policy pronouncements of promoting cultural values in schools as a means of educating children for the future, my findings revealed the opposite. For instance, while the education policy is premised on appreciating Zambia's cultures, customs, and traditions, as well as commitment to preservation of the ecosystem (MOE, 1996), schools were least supported to achieve these goals. Indigenous cultural values of respect and caring for others were not promoted. The type of games and songs being promoted largely emphasised the Western values. The argument here is that though the school curriculum is not hermetically sealed against indigenous cultural values and practices, there should be a strong focus on the inclusion and promotion of such indigenous phenomena instead of ignoring or neglecting them.

Part B of this chapter has shown that Lozi children's indigenous musical play games are underpinned by many intellectual benefits that are potentially useful for enhancing the cognitive skills of children. For instance, in playing most of the games, children were expected to pay particular attention to the rules governing the activity. Children were required to make intelligent calculations to win a particular game, while other games were found to develop both the numeracy and literacy skills of children. From what has been presented, I argue that using a culturally rich resource in school was likely to influence the thinking processes of children. This section has also shown that different indigenous Lozi play games were played during various seasons which imply that teachers could use these games during various seasons of the year to

strengthen the inculcation of some key concepts in the areas of interest. As pedagogical tools, the indigenous play games also had the potential to create much concentration when performing the games as well as creating a lot of interest for both the players and the local communities.

The last part of the chapter has highlighted key findings that included a critical lack of indigenous play materials in the teachers' resource books. While indigenous play materials were in abundance in the local community, they were mostly not reflected in any way in the school curriculum. The section has also shown that most teachers were not very knowledgeable about indigenous play activities while the school curriculum was still heavily dominated by Western play games and songs which were found to be unrelated to the everyday experiences of most rural children. The study findings has also revealed that common local songs in schools only help to promote the acquisition of certain values at the expense of those most valued in the community. For instance, the English rhymes and nursery songs noted earlier were at variance with what local children mostly knew. While reading and writing are essentially valued intellectual skills, the cultural values also need to be emphasised. The chapter has also shown that there were perceived double standards on the part of policy makers for promoting a localised curriculum while insisting on the inclusion of some foreign western materials in the same curriculum. There was therefore a mismatch in terms of policy initiatives and the implementation processes. While Standards Officers were concerned with the implementation process, those on the ground such as school head teachers and teachers were sometimes not fully involved in the implementation process. It is therefore evident to note from the aforementioned issues that the school curriculum was devoid of relevant and useful indigenous resources through which linkages between the school and home environments could be connected. Introducing such indigenous materials in schools had the potential to instill the cultural and educational values in children especially those in the remote rural areas where such values are indispensable.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1. Overview

This chapter discusses the research findings presented in chapter four in the context of the three overarching objectives that guided the study to show how Lozi children's indigenous musical play games were rich sources of knowledge acquisition. As noted in the previous chapter, these play games were found to be laden with various substantive cultural values relevant for the socialisation process of children. The play games were equally found to be underpinned by numerous intellectual and educational benefits. The current chapter therefore provides a synthesis of the cultural and educational values of these indigenous play games to justify why they should be included and promoted in the Zambian school curriculum. The discussion that follows is premised on the indigenous musical play games of Lozi children in the context of the first study objective.

5.2. Indigenous musical play games of Lozi children.

The outcomes of this study in relation to my auto-ethnographic reflections based in the early section of chapter four provided examples of indigenous musical play games that children were exposed to from an early age. Such indigenous musical activities provided examples of some potentially rich cultural resources for teaching pre-literacy and numeracy activities among the school children. For instance, introducing lullabies and chants to the children could easily help children to connect their own home experiences of caring for their own family siblings or when they use such songs during play. They could be used for enhancing emergent literacy activities in preschool settings and were therefore 'funds of knowledge' in line with Moll et al (1992) theory. I found this to be consistent with Okwany (2016) who opines that songs, storytelling and local games are vital for early learning of children and are therefore potentially relevant in the ECE intervention programmes. I also found that children's early exposure to musical chants based on observations of various birds and animals in their local ecological settings were consistent with the theory of Gardner where sensitivity to the local environment is classified as a dimension of naturalistic intelligence (Timmins, 1996). Children's' chants and songs were potentially relevant for enhancing knowledge in the ecological system. In chapter two of this study, it was noted that

Greek form of education emphasised the use of play and songs as a means of teaching concepts to children (Stamou, 2002). The tendency of neglecting such kinds of cultural resources negates the traditional approach to early child education in a cultural context and likelihood of music development later in life.

In the sections that follow, I argue that the indigenous play games have their own strong cultural orientations and values connected with the indigenous form of education that emphasised the acquisition of survival and sustainable lifelong skills. My argument complements the views of other African scholars such as Nsamenang (2005), Serpell (2011), Ng'asike (2014) Banda (2010), Mtonga (2012), and Ejuu (2019) among others, who have argued for curriculum reforms that consider the inclusion of indigenous cultural resources such as children's play games as vital components for the socialisation and enculturation processes of African children. Apart from the survival values, indigenous musical play games were essentially relevant for the development of the affective and cognitive capacities of children (Blacking, 1988; Mtonga, 2012, Mukela, 2013). Howard (2014) avers that substantive themes of music's sociocultural meanings and functions tend to be missing from most school curricular practices. This in itself is a serious gap that this study attempted to fill emanating from the valuable insights from the study findings presented in chapter four.

5.3. Acquisition of sociocultural values through indigenous play games

The outcomes of this study have revealed that as children engaged in indigenous play games such pretend play locally known as *mandwani*, they acquired various sociocultural values relevant for their socialisation process. It was observed that *mandwani* helped the Lozi children to imbibe such Lozi values as respect, caring for others, and sharing play objects with others. In the context of the discussion that follow in this section, *mandwani* or pretend play will be used as a case in point to explore the cultural values and practices necessary for the socialisation and enculturation of Lozi children.

- **The cultural values of respect and obedience**

In my analysis of *mandwani* presented in chapter four, it was noted that children for both genders addressed each other using culturally accepted standards of respect (*likute*). Children clapped their hands when giving or receiving objects from their fellow play mates. During such moments

of play, they were encouraged and taught to kneel down when talking to their surrogate parents as a way of showing respect. They were also encouraged to lower their eyes when talking to those occupying positions of high responsibilities at *mandwani* as expressions of respect.

Among the Lozi people, the value of respect is highly emphasised and is underscored by the proverb ‘*wa mumona maoyo, a tunda kwaanu,*’ meaning when you see a child exhibiting good manners, then he or she is coming from well cultured people. Respect (*likute/maoyo*)¹³¹ is highly prized and children are taught to be respectful from an early age by way of clapping hands (*kukandelela*) when giving or receiving gifts or objects from an elderly person. They are not expected to look straight in the eyes of elders, but should lower their eyes while bending or kneeling down when talking to elders. A child who demonstrates respect (*likute*) is referred to by such terms as ‘*mwana zwezwi*’ or one who has been well brought up, ‘*ya na ni ngana/butali*’, or one who is intelligent or clever. The one who lacks in such virtues is referred to as ‘*ya sina likute, muñete*’ (one who is disrespectful, an alien)).

Respect for cultural values during *mandwani* was also revealed in the upholding of such cultural values as engaging in mock dancing and singing in imitation of the actual adult rites of passage or *sikenge* as processes through which children gained knowledge in their tradition or *sizo*. During the course of this study, findings obtained revealed the strong desire that higher institutions in the Lozi administrative structures yearn to see in their children and youths: to have children and youths who were grounded in the Lozi culture or *sizo*.¹³² The inscription on the Lozi xylophone captured during this study helps to stress this point: ‘*Mukuteke sizo*’ or respect tradition/culture (see fig. 23 in this chapter). This observation also helps to reveal what society expects from the school curriculum.

¹³¹ These words are usually used interchangeably to mean respect. *Likute* is the Kololo form while *maoyo* is the indigenous Luyana form. Closely associated with *likute/maoyo* is *ngana* or intelligence or cleverness.

¹³² Barotse Royal Establishment stakeholders meeting held in Sioma district in 2020 where the Lozi Prime Minister or *Minyolui* was the delegation leader.



Fig. 23: An inscription on the *silimba*: *Mukuteke siz*o (Respect culture)

Findings obtained from this study are consistent with those noted by Gluckman (1951), Jalla (1909), and Lubinda (2004) on the cultural aspect of respect and orderliness among the Lozi people. These studies have shown that respect is one of the most prized virtues in the Lozi culture. Stirke (1922), Mupatu (1959), Mbikusita-Lewanika (1979) have shown that during *mandwani*, children made mock representations of court proceedings as they saw such daily activities at the royal court. Among the Lozi people, respect (*likute*) is mostly seen in the way Lozi subjects conduct themselves at the royal court. Mupatu (1959) makes the following observation, “for a Lozi, respect is not slavery as most people tend to think” (p.44.) (Translated by Mukela). Lubinda (2004) has argued that conceptualisation of respect (*likute*) is closely associated with intelligence among the Lozi people. It is assessed by a diligent manner in which one’s speech resembles elderly people.

Apart from *mandwani*, this study also found that there were some play songs such as ‘*Tukatwale malonga kuli mwangana*’ (Let’s take the plates and goats to the chief), and ‘*Timbokee, timbokee, uka bapala ni sitoho sa hao*’ (Ostracised, ostracised, you will play [alone] with your head) discussed in chapter four which served as clear examples of how the cultural value of respect was promoted through play. These play songs were found to be consistent with Nompula (2011) who argued that, “Songs teach children manners and correct social behaviour. Through indigenous music and games, children not only learn the language, but also how to behave (p.372).” Thus, correct social behaviour was expected from children from an early age.

Nompula (2011) further observes the cultural relevancy of such play repertoire as a subtle means of achieving respect and cooperation among players:

Through call and response game songs, children learn to listen, respect and cooperate with the leader, which in turn develops respect for and cooperative spirit in working with the leaders in society (p.372).

Elsewhere in Africa, a study in Botswana conducted by Tsamaase et al (2020) found similar findings on respect as a valued cultural aspect among the Batswana people. Children were expected to show respect by way of clapping their hands. In South Africa, Daswa (2018) argues that *Mahundwane*¹³³ or pretend play as practiced by the Vhavenda children helped them to respect those in authority. This is consistent with the African values where respect for established authority is emphasised (Tiberondwa, 1978, Achebe, 1959). In this regard, my argument on this point is that schools should act as bridges that connect and strengthen cultural values. For instance, the cultural value of clapping hands or looking down when children talk to their teachers should be upheld in schools to promote the deeply entrenched African values. Teachers in schools should not rebuke children who demonstrate such behaviour, but should instead learn and appreciate such cultural practices as evidence of children's strong orientations to their indigenous cultural knowledge. There should be no discrepancies between the school curriculum and the goals of the social group where children are coming from (Serpell, 1993).

- **The cultural value of sharing**

This study found that children played *mandwani* and other games in groups and not as individuals, and shared their play objects. This was consistent with the Lozi proverb of '*tulye tonje*,' meaning let's eat together. An analysis of this cultural practice in the wider Lozi context meant more than sharing food only. It meant living in harmony with others and the established institutions. In this manner, children functionally became culturally literate with the practices of their own communities (Serpell, 2001), and was a typical representation of how they were expected to fit in as adults consistent with the observation by Greenfield (1994) on the cultural significance of games. Learning to live in harmony with others in the Lozi sense was an expression of intelligence. Mishra (1997), in citing studies by Berry (1984); Dasen (1984);

¹³³ The reader may wish to know that *Mandwani* is the corrupted Lozi version of the Venda term *Mahundwane*. The reader is referred to chapter one of this study on the Kololo occupation legacy of Barotseland. Similar terms such as *ngana* and *butali* in use among the Lozi have their origins from this historical occupation (cf Blacking, J.(1988).

Serpell (1989), and Tap'e (1994) on the various conceptualisation of intelligence makes the following observation,

in some societies holistic rather than analytic problem solving is culturally valued, and deliberation rather than haste is considered as the proper course of action. In these societies, collective discussion rather than individual reflection may be the preferred cognitive mode (p.148).

Among the Lozi people, the cultural value of sharing was given priority by parents to toddlers in a playful manner where parents gave objects to the toddlers and thereafter invited the toddlers to give the object back to the parents. In several studies in Africa, the culture of sharing is encouraged at an early age. For instance, among the Wolof people of Senegal, Rabain (1979) cited in Serpell (2008) provides accounts of how this important cultural value among infants and toddlers is nurtured from an early age. Similar cultural practices of teaching sharing at an early age have also been reported among the Nso' people of Cameroon (Serpell & Nsamenang, 2014). In Zambia, Mtonga (2012) shows how Tumbuka mothers give items to infants and expect them to give back such items to their mothers as a way of enhancing the value of sharing among children. Clearly, the schools dominated by Western values of individualism tend to overlook such important social cognition cultural processes.

However, this contrasts sharply with the modern trends where individualism is promoted in schools. Findings obtained in this study revealed that although children played together in their nursery play parks, they never shared their meals together but ate their pre-parked meals alone. In this manner, children were alienated from their core African values while schools seemed to legitimise such practices. This was a gap in itself over what children learnt at home and what they found at school. The school curriculum was found to be silent on this important cultural value. This is one criticism that has been leveled against modern school systems for alienating children from their indigenous core values (Nsamenang, 2008; Marfo & Biersteker, 2011, Serpell, 1996).

- **The cultural value of caring for others**

Closely connected to the cultural value of sharing was the value of caring for others. In the analysis of the verbatim expressions from children at *mandwani*, this study found that older

siblings in the mock families were expected to take care of the young ones. This cultural practice was also observed by Weisner (1997) about Kenyan children. Caring for others as an important cultural aspect, found its expression in the Lozi proverb of ‘*minowe ni munu*,’ meaning your young brother or sister is also a person. It was echoed through play songs and dances. Thus, such play songs as ‘*Haneni kula, hakuna yanani shwela makeke*’ (when I was sick, no one felt pity for me) presented in chapter four, demonstrates how children acquired the social cognitive values of social responsibility. Serpell (2011) has observed that social responsibility is not only a dimension of intelligence but a necessary education tool. One weakness that has been leveled against most African educators is their claim that “the cultivation of social responsibility is one of the goals of education, but the practices ...often seem better attuned to the promotion of individual achievements without reference to their impact on society” (Serpell, 2017, pp 893-4). Unfortunately, social competences that include being helpful and socially responsible are in most cases overlooked in Western psychological theories of intelligence (Nsamenang & Lamb, 2009). Worse still is the fact that such theories and practices seem to gain their foothold in some African higher institution of learning. The new forms of education currently in place seem to encourage individualistic tendencies as opposed to the communal approach embraced in the African proverb of ‘it takes the whole village to raise a child’ (Ferla, 2019). Gaskins (2013) underscores the significance of pretend play as,

children chose to explore through pretend play not only those economic activities they will participate in as adults, but also the full range of cultural knowledge that will constitute their adult worldview (p.229).

- **The Lozi concept of ‘*butu*’ or being human**

Findings obtained from this study have revealed as children imbibed the cultural values discussed above at *mandwani*, they attained ‘*butu*’ or being human in the process of their development. The conceptualisation of ‘*butu*’ in the Lozi sense is the total sum of an individual’s socialisation process where kindness and being sympathetic and compassionate to others in the larger society is manifested. ‘*Butu*’ is linked to the human heart (*pilu*) as a metaphor of a true person, and is stressed by such expressions as ‘*mutu ki pilu*’ which simply means the true worth of a person is measured by the nature of his or her heart. The implication here is that the heart defines an individual’s character in relation to others. It is this vital aspect of human development

that the Lozi people expect their children to embrace in the process of development. One who cannot control his or her emotions is referred to as '*ya sina pilu*' literally one who has no heart, or *ya shwile pilu* (literally, one whose 'heart is dead' meaning one who over reacts in a dangerous manner). I found Blacking's (1988) analysis of *Vhuthu* values among the Venda people of South Africa to be applicable to the Lozi people. Blacking observed that the term referred to a person's kindness, neighbourliness, and compassion. The conceptualisation of the human heart as the centre of an individual's character was found to be consistent with the other African and Zambian cultures. For instance, among the Venda, '*mbilu*' means the heart (Blacking, 1988), and among the Chewa of Eastern Province in Zambia it is known as '*mtima*' (Mtonga, 2012). According to Greenfield et al., (2003), this conceptualisation of an individual's character is more important in a culture that places greater value on social character. According to Nxumalo and Mncube (2019), well thought-out indigenous pedagogies that include children's indigenous games can be used to teach *ubuntu* values. Findings from this study have revealed how indigenous musical play games like *mandwani* were underpinned by important cultural values such as respect, sharing things, and caring for others.

- **Other cultural values gained from sociodramatic play (*mandwani*)**

Playing outdoor activities such as *mandwani* presented in chapter four of this study helped children to learn many things from their peers. Children learnt how to relate with others and created social harmony in the process, through singing and dancing. They appreciated the aesthetic values of music and its role in society and developed their artistic talents in the process (Odero, 2016). They engaged in fishing and hunting, and developed necessary skills in the process. They appreciated the cultural values of hard work demonstrated through making of play toys, building and cooking. Lozi children learnt to identify the names of indigenous trees that made strong fibres for tying during the construction of their small thatched huts. This was an indigenous way of learning and consistent with the observation made by Haagen (1994) among the Aboriginal children of Australia;

In the camp you can hear the children hour after hour, laughing and shouting at their play... Out in the scrub with their tiny digging sticks they mimic the action of their mothers, and at any age when the white child is learning to read books, they are busy, all unconscious to themselves, learning to read the book of nature. They gradually come to know where to find bulbs and seeds

that are good to eat, and to recognise the tracks of every animal, large and small, that burrows in the ground or nests in the trees (p.7).

The outcomes of this study in relation to an indigenous play game like *mandwani* and the attendant lessons it conveyed were found to be missing in the school curriculum. Teachers were more preoccupied with completing the school syllabus than providing lifelong cultural lessons. In their criticism of modern day school curricula, Paradise and Rogoff (2009) have argued that against the relegation of informal ways of learning outside school as being “inherently less conceptual or cognitive than formalised school learning” (p. 102). They have pointed out that it reflects a cultural school-centric bias that is misplaced. According to Paradise and Rogoff (2009), playing games and children’s imitation of everyday adult activities is another form of learning, an informal type of education. This is consistent with the arguments made by Provelengios and Fesakis, (2011) that games in all their forms have always found application as a means of education and socialisation. I agree with the observation by Nyota and Mapara (2008) that children’s socio-dramatic play (*mahumbwe*) among the Shona people of Zimbabwe instilled the cognitive skills that were valued for adult life. As observed from this study, *mandwani* had the necessary potential elements of educating children for their future consistent with the Zambian national policy of Educating Our Future (MOE, 1996).

A documentary analysis of *mandwani* play in Western Province has revealed that this indigenous activity remains one of the most popular and favourite pastime activities among the Lozi children (Stirke, 1922; Mupatu, 1959; Mbikusita-Lewanika, 1979; Mukela, 2013). Given its popularity as a rich indigenous play activity, *mandwani* could be used to teach the values and practices of the Lozi people of respect (*likute*), sharing and caring for others in a playful manner. However, despite its long history of existence in the province, this rich indigenous cultural resource has remained neglected in the school curriculum as observed from this study.

5.4. *Mandwani* as a context in which children can develop competencies within their zone of proximal development

Arising from the observations made on the social cognition value of *mandwani*, I argue that the play game provided an opportunity for learning, and therefore acted as a context in which

children could develop competencies within their zone of proximal development. Vygotsky (1978) defined the zone of proximal development as

the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p.86).

As observed in this study, children engaged in *mandwani* activities played at the periphery of the villages in groups. During these periods of play, young children were presented with tasks such as cooking by their surrogate parents that they needed to complete. Children were taught by their fellow play mates how to cook good meals. When it came to playing board games such as *muyato* and *mulabalaba*, children disclosed that they learnt the rules of the games by observations and by being taught by their friends. Verbatim expressions such as,

Wena u inzi mwa wani, ñola wani sina cwana” (you are in the first stage; write the number 1 like this). *A ki mona moi ñolelwa tu, ñola cwana*”¹³⁴ (this is not the way you should write the number 2, write it like this),

seem to be attempts by a “more competent peer” to prompt the younger child’s development within his/her zpd. Through the process of mentorship, children with less skill benefited from their interactions with those that were knowledgeable in some skills. Older children taught the young ones certain acceptable behaviours. I found this to be consistent with the observation by Rogoff (2003) when she notes,

When children play, they often emulate adult and other community roles that they observe. They experiment with and practice social roles in which they may later participate or that complement their current roles (e.g., playing mother and father or playing teacher) (pp.298-299).

The sociocultural theory of Vygotsky has implications for this study because of its focus on the central role that culture plays in the development of the sociocognitive processes of a child. The development of the child’s cognitive processes is explained as taking place within the sociocultural context. Rogoff and Morelli (1989) have made this point very clear when they noted: “Vygotsky’s theory offers a picture of human development that stresses how development is inseparable from human social and cultural activities” (p.13). Bruner (1996) has argued that

¹³⁴ Interview with the music teacher expert in Nalolo district.

“learning and thinking are always situated in a cultural setting and always dependent upon the utilisation of cultural resources” (p.4). The significance of play for children’s development has aptly been stated by Vygotsky (1978) who opined that:

Play creates the zone of proximal development of the child. In play, a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself. As in the focus of a magnifying glass, play contains all developmental tendencies in a condensed form and is itself a major source of development” (p.102).

The theory is also instrumental for this study because of its emphasis for educationist to use existing tools within a given culture to facilitate meaningful learning. An understanding of how the process of cognitive development occurs within the zone of proximal development through peer mentorship deserves the attention of all key stakeholders in the provision and delivery of quality and meaning education. Nsamenang (2005) explains the interplay between cognition and development within an African cultural context as;

We interpret development in African social thought as the acquisition and growth of the competencies in the physical, social and emotional domains and the moral maturity required to competently engage in the world, implying the family, community, and the society at large (3).

5.5 Aquatic indigenous play games

The findings from the study have revealed that the existence of large water bodies in the province provided an affordance for play to most Lozi children. Aquatic play games such as swimming and paddling were also necessary survival skills. In order to promote these survival skills, children engaged in various indigenous aquatic play games such as hide and seek (*muipato*), chasing and touching each other (*butongwe*), and breath control (*mucupo*) to acquire the valued cultural skills of swimming in preparation for fitness in the environment. I found the observations by Leibs (2004) that swimming in Africa was both a survival skill and recreational activity to be true for the Lozi children. Stirke (1922) makes this observation on paddling,

Paddling itself is quite a fine art, and to be a paddler in the Barozi sense of the word is to have a more than useful knowledge of the science (p.55).

The observations by Stirke that paddling was an important indigenous cultural practice was found to be supported by the outcomes of this study. Further, Namafe’s (2004) observation that

to the Lozi – speaking people, the flood centrally influences their philosophical, religious, and cultural approach to life as well as their economic, aesthetic and other elements of life were supported by the affinity that Lozi children had towards indigenous aquatic play games.

The aesthetic element of swimming was usually demonstrated during the *kuomboka* annual ceremony when amateurs in paddling were thrown overboard from the *Nalikwanda* barge into the water. This traditional practice constituted part of the play game by adults during the *kuomboka* ceremony, (Mukela, 2013) while the act of paddling itself was a form of play on the flood play ground or *patelo* of water (Sibetta, 1971). Swimming and paddling were highly emphasised by parents to their children. Therefore, among the Lozi people, indigenous aquatic play games drew upon the existing natural water affordances of the environment and turned such into play forms consistent with Gibson’s theory of affordances (Gibson, 1979, Gibson, 1982, Fjortft, 2004). Environmental ecologies provided rich and realistic skills for the cognitive developmental process of children (Reed, 1993; Bronfenbrenner, 1993). From this observation, it could then be argued that Lozi children were products of their own environments consistent with the observation by Bruner (1996) that “culture shapes mind, and that it provides us with the toolkit by which we construct not only our worlds but our very conceptions of ourselves and our powers” (p.x). This observation is further supported by Nsamenang’s (2005) argument that in the African context,

Learning is not separated into discrete disciplines, but all strands of it are interwoven into a common tapestry, which is learned by children at different developmental stages, who participate in the cultural and economic life of the family and society (p.1).

To what extent did these survival skills of swimming and paddling feature in the school curriculum? Teachers’ responses in the study revealed that the Zambian school curriculum was deficient in its inclusion of indigenous play games. While swimming was perceived to be an important indigenous activity, the type of swimming styles noted in the school textbooks, as presented in part C of chapter four were at variance with the indigenous practices. They were mainly tailored for aquatic competitive purposes. Meanwhile, this study found that there were no deliberate programmes in schools in Western Province to promote the indigenous skills of swimming and paddling for international competitions.

5.6. Other selected cultural values in children's indigenous play games

- **Toy cattle modeling**

The findings from this study have revealed that indigenous play games such as making toys from clay or maize stalks such as cattle and ox-carts expressed children's appreciation of the valuable cultural practices for work and ownership of cattle. According to Turpie et al. (1999), subsistence farming and livestock rearing are the major livelihood activities in Western Province. In their play games, Lozi children represented these activities. For instance, most children in rural areas fashioned cattle and ox-carts from clay or maize stalks to show the value household families attach to the ownership of such objects. Boys fashioned cattle from clay, from dry stalks of maize, from empty snail shells, and twigs of trees. Through the act of playing and fashioning cattle from dry stalks of maize, children were likely to develop attitudes of kindness common among the Lozi people of loaning cattle to the less privileged. This is consistent with the cultural practice of '*mafisa*' (loaning cattle) documented by Wood (1989). Among the rural population, girls engaged in work and such were accompanied by work songs. The findings from this study were consistent with the observations by Flanagan and Nissenbaum (2014) that "all games express and embody human values [and that] games provide a compelling arena where humans play out their beliefs and ideas" (p.3).

5.7. Indigenous musical play games underpinned by the value for hard work

This study found that the line between play and work was a thin one. Children played while they worked. Some play games underpinned by the cultural value for work were accompanied by songs while others were not. Others were emphasised through story narratives. In chapter four, it was noted that sometimes during work, important lessons were provided to the children. This observation from the study outcomes is supported by Mtonga's (2012) view that work songs in which children were involved provided an opportunity for both formal and incidental learning among the Chewa people.

5.8. Indigenous play games as forms of learning

The rationale for the arguments advanced in this section of the study are grounded in the observation that indigenous play games largely act as a lens that mirror and reflect what a

particular culture values (Rogoff, 2003). Hedges (2007) observes that children's interests are to a large extent stimulated by their experiences and funds of knowledge in their families and communities. The significance of play is summed up by Sutherland (2012) who notes,

Play is children's natural means of exploring the human and natural environment of their existence, of learning how to exist with and within those environments, and for resolving the problems they encounter in the process (p.1378).

The type of play that children perform during their play time to a large extent is a powerful indicator of the cultural ways and patterns of life of their society. It constitutes a cornerstone of their social, emotional and intellectual development (Rogoff, 2003; Flanagan & Nissenbaum, 2014; Thompson et al., 2014; Aypay, 2016; Nyota & Mapara, 2008; Amlor, 2016). Further, such play has the benefit of enriching both the sociocultural and cognitive science-oriented research (Rogoff, 2003, Etta et al, 2019).

Children generally do not perceive play related activities as learning situations (Addo, 1996). Harwood and Marsh (2012) have observed that music or playground activities are primarily performed by children for their own sake. Even the survival cultural values that underpin the indigenous play games are only appreciated as children grow older and begin to draw significant meanings in normal adult life. Rogoff (2003) has argued that human development across life span in each community "is guided by local goals, which prioritise learning to function within the community's cultural institutions and technologies" (p.23). Childhood development is about preparation for adult life and to a larger extent, the types of play games engaged in reflect the most valued processes that are likely to influence the child directly or indirectly. Most children learn by observing and pitching in the everyday cultural activities (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009). The observation by Snelson (1974) that education is a condition of human survival whose purpose is to transmit the wisdom and knowledge of one generation to the other in preparation for life duties is valid and candid. As observed by Ejuu (2015), it is time to start rethinking and redefining education in the African context and halt the erosion and alienation that Western education has unleashed on Africa (Nsamenang, 2008).

5.9. Schools as centres of excellence

In this section, I argue that schools should be centres for promoting both the indigenous and contemporary values. By contemporary values I refer to the values that may be promoted in schools but tend to be similar in principle and approach to those existing within the traditional circles. For instance, in story narratives, issues focusing on hygiene have been noted (Mukela, 2013). It was noted by Mufalali (1974) that in colleges of education, traditional dances, songs, and indigenous forms of play should be preserved. My argument is supported by Campbell (2002) who argues that schools exist to pass on to children the heritage of society, the cultural knowledge that is deemed important for all as a means for continued enlightenment of members of the society for generations to come.

5.10. Intellectual values of children's indigenous musical play games

The second research objective of this study was to document the perceived intellectual outcomes and socio-emotional processes involved in participating in the Lozi children's music and game songs with particular attention to the various educational potentials that such activities have.

Apart from the cultural benefits that underpinned the various indigenous play games for Lozi children, the outcomes of this study also found that they underpinned by various intellectual benefits. The study found that chasing games, rope jumping games, ball throwing games, listening and speaking games, rhythmic singing games, stories, board games involving movements of stones, riddles, and aquatic games, were underpinned by specific rules that required knowledge of their operations all involved forms of making strategies and critical analysis in understanding the rules. These indigenous play games could easily be utilised to promote the emergent literacy and numeracy skills to children in the lower grades.

5.10.1. Indigenous musical play games and emergent literacy

A detailed analysis of the corpus of indigenous play games among the Lozi children that was presented in chapters four of this thesis has revealed that they had the potential to generate various associated linguistic benefits for children. Their application in the school curriculum deserves serious consideration. Children's play games as noted by Sutherland (2012), happen to be composed and expressed in the mother tongue. I argue that this is the more reason why any

localisation or indigenisation of the school curriculum has to take into consideration of this pedagogical benefit if the whole process of localisation has to be meaningful. In Uganda, a study by Abiria (2011) established the pedagogical benefits for using children's indigenous play forms such as riddles for emergent literacy development skills. Unfortunately, findings obtained from this study have revealed that teachers rarely used indigenous play games for reading purposes. This was consistent with the findings obtained by Tambulukani, (2015) and Katonga (2017) in other parts of Zambia. In some cases, as observed by Kalinde (2017), children sung some songs that were in English in a meaningless manner and lacked any understanding of such songs. In other instances, indigenous play songs were mostly included when the teacher wanted to use them for motivational purposes or when they were about to go home, a situation that was also reported by Croft (2002) in her study in Malawi.

According to Teale and Sulzby (1989) and Sulzby and Teale (1991), the social aspects that include the home and community settings are instrumental in promoting emergent literacy development among preschool children. Emergent literacy is concerned with the earliest literacy development, the period before children read and write conventionally (Sulzby & Teale, 1991). It includes the knowledge and activities related to the alphabet, phonological awareness, symbolic representation, and communication (Teale and Sulzby, 1989). Other studies have in fact shown that music can be used as an intervention to improve the phonological and reading challenges of children with dyslexia (Forgeard et al., 2008). A longitudinal study by Maclean et al., (1987) on a sample of English children aged 3 years 4 months found that there was a strong relationship between children's knowledge of nursery rhymes and the development of phonological skills. Several studies that have been undertaken on the state of the school curriculum of Zambia have revealed that the literacy and numeracy levels of the Zambian school children are low and disturbing when compared with other countries in the Sub-Saharan African region (Matafwali, 2010; Matafwali & Munsaka, 2011; Mwanza-Kabaghe et al., 2015; MOE, 2017). These studies have criticised the use of English as medium of instruction for the overall low reading and numeracy levels of Zambian children. They have since argued for the use of local languages especially at the lower levels to ameliorate the situation. Using known indigenous play songs and games has the potential to help children improve their literacy skills.

5.10.2. Indigenous musical play games and emergent numeracy

- **Board games involving movement/throwing of stones**

Board games also known as ‘Mancala’¹³⁵ in Arabic, refers to a group of games often called “count and capture” or “pit and pebble” game and involve “scooping up playing pieces and dropping them around a board” (Wilkins, 2002, p.22). These board games involve adherence to set rules by participants (Gobet et al 2004) and this is one dimension of their intellectual underpinning. While a wide range of such games was found to be highly enjoyed by children, it was also evident from the findings from this study that such games were never utilised by teachers during their lesson presentations. My observations and analysis of these indigenous play games revealed that they were underpinned by numerous mathematical concepts. For instance, the indigenous board games of *muyato* and *mulabalaba* that involved movements of stones in designated holes enlisted high levels of coordination, concentration, reasoning and calculations, and adherence to set systems of rules. An earlier study conducted in Zambia by Leacock (1972) observed that this indigenous activity involved the cognitive processes of learning to weigh alternatives that involve a series of additions and subtractions of smaller numbers. Similar findings were reported by Retschitzki (2000) cited in Serpell (2018) in his study among the Baoule people in Cote d’Ivoire. Mancala, according to Wilkins (2002), are games of skill particularly math and logic skills.

Calls aimed at explaining why pupils in school perform poorly in mathematics have increased in the recent past. For instance, Knight (2003) has argued that children perform poorly in mathematics because they are often subjected to unknown materials other than what they are familiar with. A number of studies conducted on the use of indigenous play games in schools have revealed that teachers do not utilise these resources known to children despite their intellectual associated benefits (Nabie, 2015; Tatira et al., 2012; Ndukwe et al., 2014; Nkopodi & Mosimege, 2009; Tsindoli, 2018, Sulistyaningtyas & Fauziah, 2018). As revealed earlier, findings from this study on the teachers’ failure to utilize play games were consistent with the observations noted by other scholars both within and outside Africa. In Zambia, Mtonga (2012) and Mukela (2013) have shown the intellectual benefits of the *morabaraba* game as one resource that could be used for teaching.

¹³⁵ Mancala itself comes from Arabic word for ‘move’ and refers to the moving of the pieces” (Wilkins 2002, p.22).

How were the intellectual processes then mobilised in indigenous play games such as *muyato*, *mulabalaba* and twelve Men's Morris also locally known as *mulabalaba wa 12*? In playing these games, participants were required to engage in processes of planning throughout the play circle or session. Winning the game of *mulabalaba* involved critical thinking, concentration, strategic planning and execution of all the planned options. This was found to be consistent with the findings established by other scholars on this topic (Serpell, 1993; Tatira et al., 2012; Mtonga, 2012; Mukela, 2013; Moloji, 2015; Nkopodi & Mosimege, 2009, Mosimege & Ismael, 2004). In their argument on the relevance of incorporating indigenous games such as *morabaraba*, Mosimege and Ismael (2004) and Nkopodi and Mosimege (2009) have argued that mathematical problem-solving skills were usually at play based on the specific rules that each particular game had. In their analysis of the mathematical concepts embedded in *morabaraba*, they found the following as the principal concepts:

- Identification of various quadrilaterals (squares) and similarities and differences between them;
- Ratio and proportion between the lines and the squares making the complete *morabaraba* board;
- Symmetry: The various sides of the board; within each side of the board; Placement of tokens and repetitive movements of the tokens on the board;
- Logical deductions in the execution of the various steps of the game;
- Counting of the tokens;
- Addition and subtraction of the tokens until a game is won on the basis of the remaining number of tokens.

Similar observations on the intellectual benefits underpinning board games such as *mulabalaba* (*morabaraba*) consistent with the observations made during this study have been documented by Zaslavsky (1997). However, more focused research would still be needed to demonstrate that the children playing the game are actually making accurate calculations (Nunes et al., 1993; Saxe, 1988).

While the indigenous play games discussed so far have been found to have various intellectual benefits underpinning them, this present study found that teachers could not incorporate these rich cultural resources which were at their disposal. Although pupils engaged in various indigenous outdoor activities, such activities remained outside the classrooms. Some studies in Zambia have revealed similar observations on the non-utilisation of local indigenous play resources. In a study conducted by Nakawa (2012), in some selected schools in Zambia on the linkages between mathematics syllabus and text books, she found that communication and problem-solving activities which were likely to enhance pupils' mathematical thinking skills received very little attention in the school-based text books at the elementary levels. Communication and problem-solving activities are common features in children's indigenous play game activities. Earlier in their studies, Mumba (2000), Kalinde (2010) and Mukela (2013) observed similar findings on the non-utilisation of game songs in the Zambian schools. These observations were also found to be consistent with those established elsewhere in Africa. For instance, a study by Abdulai (2016) in Ghana found that most of the indigenous play materials were not used for instruction at the early childhood level. This was because the indigenous musical play games were not catered for in the Ghanaian Early Childhood educational programme. A study by Kejo (2017) in Tanzania found that while teachers viewed play to be important for teaching, only few of the teachers interviewed utilised it as a teaching tool. In Kenya, Wanderi (2011) and Akuno (2015) have lamented how Kenyan teachers fail to utilise indigenous play songs in schools but instead still heavily rely on English nursery rhymes, a colonial feature that dominates many African schools (Andango, 2012; Akuno 2005).

5.10.3. The use of stories and riddles as pedagogical tools for intellectual development

This study found that there were some indigenous approaches to teaching and learning that could easily benefit modern Zambian education system.

- **Stories and their educational implications**

Lozi stories assumed two forms in their approach; those accompanied by songs and those without songs. Both of these approaches were observed in the story sessions documented. This study found the Lozi practice of storytelling as one that encouraged listeners to engage in discovery learning. Lozi storytellers did not engage the audience in a barrage of questions or

revealing the meaning of the stories to their audiences. This lack of structured guidance was found to be underpinned by the cultural practice of not disrupting elders when they were speaking. However, I also noted that it was a deliberate cultural practice designed to leave learners to discover for themselves the moral lessons underpinning the story as children developed and grew up. This pedagogical approach is consistent with Pedersen's (1993) observation that,

After teaching a folk tale, no follow-up is necessary, stories are valuable in their own right. If a story is followed immediately by a barrage of comprehension questions, the artistic value is lost and storytelling suffers. I would suggest waiting a while, maybe a day, to ask the usual who, what, where, when, why, and how (p.4)

I found Pedersen's suggestion to be in harmony with the Lozi traditional approach to storytelling highlighted earlier.

Apart from the above pedagogic benefit, storytelling provides learners with linguistic benefits. When used as a teaching aid, the story should be told in full without any interruptions from the learners. Learners, especially those in ECE should be encouraged to remain attentive and participate when invited to do so especially where an accompanying story song is involved. In his studies among the Tswana children, Simako (2009) noted that "stories and story songs steered imagination and inculcated divergent thinking skill as pupils had to recite them orally" (p.154).

Another important pedagogical process underpinning storytelling and accompanying songs relates to the active participation of participants and how they end up owning the whole process. According to Ng'andu (2009), the process of storytelling in the classroom should be presented in an authentic manner for it to appeal to the intellect of the learners for them to own the learning process. The use of traditional stories and their accompanying songs has the potential to develop the linguistic and musical competences of young learners. Gardner's (1983) seminal study on Multiple Intelligences (MI) avers that linguistic abilities are a dimension of intelligence (Gardner & Hatch, 1989). Linguistic abilities as they relate to children's indigenous play games are best expressed through oral and verbal activities such as games and play songs, proverbs, riddles, traditional stories, and tongue twisters (Engh, 2013; Jolly, 1975; Murphey, 1992; Pedersen, 1993; Miller & Pennycuff, 2008, Nyoni & Nyoni, 2013). Consistent with these observations, this study found that engaging children in storytelling and riddling activities provided them with

excellent opportunities for developing their linguistic and imaginative competencies. In the evenings, story times acted as indigenous television sets where children's imaginations were exercised. Philip (1999) observes that the cognitive skills of creating mental imageries, making inferences, and comprehension common in reading are also at play when listening to stories and therefore argues for the incorporation of stories for early literacy development among preschool children. This process of enhanced memory recall corresponds to the phenomenon of 'songs in their heads' reported by Campbell (1998) and Murphey (1992).

Storytelling served another purpose in that it helped children to become avid singers. Transmission of knowledge through stories and songs was an indigenous way of preserving knowledge for future generations. According to Bhushan (2016) "knowledge has always been created, preserved and propagated in the mode of orality" (p.131). Pedersen (1993) observes that, through singing, storytelling and folk speech activities, some of the cognitive tasks such as observations, exploring cause and effect, comparing and contrasting, interpreting facts, analysis, problem solving and evaluation are enhanced. He further argues that "retention is excellent with songs, rhymes [...] because of their melody, rhythm, story-line, and repetition" (p.2).

When carefully analysed in the light of Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences, stories are multimodal in their nature because they cater for the development of linguistic, musical, and interpersonal/intrapersonal intelligences underpinning them. These intelligences can easily be noted in any storytelling sessions as noted in the findings of this study. In class, the other intelligences of body kinesthetic and spatial intelligences may be at play when teachers engage learners in dancing or drawing the contents of the story.

- ***Mayumbo* (riddles) and their educational implications**

This study found that *mayumbo* were mental testing games played by children during their pastimes in the evening. The meaning of the noun *mayumbo* (singular *liyumbo*) conveys the notion of engaging in a challenging contest (*kuyumbana*). If the riddles failed to provide the correct answer, they were expected to admit their failure by saying: "*Pwa pwa*" (meaning "failed"). An analysis of the corpus of *mayumbo* documented in this study revealed that they afforded various intellectual benefits. Firstly, the traditional call to attention had the cognitive

element of enlisting the attention of the other participant. Secondly, *mayumbo* were observed to be characterised by higher levels of imaginations and creativity.

According to Bhushan (2016), proverbs and riddles are instrumental in promoting intellectual arguments among participants as well as storing linguistic knowledge (cf Rogoff, 2003; Serpell, 1993; Mtonga; 2012, Mukela, 2013). Riddles develop critical thinking because they often employ the use of metaphors. In analysing a corpus of some selected Yoruba riddles, Shuaibu (2014) demonstrated how some riddles were underpinned by mathematical concepts and argued that Yoruba riddles were potentially relevant for developing logical reasoning among children.

In Africa, folklore scholar Allan Dundes (1964) has observed and argued that for a long time, riddles have been viewed as a subject of marginalisation because of the misconceptions that some scholars have given to them. He cites entertainment and laughter as the main reason why children engage in them. Blacking (1961) viewed Venda children's riddles as lacking in educational value and incapable of developing power of logic and reasoning and stimulate imagination. For Blacking, it was the knowledge of the riddle that was important rather than the ability to work it out. Ruth Finnegan (2012) views them as "of childish interest" and the "special domain of children" meant for "entertainment rather than for serious consideration" (p.413). However, other scholars have viewed riddles as being important in the intellectual development of children (Dundes, 1964; Gowlett, 1966; Gachanja & Kebaya, 2013; Nyota & Mapara, 2008; Mtonga, 2012; Abiria (2011), Gulere, 2014, Serpell & Mukela, 2019). As observed from this study, riddles constituted a wealth of cultural resources that were essentially relevant for enhancing the intellectual processes of children and were therefore valuable tools in the educational process.

5.11. Teachers' perceptions of the school curriculum

The third research objective was to explore the teachers' perceptions on the possibilities for including indigenous play games in the Zambian school curriculum. The discussion that follows focuses on research evidence to demonstrate how the indigenous musical play games could be integrated into the mainstream curriculum.

- **Failure to include indigenous musical play materials in the Teachers' Guides**

The findings obtained on this point revealed that music and play games were under-emphasised in the school curriculum. The Teachers' Guides (TGs) in the Zambian school curriculum had a strong inclination towards the promotion of Western games and play songs. Similar findings in Zambia were observed by Mubita et al (2005). In the present study, a careful analysis of the policy documents from 1966-2013 has shown that indigenous play games have not received particular attention (MOE, 1969, 1971, 1973¹³⁶, MESVTEE, 2013). While indigenous play materials have largely been relegated to the periphery, the Western games and play songs on the other hand have received considerable attention for their perceived value in promoting literacy among children. A comparative analysis of several teachers' handbooks in the Zambian school curriculum has revealed that Western games and play songs have remained in use in the successive curriculum revisions for over fifty five years now. They have simply been adopted and adapted and included in the school curriculum.

This study also found that teachers' guides did not have explicit methodologies in children's indigenous play songs that teachers could adequately rely on and use in their teaching. Coupled with this challenge, most of the teachers in the study also acknowledged that they were not very knowledgeable in indigenous play games and songs. As such, most of them relied in their teaching on Western nursery rhymes that were known to them and were found in the teachers' guides. The findings from this study on this point were consistent with those of Harrop-Allin (2010), in South Africa, Agbagbla (2018) in Ghana and Andang'o (2009) in Kenya where teachers acknowledged lacking adequate knowledge in indigenous play materials. In this study, the teachers revealed that they avoided topics that expected them to use indigenous materials because of what they perceived as their own personal inadequacies in indigenous play game materials. The educational implication of this admission by teachers is that teachers create gaps in the learning process and fail to make connections to what children know and end up teaching things that are unrelated to the children's home experiences. This is one learning gap where the adoption of Western forms of education so common in Africa has been criticised. It has been argued that the fail to make any meaningful connections with children's everyday experiences (Serpell, 2005), a tendency that has resulted in de-emphasising of the values of the students'

¹³⁶ Included indigenous play materials in the ZPC Teachers' Guides were reflected in the Physical Education section of the English text books.

home cultures in the learning process (Abah et al., 2015). By focusing on their own lack of knowledge, teachers are overlooking the availability of local funds of knowledge (Moll et al 1992) known to their pupils and their families. In order to correct this situation, two strategic ways can be used:

- Curriculum developers and publishers should include indigenous games and songs in text books distributed to schools and teacher training colleges
- Training teachers to recruit local experts from their pupils' home communities to bring the wealth of their knowledge of those indigenous cultural resources into the curriculum, by visiting the classroom as well as guiding children's home work. Pupils can be mobilised to facilitate this process of recruitment by introducing teachers to relevant experts in their home community.

According to Ngwaru (2014), most teachers' pedagogies completely exclude children's 'funds of knowledge' available in most local communities. Harrop-Allin (2010) observes that cultural resources within the local communities include children themselves and their local environment which include the local experts. My observations in several workshops that I have attended have revealed that although community participation is encouraged through Parent Teachers' Associations (PTAs), harnessing of the community's expertise in processes that relate to pedagogy has been missing. Instead, community members have been recipients of school programmes instead of being facilitators and collaborators to such programmes as well. The implication of such an approach is that school teachers tend to view themselves as having a monopoly of knowledge while neglecting community experts as lacking in educational knowledge when in fact the same community experts are knowledgeable in their own traditional educational systems. Findings from this study have revealed that teachers could benefit from the services of expert community volunteers.

- **Negative attitudes by teachers to indigenous play games**

This study also found that in some cases, teachers' lack of knowledge in indigenous play games was as a result of their own perceived negative attitudes towards indigenous play songs. Some teachers felt that associating themselves with indigenous play materials was a sign of backwardness. Similar views have been reported by Mubita et al (2005), and Mbewe et al.,

(2018) regarding teachers' perceptions on the use of local languages in the city of Lusaka in Zambia. Banda (2010) has observed that the term local is frowned upon as carrying a social stigma of being sub-standard. If teachers are shy to use the local language, they will be shy too to use the accompanying indigenous play games, a point of observation that Mukela (2013) found in the rural schools of Western Province of Zambia. My argument on this issue is that the inherent weakness in the failure to utilise children's indigenous play games common in the schools in Western Province largely arises from an inherited colonial education that failed to promote the African play games in the education system but taught Africans to look down upon their own language, culture, religion and music and dance. This observation is consistent with Mavhunga (2006) in his analysis in Zimbabwean situation. In the literature section, it was pointed out that Western games such as cricket and football were emphasised because they were perceived to be civilised forms of sport (Edwards, 2012) capable of producing fine leaders (Mavhunga, 2006). In the case of Western Province, it was noted how some missionaries attempted to introduce those Western games to the Lozi children.

- **Teachers' lack of involvement in curriculum planning**

Those teachers who favoured giving more attention to indigenous culture lamented that their input in the design and planning of the school curriculum was not prioritised leading to an ineffective implementation process. The teachers argued that this was a contributing factor to why children's indigenous play games had continued to receive little attention and relegation in the school teachers' guides. One inherent weakness that has been leveled against the Zambian school curriculum is its enduring tendency to be overly academic. The curriculum has mainly been concerned with "cognitive and factual knowledge" (MOE, 1992.p.vii) and "lacks the flexibility that would enable it to respond to different local circumstances" (p.viii). While there have been numerous curriculum reforms in Zambia such as the Education Reforms of 1977, Focus on Learning of 1992, and Educating Our Future of 1996 (MESVTEE, 2013), the implementation process has received little attention (Kalinde, 2017). As argued by Mavhunga (2006) in the case of Zimbabwe's curriculum reforms as being heavily rooted in Western hegemony, the situation in Zambia also seems to be the same. Teacher innovations were lacking because of a rigidly prescriptive curriculum that tended to disadvantage the rural children. This

type of prescriptive and rigid curriculum is what Paul Freire (1970) criticised as promoting a banking and rote type of learning.

According to Alsubaie (2016), teacher involvement in the planning process of the school curriculum is critical for any successful implementation. This is because teachers develop feelings of ownership of the curriculum process. For Salami and Oyaremi (2012), teachers are at the heart of curriculum implementation and dissemination because they are the people who actually implement curriculum. When a curriculum is simply imported and imposed and lacks the involvement of the indigenous people, such a curriculum is bound to fail because it is insensitive to the local needs of the people (Ball, 2003). In recent years some curriculum initiatives especially those that are donor funded have been criticised as having hidden agendas mostly aimed at strengthening Western values (Mavhunga, 2006).

- **Failure to incorporate relevant pedagogies from past curricula**

Teachers in this study observed how certain pedagogies in the curriculum before 2013 were overlooked and replaced by new ones. It is this same observation that led the teachers to question the rationale behind the replacement of the 1993/1994 Silozi books that were rich in content with a curriculum that was found wanting on many points of content. When it came to the Western play games, these were not replaced but received a lot of attention in various curriculum revisions. I concur with Mwesa (2005) who has criticised this indiscriminate utilisation of Western play games over the local and indigenous ones. The inclusion of indigenous games and play songs in most of the curriculum reforms undertaken in Zambia has tended to receive least attention and has been a challenge for some time. This observation deserves some attention, changing from one curriculum to the other has brought mixed feelings among many teachers and only shows lack of policy direction. My observation is consistent with Nsamenang's (2008) observation that curriculum changes are influenced by donor interests and funding. I also argue that curriculum changes tend to be effected on the economic and political lines and not necessarily on needs. For instance, the introduction of Chinese language in Zambia could be argued largely on the vested economic interests that Zambia has with China.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Chinese is now offered in some schools across the country.

5.12. Challenges to the localisation of the school curriculum.

The problem of indigenisation of the school curriculum arising from teachers' and school administrators' negative attitudes as discussed earlier in this chapter can best be argued and analysed as being grounded in historical antecedents. As noted earlier, Western missionary schooling in Africa in general, and Zambia in particular tended to demonise the indigenous cultural practices and education and attempted to uproot them by offering a Western form of education as an alternative (Snelson, 1974). African music, dancing and sculpture were labeled 'primitive art' (Nkrumah, 2012). But in the course of history, it became apparent that Western education was unsuited for Africans. Consequently, the Phelps-Stokes Commission was established to look into the possibility of localising and indigenising the African school curriculum as part of the education reforms (Snelson, 1974, Carmody, 2004). In Ghana, Amegago (2011) notes the focus of the educational reforms during the colonial period undertaken by the Phelps-Stokes Commission as one that was intended "to Africanise the curriculum through an emphasis on agriculture and the inclusion of other African cultural components such as botany, literature, folklore, music and dance" (Amegago, 2011, p.xiv). One of the objectives of the Phelps-Stokes Commission centred on recreation:

All who are familiar with the pleasure-loving and joyous temperament of the African, which finds expression in moonlight orgies, dances, and other physical excesses, readily agree that sound and healthful recreation should be added as a fifth objective. The possibility of adapting African music, dancing and other amusements further commends recreation as an important element in education (Carmody, 2004, pp.5-6).

However, these curriculum reforms were rejected and were met with "[stern] criticisms from the African Europeanised elites' as part of the colonialists' attempt to perpetuate the suppression of the Africans" (Amegago, 2011). According to Amegago, this reaction was due to the elites' ambition to keep abreast with modernisation in the Western societies. Yankah (2012) sums up the attitudes of the elites as follows, "[i]f independence was to be fruitful, Africa needed to modernise its structures" (p.1067). In Zambia, similar reforms were advocated based on the same approach as that of Ghana reported earlier. The perception from the local people was the same. Carmody (2004) reports that "local people came to perceive English as one of the best ways of gaining wage employment either at home or through migration, they wanted to learn it" (p.7).

The proposed indigenous curriculum was meant to equip an African for fitness in future societal activities. However, Zambian educated elites as their fellow counterparts all over Africa rejected and missed this golden opportunity and wanted the same education as that of the white man (Davis, 1967). The imposition of an indigenous form of education was perceived by most educated Africans as a ploy meant to perpetuate European oppression and increase their domination over Africans (Amegago, 2011).

While it may be argued that the African educated elites were responsible for stifling the localisation process of the African curriculum due to the negative attitudes that they exhibited to the implementation process, there were however some grains of truth in this objection. Firstly, it was the hidden agenda of the colonial masters' intentions to provide a form of basic education that would only be helpful for Africans to secure lower jobs and reduce competition for highly skilled ones - what Mavhunga (2006) has viewed as an education that was intended to turn Africans into hewers of wood for the colonial masters. Secondly, Ball (1983) reports that despite the seeming advantages contained in the Phelps-Stoke Commission report on the relevance of adapting the school curriculum to the needs of the local people, it was however underlain by some racist ideology "of the intellectual inferiority of the African" (p.253), whose basic assumption was that "the African was innately less intelligent than the European and therefore needed a long period of practical education, before any further plans for his development could be considered" (p.253). Both missionaries and European colonial administrators perpetuated this ideology in the education system they provided to the Africans.

Thus, with the demise of the politics of imperialism that informed the first curricula of Western missionary schooling in 19th century Africa discussed earlier in this section, the post independent African leaders embraced the modernisation ideology as part of their decolonisation movement in the 1960s to develop the continent through robust driven education programmes. Modernisation theory has the assumption that,

the moving force of economic development is a certain kind of individual, equipped with a coherent package of skills, values, motives and attitudes uniquely well adapted to the tasks of building, expanding and maintain a modern industrialised society (Serpell, 1993, p.15).

Though seemingly attractive with its economic incentives, modernisation theory however was about following the developmental footsteps of Europe for the attainment of a technological and industrial society (Matunhu, 2011). While education was seen as a key agent of modernisation (Carmody, 2004), the type of education it advocated was still a borrowed colonial type of education. In chapter two of this thesis, it was observed that Western education tended to favour Science, Mathematics, and English subjects as subjects in the curriculum that could lead to technological and industrial development because of their emphasis on scientific thinking. Thus in most African school curricula, there was a strong emphasis for these subjects and many foreign expatriates mostly drawn from Western countries were employed to teach these subjects at secondary school and tertiary levels of education. However, this dependence on Western aid and borrowed education system was found to be unsuited for the Africans. It brought about disillusionment and discontent among African leaders. In Zambia, Carmody (2004) reports that President Kaunda viewed this system of education as enslaving, one “conceived by other minds in other days”(p.31), and this was consistent with perspectives by African scholars who wanted reforms in the African education system as a way of decolonising the African minds from dependence on alien and foreign forms of education (Ngungi, 1986).

The disillusionment and discontentment of having a colonial system of education ushered in a reawakening to self determination in finding solutions to Africa’s economic and political needs instead of fostering dependence to former colonial masters and their system of education and curriculum. Thus, the African Renaissance, a process of reclaiming the dignity of Africa following Western colonialism and imperialism was born in the way African leaders should approach their economic, political and education challenges. The concept of African Renaissance, a term popularised by Thabo Mbeki, as explained by (Ngungi, 2012) entailed the “economic and political recovery of [Africa’s] power” to self determination, and “a fundamental change of attitude- on the part of African bourgeoisie, African governments, and the African intellectual community-towards African languages” (p.1529).In this vein, calls for reforms aimed at the localisation and indigenisation of the African education system with a focus on culture have received significant attention. I argue that local languages are also closely connected with the acceptance and use of indigenous musical play games.

However, challenges to the localisation and indigenisation processes in Zambia have remained perennial issues. For instance, Nkolola and Simwinga (2008) report that parents tend to resist the use of local languages because it is not associated with any economic benefits in the white-collar job market of the Zambian economy. On the other hand, resistance to the use local languages which also includes indigenous musical play games in schools has been triggered by the use of the term 'local' which Banda (2010) reports as being associated with being of low standards or sub-standards. This study has revealed that teachers themselves tend to have negative attitudes towards local and indigenous play games that form part of the localisation process. It is therefore noteworthy to argue that African elites, as noted from the findings from this study, have to a large extent been responsible for failing to find lasting solutions to Africa's problems because of their Western form of education attained from Western universities. Nkolola and Simwinga (2008) observe that most of the elites tend to send their children to expensive schools where learning is mostly done in English. In such schools, Western play games are also favoured. This tends to undermine any progress made towards localisation of the school curriculum as members of the community look to such elites as role models in education matters. In short, the curriculum that is favoured in most African countries including Zambia is largely a reflection and copycats drawn from the Western World and promoted by Zambian scholars without serious analysis of the implications of such programmes especially on the majority poor rural community school children. Most educated Africans in general and Zambians in particular together with their political systems are largely responsible for stifling their own education systems as they tend to undermine their own indigenous forms of education as inferior and backward as observed from the findings presented in this study. I concur with the African scholars who have criticised the negative attitudes of most educated Africans and political systems as largely responsible for Africa's underdevelopment (Achebe, 1959; Kaya & Seleti, 2013; Yankah, 2012; Anyidoho, 2012; Táíw'ò, 2012; Awoonor, 2012). It was also noted that negative attitudes towards indigenisation of the curriculum in the schools in Western Province were promoted by some White foreign nationals who felt that promotion of Western values over the indigenous ones was inevitable considering the global market economies. Teaching of English and supply of Western play toys was therefore considered appropriate. I argue that the reason why private schools fail to comply with the government educational policies of promoting the use of local languages mostly arises from failure by government to implement the national policies on education. This point of view

has also been observed by Mubita et al (2005) and Katonga (2017). Most of the private schools continue to attract the children of those who are supposed to implement the policies in place. My argument in this section has been that the process of localisation and indigenisation is deeply rooted in historical antecedents and therefore requires focused approaches to achieve and implement. While teachers and school administrators' minds need to be decolonised, education service providers also need to resist the temptation of importing curriculum programmes that are driven by donor interests.

5.13. Applying research to practice

The integration of indigenous play activities such as stories and riddles demonstrated through the active participation of an expert community volunteer during the course of this study revealed that preschool curriculum could be enriched in many ways. The pedagogical approach and presentation style of stories and riddles took a traditional approach much to the appreciation of the local nursery school teachers. Teachers who adopted this traditional approach following the organised workshop expressed satisfaction in terms of class management. For instance, as noted in chapter four, children sat on a local mat (*museme*) in a circular or ring formation while listening to the stories. The storyteller never bothered children with numerous questions after telling the stories yet she got satisfactory responses when she tried to find out from the children the contents of the stories on subsequent days. This approach differs with the established order in most language activities in the mainstream curriculum where children are subjected to questions based on a story. Asking questions the following day provides enough evidence of the retention and recall abilities that children are likely to get from storytelling sessions.

The applications of some selected indigenous play games in some schools as demonstrated in this present study clearly revealed their suitability for use in the enrichment of the school curriculum as well as for promoting the cultural literacy and for their educational benefits. For instance, the use of riddles proved to be a relevant cultural resource for teaching both literacy and numeracy activities. My observations in schools where riddles were used as pedagogic tools were consistent with Tuwor (2014) that riddles are naturally entertaining. Instead of alienating the children (Nsamenang, 2008), the play games were found to be strong 'funds of knowledge' relevant for connecting bridges between the school and home environments (Schliemann et al., 1997, Serpell & Hatano, 1997). The games were culturally relevant because they were context

bound. According to Andang'o (2009), social and cultural contexts are important in the study of human development. Andang'o further observes that issues of teaching and learning should be approached with respect to the culture and society in which they exist. Children should not be tested or assessed on things that are out of reach of their own contexts to avoid creating mismatches and gaps (Maina, 1997). This point of view resonates well with the new developments in pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning. For instance, some scholars have argued that mathematics teaching in schools should not be taught in a rigid, detached and irrelevant way devoid of the cultural contexts, as is the common practice in many third world countries. Instead, it should be underscored with cultural understanding to make its teaching meaningful (Fasheh 1980, Anderson, 1997). It may be worth noting that Anderson and Fasheh have both built on this theme of cultural understanding to advocate for curriculum reform in the African-American education in the USA and in the Arab world respectively. Many children in Zambia fail to appreciate mathematics because the teaching of this subject is tailored to passing examinations only, thereby forcing learners to memorise formulas. The games from which children could design formulas in play games are never considered. In Mozambique, the work of Gerdes (2011), has demonstrated how the cultural practice of weaving baskets and furnishing them with geometric patterns is closely related to mathematical concepts.

5.14. The need for an indigenised school curriculum.

According to Battiste (2002) cited in Kaya and Seleti (2013), the following caution is provided, “when people disregard their own knowledge [usually preserved in play forms], it slowly gets lost and can easily be misappropriated” (p.33). Most of the play games that children engage in are usually accompanied by the songs that Zambian children perform in their everyday activities. Traditional indigenous games are embodiments of the cultural values of any society. For Roux (2006), indigenous games are likely to find meaningful expression when formally institutionalised in classroom situations.

What has been discussed in this section is consistent with the concept of a generative curriculum which is an initiated community and school partnership in curriculum formulation where indigenous cultural values and traditional languages find expression (Ball, 2003). The whole aim is to promote more appropriate cross-cultural curriculum content (Schafer & Pence, 2006; Hyde & Kabiru, 2003; Ball & Pence, 2001, Nsamenang & Tchombe, 2011). In recent years there has

been a global reawakening of interest in indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) as a relevant and sustainable form of knowledge that deserves to be integrated in school curricula much as the Western education does (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2006; Ball & Pence, 2000; Schafer & Pence, 2006, Banda, 2008, Ng'asike 2014). Unlike universal programmes driven by donors that tend to appeal to recipient countries but lack sustainability, indigenous musical play games on the other hand are less costly and sustainable. I argue that adopting a generative curriculum is one way of translating research into practice where indigenous values find expression in a sustainable manner.

5.15. Summary

In this chapter, I have argued that Lozi children's indigenous musical play games were underpinned by significant cultural values and practices grounded in everyday forms of learning. Exposure to such activities prepared the Lozi children to be socialised and integrated into the adult life. Children engaged in indigenous play games that helped them to imbibe those valued cultural practices to be truly human (*butu*). These observations regarding the established findings from this study on the social cognitive values underpinning some Lozi children's musical indigenous play games and their socialising roles are consistent with Holmes (2011), Hangartner-Everts (2013) who views play as mostly a lens of the cultural values and attitudes as opposed to academic pursuits. For Katz (1986), the vocations common in a given environment influence the type and nature of indigenous musical play games in place. I found Nsamenang and Lamb's (1994) argument cited in Nsamenang (2005) as a summary of the African socialization process:

In consequence, in African family tradition, socialisation is not organised to train children for academic pursuits or to become individuals outside the ancestral culture. Rather, it is organised to teach social competence and shared responsibility within the family system and the ethnic community (p.4).

I have also argued in this chapter that indigenous musical play games were underpinned by numerous intellectual benefits that could become springboards for strong foundations in early learning programmes. Instead of subjecting children especially those in the rural areas to foreign materials, I have argued that the existing indigenous play materials common to such children be given preference before foreign ones are utilised. The argument presented in the chapter was not meant to discredit the incorporation of non-African teaching materials deemed beneficial, but to

accord a focused approach to what a Zambian child would lean on sustainably in his/her educational endeavours. Learning and teaching should provide strong foundations anchored in the home-based knowledge known to most children especially those in the rural areas.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Overview

The chapter provides a summary of the key findings that the study explored to show its significance on the topic under investigation. The recommendations that have been advanced are intended to create awareness on the need to address the discussed and analysed. The recommendations are also intended to create interest for future research undertakings with the overall aim of enriching the school curriculum using indigenous epistemologies.

6.2. Summary

The focus of this study was on exploring the indigenous musical play games of the Lozi people in order to understand their cognitive values. By situating the study in ethnography, the study attempted to understand the connections that existed between various indigenous musical play games in relation to the socialisation processes among the Lozi children. The study also explored the intellectual benefits that underpinned the various indigenous musical play games among the Lozi children to appreciate their educational benefits for curriculum enrichment. The conceptualisation of this study was prompted by the realisation that there were few studies that had ventured to explore children's indigenous musical play games. In the current context of Zambia, the study undertaken by Mtonga (2012) remains significant.

In chapter one of the study, it was noted that the Lozi people had strong orientations to their flood prone environment. This strong attachment had implications in the way they identified themselves. For instance, through the metaphor of *mambumbwe a Lyambai* (ligneous reeds of Lyambai) in reference to the Zambezi River, they defined themselves mainly as people who were resistant to the floods. As observed in the study, the annual floods were a welcome phenomenon than one that was feared. In this regard, they have become part of their ecosystem and they interpret their world view from this ecocultural perspective. Later in the chapter, it was noted how various indigenous aquatic play games became closely connected to their ecological landscape and culture. In this regard, it was established that indigenous play games such as paddling and swimming were not only recreational but survival in nature. The fondness that the

Lozi people had for their land was demonstrated through play games such riddles (*mayumbo*) and guessing games such as *ñela*. Through their creation myth story, the Lozi people view themselves as being left in the flood plain by *Nyambe* their God in order to protect everything he created including fish, wild animals, forests, and human beings.

Further, chapter one had also revealed that certain socioeconomic activities and environmental conditions that existed among the Lozi people in the flood plain had provided affordances for certain games and play forms to be in existence for survival purposes. For instance, the chapter has revealed that due to the existence of large water bodies in the local environment, there were various aquatic play games and songs. These play games were largely for adaptation and survival purposes. Children's riddles and stories oscillated around the local environmental objects and activities. The different forms of subsistence economies in terms of fishing, agriculture and cattle keeping were also demonstrated in various games and play songs. However, the local school curriculum was found to be inadequately represented in these issues creating serious mismatches between what children encountered in their home settings and the school. Most of what the school curriculum portrayed included objects that were largely familiar for urban children while rural and local objects featured less.

In chapter two, different literature reviews were explored to show how children's musical play games as a research study had received scholarly attention. It was noted that there was an extensive body of research especially from the Western world that had investigated the role of music and play games in the development of children. This study noted that the play games that were in place were closely related to the most prized values of the society. For instance, it was revealed that Western games such as javelin and discuss were promoted by the Greeks as a way of preparing the children fight in the battles when they grew up. As noted in the review, most of these Western games were still common today even in the Zambian schools.

The chapter further revealed that various research undertakings in music education and play games that dominated the Western countries were mostly inspired by interest to promote intellectual development among children. It was therefore argued in the chapter that different societies had different value systems. However, while there were more research undertakings in most Western countries, countries in the developing world including Zambia remained behind. The introduction of Western education system in Africa through the missionaries resulted in the

condemnation of indigenous play games including dance and songs. The chapter revealed how Western education eclipsed the indigenous forms of education where playing and working was combined and was also part of the children's social cognition.

The major focus of the argument highlighted in chapter two was that advanced by Nsamenang where it was argued that Western theories had biased tendencies of perceiving early childhood play activities in terms of intellectual developmental milestones rather than their social cognitions (Nsamenang, 2008), and that, when it came to the cultural practices of other non Western societies where social competences such as social responsibility were emphasised, such indigenous values and practices in most cases were overlooked and lacking (Nsamenang & Lamb, 1998). In this regard, Mtonga (2012) had strengthened the argument in chapter two regarding the inappropriateness of Western psychological tests in analysing the culture and behaviour of others. In this respect, the conceptualisation of cognitive development from a Western perspective had been criticised because it tended to neglect the affective culture most common in Africa and other non Western countries (Blacking, 1988). Cognitive development from an indigenous African perspective included aspects such as engagement and interactions with valued cultural practices that included music and dance (Serpell & Nsamenang, 2014). Later in chapter four, it was noted how Lozi children through pretend play interacted with such activities during their play moments. It was noted that when children played, they engaged in such cultural valued activities that included singing and dancing, and therefore, Gardner's (1983) conceptualisation of musical intelligence found justification. Indigenous musical play games were found to be part and parcel of the indigenous knowledge system. The review noted that children's indigenous play games such as stories and riddles were an integral part of knowledge acquisition. They were a means of socializing children, who in the case of this study were the Lozi children.

Chapter three highlighted the research approach that informed the study. Grounded in ethnography, the study attempted to understand the phenomenon under investigation, in the case of the present study, children's indigenous musical play games, as it happened in a natural cultural context. Different methods that included participant and non participant observations, focus group discussion, interviews among others were utilised to explore the phenomenon and obtain the data.

In chapter four, the key findings of the study were highlighted. Using the theoretical model of Nsamenang (1992) of sociogenesis, it was observed that Lozi children had various indigenous musical play games performed during the different stages of their development. Children learnt their cultural competences through play activities. The presentation of various play games at different stages of development were explored and were found to be educationally relevant. They could be used to enhance listening and speaking skills among children especially those in the early grades. The play games and chants were noted to be potentially relevant in strengthening knowledge in other subjects of the school curriculum. The chapter focused extensively on pretend play (*mandwani*) since this was found to be the most favoured play activity in which both boys and girls participated. Important cultural values of the Lozi people were explored and observed. These included respect towards other players, sharing of play objects and food, and caring for others. The acquisition of such cultural values resulted in someone being defined as being human (*butu*). As shown in the study, Lozi children were expected to be respectful to those in authority from a very tender age. Indigenous play games such as *mandwani* or pretend play provided valuable insights on how children acted and role played adult roles. From an analysis of the various indigenous musical play games that children performed, it became quite clear to learn that the games were potentially beneficial for socialising the Lozi children into their adult roles. Indigenous Lozi play games were a means of firmly establishing children to their deep rooted cultural values, practices and knowledge systems.

The other key findings noted in the chapter included the intellectual benefits associated with the various indigenous play games. The study outcomes revealed that board games such as *mulabalaba* and *muyato* required participants to marshal a lot of intellectual processes that included making intelligent calculations when playing the games. It was noted that such indigenous play games were potentially relevant for enhancing the numeracy skills of young children especially those at the preschool level. Other play games such as hide and seek (*muipato*), chasing games such as lion (*tau*), and rhythmic singing games required participants to make intelligent decisions to avoid being eliminated during the play moments. Indigenous play games anchored on the natural environment were seen as being critical in the acquisition of environmental knowledge.

The last section of chapter four presented the challenges that the Zambian school curriculum faced. The study revealed that there were gaps in the text books such as lack of inclusion of indigenous play games. Added to this finding was the lack of knowledge that teachers portrayed towards indigenous play games. It was noted that while the current educational policy in place promoted the use of a local familiar language in the teaching and learning process, it was discovered that mismatches existed because of the negative attitudes that teachers had towards indigenous play games. Most of the teachers did not incorporate indigenous related materials in their lesson plans or utilised them while school administrator paid the least attention to the promotion of indigenous play games. Chapter four also provided insights regarding the inappropriateness that existed due to the overuse of some Western nursery songs. Some of the Western nursery songs were found to be detached from the everyday activities of the Lozi people. The last section of chapter four provided useful insights in the incorporation of the indigenous play games in the classroom. Children's motivation was noted during learning resulting in much interaction between children and their teachers.

Chapter five provided a synthesis of the thesis and argued that schools were expected to act as bridges that connected and strengthened the cultural values. Different values such as clapping of hands and lowering one's eyes which forms of respect among the Lozi people were expected to be promoted. In chapter five, the conceptualisation of '*butu*' (being a person) was further argued. It was argued that being human (*butu*) in the Lozi sense entailed living in harmony with others and respect the cultural values that were practiced. This in itself was an expression of intelligence. The chapter noted that such a conceptualisation was at variance with the school system where emphasis was more on academic excellence at the expense of what most indigenous communities in the rural areas among the Lozi period cherished. The chapter also highlighted the value of embracing the pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning drawn from the indigenous perspectives. The chapter noted that teaching and learning could be improved using the 'funds of knowledge' from the local communities.

6.3. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has provided justification for the inclusion and incorporation of local teaching and learning resources in the Zambian school curriculum. Undertaking such a venture would greatly enrich the existing school curriculum. This study did not advance notions of

complete abandonment of Western play games. Instead, the study has shown that a balanced approach was necessary. Most of the indigenous play games were found to be similar in approach to the cross cutting issues affecting the world today. For instance, the study has revealed that indigenous stories could equally address global concerns of gender based violence, environmental pollution, and depletion of natural ecologies such as trees and animals. The study provided various indigenous play games based on wild life conservation, water conservation, health and hygiene among others key cross cutting global issues. The issues of children's well being were demonstrated in the indigenous story songs in chapter four of the study. In the area of education, issues about literacy and numeracy continue to dominate the government agenda. In the early section of chapter four of the study, various lullabies were provided which had the potential to enhance literacy skills especially among young children at preschool levels. Additionally, several chants common to rural Lozi children were provided as potential linguistic materials to teaching. The argument in the study was not about discarding the Western games in the school curriculum but as observed by Nsamenang (2008), it was to provide for indigenous epistemologies to reclaim their rightful position in formal education systems alongside the Western ones because both were essentially relevant for the well-being of developing children.

Another segment that deserves consideration as argued in this thesis relates to the need to consider indigenous epistemologies as valuable cultural resources in the education system. By using such indigenous resources like the Lozi myth of creation presented in chapter one, important lessons applicable to some school subjects in the curriculum could easily benefit from such innovations. Unfortunately, as lamented by Tuwor (2014) much of what happens in the classrooms is largely incongruous with what happens in the home and community experiences of most school children. According to Tuwor,

African students just as their colleagues in America and all over the world need curriculum and teaching strategies that resonate with their cultural setting. African traditional education involves the use of folk music, storytelling, and proverbs, for this reason, African music would follow the traditional trend of teaching and learning as well as play an effective role in teaching African children in the classroom (p.70).

In the case of Zambia's experience, the Ministry of Education (1992) has rated its curriculum as mostly academic and divorced from children's local experiences. Unfortunately, this rating has

not received any attention and has not yielded any meaningful results in the field of music education and the related indigenous musical play games. Much attention as observed from my experience and from the outcomes of this study has been given to donor-driven programmes that tended to eclipse local innovations. Most of such programmes lacked indigenous flavour, and were mostly designed to inform urban settings with little relevance for most rural children. Traditionally, indigenous oral play games such as riddles and story songs were performed in children's own mother tongues and therefore likely to inform and benefit the Zambian school curriculum. I concur with the Zambian scholars Namafe (2006), Mtonga (2012), and Tambulukani (2015) who have argued that music, games, rhymes, and traditional ceremonies should be included in the school curriculum as pedagogical tools to make learning more meaningful, enjoyable and effective. I also support Serpell's (2011) criticism on the inherent weakness in institutionalised public schooling as ostensibly inclined to assessing academic pursuits only at the expense of the values and aspirations of parents in most rural African communities. Both the cultural and academic values are essentially relevant for enhancing a child's development. Using such rich culturally relevant materials especially when used in literacy and numeracy lessons could be a milestone in achieving Zambia's educational goals. Elsewhere in Africa, it has been demonstrated that children in rural local communities appreciated doing things that were valued most by their local communities (Ejuu, 2015), Ng'asike, 2014; Jirata, 2013; Katz, 1986). The findings from this study have demonstrated that Lozi children were not empty slates to be filled by Western songs and play games for their knowledge construction but that the traditional play games were rich potential cultural resources for their indigenous knowledge construction and could be used as entry points in the school curriculum.

6.4. Recommendations

This study does not claim to have exhausted all the indigenous Lozi indigenous musical play games past and present. In fact as may be seen from the volume of the play games documented in three chapters, this simply shows that there is more to be done in this regard. As such the study recommends the following:

- More resource allocation to carry out and document the indigenous musical play games from the various ethnic groups of Western Province of Zambia to make the process of a

localised school curriculum more enriching and rewarding. This could be done by tapping existing potentials from different provinces and creating a national pool.

- Engaging experienced resource personnel from the local communities and those who once served as teachers would ensure a smooth transition of knowledge from the old to the young ones. Most retirees feel neglected when they are not asked to contribute to the system despite the desire they may have, despite their vast knowledge and wisdom. The Lozi proverb *ngana ta anu* (intelligence/wisdom belongs to the people) sums up this recommendation.
- Transcriptions of indigenous play songs to music and allowing teachers to access such materials in both CDs and audio form should be done. Transcriptions should include notating the music of such indigenous play songs. This would ensure the preservation of the traditional play songs and games in their indigenous form. (See appendix J as examples).
- Inclusion of indigenous play activities in the Teachers' Guides (TGs) and other curricular documents. As noted from this study, indigenous musical play activities were lacking in these key curriculum documents.
- Teacher in-service programmes should give attention to indigenous musical play games in their college of education programmes. Both primary and preschool teachers should be equipped with pedagogies drawn from the rich Zambian cultural resources.
- Changes in policy on standards for accreditation of private preschools to reduce the emphasis on expensive Western-style equipment and increase attention to equipping schools with locally-made, low-cost indigenous musical instruments and play materials should be prioritised.

6.5. Suggestions for further research

- More research undertakings supported by the Ministry of Education where rural teachers' voices could be heard. This study found that most rural teachers were recipients of programmes from urban areas with very little input from rural setting.
- Undertake documentation through recordings and transcriptions of indigenous musical play songs for easy accessibility to all.

- Seek funding from international agencies to document and preserve children's indigenous musical play games.

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Appendix A: Letter of Consent for the teacher

The University of Zambia
School of Humanities and Social Sciences
Department of Psychology

Date 8/05/2018

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a doctoral student in Child and Adolescent Psychology from the above named institution under the supervision of Prof. Robert Serpell conducting a research on my thesis entitled: *Indigenous musical play games as cultural resources for the cognitive development promotion in Zambian children: the case of Western Province*. I am requesting for your participation in this study through interview and focus group discussions. Please show your willingness to participate by signing on the provided slip.


I must hasten to inform you that the name(s) of the participants in this study who will be observed and video/audio recorded, or interviewed will remain anonymous if they so wish. Their participation is voluntary; they will be allowed to withdraw during the study without providing reasons for doing so.

If you have some questions regarding the nature of this study, please feel free to contact me on my mobile phone number: **0971993424** or that of my research supervisor on **0977758705**

Yours faithfully,

Mukela, Reuben Mashebe.

I Sr. Marian Chilonga, have read and understood the contents of this letter. I therefore give permission to the researcher to conduct an interview with me.

Name Sr. Marian Chilonga Signature 

Appendix B: Letter of Consent for the Parent

The University of Zambia

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of Psychology

Date 6/11/2017

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a doctoral student in Child and Adolescent Psychology from the above named institution under the supervision of Prof. Robert Serpell conducting a research on my thesis entitled: *Indigenous musical play games as cultural resources for the cognitive development promotion in Zambian children: the case of Western Province*. I am requesting for your child's participation in this study. Please show your willingness to allow your child to participate in the study by signing the provided slip.

I must hasten to inform you that the name(s) of the participants in this study who will be observed and video recorded will remain anonymous if they so wish. Their participation is voluntary; they will be allowed to withdraw during the study without providing reasons for doing so.

If you have some questions regarding the nature of this study, please feel free to contact me on my mobile phone number: 0971993424 or that of my research supervisor on 0977758705

Yours faithfully,

Mukela Mashebe Reuben.

I N. mwenda, have read and understood the contents of this letter. I therefore give permission to the researcher to conduct observe and video record KASY NJWAWU in the research project provided that this is done under the supervision of the class teacher.

Name N. mwenda Signature [Signature]

Appendix C: Letter of Consent for Expert Village Music Informant

The University of Zambia

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of Psychology

Date: 01/06/2016

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a doctoral student in Child and Adolescent Psychology from the above named institution under the supervision of Prof. Robert Serpell conducting a research on my thesis entitled: *Indigenous musical play games as cultural resources for the cognitive development promotion in Zambian children: the case of Western Province*. I am requesting for your participation in this study through interview and focus group discussions. Please show your willingness to participate by signing on the provided slip.

I must hasten to inform you that the name(s) of the participants in this study who will be observed and video recorded will remain anonymous if they so wish. Their participation is voluntary; they will be allowed to withdraw during the study without providing reasons for doing so.

If you have some questions regarding the nature of this study, please feel free to contact me on my mobile phone number: 0971993424 or that of my research supervisor on 0977758705.

Yours faithfully,

Mukela Mashebe Reuben.

I MULIKELILA MPANSA, have read and understood the contents of this letter. I therefore give permission to the researcher to conduct an interview with me.

Name MULIKELILA MPANSA Signature [Handwritten Signature]

Appendix D: Letter of Consent for the College Music Lecturer

The University of Zambia

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of Psychology

Date 30/05/2017

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a doctoral student in Child and Adolescent Psychology from the above named institution under the supervision of Prof. Robert Serpell conducting a research on my thesis entitled: *Indigenous musical play games as cultural resources for the cognitive development promotion in Zambian children: the case of Western Province*. I am requesting for your participation in this study through interview and focus group discussions. Please show your willingness to participate by signing on the provided slip.

I must hasten to inform you that the name(s) of the participants in this study who will be observed and video/audio recorded, or interviewed will remain anonymous if they so wish. Their participation is voluntary; they will be allowed to withdraw during the study without providing reasons for doing so.

If you have some questions regarding the nature of this study, please feel free to contact me on my mobile phone number: **0971993424** or that of my research supervisor on **0977758705**.

Yours faithfully,

Mukela, Reuben Mashebe.

I HALEKA J., have read and understood the contents of this letter. I therefore give permission to the researcher to conduct an interview with me.

Name HALEKA J. JUNE-MILLS Signature [Signature]

Appendix E: Letter of Consent for the College Music Student

The University of Zambia

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of Psychology

Date 15/11/2014

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a doctoral student in Child and Adolescent Psychology from the above named institution under the supervision of Prof. Robert Serpell conducting a research on my thesis entitled: *Indigenous musical play games as cultural resources for the cognitive development promotion in Zambian children: the case of Western Province*. I am requesting for your participation in this study through interview and focus group discussions. Please show your willingness to participate by signing on the provided slip.

I must hasten to inform you that the name(s) of the participants in this study who will be observed and video/audio recorded, or interviewed will remain anonymous if they so wish. Their participation is voluntary; they will be allowed to withdraw during the study without providing reasons for doing so.

If you have some questions regarding the nature of this study, please feel free to contact me on my mobile phone number: 0971993424 or that of my research supervisor on 0977758705.

Yours faithfully,

Mukela, Reuben Mashebe.

I MWIYA MWIYA, have read and understood the contents of this letter. I therefore give permission to the researcher to conduct an interview with me.

Name MWIYA MWIYA Signature [Signature]

Appendic F: Letter of approval from the Research Ethics Committee- UNZA



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

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

P O Box 32379
Lusaka, Zambia

15th September, 2016

Mr. Reuben Mashebe Mukela
Sioma District Education Board
P.O Box 920089
SIOMA

Dear Mr. Mukela,

RE: FULL ETHICAL CLEARANCE

With reference to your research proposal entitled: "**Indigenous Musical Play Games as Cultural Resources for Cognitive Development Promotion in Zambian Children: The Case of Western Province.**" You are hereby given full ethical clearance to proceed with your research.

ACTION: APPROVED
DECISION: 15th September, 2016
EXPIRATION DATE: 14th September, 2017

However, it is recommended that all data to be collected should be kept confidential and that if there are plans for publication or dissemination of results, the names of the participants should not be linked with the research in order to ensure confidentiality.

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.

You should seek local approval from relevant traditional authorities at various levels of administration in Western Zambia such as silalo indunas, because this part of Zambia cherishes its culture so strongly. This is especially so in relation to the planned use of audio and video recordings to collect data.

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,

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

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

Appendic G: Letter of approval from the Ministry of Education

TS 34017

17th November, 2016

Mr. Reuben Mashebe Mukela
Sioma District Education Board
SIOMA.


**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA FOR
DOCTORAL STUDY: YOURSELF**

Reference is made to your minute dated 23rd September, 2016 through which you requested the Ministry of General Education to consider granting you permission to collect data for a Doctoral study.

I am pleased to inform you that the Ministry has granted permission for you to collect data in the selected Districts in Western Province.

Further, by copy of this letter, the Provincial Education Officer (PEO) Western Province is hereby being informed about this authority to allow you conduct your research in selected schools in various District in Western Province.

Thank you for showing interest in our Ministry.


Fredrick Mwila
Acting Director-HRA
For/Permanent Secretary
MINISTRY OF GENERAL EDUCATION

C.C: The Provincial Education Officer, Lusaka Province, Lusaka

Appendic H: Letter of approval from the PEO – Western Province

All correspondence should be addressed
to the Provincial Education Officer
And not to Individuals

Telephone: +260 217 221031
Tel/Fax: +260 217 221838
Telegram: PROVED MONGU



In reply please quote:

No:.....

**REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
MINISTRY OF GENERAL EDUCATION**

**PROVINCIAL EDUCATION OFFICER
REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS
P.O. Box 910031
MONGU - ZAMBIA
WESTERN PROVINCE**

18th May, 2017

Mr. Reuben Mashebe Mukela
Sioma District Education Board
SIOMA.

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSIOPN TO COLLECT DATA FOR DOCTORAL STUDY:
YOURSELF**

Reference is made to your minute dated 23rd September, 2016 through which you requested the Ministry of General Education to consider granting you permission to collect data for your doctoral study.

I am pleased to inform you that the Ministry has granted permission for you to collect data in the selected districts in Western Province.

By copy of this letter, the District Education Board Secretaries are hereby being informed of this authority to allow you to conduct your research in selected schools in various districts in Western Province.

Loveness Mubisi
Provincial Education Officer
WESTERN PROVINCE

CC: The District Education Board Secretaries, Western Province

Appendix I: Examples of some books accessed during the study having Western play songs and games

- Ministry of Education (1969). *New Zambia Primary Course*. Lusaka: National Educational Company of Zambia.
- Ministry of General Education, Youth and Sport, (1990). *Zambia Basic Education Course Grade 1 English Teacher's Guide Part B: The Year's Work*. Lusaka: Kenneth Kaunda Foundation
- Ministry of Education (1992). *Zambia Basic Education Course Grade 2 Teacher's Guide Part B: The Year's Work*. Lusaka: Zambia Educational Publishing House
- Curriculum Development Centre (1994). *Zambia Basic Education Course Teacher's Guide Part B: The Year's Work: Lusaka: Zambia Educational Publishing House*
- Ministry of Education (1995). *Zambia Basic Education Grade 5 English Teacher's Guide Part B: The Year's Work*. Lusaka: Zambia Educational Publishing House
- Ministry of Education (n.d.). *Learning at Taonga Market: Grade one Mentor's Guide*. Lusaka: Educational Broadcasting Services
- Ministry of Education (n.d.). *Learning at Taonga Market Grade 3 Mentor's Guide*. Lusaka: Educational Broadcasting Services

Appendix J: Some selected transcriptions of indigenous play songs

MBUMBU WA LILA

Transcribed by: Mukela M.

$\text{♩} = 90$

Mbu-mbu wa-li-la uba-ta ku-nya-nya.. A.. a-i-ye.. a.. a-i-ye..

Detailed description: A single staff of music in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 90. The melody consists of a sequence of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are written below the staff, with some words repeated in a second line.

NAKUTAMBEKELA

Transcribed by: Mukela

$\text{♩} = 90$

Na-ku - ta - mbe - ke - la so-na si - ka se. U-si - ke wa-fo - sa we-ze si-na na

Detailed description: A single staff of music in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 90. The melody features a mix of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the staff.

WENA MWANANA ULILA AHULU

Transcribed by: Mukela M

$\text{♩} = 110$

Voice We - na mwa-na - na bo - na nda-ta - ho we

Voice u - li - laa - hu - lu ha' - na mu - ta - nga

Detailed description: A two-staff musical score for voice. The top staff is labeled 'Voice' and the bottom staff is also labeled 'Voice'. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 110. The melody is written in a soprano range. The lyrics are written below the staves.

5 ^{2.}

Vo. na mu - ta - nga

Vo.

Detailed description: A continuation of the musical score for voice, showing two staves. The top staff is labeled 'Vo.' and the bottom staff is also labeled 'Vo.'. The key signature remains three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The melody continues with a few more notes. The lyrics 'na mu - ta - nga' are written below the top staff.