

**MANAGING LEARNERS' ATTENDANCE IN SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF
SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS ALONG THE SHORES OF LAKE TANGANYIKA
IN MPULUNGU DISTRICT**

BY

KALIMAPOSO CATHERINE

**MANAGING LEARNERS' ATTENDANCE IN SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF
SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS ALONG THE SHORES OF LAKE TANGANYIKA
IN MPULUNGU DISTRICT**

BY

KALIMAPOSO CATHERINE

**A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in collaboration with Zimbabwe
Open University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of
Master of Education in Educational Management**

The University of Zambia

Lusaka

2018

DECLARATION

I, **Kalimaposo Catherine**, solemnly declare that this piece of work presents my own work and all the work of other people has been fully acknowledged.

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved husband Mr Masafwa Chisha and my Children for their support and encouragement during the course of my studies.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation by Kalimaposo Catherine is approved as a fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in Education Management.

EXAMINERS

Examiner's signature:..... Date:.....

Examiner's signature:..... Date:.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I give praise, glory and honor to the Lord God Almighty for his grace and favour upon my life.

Thanks are due to my able supervisor Ms. Eunifridah Simuyaba for her diligence, encouragement and indeed friendly guidance throughout the study and for accepting to supervise my work and furthermore for creating space for me in her tight schedule during the supervisory work.

I convey my sincere gratitude to our Course Coordinator Dr. G. Masaiti for his tireless advice and encouragement during our study programme.

My sincere gratitude goes to my brothers Dr. K. Kalimaposo and Mr. Daniel Kalimaposo for their inspiration and words of encouragement during my study.

I'm extremely grateful to my husband Mr. Masafwa Chisha who endured my absence from home while I was studying and for the financial support. I also thank my children: Debora, Masafwa, Mutale, Faith, Prosper and Blessings for not giving me pressure during my studies.

Lastly my special thanks goes to all the respondents who provided necessary information for this study without their help, completing my study would have been a nightmare.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration	i
Dedication	ii
Certificate of Approval	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	x
Abstract	xi
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	3
1.3 Purpose of the Study	3
1.4 Study Objectives	4
1.5 Research Questions	4
1.6 Significance of the study.....	4
1.7 Theoretical framework	5
1.8 Delimitation of the study.....	5
1.9 Limitation of the study	5
1.10 Operational definitions.....	6
1.11 Summary	6

CHAPTER TWO	7
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	7
2.0 Overview	7
2.1 Factors associated with learner attendance in schools	7
2.1.1 Environmental factors.....	7
2.1.2 Parental involvement in child education	9
2.2.2 Parental level of education and their child’s academic performance	13
2.1.3 Teachers’ influence on learner attendance	14
2.1.4 Administrator involvement in learner attendance	15
2.1.5 Influence of fishing activities on academic performance.....	17
2.2 Strategies used in primary school to address absenteeism.....	18
2.3 Summary	19
CHAPTER THREE	20
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	20
3.0 Overview	20
3.1 Research Design.....	20
3.2 Study area or site	22
3.3 Study population	22
3.4 Study sample	22
3.5 Sampling procedure.....	22
3.6 Research instruments.....	24
3.6.1 Interview guide	24
3.6.2 Focus Group Discussion guide	24
3.6.3 Document analysis.....	25

3.7 Data collection procedure.....	25
3.7.1 Access to research sites	25
3.7.2 Data collection	26
3.8 Data analysis	26
3.9 Limitations	28
3.10 Ethical considerations	28
3.11 Validity and Reliability of study instruments	29
3.12 Summary	30
CHAPTER FOUR.....	31
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS	31
4.1 Overview	31
4.1.1 Preliminary information on the profile of participants and study sites	32
4.2 Objective One: To evaluate factors associated with learner attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District.....	34
4.2.1 Factors associated with learner attendance in schools.....	34
4.3 Objective Two: To determine the levels of learner attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District.....	46
4.3.1 Learner absenteeism rates.....	46
4.3.2 Levels of learner school attendance in primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika	47
4.4 Objective Three: To establish the perspectives of school administrators, teachers and pupils on learner attendance and ascertain parental involvement in selected primary schools along the lake shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District.	48
4.4.1 Teacher and Administrator influence on learner education.....	48
4.4.2 Parents involvement in curbing learner absenteeism in lake shore schools	48

4.5 Objective Four: To find out strategies and policies which have been put in place to address learners’ attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District	49
4.5.1 Strategies used in primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika to address absenteeism.....	49
4.5.2 Corporal punishment	51
4.5.3 Register attendance tracking strategy	52
4.6 Summary	53
CHAPTER FIVE	55
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMEDATIONS	55
5.1. Overview	55
5.2. Summary	55
5.3. Conclusion.....	56
5.4. Recommendations	57
REFERENCES.....	59
APPENDICES	62
Appendix I: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule for Head teacher.....	62
Appendix II: Semi–Structured Interview Schedule for Teachers Managing Learner’s Attendance in Selected Primary School	63
Appendix III: Focus Group Interview Schedule for Learners Who Are Frequently Absent	64
Appendix IV: Interview Guide for Parents	65

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Participants by Gender.....	32
Table 2: Duration of Head teachers, teachers and pupils in the selected schools.....	32
Table 3: Professional qualifications for Head teachers and class teachers	33
Table 4: Profile of the Three Schools That Took Part in the Study.....	33

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Showing results of factors of learner absenteeism in schools	45
--	----

ABSTRACT

Learner absenteeism is one of the major precursors to poor academic performance in rural primary schools. If learners miss school, they do not learn and ultimately they fail or drop-out. Notwithstanding, this problem does not receive the attention it deserves. The purpose of the study was to investigate factors associated with learners' low attendance. Learners' low attendance is the major factor to poor performance in rural primary schools. The study was conducted in Mpulungu District of Northern Province in Zambia. A qualitative study design was adopted. Interviews guide, focus group discussion, document review and observation were used as data gathering techniques focusing on three selected primary schools, with a high rate of learner absenteeism, along the shore of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District. Participants were purposefully selected which involved head teachers, teachers, pupils and parents. The purpose of the study was to gain some insight into the management challenges faced by managers and teachers and the strategies they use to reduce learner low attendance in schools. The study evaluated factors associated with learner attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District and determined the levels of learner attendance in these schools. It also established the perspectives of school administrators, teachers and pupils on learner attendance and ascertained strategies and policies that had been put in place to address the problem of learner attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District. Factors that contribute to low learners' attendance were identified and categorized as environmental factors and home factors. Generally, these factors mostly, included social-related factors such as the attitudes of family members of pupils towards school, the attitudes of individual pupils towards school and failure to adapt to the school and physical environment. This study therefore, concludes with recommendations that may help in improving learners' low attendance in primary schools in order to improve teaching and learning in primary schools along the Lake shores.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Absenteeism is as a result of poor learner attendance in school which is often defined in different ways by different scholars. Community Agency for School Enquiry and Joint Education Trust (2008) distinguished between authorized and unauthorized absenteeism that, unauthorized absenteeism refers to absence from school with a motive not usually known to the school or the parents while, authorized absenteeism refers to absence that are allowed and accepted by the school either before or after they have taken place. Some researchers (Cunningham 2005) use the concept truancy, which refers to absence of learners from school without the knowledge or consent of their parents. These learners leave their homes with the intention of going to school, but become distracted by out of school activities. Even when disciplinary measures by parents and the school are strictly implemented, some learners refuse to attend school. Sometimes learners may be withdrawn from school by their parents to boost their family income by involving them in cheap labour at an early age. (Teasley, 2004) and (Zang 2003) is of the opinion that learners' poor attendance is associated with poverty and that learners tend to show first warning signs in the primary school phase of their education. Therefore, early interventions are needed at primary school level as without any intervention of non-attendance it may become a routine pattern that increases over a period of time. (Zang, 2003) explains that, once absenteeism is entrenched it will be difficult for learners to attend school regularly even if the parents' poverty levels are alleviated by addressing the factors that contribute to the state of poverty.

Although there is a policy on free primary education, parents and learners are not aware of their constitutional rights to benefit from this policy. The Zambian Education Act 434 No 23 of 2011- part IV Right to education cap. 1 no 15 and 17 states; A child has a right to free basic education. 17(1) states except as provided for in this Act or any other written law a parent shall enroll a child who has attained the school going age at an education institution and shall ensure the child's attendance at the education institutional. Despite what has been declared in the Zambia Education Act of 2011 parents tend not to monitor their children's attendance in school.

Educating Our Future, (1996) revealed that although there is room in the school for approximately nine out of every ten children the number of children aged 7-13 who are not in school is actually extremely large. Census data shows that in 1990 the number exceeded 650,000 with more children out of school in rural than in urban areas.

Therefore, the efforts, by government through the ministry of General Education to provide Primary education to all its Citizens has been compromised by a number of challenges, one of which is learner attendance in school. UNICEF (2010) indicates that it is highly debatable whether Zambia is on the right track to achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE) or not, as there are still children especially in rural primary school who do not attend school regularly.

Education is considered as an instrument for promoting and controlling change for incorporation into society. Hence the current Zambian National Policy on Education Educating our Future, (1996) 'recognizes the importance of education by emphasizing access, equity and retention at all levels of the education system in Zambia. The Zambian government should emulate other countries in Southern Africa and beyond who have introduced compulsory primary school attendance in their constitution as a means of making parents closer, answerable and accountable for their children non- attendance of school.'

There have been pronouncements in Zambia to have policies and strategies for the achievement of quality education and participation by all school going children in the country. This can be noted in the important reforms and recommendations like free Basic Education from Grade 1 - 7 introduced in 2002 and the re-alignment of the pre-school or Early Childhood Education in the main primary school system in 2014. In addition, the government through the ministry of Education introduced the Re-Entry Policy in 1997 in order to increase the number of girls in school by bringing back the girls who fall pregnant while attending formal education. These policies contribute toward reducing absenteeism and truancy in school to ensure access, retention, equity and progression in the education system.

A study by Kasanda and Sakala (2006) on the provision of quality education in Zambia revealed that school attendance was poor in rural areas compared to urban areas and that girls were still lagging behind boys in terms of enrolment, retention and completion. In a similar study reported by UNESCO (2008) there were more than 75 million children of school age world-wide that were not in school. Statistics indicate that the majority of these children were in sub-Sahara

Africa and Zambia falls in the same region. UNESCO (2005) released a policy review report on the number of countries that had achieved universal primary Education (UPE) for all, only a few countries were on course in achieving the set targets and Zambia was not among the successful countries.

Absenteeism is intently regarded as delinquent behavior and juvenile Crime in Western Industrialized Countries (Collins, 1998, Reid 1999). Absenteeism has negative implications for the quality of citizens and human resource development in general. Lungwangwa (1996) observed that, the decline of quality teaching and learning coupled with poor school attendance of learners in primary schools has produced crisis of confidence in Education. Therefore, it is important to determine the levels of school attendance and establish the factors that affect school attendance by capturing the views of teachers, pupils and parents in selected primary schools along the shore of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Ministry of Education (MOE 2012) reported that schools in valley areas in Zambia have consistently reported the highest numbers of learners who do not regularly attend school, including those who are absent from the Grade 7 and 9 final examinations (MOE Statistical Bulletin 2012). Similarly, the Living Conditions Monitory Survey conducted by the Central Statistical Office (CSO 2012) reported low levels of school attendance in most valley districts of Zambia. There appears to be a gap in knowledge on the situation of primary schools along the lake shore of Lake Tanganyika with respect to school attendance. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the management of learner attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify factors associated with learner attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District and find out the strategies and policies that have been put in place to address this problem.

1.4 Study Objectives

The study will be guided by the following objectives.

1. To evaluate factors associated with learner attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District.
2. To determine the levels of learner attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District.
3. To establish the perspectives of school administrators, teachers and pupils on learner attendance and ascertain parental involvement in selected primary schools along the lake shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District.
4. To find out what strategies and policies have been put in place to address learners' attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study.

1. What factors are associated with learner attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District?
2. How are the levels of learner attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District?
3. How do school administrators, teachers and pupils perceive learner attendance and to what extent is parental involvement in monitoring learners' attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District?
4. What strategies and policies have been put in place to address low learner attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District?

1.6 Significance of the study

The findings of this study may provide valuable information on managing low attendance of learners to Educational Administrators, Policy Makers and other Stakeholders working in schools. Furthermore, the findings of this study might influence policy formulations and may be

useful in finding a lasting solution to the problem of poor learner attendance in schools. The study will also contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the management of learner attendance in schools.

1.7 Theoretical framework

This study was guided by the social learning and the motivational theory of behaviorism. The study adopted social learning theory, proposed by Albert Bandura in 1990s. According to the theory, people learn from one another via observation, imitation and modeling. The theory has often been called a bridge between behaviorist and cognitive learning theories because it encompasses attention, memory and motivation. Social learning theory purports that people learn by observing others. The theory explains how people learn new behaviours, values and attitudes. In a school set up, pupils' attendance is influenced by observing their peers', parents' and teachers' attitudes and behaviours. This study was therefore, aimed at ascertaining whether or not pupils' absenteeism is influenced by the behavior of individuals they interact with.

The study was also guided by the motivation theory of Behaviorism, which was propounded by BF Skinner. Skinner's reinforcement theory is based on operant conditioning which explains that behavior can be formed by its consequences (Gordon 1987). He gave an example on positive reinforcements such as appreciating desirable behaviours, giving good grades or material awards such as trophies or money, which in turn, can increase the possibility of the rewarded behaviors' repetition. This study tested on whether or not pupils' absenteeism is associated with positive or negative reinforcements.

1.8 Delimitation of the study

The study was restricted to selected primary schools along the shore of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District. Other schools on the mainland did not participate in this study.

1.9 Limitation of the study

Some parents might be apprehensive in participating in this study and may not disclose vital information especially the home related factors associated with learners' low attendance in

schools. Teachers may not have up-to-date class attendance registers to use in the verification of information.

1.10 Operational definitions

Absenteeism – The tendency by learners of staying away from school formal learning due to nothing serious reasons, often individualistic driven

Managing learners' attendance in school – The ability by the school management to devise ways and means of curbing cases of absenteeism

Shores of Lake Tanganyika – dry land area along the lake which has schools built on them

1.11 Summary

The chapter presented the introductory part of the study. Among the things presented include: the background, statement of the problem, research objectives and questions. The chapter also presented the theoretical framework that informed and guided the study. Operational defining section has also been presented. The next chapter will present the review of related literature on the title under study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Overview

Managing learner attendance in primary school is provided under review of related literature. This section is presented thematically in accordance with the research objectives. This will enable the reader to follow a logical sequence, that include: - factors associated with learner attendance in primary schools, the levels of attendance, how school administrators, teachers, pupils and parents perceive learner attendance and the levels of parental involvement on learner attendance.

2.1 Factors associated with learner attendance in schools

2.1.1 Environmental factors

Environmental factors such as school environment and home environment have greater influence on learner attendance in school. These can have a negative or positive influence depending on the nature of that environment. Havighust and Newgaten (1966) contended that the child grows up in two social worlds. One is the adult world thus his parents, teachers and other relatives. The second is the world of peer or age-mate thus his friends, play grounds, clubs, gangs and school grounds. They further cited an example that there are grounds in which it is mandatory that, anybody who is on the 'in' must be scornful of the school and rebellious towards teachers.

According to Reid (2003) learners who are bullied at school will not inform teachers and parents that they are being bullied because they fear further consequent actions from the bullies or they may stay away from school to avoid bullies. Other factors, such as fear of failure, which results in negligence and nervousness in interacting with fellow learners, may have negative impact on learner's school attendance (Thambirajah al 2008).

Rice (1981) stated that in the United States of America, peer group influence, is a major factor that determines whether students will go to school or not. He notes that most adolescents like to do what their friends have been doing, thus if friends have been dropping out of school to get work which earn them good income, they will be persuaded to do likewise. He further stated

that, a strong peer group can affect student's school attendance, hence, students who have become cultured into a pattern of life that rejects education or have joined delinquent' group that rebels against the established system of education are strongly influence by peer groups to be out of school.

Absenteeism is also associated with sexual promiscuity, alcohol and drug usage which eventually leads to dropping out of school (Teasly, 2004), when learners become involved with alcohol and drugs, they could end up becoming addicted and have health problems later in life Teasley (2004) the use of drugs and alcohol can lead to sexual promiscuity and unprotected sexual intercourse which expose learners to the risk of teenage pregnancy and contracting HIV/AIDS and other diseases (Desocio et al, 2007).

School infrastructure contributes a lot to learners' attendance in school. If infrastructure is poor, it discourages learners especially girls to attend school when they are menstruating. As HSRC (2005) revealed, girl learners tend to stay home when they are menstruating. In the same HSRC report, it was further established that sanitation facilities at school were inadequate or unavailable, which subjected girls to severe humiliation, thereby lead to absenteeism. Davies and Lee (2006:206) reported that "learners miss school due to fear of being mocked by their peers, fear of other learners and intimidation by peer or fear of bullying." Besides the fear of other learners, the fear of conflict with teachers has been regarded as the key reason for poor learner attendance. A study done by Hendron (2014) indicated that school factors that contribute to poor learner attendance show that some teachers respond harshly towards learners who display bad behavior. Learners in turn may miss school if they feel that attending class will not improve their grades because their relationship with teachers is poor. This could also lead to further negative perception of the overall school atmosphere.

Another common problem that causes learner absenteeism in rural areas is the long distance that the learners have to walk to school where there is no proper transport (UNESCO, 2009). In rural areas there are limited hostel facilities and at times, learners are unable to attend school due to bad weather conditions. Furthermore, intimidation of girls by boys and outsiders is a factor contributing to learner absenteeism (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005).

One outstanding widespread reason for learner absenteeism, mainly in rural areas, is the issue of child Labour where families make their children work to subsidize the family's income or

require them to take over extensive domestic duties while their parents work in the fields or factories (Zahaf et.al 2005; Budlender,2006). Most learners in rural areas devote a certain amount of time before or after school each day to family and agriculture chores, such as herding cattle, fetching firewood and water (Zahaf et al 2005; Budlender, 2006).

There is a strong link between poverty and absenteeism. In UK poverty refers to elements of deprivation, such as low income, high rate of unemployment, poor housing conditions, crime and pupils that lack role models in their families (Zhang 2003). In other countries like Zambia, apart from unemployment, there are orphans and child headed families who have to work for a living during school hours. According to (Rodson and Kanyanta 2007), in families affected by HIV/AIDS children attend school irregularly because they are required to stay at home to care for siblings or sick parents (Weidemanet al 2007).

2.1.2 Parental involvement in child education

Parental involvement and attitudes play a significant part in child's attitude towards school attendance (Reid 2008). Parental involvement, for example, generally refers to actively supporting child's academic progress, monitoring their school attendance and homework, and participation in parent-teacher meetings and other activities. Positive parental involvement relates closely to a child's success in school, whereas poor parent involvement may indicate limited interest that some parents have in their children's academic success (Bridgeland, Dilulio, and Morison 2006). While parental involvement is a key aspect of a child's attendance, broader family variables serve as important contextual risk factors as well. Previous work in this area has shown that children with poor attendance rates often come from families experiencing poor cohesion, conflict, and family separation (Chapman 2007). Other research indicates that truants and persistent absentees are most likely to come from disadvantaged home backgrounds and unfavorable social circumstances (McCoy et al. 2007). Amuedo-Dorantes and Pozo (2010) argue that migration has a negative impact on school attendance of children. However, Conger, Schwartz, and Stiefel (2007) report that some immigrant students have higher attendance rates, possibly because their parents place a greater value on school.

Yazli-Mintz (2009) interviewed learners concerning their parents' involvement in their children's education. Learners confirmed the role of their parents in their regular attendance and

stated that they attend school because of their parents' or guardians' involvement in their school activities. Parents play very important roles in truancy. For the home is considered as the source of love, care and security for the family especially young ones. Children need to be secured by their parents. Family factors are issues that impact on learner attendance within the control of parents or other family members, responsible for supervision of school going children (Cook and Esenin, 2010). Some parents engage their children with heavy domestic duties like selling fish, fishing and fish processing for example drying and smoking. Others leave their older children especially first born children to care for younger children even before they are ready for such responsibilities. These acts contribute to them to become truant because of lack of supervision from their parents.

Agyemang (1988) stated that most African parents of today and parents of pre-industrial societies such as the fisher folk, farmers and even the market women do not derive any pleasure in having their children in school. Their parents think that it is an economic burden to send their children to school, feeling that if children stop attending school and rather help to perform some other job that could bring income in the home the better. The economic environment of a place makes the parents compel the children to work instead of attending school which results in low school attendance. Hurlock (1964) investigated that, children who are truant with their parents' knowledge and consent have adopted their parents' attitude towards school and learned to place a low value on education. This is especially true of children whose parents often want them to help at home or get jobs as soon as they look old enough to obtain working papers. Robinson (1978) argues that in England many parents have serious doubts about the relevance and usefulness of today's school in preparing children for adult life.

Mayer (2002), in her study on influence of parental income on children's outcome in US documented the findings on six broad areas of child outcome; cognitive test scores, socio-emotional functioning, mental health and behavioural problems, physical health, teenage child bearing, educational attainment and future economic status. She established that parental income is positively associated with all these outcomes and adds that the size of the effect of income differs across different outcomes but appears to have its largest effect on cognitive test score and educational attainment. Under educational attainment, Mayer (2002) asserts that parental income affects children educational attainment by affecting the quality of primary and secondary

schooling thereby affecting students achievement in the lower grades and hence their achievement in and expectations for post primary schooling. Parental income may also affect parents' expectation for their children. If parents think they cannot afford to send their children to college they may discourage their aspirations. Gratz (2006) in his article entitled 'The Impact of Parents Background on their Children Education,' points out that, along with their ability to educate their offspring, the economic status of people plays a huge role in their own education. He explains that parents with lower income often have to work longer hours to earn their small salaries.

King (1981) stated that in poor families especially in the rural areas, child labour is very necessary to the survival of families. Children who work have little or no time to attend school. Learners in rural areas work in the paid Labour and therefore cannot attend school. Twumasi and Assimeng (1987) revealed that child Labour exists in both rural and urban areas in Ghana. Children who are between the ages of six and fourteen are engaged in fetching water and carrying farm produce for household use. The children normally assist their parents in domestic tasks such as farming and fishing instead of attending school. These activities are part of the processes, which prepare the children to occupy adult roles and responsibilities. Qualgrain (1988) studied that among the people of thorn (in the Central Region of Ghana) children who go to school are less of an asset than those who go to fishing. Most of the parents who are either fishermen or fishmongers encourage their children to help them in their fishing activities instead of attending school. The boys join the fishing crew and the income that comes out of fishing is given to their parents. The young girls are also initiated into fishing activities at a very early age. They help in the carrying, selling and the preservation of fish in order to supplement the families' income instead of attending school. He concludes that most parents who have their children at school regard them as 'family parasites' since their feeding, clothing and total school expenditure become a drain on the financial resources of the family.

Child Labour was stated as the cause of learner absenteeism. According to the HSRC (2005), out of 38% South African learners were engaged in some form of household or domestic Labour. At some schools, learners were expected to work; for instance, cleaning their classrooms but learners who were not engaged in any work in some schools, attendance was slightly higher. Attendance rate of learners who attend school in which they were made to work was 94%

compared to 97% rate in school where learners did not work at all (Wittenberg, 2005). According to HSRC (2005) punishment for late coming was so severe to the extent that instead of going to school; learners opted to stay away from school, even though the practice of corporal punishment has been abolished. However, the Human Science Research Council Emerging voices (2005) revealed that many schools still practice corporal punishment. Learners engaged in unauthorized absenteeism in order to avoid punishment.

Some families are unable to encourage their children to attend school regularly due to some instability in their marriage. Sometimes marital conflicts and separation contributes to high levels of poor school attendance by learners. Like it is a case in some areas where most of the students are kept and provided for by their grandmothers and some single parents due to marital conflicts. Bell, Rosen and Dynalatch (1994) Haddan (1996) Hallom and Roat (1995) and Smith (1999) explains variables that have been found to contribute to truancy as unstable family relationship which include parental separation and marital conflicts. When the bondage weakens or breakdown between the family members especially the parents it might be difficult for children to attend school regularly because of being kept by one parent or in an extended family structure. Finlay (2006) established that learners from single parent families are more likely to miss school than learners living within two parent families. Moseki (2004) noted that there is a link between non-involvement in single parent parenting and misbehavior. This means that, in single parent families, monitoring and supervision become a burdensome or the parents tend to lack the ability to monitor and supervise children.

A study done by Ndlapo (1997) found that few truants were living with at least one biological parent. The recent increasing trend towards one parent families also manifests as a result of other factors such as death, teenage pregnancy or single parenthood due to divorce. Hurlock (1964) stated that “the influence of parents is unquestionably one of the strongest and most persistent factors determining what the child’s interest in school will be. Not only do parents influence their child’s attitude towards school in general but also they have a profound influence on their studies towards different school subjects and teachers. When parents show interest in the child’s schooling and the pride in their achievements, they usually live up to their capabilities when they are indifferent; they are likely to be indifferent also. Hunt (2007) emphasizes that unfavorable parental attitudes towards school as a significant influence on the absence rate of children plays a

pivotal role in promoting absenteeism. Learners whose parents' have experienced poor health and economic condition develop a negative attitude towards school either because the family needs a student to work and contribute to the family income, or because education is not perceived to be an avenue to increase economic status (Hunt 2007).

According to Railsback (2004), lack of parental involvement in the child's education plays a negative role in academic achievement and learners' attendance. Malcolm et al (2003) further established that parental involvement in their child's academic welfare determine that academic performance and attendance. Railsback (2004) emphasized that the more adults are available in the household, the more likely the learner from that household would effectively execute academic task they would be there to encourage and support them.

2.2.2 Parental level of education and their child's academic performance

Kean (2005) studied the influence of parents' education and family income on child achievement. He found that there was a direct effect of parental education on European-American children's standardized achievement scores and also noted that parental education exerted indirect effect on parents' achievement, fostering behaviours and subsequently children's achievement. Kean (2005) argues that parental education is linked to the parent providing a more stimulating physical, cognitive and emotional environment in the home and more accurate beliefs about their children actual achievement. Gratz (2006) points out that, children's brains are like sponges, they absorb everything surrounding them. Therefore, what they learn from their parents in the first years of their lives impact for the rest of their lives. He goes ahead to emphasize that education that children receive is very much dependent on the education that their parents received when they were children and therefore parents with an educated background have a much easier time preparing their children for school compared to parents lacking this background. Gluckman (2004), in his book entitled 'Letter to the next president: What can we do about the real crisis in public education,' emphasizes how much research has repeatedly demonstrated that schools do better when parents are engaged as equal partners in the decision making that affect their children and their school. However, parents with less education do not participate as often in their children education to some extent because they don't realise the importance of their interactions with schools.

Niza (2011) in her article published in the International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences observed that parents have ignored guiding their children and adolescents as they grow up and such children were later trapped in to immoral activities. This was mainly attributed to by parent's ignorance on the importance of education. Some children were not schooling not because their parents could not afford to send them to school but mostly because their parents were lazy and could not motivate them to study and actually thought that sending children to school was a waste of money.

There is also evidence to show that there is a relationship between academic performance and pupils' family background. Students whose parents have high levels of education and have good jobs tend to remain longer in school and to perform better academically compared to students from poorer backgrounds. Generally they have no need to drop from school to join labour market because parents are able to provide them with basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter and reading materials among others. Parents' background can therefore be considered as an influential, yet significantly underrated factor in their children education.

2.1.3 Teachers' influence on learner attendance

The relationship between the teacher and the children is one of the most influential factors on learner attendance. When teachers are unfair or hostile, student attendance in school tend to be poor because no student would like to stay in a school where teachers are unfair and hostile. (Kearney 2008) asserts that poor relationship between learners and teachers may also force certain learners to stay at home instead of attending school. Reld (2005) is of the opinion that if learners have a poor or conflicting relationship with their teachers they will stop going to school in order to avoid them. Factors such as insults and humiliating remarks by teachers also contribute to the absenteeism of learners at school (Moseki, 2004). Halliam (2008) maintains that teachers play a major role in shaping students attachment to and engagement at school. Teachers who support their students by caring show them respect praise them and meet their needs, this encourages learners to attend school more regularly (Hallinan 2008). Whereas learners who feel that their teachers do not support, respect them and do not pay attention to their diverse needs have more attendance problems at school. Loustadt (2005) and Moseki (2004) suggest that absenteeism rate was lower where there was positive relationship between the educator and the

learners. Absenteeism and truancy occurred where learners avoided certain teachers and negative attitude displayed by some teachers drove learners out of school. Furthermore, insults and humiliating remarks by the teachers led to school non-attendance.

Farnel and Finlayson (1988) reported that, “pressure and boredom” are most often mentioned by students as negative aspects of school academic work. They explained that the pressure to meet academic standards that seem unattainable may lead to disengagement and dropout of school. Miller and Reinhardt (1987) found that the schools’ warm accommodation environment enhances engagement and thus increases schools’ holidays and power of academic excellence. Most teachers make their teaching uninteresting due to inadequate preparation; as a result, ineffective exercises are given to students to work. Surprisingly other teachers occupy students with writing of notes on the chalkboard for their friends, whilst teachers sit back relaxing or go outside of the classroom to do personal private businesses, this generally influences student’s negative behavior towards school. When students see their teachers behaving in a certain way they tend to resort to absenteeism which seriously affect their academic performance (Hurlock 1964). Learners need some recognition and acknowledgement of their regular school attendance and when this is not forthcoming they down play the importance of school because peer pressure forces them to join gangs and be involved in the activities of the group which take place during school hours (Reld, 2005). Alternatively, when learners realize that their teachers do not care about their absenteeism, they may begin to believe that there is no need for them to attend school regularly. This may have an impact on the performance of learners where they stay at home for no specific reason and believe that they have made a good decision.

2.1.4 Administrator involvement in learner attendance

Management is the process of “designing and maintaining the environment in which individuals work together efficiently in groups to accomplish selected aims” (Koontz and Welhrich, 1990:4). Everad and Morris (1990:5) indicated that supervision has much to do with educational leadership. Taylor (as cited in Atta, Agyenim, Boateng and Baafi Frimpong, 2000) stated that, Man by nature is lazy and therefore needed strict supervision by the manager in order to get him do the work he has been assigned to. Tanner and Tenner (1980) also stated that the aim of supervision is to help teachers to function at the top of professional vision and that, whatever the

type of supervision done in schools the objectives is directing teachers towards improved performance. Clickman and Stephen (1995) expressed that supervision is the function in schools that draws together the discrete element of instructional effectiveness into whole school action. Discipline and school attendance by school authorities and parent's influences learner school attendance. Crowther (1995) defines discipline as "training especially of the kind that produces self-control, orderliness and capacity for co-operation". Medinnus and Johnson (1976) stated that in current thinking, discipline is often quite equated with guidance. However, discipline might be more appropriately described as the methods used by heads to ensure their pupils' compliance with the guidance.

When school rules are not effectively implemented and little effort is exerted in following up on learners who attend school irregularly, a culture of non-commitment to school attendance is created. Okumbe (1998) defined discipline as the action taken by management to enforce organizational standards. In any organization for objectives to be achieved, all members are required to adhere strictly to the various behavior patterns so as to achieve set objectives. To control the conduct of teachers in school there should be rules, regulations and standards to follow. An intervention suggested by Teasley (2004) is that the family and the school should work as a single unit where schools support parents to become more vigorously involved in ensuring that their children attend school. The involvement of parents in the monitoring of absenteeism is significant as they need to be aware of the day today progress of their children (Community Agency for social enquiry and joint Education trust 2007). The assumption underpinning this strategy is that school attendance can be improved if the school create a good parent school relationship by involving parents in the decision making process and in monitoring absenteeism at school on a daily basis. In terms of this team work strategy, schools are continuous in contact with the families concerning learners' attendance (Teasley 2004).

A study conducted in Limpopo province in South Africa showed that 22% of the children had nothing except tea for breakfast. Inadequate nutrition results in learners becoming sick at school, they show signs of exhaustion, they are unable to concentrate and they perform poorly (Nelson Mandela foundation, 2007). However, school feeding programme in most schools encourage learners to attend school, especially in rural and high poverty areas (UNESCO, 2009). It appears that school feeding programme serves as a motivating factor in encouraging school performance.

The primary school nutritional programme has contributed to improved school attendance. In Tanzania, a study on the characteristics associated with primary school attendance amongst the most vulnerable children indicates that providing school fees, food assistance and holding support meeting improves learners' school attendance (Ngondi 2010).

Hunt (2007) maintained that student absenteeism and lack of motivation were intertwined. Teachers investigated the theories of motivation to apply them with the aim of reducing the problem of learner absenteeism. Predictor of student absenteeism can be categorized as those which identify the causes of the absenteeism with the student or his/her family characteristics, those which identify the student's social or economic environment as the causal factor and those which examine the effects of various school characteristics as influence in the absenteeism rate of learners. The literature reviewed above indicates that various factors are responsible for low learner school attendance in primary schools. However, most of these studies have been conducted along the shores of Lake Tanganyika. And this is the gap that this study sought to fill.

2.1.5 Influence of fishing activities on academic performance

Rosi and Rosati (2001) conducted a study in Pakistan and Nicaragua, in which it was indicated that every hour a pupil spends on household chores significantly, increases the probability of grade repetition. Udo et al (2013), in their study, which was aimed at establishing the effect of fishing activities on academic performance of teenagers amongst the riparian communities, found that academic performance of students was statistically and inversely related to frequency of fishing per week but directly and significantly related to fishing as a means of supporting education. They further observed that only 12 percent of teenagers who engaged in fishing could take an academic performance position of 1st to 5th in their classes, yet teenagers in the same environment who were not engaged in fishing performed better in their classes by having an average performance score of 60 percent.

In a similar study on the influence of participation in fishing activities on Academic Achievement of Primary School Pupils in Suba and Homa-Bay Districts, Kenya, Ligeve et al (2012) sought to determine whether fishing activities had an influence on pupils' academic achievement. They found out that participation in fishing activities had an effect on academic achievement, and that the effect was moderated by gender. On the same note, Walakira et. al

(2008) observed, in their study of child labour in the fisheries sector in Uganda, that out of the 59 percent that were not attending school in their sample, 54 percent dropped out of school and 5 percent never enrolled. This therefore, implies that fishing has negative influence on pupil attendance. In a similar study, Westaway et al (2009) studied the educational attainment and literacy in Ugandan fishing communities undertaken in three Ugandan villages. They established, using in-depth qualitative research that low educational attainment existed in the fishing communities where very few children complete primary school and even fewer transitioned to secondary school. In addition to high dropouts, they also observed poor results in the end of year examinations. Some of the reasons they highlighted for the dropout and poor performance were offer of paid work (often in relation to fishing), group influence and lack of money to pay for school requirements.

2.2 Strategies used in primary school to address absenteeism

The most common strategy used in primary schools to curb pupil absenteeism is punishment. In his study Masogo (2015) argued that the most effective method of administering punishment in public Schools in Botswana is corporal punishment. Fifty percent (50%) of the teachers say that they discipline students who habitually absent themselves from school without valid reason. The aforementioned teachers use corporal punishment as a form of discipline measure, not as a way of inflicting physical pain to the students. On the other hand, pupils' also know that they could be punished if they unlawfully absent themselves from school. The school authorities, mainly the School Head and the Deputy School Heads indicated that stakeholder involvement (at 50%) and home visits(also at 50%) as well as taking firm action will solve absenteeism effectively while teachers also concur on stakeholder participation (55%) and monitoring students (22%) as a solutions to student absenteeism (Masogo, 2015). School authorities here are seen as taking a reactive role towards the problem.

The problem of absenteeism have been solved or least minimized by the combined effort of all those responsible for the child's education. The combined efforts and co-operation of parents as the first contact point for the child, teacher as guides, social welfare officers, local education authority officials, traditional rulers, district heads, village heads and the community as a whole (Mahuta, 2007).

According to Learner (1997) teachers' have been reminded to avoid labelling learners with Manifest Difficulty in Academic Skills. They have applied knowledge acquired in teacher education programmes by being aware that a pupil who does not seem to be coping with academic skills can begin to run from learning, becoming truant and eventually drops out. Some pupils could be suffering from some learning disabilities. Teachers are to be considerate and be emphatic and not label such with derogatory names. Rather referral should be made to the school counsellor and pupil's parents enlightened to the fact that the pupil needs help.

From the foregoing, it is clear to state that, factors leading to low attendance of learners in schools situated in the valley districts of Zambia are well established in various literatures. However, the gap that this study wished to fill up was to investigate school administration management of learner attendance in selected primary schools along the lake shores of Lake Tanganyika.

2.3 Summary

The chapter reviewed related literature on the research topic. Various sub themes were created under which relevant literature was reviewed. The chapter further brought out the research gap which the study pursued through its four research objectives. The next chapter presents the Methodology of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter presents an overview of the methods through which data was gathered and analyzed. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006) research methodology deals with the description of methods applied in carrying out research study. This study discusses managing learners' attendance in primary schools; a case study of the three primary schools along the shore of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu district. This section covers the research design, target population, sample size, sampling procedure, research instruments and data collection procedure.

3.1 Research Design

A research design according to Ordho (2004) is the scheme outlining a plan that is likely to be used in generating answers to research problems. There are two main research designs that can be employed, the qualitative and quantitative design. Qualitative design concentrates on the meanings attached to a particular view point, there are many different meanings regarding a particular phenomenon (Gay and Alrasian, 2003).

Leady and Armrod (2005) argued that qualitative research typically answers questions regarding natural phenomena with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from the participants' point of view. Qualitative research seeks to probe research setting in-depth to obtain a fuller understanding of the way things are and why and how the participants in a particular context perceive them. Qualitative research provides the researcher with the flexibility to interact and engage with research participants and is useful in discovering their opinions and perspectives (Creswell, 2014).

In quantitative research, statistical means are used to objectively measure things. Qualitative designs usually involve the use of numbers that can be illustrated with graphs or charts. Kombo and Tromp (2006) stated that quantities research lies on the principle of validity. That means confirmation, proof, corroboration or substantiation the researchers' values, interpretation and feelings are not considered and objectivity is reinforced.

However, this study adopted qualitative research approach within the qualitative approach the researcher employed a case study as a research design, in order to establish facts that contribute to managing learners' attendance in primary schools: a case of primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District. Kombo and Tromp (2006) defines a case as one which, seeks to describe a unit in detail, context and historically. It is a way of organizing educational data and looking at the object to be studied as a whole Brink and Wood (1998) also explained a case research examines relevant factors in detail to arrive at an appropriate description of the reality of the existing situation.

A case study research design was chosen because it enables researchers explore the experiences of participants or organizations. Zainal (2007:34) asserted that, "the examination of data is often conducted with the context of its use that is within the situation in which the activity takes place.

The other advantage is that, since there multiple of realities, the process of managing learners' attendance vary from one school to another. In understanding this case design, the researcher can gain more insight into the management challenges faced and strategies which they use to improve learners' attendance in primary schools along the lake shores. The choice of this case study was to enable the in-depth investigation of the points of view the participants and their actions concerning learners' attendance (Creswell, 2007).

Having adopted this case study design, it helped the researcher to bring about deeper insight and better understanding of how learners' attendance can better be managed in schools. Baxter and Jack (200:543) defined a case study as "an approach to research that facilitates exploration of phenomena within its context, using a variety of data sources". This implies that it is an intensive description of a single individual or sometimes a group. A case study has a distinctive advantage over research strategies when "how or why questions are posed to discover a current phenomenon events (yin 2003:14). Gronholm and Hjalmarsson (2011) also argued that qualitative research is best used when little is known or if there is uncertainty about a phenomenon.

3.2 Study area or site

Research was conducted in Mpulungu District in the Northern Province of Zambia in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika. Purposive sampling was used in selecting these schools.

3.3 Study population

According to Castillo et al (2009), a study population is a generally large collection of individuals or objects for the study. In other words, it refers to the entire group of individuals or objects to which the researcher is interested in generalizing the findings. Similarly, McMillan & Schumacher (1997) define study population as a group of elements or causes, whether individuals, objects or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research. This study targeted a population of head teachers, pupils and parents from different villages near to the primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District.

3.4 Study sample

A study sample is a subset of the total number of elements that can be studied (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). In other words, it is part of a population that is selected to represent the entire study population. In this study, a sample of three primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District was selected using purposive sampling. The sample size consisted of three head teachers, nine teachers, three from each school, and fifteen pupils, five from each school. Fifteen parents five from the village near the school also participated in the study. This gave me a sample size of forty-two respondents.

3.5 Sampling procedure

The researcher used purposive sampling procedure to select head teachers, teachers and learners and parents. Purposive sampling was used in order to obtain the type of information required for the study. It enabled the selection of participants with the potential to provide rich data and thick description of their experiences of the phenomena (Johnson and Christenson, 2012, Mc Millian and Schumacher, (2006). Purposive sampling involves purposively selecting individuals from the

population based on the knowledge and judgment of the researcher when it comes to selecting participants that are to be studied (Msabila and Nalaila, 2013).

This study using purposive sampling so as to focus on particular characteristics of the population of interest, this enabled the researcher answer the research questions. As Orodho and Kombo (2002) stated that, the power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information rich cases for in-depth analysis. The selected interviewees were those who had been at the station for more than two years for the reason being that those who had served for more than two years may have more exposure to the phenomenon than newly appointed ones. Therefore, they can bring forth the strategies used to manage learner's attendance in primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika. The assumption was that those interviewees had the potential to provide knowledgeable data on the management of learner attendance.

In fact, this study, a case study research design was chosen for a number of reasons, in that, in the case study design the researcher will be able to understand the experiences of participants or organization. Zainal (2007) asserted that, the examination of data is often conducted with the context of its use that is within the situation in which the activity takes place. The other advantage is that, since there multiple of realities, in the process of managing learners, attendance may vary from one school to another. In understanding this case design, the researcher can gain more insight into the management challenges faced and strategies which they use to improve learners' attendance in primary schools along the lake shores. The choice of this case study was to enable the in-depth investigation of the view of points of the participants and their actions concerning learners' attendance (Creswell, 2007).

Having adopted this case study design, it helped the researcher to bring about deeper insight and better understanding of how learners attendance can be better be managed in schools. Baxter and Jack (200:543) defined a case study as "an approach to research that facilitates exploration of phenomena within its context, using a variety of data sources." This implies that it is an intensive description of a single individual or sometimes a group. A case study has a distinctive advantage over research strategies when how or why questions are posed to discover a current phenomenon event (Yin, 2003). Gronholm and Hjalmarsson (2011) also argued that qualitative research is best used when little is known or if there is uncertainty about a phenomenon.

3.6 Research instruments

Research instruments or tools are devices used to facilitate the collection of data. Three research instruments were used. These included; interview guides, focus group discussion guide and official documents. The use of these instruments was meant to achieve triangulation in data collection. It was considered necessary to triangulate using these four methods of data collection in order to strengthen validity and trustworthiness of the findings. Furthermore, the justification for the use of triangulation in data collection methods was due to the sensitive nature of the study in which no single source of information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective on a study (Wamunyima, 2013).

3.6.1 Interview guide

An interview is a conversation between two or more people where questions are asked by the interviewer to elicit responses from the interviewee. Zohrabi (2013) argues that the purpose of interview is to reveal existing knowledge held by the respondent in such a way that it can be expressed as answers to the interviewer's questions and can be interpreted. A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect qualitative data from the head teachers, class teachers, and pupils regarding their views and opinions concerning factors that lead to absenteeism of learners in their schools, the level of pupil classroom attendance, and the strategies that have been put in place to curb this problem. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) indicate that the advantage of a semi-structured interview guide is that it allows for new questions to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the respondent says. Using this guide, the researcher was able to clarify questions and probe the answers of the respondents, thereby obtaining in-depth information on the subject. See example of the interview guide used in appendix.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussion guide

A focus group discussion is an interactive event guided by an interviewer to stimulate participants, guide discussion and probe in order to obtain highly detailed and specific group data that meet the research objectives (Shedlin and Schreiber 1994). It allows for the richness and flexibility in the collection of data and it also allows for the extensive exploration of the research problem (Freitas et al., 1998; Creswell, 2009), which the researcher must capitalize on while

resolving the difficulties it presents. In this study a focus group discussion guide was designed and used to collect qualitative data from learners. The tool was chosen because it allowed the researcher to explore further and obtain deeper insights into responses provided by learners earlier. See example of the Focus Group Discussion Guide used in appendix.

3.6.3 Document analysis

Leslie et al. (2009), describe a document as written material which serve as valuable source of data. Therefore, document analysis is a form of qualitative research method in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic. The advantage of documents is that they help the researcher to corroborate and strengthen data which is collected through other instruments (Weiss, 1998). This method was chosen in order to increase the breath of analysis of data regarding pupil absenteeism in primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika. In this study, documents reviewed were school policy documents containing school rules and regulations. See examples of the documents reviewed in appendix.

3.7 Data collection procedure

This section explains how qualitative data was collected in order to answer research questions on pupil absenteeism in primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika.

3.7.1 Access to research sites

The researcher began data collection by obtaining letter of ethical clearance approval from the University of Zambia. This was a requirement by the University for every Study involving human participants. Permission to conduct the study was also sought from relevant authorities, that is, the Ministry of General Education, through DEBS office in Mpulungu district. The authorization letter obtained from DEBS office was presented to all head teachers in three (3) selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika. This was to allow the researcher collect data from learners, teachers and head teachers themselves. A letter of authority is presented in the appendix section.

3.7.2 Data collection

Data was collected qualitatively. Before the interviews were conducted, head teachers and class teachers were contacted in order to make appointment for the interview and explain the purpose of the interview. The interviews were conducted in the respondents' offices. During the interviews, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the respondents before the start of the interview. An interview guide was used. Respondents were allowed to exhaust their views before moving on to the next question. Data collected was recorded by writing down responses in the note book; it was later reorganized for analysis. Responses from interviewees were double checked by reading them out to the respondents for purpose of validation. This was done in order to provide validity to the narratives in the results.

Three (3) focus group discussion panels involving five (5) randomly selected learners on each panel were conducted in three schools, with the view to collect in-depth information on the study. The number of focus groups was three (3). The discussions took place in class rooms which provided a favourable atmosphere for the activity. Prior to the discussion, respondents were informed about the research topic and the purpose of the focus group discussion. They were also free to choose to participate in the discussions or not. Participants were encouraged to freely express their opinions on the subject matter. A focus group discussion guide was used to direct the discussions and data was collected by writing down main points in responses. Participants discussed the topical questions until their ideas were exhausted before another question could be paused to them. The session ended as soon as all the questions were exhausted and a summary of main points discussed was read out to respondents for the purpose of validation. Regarding document analysis, the researcher requested for a copy of school absenteeism policy from each research site. No school produced hard copies of school rules and regulations which were the only document that was supposed to represent what was requested for.

3.8 Data analysis

Data analysis is a process for obtaining raw data and converting it into information useful for decision-making by users. Data collected was analysed in order to answer research questions pertaining to absenteeism in primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika.

Qualitative data was analysed by categorizing thematic areas for easy descriptions of practices and policies in factors associated with learners' low attendance in Primary Schools. Puljevic and Learmonth (2014) indicate that thematic analysis identifies common themes within the data, and allows for these themes to be grouped in a clear and organized manner. They further argue that categorizing thematic data helps the researcher to interpret the research topic and give detailed descriptions of data. In this study major themes were drawn from interviews with head teachers, and class teachers as well as from focus group discussion with learners. This was manually done. In the preparatory stage, handwritten field notes from interviews were organized and transcribed for analysis. Each set of raw data was explored by reading through while identifying and noting common themes in accordance with the items on the interview guide. This action is supported by Creswell (2003) who asserted that this stage entails that the researcher reads all data to obtain a general sense of the information and reflect on its overall meaning. Using the constant comparative method, which is a form of analysis where data are reviewed line by line in detail (Leslie et al., 2009), thorough categorization was done by coding and creating labels for common themes on each item. Major themes were drawn and described in line with the study. Attention was given to the frequency of the theme because it indicates the trends. The researcher used information gathered during literature review to refine the themes. This made it easy for the findings to be presented in themes and quotations.

Regarding data obtained from focus group discussions, initial analysis was done during the discussions. This was done by creating simple categories of emerging themes according to research questions. During the main analysis, the researcher considered the words and their meaning, the frequency, the specificity of the responses, the extent and the context of the comments in the textual data. This is as Kruger (1994) emphasized. Thorough categorization of the themes was later done using thematic analysis in order to capture the experiences of the learners regarding practices and policies for low learner attendance in schools.

The researcher undertook document analysis to deepen the understanding of the levels of attendance of learners in Primary Schools. The analysis was done based on themes which emerged from literature review regarding pupil absenteeism in primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District. Using constant comparison method, the researcher tried to identify words and statements which were in line with themes indicated earlier in this

paragraph. Text relevant to each theme was identified and written down for the purpose of describing policy guidelines used in pupil absenteeism in primary schools along lake shores.

3.9 Limitations

Some parents were apprehensive in participating in this study and they did not disclose vital information as expected, especially on the home related factors associated with learner attendance in school. Some class teachers did not have up-to-date class attendance registers to use in the verification of information.

Some Head teachers appeared not to be interested in being interviewed. They complained of participating in too many research interviews but received no feedback on the findings. In some schools there were challenges of rooms from which focus group discussions could be conducted. This forced the researcher to conduct discussions during lunch hour when class rooms were not occupied. For this reason, incentives in form of refreshments, were provided to participants

3.10 Ethical considerations

Ethical concerns were considered to be of paramount importance in this study because of the sensitive nature of the topic and the vulnerability of young people involved as respondents. First, the researcher sought for the ethical clearance approval from the University of Zambia Research Ethics Committee. Second, recognizing the fact that young people are sensitive to giving information that concern them, informed consent was sought from their parents through teachers, for most of them were below the age of fifteen years. See appendix. This was done before commencing the process of data collection. Additionally, the researcher explained to them the nature and purpose of the study, duration and type of participation expected, so as to give them an opportunity to decide whether to participate in the study or not. At all times the privacy and autonomy of the respondents was respected. Privacy was ensured by informing them that data collected in form of personal views, opinions and attitudes would only be shared with those involved in the study or withheld from others. Autonomy of the respondents was also ensured by allowing them to withdraw from participation at any point in the process and to choose not to respond to any question when they felt uncomfortable with it.

The researcher ensured that no physical or psychological harm was caused to respondents in the process of data collection. This was done by being alert to any discomfort they might experience while responding to the questions and by providing refreshment to participants in Focus Group Discussions which were conducted over lunch time. This also served as an incentive to them. In order to ensure confidentiality, all respondents remained anonymous during and after data collection process. The researcher also assured the respondents during interviews that data collected was to be treated as confidential. This was done by making sure that particular information given was not identified with particular respondents.

3.11 Validity and Reliability of study instruments

Validity refers to the degree to which a measuring instrument measures what it intends to measure (Heffer, 2014). In this study, instruments were checked for content validity. According to Shuttleworth (2009) content validity is the estimate of how much a measure (instrument) represents every single element of a construct or area of interest. Content validity can be determined by expert judgment in the field of study. To ensure content validity the researcher submitted all the three research instruments, that is, interview guide, focus group discussion guide and document analysis checklist to at least three experts primary school management including supervisors who gave expert analysis and opinions of the questions in line with research objectives. Some items in the instruments were modified in order to directly link them to the purpose and objectives of the study. Further, Validity of data and findings concerning current practices and policies on pupil absenteeism in primary schools along Lake Tanganyika shores was also ensured by triangulating data collection and analysis methods. Triangulation refers to the use of two or more methods of data collection of some aspects of human behaviour (Creswell, 2007). This was done by cross-checking and comparing responses obtained through all three instruments used.

Reliability as defined by Joppe (2000) cited in Golafshani (2003) is the extent to which results are consistent over time and accurate representation of the total population under study. In this study, reliability of research instruments was improved by carrying out a pilot study to improve procedures of data collection and by ensuring that items on the interview guide, and focus group discussion guide produces similar outcomes when applied during main stage of data collection

and analysis concerning strategies used to curb absenteeism in primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika.

3.12 Summary

This chapter has described the research methodology applied to the study. The study used a case study design in which only qualitative methods were used for data collection and analysis. The study used interview guides, focus group discussion guide and document analysis to obtain data from respondents concerning factors associated with learner attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District and the strategies currently used in alleviating this problem. Purposive sampling technique was used to select three head teachers, nine teachers, three from each school, fifteen pupils, five from each school and fifteen parents five from villages which surround the school. This gave a sample size of forty-two respondents.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents the findings and discussions from the specific themes that emerged during interviews with the participants. This chapter starts by giving findings and later discussion on factors associated with learning attendance of school. Secondly, presents findings and later a discussion on determining the level of learner attendance. Furthermore, the chapter presents a discussion on establishing the perspective of school administrators, teachers and pupils on learner attendance and ascertains parental involvement. Lastly, the chapter presents a discussion aiming at finding out strategies and policies which schools have put in place to address learner attendance. The discussion is linked to existing literature for validity's sake. Mostly, the discussions either confirm or disqualify earlier findings and claims of other scholars on similar matters. The 'Social learning theory' by Albert Bandura (1990) which was used in informing this study as well as the 'Motivational theory of Behaviorism' by BF Skinner theory are still pivotal in this chapter. They do so by making theory relevant and informing and providing direction in interpreting knowledge

The findings of this research were guided by the following research objectives:

1. To evaluate factors associated with learner attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District.
2. To determine the levels of learner attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District.
3. To establish the perspectives of school administrators, teachers and pupils on learner attendance and ascertain parental involvement in selected primary schools along the lake shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District.
4. To find out what strategies and policies have been put in place to address learners' attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District.

A summary is given at the end of the presentation and discussion of this chapter.

4.1.1 Preliminary information on the profile of participants and study sites

The research involved three primary schools in the form of a collective study. Zucker (2009.2) explains a collective study as “the study of a number of cases in order to inquire into a particular phenomenon”. The case study involved three primary schools in Mpulungu District. Data from each of these schools was presented separately and there after all case studies were discussed as a unit. Data was not presented as a comparative case study.

The interview data was collected from the relevant participants per school. These included the Head teacher, teachers, pupils and parents from the three purposively sampled schools. Participants were interviewed using interview guide for Head teachers, teachers, and parents and focus group discussion was done for pupils. A document study was done on the learners’ attendance in schools.

Table 1: Participants by Gender

	HEAD TEACHER NUMBER	CLASS TEACHER NUMBER	PUPIL NUMBER	PARENTS NUMBER
Males	2	7	6	8
Females	1	2	9	7
Total	3	9	15	15

The above table shows that out of three Head teachers, two were male and one female. The nine class teachers, seven were males and two were females. Out of fifteen pupils, six were males and nine were females. Out of fifteen parents who participated in the study, eight were males and seven were females. (The Parents came from villages surrounding schools).

Table 2: Duration of Head teachers, teachers and pupils in the selected schools

	HEAD TEACHER	CLASS TEACHER	PUPIL	PARENT
NO. OF YRS				
0 – 2yrs	1	2	1	
3 – 5yrs	2	4	11	1
6 – 8yrs		3	3	6
9 – 10yrs				4
11 and above				4

The table shows that out of three Head teachers one was at that school for two years. Two were in the range of three to five years. The nine class teachers, two served in that school for two years, four were in the range of three to five years and three served between the range of six to eight years. Out of the fifteen pupils who participated in the study, one appeared to be in school for two years. Eleven failed in the range of 3 to 5 years and three between 6 and 8 years. Yet the parents who lived in the villages which surround the school, one lived there between 3 to 5 years, six between 6 and 8 years, four between 9 and 10 years and four lived for 11 years and above.

Table 3: Professional qualifications for Head teachers and class teachers

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION	HEAD TEACHER	CLASS TEACHER
	NUMBER	NUMBER
Certificate	0	4
Diploma	1	3
Degree	2	2
Master's Degree	0	0
Total	3	9

The table 3 above indicates that, out of the three Head teachers who participated in the study, one had a diploma and two had degree. The nine class teachers, four of them had certificates three had diplomas where as two had degrees as their professional qualifications.

Table 4: Profile of the Three Schools That Took Part in the Study.

School	Distance From Debs Office	Year Opened	Number Of Classrooms	Surrounding Villages	Number of teachers by gender			Pupil enrolment by gender		
					M	F	T	B	G	T
A	21km	2009	5	4	2	6	8	221	194	415
B	32km	1984	5	6	4	0	4	215	155	370
C	168kn	1972	7	3	6	2	8	304	209	513

This table shows the profile of the three selected primary schools for the study. These schools are referred to as school A, B and C.

Table 4 shows that school 'A' is 21 kilometers away DEBS office. School 'B' 32 km and school 'C' 168 km. School 'A' was opened in 2009, school 'B' in 1984 and school 'C' in 1972. Number of classrooms showed that, school 'A' had 5 rooms, school 'B' 5 rooms and school 'C' 7 Rooms.

School 'A' is surrounded by 4 villages and school 'B' 6 villages where as school 'C' three villages. The total enrolment by gender in school 'A' was 221 males and 194 females giving the total of 415. In school 'B' males were 215, females 155 giving the total of 370 and in school 'C' enrolment for males was at 304, females 209 making a total of 513. Number of teacher by gender in school 'A' were 2 males and 6 females making a total of 8. In school 'B' 4 males and no females, total 4. In school 'C' there were 6 males and 2 female's total 7.

4.2 Objective One: To evaluate factors associated with learner attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District.

4.2.1 Factors associated with learner attendance in schools

In order to address the major factors associated with learner attendance in selected primary schools so as to find strategies on how learners' attendance can be managed in schools, a number of questions were asked to Head teachers, teachers, pupils and parents. The main focus was on environmental factors such as school climate and home climate which were considered to be of great influence towards low learner attendance in school. These factors included less parental involvement in their Childs' education. Teachers influence on learners' attendance in school and administrators' involvement in learners' attendance.

4.2.1.1 Environmental factors: Distance and geographical environmental set up

To start with, Head teachers and teachers were asked to state weather there was low learner attendance in their schools and to state what factors were associated with low learner attendance in school. All the three selected primary schools perceived that, factors which contribute to low learner attendance in school include family, individual learners, social environment as well as school environment. Most of the teachers were concerned about distance, that, learners cover long distances when coming to school. Distance was seen as a contributing factor towards low learner attendance in school. Some learners may only report to school twice in a week or three times due to the fact that they feel tired of reporting every day. UNESCO (2009) confirms that, learner absenteeism in rural areas is due to the long distance which the learners have to work to school and where there is no proper transport infrastructure.

Environmental factors can have a negative or positive influence depending on the nature of that environment. Havighust and Newgaten (1966) stated that child grows up in two social worlds, one is the adult world thus his parents, teachers and other relatives. The second is the world of peer or age mate, thus friends, play grounds, clubs, gangs and school grounds.

Teachers went on to explain that low learner attendance was worse during the rain season due to the difficulty for the learner to pass on the temporally erected bridges, because some of the bridges were easily damaged during the rainy season.

It was also evidently revealed that as a result of long distance from home to school and difficult terrain, pupils are tempted to be absent. This is in consonance with the observations of Obanya (2010) who found that in swampy, wetland terrains where utilities and social amenities are epileptic or non-existent, children are easily tempted to leave school before graduation.

According to this study, learners in school A and school B walked long distances daily. Lack of transport was identified as a deterrent to regular school attendance. In the light of the above, the causes and effects of learner absenteeism in this study and those in the literature studied were more or less the same. However, the causes of absenteeism in school A, B, and C were peculiar to the environment in which the two schools were located. In a nutshell, the findings of this study reaffirm what has been studied in the literature review. On the other hand, there were other factors which were completely peculiar to this study and were not mentioned in the literature review: the influence of Lake Tanganyika on primary school pupil attendance, and the negligence of their parents.

4.2.1.2 Social factors: school vs home interesting activities

Under social factors it was discovered that there were a lot of activities which happened in the villages especially in the evening, such as watching videos, where learners were made to sleep late consequently, they would feel lazy to report to school the next day. Not only videos, teachers in school 'B' reported that pupils liked playing gambling vending games popularly known as 'Bonanza' which required a child to have money to buy tokens for the same machine. As such, most learners were found to be engaging themselves in small businesses so that they could raise money for playing 'Bonanza' hence neglect school. In line with one of the theories used, this finding confirms with BF Skinner's Motivational theory of Behaviorism. Learners in this part of

the country found soles in playing of gambling vending games whose benefit acted as a motivation for abandoning school and continue playing the game. The winning of money which is usually dispensed by the machine is reinforcement on the behavior of the learners in that particular area thereby abandoning the mindset of school.

The result of the findings identified pupils' lack of interest in school activities as one of the causes of absenteeism. This is in line with the findings of Elliot, Kratochwill; Cook & Travers (2000) who stated that interest is an enduring characteristics expressed between a person and a particular activity or object. It then follows that a child who lacks interest in school activity will not be motivated to learn, so he will stay away from school to engage in any activity that interest him most.

4.2.1.3 Home factors: Home social status and child abuse by parents

Teachers who participated in the study had to put blame on the parents that, most of the parents in that area were fond of engaging themselves in polygamous marriages because of fishing camps. Therefore, their families were unstable. Teachers reported that;

It is very difficult to teach a child from unstable family because they seem to be disturbed all the time and they do not concentrate fully hence irregular attendance.

The researcher found that, unstable families played a negative role in promoting learner attendance. Most of the learners revealed that, their absence from school was as a result of domestic violence which occurred between parents. Learners had the following to say.

Sometimes we are forced to go and stay with our relatives far away from school because of violence at home caused by dad so we do not manage to come to school every day.

Lack of parental support in terms of informing their children about the importance of education makes learners to be demotivated to attend school regularly.

One teacher from school 'B' explained that:

Some parents do not realize the importance of education due to the fact that most of them are illiterate.

The other teacher in the same school reported that:

Pupils lack motivation from parents such that there is no parental involvement in their children's education; parents do not care whether or not their child has gone to school ~~or not~~.

If parents were fully involved in their child's education, low learner attendance could have improved in schools, in that parents would have a primary role to play in monitoring their children's progression in school. This can be done by checking what their children have learnt so that they work hand in hand with the teachers. Relevant literature suggested that parental participation was generally perceived as a way to improve the quality of education (Singh, Mbokodi and Msila 2004). Other literature by (Rothstein 2005) also confirms that, in order to educate children effectively parents and families should become fully involved in the process of educating learners.

Child Labour as a factor in relation to home factors can lead to learners' low attendance in school. Although there are laws which prohibit child Labour, most of the places in the sampled study sites had not taken it into consideration. This study revealed that child labour was being practiced in the communities where the selected primary schools were located. One girl child from School 'A' had this to say concerning child labour:

Sometimes I would not go to school because my mother would have told me to remain home and look after my siblings when she goes to the market

My father would ask me to assist him in the drying of fish so I tend not to attend school.

I have to be absent from school when I escort my mother to the market and sell fish.

According to the study findings, parents did not realize that child Labour was a contributing cause of low learner attendance in school for. Parents thought exposing their child to laborious work was another way of teaching their children to be responsible. Albert Bandura's (1990) Social learning theory justifies this conception by parents of learners from these lake shore schools that certain habits are socially inherited. Slowly, this behavior consumes the mindset of the entire community that children should be exposed to labour intensive works as a way of grooming them into responsible citizens. In the end, such thoughts become a culture of such a community and ends up affected conversional institutions like schools which disagrees with such beliefs.

Child labour was stated as the cause of learner absenteeism this is in conformity with the findings of HSRC in their study conducted in South Africa. According to HSRC (2005), 38% of South African learners were engaged in some form of household or domestic labour. At some schools learners were expected to work, for instance cleaning their classrooms; school attendance was slightly higher for learners who were not engaged in any work at school. Attendance rate of learners who attended schools in which they were made to work was 94% compared to 97% in a school where learners did not work at all (Wittenberg, 2005).

Additionally, this study also noticed that most primary school pupils from the shores of Lake Tanganyika came from families with lower socio-economic status (SES) and were more likely to absent themselves from school. These findings support the link between absenteeism and socio economic status as found by Morrissey et al. (2013), who noted that having a higher percentage of students from low-SES families was associated with a higher school absence rate. It can therefore be suggested that parents' educational level and income play important role on student absenteeism levels and academic achievement. In other words, parents' educational level and income have a negative effect on pupils' school attendance. The finding of this study showed that pupils' absenteeism is negatively related with academic achievement. The findings also showed that previous academic achievement predict current absenteeism. Most studies in the literature review suggested that students who attend school regularly have higher academic achievement than students with high absences. This finding of this study is consistent with those studies indicating that absentees have low level of academic achievement.

This study showed how household factors influenced absenteeism among primary school pupils in schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika. Characteristics of other household members exhibited relationships with children's absenteeism, although not always consistently. The findings were in conformity with the study which was conducted in Kenya, where pupils living in female-headed households demonstrated an increased probability of missing school (Dreibelbis et al. 2013), while the sex of household head had no effect on children's attendance in Tanzania (Burke and Beegle 2004). Burke and Beegle (2004) also found that girls' weekly attendance increased with the age of the household head, perhaps reflecting the result from Grant et al. (2013) that girls in Malawi who lived with their grandmothers had lower odds of absence during their last period than those who did not. Belachew et al. (2011) investigated the relationship between severe household food insecurity and school absenteeism in Ethiopia, and found it to be significantly associated with missing school among students aged 13-17.

This study revealed that a disintegrated family background was one of the factors that contributed to learner absenteeism. The literature studied also reiterated this statement by stating that in a study conducted in the Eastern Cape, teachers reported that 74% of learners who experienced learner absenteeism came from unstable family backgrounds (Buchel 2006).

4.2.1.4 Teacher related push factors

The researcher invited the respondents to respond to questions which were related to factors which contribute to low learner attendance in schools as propagated by teachers.

One learner in school 'C' reported that:

Sometimes I fail reporting to school because of severe punishments by teachers on duty for late coming.

Most of the learners complained on the same mistreatment by their teachers, that, they do not consider the problems which cause them not to report to school regularly. These findings confirm those of a previous study by Mosek (2014) who reported that absenteeism rates were lower where there was a positive relationship between the educator and the learner. HSRS (2005:29) also stated that "punishment for late coming was so severe to the extent that instead of going to school, learners opted to stay away".

Other findings from eleven (11) parents out of fifteen (15) were complaint based. They indicated that, most of the teachers were responding harshly to the learners and were fond of punishing them severely even when they could not answer their home works. As such, children failed to report to school because of fear. Three parents from the village near school 'C' reported that:

Teachers were not found in school most of the times. They usually mentioned that they had gone for salaries leaving learners unattended to.

As a result, learners tended to engage themselves in other activities. When this tendency persists learners are left with no choice of liking school as there is perceived to be no motivation to draw them close to school. Motivation is paramount in reinforcing a behavior which is distant in a human being who should be tamed to begin to like something BF Skinner (1960).

4.2.1.5 School factors: Poor teacher / pupil relationship and bullying

The other factors are school based factors which resulted within the school context. The following school based factors were identified and were found to contribute to low learners attendance in selected primary schools.

1. Poor relationship between teachers and learners.
2. Bullying by friends.

4.2.1.5.1 Teacher / Pupil poor relationship

Teacher's attitudes towards the learners were also mentioned in this study as a reason for learner low attendance in schools. Studies done by Kearney (2008) and Reid (2005) reported that poor relationship between teachers and learners may force the learners to stay home instead of attending school. If learners have a poor or conflicting relationship with the teachers they try to avoid those teachers by not attending school. Two learners in school (B) reported that

I and my friends we don't come to school regularly because our teacher like making funnies of us because of the village where we come from. So other learners will laugh at us.

Poor relationship between teachers and learners was also highlighted by parents who participated in the study that, teachers who had poor relationship with their children, parents also developed bad attitude towards them. One parent had the following to say:

Am not happy with the bad comments passed by teacher (X) towards my child that, there is no one who is educated in your family. So even you, you won't make it just join your father in the exercise of catching fish.

The same parents further added that:

The problem which is there is that, there are only three teachers at this school, so even if you complain towards one teacher, your child will still be handled by that same teacher. Staffing levels are very poor.

The researcher observed that, negative attitude of teachers towards learners led to learners non - attendance of school. This observation was confirmed by Moseku (2004:38) who argued that, “in most British Cities, learners maintained that, negative attitudes displayed by teachers drove them out of school”. Hendron (2014:69) also reported that, “learners miss school if they feel that attending class will not improve their grades because their relationships with teachers are poor”. Similarly, Moseku (2004) argues that:

Learners' absenteeism rates are lower in the cases where there is a positive relationship between teachers and the learners.

It was discovered that teachers overstay in town when they happen to go for salaries, making learners not to attend lessons because no one attends to them. This led to learners' irregular attendance in school because it may happen that only one teacher remains in school. This is as a result of lack of transport from one main land across the lake to the shores of the school as there was only one passenger boat to ferry people and usually moved on Wednesdays and Fridays.

In this study, absenteeism occurred where learners avoided certain teachers and negative attitudes displayed by some teachers which drove them out of school. Insults and humiliating remarks by the teachers also led to school non-attendance. This was also found by HSRC (2005),

who found that punishment for late coming was so severe to the extent that instead of going to school learners opted to stay away from school. Even though the practice of corporal punishment has been abolished in the Zambian school system, the MOE (2006) revealed that the practice of corporal punishment was abolished, though the target schools still used it. As a result learners engaged in unauthorized absenteeism in order to avoid punishment.

4.2.1.5.2 Bullying in school

Bullying was mentioned to be the other cause of low learner attendance in this study. Bullying was seen to be closely related with violence. In school 'C', three boys were reported to be notorious and that they terrorized their friends. These boys are older than others and big in stature because they started school late. When learners were being interviewed, they mentioned this unruly behavior that is exhibited by these three boys. One of them had this to say:

These three big boys like bullying other learners just because they are being laughed at in class when they fail.

A similar incident happened to some learners in school 'B' where some learners attested to the fact that sometimes they had to stop coming to school for fear of their friends from other villages who usually commanded them to be bringing them wild fruits, failure to which they were threatened to be beaten. One pupil made the following account:

We fear reporting to school because our friends from the next village demand that we bring them wild fruits such as 'mfungo' and that if we don't bring, we were to be beaten. Initially we move as a group and if others fail to come to school, it means everyone would abscond for fear of being beaten.

The study further confirmed that head teachers, teachers and parents run away from their responsibilities of taking control over children by preventing bullying in these schools. According to the findings, affected learners tend to stay home as a way of avoiding bullying, since there are no serious school policies on bullying. One of the parents that were interviewed had the following to say:

Teachers must ensure that they punish those learners who are bullying their friends and if

anything, their parents should be summoned so that they are cautioned to try and instill discipline in their children.

A survey in Ghana and Swaziland, respectively, found that students who experienced bullying in the previous 30 days were more likely to report missing school during the same period (Dunne et al. 2013), although in both cases the direction of causality is not possible to discern. With respect to teacher characteristics, an ethnographic study of junior secondary schools in Botswana and Ghana observed that student attendance and punctuality were markedly poorer in low-performing schools with lax or inconsistent management manifested by teacher lateness or absence, failure to mark student work or erratic use of disciplinary sanctions than in high performing schools characterized by strong discipline (Dunne 2007).

4.2.1.6 Parental factor: Less parental involvement in child education

Other factors identified concerns less parental involvement in their children's education. All the Head teachers interviewed from the three selected schools reported that, once parents are summoned to school over pupil absenteeism, they did not co-operate. They would rather keep their child home. Some teachers also reported that, some parents have a habit of sending their children to the market instead of encouraging them to go to school. It was also discovered that other learners were left at home looking after their siblings while their parents were out for other duties. Findings from learners about parental involvement showed that most of the parents did not encourage their children to go to school; they would rather engage their children into household chores and other activities which would help them gain income quickly. Some parents considered education as a waste of time. They believed that, it did not pay back quickly. Some of the activities which learners talked about included selling of mangoes and fish.

Parents who migrate to fishing camps saw their children drop out of school because they were left alone to care for themselves. Parents that were interviewed admitted that their children were seen around and that they did not attend school regularly. One of the parents described this issue as follows:

It is difficult for me to know my child does not go to school regularly since am only at home once a month and sometimes I do not even return, I just send food for them, so it is very difficult for me to make follow ups.

Another parent had this to say:

As a mother I came to know that my child does not attend school when he was told by his teacher to call us as parents, that if he does not call us then he risks being chased from school. Since I am rarely found home, he was made to stay away from school for three weeks for failure to call us.

In the finding of the study, it was discussed that lack of parental involvement in their child's education was a common factor brought about by majority of the interviewees. This factor plays a negative role in improving learner low attendance in school. Further studies done by Hurlock (1964) investigated that "children who were truants with their parents' knowledge and consent had adopted their parents' attitude towards school and learned to place a low value on education." Bandura's (1990) social learning theory is very informative in this respect as it justifies why learners constantly stayed away from school due to the imitation of bad attitudes from their parents of not wanting to place a high value on education.

The interviewees described the aspect of lack of parental involvement as follows:

The teachers in school 'A' reported that

It is very difficult to deal with learner absenteeism when parents are not concerned about the problem because other parents consider it not to be a serious problem.

When parents ignore their parental responsibility towards their child's education, learners' low attendance in school tends to increase.

In particular, the lack of parental involvement impacts negatively on learners' school attendance. When parents are willing to work with teachers some of the school barriers associated with learner low attendance can be overcome. Railsback (2004: 18) argues that, "there is a positive link between parental and caregiver involvement in learner education and attendance".

Teachers were frustrated by lack of parental involvement in their children’s education. This is what they said:

Most of the parents were not available even when we summon them to come and explain the absence of their child in school. Children themselves report that they are left alone when their parents shift into fishing camps and others go to the plateau area for farming? Parents who were available it’s like they were also not interested in school work. By look of things it’s like they lack role models in the village to motivate their children so they would prefer engaging their children in activities which can give them first money.

From the teachers interviewed, it was established that learners whose parents were actively involved in their education performed much better in their school work than their counterparts whose parents were not involved.

Summary of the findings of the study concerning learners’ low attendance in school is shown below.

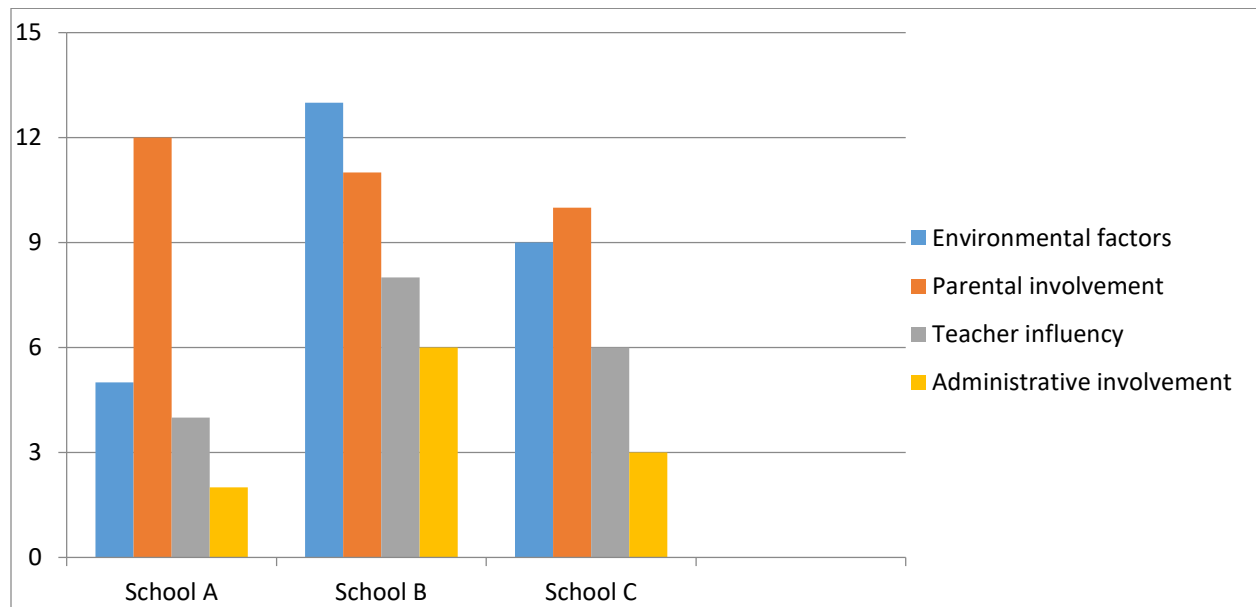


Figure 1: Showing results of factors of learner absenteeism in schools

The summary of the findings for the study shows that in school (A) parental involvement has greater influence on learners' low attendance as compared to other factors. School (B) shows that all the four factors do contribute much to low learners attendance in schools especially environmental factors and parental involvement which shows the highest readings. In school (C) the readings show that administrative involvement has less influence as compared to these other three factors.

Therefore, it is evident that the four factors raised have great influence to low learner attendance if not properly addressed.

4.3 Objective Two: To determine the levels of learner attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District.

4.3.1 Learner absenteeism rates

Learners absenteeism rates in the selected schools have been found to vary between 28% and 39%, that is according to the pupil monthly returns of the schools. Lack of parental involvement in their children's education, play a negative role in the achievement and attendance of learners. This is what one head teacher said:

Most of the pupils in this area are engaged in fishing, hence they migrate to fishing camps most of the times to assist their parents and this results in their parents' inability to monitor their children's education

Perpetual absenteeism was mentioned several times by teachers in all three schools. According to the teachers that were interviewed, learners with low attendance perform poorly in class, and that this made them to be absconding from school. The following is what one of the interviewed teachers said:

Learners tend to lose interest in school because of their poor performance, they lack motivation from their parents. Parents are not fully involved in their children's performance in school, for they do not even monitor how they fare.

Learners that were interviewed also confirmed that their poor performance contributed greatly to their dropping out of school. One learner from school 'B' had this to say:

I see no reason why I should be coming to school every day because I cannot pass, meaning I cannot be formally employed. Hence coming to school to me is a sheer waste of time. All I want to know is how to write and count, there after I will join my father's business. In fact, that is what my father has always been telling me

4.3.2 Levels of learner school attendance in primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika

According to the Head teachers and class teachers of the selected schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika, there has been a low turnout in terms of pupil school attendance. This has always been below average and worse in Kapenta breeding seasons from June to August, and the season when mangoes are ripe from September to October. A head teacher from school 'A' had this to say:

Pupils' absenteeism levels are high in these schools, especially times when there is kapenta and mango.

Another teacher from school 'C' said the following:

I would say, pupils attendance in this school is below average and there are certain times when it becomes worse, only pupils from the teachers' homes attend classes.

Most class teachers find it difficult to even maintain their records of how many pupils they have in their classes for the numbers keep on fluctuating, some pupils stay away from class for months without even caring.

Most pupils decide not to attend classes at the expense of other activities such as Bonanza without even caring about school.

It is evident from the findings that levels of absenteeism of pupils in schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika are very high. It is indicative that pupil attendance fluctuates and that it is seasonal in nature. Practically, it is influenced by other activities such as fishing, selling mangoes, and playing Bonanza. All head teachers in selected primary schools explained that pupil attendance in their schools is below average, and that it is very difficult to keep track of each and every pupil, because most of them are periodical in terms of attendance.

4.4 Objective Three: To establish the perspectives of school administrators, teachers and pupils on learner attendance and ascertain parental involvement in selected primary schools along the lake shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District.

4.4.1 Teacher and Administrator influence on learner education

Administrators have the duty to supervise teachers towards improving learners' performance which can only be achieved by improving learners' attendance in school. The findings show that Head teachers interviewed from the three selected primary schools, one Head teacher from school 'B' showed lack of interest in monitoring learner's attendance, he came out clearly that the people in the villages which surround the school have no interest in sending them to school. So they tend not to encourage them, they consider education as a by the way activity.

4.4.2 Parents involvement in curbing learner absenteeism in lake shore schools

Parents under some catchment area in school 'B' complained that they are not fully involved in school affairs; hence they do not know some of the activities which take place in school. The head teachers in school 'B' was reported that, he distance himself from the community. Parents further reported that some teachers like going to the BOMA where they have left their wives and they take too long to report back to school, this also contributes a lot to learner's low attendance in school. Because learners would go to school and find that there is no teacher to attend to them and they are always sent back home by the school authorities.

4.5 Objective Four: To find out strategies and policies which have been put in place to address learners' attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District

In order to collect views on the strategies and policies school administrators have devised to address learner attendance, learners, teachers and Head teachers were interviewed and probed.

4.5.1 Strategies used in primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika to address absenteeism

Despite acknowledging a range of structural barriers to school attendance, most participants nevertheless considered students responsibility for their own absenteeism. Indeed, most suggestions to improve attendance in their communities revolved around correcting personal failings, rather than addressing external constraints. Pupils from schools 'A' and 'C' had this to say:

We need to take the responsibility of checking if our hair needs cutting and ask for money before we are sent away from school.

I think to reduce absenteeism we need to keep our clothes clean all the time and we should ask for soap from our parents.

If we children stop concentrating on football this can help us concentrate more on school.

What can help to reduce absenteeism is when we work hard in school.

In assigning responsibility for attendance to pupils themselves, participants typically favoured enforcing strict punishments for students who missed school or arrived late. They considered these punishments necessary to prevent future episodes of absenteeism or late arrival, to deter other pupils from following a bad example, or to live up to the standard of behaviour expected of committed pupils. One pupil from school 'B' had this to say:

It's necessary that a pupil who misses school should be punished because if they fail to punish him, he becomes happy and decides to miss school again. He even boasts that there is nothing that

teachers do when I miss school. If they give him a punishment after missing school, he knows that missing school is bad.

The language used by participants that missing school is ‘bad’, that a pupil’s ‘duty’ is to arrive on time reinforces the idea that school attendance holds a form of moral significance for pupils that is divorced from their daily realities. Indeed, one, described arriving late to school due to a heavy burden of household chores, but nevertheless found being punished ‘fair’ since it reflected that ‘getting to school late was wrong.’ A learner from school ‘A’ said the following:

My mother was not home so I had a lot of things to do. I was sweeping in the house cleaning dishes and mopping in the house.

Another participant demonstrated how students conceptually separated the moral significance of school attendance from their own personal experiences. However, when discussing the hypothetical case of how to treat peers who had similarly arrived late, one pupil from school ‘C’ concluded that:

It’s necessary that they should be punished, because they missed school.

All the schools indicated limited use of strategies in addressing absenteeism in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika. The common strategy mostly used to improve attendance in their communities centred of encouragements coming from each other, and that one should strive to correct.

Checking on one another when going to school help us to be consistent in terms of attendance, by doing so we encourage each other not to abscond from school.

Punishments also play a vital role in controlling pupil school attendance although most pupils stop school once they are given any form of punishment, and this has made teachers to shun away from implementing this measure.

Pupils’ who miss class are sometimes punished, but some stop coming to school once they are given any form of punishment without even caring about the outcome of staying away.

There are very limited strategies that the school authorities have put in place to curb pupil absenteeism in schools. They have even failed to implement government policy guidelines on pupil continuous absenteeism from school, for fear of losing out the majority of pupils.

4.5.2 Corporal punishment

Despite the fact that corporal punishment is not allowed in Zambian schools, almost all the learners interviewed mentioned that corporal punishment was still practiced in schools. Learners describe the issue of corporal punishment as follows:

When we report late for school teachers would beat us, so if we see that we are late we just decide to stay at home to avoid being beaten. Even when we fail to write homework in our class most learners will not come to school when homework has been given. We have no one to assist us at home.

Punishment for late coming is also confirmed in the study by HSRC (2005:29) that “*punishment for late coming was so severe to the extent that instead of going to school, learners opted to stay away from school.*”

Teachers in schools also admitted that they cannot stop practicing corporal punishment because it is a way to instill discipline in learners. Teachers reported that learners in rural schools were older than those in town schools so they had no alternative measure to instill discipline in the absence of corporal punishment. To support their argument teacher participants had the following claim to make.

I understand that corporal punishment is not allowed; now management has not provided alternatives for instilling discipline in school learners. The government should come up with disciplinary measures to replace corporal punishment.

Teachers reported on standard procedures and measures to deal with truancy and late coming, lack of policy on controlling truancy and late coming gave rise to learner absenteeism. Two teachers reported respectively:

There is no policy in place to deal with late coming and truancy so there is nothing that we can do to such learners. These learners are aware that arriving late for school is an offence they do it deliberately even if we change the reporting time for school.

This study further revealed that there was a close link between learners' low attendance and late coming. In school (A) teachers reported that late coming was the first stage before learners become chronic absentees. Late coming was mentioned by majority of the teachers and that it attracted corporal punishment.

4.5.3 Register attendance tracking strategy

Class attendance registers remain a strategy used by teachers to determine learner attendance in schools so as to address it inclusively. The class teachers and all head teachers that were interviewed attested to the fact that, the design and layout of class attendance registers create loopholes which are easily manipulated by class teachers. One head teacher from school 'A' said the following:

There are inconsistencies in the way registers are handled; teachers are lazy in terms of marking of class attendance registers, to catch up, one teacher had marked a certain learner present and this learner was admitted in the hospital at the time.

The study further reviewed that lack of proper accountability on the part of the school management team is partly to blame for not giving proper or current statistics of learners' attendance in school.

Learners tend to absent themselves from school during times when other teachers go to draw their salaries from town because sometimes they over stay in town since other teachers have left their families in town. Therefore, learners from different grades are forced to share one classroom which makes learning difficult. One learner from school 'A' had this to say:

It is useless to go to school towards month-end because we are forced to learn with other grades and learning is not usually effective. It is better to stay at home than spend time in school just playing outside and cleaning teachers' houses, surroundings and drawing them water.

Teachers who participated in the study revealed that they have work load to teach because of poor staffing levels in school. Teachers from school 'B' had this to say concerning the unreliability of the class registers.

As teachers, we have a heavy work load because we have more classes to teach due to poor staffing levels, so it is difficult for us teachers to effectively teach and up to date registers..

The other teacher in the same school reported that policies regarding learner absenteeism were lacking in school and this is what he had to say:

In township schools things work completely different from rural schools when it comes to absenteeism. Guidelines could be there stating that learners who absent themselves from school for ten consecutive days those learners should be withdrawn from the class register which is not the case in our schools. If we happen to apply that in our school then we can remain with no learner in school.

There are no standard procedures to tackle learner low attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District.

Family factors also have an impact on absenteeism, and academic achievement. Most literature from different studies revealed that the rate of student absenteeism differ in respect to parents' educational level and income. Family factors predicted student absenteeism and academic achievement. It was found that pupils' whose mothers and fathers did not receive high school/college education reported higher rate of school absenteeism. This is in conformity with Henry's study in 2007, who noted that students whose mother or father has college degree, had a lower chance of being absent from school. The finding of this study supported the link between school absenteeism and parents' education level as also found by Oztekin, (2013), and Yildiz and Kula (2011), who suggested that low parents' education level has negative effects on school absenteeism.

4.6 Summary

This chapter has discussed the four main objectives through various emerging themes. It categorically presented findings and gave a critique and a discussion by relating to related

literature as well as through the lenses of the theories that informed the study. The next chapter presents summary, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Overview

The previous chapter presented main findings of the study. This chapter therefore, presents the summary, conclusion of the study and the possible recommendations by the researcher basing on the findings of the study.

5.2. Summary

The study investigated the factors associated with learner's low attendance in selected primary school along the shore of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District of Northern Province Zambia. In this study, the researcher was guided by the following objectives; to evaluate factors associated with low learner's attendance in selected primary schools in order to find strategies on how learner's attendance can be managed; to determine the levels of learners attendance in selected primary school so as to establish how they can be addressed; to establish the perspectives of school administrators, teachers and pupils on low learners' attendance and ascertain parental involvement in their children's Education, and to find out what strategies and policies have been put in place to address learners' attendance in selected primary schools.

The case study design was employed in this study in order to investigate factors associated with schools along the shore of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District of Northern Province Zambia. The target population for the study was Head teachers, teachers, and pupils from selected primary schools and parents from surrounding villages of the selected schools. The sample size consisted of 42 respondents. The researcher arrived at the sample by use of purposive sampling from selected primary schools along the shore of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District. Data as was collected by use of interview guide for Head teachers, teachers and parents, and a focus group discussion was done with the learners. Document study was also done to investigate learners' attendance in school. Qualitative data gathered by the above instruments were analyzed by use of thematic analysis. Specific themes were analyzed theoretically.

The findings from the study have revealed a good number of factors associated with low learner's attendance in primary schools. Among the factors which strongly came out were: Long distance to school, lack of parental involvement in their children's education, peer influence due to social activities which happen in their villages, because of traders who go to buy fish and Kapenta in the same villages. Teachers' influence was also a factor contributing to low learners' attendance in school, in that punishment and responding harshly to learners even absenteeism of teachers in some schools cause learners not to report regularly to school. Lack of parental sensitization on the importance of education by school administrators was also a contributing factor towards low learners' attendance in school. Because in rural areas most of the parents are illiterates they don't know the benefits of education to their children. School authorities needed to create awareness.

5.3. Conclusion

The study was anchored on managing learner's attendance in schools among a selected number of primary schools along the lake shore of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu District of Northern Zambia. Four objectives set to achieve this concern. The following were findings and conclusions:

Firstly, the study sought to evaluate factors associated with learner attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu district. Various factors were evaluated and the results showed that many of them were as a result of lack of concern of learner or child education in the case of teachers and parents respectively. If they all applied themselves to helping learners see relevance in their education, these would cease to be negative factors.

Secondly, the study wished to determine the levels of learner attendance in selected primary schools along the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Mpulungu district. Various findings were brought up with regards to the levels of attendance. It was reviewed that usually, the level of attendance was average per term. This was as good as the entire population not attending school. The conclusion reached was that, levels need to increase of attendance from average to almost full as this encourages other perpetual absentees to improving.

Thirdly, the study wanted to establish the perspective of school administrators, teachers and pupils on learner attendance and ascertain parental involvement in selected primary schools

along the lake shores of Lake Tanganyika. The findings showed that, some administrators lost hope in improvement of pupil attendance due to cultural attitudes developed by people (families) of the lake shore who seem not to see value in education investment. Parents in as much as they complain for not being involved in matters affecting their children, they are not supportive of school initiatives meant to improve their children academic wellbeing. Teachers try their best but they are also faced with unique challenges which draw them back from putting in their all. The conclusion is that, stakeholders should collectively find a way of supporting education in communities for the poor attitude to end.

Lastly, the study sought to find out strategies and policies put in place by school administrators to address learner attendance. Among the identified strategies include: corporal punishment, general punishments and register tracking. However, the conclusion has been that, on the part of learners, there should be a sense of self-discipline and seriousness. They perceived contributing factors as environmental factors both school and home environments, less parental involvement in children's education, teachers' influence on learners' attendance. Most of the participants confirmed that these factors contribute much low learners' attendance in school. Therefore, motivation of learners by school authorities and parents could cause a positive response towards learners' attendance in school.

5.4. Recommendations

At the end of the study the researcher suggested the following possible recommendations basing on the most common reasons for learners' poor attendance in primary schools and how those can be managed by the Ministry of General Education and the Head teachers in primary schools.

- a. School authorities should take interest in sensitizing parents due to the fact that most parents in rural areas are illiterate and they need to be encouraged by involving them in school activities so that they can provide greater support for their child's education.
- b. School authorities should formulate school-based policies aimed at encouraging parental involvement in their children school affairs and help curb poor learner attendance in schools.
- c. School management should encourage teachers to visit nearby schools to find out what strategies are being implemented in school in reducing low attendance.

- d. A school should be made an interesting place where learners must look forward to attend class. Therefore, their school authorities and teachers should think about creating ways of making the school environment interesting to pupils.

REFERENCES

- Agyemang, D.K. (1988). *Sociology of Education for African students*. Accra: Blackmast Publishers.
- Burt, C. (1969). *The Backward Child*. London: University of London Press.
- Central Statistical Office, (2012). *Zambia 2010 census of population and housing*. Lusaka: CSO
- COOK, D.L. and Esenin, A. (2010). *Factors Influencing students' absenteeism in primary schools in Jamaica*. Caribbean Curriculum 17(1) 33 – 57
- Collins, P. (1998). Negotiating selves: reflections on unstructured interviewing
[www. Socresonline. Org. uk/3/3/2.html](http://www.Socresonline.Org.uk/3/3/2.html)
- Community Agency for Social Enquiry and Joint Education Trust (2007) Director @case.
[Organization.za/http://www.case organisation.](http://www.caseorganisation.za)
- Crowther, J. (1995). Oxford English Dictionary: Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Davies, J. D. and Lee, J. (2006). “To attend or not to attend? Why some students choose schools and others reject it.” Support for learning. 21 (4) 204 -209
- Formin, S.D. and Forge J. W. (2005). Central Africa: Cries Reforms and Reconstruction. Dakar Council for the Development of social Research in Africa.
- Finlay, K. (2005). School Attendance Tracing: Challenges and effective practices. National centre for school Engagement. United Kingdom
- Finlay, J. (2006). Re-engaging Youth. In school Education of the Truancy Reduction Demonstration Project. Denve Co. Colorado foundation for families and children.
- Franel, M. and Finlayson A. (1988). Children's Perceptions in high and low delinquency school, London: ward lock Education.
- Gardners, J.W. (2012) Collaborative approach to Reducing non-attendance among K12 students
[http://www gardner centre Stanford](http://www.gardnercentrestanford.org). Accessed on 24 – 07 – 2014
- Harvinghust. R.J. and Newargaten B.L. (1966). Society and Education. New York: Umwin Publications.

- Hurlock, E. (1964). *Child Development*. Tokyo: Tosho Printing Company Limited
- Hendran. M.C. (2014). *School Climate, absenteeism and psychopathology among truant youth*. Unpublished MA dissertation Las Vegas: university of Nevada.
- Hunt, A (2007). *Schooling Citizens’ study of policy in practice in South Africa*. Unpublished D Phithesis. Brighton, University of Sussex.
- Kasanda, S.M. and Sakala, C.T. (2006). *Learning achievements at middle basic level: Zambia National Assessment Report*. Lusaka MOE.
- Koonty, H. and Welhrich, H. (1990) *Essentials of management* (5th ed. MC Grow - Hill
- Malcom, H., Wilson, V., Davidson, J. and Kirks, J. (2003) *Absence from school: A study of its causes and effects in seven LEA’S*. the SCRA Centre. Glasgow. University of Glasgow
- Mosek, M. (2004). *The Nature of Truancy and life world of truants in secondary school*, University of south Africa, Pretoria –thesis.
- MOE (1996). *Education our future: National Document*. Lusaka: MOE
- MOE (2012). *The ministry of Education Statistical Bulletin for 2012*. Lusaka: MOE
- Miller, S.E. and Leinhardt. G. (1987). *Experimental Features of secondary schooling for high students/ part Academic integration*, paper presented at the annual conference of American Educational Research Association, Washing D.C
- Nelson Mandela Foundation (2005). *Emerging voices: A report in education in such Africa Rural Communities*. Cape Town: HRSC Press.
- Ndlap R. V. (1997). *Truancy in black Schools: the role of parents* (unpublished M.Ed Dissertation Raand Afrikaans University South Africa.
- Okumbe J. A. (1998). *Educational management: theory and practice*. Nairobi: Nairobi University Press.
- Reld. K (2006). *Raising school Attendances: A case study of Good practice in monitory and Raising standards, quality Assurance in Education*. Vol.14 No 03 pp. 199 – 216

- Reld, K (2005). The cause, views and traits of school absenteeism and truancy Research in Education. (74) 59 – 82.
- Rice, P.F (1981). The adolescent development relationship and culture.
- Railsback, J. (2004). *Increasing student attendance strategies from Research and practice*. Portland: North West Regional Educational Laboratory.
- Robison, M. (1978). *Schools and Social work*. London: Rutledge and Kegan Paul Limited.
- Smith, P.J. and Cronje, G.J. (1999). *Management Principles: A Contemporary South African edition (Eds)*. Kenwyn: Juta and co, Ltd.
- Teasley, M.L. (2004). Absenteeism and Truancy Rick, Protection and best Practices implications for school workers. Children and school, 26 (2) 117 – 128.
- United National Education and Cultural organization (UNESCO), (2004). *Education for all in business for all*. Windhoek: UNESCO.
- UNESCO (2010). *Education for all Global monitoring report*. Lusaka: UNESCO.
- UNICEF (1999). *A Thematic and Documentary review: Preparatory review of GRZ/UNICEF education programme*. Lusaka: UNICEF.
- Wittenberg, M. (2005). *The school in South Africa, Working Paper No 113*. Cape Town: Centre for social science Research, University of Cape Town.
- Yazzle-Mintz, E. (2009). *Engaging that voices of students. A report on the 2007 and 2008 High school survey of student of engagement*. Bloomington: In Centre for evaluation and education policy.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule for Head teacher

DATE

SCHOOL

GENDER

The purpose of this study is to find out what strategies head teachers use to manage learner's low attendance in primary schools.

1. What do you understand by the term learner attendance?
2. What is the state of learners' attendance at your school?
3. What is the responsibility of the following stakeholders towards learner attendance at your school?
 - Teachers
 - Parents
4. Which policies have you put in place at your school to control learners' low attendance?
5. In your opinion are the policies effective to control learners' low attendance in school.
 - If yes how are the policies effective to monitor learners' attendance?
6. Apart from the class attendance register, which other documents are in place to monitor learners' attendance?
 - If other documents are in place how effective are they towards the control of learners' low attendance in school?
 - If the documents are not effective why?
7. What do you think are the causes of learner's non-attendance at your school?
8. What management functions do you use to influence regular learners attendance?
9. How do you use these management functions to influence regular learners' attendance?
10. Which recommendations, suggestions or proposals as head teacher can be implemented by the Ministry of Education to affect learner attendance?

Appendix II: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule for Teachers Managing Learner's Attendance in Selected Primary School

The purpose of this study is to find out what strategies teachers use to manage learners low attendance in primary schools.

1. Between boys and girls who are frequently absent from school.
2. What is the relationship between teachers and parents in trying to alleviate learners absenteeism?
3. What kind of support do learners get from their parents in terms of encouraging them to attend school regularly?
4. What do you consider as a major role you have to play as a teacher to curb learners' low attendance in school?
5. What do you think are some of the causes for low learners' attendance in school?
6. How often do you mark the class attendance register?
7. What measures do you put in place in your class for learners who are often absent from school?
8. What measure has management put in place to combat low learners attendance in school?
9. What do you suggest should be done to solve the problem of low learners' attendance in school?

Appendix III: Focus Group Interview Schedule for Learners Who Are Frequently Absent

1. For how long have you been at this school?
2. What is it that you like most about this school?
3. How far is your home from school?
4. How do you feel when you arrive at school after walking long distance?
5. Are you punished for reporting late for school?
6. Do your teachers understand your situation?
7. What activities do you do at home before reporting for school and after knocking off?
8. Do you live with your parents?
9. What do your parents do to earn a living?
10. What causes you not to attend school regularly?

Appendix IV: Interview Guide for Parents

1. What do you do to earn a living?
2. Do you stay with your child on daily basis, if not why?
3. Are you aware that most of the days your child doesn't make it to school?
4. If the answer is yes to question three, what have you done to help your child's?
5. Have you discussed this problem of non-attendance with your child's teacher?
6. If the answer is yes to question 5, did your child get any help. If the answer is no, why?
7. Are you as a parent monitoring the attendance of your child?
8. How often are you involved in your child's education?
9. How frequently do you check your child's school work?
10. If the answer is yes to question 9 are you satisfied with the progress of your child's school work?
11. What activities is your child involved in at home?
12. What do you think could be the factors associated with school attendance of children in your area?
13. What do you think can be done to improve learners' low attendance in school?
14. How is the relationship between you and the members of staff?
15. For how long have you been staying in this village?