

**THE NATURE, PREVALENCE, CAUSES AND METHODS USED BY TEACHERS
TO CORRECT THE READING DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY MIDDLE
BASIC SCHOOL LEARNERS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS IN ZAMBIA:
A CASE OF MAGWERO AND NDOLA LIONS' SCHOOLS FOR THE
BLIND.**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Thomas Mtonga, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is typically as a result of my own individual efforts and that all the work from other researchers has been acknowledged. I further certify that this dissertation has not been submitted for a degree in any University or similar institution.

Signature:

Date:

APPROVAL

The University of Zambia approves this research report of Thomas Mtonga as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in Special Education: (M.Ed Special).

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work of my hands to my dearest wife Faith Haantete and our three children Thofai, Wodala and Uchizgi. My heart goes out for my family because when you needed me most, I was not available and in moments of deep sorrows and over working work laid upon me, you listened and understood my situation.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the nature, prevalence, causes and methods used by teachers to correct the reading difficulties experienced by middle basic school learners with visual impairments in Zambia. The objectives of the study were to:

identify the nature of reading difficulties among middle basic school learners with visual impairments; determine the prevalence levels and causes as well as to establish the methods used by teachers to correct the identified reading difficulties. The study used the survey design. The target population was one hundred and sixteen middle basic school learners and twenty-six middle basic Special Education teachers in six residential schools for the blind. The sample consisted of forty-five learners and fourteen special education teachers. Random and purposive sampling were used to arrive at the pupil and teacher samples.

In collecting data, questionnaires were administered to learners and teachers. Teachers were also interviewed and learners were engaged in focus group discussions. The study instruments were piloted at Munali Special Unit in Lusaka before they were used in the study. Qualitative and quantitative data analyses were used. The findings of the study revealed that more than half (56.3%) of learners with visual impairments experienced tactile reading difficulties while 43.6% of the respondents experienced phonological and phonemic reading difficulties. 48.8% of all the respondents indicated that the reading difficulties were caused by inadequate reading materials and 44% of them stated that the reading difficulties were caused by challenges in distinguishing letters and dots. Besides these findings, 72% of the respondents also indicated that the identified reading difficulties could be corrected if learners were given adequate special homework and individualized attention.

The study concluded that learners with visual impairments experienced a very high prevalence of reading difficulties contrary to the reading abilities expected at their levels. Major recommendations were made among which were that the Ministry of Education should formulate deliberate policies to enhance the acquisition of reading skills among learners with visual impairments and that the Ministry should purchase adequate reading materials for the learners under review. The Curriculum Development Center and the Examination Council of Zambia should prepare reading materials that are suitable to learners with visual impairments.

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