

STUDENT DECLARATION

I, **Reuben Mashebe Mukela**, declare that this dissertation is my original work and is a product of my efforts through the professional guidance of the recognised supervisor whose name and signature have also been signed below. Further, this dissertation has not been presented for a degree in any other university. All citations and references have been duly acknowledged.

Signature.....Date.....

SUPERVISOR

Prof. Robert Serpell

Signature.....Date.....

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APPROVAL

This dissertation of Reuben Mashebe Mukela has been approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Arts in Child and Adolescent Psychology by the University of Zambia.

Signed:

Date:

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ABSTRACT

The present study was designed to assess the role of indigenous music and games in the promotion of cognitive development in Zambian children with specific focus on Western Province of Zambia as the area of study. Using an ethnographic approach, the study involved 44 participants using purposive sampling. Thirty two of these were children aged between 10 to 13 years old drawn from 4 public schools in Senanga and Shangombo districts of Western Province, while 8 of them were music teachers. Four of the participants were local informants reputed for playing the traditional xylophone (*silimba*). School pupils and expert music teachers were carefully selected after making thorough inquiries about their expertise in music with the local school managements while the xylophone expert players were selected through careful inquiries from the local community. After administering in-depth semi-structured interviews and carrying out field observations in which children's play and music activities were demonstrated, data obtained was video filmed and acoustically recorded. Data was later coded and analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis procedure to establish the emerging themes. The results obtained revealed that indigenous play and music activities had many educational benefits underpinning them which were potentially valuable for promoting children's cognitive and social abilities. For instance, in the area of mathematical skills, it was observed that constant participation in indigenous games like *mulabalaba* (a game that involves the movements of stones in dug out small holes), and *muyato* (a game involving throwing of a stone in the air while simultaneously scooping some stones back and forth in a small dug out hole) had the potential to improve the children's numeracy skills. Participants involved the use of higher order cognitive skills such as logical thinking and problem solving while playing these games. The activities were also likely to promote child-to-child interpersonal relationships, and children's psychomotor development. Handclapping singing games could enhance children's alertness, concentration, and coordination processes. Rules accompanying games were likely to help children to develop self-discipline in a playful manner and to relate well to others. The study also found that participation in indigenous songs and dances had the potential benefits to improve children's linguistic competencies and memory skills; increase school attendance; improve self-

confidence; promote courage to stand before others, and help to facilitate in bridging the school and home environments.

The study also found that children's intent participation in playing musical instruments was likely to promote social cooperation and a keen desire to preserve cultural heritage. Despite their intellectual and social benefits, the study revealed that some indigenous play and music activities were on the decline due to negative attitudes by some young inexperienced teachers, lack of support from government leading to teacher frustration, and the influence of the television on children even in the remote rural areas. The study recommends the inclusion of the indigenous music and games into the main school curriculum for curriculum enrichment.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to:

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

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- Sesheke
- Mongu
- Shangombo
- Lukulu
- Kalabo
- Senanga