Perceptions of Stakeholders Towards the Academic and Vocational Learning Pathways in Selected Secondary Schools in Kafue District, Zambia.

BY

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this piece of work to my mother Regina Kayemba and my brothers and sisters for their support during the time the study was being conducted.

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Author's Declaration

I, David Chanda do declare that this dissertation represents my own work and that it has not in part or in whole been presented as material for award of any degree at this or any other university. Where other people's work has been used, acknowledgement has been made.

Author's Signature.....

Date.....04/10/16.....

APPROVAL

This dissertation by David Chanda is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Education Management.

Signature..... **Date**.....

Signature..... **Date**.....

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to determine the perception among stakeholders towards the academic and vocational learning pathways in selected secondary schools in Kafue district. Both qualitative and quantitative research design were used to collect data. Self-structured questionnaires were used to collect data from the learners. The research study comprised of 180 participants from four selected secondary schools in Kafue district.

The information was statistically analyzed using the statistical package social science (SPSS) and was interpreted. Results indicated that learners in most of the secondary schools perceive certain learning pathways with negativity hence they tend not to like certain learning pathways in fear of failure especially those with learning pathways such as natural sciences under the academic learning pathway and technology under the vocational pathways.

The main findings indicate that the perceptions for stakeholders towards the academic and vocational learning pathways are good. However, most of the learners' choice of learning pathways depends on the availability suitable infrastructure, equipment, trained personnel and motivation to enhance decision making.

Further, in view of the findings, the researcher made the following recommendations; there is need for educational planers to full avail information to the stakeholders who are learners, teachers and administrators on the academic and vocational learning pathways. Educational administrators should also plan for capacity building among the teachers and administrators in order to encourage and give a positive attitude to the learners on the learning pathways in schools.

Table of content

ACRONYMS

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

MOE - Ministry of Education

ZECF – Zambia Education Curriculum Framework

NIF – National Implementation Framework

BSR – Baseline Survey Report

NRC – New Revised Curriculum

CAI – Computer assisted Instruction

DEBS – District Education Board Secretary

VET – Vocational Education training

TVET – Technical Vocation Education training

ICT's – Information, communication technology

MGD's – Millennium Goals for Development

CDC – Curriculum development Centre

MOGE – Ministry of General Education

SPSS – Statistical package for social sciences

CHAPTER ONE

2.0 Overview

This chapter presents the background, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions and the significance of the study. This is followed by the conceptual framework of the study, theoretical framework of the study, limitation of the study, operational definitions of the concepts and terms used in the study, layout of the dissertation and summary of the chapter.

1.1 Background

The education system in Zambia has undergone some changes which have roots in the pre-colonial era in terms of career path reforms. The provision of education in Zambia is guided by the democratic principles of liberalization, decentralization, equality, equity, partnership and accountability. The principles of liberalization and decentralization entail that many individuals and organizations are involved in the provision and management of education. Therefore, the need to develop a standard curriculum regulatory framework was necessary (MOE, 2013).

According to the Education Act of 2011, the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education is the custodian of quality education provision and ensures that all providers adhere to the policy and regulations on curriculum. Therefore, all learning institutions should have the Zambia education curriculum framework (ZECF) and other important curriculum-related documents and syllabuses. These documents shall function as key daily guides and tools to ensure the provision of quality education. In

order to keep the curriculum up to date, Zambia education curriculum framework (ZECF) is reviewed every ten (10) years in response to change drivers that include political, economic, social, technological, ecological and legal factors. However, curriculum support materials such as syllabuses and books are reviewed after every five (5) years in order to keep them up to date.

The rate of technological advances and new labour market needs have accordingly changed the way skills training should be done. Governments are thus strategically responding to these needs and bridging technological skills at different levels of human resource development. New technology and changing manufacturing processes have an effect on productivity and on the demand for workers with higher-level skills, enterprising and innovative traits with broader workplace competencies that can command higher returns (MOE, 2013).

Skills training and development, supported by appropriate learning pathways and curriculum are pertinent factors for any economy to have human resources that are efficient and effective in any job. Appropriate curricula and learning pathways help equip individuals with essential competences and skills necessary to operate a particular job successfully; whether they are working for someone or running their business (MOE, 2011).

In fact, the Education Act, (2011) confirms that, appropriate and relevant skills training should have an assortment of different skills that are applicable to a variety of jobs. The method of training also matters a lot. The training method should incorporate both best practices and nurture and develop vocational and technical skills for learners to be able to use a combination of their intellect and hands to add value to their lives and resources around them.

However, this have had not been the case in Zambia for some time now due to the limitations because of the education curriculum to enable individuals acquire the optimum labour market needed skills. A study on the Zambian literacy levels, however, revealed that the country is placed second from the bottom out of the 15 countries in the sub region that were surveyed for three years (MESVTEE, 2013).

It was against this backdrop that the government developed a new school curriculum which enables learners choose a career path and guidance framework on the preferred type of education for the labour market. The framework, which provides curriculum guidelines and structures for the school system levels, was piloted in selected districts and schools in all the ten provinces that were being evaluated before it was fully implemented in January, 2014. The new national curriculum framework has reviewed the structure of the curriculum at all levels. The new curriculum was inspired by the 1996 Education Policy, 2011 Education Act, Action Development Plans, National Implementation Frameworks, the Vision 2030, 1999 Baseline Survey Reports and 2009 National Curriculum Symposium report.

The new curriculum at secondary school level offers two learning pathways which are Academic and Vocational pathways. The academic career path incorporates social sciences, business studies and natural sciences while the vocational pathways include the technical drawing and metal work, and Home economics and hospitality. However, the numbers of learners taking natural sciences has continued to decline despite the government directive to make natural sciences as compared to other pathways like the social sciences, social sciences and vocational pathways. It is from this background that the study seeks to investigate the perceptions of

learners, teachers, parents and administrators towards the academic and vocational pathways in selected secondary schools in Kafue District.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Skills training and development supported by appropriate Career pathways and curriculum are pertinent factors for an economy to have human resource that are efficient and effective in any Job. Appropriate curriculum and learning pathways help equip individuals with essential competences and skills necessary to operate a particular Job successfully (MESVTEE, 2013). Therefore, the training methods should incorporate both best practices and nurture and develop vocational and technical skills for learners to be able to use a combination of their intellect and hands to add value to their lives and resources around them (Ida and Keith, 2014).

However, this has not been the case in Zambia for some time now due to the limitations of the curriculum which enabled individuals acquire only the labour market needed skills (Kelly, 1991). It is from this background that the government developed a new curriculum with an emphasis on career pathways where learners choose either academic or vocational pathway depending on their abilities.

Despite the government efforts to have the new revised curriculum be implemented, most schools are shunning away from taking on certain career pathways. Some schools are taking of career paths which are deemed easy to administer, less costly and where they are enough trained personnel to teach. Further, parents and certain teachers discourage learners to take on certain career pathways despite performing very well at junior citing such being difficult and challenging. These stakeholders such as learners, teachers and school administrators perceive career pathways as costly, not relevant to the job market, difficult to be undertaken and may not be applicable in a Zambian context despite the government effort to fund its implementation.

Despite the above stated, we do not know the perceptions of the stakeholders towards the academic and vocational learning pathways. Therefore, the study seeks to explore the perceptions of these stakeholders towards the academic and vocational career learning pathways.

1.3 Purpose of the Study or Aim

The main purpose of the study was to establish the perceptions of the stakeholders towards the academic and vocational pathways among stakeholders in selected secondary schools in Kafue district. Stakeholders in this case include learners, teachers, parents and school administrators.

1.4 Study Objectives

The investigation was guided by the following specific objectives to:

1. Establish the perceptions of the stakeholders towards academic and vocational pathways.
2. Determine the availability and suitability of infrastructure that supports effective teaching of vocational and academic career pathways.
3. Establish the levels of awareness among stakeholders towards academic and vocational career pathways
4. Find out the availability of skilled personnel to teach the two career path ways

1.5 Research Questions

The following questions guided the research:

1. What are the perceptions of the stakeholders towards academic and vocational career pathways?
2. How suitable and available are the infrastructure that support the teaching and learning of academic and vocational career pathways?

3. How have the stakeholders responded to the implementation of the academic and vocational career pathways?
4. What kind of personnel is available to teach the academic and vocational career pathways?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study seeks to inform policy on the perceptions among stakeholders towards the academic and vocational career pathways. It may also inform educational planners on the response and preferences of the learners towards the academic and vocational career pathways and this information may help them to effectively evaluate the implementation of the new curriculum. Further, it may serve as a source of literature for further similar studies.

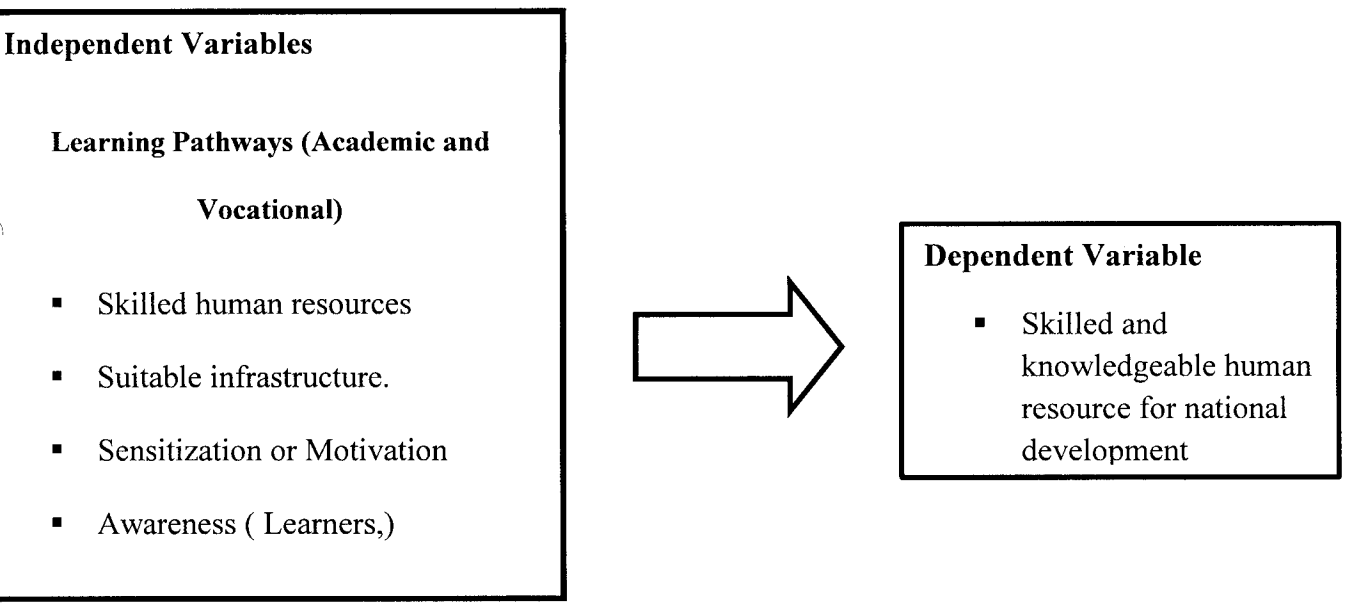
1.7 Conceptual Framework

Ida and Keith, (2014), articulates that, skilled human resource can only be attained through a well spelt out career path choice by individual learners and well-furnished laboratories and workshops enhance effective teaching and learning of both academic and vocational career pathways subjects and learners and teachers appreciate highly the subjects. Availability of teaching and learning materials also enhances effective teaching and learning. The absence of the above may lead to inefficiency, poor results, and lack of interests by learners and teachers.

Therefore, effective teaching of both academic and vocational career pathways as enshrined in the new curriculum requires fully furnished workshops for vocational subjects and well stocked laboratories for academic subjects and well trained human resource. Therefore, this framework looks at the ideals for academic and vocational career pathways such skilled human resource, suitable infrastructure, motivation and the attitudes of stakeholders. Once this is done, then we

have skilled and knowledgeable human resource for the much needed national development as the outcome. The model below illustrates how independent variables are connected to the depended variables. The independent variables are career pathways and include factors such as are skilled human resource, infrastructure, sensitization and attitudes of stakeholders while depended variable is skilled and knowledgeable human resource for national development.

Figure 1.7.1 shows conceptual framework of the study



1.8 Theoretical framework

The study was guided by the theory of behaviorism. Behaviorism equates learning with changes in either the form or frequency of observable performance. Learning is accomplished when a proper response is demonstrated following the presentation of a specific environmental stimulus.

Behaviorism focuses on the importance of the consequences of those performances and contends that responses that are followed by reinforcement are more likely to recur in the future. No

attempt is made to determine the structure of a student's knowledge nor to assess which mental processes it is necessary for them to use (Winn, 1990). The learner is characterized as being reactive to conditions in the environment as opposed to taking an active role in discovering the environment.

Although both learner and environmental factors are considered important by behaviorists, environmental conditions receive the greatest emphasis. Behaviorists assess the learners to determine at what point to begin instruction as well as to determine which rein forcers are most effective for a particular student. The most critical factor, however, is the arrangement of stimuli and consequences within the environment.

Many of the basic assumptions and characteristics of behaviorism are embedded in current instructional design practices. Behaviorism was used as the basis for designing many of the early audio-visual materials and gave rise to many related teaching strategies, such as Skinner's teaching machines and programmed texts. More recent examples include principles utilized within computer-assisted instruction (CAI) and mastery learning.

The goal of instruction for the behaviorist is to elicit the desired response from the learner who is presented with a target stimulus. To accomplish this, the learner must know how to execute the proper response, as well as the conditions under which that response should be made. Therefore, instruction is structured around the presentation of the target stimulus and the provision of opportunities for the learner to practice making the proper response. To facilitate the linking of stimulus-response pairs, instruction frequently uses cues to initially prompt the delivery of the response and reinforcement to strengthen correct responding in the presence of the target stimulus.

Since the main goal of the behaviorist is to solicit for response, then it was quite applicable in this study which seeks to look at the perceptions of the learners on the academic and vocational learning pathways. This study entails accessing the responses of the learners towards the introduced learning pathways in the revised curriculum in secondary schools hence the use of the theory.

1.9 Scope of the Study

The research study endeavored to investigate the perceptions of stakeholders towards the academic and vocational career path ways. The study will cover people involved in the implementation of the learning pathways such learners, teachers, parents and school administrators in selected secondary schools in Kafue District.

1.10 Limitation of the study

Limitations related to the study were inadequate finances and limited time and the fact that the study was a case study; the research confined itself to few schools within Kafue district who could not represent the entire schools in Kafue district. This means that the findings had to be generalized to the entire population under probe. Ghosh (2013), states that the Case study method has some limitations and difficulties which makes research work a challenge to the researcher.

A Case study gives false generalization of the situation and has proved to be difficult in the collection of historical data and is subject to chances of making errors in selection of the case. The researcher also had difficulties in accessing some of the learners as most of them were found learning or would have knocked off. However, the researcher managed to obtain the data from some of the learners, teachers and administrators present.

1.11 Operational Definition of Terms

Career pathway is a series of connected education and training programs and student support services that enable individuals to secure a job or advance in a demand industry or occupation. Career Pathways focus on easing and facilitating student transition from secondary school to college or university (Dan, 2005).

Academic pathway is a learning pathway which includes social sciences, business studies and natural sciences. It is boundary spanning curricula, instructional and organizational structure and meaning assignments that either link or extend from high school to college or university (John & Michael, 2011).

Vocational pathway is a learning pathway which incorporates technology, metal works and home economics and hospitality and focus on acquisition of life skills (Dan, 2005)

Infrastructure is the basic structure or features of a system or organization such as buildings, roads, electricity, communication, and many more.

Skilled human resource refers to the person who is trained, well-educated, and energetic, experienced, devoted to their field and is capable to do any specific work in a balanced way and efficiently. Teachers, doctors, engineers are some of the examples of skilled manpower (John & Michael, 2011).

Development is an event that occurs when something passes from one state or phase to another.

Perception is the way in which something is regarded, understood or interpreted. It may imply also the ability to understand or notice something easily (Elaine & Pamela, 2004).

Teacher is a person who teaches or instructs, especially as a profession.

Learner is someone who is learning about a particular subject or how to do something.

School Administrator is a person whose Job is to manage a school.

1.12 Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. This section serves to indicate what the researcher intends to indicate in each chapter.

Chapter one: In this chapter, a brief overview of the research problem, aims of the research, definition of concepts and the whole research process is given

Chapter two: This chapter brings out a review of literature studies on the vocational and academic learning pathways. In accordance to studies, literature review is a description of primary and secondary sources of research material.

Chapter three: This is the critical part of the research study. Research design sets up the framework for the study and is the blueprint of the research. This chapter will give a brief explanation of the theory underpinning the methodology as well as how the researcher plans to do the research. Ghosh, (2013) define a research design as a plan or a blueprint of how you intend to conduct a research project.

Chapter four: The research findings would be presented and a clear analysis of data collected.

Chapter five: In this chapter, discussions of the findings would be done bringing out details the results on the perceptions of stakeholders towards the academic and vocational learning pathways.

Chapter six: In this chapter, conclusions from the results in chapter 4 as well as recommendations and the limitations of the study would be presented.

1.13 Summary

In chapter one the introduction and background was given. In addition, an overview of the research project was described and important concepts were defined. Literature review follows in chapter two.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

The Literature presented in the following sections provides a framework from which to analyze the questions under examinations in the research study. Owing to the amount of extensive information available on perceptions of stakeholders towards the academic and vocational learning pathways, only information pertinent to the research questions is presented.

According to Shulze (2002), a literature study is a systematic critical analysis and a summary of existing literature that is relevant to the research topic. It involves readings on appropriate selection of available literature such as books, articles, dissertations, and newspapers reports in which new events have been reported and opinion expressed on the matter under study.

In fact, De Vos Et al, (2005), noted that, a literature review is a description of primary and secondary sources of research materials. Particularly, it is a narrative or interpretive survey of the current status of research being investigated. Further, the purpose of literature review is to determine what others have learned and written on the field of the research problem and thus gather information about it.

In addition, researchers such as Mouton, (2002), identifies that literature review offers a synthesis of what has been written on the topic relevant to the study, what has not been written on the topic usually referred to as the 'gap'. It also shows how the researcher intends to address the 'gap' in the existing knowledge base.

Therefore, in this chapter, literature on perceptions of stakeholders towards the academic and vocational learning pathways globally is discussed with a view of determining the perceptions of

stakeholders towards the academic and vocational learning pathways in various countries who have adopted both academic and vocational learning pathways.

Further, the section discusses the principles and concepts of academic pathways and vocational pathways. It will discuss the literature (secondary data) that explores the concept of Academic and vocational career pathway in other countries. The secondary data that which will be used come from various authors who talk about global perceptive of Career pathways and the types of learning pathways. It will further endeavor to look at the attributes and basic features, personal characteristics of the learning in certain Career pathway, skilled human resource, suitable infrastructure and attributes of learners, parents, teachers and school administrators on Career pathways.

2.1.0 Experiences at global level on learning pathways

The vocational and academic divide has persisted in the United Kingdom education and training sector for a long time. Literature reviews that the vocational route is considered inferior to the academic one, attracting disproportionately high number of low income students who may be excluded from general or academic education and often come for areas of multiple disadvantage (Crawford et al, 2011). Although in 1944 Education Act might have contributed to establishment of the divide, the literature recognizes that the relative attractiveness of vocational education and training may steam from historically lower levels of esteem for manual workers as compared with those who could afford to engage with theoretical ideas and knowledge (Hyland and Winch, 2007).

In their study (Virolainen and Stenstrom, 2014), confirms that despite the fact that vocational education and training is stigmatized in many societies it has been suggested that it is less well-regarded in liberal market economies such as United Kingdom and United States of America

than it is considered in coordinated market economies such as Denmark and Germany. The former view VET as a track for those with lower academic performance while the later view VET as a contributor to an innovation-based economy (Bosch and Charest, 2008). It is therefore important to improve the attractiveness of vocational pathway in its own right and thus contribute to the improvement of vocational education and training.

In most developing countries in the world, formal employment has failed to glow at the same rate with informal employment resulting in significant levels of unemployment and underdevelopment (ILO, 2003). For example in Ghana, technical and vocational education is at the center of the country's policies to help solve employment problems and to reduce poverty (King and Palmer, 2007). The government recognized that the country's training system was not producing employable graduates with the right skills (Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, 2008). Hence, its investment in the technical skills to equip individuals and be able to work on their own once they passed through secondary education. All these were enshrined in the curriculum that separated the academic path from the vocational learning pathway.

Additionally, key challenges facing TVET in most African countries include; the need to improve the perceptions of vocational education and training; to improve the training of instructors or educators; to develop links between vocational and general Education, which currently often operate in parallel, and between formal and non- formal training programs(Bosch and Charest, 2008).

2.1.1 Skilled Human Resource

Skilled human resources in curriculum implementation are cardinal. Lack of the skilled personnel would hinder the effective implementation of the curriculum in any country. In the education sector, it would mean that all the stakeholders should possess the required and

necessary skills to accelerate the process. Teachers should be competent with the new skills and methods being promoted in the new curriculum. The managers should also understand fully the contents of the curriculum in order for them to explain to their subordinates.

For instance, one of the subjects being incorporated in the new curriculum is information and communication technologies (ICTs) which require specialized competencies. It is therefore important to note that teachers should possess these competencies in order to effectively teach the subject to the learners. Computer literacy and ability to access the internet to match student's sources of information and modern ways of collecting information are desirable (MOE, 2013).

Furthermore, the quality of teachers is a determinant of the quality of the education system. Teachers constitute the human resource required for the facilitation of the objectives of any curriculum and its implementation. Since what teachers do in classrooms and laboratories are largely independent of what they know. Capacity building of teachers is imperative for the implementation of the new curriculum.

The training and retraining of teachers is necessary for them to enact reformed based curriculum such as that of the program. The capacity building process should be systematic and continuous through workshops, seminars, enlightenment programs on the reform, orientation courses and other useful educational activities. This is because teachers themselves like pupils and students require support to be effective in the delivery of the curriculum. Further, curriculum material such as teachers' guides, handbooks and manuals should be designed to improve teacher quality as one potential vehicle towards supporting them (Danmole, 2011)

Most African countries have embarked on curriculum reviews in the sector to meet the growing demands of society and the world at large. The notable among many is Nigeria whose curriculum

review was aimed at meeting the growing aspiration of the society and the millennium development goals.

Education is regarded as a tool for achieving the desirable change; hence the curriculum is an instrument for delivery of the educational goals and objectives (Orji, 2004). It is prudent to recognize that the fact the appropriate and functional curriculum is needed to achieve meaningful and sustainable development. It is from this background that, Nigeria's education system has undergone a number of reforms tailored towards achieving national and global developmental goals.

The implementation of the new education curriculum and subsequent achievement was scheduled for 2015 in accordance with MGDs. Therefore, stakeholders in education were tasked to ensure that there was effective implementation of the curriculum. However, considering the special position in the school system, the school heads and managers and inspectors were expected to play key roles in providing good leadership and motivation for success of the new curriculum (Danmole, 2011)

The stakeholders were expected to adequately distribute copies of the new curriculum to various education institutions and see to it that teachers are using these copies of the curriculum in schools. Further, advocacy and sensitization exercises were conducted to make the teachers be familiar with the content of the curriculum. Teachers were trained and retrained and mentored on how best they could participate in the implementation of the new curriculum. This scenario clearly indicates the needs equipping the teachers with skills before the curriculum is fully enacted. If the curriculum is affected without preparing the teachers and mangers in schools with relevant skills then, it would mean lapses during the implementation process.

Teachers were encouraged to write and produce books and other instruction materials in line with the new curriculum. There was also need to create an enabling environment for the implementation of the trade and entrepreneurship subjects for senior secondary school. Incentives were also put in place to motivate the teachers. The involvement of teachers in writing books for the new curriculum meant teachers were already aware of the contents of the subject matter and would be very easy for them to teach effectively as compared to a situation where a curriculum would be put in place and learning pathways stated clearly but without teaching and learning materials to effectively implement the new materials in the curriculum.

In South Africa for example, authorities seem to be always changing the curriculum and this has affected the implementation process (Badgugela, 2012). However, according to Piaget, educators work well where there is certainty and stability in the curriculum and the education system. Consistence change in the curriculum affects the teacher performance in terms of methods and approaches. For instance, a situation where one method is introduced today before the evaluation, another method is introduced to replace the former. In such a situation, teachers tend to be confused as to what exactly needs to be done.

The other scenario is in Indonesia where the government took a careful step by implementing the concepts of the school based curriculum in order to deal with the main education problems such as the demand for teachers in schools to be skilled and trained (Mulyasa, 2006). Amongst many of the steps taken were that, authorities empowered schools to arrange, improve or develop and evaluate their curriculum by considering social, cultural, financial, and local potential as well as society needs, results and other aspects that affect the education process in the school or in the area where the curriculum was being applied.

In the year 2000, Zambia through the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) also embarked on the school curriculum review starting with the Lower and Middle Basic Education (Grades 1 – 7). The purpose of the review was to link the school curriculum to teacher education. Specifically, the review that commenced in 2000 was meant to re-define the desired learner, the teacher-educator or instructor and the teaching and learning outcomes so as to make education relevant and responsive to the individual and society (CDC, 2000).

While the Primary School curriculum was reviewed in 2000, the Secondary School curriculum was last comprehensively reviewed in the early 1970s. It consists of a small number of core subjects and a wide range of optional subjects. However, evidence from the Junior Secondary School and School Certificate Examinations results show that almost all learners take academic subjects, with less than 15% taking practical subjects of any kind. In 2013, a framework was put in place and implementation process started (CDC, 1999).

The government through the Curriculum Development Center came up with the curriculum framework of 2013 which gave proper guidance on the career pathways. The document brings in aspects of two learning pathways called academic and vocational career pathways. The career pathways are meant to prepare learners not only for the white collar job but also equips them with skills that are life sustaining. In fact, MOE, (2011) confirms that government should introduce practical work at secondary school level as part of grading towards grade twelve (12) finals, say forty (40%) percent practical and sixty (60%) percent theory. This will equip the children with skills and sense of responsibility at an early age.

The skills being advocated for in the new revised curriculum may be good but are the teachers fully trained to handle the new skills being introduced in the new curriculum. What about the learners, are they allowed choosing career pathways according to their abilities. In fact, literature

reviews that, where teachers and other educators are fully trained in skills being proposed in the new curriculum, the implementation process becomes easy and everyone feels part of the system being proposed (MOE, 2013).

2.1.2 Infrastructure

Literature reviews that, it is critical to note that suitable equipment and infrastructure should be put in place to support the implementation of any curriculum. Infrastructure includes; well-furnished classroom blocks, equipped laboratories such sciences laboratories and computer laboratories. Teaching and learning materials should be adequate to enable teacher and learners effectively use them.

In fact, it should be noted that any curriculum being implemented has its own infrastructure requirements. It may require building new addition classroom blocks, new laboratories, or rehabilitation of the existing infrastructure. For instance, there are schools where infrastructure in being shared by students. In such cases, new infrastructure should be put in place to curb such scenarios. This would enable the exposure of the students to practical experiences, acquisition of relevant skills, scientific attitudes without any hindrance (Danmole, 2011)

It should be the government program to ensure the production and provision of textual and other instructional materials should be a priority for quality delivery of the curriculum. Simple science and computer apparatus and equipment should be part of the package in the provision of government towards the curriculum to be implemented. Besides, teachers and students require exposure and practical experience with standard and modern apparatus and equipment.

Adequate facilities such as classrooms, halls, libraries, laboratories and playing fields are key priorities for the successful curriculum implementation. Schools need adequate classroom

accommodation to alleviate overcrowding. The problem of overcrowding makes learners to share the few stocks of furniture and teaching and learning materials available in the school. In such cases teacher effectiveness is hampered and it becomes impossible for the teacher to render individual pupil attention because of the large number of pupils in class (Kelly, 1999).

Further, Mwanakatwe, (1974), observed that teaching and learning resources such as desks and other educational materials and requirements were in short supply or unavailable and teacher's salaries and condition of service were poor in mission schools before independence. Therefore, the absence of such would impact negatively on curriculum development. However, if the infrastrustructure is in place at the point of Curriculum implementation, then the process would be smooth and stakeholders would be more than willing to effectively support the process.

2.1.3 Motivation and Awareness

According to literature, people are affected by any change need to be fully aware of the changes to take place. Various stake holders are invited and briefed on the need for the change and the change process. Motivation is necessary to avoid people failing to cooperate and support the idea of change. MOGE, (2015) confirms that, the standards and evaluation section of the Ministry has not been providing frequent professional encouragement, guiding and counseling to teachers through visits to schools as well as encouraging in service training courses. Now, if this is not happening, how do we expect teachers and other educators to participate fully in the implementation process of the new curriculum?.

Further studies have suggested that poor management of time by school administrator affect the implementation of the curriculum. The programs in the school affect the implementation of the curriculum. The learning time in schools is mostly mismanaged by School head teachers and class teachers. In most schools a lot of time is taken up by activities such as assemblies,

meetings, visiting government officials, extra-curricular activities like sports, and many other unforeseen eventualities that take place at the expense of sensitizing the learners about new curriculum or programs coming in the school (Tabulawa, 1998). However, if well planned and managed, time is a critical factor in any program implementation process.

Globally and even at continental level, countries that have implemented learning pathways in new curriculum have identified motivation and awareness among stakeholders in the education sector as key to effective implementation of the curriculum. In most cases, a new curriculum would bring in new subjects where there may be few human resource to handle such specializations. It is important to bring to the attention of various stakeholders such as teachers, learners, parents, and school managers the main objectives of the curriculum. Coupled with need assessment, the stakeholders will be able to know what is expected of them and would prepare in welcoming the new ideas.

According to Orji, (2010), teachers in most countries are ill motivated and this has reduced their morale to teach effectively. Salaries are low and enrollments in classrooms are too big which result in being less efficient when it comes to using child centered approaches in teaching. It is important to motivate the teachers by improving their conditions of service in terms of salaries and reduced enrollment in classroom to allow them meet the needs of each and every child in the classroom.

2.2 Summary

The chapter has brought out what others have written on the perception of stakeholders towards the academic and vocational learning pathways. Global examples have been given on how stakeholders in some countries have perceived the academic and vocational learning pathways.

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter described the type of research design which was employed, the steps that were followed in conducting the research, the respondents of the study, the research instruments and the statistical instruments which were used. According to Mouton (2002) methodology is a plan to apply a variety of standardized methods and techniques in the systematic pursuit of knowledge. It includes the data collection plan which sets out the detailed strategy for collecting data. That is, where, when, how and from whom (Schulze 2002).

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001) the goal of a sound research design is to provide results that are judged to be credible. Credibility refers to the extent to which the results approximate reality and are judged to be trustworthy and reasonable.

Further, the chapter is the description of methods used applied in the study. It would be outlined in the following sections; Research design, Study area, population of the study, sampling techniques, research instrument, data collection procedures and data analysis (Kombo & Tromp, 2004).

To get an insight into the perceptions of stakeholders towards the academic and vocational learning pathways in selected secondary schools in Kafue district and the nation as a whole, a data collection exercise was conducted on perceptions of learners, teachers, parents and administrator of the selected secondary school in the district. In view of this, this portion of the research study outlines ways and means that were employed in collecting data about the subject matter.

3.1 Research Design

The research design is a general plan, blueprint and structure of the investigation which the researcher uses to obtain evidence to answer the research questions (De Vos et al 1998). It guides the manner in which the study is to be conducted and creates a framework for the research (Brink & Wood 1983).

According to Kombo and Tromp, (2006), research design is the structure of the research that holds all elements in the research together and shows how all the major parts of the research project work together to try to address the central research questions. It is also a scheme outline or plan that is used to generate answers to research problems (Orodho, 2003).

The research design for this study was qualitative, exploratory, descriptive as well as quantitative. According to the distinction made by Hoberg (1999), the design is more closely aligned with inductive building of theory as opposed to deductive testing or extension of theory. Each aspect of the research design is outlined as follows:

3.1.1 Qualitative

Qualitative research emphasizes the dynamic, holistic and individual aspects of the human experience and attempts to capture those aspects in their entirety, within the context of those who are experiencing them (Mathebula 2000). It includes the identification, study and analysis of subjective and objective data in order to know and understand the internal and external worlds of people (Mathebula 2000). The qualitative design is most suitable as it facilitates flexibility and will allow staff to describe their perceptions from their own frame of reference (Lewin & Vuliamy, 1990).

Schulze (in Hoberg 1999) specifies that qualitative approaches are useful when the researcher seeks to develop an understanding of human phenomena and to investigate the meaning given to events that people experience. This study involved interaction with the participants (personnel) in the setting of their workplace and was directed towards understanding what they thought was crucial regarding retention strategies that were implemented. It is against this understanding, the phenomenological form of qualitative design was deemed most appropriate.

The researcher employed a qualitative research method because of the following characteristics: it does not give step by step instructions and a fixed recipe to follow. The design is flexible and may change during the research. It also allows more than one method of data collection was used, including interviewing observation and document analysis. This was called triangulation of data source and it improved the trustworthiness of the data. Further, qualitative research method was followed because data to be interpreted and analyzed would reflect the experiences of the stakeholders towards the academic and vocational learning pathway.

3.1.2 Exploratory

Qualitative research can be oriented towards a discovery (Dzivhani 2000). Such a research was deemed exploratory as it was situated in a relatively unknown research area. It attempted to gain insight into what the stakeholders perceive as academic and vocational learning pathways and how they have responded. The exploratory nature of the research enabled the researcher not only to share in the understanding and perceptions of personnel as participants in the study, but explored and built knowledge on how they structured and gave meaning to this aspect in their everyday lives.

3.1.3 Descriptive

A descriptive study provided a detailed description of the phenomenon under investigation in order to answer the research question (Brink &Wood 1983). The researcher, after the empirical investigation, described the lived experiences of personnel (participants) as they expressed themselves on factors that influenced stakeholders perceptions towards the academic and vocational learning pathways. Descriptions were predominantly textual and narrative. That was, a recounting of the participants" own words. Their own words explained the meaning that they ascribed to their world and experiences in respect to the problem. As Leininger (in Mathebula 2000) mentions, the goal of qualitative research was to document and interpret as fully as possible the totality of whatever

3.1.4 Quantitative

In this study, a quantitative research design was deemed most suitable to investigate the perceptions among learners towards the academic and vocational learning pathways. A quantitative research design was decided on mainly to involve all the 180 respondents so that standardized information would be collected. These identified trends, however, were generally restricted to superficial conclusions based on highly controlled data gathering techniques. McMillan and Schumacher (2001), state that designing quantitative research involves choosing subjects, data collection techniques (such as questionnaires, observations or interviews), procedures for gathering data and procedures for implementing treatments.

3.1.5 Justification for the use of qualitative and quantitative methods

This research is a quantitative and qualitative survey. This approach was the most appropriate to obtain information on the perception of stakeholders towards the academic and vocational learning pathways in selected secondary schools of Kafue District.

According to Babbie (1979), quantitative survey approach is probably the best method available to those in social sciences which are interested in collecting original data for purposes of describing a population. Surveys are also excellent vehicles for the measurement of attitudes and orientations prevalent in a large population.

Therefore, the researcher was motivated to use quantitative survey because of its usage of scientific tools such as questionnaires and qualitative interviews ,focus group discussion which allowed the researcher to have access to information that was not directly observable.

The quantitative research survey method was chosen for the following reasons Ghosh (2013):

3.2 Study Population

Population refers to a cohort of individuals, objects or items from which samples are to be selected (Kombo and Tromp, 2006).

The research was conducted in four (4) randomly selected secondary schools in Kafue districts out of nine (9) secondary schools giving a percentage of forty four percent (44%) where the both academic and vocational career pathways are being implemented. Both girls and boys among the learners will be respondents during data collection and both male and female teachers were also be randomly selected as respondents. Further, both male and female parents and school administrators were respondents during data collection in the selected secondary schools

3.3 Sample size and Sample techniques

Schulze (2002) defines sample as an element that is a small group of a target population that is selected for inclusion in a study. As noted by Booyse et al (2002), it stands to reason that it is impracticable to mount surveys that include entire target population; hence a sample is drawn that is representative in that, those included in the sample display the same characteristics as the target population.

The sample size consisted of thirty percent (30%) of boys and girls from the sampled four (4) secondary schools out of the nine (9) secondary schools in Kafue district. The male and female teachers teaching the pupils in selected schools and school administrators were also sampled as respondents. The table below shows the summary of the sample size and participants:

Table 3.3.1

Sample size

School.	**Boys Pupils**	**Girls pupils**	**Male teachers**	**Female teachers**
A	20	20	2	3
B	20	20	3	2
C	20	20	2	3
D	20	20	3	2
TOTALS	**80**	**80**	**10**	**10**

Total sample size was **180** respondents.

Sampling procedure refers to the manner in which a sample is selected from a population. It is a process of selecting a representative sample from a well-defined population (Orodho and Kombo, 2002).

The sampling of this study was fundamentally carried out in two phases using two different approaches. These are: firstly, Simple Random sampling and secondly, Purposive Sampling. Simple Random Sampling was employed when selecting schools where the learning pathways are being implemented. After identifying the schools, Purposive Sampling was used to select learners, teachers from the pupil's registers and staff registers of each participating school.

The probability sampling technique was used under which the random sampling technique was used to come up with the actual sample size. The study employed this technique because, probability entails something which is more likely to happen than not. This made generalization easy and with accuracy. Given the total number of pupils in each of the sampled schools, a thirty (30) percent shall be calculated of both girls and boys in order to come up with the total number of the respondents among pupils.

According to De Vos et al (2005), data collection involved the gathering of information about the variables in the study. In fact, Mouton (2002) holds that data collection involved applying the measuring instrument to the sample or cases selected for the investigation. The researcher chose a wide range of techniques and approaches for collecting data from the subjects.

Qualitative research covers a spectrum of techniques and in this research design, the researcher used a wide range of strategies of inquiry (De Vos et al 2005). These strategies differed depending on the purposes of the study, the nature of the research question, and the skills and resources at the researchers disposal. Thus, data collection involves applying the

chosen measuring instrument/s to the sample or cases selected for the investigation (Mouton 1996).

However, to ensure attainability or achievement of the research objectives, quantitative descriptive design method was used in the study. This method includes the process of describing; analyzing and interpreting both qualitative and quantitative data that was collected assess the perceptions towards the academic and vocational career pathways among learners, teachers, and administrators in selected secondary schools in Kafue district.

3.4 Study Area

The research was conducted in selected secondary schools in Kafue district of Lusaka province. The schools were selected at random from the list of nine (9) secondary schools in the district regardless of their location within the district from which four (4) schools were selected to be a sample for data collection

3.5 Instruments for Data collection

For the purpose of data collection, the researcher used a self-structured questionnaire. This helped to address all the dimensions of variables and in the collection of relevant data and information. In the questionnaire the researcher seek to use the five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Scoring and evaluation of the questionnaire on the items of the variables will be as follows:

Table 3.5.1 Scoring and evaluation

Scale	Responses	Interpretation
1	Strongly disagree	Extremely poor
2	Disagree	Poor
3	Neutral	Slightly strong
4	Agree	Strong
5	Strongly agree	Extremely strong

Validity

The instrument was both face and content validated. It was given to experts in the graduate studies school of education and based on their guide; necessary modifications and adjustments were made. The content validity of the instrument was also determined by the experts.

Reliability

A pilot study was carried out using twenty (20) of respondents from Chilanga district of Lusaka province. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using the Alpha reliability method.

3.6 Procedure for Data collection

Data collection is a process of gathering information from participants aimed at proving or refuting some facts. Accurate data collection is important in research as it allows for dissemination of accurate information and development of meaningful programs. This is

achieved using appropriate data collection techniques which are essentially tools and means for collecting data (Wall, 1986).

Two methods were used for data collection in this research. The first phase was a self-completion type questionnaire which was administered to all the one hundred and sixty (160) pupils in the selected secondary schools and interviews were conducted among twenty teachers some of whom are teaching the pupils.

Self-administered and self-contained structured questionnaire was designed by the researcher and was used to collect relevant standardized data from all subjects in the sample. McNamara (1997) describes the structured or close ended item as the mainstay of survey researches the questionnaire technique was chosen because it had several advantages. Close ended items are amenable to statistical data analysis with minimal manipulation of raw data. MacNamara (1997), states that questionnaires can access a large sample which place minimal demands on personnel, and can be totally anonymous. The reasons for using questionnaires in this study was that as a data gathering instrument it was cost effective, easy to complete and timeliness of responses.

Stratified random sampling method was used to identify 20 respondents for the interviews which according to Marshall and Rossman (1999) has a high apparent validity in the sense that, the researcher selected the same number of subjects to be in each stratum of the sample. Other reasons included the fact that the results were believable, and they were low in cost: one got results relatively quickly and they increased the size of a report by talking with several people at once.

The respondents were selected pupils and teachers in the selected schools in Kafue district. School administrators included head teachers and deputy head teachers of the selected schools.

Permission was sought from the sampled schools through the head teachers, then questionnaires were administered and a check list was drawn in order to effective make a follow up on the answered questionnaires.

3.7 Data Analysis

In view of the nature of the research design, the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 was used to analyze the data that was collected. Frequency counts, means, standard deviation and simple percentages were employed for the analysis of data. The analysis was done by means of a computer. Standard deviations were also used because they present data with much accuracy and show how scores are spread from the central point.

All the data was coded and analyzed using the Statistical Analysis Software (SAS). Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were computed and used to analyze the data in order to answer the research questions.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical concerns are very important component to any social research. Cohen, et' al (2000) holds that; *Ethical concerns encountered in educational research in particular can be extremely complex and subtle and can Frequently place researchers in a moral predicament which may appear quite irresolvable.*

Therefore, when conducting research, there are ethical issues to consider. These aimed at protecting those involved in the research some of whom were not able to represent themselves in the event that, they were misrepresented. This was particularly very important for this study since it dealt with various people of different backgrounds.

Ethical concerns were taken into consideration in this study. All data collected during the study was and shall be kept strictly confidential and shall not be used for purpose other than the intended one. The researcher also maintained an open and honest approach and ensured that names of the respondents involved were and are protected to this end.

In fact, before the researcher went in the field to collect data from the selected school, permission was sought from the District Board Secretary (DEBS) Office and Head teachers of the targeted schools and the participants were assured of confidentiality and the data to be collected was for academic purpose.

3.9 Summary

This chapter presented the methodology which was used in gathering data on perceptions of stakeholders towards the academic and vocational learning pathways in selected secondary schools in Kafue district.

The chapter further depicted the research framework used in this enquiry. The aims of this research, the research design and the research methods were given. All considerations to ensure trustworthiness of the research were explored and discussed while ethical considerations were also observed.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Overview

The findings of the study are presented in this chapter. They are presented descriptively and by use of tables. The tables show the frequencies and percentages. The frequencies and percentages are narrated below each table. On the other hand, findings from the interview sessions are presented in a descriptive form according to the questions posed during the discussion.

4.1 What are the perceptions of stakeholders towards academic and vocational learning pathways?

4.1.1 Responses from Learners

Table 4.1.1.1: Most pupils do not like taking natural sciences pathway

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Neither agree nor disagree	30	16.7	16.7	16.7
Agree	92	51.1	51.1	67.8
Strongly Agree	56	31.1	31.1	98.9
999	2	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	180	100.0	100.0	

According to table 4.1.1.1 above, 92 respondents representing 51.1% agreed to the assertion. 56 respondents representing 31.1% strongly agreed to the above statement an indication that in the

selected secondary schools most pupils do not like taking natural sciences in the academic pathways.

Table 4.1.1.2: Teachers and administrators do not choose learning pathways for the pupils

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	37	20.6	20.6	20.6
	Disagree	38	21.1	21.1	41.7
	Neither agree nor disagree	28	15.6	15.6	57.2
	Agree	59	32.8	32.8	90.0
	Strongly Agree	17	9.4	9.4	99.4
	999	1	.6	.6	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1.1.3: Usually career and guidance department in the school choose career pathways for the pupils

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neither agree nor disagree	18	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Agree	85	47.2	47.2	57.2
	Strongly Agree	73	40.6	40.6	97.8
	999	4	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	100.0	

The table 4.1.1.2 above shows the responses of the learners on how teachers and administrators in school choose learning pathways for them. 38 respondents disagreed representing 21.1% while 37 respondents representing 20.6 % disagreed despite 59 respondents agreeing to the assertion. Table 4.1.6 clearing shows 85 respondents agreeing representing 47.2% and 73 respondents strongly agreeing representing 40.6% of the total respondents.

Table 4.1.1.3: Lack of motivation discourages learners from taking academic learning pathways (Natural sciences).

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Disagree	2	1.1	1.1	2.2
	Neither agree nor disagree	13	7.2	7.2	9.4
	Agree	98	54.4	54.4	63.9
	Strongly Agree	63	35.0	35.0	98.9
	999	2	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1.1.3 shows 98 respondents representing 54.4% agreed to the assertion while 63 respondents representing 35% strongly agreed to the fact that lack of motivation discourages learners from taking on natural sciences which falls under the academic learning pathway.

Table 4.1.1.4: Pupils are free to choose learning pathways of their choice

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	60	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Disagree	60	33.3	33.3	66.7
	Neither nor disagree	5	2.8	2.8	69.4
	Agree	47	26.1	26.1	95.6
	strongly agree	1	.6	.6	96.1
	999	7	3.9	3.9	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1.1.4 shows responses of the learners with regards to the choice of the academic and vocational learning pathways. The commutative percentage of the responses of the learners who strongly disagreed and just disagreed on the choice of the learning pathways is 66.7% representing a number of 120 of the respondents.

Table 4.1.1.5: Most pupils do not like taking natural sciences pathway

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neither agree nor disagree	30	16.7	16.7	16.7
	Agree	92	51.1	51.1	67.8
	Strongly Agree	56	31.1	31.1	98.9
	999	2	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1.1.5 shows that 92 respondents representing 51.1% agreed to the assertion that most of the learners do not like taking on natural sciences under the academic learning pathways and about 56 respondents representing 31.1% strongly agreed to the same assertion

4.1.2 Responses from teachers

Selected teachers in various schools were interviewed regarding the perceptions towards the academic and vocational learning pathways. Some of the responses were that; *...teachers have accepted the curriculum though there could be challenges on the combinations of the subjects in both the academic and vocational learning pathways....teachers need orientations through continuous professional development CPDs....*

...Despite the fact that most of the learners have appreciated the revised curriculum, they have found it a challenge when it comes to practical part which involves hand on experiences as it aims at testing their skills....

4.1.3 Responses from Head teachers

Head teachers at schools where the research was conducted added on the perceptions of stakeholders towards the academic and vocational learning pathways. Citing learners one of the head teachers said;*...the career pathways provides learners with an opportunity to pick the career path of their choice.,,,the old curriculum was highly academic and prepared learners for white color job. The revised curriculum develops a skill that gives learners an opportunity to explore themselves. However, the vocational pathways are expensive and some schools do not have tools and equipment to support the vocational practical part of the curriculum."*

4.2 How suitable and available are the infrastructure that support the teaching and learning of academic and vocational learning pathways?

4.2.1. Responses from the Learners

Table 4.2.1.1 : Lack of suitable infrastructure discourages learners from taking academic learning pathways (Natural sciences)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Disagree	2	1.1	1.1	2.2
	Neither agree nor disagree	13	7.2	7.2	9.4
	Agree	98	54.4	54.4	63.9
	Strongly Agree	63	35.0	35.0	98.9
	999	2	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.2.1.1 indicates views of the leaners on how they perceive infrastructure in the schools sampled as a reason to why they chose taking certain career learning pathways.

Table 4.2.1.2: The equipment in the science laboratory is enough to support the teaching of learning pathways

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	87	48.3	48.3	48.3
Disagree	83	46.1	46.1	94.4
Neither agree nor disagree	7	3.9	3.9	98.3
Agree	1	.6	.6	98.9
Strongly Agree	2	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	180	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.2.1.2 shows responses of the learners on the how they perceive academic and vocational career pathways due to availability of equipment.

Table 4.2.1.3: There is inadequate teaching and learning materials in the schools to fully teach both academic and vocational learning path ways

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	39	21.7	21.7	21.7
	Disagree	55	30.6	30.6	52.2
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	27	15.0	15.0	67.2
	Agree	52	28.9	28.9	96.1
	Strongly Agree	3	1.7	1.7	97.8
	999	4	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.2.1.3 shows however a different scenario as the majority of the respondents about 30.6% disagreed to the assertion that most schools did not have adequate teaching and learning materials despite 28.9% agreeing to the assertion.

Table 4.2.1.4: Pupils are able to do experiments any time they are free in the science laboratory

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	92	51.1	51.1	51.1
	Disagree	75	41.7	41.7	92.8
	Neither agree nor disagree	10	5.6	5.6	98.3
	Agree	1	.6	.6	98.9
	Strongly agree	1	.6	.6	99.4
	999	1	.6	.6	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.2.1.4 shows that 98 respondents representing 51.1% strongly disagree to the assertion of learners being free to conduct lessons and 75 respondents representing 47.7% disagree to the assertion.

4.2.2 Responses from teachers

With regards to the available infrastructures and how it supports teaching and learning of the academic and vocational learning pathways, some of the responses from the interviews with some teachers were; *most schools do not have infrastructure to support the vocational part of the revised curriculum... need to equip schools with infrastructure, tools, and equipment such as laboratories, and other specialized rooms and workshops....*

4.2.3 Responses from Administrators

Some of the administrators also added on to say; *the revised curriculum is good, although implementation was done too early...we did not put all the required necessities to support the curriculum in place...as a result some of the administrators, teachers, learners received it with mixed feelings....*

4.3 What kind of personnel is available to teach the academic and vocational learning pathways?

4.3.1 Responses from the learners

Table 4.3.1.1: There are enough trained teachers to teachers academic and vocational subject such as design and technology

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	25	13.9	13.9	13.9
	Disagree	37	20.6	20.6	34.4
	Neither Agree nor disagree	16	8.9	8.9	43.3
	Agree	59	32.8	32.8	76.1
	strongly agree	43	23.9	23.9	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.3.1.1 indicates that, 59 respondents representing 32.8% agreed and 43 respondents representing 23.9% strongly agreed to the fact trained personnel are enough to teach the two learning pathways.

Table 4.3.1.2: Most pupils are afraid of taking up academic learning pathway due to inadequate trained teachers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	43	23.9	23.9	23.9
Disagree	45	25.0	25.0	48.9
Neither agree nor disagree	26	14.4	14.4	63.3
Agree	32	17.8	17.8	81.1
Strongly Agree	33	18.3	18.3	99.4
999	1	.6	.6	100.0
Total	180	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.3.1.2 confirms this fact as 45 respondents disagreed representing 25% and 43 respondents representing 23.9% strongly disagreed to the assertion.

Table 4.3.1.3: Pupils have adequate information concerning the academic and vocation learning pathways

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	23	12.8	12.8	12.8
	Disagree	35	19.4	19.4	32.2
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	28	15.6	15.6	47.8
	Agree	56	31.1	31.1	78.9
	Strongly Agree	38	21.1	21.1	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.3.1.3 confirms that learners have adequate information about the academic and vocational learning pathways. 56 respondents agreed representing 31.1% and 38 of the respondents strongly agreed representing 21.1% of the total respondents.

Table 4.3.1.4: Most pupils are told by parents and guardian to avoid natural sciences pathways in fear of failure

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	6.1	6.1	6.1
	Disagree	12	6.7	6.7	12.8
	Neither agree nor disagree	17	9.4	9.4	22.2
	Agree	92	51.1	51.1	73.3
	Strongly Agree	48	26.7	26.7	100.0
	Total	180	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.3.1.4 shows 92 respondents representing 51.1% agreed and 48 respondents representing 26.7% which give the total of 140 respondents agreeing to the assertion that parents and guardians discourage them from taking on certain learning pathways.

4.4 Summary

The chapter has brought out information from various stakeholders on the perceptions towards the academic and vocational learning pathways. The following chapter discusses the perceptions towards academic and vocational learning pathways.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

6.0 Overview

In this chapter, findings that have been presented in chapter four shall be discussed according to the stated objectives. Establish the perceptions of the stakeholders towards academic and vocational pathways, determine the availability and suitability of infrastructure that supports effective teaching of vocational and academic career pathways, establish the levels of awareness among stakeholders towards academic and vocational career pathways, and find out the availability of skilled personnel to teach the two career path ways.

5.1 What are the Perceptions of the stakeholders towards academic and vocational pathway?

Generally, from the information gathered, the perceptions amongst the stakeholders are good as confirmed by one of the administrator who confirmed that, "*the career pathways provides learners with an opportunity to pick the career path of their choice.,,,the old curriculum was highly academic and prepared learners for white color job. The revised curriculum develops a skill that gives learners an opportunity to explore themselves. However, the vocational pathways are expensive and some schools do not have tools and equipment to support the vocational practical part of the curriculum.*"

It was discovered that learners perceive academic and vocational learning pathways in terms available infrastructures in schools. Most of the responses by the learners in schools show that they chose certain learning pathways based on the available infrastructures. Some of the pupils indicated that they do not to take on the Vocational learning and academic pathways due to luck

of infrastructures such as well-equipped laboratories and workshops for vocational subjects needed for practical sessions.

According to the information gathered among the learners in various schools, 87 respondents out of 180 strongly disagreed to the assertion that equipment in schools were enough to support the learning and teaching of the learning pathways and this affect their choice of learning pathways citing examples of certain schools where the school have introduced natural sciences under academic yet they do not have adequate teaching and learning materials and laboratory equipment. Further, 83 respondents disagreed to the assertion an indication that in most schools where the researched was conducted learners associates the choice of learning pathways to the availability of equipment in schools supporting the teaching and learning of both academic and vocational pathways.

According to table 4.1.1.1, 92 participants representing 51.1% agreed the assertion that most of the learners do not like taking on natural sciences pathway which falls under the academic pathways. 56 respondents representing 31.1% strongly agreed to the above statement an indication that in the selected secondary schools most pupils do not like taking natural sciences in the academic pathways.

This if left un checked would make the country have very few people with the understanding of natural sciences which is a basis of development in technology and social sciences and other learning pathways would be overwhelmed with huge numbers which may lead to having educated un employed and the numbers to be produced may be unable to match with the available job opportunities.

In fact, other studies show that, students in an educational institution should be given an opportunity to choose learning pathways which they are comfortable with and according to their abilities. However, this has not been the case in most of the schools in Kafue district where the research was conducted and most of the respondent affirms that once a learner is enrolled at grade eight (8) or grade ten (10), they are already allocated classes using the results at grade nine (9) final examinations.

However, the table 4.1.1.2 shows the responses of the learners on how teachers and administrators in school choose learning pathways for them. 38 respondents disagreed representing 21.1% while 37 respondents representing 20.6 % disagreed despite 59 respondents agreeing to the assertion. Combining those who disagreed and strongly disagreed, it can be concluded that teachers and administrators choose career learning pathways for the learners and this may make some of the learners to shun away from certain career pathways

Hence, the learners always have been made to believe that they cannot choose learning pathways but that, they should always been allocated a class by the career and guidance department. This has had a negative impact on the perceptions of the learners towards the two learning pathways and tends to believe further that certain learning pathways cannot be done as they seem to be for those who score high at grade nine (9) or grade seven (7) level. For instance, at secondary school in Kafue district, it was observed that those learners who score high marks are put in classes that that termed ' pure classes' while those who score average are put in other classes. This has created grouping among pupils and those who are not in classes termed as pure class tend to shun associating with each other.

Furthermore, the learners who are not in pure classes tend to discourage the new comers who come in grade ten (10) citing among many reasons that the subjects in the 'pure' classes are difficult. This has lowered the self-esteem in most learners who may have a desire to pursue a natural science learning pathway in the academic learning pathway.

With regards to practical sessions, both the academic and vocational learning pathways demands that students conduct practical sessions after or during lessons to enhance the knowledge and skills retention of the learners. However, table shows that 98 respondents representing 51.1% strongly disagree to the assertion of learners being free to conduct lessons and 75 respondents representing 47.7% disagree to the assertion. This implies that most learners perceive learning by doing especially in the vocational pathways such technology to have less time for experiments as learners are not free to conduct experiments when they are free.

Further, some of the leaners indicated that, the school had taken on the vocational pathway but yet the materials and equipment to use during practical session were not adequate to support all the learners. This has discouraged most of the learners from taking on certain learning pathways and the evidence was that the classes taking on natural sciences learning pathway had very few learners as compared to those taking the business learning pathway.

According to table 4.1.1.3, most of the learners indicated that, learners have responded positively to the learning pathways however, motivation is key in ensuring that learners love and work hard in the learning pathways given to them. However, if this is not adhered to, learners tend to be discouraged and end up having a perception that certain learning pathways are for a selected and gifted learners. For instance, 98 respondents representing 54.4% agreed to the assertion while 63

respondents representing 35% strongly agreed to the fact that lack of motivation discourages learners from taking on natural sciences which falls under the academic learning pathway.

Additionally, the figures gives a clear indication that the learners need motivation and sensitization on the learning pathways and the benefits accrued to the pathways regardless of which pathways they choose to follow. More importantly, the negativity expressed by the learners can only be avoided if and only if they school agreed and planned to give full sensitization to the learners of the importance and attributes of each and every learning pathway being offered in the school.

Furthermore, table 4.1.1.4 shows responses of the learners with regards to the choice of the academic and vocational learning pathways. The commutative percentage of the responses of the learners who strongly disagreed and just disagreed on the choice of the learning pathways is 66.7% representing a number of 120 of the respondents.

Therefore, if learners are not allowed to choose learning pathways of their own, it discourages them and most of whom expressed dissatisfaction of the way they are allocated certain career pathways despite them expressing their interests of the learning pathway they would want to pursue. This further has led to learners responding negatively to the academic and vocational learning pathways which may lead to failure to effectively implement the revised new curriculum.

Regarding the choice of choice of the learning pathway, it was discovered that most learners do not like taking natural sciences under the academic pathway. This is evident from the response

given in table 4.1.1.5 which shows that 92 respondents representing 51.1% agreed to the assertion that most of the learners do not like taking on natural sciences under the academic learning pathways and about 56 respondents representing 31.1% strongly agreed to the same assertion and indication that the learners in most secondary schools where the academic learning pathway is being followed fear to take up the natural sciences learning pathway under the academic learning pathways.

This can be concluded that learners fear being allocated in classes taking on naturals sciences pathway and this has led to a situation where classes taking natural sciences learning pathways having very few numbers of learners in classes and this has further affected the output at senior secondary levels as they would be very few learners proceeding to the tertiary education and pursue natural sciences at a higher level. In turn there are few people graduating with the skills in the field of sciences.

5.2 How Suitable and available are the infrastructure to support the teaching and learning of academic and vocational career pathways?

With regards to the suitability and availability of infrastructure, table 4.2.1.1 shows views of the leaners on how they perceive infrastructure in the schools sampled as a reason to why they chose taking certain career learning pathways. About 98 respondents out of 180 agreed to the fact that same schools were lucking in laboratory facilities hence the need to improve infrastructure in order to make the learning be attracted to certain learning pathways especially the academic learning pathway where natural sciences are a main core subject of study. Further 63 respondents representing 35% of the total respondents strongly agreed to the assertion that infrastructure was

at helm of helping the choices learners make towards the academic and vocational learning pathway. However, two (2) each of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively concerning the learning career learning representing 1.1% each of the total number of respondents.

In support of the scenario above, Kelly, (1999) states that, adequate facilities such as classrooms, halls, libraries, laboratories and playing fields are key priorities for the successful curriculum implementation. Schools need adequate classroom accommodation to alleviate overcrowding. The problem of overcrowding makes learners to share the few stocks of furniture and teaching and learning materials available in the school. In such cases teacher effectiveness is hampered and it becomes impossible for the teacher to render individual pupil attention because of the large number of pupils in class

Therefore, it can be concluded that most learners in secondary schools of Kafue district fear to take up academic and vocational career pathways due to inadequacies in the facilities and equipment's that support the teaching and learning of both the academic and vocational learning pathways. In some secondary schools, natural sciences have been made optional where the learners are supposed to take up pure sciences due to lack of equipment necessary to support the teaching and learning of pure sciences. This is however against the recommendations as outlined in the revised curriculum where every secondary school is encouraged to take natural science pathways as compulsory.

Additionally, regarding teaching and learning materials, learners tend to have a negative attitude towards certain learning pathways due to the fact that teaching and learning materials may not be enough in the school. Table 4.2.1.3 shows however a different scenario as the majority of the

respondents about 30.6% disagreed to the assertion that most schools did not have adequate teaching and learning materials despite 28.9% agreeing to the assertion. This implies that, the choice of the learning pathways does not entirely depend on the availability of teaching and learning materials in schools. However, certain learners felt that, the teaching and learning materials plays a role in the choice of the learning pathways by the learners.

5.3 What kind of personnel is available to teach the academic and vocational career pathways?

The research discovered that, inadequate trained teaching staff came out as being the reasons as to why learners perceive negatively or positively of the learning pathways under study, table 4.3.1.1 confirms this fact as 45 respondents disagreed representing 25% and 43 respondents representing 23.9% strongly disagreed to the assertion. This can be concluded inadequate trained human personnel have nothing to do with the way learners perceive the academic and learning pathway. Thus, there a number of teachers trained to handle the subjects in both the academic and vocational learning pathway.

In fact, the scenario above is supported by Danmole, (2011) who confirms that, the training and retraining of teachers is necessary for them to enact reformed based curriculum such as that of the program. The capacity building process should be systematic and continuous through workshops, seminars, enlightenment programs on the reform, orientation courses and other useful educational activities. This is because teachers themselves like pupils and students require support to be effective in the delivery of the curriculum. Further, curriculum material such as

teachers' guides, handbooks and manuals should be designed to improve teacher quality as one potential vehicle towards supporting them

With regards to personnel handling the academic and vocational pathway, the responses of the learner on the perceptions of the learning pathways in relation to the trained human resources and the reactions on the need to have trained and skilled personnel on the in both academic and vocational learning pathways especially design and technology. According to the information in the table 4.3.1.2, 59 respondents representing 32.8% agreed and 43 respondents representing 23.9% strongly agreed to the fact trained personnel are enough to teach the two learning pathways.

However, despite the fact above, the number of learners in both the academic and vocational learning pathways tends to decline and one wonders what could be the reasons as to why this has been the case in most schools. The content of the two learning pathways came out as the reasons as to why most of the learners shun the pathways. In most school sampled, it was discovered that learners fear taking up subject that involves practical session. Those who are allocated natural sciences path where practical pure physics and pure chemistry are undertaken tend to refuse taking such classes and those allocated vocational classes where practical woodwork, home management, home economics, and metal work in some schools are taken tend also to refuse to take such subjects.

Additionally, table 4.3.1.3 confirms that learners have adequate information about the academic and vocational learning pathways. 56 respondents agreed representing 31.1% and 38 of the respondents strongly agreed representing 21.1% of the total respondents. This in an indication that most of the learners in schools have information about the academic and vocational learning

pathways but one wonders why they have continued to shun the natural sciences and technology learning pathways under the academic and vocational learning pathways respectively.

Some of the learners agreed to the fact and cited examples of fear of failing as they are told that the subjects in these learning pathways are difficult. Others confirmed of associating the names for certain subject to be in the category of those that are difficult and associated to gifted individual.

In fact table 4.3.1.4 shows results of why most of the learners perceive that certain learning pathways as difficult and shun them. The table confirms to the fact parents and guardian tells their children to avoid taking of certain learning pathways in fear of failure. 92 respondents representing 51.1% agreed and 48 respondents representing 26.7% which give the total of 140 respondents agreeing to the assertion that parents and guardians discourage them from taking on certain learning pathways.

The above scenario clearly confirms that, most of the learners tend to avoid learning pathways especially the natural sciences in the academic pathways because of the information given at home. One of the guidance teacher at one of the schools also affirmed to this fact and cited an example of the parent who refused to let the be allocated a class where the learners take natural sciences citing the additional mathematics, chemistry and physics were difficult and that the child would fail. However, one wonders how the learners can have positive minds towards the subjects being offered in schools when the parents and guardians are not encouraging their children to take challenges that would make them more beneficial to the world of knowledge.

5.4 Summary

The chapter has discussed the perceptions of stakeholders towards the academic and vocational learning pathways. It has also brought out the issues with regards to reasons why stakeholders have various perceptions towards the learning pathways.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Overview

In chapter four the findings of the data gathered during the interview session and questionnaires given to learners, teachers and administrators with regards to their perceptions towards the academic and vocational learning pathways was presented. In chapter five, a discussion was given in details on the findings during the research.

This being the final chapter, it is necessary first and foremost that articulate the main important point in the current research and further put up some recommendations from key findings during the research.

6.1 Conclusion

The research has discovered that the perceptions of the stakeholders towards the academic and vocational learning pathways are good despite the fact that choose to take on certain learning pathways based on the availability of suitable infrastructure. Therefore, schools without proper equipment and infrastructure tend to have very few learners taking on natural sciences which fall under the academic learning pathway.

Furthermore, many of the participants in the research came out that, the two learning pathways which are the core of the revised new curriculum was received with mixed feelings as most of the stakeholders had very few information regarding the subject combinations in each learning pathways. Learners are not allowed to choose learning pathways of their choice but instead the guidance and careers department allocate classes for them without considering learner's abilities and potentials.

It has been discovered that, the scenario above discourages most of the learners from taking on certain learning pathways in fear of failure. It also came out that parent and guardians discourage the learners from taking on certain learning pathways especially the natural sciences under the academic learning pathways in fear of failure.

6.2 Recommendations

The following are recommendations and suggestions for educational planners and policy makers:

6.2.1 Recommendations for educational planers

There is need for educational planers to full avail information to the stakeholders who are learners, teachers and administrators on the academic and vocational learning pathways. One of the schools proved to have a lot of learning pathways hence the confusion among the learners and the teachers inclusive of administrators.

There is also need to equip schools with the necessary facilities that support effective teaching and learning of various learning pathways especially the natural sciences and technology learning pathway.

Educational administrators to plan for capacity building among the teachers and administrators in order to encourage and give a positive attitude to the learners on the learning pathways in schools.

6.2.2 Recommendations for school administrators

There is need for school administrators to engage learners in the choice of learning pathways. There is need to access the abilities and interests of the learners before the classes are allocated

to them. Learners should be given a choice instead of career and guidance teachers allocating classes against the potentials of the learners.

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APPENDICES

Questionnaire for pupils

Dear Respondent,

My name is Chanda David a Master of Educational Management student at the University of Zambia in collaboration with Zimbabwe Open University. I am researching on the topic: *experiences among the pupils, teachers and administrators towards academic and vocational career pathways in selected secondary schools in Kafue district.* You have been selected to be part of the sample in aiding my research study and its success.

The information provided will be strictly confidential and exclusively for this academic research only and not for any other purpose.

The questionnaire has **two** (2) sections **A** and **B**. kindly answer ***ALL*** questions by responding according to the information you have.

Section A

Instructions: Please place a tick in the box [ ] preceding the item.

Basic information

1. Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]
2. Group or Category

   Grade 10 [ ]

   Grade 11 [ ]

   Grade 12 [ ]
3. Name of the school _____

Section B

Instructions: Place a tick [ ] in the box that best rate your level of agreement with each statement as a correct description of the situation at hand.

1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neither Agree or disagree 4= Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Rating	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
A. Infrastructure					
1. The equipment in the science laboratory is enough to support teaching of Natural sciences.					
2. Pupils are able to do experiments any time they are free in the science Laboratory.					
3. The government give enough funds to support the teaching of Academic and vocational subjects.					
4. There is inadequate teaching and learning materials in schools to fully teach both academic and vocational career pathways.					
5. Lack of suitable infrastructure discourages learners from taking academic pathway (natural sciences).					
6. The available classrooms in the school do not support the teaching of academic learning pathway (especially natural sciences).					
B. Sensitization					
7. Pupils are aware about the academic and vocational career pathways.					
8. Pupils are free to choose career pathways of their choice.					

9. Teachers are teaching both the academic and vocational subjects effectively.					
10. Teachers and Administrators do not choose learning pathways for the pupils.					
11. Teachers are highly motivated to teach the academic pathway subjects than Vocational pathway subjects.					
12. Most pupils do not the academic (natural sciences) pathways					
13. The government did not give enough information on teaching and learning of both academic and vocational career pathways.					
14. Usually, career and guidance department in the school choose career pathways for the pupils.					
C. Human Resource					
15. There are enough teachers trained to teach Academic and Vocational subjects such Design and technology,					
16. Most pupils are afraid of taking up Academic career pathways due to lack of adequate trained teachers					
17. The government has not employed trained teachers to effectively teacher the two learning pathways (academic and vocational pathways).					
D. Awareness					
18. Pupils have adequate information concerning the academic and vocational career pathways					
19. Most pupils are told by the parents and guardian to avoid natural sciences pathways in fear of failure					

20. Most teachers do not have adequate information concerning Academic and vocational career pathways					
21. Most Administrators are afraid to take on Natural sciences learning pathway in fear of costs of practical.					

Thank you for your time spared in answering this questionnaire.