TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE USE OF SONGS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INITIAL LITERACY SKILLS AMONG GRADE ONE LEARNERS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NYIMBA DISTRICT EASTERN PROVINCE, ZAMBIA

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Cecilia Tembo, do hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work, and that all the works of other persons used have been duly acknowledged, and that it has never been previously submitted for the award of any academic paper at the University of Zambia or any other University.

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APPROVAL

This dissertation of **Cecilia Tembo** is approved as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Literacy and Language by the University of Zambia.

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at establishing teachers' perceptions on the use of songs in the development of initial literacy skills among grade one learners in primary schools in Nyimba District in Zambia. The objectives were to: describe the types of songs that can be used as tools to develop initial literacy skills among grade one learners in primary schools, establish teachers' perceptions on the use of songs as tools to develop initial literacy skills among Grade one learners in primary schools, ascertain the appropriateness of songs that can be used as tools to develop initial literacy skills among grade one learners; and explain challenges teachers can face when using songs as tools to develop initial literacy skills among grade one learners. A descriptive case study design under qualitative approach was used to conduct this study. The sample was 30 grade one teachers. Data was collected through interview guides and classroom observation guide.

The findings revealed that teachers can use traditional songs, action songs and storytelling songs. The lessons derived from these types of songs encompass physical, social, moral and spiritual aspects. The findings also revealed that teachers felt that songs could increase learners' motivation and participation towards the lessons, improve memory and reduce anxiety in learners. In addition, the findings showed that the appropriateness of songs could help learners to acquire initial literacy skills namely; phonics, phonological awareness and vocabulary whereas some inappropriately used songs were used to kill boredom in learners and for fun or entertainment. In terms of the challenges that teachers experienced in using songs when teaching, the study revealed two major themes namely; disruption of learners' attention, time wasting and inadequacy of songs in the teachers' guide book.

Bordering on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made; that the curriculum planners should include more songs in the teacher's guides which are more related to the lessons. The study also recommends that teachers should be creative and innovative to create songs. For further research, the study recommends a study which will seek to assess trainee teachers' preparedness to use songs in initial literacy classes.

Keywords: **songs, initial literacy skills**

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents and my siblings. Their presence gave me hope and encouragement both spiritually and emotionally during this study.

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OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Alphabetic knowledge: the understanding that written letters systematically represent sounds.

Effectiveness: the extent to which an activity fulfils its intended purpose function.

Fluency: Is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly.

Initial literacy: The official start of learning how to read, write and speaking.

Initial literacy Skills: Skills learners know about reading and writing before they can actually read and write, such as alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, letter writing, print knowledge, and oral language.

Phonemic awareness: Is identifying and manipulating individual sounds in words

Phonological awareness: the understanding that oral language is made up of sounds or groups of sounds.

Phonics: Is a relationship between the letters of written language and the individual sounds of spoken language.

Songs: A song is basically words put to rhythm. Song is short piece of music with words that you sing and can be enjoyed by anyone.

Vocabulary: Refers to words which are known for communication purposes.

ACRONYMS

DEBELS	Dynamic Instructors of Basic Early Literacy Skills
ECZ	Examination Council of Zambia
EEG	Electroencephalogram
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
NAEYC	National Association for Education of Young Children
SACMEQ	South African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
UAE	United Arab Emirates
ZECF	Zambia Education Curriculum Framework

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview

The researcher in this chapter presents the background information to the study, the problem statement, the objectives, the significance of the study, the theoretical framework, delimitation of the study, definition of terms and finally the summary of the chapter.

1.2. Background

Learning to read and write is important to a learner's success in school and plays an integral role in the adaptation of the learner in the society. Failure to learn to read has a negative impact on learners in all academic areas, co-curricular activities and peer relations (Lipka and Siegel 2010). It also has an impact on an individual's ability to participate in society and to understand important public issues (Anderson, 2002). Therefore, literacy is fundamental to many life activities and is perhaps the most essential skill learners learn in school and as they socialise in their communities. According to Lewis (2010) literacy is the ability to read and write and the heart of basic education for all. During early years, children develop reading related behaviours that are very important for later reading (Teale and Sulzby, 1986). Learners therefore need to develop appropriate literacy skills in early years to be able to engage successfully in other school levels. However, there are many learners today who enter school with little or no prior book knowledge or reading and writing experiences (Examination Council of Zambia [ECZ], 2016).

Over the years, academic expectations of literacy have been increasing in every grade, especially at primary school level. The revised curriculum for early childhood and primary education that ranges from pre-school to grade 4 in government and private schools emphasises on child literacy (Zambia Education Curriculum Framework [ZECF], 2013). In 2005, a recommendation was made by the National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy with the view to equip teachers with teaching strategies based on findings from rigorous evidence based research that are shown to be effective in enhancing the literacy development for all children (ECZ, 2005).

For many years now, Zambia has continued experiencing low literacy levels in most primary schools despite efforts being made by the government and other partners to eradicate illiteracy

through getting involved in the provision of quality education by providing early literacy learning and teaching materials. The South African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ III) of 2010 report that only 27.4% were able to read at a basic competency level among Grade 6 learners that were tested in reading. This gave the Zambian educationists a big homework to find ways and means of increasing learner achievement in literacy. Similar studies done in Zambia recently, continued to report that there has been very little success in improving the literacy levels among learners in Zambia (Jere Folotiya et al, 2014; Matafwali, 2010; Mubanga, 2012). A learner who is a poor reader in first grade is 88% more likely to remain poor in fourth grade (Juel, 1988). It is also said that learners who fall behind in learning to read typically become entangled in a cycle of failure and the gap widens (MESTVE, 2013). From these studies it is clear that reading literacy is a widespread problem.

The perspective of initial literacy states that the acquisition of literacy takes place through an evolutionary process whose origins can be traced back to the child's early life (Sulzby and Teale, 1991). It is assumed that there is no clear point to know when reading and writing appear, since the child controls those formal skills gradually through the practice of certain linguistic oral conceptual, pre-reading and pre-writing skills. There is an agreement that the literacy process starts with the first linguistic interactions in the family, continues during the pre-school years when the child receives informal education, to the stage where the child goes into formal school and gets involved in literacy activities that can be considered conventional reading and writing (Stahl and Yaden, 2004).

There are many ways to learn initial literacy skills, through books, radio and games. Each method has a different presentation style. A song is one method in which leaners can automatically learn through hearing or without consciousness. Music and rhythm are like therapy and the lyrics not only to convey meaning but can teach initial literacy skills. Initial literacy skills are the foundation that the learners must have in order to become fluent readers. Teachers can help learners become successful readers when they create learning experiences that are enjoyable by using songs, rhymes, and poems (Feldman, 2005). Songs are one of the significant tools used in education. Fostering initial literacy skills through singing can be more valuable and effective. According to the Florida Institute of Education (2007), the teacher needs to instill early literacy skills in the learners which will form the basis for future understanding

of concept; phonemic awareness, phonological awareness, knowledge of letters and comprehending stories among others.

Phonemic awareness is the understanding and ability to work with sounds in our language. Research indicates that phonemic awareness is a strong predictor of beginning reading achievement (National Research Council, 1998). Although children naturally hear and play with sounds, current practice supports more intentional teaching to develop the ability of children to identify and manipulate sounds. Such teaching includes matching words that begin with the same sound, listening for each distinct sound, blending sounds into words, and taking apart and manipulating sounds, for example, taking away the /h/ and putting a /p/to change *hat* to *pat*. This kind of instruction should not be planned for long periods of time, nor in a drill and recall fashion. Rather, carving out brief moments for quick games as you move from one activity to another can heighten children's sensitivities to sounds and provide needed instruction. Phonemic awareness is important in the development of initial reading because it allows children to associate sounds with letters (Reading and Van Deuren, 2007). When a learner is able to match sounds and printed letters, they are able to analyse unknown words or synthesise sounds to create new words. As children become comfortable hearing and making individual sounds in spoken words, familiarity will build their confidence for later stages of decoding words.

Phonological awareness is the ability to detect and manipulate sounds (Yopp and Yopp, 2009). Degé and Schwarzer (2001) define phonological awareness as the ability to analyse and manipulate language on two levels. On the word level, phonological awareness refers to the ability to manipulate and analyse larger phonological units (e.g., rhyming and blending words). On the phoneme level, phonological ability refers to the ability to analyse and manipulate the individual sound units (phonemes) within a word. It has repeatedly been shown that phonological awareness is an important predictor of later reading ability. It has been found to be a reliable predictor of reading success meaning that learners who have a solid understanding of phonological awareness are likely to become successful readers, while learners who lack phonological awareness are likely to become poor readers. Providing learners with instruction in phonological awareness may prevent reading difficulties from occurring, and may even reduce the severity of a reading disability (Ericson and Juliebö, 2000). Phonological awareness

does not develop naturally, but requires explicit teaching and multiple opportunities for practice (Phillips, Clancy-Menchetti and Lonigan, 2008). The more practice and opportunity learners have to develop their phonological awareness, the more likely they are to become successful readers. Research suggests that phonological awareness instruction may have the greatest impact in preschool and kindergarten, and may decrease beyond the first grade (Ehri et al., 2001). Therefore, teachers have a limited amount of time to develop learners' phonological awareness. One of the activities performed in order to increase phonological awareness is to sing a song (Zygouris-Coe, 2001).

Other predictors of becoming a success reader are letter knowledge and print awareness that also come at the early stages of literacy. Just as the alphabet is learnt by singing the alphabet song, children can recognise letters and become aware of their structure through songs. Print awareness is a broad term that refers to a learners' ability to recognise print ranging from contextualized environment print to decontextualized written words (Vukelich, Christine and Enz, 2012). Research has shown that children's knowledge of concepts of print is moderately correlated with reading ability in the primary grades (National Reading Panel,2000). Word knowledge and vocabulary needs application. Singing about vocabulary can provide a unique medium to teach and put words into context.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 1998) encourages the use of reading materials that are familiar and predictable to learners. The familiarity and predictability of the stories can help the child grow in self-control and self-confidence in their ability to learn how to read (Barclay and Walwer 1992). Using lyrics from familiar songs for reading, instructions can be beneficial in providing predictable elements such as repetitive phrases, rhymes, refrains, and sentences. Additionally, engaging children in reading activities that keep their interest is key to improving literacy levels at primary school. Furthermore, songs can lure pupils into a web of enjoyment and may prompt them to intrinsically improve their levels of literacy.

Rosova (2007) claimed that songs have a place in the classroom for helping to create a friendly and co-operative atmosphere for language learning, but they can offer much more. He also mentioned the idea that songs are effective tools in education. Most researchers revealed that

using songs give a great influence in educational settings. Therefore, rhymes and songs can give learners a familiar feeling, a relevant and special link with their human environment and as such influence the acquisition of their first language in a quite notorious and important way.

For many learners, singing songs have represented one potential source of exposure to vocabulary learning. Songs, like languages, contain lyrics that convey messages. These messages are featured with pitch, volume, intonation, stress, tone, rhythm and pauses (Chang, 2000). So when learners hear songs, they are actually being exposed to native speakers' modelling using correct pronounciation, and when they sing songs, they are actually using the language. In addition, the rhythm and melodies of the songs greatly help learners pronounce the vocabulary in a natural way (Farrug, 2008).

According to Moon (2000), learners have a great capacity to enjoy themselves. When they are enjoying themselves, they are usually absorbed by the activity and want to continue with it. They are not always aware that they are learning skills of literacy. The lyrics of songs are useful in giving the learners a good feeling. Some consider music and singing with young learners, as a fun side-activity. They are also an effective device to help learners learn. Just singing the songs and reciting the chants and rhymes with learners provides a great foundation for literacy development. It is interesting to note that learners seem to remember words to songs better than they do the words to stories (Ridout, 1990). In and out of the classroom today, people are beginning to realise that music may enhance the overall learning of learners. Singing is a natural and joyful language. When it is combined with early literacy development and other cross-curricular activities, such as math, science, and social studies, the beginning process of reading and writing can be as natural and joyful as a song (Barclay and Walwer, 1992). Songs have been found to support language development by assisting children in learning to connect words and meaning with print as well as focusing attention on rhymes and other sound patterns.

Most primary school teachers generally use songs as a teaching technique and Cameron (2001) claimed that the use of songs and rhymes is also important for young learners in foreign language classrooms as it can help them improve their listening and vocabulary. Similarly, Johnstone (2002) claimed that teachers of young learners may make an important contribution to children's early language education by introducing recorded songs to their classes. Also

Demirel (2004) claimed that the most effective way to teach listening comprehension, pronunciation, and dictation to young learners is through teaching songs. This study, therefore, aimed to add to existing knowledge produced by other researchers by establishing teachers' perceptions on the use of songs as a tool for the development of initial literacy skills among primary school pupils.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Literacy which accounts for writing and reading skills contributes significantly to high educational standards of any country. Literacy development is a process that spans through early childhood years and it is one of the most important abilities learners acquire as they progress through their early school years.

Songs are a common feature in many everyday life activities, in many communities and among people of all ages including school going children as early as those in grade one. Songs are powerful materials that shape and affect the life of the individual in the community. They are used at work places, recreational places and as lullabies. The true power of songs and their impact in literacy learning is something this study wanted to establish. It is in view of this that the researcher thought it necessary to establish teachers' perceptions on the use of songs in the development of initial literacy skills in education particularly amongst grade one learners.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to establish teachers' perceptions on the use of songs as tools to develop initial literacy skills among grade one learners in selected primary schools in Nyimba District.

1.5. Research Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were:

1. To explain the types of songs that can be used as tools to develop initial literacy skills among grade one learners.
2. To establish teachers' perception on the use of songs as tools to develop initial literacy skills among Grade one learners.
3. To ascertain the appropriateness of songs used as tools to develop initial literacy skills among grade one learners.

4. To explain challenges teachers would face when using songs as tools to develop initial literacy skills.

1.6. Research Questions

1. What types of songs are used as tools to develop initial literacy skills among grade one learners?
2. What are teachers' perceptions on the use of songs as tools to develop initial literacy skills among grade one learners?
3. How appropriately are the songs used as tools for developing initial literacy skills among grade one learners in primary schools?
4. What challenges do teachers face when using songs as tools to develop initial literacy skills?

1.7. Significance of the Study

The study may be significant in that; the findings of the study may provide relevant information that may be useful to the Ministry of General Education to recognise the importance of utilising songs in the teaching of initial literacy. The information on the influence of songs may also be used by curriculum developers to develop appropriate literacy programmes to promote literacy skills in lower primary schools. Additionally, policy makers may also use the findings to develop policies that will support literacy among learners in lower primary schools. Further, it is hoped that the results of this study may help grade one teachers to create effective learning environment in the light of using songs. The research will also help teachers to re-evaluate themselves and improve their role in enhancing reading skills for the pupils. Finally, the study will also open an avenue for further research in this realm.

1.8. Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the sociocultural theory of learning by Vygotsky 1978. Sociocultural theories of literacy emphasise the role that culture plays in the development and practice of literacy. Literacy learning from this perspective is a social practice, one that is embedded within specific cultural contexts and mediated by particular cultural tools (Gutiérrez, 2002). The study utilised Vygotsky's (1978) notion that language learning is influenced by the social contexts in which learners are deeply involved as they grow up and that they draw on a range of mediational

tools in the construction of meaning (Cole, 1996). Sociocultural theories of literacy have led to an understanding of the way in which learners are immersed in literacy practices from birth and thus develop a range of skills, knowledge and understanding about literacy (Hall, 1987). Learners' own cultural interests, however, can be important in literacy learning.

In order to understand the connection between initial literacy development skills and the cognitive and social values of songs, the researcher draw on social constructivism which is an interconnection between Piaget's (1973) cognitive theory and Vygotsky (1987) sociocultural theory (Palincsar, 1998). Social constructivism emphasises the importance of the home language and experiential knowledge in learning. It suggests that knowledge develops as one engages in dialogue or interacts with others (Palincsar 1998) and views knowledge as a developmental, cultural and socially mediated process which involves interaction between the most knowledgeable others and the less experienced (Yilmaz, 2008).

With regard to teaching and learning, social constructivism encourages the recognition of learners' prior knowledge as a significant resource in mediating knowledge construction (Ohta, 2000). The sociocultural theorists emphasise that teachers should know the learner's prior experiences before formal schooling. Winsler (2003), pointed out that is what learners already know and can do when they come to school that should be bridged with activities transformed by classroom realities. Concerning literacy teaching, social constructivism values the variety of literacies acquired by learners from the surrounding environment through informal interactions such as talks, play and songs, which occur mainly through the learners' first languages (Street 1995). They view such knowledge as a good foundation for other literacy events and practices including listening, reading, writing, imagination and meaning-making of the learning content. In the performance or narration of songs, learners cross the border from informal (home) literacy to formal (school) literacy as they construct their own meaning from the stories. In this way, they construct literacy knowledge which is significant in their learning across the curriculum. In this context, the researcher views social constructivism as an appropriate lens to understand how learners construct knowledge from songs. It is believed that young learners depend on the cognitive or mental structures and the social environment to construct literacy knowledge. The cognitive structures include higher order thinking tools to stimulate critical and problem solving skills (Kozulin, 1998), while the sociocultural environment encourages information sharing and

interaction between individuals who learn from each other. As literacy is regarded as both a cognitive and sociocultural practice (Baynham, 1995), songs have a number of capacity to theory which is influenced by a number of factors such as language proficiency and pedagogical strategies employed in literacy lessons. This implies that literacy teaching strategies should encourage learners' active engagement in the form of individual and collaborative activities which may include guided, paired and shared reading and writing (DBE, 2011).

Vygotsky described three zones of development in order to support learners' learning. The first is the zone of Actual Development. In this zone, the child is able to complete tasks independently. The second is Zone of Proximal Development, which describe the distance between the actual development level as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. It is in this zone where teaching and learning occur. The third zone is the Zone of Frustration. In this zone, children experience frustration, as they do not have the background knowledge or skills to understand what is being taught. In this zone, children often experience anxiety and loss of self- confidence. Over the time, this can destroy learners' curiosity and motivation to learn (Robb, 2003). According to this theory, children are provided with necessary tools and assistance or scaffolding for learning while they are in the zone of proximal development. Eventually the child moves towards gaining the necessary skill away from the zone of proximal development. At this point the scaffolding can be removed and the child can act independently.

In this study, songs are viewed as necessary tools to help learners develop initial literacy skills. Grade one teachers should identify the zones of proximal development of their pupils in regards to reading in order to provide necessary scaffolding. Through the use of songs, teachers can help learners develop proper literacy skills.

1.9. Delimitation of the Study

Delimitation of the study refers to restricting a study by geographic location, age, sex, population, population size or other similar conditions (Msabila and Nalaila, 2013). Therefore, the study was carried out among ten primary schools in Nyimba District. It targeted teachers of grade one.

1.10. Limitation of the Study

The findings of this study cannot be generalised to other populations due to limited sample size of only thirty (30) participants drawn from ten primary schools in Nyimba District. Also, the findings may be different from other schools across the district and across the nation.

1.11. Organisation of the Study

The dissertation is organised into six chapters.

The First Chapter outlines the topic, background of the dissertation and statement of the problem. It highlights the purpose of the study, specific research objectives, and research questions, significance of the study and delimitation of the study. Operational definitions as well as theoretical framework on which the study is based and summary of the introduction are given.

The Second Chapter reviewed literature that discusses the role of songs in the development of initial literacy skills to grade one learners.

The Third Chapter outlines the methodology adopted in the study. It discusses the research design, population, methods and techniques applied in data collection and analysis; the ethical considerations as well as the summary of the chapter are given.

The Fourth Chapter specifically deals with an account of the findings of the study. The findings are presented using research questions.

The Fifth Chapter presents the discussion of the findings. To discuss the findings, the research objectives, literature review and theoretical framework are used.

Chapter six concludes the study and recommendations of the study are drawn

1.12. Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, the researcher has presented the introduction to the study giving background, problem statement, and significance of the study. Research objectives and questions were also presented. The researcher has also provided theoretical framework that guides the study, delimitations, operational definition of terms and the organisation of the study. The next chapter will discuss the literature review relevant to the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Overview

The researcher in this chapter reviews some of the relevant literature available on songs with a view to identifying the gaps in existing knowledge that this study intends to fill. The research objectives are restated and used as themes:

1. To describe the types of songs that can be used as tools to develop initial literacy skills among grade one learners.
2. To establish teachers' perception on the use of songs as tools to develop initial literacy skills among Grade one learners.
3. To ascertain the appropriateness of songs used as tools to develop initial literacy skills among grade one learners in Nyimba primary schools.
4. To explain challenges teachers would face when using songs as tools to develop initial literacy skills.

2.2. Concept of Initial Literacy

Initial literacy, according to the Annual Edition (2005/06), refers to knowledge, skills and dispositions that precede learning to read and write in the primary grades. It is what learners know about reading and writing before they actually read or write. Initial literacy is an emerging set of relationships between reading and writing. These relationships are situated in a broader communication network of speaking and listening, whose components work together to help learners negotiate the world and make sense of experience (Lewis 2000; Siegler, 2000). According to Waldfogel (2012), learners need writing to help them learn about reading, they need reading to help them learn about writing and they need oral language to help them learn both. Effective initial literacy instruction provides learners with developmentally appropriate settings, materials, experiences, and social support that encourage early forms of reading and writing to flourish and develop into conventional literacy. Initial literacy skills have a clear and consistently strong relationship with later conventional literacy skills, such as decoding, oral reading, fluency, reading comprehension, writing, and spelling (National Institute for National Literacy 2009). In school, learners go through a sequence of levels of reading development beginning with initial literacy skills.

After the initial literacy stage, learners develop decoding skills (Grade 1-2), fluency and automaticity (Grade 2-3) and later use reading to learn (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2010).

2.3. The Role of songs in teaching.

Songs are known for developing oral language in pre-schoolers. Literature has revealed that, literacy can be promoted through songs. The successful acquisition of reading and writing in early childhood depends on a solid background in oral language skills. It is from this point of view that scholars such as Chong and Gan (1997) have suggested that there is no better way to gain knowledge and confidence in oral language than through songs. Songs are a natural way for children to experience rich language in a pleasurable way. Young children seem to be naturally excited for sound and rhythm. Besides providing enjoyment, songs can play an important role in language and literacy development. Strong social bonds are encouraged through songs beginning in preschool. Establishing a sense of rhythm can be used to increase a child's awareness of rhyming patterns and alliteration in other areas of reading and writing.

Through songs, memory skills can be improved, and aural discrimination increased (Chong and Gan 1997). Songs can focus the mind on the sounds being perceived and promote learning through an interactive process. It is important to be conscious of auditory and discrimination skills in teaching children. Songs help increase these listening skills in a fun and relaxed manner. Listening skills is key in singing, language and expressive movement, and later reading and writing (Wolf, 1992).

Songs have always been a way for children to remember stories and learn about the world around them. Using songs as a stimulus can effect one's emotions and make information easier to remember. Songs also create an environment that is conducive to learning. They can reduce stress, increase interest, and set the stage for listening and learning. The similarities between literacy acquisition and musical development are many. Therefore, teaching that combines songs with language arts instruction can be the most effective (Davies, 2000).

A child's initial introduction to patterned text often first occurs in songs, chants, and rhymes that are repeated over and over again throughout childhood. Once children become familiar with this patterning, they are excited and able to participate in shared reading, writing and

other oral language experiences. Concepts about print become more meaningful, and conventions of print are learned in context. Additionally, substitutions in songs, chants or poem can provide for real language experience opportunities. When emergent readers see printed words in the text again and again, they come to identify those words and phrases by their similarities and configurations.

The effects of songs on the emotions are commonly known. However, the effects of songs on the brain and thinking are demonstrable. Research has shown that during an electroencephalogram (EEG), songs can change brain waves and make the brain more receptive to learning. Songs connect the functions of the right and left hemispheres of the brain so that they work together and make learning quick and easy. Brain function is increased when listening to songs and studies have shown that songs promote more complex thinking. It can make connections between emotions, thinking and teaching (Davies, 2000). Howard Gardner's research on Multiple Intelligences supports this idea. He describes how people demonstrate different skills and talents while trying to learn. Therefore, caregivers must provide different approaches to meet a child's areas of strength in order to be the most successful. For example, Gardner's Musical-Rhythmic learners are sensitive to nonverbal sounds and are very much aware of tone, pitch and timbre. Using rhythm, chanting, and songs with Pre-schoolers can increase their attention and interest while motivating them to learn (Gardner, 1985.)

Parents and care givers need to learn from this multi-million-dollar industry and use songs to help children become literate (Davies, 2000). Good first teaching is based on using what children already know, and the influence of songs on learning is clear. Therefore, it seems that caregivers would be motivated to incorporate, songs, rhymes, chants and rhythm in the scaffolding rather than just talking. Music can set the stage for learning, increase a child's interest, and activate thinking. This study considers the child's exposure to various songs and ability to sing long before coming to school as emergent literacy behaviour. These songs could be rich sources of emergent literacy that a child has but which school assumes is not there at all. This study makes an attempt to explore this idea further.

2.4. Studies on Early Literacy Development

Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) clarify that the environment in families of low sociocultural status usually offers few opportunities to develop early literacy, which is often associated to difficulties to develop reading and writing by those children that are brought up therein. They report that, in the United States, 35% of children who access to public primary schools have low levels of skills related to initial literacy, as well as a lack of motivation to learn at school. This low level of preparation for school implies a mismatch between what children develop and the performance expected from them at school, which put them in a high-risk situation in terms of school failure.

The research of Guevara, Rugerio, Delgado, Hermosilloy Lopez (2010) was carried out to assess the development level attained by Mexican pre-school children regarding pre-academic and linguistic skills related to initial literacy, and showed the features of the literacy environment of the homes of those who had poorer performances. 65 pupils from communities of low socio cultural status participated there and were assessed with two individually administered instruments. Firstly, the Range of Skills for School Learning (De la Cruz, 1989), which includes tests of speech understanding, spatial relationships, perceptive capability of shapes and spatial orientation, and secondly, the Assessment of Precurrent Reading Skills (EPLE, as per its Spanish acronym, Vega, 1998). The results showed that the children had low level of pre-academic and language skills, which may lead to poor school performance. These authors inform that the mothers of the 30 children having poorer performance answered a questionnaire to know more on the factors that affect reading and writing development in children, as well as the literacy practices carried out by them. Only a few of them informed that they carry out practices as reading stories to children or joint writing; their assumptions and practices on teaching reading and writing were related to identifying letters or syllables, although many of them answered ambiguously in this respect. The results showed that the mothers are not clear on their role as educational agents to achieve their children's initial literacy.

Guevara et al. (2010) analysed the data found in their study, taking into account the three ways family environment promotes the development of initial literacy, trying to note which aspects were present or not. The reports from the participating mothers showed that they did

not perform any interactions at their homes that may lead to an optimal development of oral and written language in their children. They informed that they had reading and writing materials at home but that they did not use them jointly with their children. The data showed that the aspects of regarding the emotional and motivational environment, especially in terms of attitudes, assumptions and practices of the parents for their children's literacy development, will be restricted.

Another study was carried out by Saracho (2001), who emphasised that pre-school children must participate in programmes that promote the acquisition of initial literacy-oriented behaviours making teaching of reading easier- through a game environment, since it is possible to perform implicitly activities related to reading and writing through playing activities. Five groups of preschool children and teachers participated in this study. The intervention phase had duration of eight weeks, during which play centres enriched with materials and interactions aimed at developing literacy were carried out in the classroom. Likewise, the physical layout of classrooms was modified in order to promote playing behaviours that in time promote the implicit use of reading and writing, according to the children's level. The results of the study showed that the children developed behaviours related to literacy in all the classrooms. Some of them were: reading the name of streets, recognising and reading traffic signs on streets, following instructions, developing vocabulary through interaction among children, using sequences of events properly, writing stories upon reading them, reading numbers, developing language by role-playing, creating stories based on personal experiences, associating pictures from cards with their relevant written names, reading letters from a list, recognising letters by their sounds, identifying words with similar sounds, creating stories from pictures and reproducing or "reading" stories.

Saracho (2001) concludes that using physical environments related to initial literacy can offer a great number of opportunities to children so that they practice skills such as reading, writing, listening and talking, all of them through symbolic play activities. Likewise, the role played by teachers in these activities is very important, since they create the appropriate environment through planning activities and games that promote the development of skills related to literacy.

Commentary

From the above display of the previous studies, the researcher can conclude that many researchers paid attention to developing initial literacy through the home and game environment. This is considered a great indicator that teachers are in a real need for adopting and adapting new techniques and methods such as songs. The current study benefits from the previous studies in the elements of initial literacy.

2.5. The Effectiveness and importance of Songs in Teaching

Jolly (1975) conducted a study on the effects of songs in foreign language learning. She used songs in Japanese conversation courses for two semesters. She stated that there is a close relationship between language and music since both entities have significant common elements and similarities. At the end of the term, she asked her learners to rate the songs according to their usefulness. The students responded that "the songs created a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere and livened up the pace of the lessons. They were also viewed by most students as increasing vocabulary, studying Japanese culture and the relationship between culture and language" (Jolly 1975). She claims that "songs are also effective in reinforcing course features, such as pronunciation, grammatical structures, vocabulary and Idiomatic expressions, and cultural exposure" (Jolly 1975). She suggests in terms of song choice that the songs "should not contain unfamiliar grammatical structures, nor grammar or vocabulary not within association of" previously presented material. Also, they should not contain unusual pitch jumps or subjects not appearing in the main textbook" claiming this could confuse comprehension (Jolly 1975). Jolly (1975) claims that music is useful in many areas of language teaching and that "there is little doubt regarding its effectiveness in maintaining the students' motivation." However, the only evidence she provides is student feedback. Whereas this may be the most important feedback, that students are noticing benefits from using music in the language classroom, empirical evidence is not provided. Based on the empirical observations, she concludes that the songs served both psychological and educational needs to the learners. While Jolly's study is appreciated on the use of songs, she did not look at teachers' perceptions on the use of songs among grade one learners.

A study conducted by Rosova (2007), the use of songs in teaching English revealed that the learners perceived the lessons with songs as interesting, instructive, positive, relaxing and

enjoyable and nobody experienced redoubtable satiety and repugnance. The study was conducted among fifty-three learners and was divided into four different groups. Two questionnaires and interviews were used to find the results of the study. The study by Rosova used a mixed method approach and the focus of the study was on learners' perceptions on learning using songs while the current study focused on teachers' perceptions on the use of songs to teach initial literacy skills.

Another study related to the effectiveness of songs was conducted by Millington (2011) entitled to use songs effectively to teach English to young learners. The study revealed how songs could help improve learners' listening skills and pronunciation. He also provided practical examples of how songs can be used as a language task. The examples of songs; "Teaching Practice Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" serve to review body parts, or "I Can Sing a Rainbow" which is helpful for reviewing colour names. He explains that to maximise the advantages of songs, songs should be developed into language learning tasks. Singing in itself will not teach learners to use the language, but developing a song from an activity to a task with preparation, core, and follow up stages will help to maximise the potential of songs as a teaching tool. Furthermore, songs can be adapted to fit in with the curriculum or language point to be taught. By adapting a song, teachers will have the advantage of selecting a particular language feature such as syntax, vocabulary or simple conversation and incorporate it into the song. In this way teachers will save time searching for new songs. The study did not look at the types of songs and their appropriate use, which this study did and looked at it from its initial state.

The other study that shades light on effectiveness of songs was conducted by Romero, Bernal, and Olivares (2012), in their study using songs to encourage sixth Graders to develop English speaking skills, conducted an action research to examine students' oral production when taking part in activities that involves songs. For collecting the data, they observed their English classes and applied a survey. Based on their study, songs ought to be an important part of daily teaching activities. The study found that using music made students more motivated and gave them the opportunity to talk in a non-threatening environment. When songs are selected carefully and match the students' need, they encourage the students to practice vocabulary and develop confidence. While this study looked at sixth graders, the current one sought to study the initial literacy among first graders (grade one).

Mashayekh and Hashemi (2011) point out the role of music in learning can be described in terms of enhancement of social harmony, motivation force and tool for learning. They suggest that language teachers should familiarise themselves with the pedagogical applications of music in language classes and the effects of music on thought and behaviour of the learners. These features of songs facilitate not only on academic success of learners but also the atmosphere of the learning environment and learners' motivation. With regards to the effects of music on learners' motivation, Ur (1999) stated that entertainment produce enjoyment, which in return adds motivation. Ur also proposed that appropriate grammar focusing techniques should be as lively and intrinsically motivating as possible. Brown (2001) underlies the importance of motivating activities which appeal to learners' interest and goals. He regards singing songs as a means to lower learners' inhibitions and to encourage them to apply their right brain processing.

According to Lo and Li (1998), songs are able to change the monotonous mood in the class and with the smoothing effect of music; they provide a comfortable class environment so that learners can develop their lingual skills more easily. They mentioned that, utilising songs in a class environment, amuses learners, helps them feel relaxed and get rid of their negative attitudes towards a foreign language while learning a lingual structure through a song (Sariçoban, 2000). A piece of music can change the atmosphere in a classroom. Children have a natural taste for music and because of that English language teachers around the world use such enjoyable and supportive means for children to improve language learning and acquisition. Sariçoban (2000) underlies the effects of songs in language classrooms by regarding them as one of the most enchanting and culturally rich resources to be used in language classrooms. He states that songs offer a change from routine classroom activities. He also points out that if properly selected and adopted carefully, a teacher should benefit from songs when teaching grammar. As the study is appreciated on the importance of songs in the classroom environment, it does not look at how the teachers perceived them as tools to develop initial literacy skills.

Douville (2001) in her book, presented several benefits of using songs and chants to enhance reading. However, she believes that there are a number of considerations teachers have to be aware of when choosing songs. She advised them to consider selecting melodies, songs, and topics that are familiar to students. She also recommended choosing songs that have patterns of

words or phrases that reflect the use of high frequency words or match with the text's vocabulary. Furthermore, Douville (2001) adds that teachers can develop their own chants to match any recognisable tune if they fail to find one. She gives an example of "The Wheels on the Bus Go Round and Round" as a possible tune to modify. She mentioned that the words of this song could be changed into different words that teachers invent, such as "The sound of B is BBB… in the word bear", in order to help students master, recognise, and read letter sounds. Moreover, she believes that when students move beyond learning from print, songs can be used to promote reading in an accurate manner, rapidly, automatically, fluently, and with appropriate expression and phrasing. In addition, Douville (2001) adds that learners can benefit from the usefulness of songs as an "instructional strategy". She explains that as learners read the songs' lyrics, they will make various discoveries about language and the process of reading.

Medina (2002) thinks the main advantage of using songs and music is the enjoyable experience they bring to students and the relaxed atmosphere they create in a class. Medina (2002) also points out that several educators commend story-songs. She explained that a story-song is a particular poem that describes or tells a story. In addition, it is meant to be sung rather than spoken, because it has been arranged with musical elements. Medina (2002) suggested, however, that teachers have to be careful when choosing story-songs. They have to make sure that the story-song is appropriate in form and that the new-targeted vocabulary is clearly demonstrated. Besides, teachers also have to make sure that the recording is interesting to the learners so that it will increase their motivation to hear, sing, and learn the song after class. Furthermore, Medina (2002) pointed out that complicated melodies hinder memorisation and force learners to give their attention to learning them rather than concentrating on the song's lyrics. Therefore, she advises teachers to choose uncomplicated tunes. Moreover, Medina (2002) focuses teachers' attention toward the songs' rhythm, and insists that they should choose songs with moderate ones. She notes that fast rhythms delay students' capability to recognise and learn targeted words. Medina recommends providing students with a short list of new vocabulary that is found in the song. She also mentions that the level of proficiency of the chosen song should match the students' level. Finally, Medina stated that some educators fail to integrate music in their language classes, so learners do not fully benefit from the positive effects music can have on vocabulary learning.

Cruz-Cruz (2005) conducted a study to determine the effectiveness of selected music and songs on teaching grammar and vocabulary. Her subjects were 28 second grade elementary school students divided into two groups composing of fourteen pupils. The learners in the control group were taught the selected English grammar and vocabulary using traditional methods of instruction. The treatment group was taught English grammar and vocabulary through the use of selected music and songs besides the traditional method. Both of the groups were taught the selected English grammar and vocabulary for a total of eighteen hours. The results of the study revealed that the control group improved its overall average of Pre-Posttest grammar and vocabulary scores from 72.8% to 83.7%. The treatment group's overall average score improved from a pre-test score of 65.7% to 90.2% on the post-test. That is, the control group in the experiment had a 10.9% gain in its average score at the end of the six-week period, compared to the treatment group's significant gain in scores (24.5%) during the course period. In general, the results of the data indicated that music and songs can be used efficiently to aid the teaching of English grammar and vocabulary to second grade students. She adds that the usage of appropriate music can make learners feel energetic and motivated. The above revealed literature is similar to the current study in the use of songs as a tool of instruction. The difference is on the approach to the subject of the study, which was the effectiveness of songs in teaching grammar and vocabulary, participants were second graders, and the method was a quantitative.

Gromko (2005) investigated the effect of music on phonemic awareness in kindergarten children. The author predicted that music instruction that focused on analysing a simple song into patterns would enhance children's ability to segment words into phonemes. The subjects were pre-tested individually on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) subtests of initial-sound fluency, letter-naming fluency, phoneme-segmentation fluency, and nonsense-word fluency. The students were then placed into either a treatment group or a control group. The treatment group participated in music instruction that focused on active participation and movement, as well as visual representations of concepts. The students in the treatment group achieved significantly greater gains in phoneme-segmentation fluency as measured by the DIBELS, but not on any of their other measures. The author suggested that learners may have benefited from the music instruction because of music's emphasis on aural development. However; the finding of this study cannot be generalized into the current study due to

methodological differences. In addition, the study concentrated on the effects of music on phonemic awareness in kindergarten children. Thus, there is a need for the current study to examine the underlying issues on teachers' perceptions on the use of songs on initial literacy skills development.

Rossi (2011) carried out a study to examine how music alone and music containing words affect knowledge acquisition and reading comprehension among college students in the US. The eye-tracking data was used as one of the primary methods of data collection. The eye-tracking data was used in order to provide a means to analyse each participant's reading/viewing patterns and eye fixations while reading and viewing the assigned materials in either the music or music with words condition, as well as to accurately determine reading and viewing times for each participant. The study found that there was significant relationship between music and knowledge acquisition and reading comprehension. This study slightly contributes to the current study as it tried to examine how music affects students' word knowledge. However, its findings cannot be generalized into the current study since it was carried out in the United State of America. In addition, it involved college students while the current one deals with grade one learners.

Tseng (2012) mentions that in order to create a more relaxed classroom atmosphere, teachers should use activities like songs to decrease anxiety. In addition, Keskin (2011) indicates that one of the most important advantages of using songs in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom is that they increase students' motivation and save the lesson from being boring and monotonous. Tseng (2012) also stated that songs convey meaning and tell memorable stories. Songs are active, short, and repetitive and contain vocabulary that enriches a child's linguistic input. Shen (2009) also mentions that songs are rich with different topics and expressions that will "echo in the learner's heart" (p. 88). Therefore, this study sought to establish how songs are appropriately used as tools to teach initial literacy skills among grade one learners in primary schools in Nyimba District.

Fras and Polona (2015) indicate that songs are a useful tool for adding variety to language classrooms. Songs are used to teach vocabulary and grammar along with sounds and stress. They also indicated that songs can be used in a variety of classroom activities such as listening

comprehension, vocabulary and pronunciation practice, translation and discussion. The study did not discuss how songs can be used to enhance initial literacy skills among grade one learners.

Murphey (1992) conducted a study on 49 students who had all experienced the song-stuck-in-my-head phenomenon in some language. The results showed that first the melody and then the lyrics from the songs get stuck and stored in memory until needed for a specific context. Therefore, he believed that songs positively influence learners' long and short-term memory. Murphey found that the majority of English teachers use or have used songs for different teaching purposes. He also found out that songs may be exploited as effectively as any other text. They can be a source of language for presenting and practising grammar and syntax, vocabulary, pronunciation, and the different skills of listening, reading, speaking, writing and translation.

Murphey (2002) explains the importance of music and songs. He argues that singing a language is easier than speaking it. He relates his hypothesis to the development of human speech and argues that research indicates that infants start producing musical babbling that is returned by their parents, "motherese" before they are capable of producing words. However, in adolescence, things change and songs seem to replace motherese babbling to a certain extent. Therefore, over time, music and songs appear in many places around us. According to Murphey (2002), using songs is important because songs can activate the repetition mechanism of Chomsky's language acquisition device. He refers to Piaget describing that children enjoy hearing themselves repeat, and explains that repetition is one of the necessities for children to learn a language. In addition, Murphey also points out that involuntary repetition is a natural tendency of our brains, as we hear things in order to make sense of them. Thus, songs can be a good tool for language learning because they provide the needed repetition in content that helps learners to feel and make sense of what they are reading or hearing. In addition to repetition, Murphey mentions another characteristic that makes songs valuable for language learning. He states that songs are more effective and motivating than texts, because they are more simple and analytical. He adds that songs are appropriate and applicable to learners in every place and time. Songs are general and relevant to any person who hears them. Finally, Murphey notes that songs are relaxing and they add fun and encouragement for most language learners.

Murphey (2002) describes some concerns expressed by participants in a workshop he gave at a group of commercial schools. They commented that music and songs are often not taken seriously by students, administrators, and teachers. They added that the sound caused by music and songs disturbed the neighboring classes. Moreover, while some students got excited, others did not sing. Other teachers did not know what the exact goal of using songs was, or how to exploit the material usefully. Also, some teachers thought that music takes away from the normal syllabus and that time is lost. Others believed that ESL songs are boring. There were also some teachers who asked which songs they should choose and what they should do if students bring music that they do not like. Murphey suggests that teachers should compare what they normally do with music and songs in everyday life to any text they use in language classrooms. He states that teachers should be able to do with music what they do with texts. For example, in everyday life, we listen to songs and talk about their lyrics, their production, their effects, and their authors. We can use similar activities in language classrooms and ask students to read songs, compose songs, write articles about songs, write letters to singers, or write dialogues using the words of a song. Furthermore, Murphey (2002) states that teachers should pick songs that are well known and available in their environment. Familiar songs facilitate the learning process and ensure effectiveness. He adds that they may have greater impact on students and motivate them to work harder. He believes that asking students to select their teaching material even makes them feel more responsible and increases their involvement in the lesson. He adds that this gives students the chance to build criteria for sorting relevant materials and encourages the student-centered approach. At the same time, it reduces teachers' time and effort, develops the student-teacher relationship, and provides both teachers and students with an excellent learning/teaching experience.

Sung Kim and Koo Kang (2015) studied the effects of developing English listening ability of middle school students through English pop songs. They say that for teaching and learning English listening skills, English pop songs can be used as an effective way and useful pattern practices related to the songs can be very helpful. English pop songs can help students feel more confident and enjoy English to learn more at home as well as in the classroom. The results of this study are that English pop songs increased the students' interest and motivation for learning English, which were turned out to help the students get about three times more scores. The two

researchers did not use Zambia as a study site hence their findings are not applicable so much to Zambia. This study ascertained how appropriately songs used can enhance initial literacy development among grade one learners.

Simwawa (2009) conducted a study on teaching geography through Zambian music to grade 12 pupils of Kamwala secondary school. The study aimed at exploring Zambian music so as to show how it can be used in teaching of Geography to grade 12 pupils and investigated the geographical educational values derived from songs. The sample consisted of eight grade 12 classes of which five where from morning session and three from afternoon. The study found out that many Zambian songs are very useful in teaching geography and did have geography education values key to sustainable development. The study revealed that a lot of Zambian songs have messages which are geographical in nature and can be called geography songs. The findings of the study also showed that songs can be used to describe, discuss and locate places in Zambia and abroad which is what geography is partially about. The study findings further pointed out that songs talk about diseases, problems of population, transport by road, politics, economics, the natural environment, unemployment, poor housing, inadequate school places and no medicine in hospitals. Finally, the study revealed that songs helped pupils to keep away from falling into practicing social vices that could lead to having early marriages, defilement and drug abuse. This study analysed the Zambian music in order to come up with enough evidence on how the songs can be used to teach geography to grade 12 learners. His findings were based on grade 12 learners while this study considered grade 1 leaners. The study for Simwawa was conducted in Lusaka and the focus was Geography whereas, this study the focus is on initial literacy skills.

Mukela (2014) conducted on the role of indigenous music and games in the promotion of cognitive development in children. He used qualitative approach to collect and analyse data. The findings revealed that play and music activities had many educational benefits which were potentially valuable for promoting children's cognitive and social abilities. The findings also revealed that participation in indigenous games, had a potential to improve the children's numeracy skills, increased school attendance among children, enhancing self-confidence and courage to participate in the learning processes in class and help to facilitate to bridge the gap between the school and the home environments. In addition, the findings showed that songs and

dances helped learners to socialise in the cultural ways of the Lozi people. The study further revealed that mockery and praise songs and dances taught about diplomacy and value of interpersonal relationships, and respect for others and those in authority. These songs and dances also warned and gave advice to children not to develop undesirable social behaviours. Playing of musical instruments had the benefit of helping children to value the need for mutual dependence in bringing about harmony in social relationships. On the other hand, participation in cultural songs also helped children to develop and promote the traditional ways of pentatonic singing, and call and response patterns. Participation and performance of these musical activities therefore could help to unify society and brought about mutual cooperation and discouraged individualism. The area of divergence is that, this study focused on the role of indigenous music to promote learners' cognitive development while this study researched on the use of songs to develop initial literacy skills among grade one learners.

Arevalo (2010), in his research, the use of songs as a tool to work on listening and culture in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes, examines the listening performance of students throughout the development of six workshops based on songs. He conducted an action research with four types of instruments; questionnaire, classroom observation, students' documents, and a semi-structured interview. Based on his findings he states that songs are the most suitable type of authentic material to develop listening comprehension. He also stated that songs can develop listening comprehension when teachers select the appropriate songs and design meaningful listening task. In addition, his findings indicated that listening to music increases students' motivation and their attention spans. They are more likely to participate in the class because of the simple conversational language that songs provide. He also found that through songs, students become familiar with native speakers' pronunciation. Thus, they get to learn grammar automatically without even realising it. This article addressed how teachers create authentic listening activities based on English songs, students' listening skill can be fostered and how these activities can be culturally meaningful and motivating for them. The results obtained in the research done cannot attempt to make a wide-scope generalisation to the current study due to research approach and the objective of the study.

Sevik (2012) conducted a theoretical study in his research developing young learners' listening skills through Songs and to discuss the importance of songs as listening activities in classes. He

concluded that listening skill is not a passive skill but a priority in language teaching. Listening activities provide comprehensible input for young learners from which they will eventually speak. Listening activities can be accompanied by visual images and physical motions to attract young learners. The findings showed that when songs are selected carefully, they provide a rich input for young learners, which help them to learn the language. The repetitive nature of songs, the joy songs impose on learners along with the power of melody and the content of the lyrics reinforces the acquisition of the language. He adds that the use of songs in young learners' classes provide the occasion of real language in meaningful situations.

Walton (2014) carried out a research on the effects of using singing and movement to teach the key pre-reading skills of letter-sounds, phoneme skills, and rhyming, and to teach children the beginning steps of reading. The project used songs and movement to target specific pre-reading skills and word reading, and included a control group to account for the effects of language and literacy programs typically found in regular Kindergarten classrooms. The main findings of the study are that songs and movement are excellent methods to teach important pre-reading skills and reading to Kindergarten children, and that these experiences significantly enhance the effectiveness of the language and literacy programs typically used by Kindergarten teachers. An important finding from the research is reported that songs and movement can effectively be used to teach letter sounds and medial phoneme skills, beyond the experience of typical literacy Kindergarten programs. He further found out that children learning songs with strong rhythmic components that manipulate sounds within words would improve their ability to identify medial phonemes. The study revealed that choral singing and moving to music are activities that Kindergarten children enjoy and are typically used currently in Kindergarten programs. Using songs and movement directly and systematically to teach letter-sounds and medial phoneme skills could add a focus that could enhance already strong Kindergarten programs. Further, the finding revealed that that songs and movement increased word reading significantly beyond that of the control group is important. One causal explanation is that the children in the songs program had increased letter-sound knowledge and medial phoneme identity compared to the control group, and that the treatment group children read more words because of the increased ability with these pre-reading skills. However, the songs and movement programme also resulted in increased pre-reading skills and it is likely that the songs programme also had a

direct positive effect on word reading as well. Finally, most of the songs from the songs programme had a pronounced beat, and the lyrics in the songs were timed to the beat, so that the prosody of lyrics in a song would coincide with the musical beat. Also, many songs segmented and blended sounds within words, and so the songs program may have facilitated the development of phonological skills within words and enhanced word reading as well. It is possible that using singing and movement to teach pre-reading skills and reading was effective because it highlighted musical beat perception and the auditory perception of rise time.

A study conducted by Chou (2012) which investigated the learners' motivation and vocabulary acquisition for the language learners of age 8 and 11 through games, songs and stories found that by using these techniques the primary school children motivation, willingness to express themselves and to interact with the teacher had risen and it helped them to memorise the new words quickly. Seventy-two primary school learners between eight and eleven years old participated in the study as follows: Second grade: 20; third grade:16; fourth grade: 17; and fifth grade: 19. They were given five 100-minute lessons about international holidays. To collect data, the researcher followed a mixed-method approach using instruments like classroom observation, field notes, and a semi-structured interview for qualitative data, while a pretest, post-test, and self-assessment questionnaire were used for quantitative data. The vocabulary test administered before and after intervention consisted of four techniques, namely, true/false, matching, anagram with pictures, and gap-filling with pictures. Field notes and the self-assessment questionnaire revealed that games, songs, and stories had a positive effect on vocabulary learning. Thus, children reported that songs helped them understand vocabulary and topics in the story (especially in the lower levels), but stories had a higher impact. Vocabulary gains were found too, especially for students in higher courses, and it was also found that results were influenced by test technique.

Aguirre, Bustinza and Garvich (2016) conducted a study on influence of songs in primary school learners' motivation for learning English in Lima Peru. The purpose of the study was to explore how the use of songs in English helps motivating learners while learning English as a Second Language (ESL). The participants were primary school learners at a private school located in the Lima Metropolitan Area. This study used a mixed-method design that included

observations carried out by the research team and questionnaires completed by learners. The results show that learners are motivated to participate and become more engaged in classroom activities when songs are used in their English classes. This result was more strongly confirmed with the observations than with the questionnaires. However, the finding of this study cannot be generalised into the current study due to participants' differences. The current study is using teachers as participants. In addition, the study concentrated on exploring how the use of songs in learning English can help in motivating learners. Thus, there is need for the current study to examine the underlying issues on teachers' perceptions on use of songs on initial literacy skills development.

According to Cheung (2001), students need goals and a sense of relevancy for them to be motivated, a motivation that would result in students actively wanting to learn and taking the time to do so. It is the teacher's task to engage the students in activities where the students look at the learning materials in search of meaning and importance, by using popular culture that appeal to the students makes the activity a pleasurable and activity-oriented learning experience. Students easily learn the things about which they have background knowledge and their motivation is increased when the elements belonging to the popular culture of the target language are involved in the class. Bringing a song listened by the student to the class environment increases students' desire to learn and enables them contribute to the process of learning by making use of their own musical knowledge. Moreover, when teachers make use of popular culture that is familiar to the students, it will create a more relaxed learning environment since students will find it easier to follow the instructions in connection to the learning material, furthermore it increases the willingness to participate and students are prone to discuss and argue about a certain topic and use English in an authentic and realistic way when the learning material is something they can relate to. Cheung (2001) argues that the integration of popular culture in the classroom can build a valuable bridge between informal and formal learning.

Anderson and Lawrence (2007) rightly argues that learners should sing for sheer fun and pleasure in a variety of recreational activities, such as, games, songs and dances and musical plays. They should also learn musical concepts such as melody, rhythm, and form through the pieces that they perform. It is important that the use of songs forms major part of children's recreational activities in the early childhood music education because they enjoy it most during

their recreational activities. Learners learn a lot by reflecting on the meaning and the importance of the text, and aesthetic response of the musical materials. Songs can be used to teach learners about societal and cultural diversity, promoting literacy skills, nurturing learners' concepts of time and chronology helping learners to cope with hard situations and other things needed for human social development.

Ara (2009) stated that children learn faster than adults especially if they were not taught in traditional ways. So, the use of songs and games is an effective tool in teaching English for young learners especially that they made them unconscious that they are learning a language, i.e. they provide an interesting and enjoyable environment for learning without the feeling of pressure. Ara's (2009) findings analysis showed that in Bangladesh teachers are insensible of the effectiveness of using songs, rhymes and games in children's classes as means of interest and motivation; they still use ineffective traditional ways of teaching with memorization. The influence of the effectiveness of songs will appear in later stages with minimum level of proficiency in English to cope with their courses.

Commentary

The related literature reviewed above, led to the conclusion that they have acknowledged the effectiveness of songs in teaching and provides the occasion of real learning in meaningful situations. The studies focused on using songs in teaching English. These studies agree with the current study because all of them deal with songs. What is not known is whether their findings would be applicable to the case of grade one learners as regards to the use of songs in improving early literacy skills since no similar study had ever been conducted in Nyimba District.

2.6. Teachers' Perception on the use of Songs

A study by Tse (2015) tries to look at Malaysian Teachers' perspectives on using songs in English Language teaching. It is descriptive in nature with an aim to surveying the perceptive of Malaysian teachers towards using songs in their English classes. The participants were 60 Malaysian teachers and one instrument, questionnaire, was applied. Based on his findings, the majority of Malaysian teachers viewed songs as an important pedagogical tool that should be employed in ESL curriculum programs. The results of the study indicated that most teachers perceive songs as important in promoting listening skills. The study further revealed that more

than three quarters of ESL teachers (76.7%) disagreed that using songs in English classes is time consuming.

Sevik's (2011) Teachers' views about using songs in teaching English to young learners, research is a descriptive study, which aims to explore teachers' views about using songs. The participants were 52 Turkish teachers and the instrument used was a questionnaire. The findings of his study revealed that most primary school teachers consider songs to be an important and necessary part of teaching English in young learners' classrooms. They believe that songs are very important in developing the listening skills of learners. They also agree that songs are fun and full of pedagogical value because songs present many opportunities for young learners to show their skills in different language areas. Even though teachers stated very positive feelings about the pedagogical value of songs, findings related to teacher attitudes demonstrate that 77% of the teachers find it difficult to find appropriate songs and 69.3% believe that they do not have enough resources to use as songs. However, this research study differs from Sevik's study regarding the cultural background of the participants.

Hejjawi (2007), also conducted a research entitled Teachers' and students' attitudes toward the use of music in English language classrooms. She investigated the use of music in English language classrooms in the UAE, as well as teachers' and students' attitudes toward music use in language teaching and learning. She utilised a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques for collecting data. The participants were 80 experienced secondary and college level teachers and 80 secondary and college level students. Her findings indicated that teachers from both levels struggled in implementing music, do not know how to use songs, think that using songs is time consuming, do not have equipment to utilise songs in their classes, and therefore decided to ignore it. Her results revealed that the participating Arab teachers have major religious and cultural considerations that stopped most of them from using songs in their language classrooms. On the other hand, her findings also revealed that only a small percentage of students had serious religious concerns in terms of listening to music or accepting songs in their ESL classrooms. The majority of the participating students respected the Islamic teaching that does not allow music background in their language classrooms.

Kirsch (2008) stated that the material used for the listening activities such as stories, songs or poems should be meaningful, and appropriate which assist learning according to the learners' level. Kirsch (2008:) pointed out that many language teachers have described the benefits of using rhymes, songs and games in foreign language classes. Rhymes, poems and songs are very popular with young language learners who tend to be familiar with this type of literacy from school or home. Children do not shy away from poems and songs in foreign languages. Teachers are equally familiar with them and thus may find them a good way into the teaching of foreign languages because they promote positive feelings. The rhythmical patterns in rhymes, songs and games facilitate and speed learning. They are a good way of developing listening, pronunciation and speaking skills. Learners do not tire of listening to and repeating them over and over again. They join in with the parts they know and acquire more sounds, words and sentences with each successive performance until they gradually master the text. These forms of literacy help learners get into the rhythm of a language and learn to pronounce sounds and words confidently, accurately and with expression. Nevertheless, learners are more likely to remember the new words and structures because they are repetitive, meaningful and presented in predictable patterns and larger chunks. Besides, many teachers take advantage of the popularity and repetitive structure of songs to practice key vocabulary in an enjoyable way. The internalisation of sounds, words and sentence patterns brings learners a step closer to using these in other contexts. In addition, rhymes, poems and songs can initiate a range of activities: listening, reading, drawing, performing actions, playing and enacting, performing in front of an audience and practicing intonation, pronunciation and structures. songs about typical traditions or cultural artifacts are helpful in developing learners' cultural awareness and understanding.

2.7. Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature which informed and guided this study. In the next chapter, the researcher presents the methodology that was employed on the study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Overview

Research methodology refers to the various steps and techniques that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying his or her research problem logically (Kothari, 2004). This chapter discusses the research methodology that was used in the study. It constitutes research design, population and sample size, sampling procedures, research instruments, data analysis and ethical issues in research.

3.2. Research Design

The study utilised a qualitative research methodology which is used primarily in the social sciences since it focuses on behaviours and perceptions. Kombo and Tromp (2006) state, research design is the conceptual structure within which the planned research is conducted. Research design shows the planned outline the researcher has opted to use to generate answers to the research problems identified. Case study is one of the designs used by qualitative researchers. The study adopted a descriptive case study research design. Merriam (1998) asserts that a descriptive case study is one that presents a detailed account of the phenomenon under study and is useful for investigating innovative programs and practices. Since this study seeks to establish teachers' perspectives on the use of songs, descriptive case study is the most appropriate research design. A case study enables the researcher to deal with relationships and social processes in a way that is denied in to a survey approach. The researcher selected the case study methodology so as to maximize what could be learnt in the period of time available for the study. One of the advantage of the case study is that it allows the researcher to concentrate on a specific instance or situation and to identify the various interactive processes at work (Bell, 1999).

3.3. Population and Sample Size

Population can be described as an aggregate of people or things that a researcher has in mind from which one can obtain information and draw conclusions (Franken and Wallen, 2000). A population targeted for a specific study shares a number of common features. In this study the

target population was limited to grade one teachers drawn from ten primary schools in Nyimba district.

The sample size is the number of participants selected from the universe to constitute a desired sample (Bless, 1995). The sample size for this study consisted of 30 participants. This variety of the sample size provided rich information on the use of songs in improving early literacy skills among grade one learners.

3.5. Sampling Procedures

Patton (2015) writes that the most appropriate procedure for qualitative study is 'purposeful sampling' this is so because "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study" (p.264). According to Krishnaswami (2004), sampling techniques are classified into two types; Probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) stated that qualitative research uses non-probability sample for selecting the population for study. It is against this background that the purposive sampling was used to select both the teachers and schools for the study through homogeneous type of purposive sampling. The sample was used in this study to ensure that it captured the intended and rightful people. It is believed that participants with these characteristics will be able to purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study (Creswell, 2007). Purposeful homogeneous sampling was best suited to this study as participants were chosen that would provide rich data directly related to the research question. For the purpose of this study, participants were selected as they were grade one teachers who had been teaching for three years and above. Schools were purposively chosen because they represented the intended purpose of the study.

3.6. Data Collection Procedure

To begin with, permission was sought from the University of Zambia and the Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies. The researcher also got permission from the District Education Board Secretary and the school managers in order to interact with the respondents freely. During data collection, the researcher briefly explained the purpose of the interview and gave chance to the respondents to ask any questions or express any concern on the interview. This was done to provide a friendly, relaxed and pleasant interview process so that the respondents provide honest answers. Teachers were interviewed on agreed dates. Thereafter, the researcher

administered the questionnaires to the sampled teachers who were expected to fill in on the spot or for a period not more than one week depending on the time available. Data was collected by listening to individuals and recording. Then the researcher reviewed all of the data, made sense of it, and organised it into categories or themes that cut across all of the data sources.

3.7. Research Instruments

In order to get information, Semi structured interviews and observation guide were used. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), questionnaires, interview schedules, observation and focus group discussions are the most commonly used research instruments. The study employed two data collection methods, namely; semi-structured interviews and classroom observation. The use of more than one data collection method allowed the researcher to cross-check if most of the findings where pointing to the same conclusions.

3.7.1. Semi-structured Interview

The study employed semi-structured interviews. An interview guide is an oral administration of a questionnaire or a list of questions that the participants are asked during the interview (Owen, 2002). Interview guides were used to obtain qualitative information on the perceptions of teachers on the use of songs in teaching initial literacy to Grade 1 learners. It is believed that this method allowed for a richer description of the teachers' experience of the phenomenon and their views on the contribution of songs to the teaching and learning of initial literacy skills. The use of interviews provides an opportunity to the interviewer to question thoroughly certain areas of inquiry and allowed for repetition of a question when the respondent seemed to have not understood (Kombo and Tromp 2006).

This instrument helped the researcher to gather information about the teachers' perception towards the use of songs in the classroom. The major advantage of this technique is that there are no chances of no-response as the interviewer personally collects data and allowed for probing in order to get in-depth information than the case is with the questionnaire were one may decide not to answer some and leave them unattended. Further, data collected from interviews is so reliable that the interviewer tactfully collects the data by cross examining the respondents.

3.7.2. Observation

The other important way of collecting data is observation. Observation is one of the methods used when collecting data, especially for qualitative research purposes. Brundrett and Rhodes (2014) argue that it is helpful in providing deep, rich data that give verisimilitude to the research process. Observation can either be direct or indirect, structured or unstructured, participant or non-participant. In this study, data was collected using a non-participant-observer field based approach. Non-participant observation refers to conducting an observation without participating in the activities that are observed, (Hennink et al, 2011). Observation was chosen as one of the methods so that the information given in the other instruments could be confirmed. Issues mentioned about songs such as being appropriate in enhancing initial literacy skills were looked at in the study. The study also looked at how the songs were applied during lessons and how the learners were learning what was being taught. Creswell (2012) stated that observation allows gathering of first-hand information by observing people in a natural setting. The advantage therefore, is that the recording of information is done as it occurs in a setting.

3.8. Data Analysis and Presentation

In this study, the researcher analysed data using qualitative approach. The researcher began the process of data analysis during the interviews by recording what was considered relevant to the objectives and questions of the research. Further, the data collected was analysed according to the generally accepted strategy of qualitative data analysis. Such a strategy consists of preparing and organizing the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes.

3.9. Ethical Issues in Research

In this research, the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the University of Zambia. The permit was then sought from the relevant officials in the Ministry of General Education and the school managers to enable the researcher to go in the field. The researcher assured the respondents that their identity would be treated confidentially and anonymity and were offered the option of withdrawing from the study at any time. The researcher ensured that all participants understood that their participation in this study was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any time. The participants were assured that the identities of both the school and the teachers will be held in the strictest confidence and that data collected from

the study will be used solely for the stated purpose. The participants were also assured that their names would not be used on the observation instrument. This ensured that their rights would not be violated and that the information would only to be used for academic purposes but not to incriminate anyone. The researcher also explained the purpose of the study to the respondents and asked them to participate in the study.

3.10. Strategies to Ensure the Trustworthiness of the Data

Although the trustworthiness of qualitative research is often questioned by positivist researchers, a number of strategies can be adopted to ensure the credibility and dependability of the findings (Shenton, 2004). The researcher adopted some of the strategies proposed by Creswell (2007) to ensure the trustworthiness of the data collected. Iterative questioning as proposed by Shenton (2004) was employed as a means of verifying the information being provided by participants. Questions were rephrased and re-presented so that answers could be compared for consistency. For the most part, the researcher relied on the actual words of the participants when analysing and coding the data in order to ensure that the meanings derived remained true to the voice of the participants. Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) posit that this allows the themes and categories to emerge from the data rather than having the researcher impose preconceived notions on the data.

The trustworthiness of a study relates to the measures put in place by the researcher to ensure that all decisions made are visible and auditable (Rolfe, 2006). Trustworthiness is imperative to a successful qualitative research study. The following section describes how the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability reflexivity and conformability have been used to ensure a trustworthy study.

3.10.1. Credibility

Credibility refers to the researcher's confidence that they have accurately recorded the phenomena under scrutiny (Shenton, 2004). A number of steps were taken to ensure that this research adhered to credible standards. Firstly, the researcher increased the credibility of the findings by being involved in a prolonged engagement with the participants (Flick, 2009). Secondly, substantial time was spent in the field, collecting data in order to build trusting relationships with the participants and to ensure a deep understanding of the context. Lastly,

triangulation was used to increase the credibility of the study. The researcher triangulated the findings by gathering data through multiple methods (observations and interviews) and from thirty grade One teachers) (Marshall and Rossman, 2011).

3.10.2. Transferability

Transferability refers to the generalisability of the research findings to similar contexts (Rule and John, 2011). Due to the small sample size and context of the study, the findings cannot be generalised as the context, environment and individuals differ dramatically. However, as Shenton (2004) stated, generalisability is not the purpose of qualitative research. Readers and fellow researchers may find value in the results of this qualitative study if they compare the findings of this study with others or with their own research.

3.10.3. Dependability

Dependability refers to the degree to which the data, that has been captured and reported correctly, depicts what has taken place in the field. The quality of documenting and recording of data are an integral part of the research's dependability (Flick, 2009). In order to ensure the dependability of this study, the participant interview and reading lessons were recorded and precisely transcribed.

3.11. Summary

The researcher in this chapter explained the scheme of the research, that is, the methodology used to carry out the research. It has highlighted on the research design, the population, sample size and sampling techniques, data collection instruments and data collection procedures, and data analysis. The chapter closes with a reflection on research ethical issues observed. In the next chapter, the researcher presents the result findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1. Overview

Chapter three looked at the methodology used in conducting this research. In this chapter, the researcher will present the research findings with regard to teachers' perceptions on the use of songs in development of initial literacy skills among grade one learners. The organisation of the chapter is based on the research questions that guided the study and themes generated from the same research questions.

1. Types of songs that can be used as tools to develop initial literacy skills among grade one learners in primary schools.
2. Perceptions of teachers on the use of songs as tools to develop initial literacy skills among grade one learners.
3. The appropriateness of songs used as tool to develop initial literacy skills among grade one learners.
4. Challenges teachers could face when using songs as tools to develop initial literacy skills.

4.2. Types of songs that can be used as tools to develop initial literacy skills among grade one learners

The first research question was meant to elicit data concerning the types of songs teachers can use when teaching initial literacy skills among grade one learners. In order to explain the types of songs that can be used in developing of learners' initial literacy skills, data was collected from the teachers through interviews. The findings were that storytelling songs, action songs, church (morality) songs and play songs can be used. To summarise this, one teacher participant said:

> *In my class I use local songs like actions and traditional songs. Mostly since we are told to use the language of play, we most use Chewa songs and Nsenga songs.*

4.2.1. Traditional songs

The first type of songs stated by teachers was traditional songs. Traditional songs have the dual motivating attack of pretty tunes and interesting stories. Teachers indicated that they did not use these songs for fun, but because of the meaning songs have. Using traditional songs, the base of the learners' knowledge of the target culture is broadened. Most of the participants explained that when such songs are used, learners learn the music of their culture, social life, the way of dressing, manners and language. The teacher participant explained further that singing the song, discusses the lesson learners can derive from the song. One teacher participant gave an example of the song as shown below.

Chaiwe (name) eyaye	*(yes, yes)*
Uziyenda bwino kuli AIDS	*(Careful with your movements there is AIDS)*
Ooh Anamwana Chaiwee	*(Chaiwe has a child)*
Eyayee walira nchende	*(Yes, yes she cried miserably)*

This participant explained that the above song teaches about good moral values. She also said that when singing, the learners move in a single file and then open their legs as they respond to the song during the movement. Sometimes they can be in a circle as the song proceeds more especially where it states 'Anamwana Chaiwee' learners will open their legs to show that Chaiwee has given birth. In addition, the teacher said that moral teaching is that they should not get involved in sexual activities as the consequence may be early pregnancy and deadly disease may be contracted. She further stated that the song warns learners to watch their movements as there is AIDS. The participants further stated that the song could morally teach learners to take care of themselves. Lastly, the teacher stated that after teaching the song, the story behind the song is narrated to advise learners on the moral lesson of the song.

4.2.2. Action songs

The second type of songs teachers stated was action songs. Some teachers said that most of the songs have actions on them and this made the lessons very attractive and interesting for the learners. Integrating songs and actions makes the lesson appeal wider learning styles. Along with melody and rhythm actions can be found to go with the song.

One teacher participant gave an example of the song:

Galu uyu m'mawa	*(The dog early in the morning)*
Wadya matemba x2	*(ate fresh Kapenta)*
Timceke pamimba	*(Let us cut it through the stomach)*
Ngati wadya matemba x2	*(to verify if at all it ate the fresh Kapenta*)

The above song means that the dog had eaten fresh kapenta and the owner wanted to rip the stomach off the dog to see whether the dog had really eaten the fresh kapenta. It can be used in class to alert the pupils as they do the actions. Teachers can use the song in order to teach good morals and not steal for the repercussion may be bad.

Another participant gave the following song as an example of an action song.

Nkhuku za Bambo zadya mphunga

Nkhuku za Abambo zadya mpunga,	*(Fathers' chickens eat rice)*
Zikadya mpunga, zitetera	*(When they eat rice, they cackle)*
Uku ziikila, uku zitetera	*(As they lay eggs, they cackle)*
Uku ziikila, uku zitetera	*(As they lay eggs, they cackle)*

The teacher stated that the song has a lot of lessons apart from the usual literacy lessons learnt. The lesson encompasses physical, social, moral, and spiritual aspects. The teacher stated that it is an all-round song that develop the learners in all facet of life.

4.2.3. Storytelling songs

Storytelling songs were the third type of songs that teachers mentioned. The study revealed that teachers used these songs in their teaching to tell learners a story and develop listening skills. The teacher explained that either the characters in the story sing or the audience listening to the story sings as an interlude. This is to make the story narrated interesting, to prevent boredom and to attract the attention of the learners. From the researcher's observation of a storytelling lesson learners sung these songs with joy and passion. They used songs to help learners develop literacy skills, as well as learn social and moral lessons.

4.3. Teachers' perceptions on songs that can be used as tools for developing initial literacy skills.

The second research question sought to establish the perceptions of teachers on the use of songs as tools in teaching of initial literacy skills. In order to establish the perceptions of grade one teachers on the use of songs in development of learners' initial literacy skills, data was collected from the teachers through interviews. Responses from teachers indicated positive attitudes towards the use of songs for teaching literacy skills. The following sub themes were identified: concept building, motivation to learn, reduce anxiety, remove boredom in class and stimulate memory.

4.3.1. Songs facilitate concept building

Teachers stated that the use of songs in their teaching could make it easier for learners to understand concepts. Songs could help learners master literacy concepts because they are able to recall the concept introduced through songs.

One participant said;

> *Learners are able to understand lessons better when songs are used in literacy. They easily grasp and understand the concept in detail. Songs do enhance the understanding of the learners because they will remember most of it. So when lyrics are used, children will recall most of the things they learn.*

Another participant submitted that:

> *I also use songs to teach literacy concepts and skills, and to teach other curriculum subjects. Actually, songs are very good materials that support learning in the classroom.*

Concerning how often teachers used songs in teaching literacy skills; most teachers stated that they always used songs during lessons in their classes as much as possible. They used songs in their classrooms because most of the lessons were songs oriented. Below is what one participant said concerning how often they used songs*:*

> *Very often, as learners enjoy singing more at this stage in turn grasping the concept unaware and unconsciously at anytime, anywhere as they would sing outside the learning environment. Mostly, the lessons are song oriented at this*

stage as continuity of their pre-school which introduced them to learning through songs.

Another participant submitted that:

We use songs during starting time (introduction) and conclusion to stimulate learners' interest in the lesson. Additionally, songs also create a conducive learning environment.

4.3.2. Motivational effects on the use of songs

This theme explored the motivational effects on the use of songs when teaching. Some participants reported that songs can enhance interest and greater engagement of learners. The participant stated that songs are highly motivating and entertaining manner of teaching literacy especially for grade one to learn literacy skills. The results of the study indicated that songs can increase learners' interest and motivation for learning. This theme was broken into two sub-categories: captures interest and increases participation.

i. Interest captured

The participants reported that singing would draw the attention of the learners. According to the grade one teachers, songs can be used to sustain the interest and to catch the attention of learners who do not pay attention in class and do not take part in the lesson. Using songs in the lesson could draw learners' interest towards the lessons and learners enjoy the lessons more.

One participant stated that:

I use songs to help my learners to focus, to capture their attention and interest. It is very appropriate as it draws the attention of the learners in class.

Another teacher participant in an interview had this to say:

hmm songs I usually use them… like …like….t…o get their attention like when I am about to start teaching maybe they are making a lot of noise I would like come I use the song to get their attention and also to..to it help them remember.

The other participant reported of using a song in teaching and stated as follows:

I remember I used a song to teach. Learners enjoyed the song very much as they danced to it, and this helped the learners to understand the lesson better.

ii. *Participation is increased*

From the findings, teachers indicated that they used songs to encourage learners to be much more engaged and more willing to participate in class activities.

One participant said:

> *Songs could stimulate learners to participate more actively in class. Learners become more willing to participate when the teacher uses a song. I believe songs calms learners and make them happy therefore they are more willing and determined while trying to learn.*

Another participant said that;

> *Songs could play a major role of motivation and ice breaking in the teaching/learning process creating conducive learning environment. I find this activity of using songs beneficial and motivating for learners. Songs can add interest to the classroom routine and potentially improves learners' motivation.*

Some participants also reported that, with the use of songs, they too are more engaged and derive greater enjoyment from their craft. This leads to an increase in teacher confidence as indicated below by one teacher.

> *Songs excites me. It makes me, I think, a better teacher when I use it.*

To sum up the responses, the following is the song one participant alluded to as one that engages the learners.

> **Mother Gode**
>
> *Mai Gode, Mai Gode* *(Mother Gode Mother Gode)*
>
> *Mai Gode Nchitsiru* *(Mother Gode is insane)*
>
> ***Chorus***
>
> *Cikati go go go cili paiwe* *(When it bangs, bang, bang it's on you)*

The participant explained that song could motivate learners to learn. Pupils sit in a circle according to what the teacher wants to teach with stones or cards. Learners are given words cards written on it. As the song is sung the learners will keep on giving the card to the next until the teacher says, 'stop' then the learner will be required to read the word in position. A learner who fails to read will be brought in the middle, which is known as a prison. By doing so, the teacher is reinforcing reading skills in a learner and learners get motivated.

4.3.3. Songs Help Reduce Anxiety

The participants stated that the integration of songs into teachers' practice helps to create less threatening learning environments for the weaker learner and helps the teacher to reach those learners who would normally withdraw and draw them into active participation in the class. Songs have the power to reduce anxiety and provide a harmonious classroom. In addition, songs are a great chance for reducing learners' anxiety giving them the opportunity to feel comfortable and more confident and this can result in increased participation. The participant teacher submitted the following observation:

> *...like there is this one weak learner in my class... So it's a way of reaching those learners, pulling them into your class.*

Through the use of songs, many participant teachers said that they are able to give their learners vicarious experiences that arouse an emotional response and help them to develop greater empathy for others.

4.3.4. Songs could remove Boredom in Class

The participant teachers stated that songs involvement in classrooms reduce the boredom, changes and refreshes the classroom's atmosphere. Furthermore, songs often offer a change from routine classroom activities.

One participant stated that;

> *Songs activities help the learners to learn better. Since literacy is repetitive and monotonous, songs make it more enjoyable. Further, children usually get bored in lessons but doing with classroom activities with songs make learners enjoy the lesson.*

Another teacher participant during interviews said*:*

> *I think changing the boring routine in any different way always attracts learners' attention to what I say.*

4.3.5. Songs stimulate verbal memory

Most of the teachers interviewed, reported that songs should be used more when teaching initial literacy skills because it is easier for the learners to remember lessons learnt with songs. They indicated that songs influence learners' verbal memory. They also said that when learners are subjected to singing, their brains become active as well as their verbal memory. In addition,

teachers mentioned that when learners sing, their cognitive memory is sharpened as they yearn to listen to what they are singing. When learners sing the song repeatedly, it helps them remember the words as they sing the song repeatedly. Learners remember more easily to songs with repetition. Because of this, it is easy for learners to retain vocabulary in the song and use it clearly in their daily dialogue. Below is what some teachers said concerning how songs can enhance memory.

One teacher participant stated that:

> *Songs make learners memorise some words which could be hard for them to read and say. Hence, learning through songs improves memory. It's quite difficult to forget a song rather than word of mouth. Songs stick into the learners' mind.*

Another teacher participant had this to say:

> *It would be difficult for the learners to forget the concept because even when they listen to the song elsewhere they will recall what was discussed during the lesson. A practical example of the use of songs in literacy is Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes song to strengthen the lesson on body parts*.

The other teacher stated that:

> *…. Songs can make learners still remember certain words and phrases of songs they learned earlier.*

The last teacher submitted that:

> *Songs make work easy in the sense that you don't have to struggle in order to emphasise things over and over again. Just use a song they will remember.*

Songs could be effective because they stick in the minds of the learners and are not forgotten so easily. They are easy to keep in mind because the melody helps to remember its content. For this reason, this resource becomes an appropriate tool to teach literacy reading skills in primary classrooms.

4.3.6. Songs could help improve Fluency

The teacher participants were interviewed on how songs can help learners acquire fluency. They said that through repetition in songs, fluency became deeply internalised after practicing both

orally and in an amusing written way. They indicated that repetition is key to fluency, and songs makes repeated practice enjoyable.

One participant said:

> *Rhyming songs help learners to acquire fluency in reading. The songs with rhymes help learners to elicit the sound of the day.*

The teacher participant explained that continuous singing of songs and pronouncing of the lyrics helps learners to read fluently and correctly because the songs that they use are in the local language which makes learners understand. As a result, learners find it very easy learning and understanding them. To sum up their responses one teacher said that:

> *As teachers, the singing of songs is very good and useful to teaching because of it being in local language. Learners tend to understand the songs more quickly and pronounce the lyrics clearer and faster than the English songs.*

4.3.7. Songs could help speech development in learners.

Participants submitted that singing songs enhances the speech development of learners and enables them to communicate freely with others. It also helps them to acquire the proper use of the language. Some teacher participants mentioned in interviews that songs play major role in speech development.

A teacher participant said:

> *As learners sing songs over and over they remember whatever has been learnt. This is because some of the words in the songs are from their environment and is close to the real life experiences of the learners, they rhyme, they are repeated, and are in sequence. After singing them for some time, they help to improve upon the language skills of the learners.*

4.4. Summary of objective two

The main aim of this objective two was to establish teachers' perceptions on the use of songs in teaching of initial literacy skills among grade one learners. The teacher participants indicated that the words of the songs improve the memory of the learners. The teachers mentioned that learners understand the words of the songs and they register in their minds immediately after teaching making it easy for them to recall after some time. In addition, the teachers said that

songs can be used to instruct learners and to explain new concepts for learners to gain knowledge about what is being taught. They further indicated that songs can add interest to the classroom routine, and create a relaxed and nonthreatening environment.

4.5. The appropriateness of songs that can be used as tools for developing initial literacy skills

The third research question sought to ascertain how appropriately teachers used songs to develop initial literacy skills to grade one learners. In order to collect data on the foregoing research question, teachers' lessons were observed followed by interviews with them. It must be noted that in this study, songs that were appropriately used are those that help learners learn whereas the songs that were inappropriately used are those that only used to fill up the gaps or kill the boredom in class. From the findings, songs that were appropriately used helped the learners to learn initial literacy skills such as improving speaking and listening, phonics and phonological awareness and vocabulary acquisition.

4.5.1. Improving speaking and listening skills

Teachers mentioned that appropriate songs could strengthen listening and speaking skills in learners as they support the development of learners' abilities in reading. One teacher said:

> *Songs are good listening practice. I like to enhance my learners' listening and speaking skills by providing a story song activity. When we use songs, we promote listening and speaking in the learners.*

Another teacher said:

> *Speaking being one of the four macro skills, with the listening that accompanies singing has a good effect on early literacy development. Learning through songs can build listening skills and enhance abstract thinking.*

4.5.2. Songs enhance Phonics and phonological awareness

From the interviews, the findings showed that appropriate songs have a positive result in enhancing phonics and phonological awareness skills as they are used to teach phonics and letter sounds of the vowels and the letters of the alphabet. The teachers perceived song as

providing plenty of opportunities to discover phonics that occur in the songs. One teacher stated that:

> *Singing is very effective for teaching literacy skills as it enhances phonic and phonemic awareness.*

Another teacher participant added that:

> *Many songs are packed with alliteration and rhyme. As learners sing these songs, they recognise individual sounds within a word and notice the same sounds in different words. The rhyme and rhythm of the songs make them one of the best ways that work for learning literacy. When the learners like and repeat the song, the words enter their long-term memory. The repetition in the songs provides literacy acquisition.*

The other participant stated that:

> *After learners have become familiar with a song, put the lyrics in front of them. As they recognise the first letter in key words, they start to break the code of reading. Song lyrics give listeners the opportunity to break down words into smaller and even lower groups of sounds. When learners learn how sounds are used to form words, it helps them improve their fluency and comprehension skills.*

Most of teachers stated that vowels would lead to the formulation of the letter syllables of the alphabet. They also explained that after introducing the sound of that particular lesson, vowels are added to make syllables and then the learners sing the song using syllables. Below is one example of the song that a teacher used in the class:

A E I O U (X3)

M'mene tiliri *"That's who we are"*

Ba Be Bi Bo Bu

M'mene tiliri *"That's who we are"*

Mwa Mwe Mwi Mwo Mwu

M'mene tiliri *"That's who we are"*

Ngwa Ngwe Ngwii Ngwo Ngwu

M'mene tiliri *"That's who we are"*

Nkhwa Nkhwe Nkhwi Nkhwo Nkhwu

M'mene tiliri *"That's who we are"*

The interviewed teachers also explained that a song can be used to teach the capital and smaller form of the letters of the alphabet. The teacher said that:

> *When teaching letter sound /A/. We write both capital and small letters on the board as /Aa/ for learners to identify them. Learners are then requested to mention the letter sound written on the board. Teacher explains the capital and small letter. Learners need to know when to write the capital and smaller form of a letter in their books as they write the given activity. This is done to all phonemes introduced. The phonemes can be on a flash card or templates.*

In the class that was observed, a teacher used a song to demonstrate how a song is used to help learners remember and differentiate between capital letters and small letters. Below is the song:

Nanga uyu ndani?	*(Who is this one?)*
'A' wamkulu, 'a' wamung'ono'	*(Capital letter 'A,' small letter 'a')*
Dzina lake A',	*(Its name is A)*
Nanga uyu ndani?	*(Who is this one?)*
'B' wamkulu, 'b' wamung'ono	*(Capital letter B, small letter' b')*
Dzina lake B	*(Its name is B)*

The teachers stressed out the point that appropriate songs could be used to teach phonological sounds such as /o/ and /u/ as one teacher stated:

> *Songs help learners master the sounds taught to them. For example, when you teach sound /o/ using the song 'oo chinkhuku changa' the sound /o / will be easily remembered.*

To demonstrate the above, a teacher, gave an example of a song she can use in class to help learners understand sounds. She also explained that in order to help learners understand letter sound /o/ in ciNyanja, she asks learners to sing a song below:

> *<u>Oo</u> chinkhuku changa*
> *<u>Oo</u> chokondweresa x2*
> *Chikati phuphuphu, cikati palasu,*
> *palasu, palasu ka nzoo*
> *<u>Oo</u> chokondweresa x2*

From the above song, the teacher explained that:

> *Learners are helped to pronounce and define the sounds better. Songs help learners create a rhythm of a sound. They relate to the sounds being introduced for that day hence songs with rhymes help learners to elicit the sound of the day. Songs also expose learners to the sounds (phonemes). In a good song, there is logic, cohesion and patterns that are critical in literacy.*

In another interview, a teacher was asked to state how songs could help learners acquire literacy skills. She indicated that the use of songs initiate learners into the acquisition of literacy skills because of the repetition which is in songs. She explained that:

> *It is the best teaching/learning approach as it goes beyond the lesson plan of the day's lesson. Some learners identify other letter sound prior to the letter in a song and relates to words of initial letter sound. Moreover, they are so creative that they compose or mime songs replacing the letter sound taught*

The teacher added that:

> *As the learners sing a song, they are able to get the concept that the song mean. They are able to understand, speak and listen. Learners are also able to understand the literacy concepts by comparing what they sing in a song and a task at hand what they are learning.*

The observed teacher was also teaching sound /o/ but used a different song to help learners learn this sound. Below is an example of the song appropriately used when teaching the /o/ sound:

Odi tilowemo,	*(knock, knock we get in)*
Odi azanga,	*(knock, knock my friends)*
Tilowemo mkalasi,	*(we get into the classroom)*
Ena akondandeu,	*(others like fighting)*
Ife tikonda sikulu	*(we like education)*
Ena akonda ndeu	*(others like fighting)*
Ngati silawo thupi x2	*(as if it's not their bodies)*

In this lesson, after singing the song, the teacher asked the learners to identify the words which had the phoneme of the day. The learners gave out such words when asked to produce words

with /O/ sound. In this case, the words in the sound of the day are Odi, tilowemo, akonda and tikonda silawo. The teacher explained further that:

> *Sometimes the learners will capture the letter sound of the day before introducing it by the teacher. Some songs may elicit the concepts of the day and this will help learners or easy up their understanding.*

In the other lesson that was observed, the findings showed that songs can help learners enhance phonological awareness because the rhymes in songs provided listeners with repetition of similar sounds. The following was the response when the teacher was asked to explain how songs that were appropriately used helped to teach phonological sound awareness

> *The local languages have one to one relationship of a letter and a sound which gives distinct unit of a sound that distinguishes a word from another. This allows learners to pick the contrastive relationship among the fundamental speech sound of a language in a given song as they sing*.

The teacher also said that:

> *A literacy lesson can be introduced in many ways such as word cards, dialogue and songs. A teacher writes the letter sound /Uu / and asks learners to mention words with the given sound.*

Below is the song the teacher used when teaching /Uu/ sound.

Utauta ophera nyama x2	*(Spear, spear for killing animals)*
Ophera nyama	*(For killing animals)*
Utauta ophera nyama x2	*(Spear, spear for killing animals)*
Ophera nyama	*(For killing animals)*
Uyu ndiuta wa Atate	*(This is Father's spear")*
Uko kuja kuli madyelero	*(There are celebrations that side)*

In reference to the above song, the teacher explained that:

> *When the learners sing the song, the sound /u/ will be internalised and it will be easy for learners to pronounce the sound correctly.*

The participant teacher also explained that:

> *We ask learners to mention the words from the song with the letter sound /U/, teacher writes on the board then ask learners to construct a sentence using the given letter sound.*

In this lesson, the teacher told the learners to look at the words to a song (lyrics) from the board, and thereafter, read the lyrics of the song aloud and asked the learners to listen and follow from the board. She finally asked the learners to repeat every line aloud.

4.5.3. Songs enhance Vocabulary acquisition

From the findings, teachers admitted that songs were a good resource of teaching and learning vocabulary skill and improve vocabulary in the learners. The respondents stated that songs provide a significant context for the new words. They also mentioned that songs widened learners' vocabulary because as learners sing songs more often, they learn more and more words. One participant teacher said:

> *Songs can help learners acquire and enhance vocabulary memorisation and acquisition.*

Another participant teacher said:

> *After working with songs, improved results are obtained, therefore it can be said that songs help the learners to complete the vocabulary exercise.*

Songs provide learners with an opportunity for great exposure to improve vocabulary. One teacher participant explained that:

> *In my opinion, songs work well if they are used to review vocabulary and help the learners to remember the words and even use them later on.*

Most of the teachers responded that songs influence the acquisition of literacy skills among learners to a very great extent. Very few teachers submitted that songs did not affect the acquisition of literacy skills. One teacher said that;

> *Many songs provide lively oral language experience. Learners repeatedly hear higher level vocabulary laced within simple melodies. Many of the same reading strategies can be practiced with songs such as retelling, visualising and questioning. Songs provide a significant amount of repetition, which results in an automatic use of the target language.*

From the foregoing, the findings were that songs that were appropriately used helped the learners in improving speaking and listening, phonics and phonological awareness and vocabulary acquisition. However, for the songs that were inappropriately used, the findings showed that they were only used for the purpose of killing boredom.

An example of the song that was used inappropriately, was when during the lesson, the teacher used a song 'chinkhuku changa' in a phonic lesson whose structural exponent was the sound /ms/. Below is the song 'chinkhuku changa':

Oo chinkhuku changa
Oo chokondweresa x2
Chikati phuphuphu, cikati palasu,
palasu, palasu ka nzoo
Oo chokondweresa x2

When the teacher was asked why she used the above song in a phonic lesson whose structural exponent was the sound /ms/, she responded as follows:

I think changing the boring routine in any different way always attracts learners' attention to what I say.

Another example of a song that was inappropriately used during lesson was "Galu uyu m'mawa". The lesson was about the phonological sound /bw/. Below is the song the teacher used:

Galu uyu m'mawa	*(the dog early in the morning)*
Wadya matemba x2	*(ate fresh Kapenta)*
Timceke pamimba	*(let us cut it through the stomach)*
Ngati wadya matemba x2	*(to verify if at all it ate the fresh Kapenta)*

When the teacher was asked as to why she used the song that was not related to the topic of the day, her response was:

I used the songs to help my learners to focus, to capture their attention and interest. It is very appropriate as it draws the attention of the learners in class.

4.6. Summary of research question three

The third research question sought to ascertain how appropriately teachers used songs to develop initial literacy skills to grade one learners. On the one hand, the findings showed that

the songs that were appropriately used by teachers were meant to help learners improve learning and writing skills, enhance phonics and phonological awareness and to enhance vocabulary acquisition. On the other hand, the findings revealed that the songs that were inappropriately used were not meant for learning literacy skills but as gap fillers.

4.7. Challenges teachers face in using songs in the literacy classroom?

The fourth research question sought to explain challenges teachers face when using songs in teaching. The qualitative data was collected through interviews with teachers. From interviews held with teachers, two major themes emerged namely inadequacy of songs in the textbooks and lesson distraction.

4.7.1. Inadequacy of songs in the books

Some teachers indicated that they do not use songs in the lessons even though they considered songs to be very useful. One participant explained that the use of songs is low because of inadequate songs in the books.

> *As a teacher of literacy, I need to compose most of the songs. A teacher has to compose most of these songs which makes it difficult to come up with the most appropriate songs.*

Another participant added:

> *Most of teachers' guide do not have enough of the songs especially those that are found within our society.*

4.7.2. Songs as time constraints and disrupting lessons

While the teachers acknowledged the positive contributions that songs make to their teaching, they all identified deterrents that would make them less inclined to use songs. These included time constraints and distracting the attention of learners during lessons. A time constraint was an issue identified by teachers that militates against greater use of songs. Concerning distracting learners' attention, one teacher had the following to say:

> *Songs may distract learners' attention from the main objective of the lesson. Some learners become more excited that they forget that they are learning. Some learners are carried away with the songs and so would love to sing in the course of the lesson delivery instead of listening to the teacher.*

In the similar way, another teacher added:

> *There are times when some learners are overwhelmed with the song that it is difficult to notice if the real concept has been grasped.*

With regard to singing songs being labeled as time wasting, below is what some teachers said:

> *The attitude is not good. Many of the teachers neglect songs because they can't sing themselves or they look at singing as a childish and time wasting activity. Many teachers think that by using songs other people and administration will think that they are just 'killing' time.*
>
> *It is an average attitude because some teachers enjoy teaching literacy using songs while others don't use songs because it demands creativity and extra monitoring of learners.*
>
> *Some learners take time to assimilate the song to the lesson taught. To them, it acts as a motivational factor. To others, it is just a part of entertainment and leading to knocking off time when they are bored.*

4.8. Summary of question four

Findings from the teachers indicated that songs are very useful tools for teaching literacy skills. It is a tool that makes teaching more enjoyable. However, some teachers indicated not to have interest in using song when teaching, alleging that songs are time consuming to use in class.

4.9. Summary

The researcher in this chapter has presented the findings of the study. Teachers indicated that the use of songs can motivate learners to learn more. The findings indicate that if songs can be appropriately used, they can help learners in acquisition of initial literacy skills. The results of this study confirms that when songs are used within the classroom for teaching purposes, the learners' attitude would be positive and that their anxiety levels would be down. The next chapter will discuss the research findings guided by the research objectives.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1. Overview

In this chapter, the researcher presents an analysis of the findings presented in the previous chapter. Themes generated from research questions will guide the discussion. The following are the research questions: (a) What types of songs can be used as a tool to develop initial literacy skills among grade one learners? (b) What are teachers' perceptions on the use of songs as a tool to develop initial literacy skills among grade one learners? (c) How appropriate are the songs teachers used as a tool for developing initial literacy skills among grade one learners in primary schools? (d) What challenges could teachers face when using songs as tools to develop initial literacy skills? During the discussion, references will be made to similar or contrasting views from the other studies presented in the literature review and also from the theory. At the end of the discussion a summary is presented.

5.2. The types of songs that teachers can use when teaching

The first objective aimed at explaining the types of songs that could be used when teaching grade one learners. The findings showed that teachers commonly used traditional songs, action songs and storytelling songs.

5.2.1. Traditional Songs

The findings of the study revealed that traditional songs could help to inculcate moral in the learners at primary school in the sense that when the learners are told any story which has a traditional song, at the end of that story the meaning was explained to the learners. The study also revealed that teachers would tell learners a story that has traditional songs by getting to the point where the song is. At the end of every story and song, the teacher asked the learners to explain the importance of the story they have heard. Therefore, the effect of such a story is related from the past to the present time, hence if the relationship of the story is bad, then learners will be inculcated of good moral conduct.

The teacher participants further stated that traditional songs are used to control bad behaviour such as gossiping, stealing, jealousy, sexual immorality and laziness. Traditional songs are good

because they can strengthen and advise learners to lead a good life. This is seen in a song 'Chaiwee' in chapter four which talked about sexual immorality. The song can be used to give advice to the learners and save them from the danger that may befall them if they indulge in immoral activities. It is an awareness song of behavioural change. The consequences of unlawful behaviour that led to her having an unwanted child, eventually ending up miserable.

The study further showed that traditional songs can be used in order to teach learners who are disobedient to stop being disobedient without mentioning their names. The study further revealed that traditional songs can help learners relate to each other because of the common cultural understanding that promote cooperation. However, traditional songs bring the connection between the school environment and home environment. The finding is in agreement with Cheung (2001) who stated that learners are more motivated when popular culture is used in the classroom, as they easily learn from things that they know. Bringing a song listened by the learners to the class environment increases the learners' desire to learn and enables them to contribute to the process of learning by making use of their own musical knowledge. The school environment will be just as familiar to the learner as the home, because the same language and songs are found in both environments. When learners sing traditional songs, they learn cultural events and warning of dangers in the society. The findings were consistent with Okantah (2000) who perceived culture as the state of intellectual development of people.

Songs reflect cultures, so learners can learn aspects of culture from songs. The participants argued that their learners can learn cultural lessons through performances. They learn how to greet, how to dress, drumming and dancing, the language they speak, manners, and many other cultural values. In this case, teachers can use such songs to teach learners cultural norms and values as well as their sense of familial and societal belonging. The findings concur Jolly (1975) findings that the use of songs give learners the opportunity to acquire a better understanding of the culture of the target language. Another study conducted by Shen (2009) also stated that language and music are interwoven with songs to communicate cultural reality in a very unique way. This is also supported by Vygotsky's theory of sociocultural which emphasises the social and cultural factors of learning. In a Sociocultural perspective, learning takes place in formal as well as informal contexts, and important aspects of learning include use of tools and

development of artifacts. In the sociocultural theory, learning occurs within a social situation, and is first between the teacher and the learner, and then is inside the child, or internalised. When learners are familiar with the text, they feel encouraged to involve in the learning process.

5.2.2. Action songs

The study findings revealed the benefits that learners could derive from these songs which have actions in them. Actions songs are considered as powerful resources which can help learners development literacy skills. By nature, grade one learners enjoy playing and singing songs and they will get a lot of benefits and advantages when they are exposed to particular songs in the classroom. As Brewster et.al (2002) asserted, using action songs is considered beneficial as the accompanying actions or gestures help to strengthen meaning and at the same time channel high levels of energy positively. They enable the learners to comprehend and understand the word easily and correctly. The action songs require learners to respond physically to what they hear and sing only when they are ready to do so. It is shown that, learners develop motor skills and strong muscles when they participate in the performance of action songs. They become physically fit, flexible, balance and move according to rhythm and coordinate the body in performing the action. The study also pointed out that the use of action songs can help learners to develop socially, emotionally, physically and cognitively as they grow. In actual sense, the researcher was told that learners become confident and excited as they were clapping and dancing to the songs. The researcher was made to listen to some of the action songs that the learners normally sung. For example, *"ici chinkhuku changa, oo chokondweresa".* When learners sing this song, they demonstrate the actions according to the song words and the functions of the parts of the chicken are also learnt in so doing. The song can also be used to teach learners about the traits of chicken that it does not always depend on others but believe in itself. When the chicken beats its wings (cikati phuphuphu), it means that the chicken will have the strength to raise against its opponents, that is courage. When the chicken is scratching the ground (palasu palasu), it is searching for food. Morally learners will learn the aspect of working hard to have something. The learners will also learn the skill of selecting the best as in when the chicken is picking (nzoo) the food. In short, it is talking about self-sustainability.

Singing action songs is not only a great way to incorporate music in learners' life but also helps develop motor skills. Participants stated that, learners sing these songs and perform the action

in them, and as they sing they coordinate their hands and legs. This way they develop psycho-motor skills. The findings support Colwell (2006) that psychomotor learning involves mastery of the coordination of mind and muscles. This immediately pushes the boat out to reach more learners by encompassing a variety of learning styles in class. Learners tend to memorise the words easier if the action is associated with the words of the song. The data revealed that teachers can use different types of songs that involve movement activities where the learners move as instructed by lyrics.

5.3. Perceptions of teachers on the use of songs as tools for teaching initial literacy skills

The second objective aimed at establishing the perceptions of teachers on the use of songs in teaching of initial literacy skills to grade one learners. Some teachers reported making use of songs in the delivery of their lessons as well as using it for a variety of purposes. The majority of teachers thought that teaching using songs could help to prepare learners in a great way for reading and writing readiness. The finding of the study revealed that the majority of the participants in the study perceived songs as a highly motivating technique of teaching literacy to grade one learners, creating a non-threatening atmosphere, facilitating transitions from one lesson to another and that songs lower learners' anxiety.

5.3.1. Songs could be highly motivating

The study discovered that songs are highly motivational tool because they will increase understanding and motivate learners to learn, making the act of learning fun. Teachers need to have in mind that some learners love active participation and physical movement while others do not like to be physically involved. What also needs to be taken into consideration is whether or not songs are motivational and provide an emotional experience. This is clarified by the fact that learners need to be emotionally involved in the learning process which abounds in play-like activities which are likeable and fun, but promote learning. By using songs, children can get the feeling of success on an individual level, but also as being part of a group. They should not, at any time, feel forced, but encouraged and motivated to participate in the activity, as well as have a sense of enjoyment of singing with the rest of the group. The learners become motivated as they engage within the songs by dancing and singing therefore learning the literacy skills. The results of the study proved that learners are motivated to comprehend the content of material since the use of songs is as an authentic material. The authentic songs are a subject of

cultural aspect and entertainment. Singing is seen by almost all the learners as an enjoyable activity, hence learners learn without realising. Besides, using songs to teach initial literacy skills makes the learning process more engaging, imaginative and motivating for learners. It is also useful to elicit open responses from learners. Repetition and simple language structures are the reasons why learners are more motivated by songs than any other type of text and are stimulated to understand the content of the songs. This finding proves Jolly's (1975) assertion that repetition in songs maintains motivation through active participation and enjoyable sounds of songs. This study found that the use of songs in a boring class becomes pleasant and interesting, hence giving learners a fun and relaxing pace. The learners will be encouraged to actively involved in learning process by making use of their musical knowledge. In this way, songs help learners to develop confidence for learning. Similarly, Arevalo (2010) pointed out that wherever we are, songs always follow us at home, at school, at office, in cars and so on. Thus, learners can instantly listen to the song and also have an interest to learn the value of language in it, thereby helping learners to reach higher levels of achievement. Teachers have to provoke interest and involvement in the lesson even when learners are not initially interested. It is the attitude and seriousness of teachers to influence learners to learn.

Harmer (2001) said that highly motivated learners do better than the ones without motivation at all. Furthermore, teachers used songs to create learning environments that assisted them in holding attention and increasing retention of information in the learners. Its use gives existence to genuine interest in the subject and motivates learners to learn. As a result, learners tend to be more attentive, tend to remember, get excited, and want to participate. Therefore, learners pay more attention than if the teacher just goes and sit down and talk. It can be concluded that song use excites and intrigues learners and that the excitement usually translates into increased participation and interest. It barely makes them interested in what is being taught.

5.3.2. Songs create a non-threatening learning atmosphere

Most teachers who participated in this research study, mentioned that songs create an interactive environment between the teacher and learners in a literacy classroom. When teachers use songs in classroom, enthusiasm and excitement is usually transmitted to the learners. As a result, learners are motivated to do more. A study conducted by Medina (2002) agrees with the findings of this study in the sense that songs bring enjoyable experiences to learners and creates relaxed

atmosphere in a class. Songs contribute to a supportive and non-threatening setting, therefore the learners are confident and active. Even shy or slow learning learners are given encouragement by singing and so they feel able to learn. Nonetheless, teachers mentioned that a huge push in confidence can be gained from this which permeates through to all learning. This is in support of what Vygotsky said on zone of frustration. Vygotsky stipulated that in this zone, learners experience frustration as they do not have the background of knowledge or skills to understand what is being taught. Learners in this zone tend to experience anxiety and loss of self-confidence. In the long run, this destroys learners' curiosity and motivation to learn (Robb, 2003).

The study also discovered that teachers perceived songs to be entertaining and could help to decrease the boredom of the classroom which cannot be denied. In this sense, learners do not get bored when a teacher use a song, their interest increase and feel more motivated to learn. Songs could help learners to learn because they provide a safe, non-threatening context within which to play with language. The use of popular culture in teaching creates an environment that enhances learning, in this case a song. When teachers design lessons using examples drawn from popular culture, learners will find them easy to follow. The classroom atmosphere will become more harmonious as learning takes place in a relaxed manner, more enjoyable as learners are engaging in activities they like, and more achievement-oriented, as learners become more willing to participate, since they can enjoy their success in answering correctly (Cheung, 2001).

Occasionally, songs were introduced when teachers realised that learners were worn out. The songs waked those who slept from their slumber. The finding proved that, songs released boredom when the learners' brains were getting tired in the course of the lesson. In addition, songs helped learners' brains to concentrate process and retain large amounts of information (Sigurdardottir, 2012). A boring class can become more pleasant and interesting with the use of songs, for the reason that songs give learners a fun and relaxing pause. Teachers concluded that learners would become happy, excited and not bored when songs are used in lessons.

5.3.3. Songs encourage learners' participation

On the subject of participation, the study revealed that participant teachers highlighted the fact that learners were more willing to participate when songs were used. The interest grade one learners have on songs is a powerful tool for engaging them in learning. The reason for this is that songs stimulate learners to participate more actively. Aguirre (2016) results showed that learners are motivated to participate and become more engaged in classroom activities when songs are used in their English classes. Active participation, is one of the components of Vygotsky theory, in activity creates a framework for dialogue to occur, and ideas are exchanged which leads to advanced development.

On the other hand, learners seem to be more committed to the activities when there is a song in the class. In addition, learners pay more attention and become more involved with the activities when a song is used. Class activities that involve songs enabled learners to use all their abilities and therefore, the learners feel more motivated to learn. Teachers reported that when a song is being used, it helps to keep learners focused and helps them to stay on task. It keeps them a little more focus other than just the talk and chalk. The most successful lessons are the ones which give the feeling of enjoyment and having a good time. Enjoyable learning has to be more effective than the traditional teacher-centred procedures.

5.3.4. Songs as ice breakers

The findings revealed that teachers make use of songs as preambles, interludes and conclusions before, within and after lessons. In the first place the songs always serve as an introduction for the learners before lessons. The findings of the study revealed that teachers use songs when they want to call the learners at the teaching corner. The findings also indicated that teachers used songs to facilitate transitions from a lesson to the next one and to give directions to the learners. As a result, these songs make the learners happy and always prepared them cognitively for the day's lesson. Many teachers reported success using songs as a warm up and relaxation tool, as a background for other activities, and as the inspiration for writing activities (Eken, 1996). According to the research findings, teachers in this study seemed to welcome and appreciate songs in their classrooms. One participant gave an example of the song below which is sung when knocking off.

Cingerengere calira, lomba tizipa (Ring ring ding dong the bell is ringing to send us off)
Tikaone amai (we go and see mother)
Atiphikira nsima (she has prepared nshima)
Nsima, nsima (nshima, nshima)
Nsima ya kapenta (nshima with kapenta)

5.4. The appropriateness of songs used in teaching initial literacy skills among grade one learners

From the interviews and lesson observations, the findings revealed that the songs that were appropriately used were considered as valuable pedagogical tools for improving listening and speaking skills, enhancing phonics and phonological awareness and for enhancing vocabulary acquisition. The findings also showed that some songs were inappropriately used as they were meant only for filling up the gaps.

5.4.1. Songs enhance listening and speaking skills

As regards to the aspect of listening and speaking skills, teachers mentioned that songs are used for the purpose of developing listening and speaking skills. Naturally, listening to any song, helps listening skills among learners as long as the language is within the grasp of the learner. The findings clearly showed that songs develop learners listening abilities. This finding equals and strengthens the arguments so far that classroom songs are an effective way of teaching listening comprehension (Arevalo 2010). Arevalo adds that songs are the most suitable type of authentic materials to develop listening comprehension skills.

In addition, it is possible to argue that the participating grade one teachers believed that using songs inside classrooms creates a relaxing atmosphere that promote speaking. This result is in agreement with the findings of Cifuentes' (2006) research findings that when songs are appropriately used, they generate favorable factors such as motivation, relaxation, self-confidence and a positive attitude, all of which promote oral production.

The findings further confirmed the finding by Harmer (2001) who referred songs as a powerful stimulus for language learning, and classified the song as one of the tools for teaching listening. It is a versatile technique as it enables the teacher to present the words graphically (printed song

lyrics), verbally (listening to the song) and contextually (song lyrics) at the same time. From these results, it can be claimed that teachers have very positive thoughts about the effectiveness of using songs appropriately when teaching listening and speaking skills. Kirsch (2008) stated that the material used for the listening activities (stories, songs or poems) should be meaningful, and appropriate which assist learning according to the learners' level. In brief, the research established that the use of songs in teaching help to scaffold learners to improve their listening and speaking skills.

5.4.2. Songs enhance phonological and letter-sound relationship

The study established that when songs are appropriately used, they have a positive influence on the learners when learning phonological and letter sound relationship. From the interviews, results revealed that there is a good change of learning the relationship between sounds and letters in class when songs are appropriately used. For example, in the lesson that was observed on adding consonants and vowels to make syllables, the teacher taught and sung a song to and with learners. It was observed that it was easy for the learners to make the combination of syllables such as mwa *mwe, mwi mwo mwu* and *ngwa ngwe ngwi gwo ngwu.* As a matter of fact, teachers mentioned that the use of songs is the most preferred strategy for learners when teaching sounds.

The participating teachers reported some major successful experiences in the use of songs in teaching and that learners have benefited a lot. For instance, in the lesson that was observed in which a teacher used a song to teach sound /Uu/, learners were able to associate the lesson on sound /Uu/ with the words in the song and as they sang and repeated the song their phonics and phonological awareness was enhanced. When songs are used appropriately, learners recognise rhyming words and are able to move sounds around in order to create new words. This is evident in a song a teacher mentioned that the last phoneme of the word, another word is formulated.

Teachers considered songs to be the basis of sound teaching for grade one classes because they help learners to pronounce and to define the sound better. The findings are in line with Walton (2014) who reports that songs and movements can effectively be used to teach letter sounds and medial phoneme skills, beyond the experience of typical literacy kindergarten programmes. When learners have the opportunity to manipulate the various sounds within words, it can

ultimately improve their ability to identify the phonemes within a word. Thus, learners do not only sing a song, but also learn their literacy knowledge through alphabet recognition and phonemic awareness.

5.4.3. Songs enhance vocabulary acquisition

The study established that when songs are used in classroom, learners are motivated to learn new vocabulary which increase their vocabulary. Although learners seem to learn new words quickly, they also forget quickly. However, it is imperative to give them a lot of practice of vocabulary to help them remember. Since mere practicing can be extremely boring and tiring to the learners, teachers should be creative by wrapping the practicing of vocabulary in singing songs. As Harmer (2001) states, songs can make a satisfactory connection between the world of leisure and the world of learning. The text of each song is the source of new vocabulary in a specific context. Word phrases introduced in this way are easier to remember and are stored in the learners' memory for a longer period of time. Songs are always familiar to the native-speaking population so they usually contain contemporary vocabulary, idioms and expressions.

The study established that using songs activities enhances vocabulary acquisition. For example, teachers explained that in the song Oo ici chinkhuku changa, leaners may come up with words with sound /o/ or /ch/depending on the lesson. The teacher will write the words on the board and ask individual learners to underline the sound /o/ and /ch/ and then read the word. In doing so, learners will come up with many words, hence improving the acquisition of vocabulary. Therefore, when the appropriate songs are chosen and used in a well-planned and balanced manner, the learners will acquire the target vocabulary. This study agrees and supports Cameron's (2001) comments that songs can be a valuable teaching and learning tool as it helps the learners to improve their vocabulary. By imitating the words from the song lyric the learners will retain those vocabularies easily. This study also confirms the findings by Chou (2012) who found that by using songs, the primary school children motivation, willingness to express themselves and to interact with the teacher had risen and it helped them to memorise the new words quickly. For that reason, the new learned words through the aid of the songs enhanced their achievement of scores. By using songs, the teacher becomes the facilitator of the learners because the teacher lets the learners read and comprehend the lyrics as the text consists of new words. The finding corresponds with Vygotsky (1978) zone of proximal development where a

teacher offers more support through scaffolding. At this point, a teacher use scaffolding as a tool in this case a song to assist learners to complete these tasks inside their zone of proximal development to promote learning and cognitive development.

As mentioned earlier, the song (Oo ici chinkhukhu canga) has the potential of increasing learners' level of vocabulary. The song will teach learners about the parts of the chicken. The learners will identify and learn the parts of the chicken through the actions in the song. Most of the words in the song are characterised by monosyllabic words of which are frequently repeated. It is from this repetition which offers learners with greater exposure to the words and helps them improve their vocabulary acquisition. It is imperative, therefore, that teachers select appropriate songs that complement the target vocabulary.

Learners make more connections between meaning and form when teachers can effectively scaffold by repeating challenging concepts. The song can change the learners' mood and it can positively influence their motivation for vocabulary learning. Therefore, when singing, learners are learning new vocabulary while making meaning of words and phrases that they would not necessarily hear within a normal conversation.

In brief, the study also established that when learners are exposed to new words and vocabulary through songs, they find it easy to transfer that knowledge into other contexts. Thus, using songs to teach a new vocabulary to learners gives better and varied opportunities for the learners to improve their new vocabulary mastery, hence, there is a greater improvement of the learners' performance in vocabulary mastery when songs are appropriately used.

However, there were some instances when songs were used inappropriately in the lessons that were observed. It was found that although teachers acknowledged the value of songs in teaching literacy skills, little did they use songs in line with the topic. This is evidenced by such cases as a teacher using the song 'chinkhuku changa' in a phonics lesson whose structural exponent was the sound /ms/. It was noted that at times, teachers mainly used songs for entertainment and keeping learners active during the lesson. For example, it was discovered during interviews that some teachers only used songs when they saw that the learners were becoming bored during the lesson. Sevik (2012) argues, language teachers should always bear in mind that the main

responsibility is to teach no matter how fun and enjoyable song activities may be for the learners, they should not get carried away by the music and the rhythm of the songs. The main responsibility is not to teach singing skills, but to teach the target language. Therefore, if songs are used ineffectively, they can easily become mere entertainment and pleasurable interruptions in the school day that, in the long term, result in boredom and a lack of interest. There should be a clear reason in the grade one teacher's mind as to why and how to use a song. Songs can be an effective means of developing learners' literacy skills only when they are well integrated into a scheme of work and carefully selected for the cognitive and linguistic needs of learners. Also the study findings are line with Ersoz (2007) who suggested that teachers should choose songs which are connected to the topic that allows the learners to carry out easy actions and emphasis on learning, it is the researcher's view that there is need to encourage teachers on the importance of songs in promoting literacy skills and the benefits that accrue when songs are used appropriately.

5.5. Challenges teachers face when using songs in the classroom

The fourth research question sought to explain challenges teachers face when using songs in teaching. The findings revealed two major themes, namely the inadequacy of songs in the textbooks and lesson distraction. Most of the teachers stated the inadequate resources such songs not being enough in teachers' books and that songs distracted learners' attention from the main objective of the lesson as the main challenges they faced.

5.5.1. Inadequacy of Songs in Textbooks

Data results corresponded, to a certain extent, with what is available in the literature in terms of teachers' ability on the use of songs in teaching. The study revealed that the teacher frequency of using songs in literacy lessons is regarded low despite perceiving songs as being relevant in teaching the learners. The teachers' responses indicated very little access to songs in literacy teaching. In this study, it was discovered that song implementation is a challenge because some teachers found it difficult to compose songs for use. This was aroused because the course books did not have enough songs for use. Some teachers said that they found it hard to find proper songs for every topic in educational activity.

The findings tie up with Sevik's (2011) findings where teachers' attitude demonstrated that teachers found it difficult to find appropriate songs for classroom use because of religious and cultural beliefs and believed that they did not have the resources to use as songs. The findings also showed that some teachers in some schools did not use songs frequently in their literacy classes because of the language barrier. They indicated that they do not have a command of the language. Some teachers indicated that they did not understand the meaning of the words in some songs and therefore could not use them.

5.5.2. Time Wasting and Lesson Distraction

Despite having positive views about the pedagogical value of using songs, this does not mean that some teachers are comfortable to use songs in their classes. The study revealed that the majority of the participating teachers found it hard to integrate songs in the teaching because they believe that using songs is time consuming hence considered not to use them mostly in their classes.

Many teachers even hold uncertainties about using songs as a full-value teaching material because they consider songs as a form of leisure time activity, which cannot be studied seriously and are not capable to execute lessons appropriately. The findings are in partial agreement with Hejjawi (2007) whose findings indicated that teachers from both levels struggled in implementing music because they do not know how to use songs, do not have equipment to utilise songs in their classes, and therefore decided to ignore it. Hejjawi's results further revealed that the participating Arab teachers have major religious and cultural considerations that stopped most of them from using songs in their language classrooms. In contrast, the findings were not in agreement with Tse's (2015) results which indicated that teachers (76.7%) trust that the usage of songs in the class is not time wasting and therefore has fortified teachers' feelings in using them.

The other challenge that teachers indicated for using songs as tools for teaching was that songs disturb other learners in adjacent classrooms as mentioned by Siskova (2008) who asserted that music can sometimes serve 'as a distraction and not as a means of learning the subject.' Some pupils are easily excited and make unwanted noise and disturbance, creating a distraction for other pupils in the class who find it difficult to concentrate. The noise that learners made while singing disturb other classes nearby or even lead to unruly behaviour. In as much as teachers

considered songs to be the best resource in teaching initial literacy skills, some teachers did not use them adequately in fear of disturbing other classes.

5.6. Implication of the theory to the study

According to sociocultural theory, learners are provided with the necessary tools and assistance or scaffolding for learning while they are in the zone of proximal development. Eventually, the learner moves towards gaining the necessary skill away from the zone of proximal development. At this point the scaffolding can be removed and the learner can act independently. In this study, songs for learners are viewed as necessary tools to help learners develop initial literacy skills. Therefore, grade one teachers should identify the zones of proximal development of their learners in regards to reading in order to provide necessary scaffolding. In this case, the assumption is that teachers in the teaching process of literacy may act as scaffolds leading learners to the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Through the use of songs, teachers can assist learners develop proper initial literacy skills. Songs also encourages interaction and collaboration among learners making it possible to develop phonemic and phonological awareness among themselves. After proper mastery of the skills, teachers can make the songs less frequent and hence, enhance independence in reading.

5.7. Summary of the chapter

The chapter provided a discussion on teachers' perception on the use of songs in the development of initial literacy skills among grade one learners. The findings were discussed in line with the research objectives, various related literature reviews and the theory by Vygotsky (1978) sociocultural theory. Considering the results of the study, it is possible to conclude that some grade one teachers in primary schools are aware of the pedagogical value of using songs when teaching literacy skills to grade one learners. The study established that songs activities can ensure permanent learning. They can make learners to be positive and to learn willingly and determined. The findings showed that songs are one of the most charming and ethnically prosperous resources that teachers can easily use in teaching literacy skills in the classrooms. Further, the findings of the study revealed that songs are valuable resources which are used to expand the learners' abilities in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Some participants acknowledged that songs are really important and vital to teaching at that level, which of course is imperative to the teaching of any other subject at learners' level.

It was discovered that there are many benefits of using songs in the classroom. Through the use of songs, the teachers met the challenges of learners in the classroom because songs used to the learners can be extremely unforgettable and motivating. The participant teachers believe that songs are motivating and encourage learners to learn. Songs increase learners' motivation through arousing positive emotions which lead to reduction in anxiety, hence, resulting in learning of literacy skills through a method that is effective, enjoyable and easy to use.

The next chapter presents the conclusion of the study and puts forward recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Overview

The previous chapter provided a discussion regarding teachers' perceptions on the use of songs in developing initial literacy skills among grade one learners in Nyimba District. The researcher in this chapter, therefore, presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study based on the findings and discussions.

6.2. Conclusion

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the discussion of the findings. The study was based on four objectives and questions. The following are the conclusions of the study.

The first objective was to identify the types of songs teachers used as tools for teaching literacy skills. The study established that teachers used traditional songs, action songs and storytelling songs. The study revealed that songs enhanced social processes of cooperation through socialisation. As learners interacted, they learn to relate to one another and create social relationship necessary in adult life. Songs of this nature, really permit real life situations. The findings were in tandem with Arevalo (2010), the findings which indicated that the type of material can foster listening skills and engage learners in a discussion about cultural and social issues. The participants further stated that the use of action songs conveys the meaning of the song and learners understand the content. After that, the teacher changes to a more abstract approach.

The second objective was to establish teachers' perceptions on the use of songs as a tool for teaching initial literacy skills. It can be concluded that songs can increase learners' motivation and participation. The findings of this study showed that majority of teachers viewed songs as great motivators during lessons and improved concentration of learners. It is important to highlight the fact that learners will be more willing to participate when the teacher use a song because songs lift the atmosphere in the class bringing in a boost of energy and passion for life that captures the learners' attention and motivate them in their quest to learn. The study established that the use of songs reduces anxiety and boredom, in the process a positive learning state is created. The findings of the study showed that songs act as a warm up activity and have

worked successfully in creating pleasant learning atmospheres. Thus, objective two established that when teachers use songs, learners seem to be more intrigued and more interested. Therefore, the use of songs can help to make subjects more appealing to learners and increase their enthusiasm for learning. It can be concluded that some teachers used songs to motivate learners to learn and create a favourable learning environment during lessons.

The third objective was to ascertain the appropriateness of songs used in teaching initial literacy skills among grade one learners. The findings of this study revealed that majority of the participants recognised and appreciated songs as a unique technique to enhance learners' initial literacy skills. The research findings also revealed that teachers considered songs as effective teaching tools with pedagogical values in enhancing phonological awareness, listening and speaking skills and vocabulary. When learners are able to recognise letters and identify letter sounds, it shows a greater understanding of the written language and that they are advancing towards the beginning stages of reading. It is a job for the teacher to provide learners with the opportunity to learn these essential skills in a memorable way so they will be able to progress forward past the phase of emergent learning. Teachers further mentioned that songs sung both at school and at home were mentioned as being good for broadening learners' abilities in acquiring sounds. The findings further revealed that songs are likely to increase learners' memory skills and ability to follow the sequence of events. Singing and listening to songs is not only considered interesting to the grade one learners, but also offers a large help to them in learning vocabulary more easily. Equally, results show that practicing listening with songs become a good way to train learners in the development of higher levels of comprehension.

The fourth objective aimed at identifying the challenges teachers faced in using songs as a tool for teaching initial literacy skills to grade one learners. The findings revealed that songs distract learners from the lessons, time wasting and inadequacy of songs in the course books.

6.3. Recommendations

In view of the above findings, the following were the recommendations:

i. **The Ministry of General Education, curriculum planners** should enrich literacy curriculum with different songs that suit different literacy skills.

ii. **The supervisors (Head teachers)** should emphasise the important role of using songs in class and encourage teachers to use them. They should conduct different training courses that help them to develop themselves and provide them with different techniques and activities that can help them in using songs in class.

iii. **The literacy teachers** should be aware of different approaches of literacy teaching. They should be creative in their classes and create suitable environment for learners by adopting up to date techniques i.e. songs that suit learners' level, interest, enjoy and motivate them to participate and interact with different activities.

6.4. Recommendations for further research

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that an experimental study be carried out on the use of songs.

A study which will seek to assess trainee teachers' preparedness to use songs in initial literacy classes.

There is need for further research in this realm especially if other grades can be considered

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interviews Guide for Teachers

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Zambia conducting a research on early literacy development. I am therefore pleased that you have taken some time to respond to these questions as we discuss. This study is purely academic hence all responses will be treated with maximum confidentiality. Please, answer the questions with regards to your classroom experience as teacher teaching grade one. All the responses you shall give are correct during this gathering. Let us feel free and share our teaching experiences.

1. What type of songs do you use?
2. Why do you use such songs?
3. How do learners benefit from these songs?
4. Explain how you can use songs when teaching initial literacy skill?
5. How often do you use songs when teaching to your grade one pupils?
6. How do songs help children acquire literacy skills?
7. What letter sound can be taught using songs?
8. Explain how you can use songs to develop alphabet knowledge in learners?
9. Explain how you can use songs (to develop) to teach phonemic and phonological sound awareness?
10. How appropriate is singing for teaching and learning initial literacy? Explain.
11. What is your view about the use of songs in teaching and learning early literacy?
12. What were some of the difficulties that you have faced in using songs?
13. Are there any songs activities included in the textbooks that you currently use?
14. When do you normally decide to use songs in your lesson?

We have come to an end of the interview. I therefore wish to thank you for the time and effort you spent answering the questions. Should you wish to contact me, below are my details.

Name: Cecilia Tembo Cell no: 0979478023

Appendix 2: Lesson Observation Schedule

INDICATOR		YES	NO	COMMENT
1	Availability of songs as a teaching tool			
2	Actual use of songs in the classroom			
3	Does the teacher sing with the learners?			
4	Does the teacher use songs to teach literacy skills?			
5	What issues do songs address?			
6	Does the teacher use songs appropriately?			
7	What actions and movements do the learners use to interpret the vocabularies in the songs?			

Appendix 3: Participant Consent Form

The University of Zambia

School of Education

Department of Languages and Social Sciences Education.

Dear respondent,

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Zambia pursing Master of Education Degree in Language and Literacy. I am carrying out a research project and you have been chosen as sampled. Be assured that the information you will give out shall be strictly kept as secret. The aim is not in any way meant to investigate you, but it's purely academic.

Be informed that participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Read the consent of the agreement below and sign.

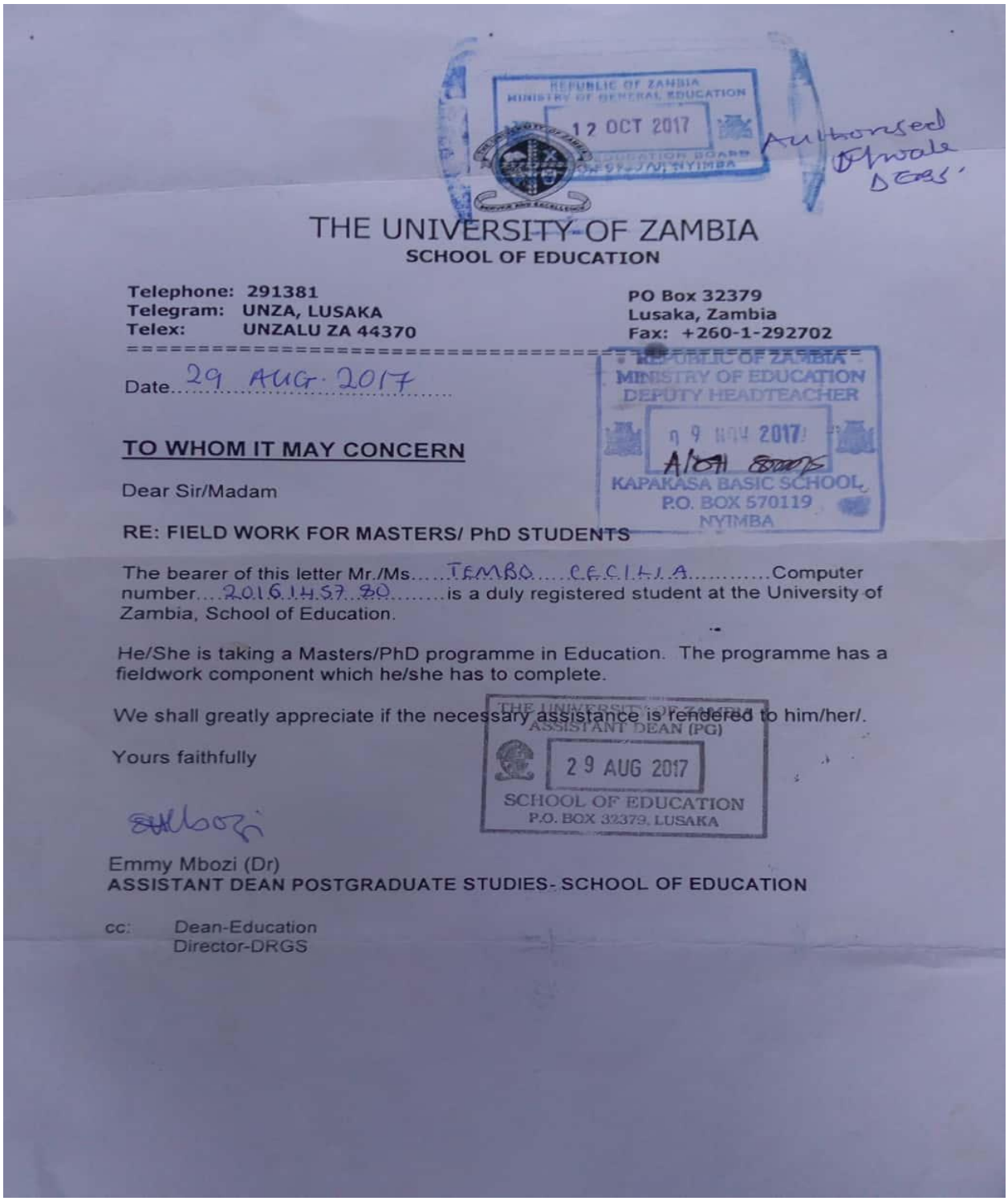
CONSENT OF THE AGREEMENT SIGNED BY THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

I have understood the instructions and conditions concerning the study and I agree to participate as the researcher asks. I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any given time and that the information collected from the conversation will be confidential.

Signed: ……... Date: ……...

Thank You for your commitment.

Appendix 4: Introductory Letter



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
MINISTRY OF GENERAL EDUCATION
12 OCT 2017
NYIMBA

Authorised
Mwale
DDRS

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Telephone: 291381
Telegram: UNZA, LUSAKA
Telex: UNZALU ZA 44370

PO Box 32379
Lusaka, Zambia
Fax: +260-1-292702

Date 29 AUG 2017

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPUTY HEADTEACHER
09 NOV 2017
KAPAKASA BASIC SCHOOL
P.O. BOX 570119
NYIMBA

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: FIELD WORK FOR MASTERS/ PhD STUDENTS

The bearer of this letter Mr./Ms. TEMBO CECILIA Computer number 2016145730 is a duly registered student at the University of Zambia, School of Education.

He/She is taking a Masters/PhD programme in Education. The programme has a fieldwork component which he/she has to complete.

We shall greatly appreciate if the necessary assistance is rendered to him/her/.

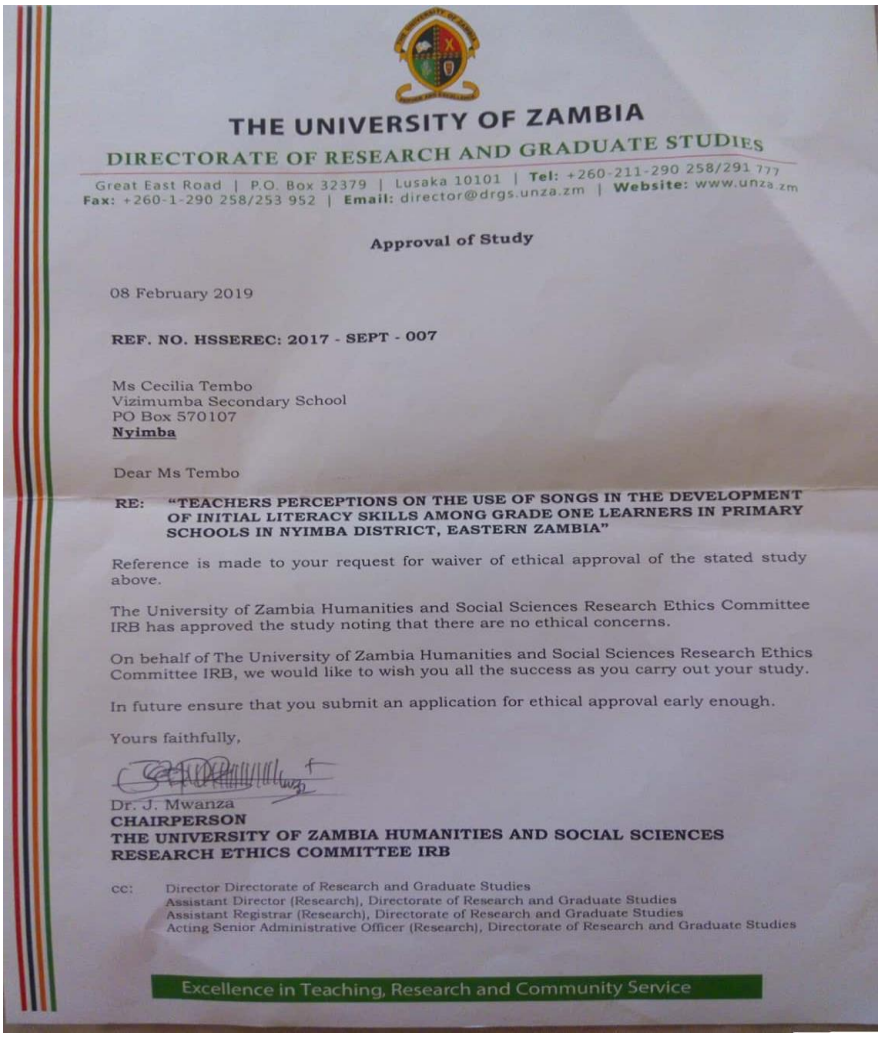
THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
ASSISTANT DEAN (PG)
29 AUG 2017
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 32379, LUSAKA

Yours faithfully

Emmy Mbozi (Dr)
ASSISTANT DEAN POSTGRADUATE STUDIES- SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

cc: Dean-Education
Director-DRGS

Appendix 5: Ethical Clearance Letter



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

Great East Road | P.O. Box 32379 | Lusaka 10101 | **Tel:** +260-211-290 258/291 777
Fax: +260-1-290 258/253 952 | **Email:** director@drgs.unza.zm | **Website:** www.unza.zm

Approval of Study

08 February 2019

REF. NO. HSSEREC: 2017 - SEPT - 007

Ms Cecilia Tembo
Vizimumba Secondary School
PO Box 570107
Nyimba

Dear Ms Tembo

RE: "TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS ON THE USE OF SONGS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INITIAL LITERACY SKILLS AMONG GRADE ONE LEARNERS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NYIMBA DISTRICT, EASTERN ZAMBIA"

Reference is made to your request for waiver of ethical approval of the stated study above.

The University of Zambia Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee IRB has approved the study noting that there are no ethical concerns.

On behalf of The University of Zambia Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee IRB, we would like to wish you all the success as you carry out your study.

In future ensure that you submit an application for ethical approval early enough.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. J. Mwanza
CHAIRPERSON
THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE IRB

cc: Director Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies
Assistant Director (Research), Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies
Assistant Registrar (Research), Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies
Acting Senior Administrative Officer (Research), Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies

Excellence in Teaching, Research and Community Service