

**EFFECTS OF COMMUTER MARRIAGES AMONG TEACHERS AND THEIR
FAMILIES IN SERENJE DISTRICT- CENTRAL PROVINCE, ZAMBIA.**

BY

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A Research Paper Submitted to The University of Zambia in Collaboration with the Zimbabwe Open University for the Partial Fulfilment of the Master's Degree in Science Counselling Programmes.

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ABSTRACT

In general, a healthy marriage setting is perceived as one in which a couple lives together in order to shape the value system of a family. Recently, many couples do not live together, but in a distant town or city, and are called commuter marriage or distance marriage. The aim of this study was to investigate the effects of commuter marriages among teachers and their families in Serenje District. The study objectives were to; determine how often teachers involved in commuter marriages visited their families, establish the effects of commuter marriages on teachers and their families in Serenje district, determine challenges faced by teachers involved in commuter marriages at work and examine intervention measures that may strengthen the marital bond among the commuter

The study utilised a descriptive research design in which both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to gather general information from a number of commuter teachers. Respondents were selected using purposive, snow ball and simple random sampling techniques. The population for this study comprised of teachers in commuter marriage and school administrators broken down as 50 teachers and 10 administrators from selected schools in Serenje District giving a sample size of 60 respondents. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyse quantitative data whereas qualitative data was analysed manually.

The research result has shown that, though many commuter couples visited their families regularly, commuter marriages had a lot of challenges than benefits and that couples could not balance work and family issues effectively. It was equally found that distant relationship had given rise to negative thoughts, emotionally disturbed children, mistrust and misunderstanding that led to couple conflict. The recommendations were that the Ministry of education must relook at the deployment policy of 2010, on married teachers so that after serving for two years, the teachers may be legible to be transferred. And the other recommendation is that basing on the challenges and effects teachers and families are going through, Ministry of education should transfer teachers in commuter marriages back to where their families are to strengthen marital bonds.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my lovely husband and my Sons who I denied motherly love when they needed me most, each time I travelled for school and also when putting everything together.

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TABLE OF CONTENT

COPYRIGHT DECLARATION	i
CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
DEDICATION	iv
AKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
CHAPTER ONE	1
1.0 Overview	1
1.1 Background of the study	1
1.2. Statement of the problem	5
1.3. Purpose of the study	6
1.4. Objectives of the study	6
1.5 Research Questions	6
1.6 Significance of the study	6
1.8 Scope and Delimitation of the study	6
1.9 Limitation of the study	6
1.10 Theoretical Framework on marriage	7
1.11 Operational definition of terms	8
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.0 Introduction	10
2.1 Formation of commuter couples	9
2.2 Benefits of being in a Commuter Relationship	11
2.3 Challenges of Being a Commuter Couple	15
2.4 HIV/AIDS, Labour Migration and Marriage	21
2.5 The Role of Women in the Commuter Marriage	21
2.6 Knowledge Gap	21
2.7 Summary	23
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	25
3.0 INTRODUCTION	25

3.1 SITE OF THE STUDY.	25
3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN.	25
3.3 Target population.	25
3.4 Sample Size	25
3.5 Sampling Technique.	25
3.6 Research Instrument.	26
3.7 Data Collection procedure.	26
3.8 Procedure for Data Analysis.	26
3.9 Ethical Considerations.	27
3.10 Summary.	27
CHAPTER FOUR.	28
4.0 Overview.	28
4.1 Frequency of family visits by teachers in commuter marriages.	28
4.2 Effects of Commuter Marriages on Teachers and their Families.	29
4.3 Challenges faced by teachers in commuter marriages at place of work.	33
4.4 Intervention Measures that may Strengthen Marital Bond Among Teachers in Commuter Marriage.	36
4.5 Summary	37
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS.	38
5.0 Overview.	38
5.1 Frequency of family visits by teachers in commuter marriages.	38
5.2 Effects of Commuter Marriages on Teachers and their Families.	39
5.3 Challenges faced by teachers in commuter marriages at place of work.	42
5.4 Intervention Measures that may Strengthen Marital Bond Among Teachers in Commuter Marriage.	44
5.5. Summary.	45
DATA PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.	28

6.0 CHAPTER SIX : CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.Error! Bookmark not defined.

6.1 Conclusion.....	46
6.2 Recommendations.	46
REFERENCES.....	47
APPENDIX A	51
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS	51
APPENDIX B.	53
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ADMINISTRATORS.....	53
APPENDIX C.....	55
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS.	55

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Overview

This chapter discussed the following sections; background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study. The chapter further discussed the Scope and delimitations of the study, conceptual framework and definition of operational terms.

1.1 Background of the study

The idea of commuter marriages originated from the lifestyle of military families. It came about because both spouses had career goals that could not be met in the same geographic location. Historically, it was the male who had to leave the family for a period of time (Gerstel and Gross, 1983). However, in recent years, an increasing number of married couples from other occupation sectors such as professional public Service and civilian populations who have a commuting lifestyle had become more common for various reasons. This is a growing form of distant relationship because spouses spent most of their time living in separate environments. This trend happens when one spouse was posted or transferred to another city or district and the other chose to remain at home. Therefore, commuter marriage is a voluntary arrangement where dual-career couples maintained two residences in different geographic locations and were separated at least for some time, for a minimum of three months (Gerstel and Gross, 1983).

The teaching profession has of late been experiencing commuter marriages. These types of marriages are now a lot more common than expected. Throughout Zambia today, teachers have been affected by such transfers due to deployments that are being done in areas where the payroll vacancy exists, unlike in the olden days.

A research carried out by Rahim, et al (2006) on commuter marriages found out that most Malaysians had a traditional family consisting of father (as primary breadwinner) and the mother, who played the main role of a caregiver. The study revealed that 86.6% of the respondents (commuters) had a negative perception of commuter lifestyle. Commuters with negative perception of their lifestyle often manifested psycho-social problems such as; depression, stress or

aggression. In this regard, commuters had a negative perception and psycho-social problems because they were less prepared to commute.

The findings of the study showed that commuters with psycho-social problems spent the least time in discussion with their children. The Quality of discussion with their children relating to issues such as education, personal problems, ambition and friends was lacking.

Mijilputri (2015) carried out a research in Indonesia among the commuting marriage couples. The findings of the study were that there was a presence of constraints in communication. The distance raised less intensive in communication, thus gave rise to negative thoughts, mistrust and misunderstanding that led the couples to a conflict.

Dewi and Sudhana (2013) added that the ongoing conflict made the couple's relationship apart and frustrating. It was noticed that couples in a commuter marriage had roles and responsibilities which became much heavier because they did not face and bear them together. Couples who lived together undoubtedly had to adjust each other all the time and shared roles well than those who were apart physically. This trend certainly influenced unsatisfactory results and disharmony in the commuter marriage couples.

Another research conducted by Schwartz (2013) in Indonesia revealed that the life of a commuter marriage had a negative effect on the relationship of husband and wife, and this increased the risk of divorce as much as 40% higher than in a non-commuter marriage partner. The reasons mentioned above were due to commuter marriage couples that did not have had time to be together and also limited time to communicate to one another. As a result of such inconsistency in communication, they became more stressful.

A research carried out by Johnson (1987) in the United States of America highlighted that seven hundred thousand to one million American couples had adopted a commuting marriage lifestyle. By 1995, according to labour statistics, both partners in 61% of married couples worked, in contrast to 53.5 % in 1990, 46.3% in 1980, and only 38.1 percent in 1970 (US Bureau of Census 1996). Further, these people did not consider themselves separated, implying a troubled marriage. Although the above figures included military couples who spent long periods of time apart, the

data suggested that the number of commuter marriages in the United States of America continued to increase.

Still in the United States, Kiefer (2000) stated that, statistics from as early as 1989, reported that 53% of married households were dual-earner couples. By 1996, the percent of dual-earner couples grew to 61%. According to data from 1989, approximately seven million employees (15% to 20% of all dual-earner marriages) were classified as dual-career couples. By 2003, U.S. workers took more than 400 million long-distance business trips that were over 50 miles each year. Additionally, in 1998 the U.S. Census Bureau indicated that 2.4 million Americans said that they were married but their spouses did not live at home, a 21% reported increase over the previous four (4) years. Further, these people did not consider themselves separated, implying a troubled marriage. Although the above figures included couples that may spend long periods of time apart, these data suggested that the number of commuter marriages in the United States continued to increase.

In another research that was carried-out by Anderson in the U.S (1992) revealed that most commuter couples had a high level of education and such partners had professional or executive careers. These were mostly between the ages of 25 to 65, and their mean age being mid- or late thirties. 40% to 50% of commuter couples had children, and more than 50% had been married for more than nine years. Most of commuter couples had advanced degrees and were heavily involved in their careers. It was also found that the job-education match was common among the commuter couples. This showed that Commuter marriages were on the rise, with recent estimates indicating that three million Americans resided in different locations from their spouses (Bergen, Kirby and McBride, 2007).

In Zambia, the then General Education Minister justified the Policy of transferring teachers around the country, regardless of their marital status, in the Times of Zambia of 6th October, 2017. Dr Dennis Wanchinga said that the transferring of teachers from one town to the other was aimed at reducing residence monotony for teachers who have over-stayed in one part of the country. Dr Wanchinga had since urged teachers in the public service to co-operate with his ministry as a way of elevating the education standards in Zambia. He further stated that all teachers were to be

transferred across the country before the end of 2018. He equally warned that any teacher who was going to resist the Government Policy on transfers would be put-off payroll and then replaced by teachers on the waiting lists. ‘We don’t expect any teacher to resist massive transfers. We are almost done with Copper-belt Province and will soon be hitting other Provinces’, he said.

The General Education Minister called on the Provincial Education Officers (PEOs) to transfer all Secondary School teachers from one district to the other, especially those who had stayed at one district for more than five (5) years. He added that Primary School teachers were also to be transferred by the District Education Board Secretaries (DEBs) from one remote school to a town school and vice-versa in order for them to experience both town and village lives. The PEOs and the DEBS were also to be transferred from one province to the other across the Country. ‘There will be no one to be left out’, he said. He then warned the resisting teachers against producing medical reports. ‘We will not entertain any medical reports with regards to transfers. It is either you leave the teaching fraternity or follow our policies. All teachers will be massively transferred with or without medical/ sick reports. We are sweeping across Zambia’, he said.

Meanwhile, teacher Union had called for a halt on the recent spate mass transfers of teachers around the country. Secondary School Teachers’ Union of Zambia (SESTUZ) vice president-Kennedy Zyangale, said that the mass transfer of teachers had an effect on teachers’ social lives. He added that the abrupt transfers of teachers disturbed the learners’ academia, and could equally tore teachers’ families apart.

In the article: ‘Transfer of married Teachers could disrupt families, Government told’ (The Zambia Observer, 1st April, 2018). The Professional Teachers’ Union of Zambia (PROTUZ) called on the Ministry of General Education to scrutinize the marital status of teachers requesting to be transferred from one school to another. Speaking in an interview with ZANIS, PROTUZ Public Relations Officer- Matthews Nkhata said that “though transfers may have a positive impact on education, in the long run there can be devastating effects on the family if couples are living separately”. Mr Nkhata further said that, delivery of service from the teacher who has been separated from his/her family and the spouse due to a transfer 8 also affect concentration in teaching. In addition, the transfer of married couples separately leads to the breaking of the family,

lack of total concentration when conducting lessons and the breeding of extra marital affairs even with school going pupils, he said.

Mr Nkhata had since appealed to the Ministry of General Education to critically consider the aspect of family setup before transferring a teacher from one town to another. He further explained that his organisation was not against the transfers of teachers but placed emphasis on the Government that conducted the transfers according to the stipulated conditions of service. In response to the above concern, Dr. Wanchinga stated that the transfers of teachers from one town to another would reduce residence monotony for the over-stayed teachers in such schools and districts.

The Government of Zambia, through the Ministry of General Education (2018) announced that it was going to carry-out massive transfers of teachers across the Country, regardless of their marital status. At the same time, the government has little consideration whether its intended move had an effect on the teachers and their families or not, hence the need to carry-out this research.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Marriage is a very important institution that originated from God as stated in the book of Genesis 2:18 “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him”. It is therefore not a humanly devised institution. Recently, the Ministry of General Education formulated a policy where its employees were mandated to be deployed, transferred or recruited anywhere within Zambia, regardless of their marital status. But according to the Ministry’s deployment policy regulations (2010) on the distribution of married teacher, “teachers should be employed in specific schools where vacancies existed. Where a married teacher accepted a position in a school far from their matrimonial home, they were expected to serve in such a school for at least two years before they could be considered for transfer”. However, what is not known is why the Ministry of General Education is not transferring teachers even after working for two years and above. Hence, the study was undertaken to investigate the effects of commuter marriages on the teachers in the selected schools of Serenje District.

1.3. Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of commuter marriages among teachers and their families in selected schools of Serenje District, and further recommend the findings to the Ministry of General Education for action.

1.4. Objectives of the study

1. To determine how often teachers involved in commuter marriages visited their families.
2. To establish the effects of commuter marriages on teachers and their families in Serenje district.
3. To determine challenges faced by teachers involved in commuter marriages at work.
4. To examine intervention measures that may strengthen the marital bond among the commuter marriage teachers.

1.5 Research Questions

1. How often did teachers involved in commuter marriages visit their families?
2. What effects did commuter marriages had on the teachers and their families?
3. What challenges did commuter couples face at the place of work?
4. What measures could be taken in order to strengthen the marital bond among those in commuter marriage?

1.6 Significance of the study

This study is significant in that, the findings from the study would generate new knowledge which may assist the Ministry of General education (MOGE) in formulating new policies to lessen commuter marriage problems among Zambian teachers.

1.8 Scope and Delimitation of the study

This research was limited to married teachers who were deployed, transferred or recruited by the Ministry of education living in Serenje District whilst their spouses are living outside Serenje District, and also the input from the administration regarding their performance at the place of work.

1.9 Limitation of the study

The results may not be generalised to other parts of Zambia since the sample was drawn from Serenje District.

1.10 Theoretical Framework on marriage

Kombo and Tromp (2013:56) stated that, “a Theoretical Framework is the collection of interrelated ideas on theories.” These ideas on theories attempt to clarify why things were the way they are, basing on the already existing theories.

Therefore, this study was based on Symbolic Interaction theory guided by Herbert Blumer (1969) which is the process of interaction in the formulation of meanings for individuals. The theory explained how people interacted and their interpretation of such interactions.

Symbolic Interaction theory deals with the way individuals defined other people’s actions through symbols-words, gestures and other non-verbal cues (Strong et al, 2001). According to the theory, an individual’s verbal and non-verbal responses were constructed in expectation of how the initial speaker would react.

In a marriage set up, one may feel that his/her partner really understood him/her, whether communication prevailed or not, but still lived in harmony or disharmony with each other. In this regard, interaction makes up a relationship. Farmer (1979) asserted that the family was made up of a web of interacting elements. Therefore, there is need for the family to remain intact. The theory affirms that a couple living together would be able to interpret the nonverbal cues to the partner because an individual’s verbal and non-verbal responses were conducted in an expectation of how the initial speaker would react. Shvaneveldt (1981) in Strong et al (2001) observed that the welfare and happiness of marital partners were held above the belief that the union (family) should stay intact.

Symbolic interactionist also argued that, shared activity helped in building emotional bonds and that marriage and family relationship was based on negotiated meanings. This emphasis on symbolic negotiated meaning focuses attention on the roles that people play in society. The family itself is a symbol, to some, it is a father, mother and children, while to others, it is any union that involved respect and compassion.

However, the views expressed by Shvaneveldt (1981) in Strong et’ al (2001) were important to this study because, if the union was apart, the welfare and happiness of marital partners would not be experienced. The views expressed by Farmer (1979) were also very important to this study,

because if the web had to be broken via employment, then marital bond would not be the same, hence the researcher's investigation on the effects of commuter marriages basing on other scholars' views.

1.11 Operational definition of terms

In the context of this study, the following terms have been defined:

Investigation- a systematic fact finding and reporting process.

Effects- the negative occurrence of something, usually on a larger scale or less.

Commuter marriage-marriage between spouses who live apart, because of the location of their jobs.

Commuter couple- refer to people who are married, but not able to live with their partners due to work commitments.

Teacher-a person who imparts knowledge to the learners.

Dual- earner Couples- This is where one spouse's work is generally considered secondary.

Dual- Career Couples- These are families in which both heads of household pursue careers and at the same time maintain a family life together.

Family- refers to father, mother and children who live together.

Bonds- ties and relationship between individuals.

Ritual-Rite: a repeated set of options.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents Literature Review that was concerned with the study, under the following headings: Formation of commuter couples, benefits of being in a commuter relationship, challenges of being a commuter couple and the role of women in the commuting marriage and then summary.

2.1 Formation of commuter couples

Ordinarily, a married couple will stay together for life, but in the current time many couples undergo marriage but not living together in the same home. The couples decide not to stay together or undergo long-distance marriage due to various reasons. One of the reasons is that of work (Beck, 2013). Commuter marriages come about because both spouses have career goals that could not be met in the same geographical location. Hence increasingly, women's mobility from the family for work related reasons has become common. People who are married or living together under customary law but who also live apart could be deemed to be in a commuter marriage.

According to Ferk (2000), the most common reasons for people to opt for long distance commuting marriage include such things like their desire to keep the current job, wanting to stay in a particular occupation, the shortage of job opportunities near their home locations, potentially higher income and better opportunities for career advancement. Rotter, Barnett and Fawcett (1998) stipulated that the basic factors encouraging couples and families to consider commuter marriage were: financial need; professional imperative and recognition of potential opportunity. Families, especially with younger children, will not typically involve themselves in commuter marriages based solely on professional imperative or opportunity. Income is a very important factor in the cause of commuter marriage. This is because chronic income limitations may require settling for less in order to remain in the same occupation or geographic location.

Becker and Moen (1999) stated that scaling back career, lifestyle, and income expectations may work for some families. Such trade-offs have an effect on acquiescence to downward mobility with potential implications for children's subsequent educational paths. Parental education is often a predictor of children's educational attainment. This may not be sufficient to overcome

broadening income gaps and an opportunity structure that increasingly favours affluent subsets in a globalizing economy.

Anderson (1992) stated that the increase in women's career opportunities has also increased the problems of couples pursuing two careers in the same place, and caused conflict regarding the spouse that should take precedence. The noted major concern for dual-career couples was finding employment in the same geographic location. One partner usually compromises by taking a less desirable job so that the other can take a position that might further his/her career. However, if this compromise cannot be reached, the option of commuting may be the result, where both spouses enjoy highly desirable jobs at the sacrifice of maintaining separate residences (Anderson and Spruill, 1993). The husband and wife will be living separately, different homes, and even different cities in order to meet the demands of their jobs. Those who live and work like this marriage are generally agreed to return and meet the family at certain times adapted to their work.

Ferk (2005) also stated that the most common reasons that married couples commit to a commuter lifestyle, either voluntarily or imposed are the increasing number of households with dual-career couples, financial and societal demands, and the desire to maintain or enhance career development, potentially higher income and better opportunities for career advancement. In this regard, a commuter marriage is a work solution compromise allowing both spouses to pursue their careers while maintaining the marriage relationship. Often the commuter arrangement is considered temporary until the couple achieves career goals that enabled them to re-locate together (Farris, 1978).

Taylor and Lansbury (1988) argued that commuter couples have been described as determined, capable, independent, resourceful and self-reliant people who had confidence in their own judgement and who are not concerned with contradicting societal norms of marriage. Couples often faced employers' doubts about whether or not the commuter would be giving his or her best performance when living out of a separate household or thought a commuter marriage would result in either a divorce or a decision to leave the company.

Anderson (1992) stipulated that the primary factors contributing to the occurrence of commuter marriages were: the number of women in the workforce, the number of Dual-Career Couples, and the number of women seeking careers requiring specialized training. Further, it has been suggested

by Bureau of the Census (1996) that tighter job markets normally forced people to re-locate, greater equality within marriage that places more attention on wives' careers, and society's increasing emphasis on individualism also add to the increased incidence of commuter marriages.

According to Anderson and Spruill (1993), a handful of U.S studies conducted on commuter marriages suggested the following: a large majority of these spouses were well-educated- over 90% had completed at least some graduate work; almost all were professionals or executives with a high proportion in academics; their median family income was between \$30,000 and \$40,000; the mean age of the individuals is mid to late thirties with a range of 25 to 55 years; 40 to 50% had children, and more than half had been married for nine years or longer.

Gersel and Gross (1984) equally stated that, with regard to Couples' Commuting characteristics, there was much more variation. In this case, the period of time couples had maintained separate residences ranged from three months to fourteen years. Spouses equally travelled from a range of forty to twenty-seven hundred miles and re-united as often as every weekend to as seldom as a few days a month. One home was usually considered the primary residence and the other a sort of satellite home. Typically, the place the couple re-united was considered the primary residence.

2.2 Benefits of being in a Commuter Relationship.

One major reason for commuting was that couples, who embark on it, usually felt they could balance work and family issues effectively; where work schedules, family roles and practices did not interfere, giving the commuters the ability and freedom to be in control of both spheres. That would very likely create opportunities for career enhancement without the constraints of the family's daily business and at the same time, increased opportunities to leverage the acquired knowledge and education. Further, the decision to relocate would often be based on the best career option, commitment to the career and higher income and benefits to the family. When engaging in a commuter marriage, a situation is seen in which both spouses generally engaged in non-traditional roles- where spouses could take on different duties such as men cooking and women doing more driving and school activities. This usually made the couple to become more self-reliant, gaining autonomy and mastery in certain skills. It also created efficiency in other areas while breaking through normative structures of society. This fact proved helpful in those couples

who engaged in non-traditional gender roles that did not necessarily bother people on what others would say about their lifestyle. This trend aimed at reducing the stress that emanated from trying to fit into societal norms. This also increases self-respect and confidence among couples (Roslan et' al 2013).

Lee (2015) equally mentioned that most commuter marriages by nature were often temporary decisions, allowing both spouses to pursue their careers and maintain their marriage relationships until they were able to be in the same geographical location again. When couples determine that the commute is not forever, they may decide to work hard at it, working on building a strong marriage that can withstand the pressures of being in a commuter marriage.

Govaerts & Dixon (1988) stated the other benefit of commuter marriage are that of the value placed on having proper and quality communication as couples were more aware of the existence of each other and see themselves as a team. This teamwork enabled them and their partners to see themselves as offering support for the career their spouse is pursuing. Couples also valued the time spent together and never engaged in unnecessary quarrels which caused them to stay in the present and enjoy the time together. In addition, it gives them the ability to balance dissatisfactions with satisfactions.

Groves and Horm-Wingerd (1991) stipulated the advantages of commuter marriages. The advantages were identified as: increased career opportunities, professional autonomy, increased independence, increased appreciation of time together, decreased focus on disagreements, and decreased frequency of arguments. Clearly, the commuter lifestyle could bring some benefits to the marriage relationship. Trust and Commitment tend to be rated as high for Couples that successfully negotiate a commuter marriage (Maines, 1993). In addition, cooperation and enhanced communication skills, along with flexibility, common interests, inter-dependence, and a desire for Self- actualization were also stated as the benefits of commuter marriages.

Anderson & Spruill (1993) also stated that there were different motivations for commuting. Commuters having a short term or limited time- line for commuting may accept as part of their occupation, or feel that enduring the short-term stress and disruption of commuting may have

brought long term benefits. These benefits included possible advancement, acquiring new skills, recognition as a 'loyal team player 'or even the attractiveness of a temporary change in routine. Dahl and Stafford (2013) also discovered that, marital relationships that lived remotely were increasingly more powerful because there was equal participation, commitment and mutual trust unlike couples who did not have a remote relationship.

Gross (1980) stipulated that there were two types of couples in commuter marriages, adjusting and established. Adjusting couples tend to be younger in age, are confronting separation earlier in their marriage, and have few, if any, children. In contrast, established couples are older and further along in their marriage, and often have moved out of the house. Thus, the established couples tend to find the commuter marriage less stressful in comparison to adjusting couples. Trust seems to be a bigger issue for the younger adjusting couple, whereas maintaining excitement in the relationship may be an issue for the established couple.

Kirschner and Walum (1978) acknowledged that living apart was not unusual for some occupations such as politicians, entertainers, sales people as well as certain circumstances such as war, immigration, imprisonment and seasonal work. A study conducted in the Klang Valley, and the sample consisted of commuters working outside the Klang Valley. Data were collected using in-depth interviews and a descriptive survey. The findings showed that 44.4% of commuters were working away from home because it was requested by their employers. Although there were more men than women who perceived the commuting lifestyle as a positive situation, there were not gender differences observed on how commuting impacted personal wellbeing. Nonetheless, significant differences were found between those with a positive outlook of the commuting life and those with a negative perception of the commuting lifestyle. Successful commuter marriages require both pre-conditions and continual adjustments. Put in terms of family strengths, for a successful commuter marriage is a stable egalitarian relationship with open family-wide communication and agreement on the goals and parameters of commuting. Other important strengths were flexibility in family roles and the ability to grow with and through one's children. Love for one's children and their well-being and future, often served as an inner thermostat regulating the emotional climate for family members and the commuting spouse in particular.

Gross (1980) found spouses experiencing more difficulty with separation than established marriages, especially those in which children were grown. In adjusting marriages, commitments, traditions, full-assurance in the success and health of the marriage may not fully be established; commuting compounds these issues. The heart of the matter for all commuting couples and families involved separation; how difficult it was for spouses and children to be separated from one another. The cost, experienced as loneliness, frustration and anxiety may affect both children and adults. Instead of the negative impact, the positive impact is also perceived in the commuter marriage.

Stafford Ben-Zeev, (2013) equally stated that the commuter marriage did not necessarily bring a bad effect on the couple. The study found that the marital relationship that lived remotely would make their marital relationship become increasingly more powerful, there is equal participation, commitment and mutual trust rather than couples who do not have a remote relationship.

Many couples, particularly in business and academia, found that the dynamics and preferences of their personal lives were being challenged by the demands and logistics of work. As Coontz (2005) (p.300). wrote; “The big problem doesn’t lie in differences between what men and women want out of life and love. The big problem is how hard it is to achieve equal relationships in a society whose work policies, school schedules, and societal programs were constructed on the assumption that male breadwinner families would always be the norm” It was ironic that the shared interests, goals, and ambitions that draw couples together during courtship may later prove to be contentious within marriages, especially where children and parenting are involved. Dual career couples should decide whose career will take precedence, for how long, and which partner must risk settling for less than they might achieve otherwise. Commuting may, under some circumstances, provide a means of avoiding an impasse without sacrificing the stability and quality of one’s marriage. For adults, efficient planning and time use, learning to live with ambiguity, and being reliable are essential characteristics that can help couples and families with commuting. Commuter marriage does not signal an abdication of child rearing responsibilities for the commuter spouse. Instead, commuting requires a thoughtful and continuously evolving reconfiguration of active parenting.

Richter (2006) also stated that commitment to family life was the single most important aspect of commuting. He discovered that there were many ways in which a thoughtful and participatory spouse and a loving parent could be involved. This ranged from varying one's modes of communication, creating photo albums for children of one's residence, workplace, and community environment, and arranging visits to giving unique gifts related to the children's school or extracurricular interests. Supplying younger children with pre-addressed stamped envelopes also helps keep communication two-way. Set schedules and information about visits and special time with the commuter parent are very important for establishing a predictable environment for children with some flexibility built in.

Bianchi (2000) stipulated that, while commuter families were to be flexible, excessive and continuous ambiguity within the family about scheduling, visits, and the parameters of commuting makes children anxious. Flexibility is both an approach to life and a means of situation-specific problem solving. Families should at very least make a detailed inventory of their strengths and weaknesses, and what they anticipate facing as a commuter family. Families owe it to themselves to work through the commuting scenario with a family practice counsel or therapist to clarify the feasibility of commuting and its potential costs and benefits to the family. Commuting has proved an effective means of bettering the lot of loved ones, although not without substantial costs.

2.3 Challenges of Being a Commuter Couple.

Gross (1980) asserted that there were two types of commuter couples, namely, adjusting and established. Adjusting couples are usually younger, both in their biological age and number of years they have been married. They are also characterized by conflict and feelings of guilt for not performing their unique traditional role and have few if any children. Established couples on the other hand, are older and more mature. Although Gross (1980) made these distinctions some time ago, it follows that the length of the marriage and the number of children a couple has, would bring different challenges. For example, issues related to raising children in adjusted circumstances, trust, anxiety, finances, keeping the love and excitement alive in a marriage, levels of stress, communication and different benefits such as independence, a healthier lifestyle and greater

concentration and attention to individual jobs/careers would be affected by the length of marriage and how many children a couple had, if any. One major drawback of the commuter marriage was the interference of work schedules and family life. This could be in the form of inflexible schedules, immobility of work-related materials (laboratories, libraries, or computers), and employers who were unsympathetic to the commuting decision.

Govaerts & Dixon (1988, pp.266-267) outlined some of the sources of dissatisfaction among dual career commuter couples, including normative stress arising from comparison with the traditional societal norms, absence of intimate communication, the spouse saddled with the care of children and management of the family home had immense responsibilities, times of separation that are not pleasant owing to loneliness, guilt and dissatisfaction, especially for the spouse who was away from family everyday life, and responsibilities, the disruption to family interaction and the unique problems of advancing careers. The commuter marriage is obviously costly in human resources, as well as emotionally and socially. The emotional cost involved were feelings of loneliness and lack of motivation as well as the lack of understanding of other people regarding the difficulties faced. For example, when couples had to face a tiring long day and were not able to immediately share with their spouse how the day went. They were to cope with not seeing their partners regularly to share stories of the day when it matters most. When it comes to time when the couple could talk about the issues for instance, a week later, the event may no longer be relevant. Anxiety could also affect the health of the couple infringing on the quality of life of the family (Schvaneveldt et al, 2001).

Ralph (2015) also observed that, socially, commuter families lacked the time to do many things that families who lived together took for granted and created special times to get some of those things done. Reunion times could become stressful as families struggled to accomplish so much in a short time and had unrealistic expectations of their time together. This had a huge impact on relationships with spouses, children, family and friends as it could lead to disappointments and frustrations.

According to Rabe (2001), the commuter arrangement is genuinely a financial burden. It required a substantial income to maintain two homes, pay for transportation, telephone, and the required

support services. When there was a financial leverage, difficult situations could be cushioned and the stress associated with that situation may be alleviated. Society and commuter couples themselves also tend to compare their marriages with what they may believe was conventional relationships. This could lead to stress as members of society (friends or family members in particular) may assume they desire marital freedom and not career development (Hertz, 1987).

Richter (2006) also noted that beyond stress, both spouses suffered physical exhaustion as the stay-at-home spouse (usually the wife) took care of the children and their own job while the spouse who commutes may work for long hours and does not have anyone to come home to and may have to settle for dinners in front of the television. In certain countries commuter marriages may account for father absence in many homes. The fathers were non-residential due to divorce, non-marital births, changing composition of families and work commitments.

Levant (1995) discovered that a father's absence could be associated with negative consequences, such as children becoming societal deviants and an increase in child poverty.

Weisser (2006) alluded that fathers' absence due to commuting may have different consequences, especially as their existence in those households were physically absent due to work but remain present through phone calls and come home regularly.

Stutzer and Frey (2007) also noted that life as a commuter became challenging and difficult to manage due to a range of factors including time spent travelling back and forth, increased expenditure as well as changes in the relationship dynamics with spouses, family and friends. In turn, stress, anxiety, and the burdens related to these and other commuting challenges impacted negatively on individual commuters' marriage, health and quality of life. Not to mention that this arrangement of commuting marriages entails a unique set of stressors in terms of emotional and financial cost for the commuter and his or her family.

Jackson, Brown and Patterson, (2000) supported the above statement when they all said that long distance open-ended commuters were the most difficult because a visit to home for the spouse took a longer period. They also added that, such types of commuter marriages were hardest on the emotional bonds, routines and intimacy of couples. Such commutes were also hardest on children,

pressing one parent into “super parent role” while the other parent struggled to make their parenting role to their children.

Kiefer (2000) suggested that, while commuting may work for some families, changing the fundamental ways in which marital relationships and family life were organised was difficult for most families because it caused stress, anxiety and affected the quality of relationships. The financial costs of routine communication, travel and maintaining two house-holds may also be very difficult for the commuter spouses.

A commuter marriage certainly has impacts for those who live it. Research conducted by Schwartz Pamer, (2013) revealed that the life of a commuter marriage had a negative effect on the relationship of husband and wife, and could increase the risk of divorce as much as 40% higher than in non-commuter marriage partner. The reasons mentioned above were due to commuter marriage couples that did not have time to be together and had less time to communicate. Such a trend resulted in the couples becoming more stressful. Lack of time to communicate well was also discovered as a possibility of drowning and ending the relationship in divorce. A research conducted by Mijilputri (2015) in Indonesia, equally identified the presence of constraints in communication of the commuter couples. The distance raised less intensive in communication, thus giving rise to negative thoughts and mistrusts, and misunderstanding that led the couples to a conflict. Dewi and Sudhana (2013) added that the ongoing conflict made couple relationship apart.

Despite Coontz’s (2005) contention that (traditional) marriage had lost its privileged legal and cultural position in North America, being separated from one’s spouse, children and household by choice, put the commuter on the far edge of conventionality. Writing from a business perspective, Bern (1999) noted that, although employers on the whole benefited from the flexibility of commuter marriage, individual employers sometimes interpreted commuting as a “marriage in trouble”, lacking conventional stability and negatively effecting job performance. Therefore, employers were to consider whether commuting employees would be more likely to quit jobs than the relocated employees.

Farmer (1979) asserted that most couples categorised themselves as happily married, which was the socially acceptable answer. Many such marriages were happy in the negative sense that overt conflict was kept under control and there were common interests such as children, status or a profession. For instance, in real life, individuals in positions of leadership like men of the colour (Reverends and pastors), and others in leadership positions where divorce was detrimental to their reputation might stay married in order to protect their status.

Farmer (1999) added that the usual marital adjustment measurement scales classified as 'successful' those marriages in which a couple engaged in little open conflict, had similar interests and fair degree of agreement on major issues, shared some of their leisure time and had affection for one another. Strong et' al (2001) stated that every unhappy family was unhappy in its own way, marital conflict still tended to centre around certain issues, especially; communication, children, sex, money, personality differences, how to spend leisure time, in-laws, infidelity and housekeeping.

Kanyowa (2003) also added that, in Zimbabwe the cultural transformation that was taking place led to more women working, thus affecting the spouses' traditional roles. This is true especially where there was poor communication or no communication between the spouse, to openly discuss the domestic and marital roles. This being the case, the relationship was likely to be fraught with tension and conflict that would lead to separation or divorce.

Mwamwenda (1996) also alluded to the sources of conflict in commuter marriages as those of: in-law problems, alcohol addiction, career versus marriage, jealousy and infidelity, religious values, child bearing, work addiction and sex. The author went on to say that finances were also the cause of marital discord that led to unhappiness in the home. For example, some husbands tended to give their non-working wives' little money for house-keeping while they spent most of it on drinking, gambling or girlfriends. Where both partners worked, arguments could be over whether they should put their incomes together or manage them independently.

Mwamwenda (1996) also noted that sex which was taken as a source of conflict by partners, could be used as a weapon to get to each other when dissatisfied. However, this trend was less likely to bring hope for sexual reconciliation.

Westlake (1992) asserted that talking provided the most meaningful way of expressing marital love. Communication could lead to understanding, thus understanding to acceptance, and then acceptance to adjustment in marriage. Partners who did not communicate at all had little opportunity to improve or maintain their relationship. Westlake (1992) also believed that the level of marital satisfaction increased with the time couples spent talking to each other. In real life communication distinguishes man from animals. Unlike animals which were limited to a few short instinctive impulses, the ability of humans allows them to exchange an infinite number of signals with each other. The basic radio language of receiver and sender makes humans relational- the ability to transmit and receive all kinds of personal data.

Kanyowa (2003) stated that the changes which took place in the society led to families living apart, with some members as far as abroad. Such changes equally brought lack of guidance from the older generation. Conversely couples were faced with issues never faced by their parents, hence finding it hard to get advice from them. The lack of guidance therefore led to frustrations and disharmony when the couple faced problems in their relationship.

Effects of commuter marriage on Children.

Battistella and Conaco (1998) stated that migration could not necessarily disrupt the development of the children left behind, particularly if it was the mother who remained in the home. The effects depended mostly on the extent of involvement with the extended family in complementing the gaps resulting from parental absence. Westlake (1992) equally noted that the separation of home and work had profound effects on day to day family life. It broke up the close and frequent interactions of husbands and wives, parents and children. The long absence of the principal breadwinner had its effects on the internal authority structure of the family. Usually children suffered physical and emotional neglect depending on their ages. As pointed by Goldenberg and Goldenberg (1993), the absence of one parent may have particularly damaging effect on the remaining parent as well as the children.

2.4 HIV/AIDS, Labour Migration and Marriage.

George and Robert (2004) argued that increased labour migration and population mobility had equally increased the risk to HIV and AIDS. The prevalence of HIV and AIDS in Mexico claimed its association to the return of the agricultural labourers from the United States of America. Crafts (2006) noted that in Southern Africa where the epidemic was particularly severe, the cause were males who migrated from neighbouring countries to work on mines in South Africa. In this regard, both males and females in Zimbabwe had been on record in terms of migrating to South Africa and Botswana in search of greener pastures. The Herald, a Zimbabwean national daily newspaper dated 25 November 2009, cited a Harare city official who stated that 'Harare was hard hit by flight of nursing staff to Australia, United Kingdom, New Zealand, South Africa, Botswana- at the height of economic difficulties.' On their return home, problems related to HIV and AIDS were obviously inevitable. The married spouses were usually at the receiving end.

Jackson (2002) supported the above statement when he said, 'The bitter truth is that marriage is the relationship through which the majority of women in Southern Africa become infected. A majority of cross boarder female traders of Zimbabwe who go to neighbouring countries such as South Africa have double tragedy as they could infect and be infected by a legal spouse or a casual partner/lover as they spend months on ends away from home trying to fend for their families. This becomes the hazard of long distance relationships.' Crafts (2006) noted that sex exploitation of female migrants, whether in transit or their destination, human trafficking or forced movement, were also other problems faced in South Africa. It seemed in Zimbabwe most couples were forced by economic hardships to migrate, hence separation from their families.

2.5 The Role of Women in the Commuter Marriage.

Van der Klis & Mulder (2008) stated that when a couple decided to embark on a commuting relationship, in many cases it is the wife who stayed in the primary home, especially if children were involved. Milkie & Peltola (1999) stipulated that women had to constantly juggle their commitments between the roles of being mothers, career (or income earning women) and partners. While Sudarkasa (2011) believed that, in Africa women played a conjugal role of first being a wife to her husband. African families were changing and child-care was easy when shared by various

members of the extended family. But for women in urban areas, they have to find ways of dealing with issues that conflicted with their work. For example, the women may have no choice but to pay for child-care and domestic work.

Tade & Aderinto (2011) stated that domestic workers had been employed by working mothers to enable the women to fulfil their roles as mothers and wives. Mothers who worked outside the home had been described as doing a second shift, triple workload, being 'cake winners' instead of 'breadwinners' and performing the balancing act.

Bianchi (2000) argued that, when mothers were employed outside the home, they provided additional financial aid to their families. This being the case, children are usually the beneficiaries of these rewards, for example, more income. Therefore, Parents tend to always prefer giving their children a better childhood which costs money, for example; providing better clothing, shelter, better schools, more activities outside the home and family holidays. The economic advantage of the mother working means she is able to cater and arrange for services that will help with child rearing and minding. Early career stages within a family can be associated with low income earning and continuous house moves, especially closer to the place of work.

As Hunt (2005) argued, these constant house moves left little choice for women to grow their careers as priority was mainly given to men's jobs. This may be rightly assumed to be the case for commuting couples in Serenje district, who mostly decide that the husband makes the move to the place of work, leaving the wife and children in the home of residence.

Schvaneveldt et al (2001) and Damaske & Gerson (2008) said that women determined a commuting relationship with their work options, especially when they decided that they needed to put their careers ahead of their traditional roles of staying at home and playing the duty of a wife.

Bankole & Adeyeri (2014) asserted that some families may need both incomes. For example; in the Nigerian context, women were expected to be engaged in bringing some kind of income to supplement family expenditure, if not taking over full responsibilities such as school fees and hospital bills. Coming to the gender aspects of workers, mobility across the rural-urban boundary showed that commuting was largely dominated by male workers. Among the rural-urban

commuters, only 11 percent were female workers; while for the urban-rural commuters, the proportion was slightly higher). For the workers with no fixed place of work, the share was 8 and 6 percent for rural and urban areas respectively women were very low. One main reason cited in the relevant literature for lower commuting among women, and especially among married women, was that they had to care for their children and other household activities along with their job. Therefore, most women preferred to work locally instead of commuting.

2.7 Summary

This section examined literature related to commuter marriage as well as other new family forms. Many Zambian families transformed from extended to nuclear families, and new family forms are emerging, ranging from dual earner families to commuter families. These changes are attributed to aspects such as more formal/western education, industrialization, more women in paid employment, socialization of children outside the home and paid domestic workforce. The causes and effects of these changes are likely to continually impact on families in Zambia.

Literature reviewed showed that commuter couples around the world shared similar characteristics such as being middle class, dual earner/ dual career couples. In the case of Nigeria, commuter marriages consisted of dual earner or dual career couples who agreed to live apart for work and family reasons in order to close a socio-economic gap. The arrangement was that there were to be regular times (weekly, monthly, as they see fit) of coming together. This entails that the couple did not intend to live apart continuously and had a plan for the ‘commute’ to end at some point. These four elements: joint decision making to live apart, closing a socio-economic gap, regular times of being together as a family and bringing the commuter relationship to an end, are characterized in many commuter marriages. Working fathers who had embraced their role were torn between the desire to be seen as good workers and also good fathers who cared for their children. Depending on the job a father had, many found that their work took them far from their families for long hours. Debates in the workplace and the desire for men to be more active in the lives of their families has led to certain policies being formulated such as paternity leave and some companies offering father incentives to include parenting workshops, telecommuting and partial work from home.

All in all, it was established that there was a knowledge gap in the sense that most scholars or researchers whose work was closely related to the current study focused their research on effects of commuter marriage on the couple, others centered attention on effects of commuter marriage on spouses who had military partners. Additionally, most researchers considered male spouses as the only ones that left the matrimonial home to work elsewhere. This is different from the current study which looked at the effects of commuter marriages on the family as a whole, instead of looking at it from the military circles, attention is on the educational system where effects are explored on the teachers in commuter marriages, and additionally the study considered both male and female teachers that left their matrimonial home. The literature on families also has no lens on commuter marriages in Zambia as these are under researched, with very little literature available. This prompted the researcher to carry-out the current study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

3.0 Introduction.

This chapter outlined and described in detail the methods and steps that were employed in collecting data for the research on commuter marriages in selected schools of Serenje district. It looked at the research design, the population, sample, sampling techniques, methods of data collection, procedure for data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Site of the Study.

Using the population sample of sixty, the study was carried out in selected schools of Serenje district of Central Province-Zambia. Serenje district is characterised by a number of ethnic groups which includes the Lala and the Bemba speaking people.

3.2 Research Design.

This study utilised a descriptive research design, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative descriptive design was used to gather general information from a number of commuter teachers, whereas the qualitative approach was used to get an in-depth information on some interesting patterns.

3.3 Target population.

The population for this study was drawn from the teachers who are in long distance or commuter marriages teaching in selected schools of Serenje District. The researcher focused on couples who were currently in a commuter marriage so that she could get their stance as commuters.

3.4 Sample Size

The sample of the study consisted of 60 married teachers working in Serenje district. Out of this number, there were ten (10) administrators and forty (50) teachers involved in commuter marriages. The sample was drawn from the teachers using schools. The respondents were commuters teaching in selected schools in Serenje District.

3.5 Sampling Technique.

The researcher used a purposive and snowball sampling technique. The purposive sampling was used to select teachers in commuter marriage as the researcher believed that they would provide reliable information (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). The snowball was used to identify other teachers

who were not part of the research in the initial stages as the teachers helped to direct the researcher to other schools which had commuter teachers. Under probability sampling technique the simple random sampling was also used to give both male and female teachers an equal chance to participate in the study.

3.6 Research Instrument

Self-constructed questionnaires and interviews schedule was the main research instruments for data collection. The questionnaires were designed to collect data from the commuter marriage teachers. The questionnaire consisted of ten questions for the commuter couples, seven questions of oral interviews and ten questions for the administrators. These items were verified by a check on the members/respondents and pilot test. Reliability analysis was conducted in order to determine the reliability of the instruments

3.7 Data Collection procedure.

An introductory letter was sought from the DEBS' office to take to the selected schools within Serenje district of Central Province. After permission was granted, questionnaires were distributed to the sampled commuter marriage teachers, completed within the specified time-frame of two days, before the researcher could go back to collect them. The focus groups were given questionnaires at different points and time (cross sectional) to answer. The two questionnaires helped the researcher to investigate the effects of commuter marriages on teachers of Serenje district, objectively. By being objective implied emotionally detached from the matter under study by not allowing one's personal beliefs, values, prejudices and biases to colour the research. Interviews were also carried out in order to collect data among the teachers. These ensured that research techniques as well as data analysed was valid, trustworthy, dependable and credible. Qualitative approach involved the collection of data among the teachers. Qualitative data also gave a rich information about social processes in specific settings and also helping in giving answers to questions that did not necessarily need figures and statistics to explain. This was because qualitative researchers do give actual information of the research setting and never distance themselves from the people or events they studied.

3.8 Procedure for Data Analysis.

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyse quantitative data. The analysis involved frequencies and percentages of particular responses which were presented by

using pie charts and bar-charts. The Likert scale of five points ranging from strongly disagreed to strongly agreed was also used.

The qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. From the information recorded in each question, the researcher identified major themes and sub-themes and critically analysed various expressions with a view of gaining deeper insights into the subject matter.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in research are critical. The origin is rooted in the ancient Greek philosophical inquiry of moral life. The ethical standards prevented fabrication or falsifying of data, which was the primary goal of research (Burgess, 1989). To uphold the ethical issues, the researcher ensured that the following were taken care of: honesty, objectivity and respect for intellectual property, social responsibility, confidentiality, non-discrimination and informed consent.

3.10 Summary.

This chapter looked at site of the study, target population, research design, and sample size, sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection and data analysis procedures. All the segments of the research design were taken into consideration at each appointed stage.

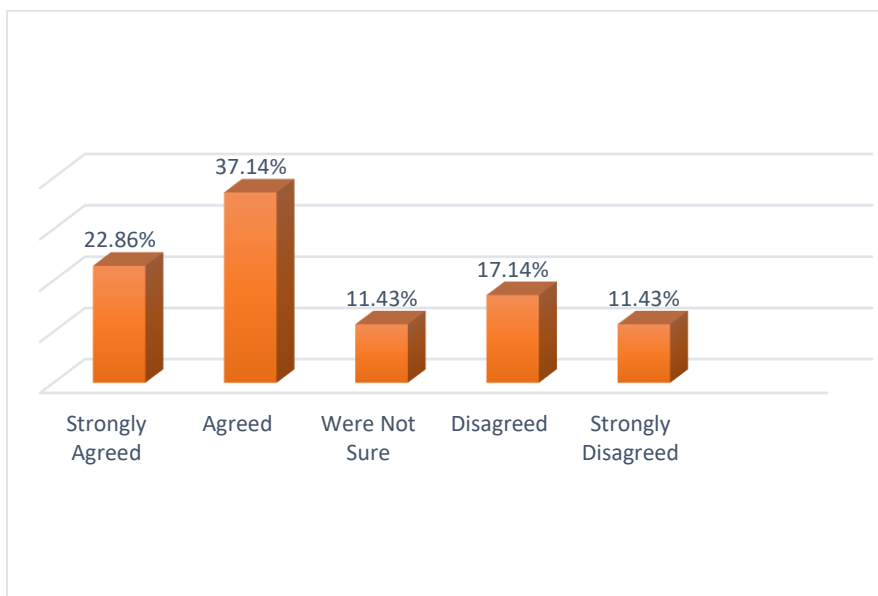
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Overview

This chapter presents the data findings on Commuter marriages among teachers of Serenje District. The presentation is guided by the following themes derived from the following objectives frequency of family visits by teachers in commuter marriages, effects of commuter marriages on teachers and their families, challenges faced by teachers in commuter marriages at place of work and intervention measures that may strengthen marital bonds among teachers in commuter marriages.

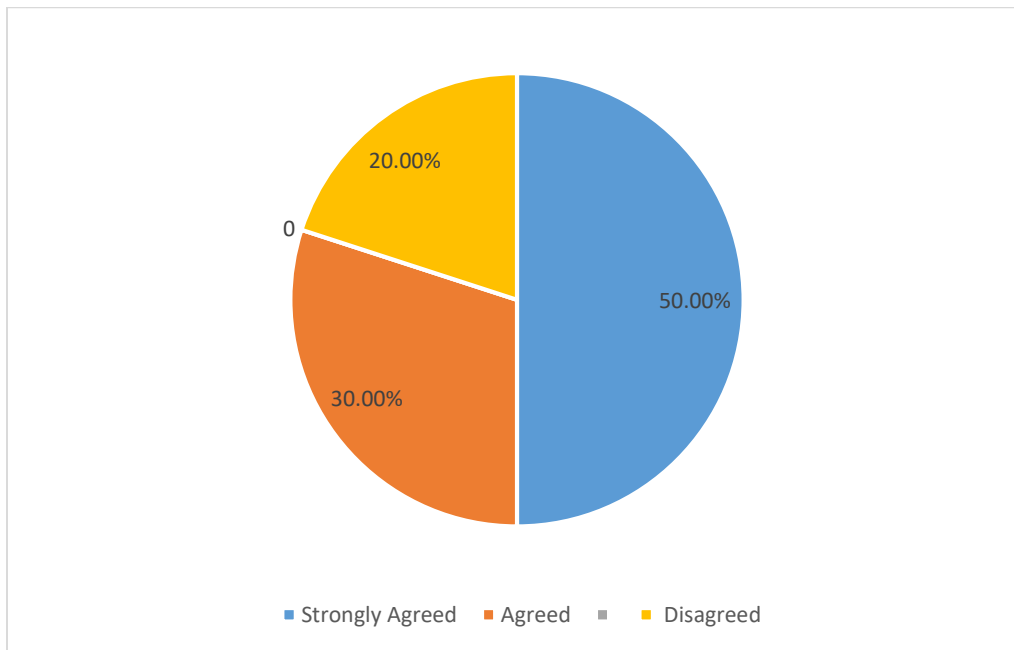
4.1 Frequency of family visits by teachers in commuter marriages.

To establish the frequency of family visits among teachers in commuter marriages 08 (22.86 %) strongly agreed, 13 (37.14%) agreed, 04 (11.43%) were not sure, 6 (17.14%) disagreed, while 04 (11.43%) strongly disagreed to the statement 'I visit my family every month'. Findings are further shown in the diagram below;



In an interview one male teacher said *“my head teacher always gives me a lot of work on Friday so that I work even on the weekend, sometimes I have a challenge to say no to the same because she always looks for something that she can use to pin me down, this affects me a lot”*

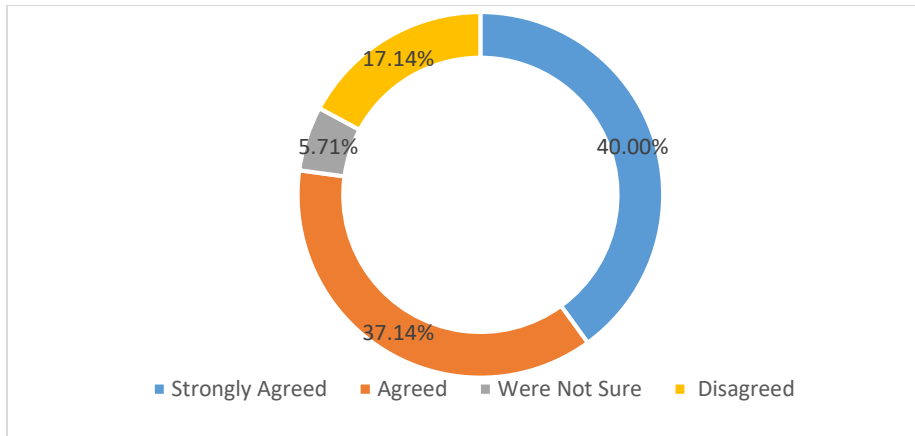
On the one hand administrators were also given the statement ‘I give permission to commuter couples each time they request’, the following were the responses: 05 (50%) strongly agreed, 03 (30%) agreed, while 02 (20%) disagreed.”. The graph below represents the administrator’s response to the above statement.



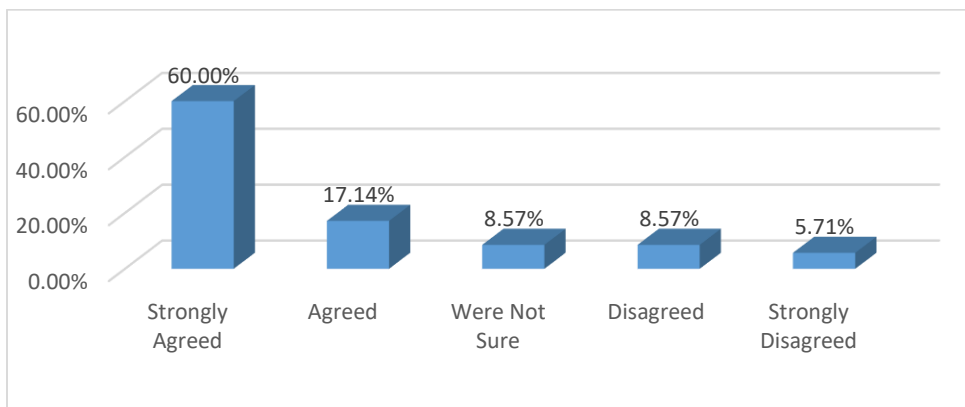
A2 also stated that *“every time my teachers come for permission to visit home; I always grant them because I know how it feels because I was once a commuter couple until my wife joined few years ago.”*

4.2 Effects of Commuter Marriages on Teachers and their Families

To establish the effects of commuter marriages on teachers and their families four key statements were given to teachers and administrators. Regarding the statement ‘Commuter marriage has affected my children’s academic performance’ 14 (40%) teachers strongly agreed, 13 (37.14%) agreed, 02 (5.71%) were not sure, while 06 (17.14%) disagreed.

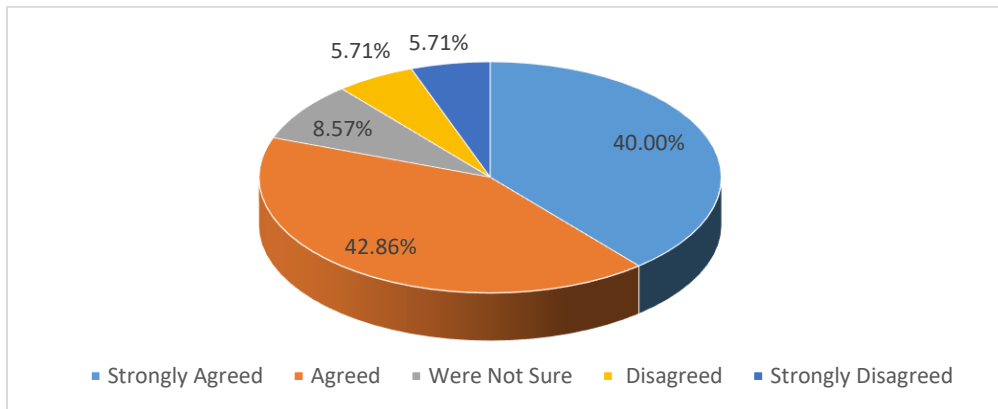


Out of the 35 teachers that responded to the statement ‘My distance relationship has given rise to negative thoughts, mistrust, sex starvation, loneliness, divorce, suspicion, emotional stress, emotional and financial costs and misunderstanding that lead to couple conflict’ 21 (60%) strongly agreed to the above statement, 06 (17.14%) agreed, 03 (8.57%) were not sure, 03 (8.57%) disagreed, while 02 (5.71%) strongly disagreed.

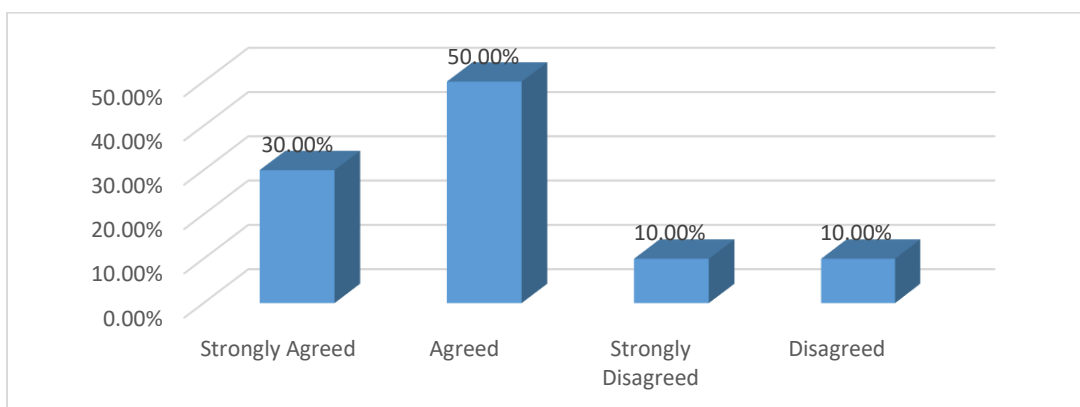


In an open ended question with regards to the same statement one male teacher said that, “*madam to tell you the truth, it is difficult for me to stay for more than two weeks without sex am being frank, at the same time, I have no cash to visit home, therefore, plan b is the only alternative but kuba careful*”. However, few respondents said that commuter marriage was the cause for divorce among teachers

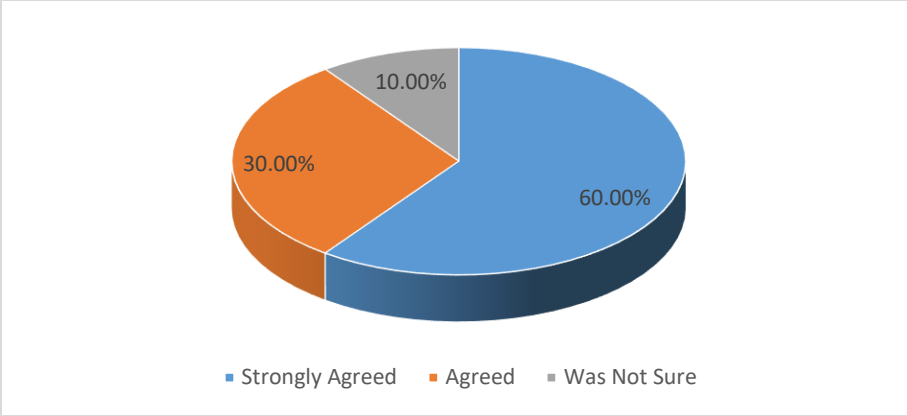
'I have noticed that commuter marriage reduces moral values of children because of absence of one parent'. Concerning the above statement, 14 (40%) of teachers strongly agreed, 15 (42.86%) agreed, 03 (8.57%) were not sure of anything, 02 (5.71%) disagreed, while 02 (5.71%) strongly disagreed. As represented below;



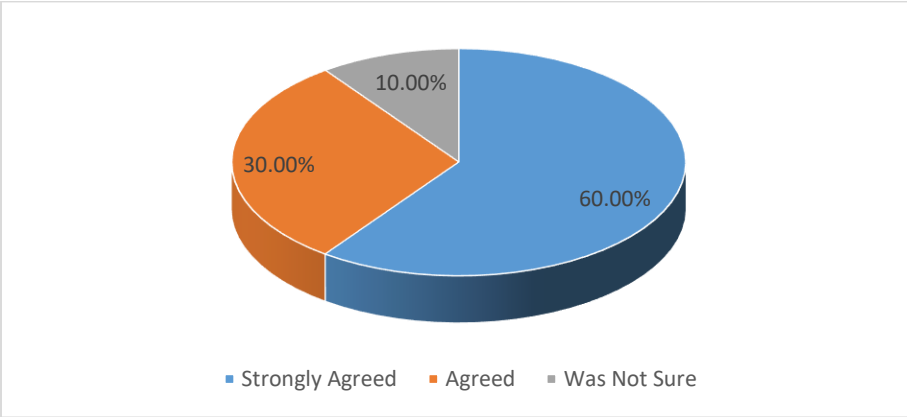
Responses from the administrators on the statement 'Commuter marriage has affected learners' academic performance at my school' were that 03 (30%) strongly agreed, 05 (50%) agreed, 01 (10%) disagreed, while the other 01 (10%) strongly disagreed. The above findings, are represented in the diagram below:



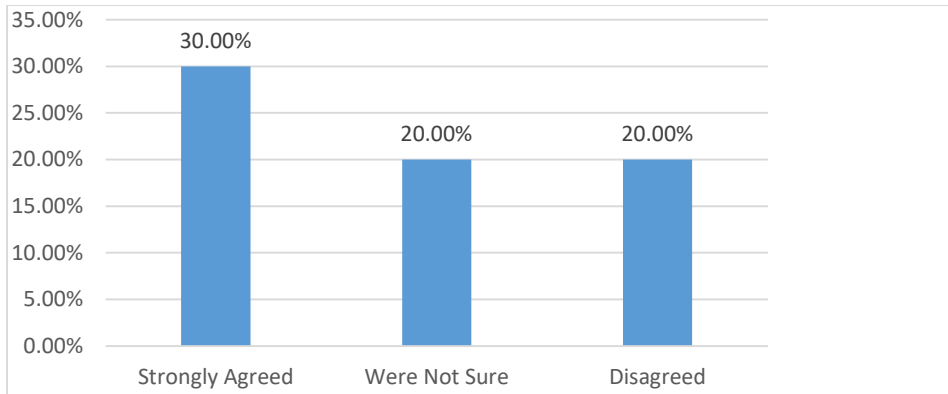
The diagram below represents administrator's response to 'Distance relationship has given rise to negative thoughts, mistrust, loneliness, stress, sex starvation and misunderstanding that has led to couple conflict.,



In addition, out of the 10 administrators that responded to the statement ‘I have noticed that commuter marriage reduces moral values of children because of the absence of one parent’06 (60%) strongly agreed, 03 (30%) agreed, while 01 (10%) disagreed. Findings are further illustrated in the pie chart below;



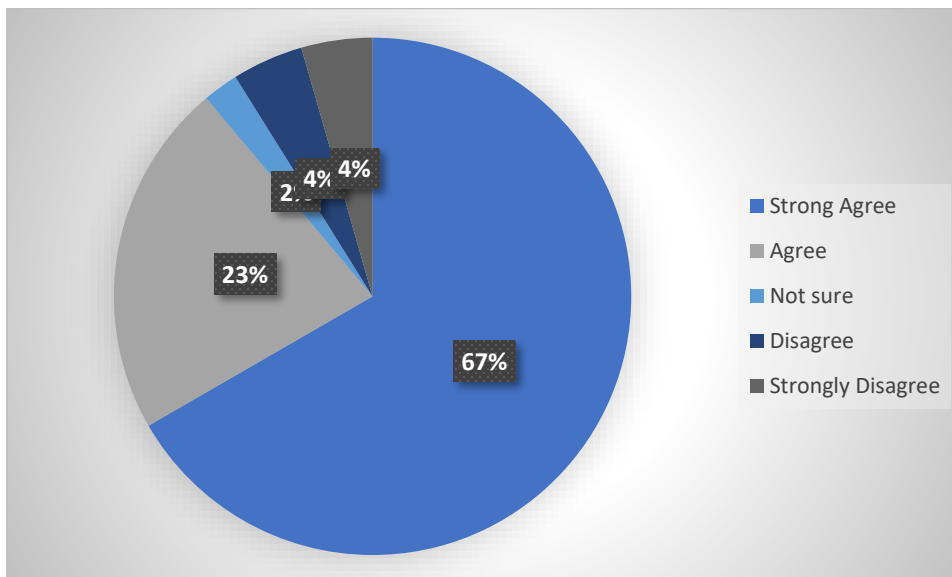
The findings from administrators on the statement ‘I have noticed that divorce is common among the commuter couples’ were that 03 (30%) strongly agreed, 03 (30%) agreed, 02 (20%) of the respondents were not sure, while 02 (20%) disagreed. As further illustrated on the graph below;



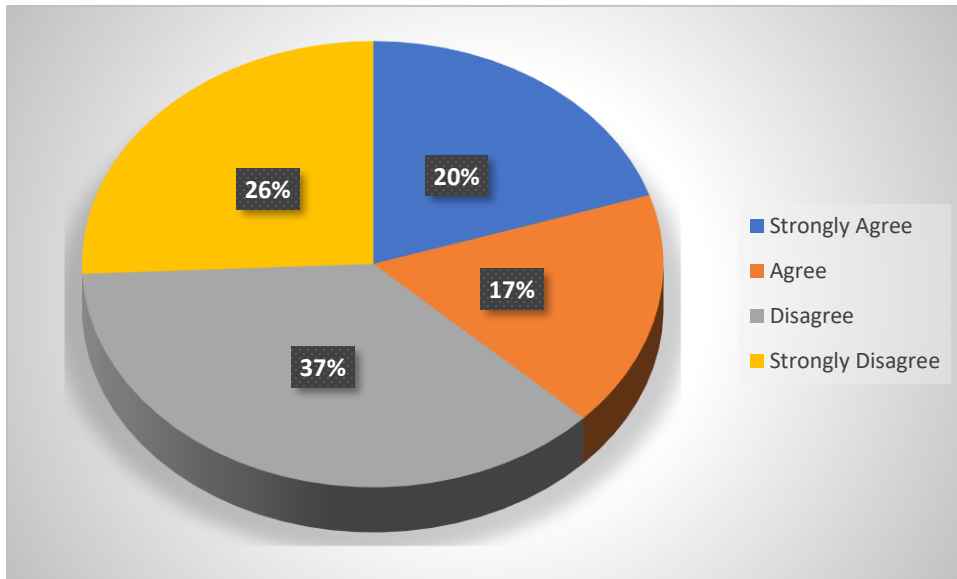
Additionally, A4 said that *“it is very unfortunate because one of my female teachers involved in commuter marriage has just lost her marriage in court a month ago and it is difficult to go back because the man has since re-married”*.

4.3 Challenges faced by teachers in commuter marriages at place of work.

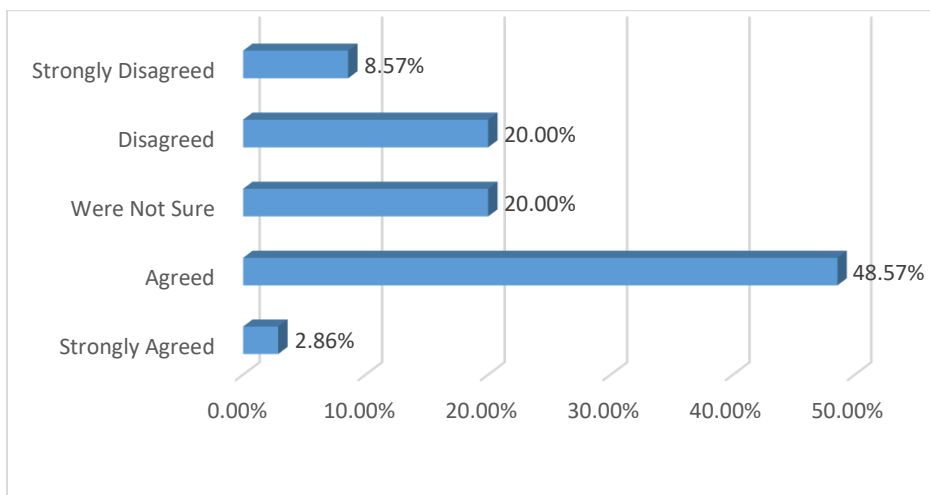
Out of the 45 respondents that answered the statement ‘I have discovered that commuter marriage has a lot of challenges than benefits’ 30 (67%) strongly agreed, 10(23%) agreed, 01 (2%) was not sure, 02 (4%) disagreed, while 02 (4%) strongly disagreed. As presented in the table below;



‘I can balance work and family issues effectively’. When this statement was closely investigated among teachers, it was found that 07 (20%) respondents strongly agreed, 06 (17%) agreed, 13 (37%) disagreed, while 09 (26%) strongly disagreed. As indicated in the graph below;

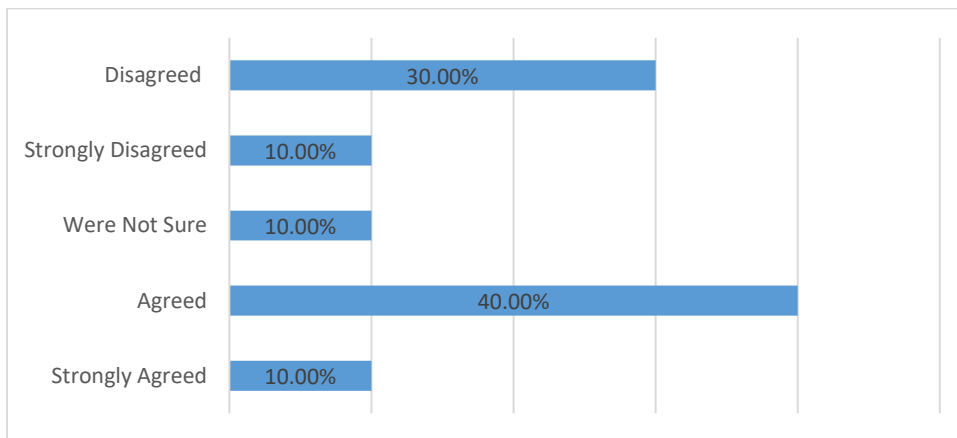


Further, 01 (2.86%) of the teachers strongly agreed, 17 (48.57%) agreed, 07 (20%) were not sure, 07 (20%) disagreed, while 03 (8.57%) strongly disagreed to the statement, ‘Commuter marriage has affected my work and the relationship with fellow workers’. Findings are displayed below:



In an open ended question with regards to the above statement A6 stated that *‘every time my teachers in commuter marriages visited their homes, they mostly came back on a Monday, missing the classes, and sometimes they would be absent for more days’* There is a lot of absenteeism among these teachers, sometimes I don’t blame them.’ One respondent also argued that *“am always absent minded because am always thinking about how my children and husband are faring, as a result of this, sometimes I go home to visit my family and delay going back for work as a result I miss my classes”*.

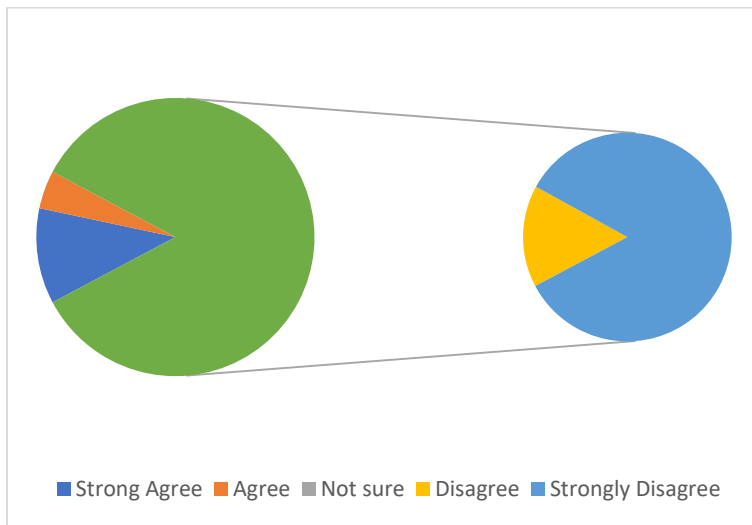
On the statement ‘Couples living in separate household do not perform well in their career’01 administrators (10%) strongly agreed, 04 (40%) agreed, 01 (10%) were not sure, 03 (30%) disagreed, while 01 (10%) strongly disagreed. The findings below represent the research statement ‘couples living in separate household do not perform well in their careers’.



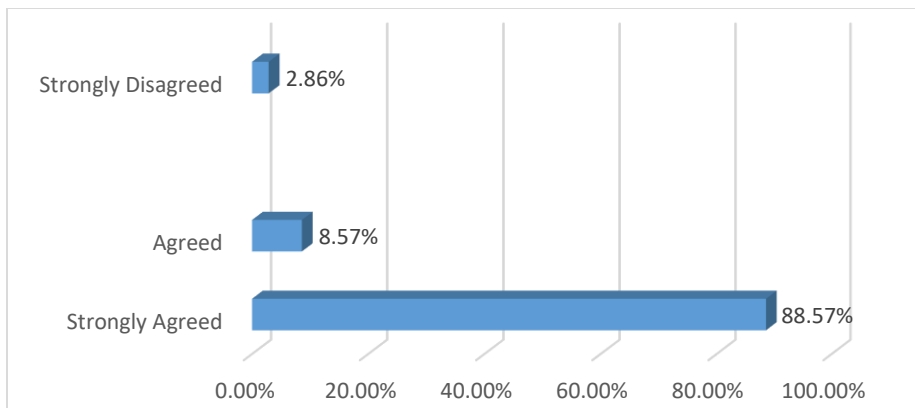
Lastly, administrators’ response to ‘Commuter marriage has affected teachers’ work and the relationship with fellow workers’ were as follows: 03 (30%) strongly agreed, 03 (30%) agreed, 02 (20%) disagreed, while the other 02 (20%) strongly disagreed.

4.4 Intervention Measures that may Strengthen Marital Bond Among Teachers in Commuter Marriage

To establish the intervention measures to strengthen marital bond among teachers in commuter marriage both teachers and administrators responded to the statement ‘I agree that commuter marriage should be encouraged by the ministry of education’ and it was discovered that 05 (11) strongly agreed, 02 (4) agreed, 06 (13) disagreed, while 32 (72) strongly disagreed. The diagram below represents the findings to the above statement



Apart from the alluded statement ‘I would opt to re-unite with the family in order to strengthen my marital bond’ was investigated and it was found that 31 (88.57%) strongly agreed, 03 (08.57%) agreed, while 01 (2.86%) strongly disagreed.



4.5 Summary

The chapter has presented the research findings which were guided by the research themes; frequency of family visits by teachers in commuter marriages, effects of commuter marriages on teachers and their families, challenges faced by teachers in commuter marriages at place of work and intervention measures that may strengthen marital bonds among teachers in commuter marriages. The next chapter will present the discussion which will add meaning to the findings presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.0 Overview

The chapter presents a discussion of research findings. The main purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of commuter marriage on teachers and their families in selected schools in Serenje District. The presentation is guided by the research objectives which are; determining how often teachers in commuter marriage visited their families, effects of commuter marriage on teachers and their families, challenges faced by teachers in commuter marriages at work, examine intervention measures that may strengthen the marital bond.

5.1 Frequency of family visits by teachers in commuter marriages.

The study found that majority of the respondents visited their families once every month. However, the study findings also indicated that a significant percentage was distributed to respondents that provided that they were not sure, disagreed and strongly disagreed to visiting their families every month. This shows that other respondents never visited their families on a monthly basis. This could be attributed to factors such as transport costs, lack of commitment for family and lack of support from administrators. The study findings by Gersel and Gross (1984) on Couples' Commuting characteristics, disagree with the findings of the current study in that, couples in their separate residences returned to their families after three months to fourteen years. However, there are similarities with the Findings by Gersel and Gross in that their study also indicated that some spouses returned to their families every weekend to as seldom as a few days a month.

The study further, established that some administrators gave permission to commuter teachers while others did not. This is so because findings from the previous chapter show that five out of the ten respondents indicated that they granted permission to their teachers and the other five indicated otherwise which shows that some administrators may not have been supportive and were not willing to give permission to commuter teachers whenever they asked for it. Findings also showed that some administrators understood teacher's situation, while others mentioned that the administrators were unconcerned. For example, a response by one male respondent with regard to being given work on Fridays and over the weekends is in agreement with the five that indicated the lack of support from administrators. It was then deduced that many administrators were not

very helpful in commuter couples' situation. This was based on the responses given by the most respondents.

This indicates that some administrators may have a negative attitude towards giving permission to commuter teachers or may simply want to take them for granted or just to exercise their authority over these teachers. Therefore, depending on the administrative style in a school, permission for teachers to visit their families would either be granted or denied.

5.2 Effects of Commuter Marriages on Teachers and their Families.

The study showed that most respondents were greatly negatively affected by the factors outlined in the research instruments such as a rise to negative thoughts, mistrust, sex starvation, loneliness, suspicions and misunderstanding that led to couple conflict. Strong et al (2001) stated that every unhappy family was unhappy in its own way, marital conflict still tended to centre around certain issues especially communication, children, sex, money, personality differences, how to spend leisure time in laws, infidelity and housekeeping. Findings by Strong therefore, provide some similarities with the findings of the current study. This entails that one individual may not have all the effects outlined above but experience at least two or more. Mijilputri (2015) is also in agreement with the findings in that, he stated that distant marriage raised less intensive in communication, thus giving rise to negative thoughts and mistrusts, and misunderstanding that led the couples to a conflict. Dewi and Sudhana (2013) also added that the ongoing conflict made couple relationship apart.

Findings also found that almost all the respondents discovered that, commuter marriages had a lot of challenges than benefits. In that, a few respondents disagreed, some were not sure and others strongly disagreed to discovering that commuter marriages have a lot of challenges than benefits. This showed that a few respondents did not have a lot of challenges but, benefits. It can be noted that some teachers have benefited by making more money for the family in a commuter marriage than in a non-commuting marriage and others would have had no challenges because of living a God-fearing life. Govaerts and Dixon (1988) agrees with the findings above, when they outlined some of the challenges among dual career commuter couples. These included normative stress arising from comparison with the traditional societal norms, absence of intimacy, communication,

suspicion, divorce, emotional disturbance, loneliness, truancy among children, the spouse saddled with the care of children and management of the family.

In addition, the findings are also supported by Stutzer and Frey (2007) who argued that life as a commuter became challenging and difficult to manage due to a range of factors including time spent travelling back and forth, increased expenditure as well as changes in the relationship dynamics with spouses, family and friends. In turn, stress, anxiety, and the burdens related to these and other commuting challenges impacted negatively on individual commuters' marriage, health and quality of life. Not to mention that this arrangement of commuting marriages entails a unique set of stressors in terms of emotional and financial cost for the commuter and his or her family.

Furthermore, the study findings also showed that several respondents that is teachers and administrators agreed to the statement that commuter marriage was one of the major causes of divorce among teachers, reason being that long couple separation led to sex deprivation that in turn gave freedom to one to look for such satisfaction elsewhere. For example, one male teacher said that, *"madam to tell you the truth, it is difficult for me to stay for more than two weeks without sex am being frank, at the same time, I have no cash to visit home, therefore, plan b is the only alternative but kuba careful"*. However, few respondents did not support the idea that commuter marriage was the cause for divorce among teachers. Looking at the great number that agreed to the statement, it was evident that commuter marriage was one of the causes for divorce among teachers. In line with the Research conducted by Schwartz (Pamer, 2013) which revealed that the life of a commuter marriage had a negative effect on the relationship of husband and wife, and could increase the risk of divorce as much as 40% higher than in non-commuter marriage partner. Therefore, Schwartz supports findings of current study.

Furthermore, the study established that the reasons for divorce were due to commuter marriage couples that did not have time to be together and had less time to communicate. Such a trend resulted in the couples becoming more stressful. Lack of time to communicate well was also discovered as a possibility of drowning and ending the relationship in divorce just as argued by A4 in the previous chapter.

The study further established that majority of respondents disagreed to the statement that commuter marriages had increased couple's independence and decreased frequency of arguments. which carries with the responses provided by the teachers. Reasons such as nagging spouse, career development, constant conflicts, violent or abusive behavioural tendencies of spouse made some teachers opt to staying separately in order to curb quarrels and disagreements. This entails that commuter marriages may increase the frequency of arguments because when people are not together for a long time they argue even over small matters.

The findings of the study were to some extent agreeing and disagreeing with Groves and Horn-Wingerd (1991) who stipulated that the advantages of commuter marriages: increased career opportunities, professional autonomy, increased independence, increased appreciation of time together, decreased focus on disagreements, and decreased frequency of arguments. Schvaneveldt et al (2010) and Damaske and Gerson (2008) argued that women determine a commuting relationship with their work options, especially when they decided they needed to put their careers ahead of their traditional roles of staying at home playing the duty of wife. These arguments to some extent are in agreement with the findings of the current study which also shows that career development is a factor that makes people to be comfortable even in commuting environments.

In another development, majority of the respondents agreed that commuter marriages affected teachers' family and their health, respectively because children's morals were negatively affected due to absence of one parent. Few respondents attributed the effects of commuter marriage in relation to family and health as being caused by the emotional instability in such families, while the other respondents said that the family got affected because spouses indulged in extra marital affairs, where in some cases, they contracted sexually transmitted diseases which later affected their health. Apart from diseases, Anxiety could also affect the health of the couple infringing on the quality of life of the family and also a lot of suspicions which lead to couple conflicts. Arguments by Schvaneveldt et al (2001) also agrees with the above findings in that they also stated that anxiety could also affect the health of the couple infringing on the quality of life of the family.

Further, the study also found that children in commuter marriages were emotionally affected due to the absence of one parent. It can also be pointed out that this could be the reason why some children bond more with the parent that stays with them as opposed to the one that is constantly

way from family home. As pointed by Goldenberg and Goldenberg (1993), the absence of one parent may have particularly damaging effect on the remaining parent as well as the children. This entails that commuter marriage could reduce moral values of children if not handled very carefully

The study further established that commuter marriage had affected the teachers' children's academic performance. As majority respondents agreed that the children's performance was negatively affected. However, a few respondents disagreed that their children's academic performance was affected. It can be argued that those who disagreed could have had children in boarding schools or leaving with other relatives. Study findings by Westlake (1992) supported the above who argued that the long absence of the principal breadwinner had its effects on the internal authority structure of the family. Usually children suffered physical and emotional neglect depending on their ages. In this case, the physical and emotional neglect of one parent could easily affect children's academic performance. In agreement to the above statement, most children's behaviour as a whole gets affected. The fact that many respondents were affected by the alluded factors, it was proof enough to ascertain that the afore mentioned were effects of commuter marriages among the selected teachers.

5.3 Challenges faced by teachers in commuter marriages at place of work.

It was found that the majority of the respondents stated that they found it hard to balance work and family due to financial constraints, divided attention and lack of concentration. On the other hand, a small number of respondents agreed that they were able to balance work and family. This would be due to commitment to family, financial stability and good management skills. Rabe (2001) agrees with the findings in that findings from his research stipulated that the commuter arrangement was genuinely a financial burden. It required a substantial income to maintain two homes, pay for transportation, telephone, and the required support services. This also promoted absenteeism, lateness, double mindedness and lack of concentration on the commuter teachers. This clearly shows that a commuter couple could not balance work and family issues effectively.

The research findings also established that couples living in separate households did not perform well in their career. This was because majority responses were in agreement with the statement that they cannot balance between work and family respectively. This proved to be true because of

the divided attention and shared resources. Milkie and Peltola (1999) stipulated that women had to constantly juggle their commitment between the roles of being mothers, career or (income earning) women and partners. Despite focussing their study on women, the argument provided by Milkie and Peltola are in agreement with the findings alluded to earlier.

Study findings also indicated that the academic performance of learners was affected by teachers in commuter marriage due to frequent absenteeism, late coming, lack of concentration, mood swings and poor relations with fellow workers. The evidence was arrived at after majority of administrators and teachers agreed to the statement that commuter marriage has affected teachers work and relationship with fellow workers. For example, A6 and T1 expressed a similar view that commuter teachers delayed to get back to work after permission to visit their families was granted stated that. These arguments are supported by the findings of the current study in that all the respondents agreed that commuter marriages affected a teacher's performance as well as that of a learner. Such responses suggest that teachers' performance will always affect pupil's academic performance.

Gross (1980) supported the above statement when he stated that one major drawback of the commuter marriage was the interference of work schedules and family life. This could be in the form of inflexible schedules, immobility of work-related materials (laboratories and libraries), absenteeism, lateness, lack of concentration and employers who were unsympathetic to the commuting decision. Bern (1999) also noted that, although employers on the whole benefited from the flexibility of commuter marriage, individual employers sometimes interpreted commuting as a "marriage in trouble", lacking conventional stability and negatively effecting job performance. Therefore, employers were to consider whether commuting employees would be more likely to quit jobs than the relocated employees.

Findings of the study also revealed that career progression was a challenge because of the shared resources and other responsibilities with the family that was living far apart. Other respondents said that it was very difficult to have career development especially during the holidays, because one would opt to spend time with the family during that time instead of going for school. The findings clearly indicate that commuter marriage could affect one's work and the relationship with

fellow workers which in turn could lead to low performance of both pupils and teachers. These are the challenges faced by most commuter couples.

5.4 Intervention Measures that may Strengthen Marital Bond Among Teachers in Commuter Marriage

The study revealed that most respondents opted to reunite with their families in order to strengthen the marital bond, this showed that many teachers in commuter marriages wished to be transferred to locations in which their families reside. These findings are supported by Jackson, Brown and Patterson (2000) who stated that commuter marriages were hardest on the emotional bonds, routines and intimacy of couples. Furthermore, the research findings above are also in line with the theoretical framework used in the study as one aspect of the symbolic interactive theory is that a couple living together is able to interpret the non-verbal cues used by the partner and places emphasis that a family reinforces and rejuvenates bonds through symbolic rituals such as family meals. This fosters unity within a family. The discussion tried to answer research question four on the intervention measures to be undertaken to curb commuter marriages among teachers.

Additionally, study findings showed that commuter marriage should not be encouraged by the Ministry of Education. This is because 30 out of 35 respondents strongly disagreed to the statement that commuter marriages should be encouraged by the Ministry of Education. On the one hand, four respondents agreed that the Ministry of Education should encourage commuter marriages. The preceding response would be due to the benefits attached such as maintaining the standards of living as both partners are able to earn an income. The findings are in agreement with Bankole and Adeyeri (2014) who asserted that some families might need both incomes and Blanch (2000) argued that when mothers employed outside the home provided additional financial aid to their family.

Furthermore, it was found that majority of the respondents said that the government supported commuter marriages among teachers because they were the ones behind deploying and transferring married people away from their families. The same respondents said that the government was equally very reluctant in solving the issue of commuter marriage among teachers. Few respondents said that the government never willingly supported the commuter marriage among teachers. The reason advanced for their support was that the government wanted to balance the number of

teachers in the country, especially in the rural areas where there was scarcity of teachers. Basing on the majority of the respondents who said 'yes', it was discovered that the government had no intention to solve the problem of commuter marriages among the teachers, hence its persistence up to date.

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Study findings also show that the way forward to commuter marriage stoppage in the Ministry of Education, the majority respondents said that the Government should come-up with new policies concerning transferring of married couples so that they could re-join their families.

5.5. Summary

The chapter presented the research findings guided by the themes namely; frequency of family visits by commuter teachers, effects of commuter marriage on teachers and their families, challenges faced by teachers in commuter marriages at work and intervention measures that may strengthen the marital bond. The discussion was also tied to literature review. The next chapter presents the conclusion and recommendation of the study.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

6.0 Overview

This chapter presents the conclusions of the research and appropriate recommendations for future research. The conclusions will be guided by the research objectives which were stated as follows: frequency of family visits, effects of commuter marriages on teachers and their families, challenges faced by commuter teachers in their place of work and intervention measures to strengthen their marital bonds. Thereafter, recommendations will be outlined.

6.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that teachers in commuter marriages experience a lot of effects that have great implications on the proper functioning of their families. Effects of commuter marriages include among others sex starvation, divorce, suspicions, loneliness, mistrust, infidelity, emotional stress, conflict among couples and families, reduced moral values on children and lack of finances. Additionally, teachers in commuter marriage also encounter a lot of challenges at work such as absenteeism, divided attention, lateness, low performance and mood swings. As a result of this, many teachers lack concentration at their place of work which consequently lead to low academic performance in learners.

6.2 Recommendations.

Based on the data collected the following recommendations were made:

- The Ministry of General education to transfer teachers in commuter marriages back to where their families are so that they can strengthen their marital bond and enable families live together once again.
- Ministry of General Education to relook at the 2010 deployment policy so that after working for two years as stated in the policy, the teachers may be legible to be transferred.
- Ministry of General Education to also re-look at the recent mass transfer policy and consider the status of teachers before deployments or transfers.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Dear Respondent,

My name is Chitundu Dorothy, a student at UNZA-ZOU, studying a Master of Science Degree in Counselling, carrying out a research on Commuter marriages among teachers in Serenje District, Zambia. Please help to ensure that this study is a success by responding honestly to the contents of this questionnaire. All the information will be treated confidentially. Do not write your name on this questionnaire.

Indicate your gender by ticking in the box below

Male

Female

Section A.

-Indicate your response by ticking in the appropriate spaces provided.

-State the extent to which the following variables are perceived with regard to commuter marriage in Serenje, Zambia.

KEY: 1. = strongly agree,
2. = Agree,
3. = Not sure,
4. = Disagree
5. = Strongly disagree

S/N	STATEMENT	5	4	3	2	1
1	I visit my family every month.					
2	I have discovered that commuter marriage has a lot of challenges than benefits.					
3	I can balance work and family issues effectively.					
4	Commuter marriage has increased my independence and decreased frequency of arguments.					
5	I would opt to re-unite with the family in order to strengthen my marital bond.					
6	Commuter marriage has affected my children's academic performance.					

7	My distance relationship has given rise to negative thoughts, mistrust and misunderstanding that lead to couple conflict.					
8	I have noticed that commuter marriage reduces moral values of children because of absence of one parent.					
9	I agree that commuter marriage should be encouraged by the ministry of education.					
10	Commuter marriage has affected my work and the relationship with fellow workers.					

APPENDIX B.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ADMINISTRATORS.

Dear Respondent,

My name is Chitundu Dorothy, a student at UNZA- ZOU, studying a Master of Science Degree in Counselling, carrying out a research on Commuter marriages among teachers in Serenje District, Zambia. Please help to ensure that this study is a success by responding honestly to the contents of this questionnaire. All the information will be treated confidentially. Do not write your name on this questionnaire.

Indicate your gender by ticking in the box below;

Male

Female

Section A.

-Indicate your response by ticking in the appropriate spaces provided.

-State the extent to which the following variables are perceived with regard to commuter marriage in Serenje, Zambia.

- KEY:** 1. = strongly agree,
2. = Agree,
3. = Not sure,
4. = Disagree
5. = Strongly disagree

S/N	STATEMENT	5	4	3	2	1
1	I give permission to commuter couples each time they request.					
2	I have discovered that commuter marriage has a lot of challenges than benefits.					
3	I have noticed that divorce is common among the commuter couples.					
4	Commuter marriage has increased couples' independence and decreased frequency of arguments.					
5	Couples living in separate household do not perform well in their career.					
6	Commuter marriage has affected learners' academic performance at my school.					

7	Distant relationship has given rise to negative thoughts, mistrust and misunderstanding that lead to couple conflict.					
8	I have noticed that commuter marriage reduces moral values of children because of the absence of one parent.					
9	Commuter marriages should be encouraged by the ministry of education.					
10	Commuter marriage has affected teachers' work and the relationship with fellow workers.					

APPENDIX C.

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS.

1. Is commuter marriage one of the causes of divorce among teachers? What is your opinion? ---

2. What are the effects of commuter marriages on:
 - i. The teacher's performance? -----
 - ii. The teacher's family and their health? -----
 - iii. The economy of the teacher? -----
3. How do fellow teachers perceive your situation at work? -----
4. Do you think the government support commuter marriages among teachers? Give reasons for your answer. -----
5. What do you think could be done to rectify this situation (commuter marriage)? -----
- 6 What is the attitude of administrators towards your situation? -----
- 7What are the effects of commuter marriages on the career development of a teacher? -----

THE END.