

**FACTORS AFFECTING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS
IN CONTINUING EDUCATION SCHOOLS: A CASE OF CENTRAL,
SOUTHERN AND WESTERN PROVINCES OF ZAMBIA.**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, **Irene Nandila Moola**, hereby declare that this dissertation is a representation of my own work, that it does not incorporate any published materials from other dissertations and has not been previously submitted for a degree at The University of Zambia or any other University

Signed.....

Date.....

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation of Irene Nandila Moola is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education (Sociology of Education) by The University of Zambia.

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on factors affecting academic performance of learners in Continuing Education Schools in Zambia. It was prompted by the learners' general poor performance in class, termly assessments, the Junior Secondary School Leaving Examinations and the General Certificate of Education Examinations. The sample comprised four out of thirteen continuing education schools in the country; two rural based and two urban based.

The research targeted 152 participants in total. These were categorised into three groups namely: head teachers, teachers and pupils. The age of the participants ranged from sixteen to fifty and comprised both males as females.

The study used both purposive and simple random techniques of sampling. It employed both the qualitative and quantitative data collection tools which included questionnaires, interview guides, a focus group discussion guide and observation. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools were employed in order to ensure efficiency and accuracy in data collection. Qualitative data was analysed thematically by coding, while information from questionnaires was analysed by use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) which generated the tables and percentages.

The findings of the study revealed that the unsatisfactory academic performance of learners in continuing education schools was due to a number of factors such as; inadequate teaching and learning materials, lack of proper infrastructure, over-enrolment, low teacher morale, few qualified teachers, rampant teacher and pupil absenteeism, insufficient funding and low staffing levels.

In line with its findings, the study made a number of recommendations to policy makers and school managers and these were; (i) MOE should increase funding to continuing education schools, (ii) MOE and school boards should find ways of motivating teachers and raising their morale, (iii) measures should be taken by school administrators to curb absenteeism among teachers and pupils and (iv) MOE should increase supervision and carry out routine monitoring and evaluation of educational standards in Continuing Education Schools for quality assurance.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my three children; Kasamba, Hambulo and Moola for their great encouragement and endurance of my long absences from home.

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I wish to thank my supervisor Mr G.N. Sumbwa for his valued fatherly advice and exceptional guidance during the preparation of this dissertation. I also thank my lecturers Dr O. C. Chakulimba and Dr K. Kalimaposo for their valued contribution towards my knowledge and giving consent for this study to be conducted. May the Lord bless you all.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

GCE.....	General Certificate of Education
ODL.....	Open and Distance Learning
ILO.....	International Labour Organisation
MOE.....	Ministry of Education
SPSS.....	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
PTA.....	Parents Teachers Association
UNESCO.....	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA.....	United States of America

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study and the definitions of some terms used in the chapter.

1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In this era of globalization and technological revolution, education is considered as a first step for every human activity. It plays a vital role in the development of human capital linked with an individual's wellbeing and opportunities for better living (Battle and Lewis, 2002). It is also considered as one of the social institutions that contributes significantly towards the construction and maintenance of social order. Education is further described as a process by which a young adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society in which he lives.

Saxton (2002), has described education as a process by which a young adult develops the ability, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society in which he lives. He adds that education ensures the acquisition of knowledge and skills that enable individuals to increase their productivity and improve their quality of life. This increase in productivity also leads towards new sources of earning which enhances economic growth of a country.

According to Jarvis, (2011), there are a variety of factors that affect adult learning in any particular situation and may cause adults to behave more or less closely to the core principles. They include individual learner and situational differences, goals and purposes for learning. Hence adult learning works best in practice when it is adapted to fit the uniqueness of learners and the learning situations, as long as they are considered in concert with factors that are present in the situation.

The quality of students' performance remains at top priority for educators. It is meant for making a difference locally, regionally, nationally and globally. Educators, trainers and researchers have long been interested in exploring variables contributing effectively for quality of performance of learners. These variables that affect students' quality of academic

achievement are made inside and outside the school. And these may be termed as student factors, family factors, school factors and peer factors (Crosnoe, Johnson and Elder, 2004).

Unfortunately, defining and measuring the quality of education is not a simple issue and the complexity of this process increases due to the changing values of quality attributes associated with the different stakeholders' view point (Blevins, 2009).

Upon attainment of independence in 1964, the government of Zambia recognised the importance and relevance for continuing education. Therefore, in the Educational Reforms of 1977, emphasis was put on the need to establish continuing education centers and schools to provide an opportunity to those who could not complete Junior or Senior secondary school education to do so. In short, this programme was designed to cater for school drop-outs (i.e. people who left school for one reason or another) to continue with their education (MOE, 1977).

Hence, the government embarked on establishing continuing education schools and centres in every province to run side by side with main stream schools in order to meet this noble cause. During the time of this study, there was a total of thirteen Continuing Education schools offering formal education and skills training to those who want to continue with their schooling in the country.

However, it has been noted that little is known about these institutions in the country and yet they cater for quite a large number of students doing formal education, running from grade eight to twelve and offer basic skills training to others in carpentry and joinery, tailoring and designing, nutrition, catering, bricklaying and secretarial studies among others.

Continuing education is a non formal kind of education which is not offered in the formalised school system but structured, in most cases to suit the learning needs of the learners in terms of time and content. This form of education is offered by government institutions as well as non - governmental organisations, businesses and churches. It usually is provided in a parallel manner with the formal teaching provided in schools and colleges. The mode of instruction is face to face contact during the day, after work, in the evening, over the weekend or through distance education. Under distance education, instruction is provided mainly through print media, radio, television, computer network or residential school (MOE, 1977).

Each Continuing Education school in the country has two sections namely; the technical and practical skills section and the academic section which offers formal education. The technical and practical skills section offers basic practical skills in carpentry, bricklaying, electrical, farming, nutrition, sewing, secretarial sectors among others while the academic section offers formal education at both at primary and secondary school levels. Those who wish to re-sit for General Certificate of Education (GCE) can also attend fulltime or evening classes (MOE, 1996) at these institutions which serve as examination centres.

Although there is an enormous growth in the number of students to be reached through the continuing education programme, the capacity to sustain immediate and rapid growth does not exist (MOE, 1996). The main problem has been that of money with which to pay the teachers, buy books and materials, develop infrastructure and so forth. The lecturers and tutors are paid per hour and the problem of finances forced the government to reduce the number of classes in the 1970s (Educational Reforms, 1977). Another problem is that some individuals may find themselves teaching classes for which they are not trained nor have the experience for. Furthermore, because continuing education centres are not located in every community around the country, this has disadvantaged a number of citizens (MOE, 1996).

Propagating the need for continuing education in the country, Mumba (2001) argues that non formal education should complement what formal education does. She adds that although there was a general expansion in the provision of education soon after independence in the 1960s and 1970s, not all school age going children are in school today. This situation was worsened, she says, during the late 1980s and early 1990s by the worsening economic situation in the country brought about by the Structural Adjustment Programme. (Mumba, 2001).

Lindeman (1961) adds that, naturally, individuals who undertake continuing education seem to want among other things, intelligence, power, self-expression, freedom, creativity, appreciation, enjoyment or fellowship. These individuals have a desire to count for something and for their talents to be utilized. In other words, they want all these realizations to be shared in communities of fellowship and so that their aspirations can be properly expressed.

Lungwangwa (1999) reiterates the importance of continuing education by mentioning that limitations of formal schooling have been increasing over the years and many children are growing up without opportunities for leaning. Even among those who enter primary

education, a significant proportion drops out before completing the primary school circle. There is belief currently gaining ground among scholars that non formal education represents a solution to the deficiencies of formal education as a panacea to the developmental needs of third world countries (Egbezor and Okanezi, 2008).

Disclaimer

The researcher found scanty literature on research based on factors affecting academic performance of learners in Continuing Education schools in Zambia. The only studies done on Continuing Education schools in Zambia the researcher came across are those done by Musonda Luchembe (1992) and the one by Nakweti Mboma (2013) on skills training in Continuing education Schools.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Following government's recommendations in the Educational Reforms (1977) and Focus on Learning document (1996) on the need to have continuing education schools and centres established to enable adults and youths who could not complete their schooling due to one reason or another to continue with their education, the government has set up a total of thirteen continuing education schools in the country. Unfortunately, the academic performance of learners in such schools seems to be below expectation. (MOE, 2010). The performance of learners in these institutions is low compared to those in regular schools (Mulopo, 2010). Little research exists in the Zambian context to show factors that adversely affect the academic performance of learners in such schools. To that effect, the factors causing poor performance of the learners is not known. This study, therefore, was aimed at establishing factors that are responsible for the learners' low performance in the continuing education schools.

1.3. Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the factors affecting the academic performance of formal education learners in selected Continuing Education schools.

1.4. OBJECTIVES:

1.4.1 General objective:

To establish factors affecting academic performance of learners in the academic section of Continuing Education schools.

1.4.2 Specific objectives:

1. To determine factors affecting the academic performance of learners in Continuing Education schools.
2. To assess the availability of teaching and learning resources in Continuing Education schools.
3. To assess the staffing levels in Continuing Education schools
4. To identify the challenges faced by teachers and administrators in the provision of education in Continuing Education schools.
5. To suggest ways in which the academic performance of learners in Continuing Education schools could be improved.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What factors affect the academic performance of learners in Continuing Education schools?
2. Are there sufficient teaching and learning resources in Continuing Education Schools?
3. How are the staffing levels in Continuing Education schools?
4. What challenges do teachers and administrators face in the provision of education in Continuing Education schools?

5. In what ways may the academic performance of learners in Continuing Education schools be improved?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study might provide valuable information to government, school administrators and teachers on how best to address problems related to learners' academic performance in continuing education schools. Furthermore, the findings may contribute to the already existing body of knowledge in the area of Continuing Education.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The findings of the study could not be generalized to other Schools for Continuing Education in the country as the study covered only four schools out of the thirteen in the country due to logistical constraints. Another limitation was that only a total of 152 respondents out of the four institutions altogether participated in the study due to time factor. However, the researcher endeavoured as much as possible to ensure that the research was a success.

1.8. Definitions of terms

Academic performance - performance in an academic subject as opposed to that in a skills or technique.

Continuing Education Centre - an institution smaller than a school that enables people who stopped learning in regular schools at any lower levels of the educational strata to continue with their education.

Continuing Education School-a school that enables people who stopped learning in regular schools at any lower levels of the educational strata to continue with their education.

Formal education - academic schooling done during regular hours of the day and covering a study syllabus.

Literacy - knowledge of reading and writing

Learners - a student or pupil in a school or any other education institution

Philanthropist - a person who for the love of his fellow human beings gives donations to schools to enable them to acquire education to improve their lives.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the literature reviewed relating to the concept and development of continuing education. The researcher has also highlighted its origins and spread to other parts of the world including Zambia in order to give a broader perspective of its development. The chapter also discusses the relevance of Continuing Education and reviews factors affecting academic performance and achievement from other written sources and studies done by other scholars.

2.2. The Concept of Continuing Education

Continuing Education is a non formal kind of education which is not offered in the formalised school system but structured in most cases to suit the learning needs of the learners in terms of time and content (MOE, 1977). Mumba (1985) describes non formal education as any 'systematic learning that is provided outside the formal system to meet the learning needs of adults as well as children'. Unlike other types of education, continuing education is defined by the student population rather than by the content or complexity of a learning programme (Lowe, 1972). It includes literacy teaching, community development, university programmes, on-the-job training, and formal education.

Institutions offering education to adults include government units and centres, colleges, non-governmental organisations, and churches. It is usually provided parallel to the formal teaching provided in schools and colleges. The mode of instruction is by face to face contact during the day, after work, in the evening, over the weekend or by distance education. Where the learner and teacher are at some distance from each other most of the time, instruction is provided mainly through print media, radio, television, a computer network or residential school (MOE, 1977). In some countries such as Ireland and the United Kingdom, continuing education is generally referred to as 'adult education' (Lindeman, 1961). Hence, policy makers as well as funding agencies see non formal education as one of the alternatives to formal schooling that may assist developing countries in the modernization process.

2.3. Historical Background of Continuing Education

Continuing Education started as early formal adult education activities which focused on single needs such as reading and writing around the 18th century. According to Microsoft Encarta, (2009), many early programmes were started by churches to teach people to read the Bible. Later, programmes were adjusted to meet more general educational needs of the population. Eventually, as more people experienced the benefits of education, they began to increasingly participate in social, political, and occupational activities. And by the 19th century, adult education was developing as a formal, organized movement in the western world. For example, in America, the largest early adult educational programme, the Lyceum, founded in 1826 in Massachusetts by Josiah Holbrook, was a result of a need by a local association of men and women with some schooling who wanted to expand their own education while working. According to the Encarta (2009), the Lyceum movement encouraged the development of other adult education institutions such as libraries and evening schools. By the mid 19th century, employers and philanthropists began to fund institutions such as the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in 1859, in New York City and the Peabody Institute in 1857, in Baltimore, Maryland for adult education. Adult education became an early concern of the United States Government. In 1862 Abraham Lincoln signed the Morrill Act, which led to the establishment of land-grant colleges offering training in agriculture and the mechanical arts. The need to develop and provide instruction in scientific farming techniques led to the establishment in 1914 of the Federal Extension Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. The pattern of demonstration farming and extension advisers created by cooperative extension has been used to improve farming all over the world. Another form of early adult or continuing education was the Chautauqua movement, which began in 1874 in New York State as a summer training program for Sunday school teachers. It attracted large audiences as a travelling lecture series and summer school. Chautauqua was the prototype of institutions established to further adult education in the United States. And by 1876, universities started offering extension programmes that brought education directly to the public.

The rapid increase in immigration into the United States during the early 20th century resulted in the establishment of more English and citizenship classes and other Americanization programmes for immigrants. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the Federal Government established education projects as part of its work-relief programmes.

Public evening classes became the most popular means of adult education, allowing people to earn a living during the day and pursue vocational and intellectual interests in their spare time. Some institutions, such as the New School for Social Research in New York City, were devoted almost entirely to education for adults. After World War II, the adult education movement in the United States received a major impetus with the passage of the Bill of Rights, which enabled many veterans of World War II, and of later military service, to complete their education. The Higher Education Acts of 1966 and 1986 reflected the growing importance of adult, part-time college student. They authorized a separate title devoted to continuing education and several financial-aid programmes. Universities even began to offer graduate programmes in this new field.

Apart from the USA, the idea of adult education also started in Europe where formal classes also began around the 18th century. For example, the Danish Folk high school movement was formed in the mid-19th century to prevent the loss of Danish language and culture that a strong German influence threatened to absorb, (Incarta, 2009). In Britain, concern for the education of poor and working-class people resulted in the growth of adult education programs, such as the evening school and the Mechanic's Institute, to expand educational opportunities for all people.

In Africa, continuing education movements are of a more recent origin. In 1960, Egypt established a “school for the people”, a system designed to educate the adult population. The pattern used was similar to that developed in Britain a century before. After many years in which the primary educational concern was with creating public school systems, in the 1970s, countries in Africa began to increase opportunities for adult education. And innovative programmes involving the mass media were used. Tanzania, for example, used mass-education techniques and the radio to organize national education programmes in health, nutrition, and citizenship. And in a few states public co-ordinating bodies such as the Kenya Adult Education Board were established (Lowe, 1972). And by the 1980s, international educational exchange programmes involving short – term non degree study in specialized fields grew in popularity in many other countries.

2.6. Continuing Education in Zambia

Although modern education began in Zambia at the turn of the nineteenth century, when the British South African Company (BSAC) took political control of the country and was continued when the British Colonial government took over the country's administration from the company in 1924, continuing education did not emerge until the second half of the 1930s or early 1940s. This is evidenced by the Snelson (1974) report which says:

“The Tyndale – Biscoe’s Development Plan of 1938 had foreseen the need for a scheme of adult education which would enable adults to improve their conditions of life and affect the dangers of antagonism arising between the older and young generations”.

It is important to note too, that despite the Tyndale – Biscoe’s Development Plan’s portrayal of the need for adult education, not many evening classes had been set up when the Colonial Office Advisory committee issued a report on Mass education in Africa in 1944. And when Zambia got its independence in 1964, the new government was faced with many challenges in the education sector. Many children were out of school and the majority of adults were illiterate. The country was also faced with a critical shortage of indigenous skilled manpower to replace expatriates in the political, economical and social sectors, while the new government was in a hurry to develop the new independent state, (Elliot, 1971). These problems called for quick policy change in the education system.

The government therefore embarked on an increase in the establishment of evening classes particularly on the Copper belt, Lusaka and other towns. Churches and voluntary organisations joined government in the provision of evening classes. The government of Zambia realized the need for developing continuing education stating that, the education of adults was very important in a participatory democracy because as many citizens as possible needed to be enlightened in order for them to effectively play their role in the affairs of the nation (MOE, 1977). Continuing Education schools and centres were thereby established in the country by the government through the Department of Adult Education in the Ministry of Education. (MOE, 1977). So far, there are eleven such schools run by the government in the country.

Apart from those under the Ministry of Education, there are Continuing Education and Literacy Centres under the Ministry of Community Development and those set up by non-governmental organisations and church bodies. The range of programmes vary but the majority are concerned with academic subjects and skills training. In the primary sector, there are both adults and youths who attend day and evening classes for the purpose of obtaining grade seven certificates and later proceed to grade. Those under seventeen years, are allowed to join mainstream schools. Secondary education goes up to grade 12. At grade 12, learners are allowed to study four subjects which they sit for during the General Certificate of Education (GCE) examinations. (MOE, 1996). According to the Ministry of education, the academic programmes attract the greatest number of candidates in continuing education schools and both youths and adults aspire to do these courses (MOE, 1996). Apart from academic subjects, Continuing Education Schools offer basic practical skills in areas such as nutrition, farming techniques, sewing, tailoring, carpentry, bricklaying and many other skills. Although there was an enormous growth in the number of students to be reached, the capacity to sustain immediate and rapid growth did not exist (MOE, 1996). The government in one of its documents, states further that, the main problem of face to face evening classes in Zambia at the time was finance to pay the teachers, buy books and materials. The lecturers and tutors were paid per hour and in the then existing financial situation of the country, it became imperative to reduce the number of classes (Educational Reforms, 1977). Furthermore, because continuing education centres were not located in every community, there were many communities which did not have opportunity for face to face teaching (MOE, 1996).

2.8. Arguments for Continuing Education

According to Luchembe (1992), Schools for Continuing Education were established in order to teach and promote skills in youths and adults who dropped out of school. The rapid expansion of the education sector had contributed to the increase in the number of grade twelve school leavers getting into colleges and universities due to

According to Mumba (2001), non formal education should complement what formal education does. She adds that education is a basic human right for the advancement of all people in the world. Although there was a general expansion in the provision of education during the period after independence in the 1960s and 1970s, not all school age going children are in school today. This situation was worsened during the late 1980s and 1990s by

the worsening economic situation in the country as a result of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) policy.

Limitations of formal schooling have been increasing over the years. Many children are growing up without opportunities for learning. Even among those who enter primary school, a significant proportion drops out before completing the primary school circle. Examples of this limitation can be seen in the following figure;. In 1991, 40,000 school age children were not in school compared to 1,494,817, who were in school. The number of non school-going children increased to 650,000 compared to 1,506,650 who were in school in 1996 (Lungwangwa, 1999).

This means that one third of the school age children in Zambia do not attend school and therefore there is high illiteracy rate among the youths. It is estimated that the illiteracy rate of the 14 - 20 year old youths is higher than that for older persons of 21 - 30 years and 31 - 45 years (Lungwangwa, 1999). If the majority of the 14 - 20 years youths were in school, their illiteracy rate would have been the lowest as it is this group which should benefit from basic education offered in primary schools.

The increases in the drop out figures of learners are one necessitating factor for the existence of continuing education institutions. This is because drop out cases are those of people who leave school before completing their studies and therefore need opportunities of resuming such studies if they so wish.

Another factor that makes continuing education necessary has to do with recommendations made during international conferences on education.

One such conference was the World Conference on Education for All, which was held in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990. Zambia participated at this world conference and held a National Conference on Education for All in March, 1991 at which Zambia re-affirmed its commitment to Education for All children in Zambia. At this National Conference, according to (Mumba, 2001), it was recognised that one of the major problems of achieving basic education for all is the question of turning the tap of illiteracy by meeting the basic learning needs of mostly school age children, out of school youths, in addition to the learning needs of adults. And she adds that unless the people are given the means (through education) to improve their practical skills, knowledge and efficiency, to achieve self – fulfilment and understand national development and world affairs, their effective participation in national development is seriously impeded. Naturally, individuals who undertake continuing education seem to want among other things, intelligence, power, self-expression, freedom, creativity, appreciation, enjoyment or fellowship. They want to count for something, their

experiences to be vivid and meaningful, they want their talents to be utilized; and they want all these realizations for their total personalities to be shared in communities of fellowship so that their aspirations may be properly expressed (Lindeman, 1961). Lungwangwa, (1999), echoes this argument, by stating that,

“ lifelong education is the unity and totality of the educational process, a series of very specific ideas, experiments and achievements, including all its aspects and dimensions, its uninterrupted development from the first moments of life to the very last....”

2.9. What Factors affect Academic Performance of Learners in Continuing Education Schools?

According to Knowles, Holston and Swanson (2015), the resulting principles of a self-directed, experiential, problem-centered approach to learning have been hugely influential and are still the basis of the learning practices used today. Understanding these principles is the cornerstone of increasing motivation and enabling adult learners to achieve.

It also involves a plethora of extra-curricular activities that engage adults as well as children and local norms for appropriate levels of academic achievement all created on ethos, consistent throughout the school and community in which the students’ aspirations and accomplishments were circumscribed (Knowles, Holston and Swanson, 2015). These educational services are often not tangible and are difficult to measure because they result in the form of transformation of knowledge, life skills and behaviour modifications of learners). So there is no commonly agreed upon definition of quality that is applied to education field. And according to (Michael, 1998), the definition of quality of education varies from culture to culture and Goddard, (2003), alluded to the fact that the environment and the personal characteristics of learners play an important role in their academic success. The school personnel, members of the families and communities also provide help and support to students for the quality of their academic performance. This social assistance has a crucial role for the accomplishment of performance goals of students at school

In school, students learn important lessons about what they may achieve and where they are likely to fit into the larger social structure of adult life (Balantine and Spade, 2008). They develop achievement identities by fashioning interpretations of these lessons that are

dependent heavily on the curriculum knowledge that was presented in the track. Questions of the production of students' achievement are related to a second set of school 'effects' of socialization and identity formation.

According to Jarvis, (2011), there are a variety of factors that affect adult learning in any particular situation and may cause adults to behave more or less closely to the core principles. They include individual learner and situational differences and goals and purposes for learning. Hence adult learning works best in practice when it is adapted to fit the uniqueness of learners and the learning situations, as long as they are considered in concert with other factors that are present in the situation.

It is noted that Continuing Education programmes, especially in the developing countries had not met with much success due to governments' avoidance of mass literacy campaigns involving heavy government expenditure. Additionally, population growth had exceeded the capacity of available resources to cope with prevailing rates of adult literacy, resulting in the increase of illiteracy levels in the world (Lowe, 1972).

It must be noted that while the establishment of Continuing Education Schools and Centres is a positive move by the Ministry of Education in Zambia so as to increase access to education in the country, the performance of learners in these institutions is a source of concern. This is attributed to various factors notably among them is inadequate funding (Wikipedia), resulting in lack of enough textbooks and other teaching and learning materials, poor infrastructure, distance to school, over-enrolment, and teacher – related factors such as absenteeism, lack of enough supervision, non-giving of homework as well as the socio-economic status of the family the learner comes from.

2.9.1. Inadequate Funding

According to the Wikipedia (2010) funding for Continuing Education in Africa is inconsistent and inadequate and that many of the difficulties experienced could be solved by allocation of resources to meet the needs including purchasing of educational materials, appropriate training for staff and other school requisites. And this funding may come from public or private sector sources or even international and foreign aid to facilitate quality educational provision. However, the costs of much adult education seem to be kept low by the use of state facilities and by extremely low salaries paid to teachers. Due to inadequate

funding of these institutions the resultant scenario is that of failure by the school authorities to purchase enough textbooks, teaching and learning aids, develop infrastructure or to motivate the teachers. According to Wikipedia (2010), there is need for investment in capacity development, having a full, sufficiently paid and well-qualified, professionalized staff if the intended results and objectives for Continuing education are to be achieved.

On the lack of enough textbooks, Mbozi (2008) in his study of quality of education in selected schools in Livingstone and Kazungula Districts in Zambia found that limited textbooks is a factor affecting academic performance of learners. According to his study, four classes of about sixty learners each shared only four textbooks amongst them, making it difficult for teachers to effectively use them during class lessons.

Apart from lack of enough text books, another factor related to low academic performance in learners has been said to be non availability of proper school infrastructure. According to IOB in Mulopo (2010), the study carried out in Ghana indicated that a good learning environment has a significant impact on school attendance and learning outcomes. According to him, the study further alluded that, the absence of adequate school facilities such as desks, blackboards, electricity and water sanitation has a negative effect on pupil attendance and learning outcomes. Kelly and Kanyika (2000), in their study discovered that better learning occurred when learners were seated comfortably on a chair and when they had sufficient room for writing either on a table or at a desk. They recommended that not more than two Learners should be seated at a desk if good results are to be achieved.

2.9.2. Over enrolment

According to Mulopo (2010), most Zambian schools are characterized by over enrolments and this has always been a negative impact on the quality of educational achievement of learners. This is so because of higher teacher to pupil ratios, pupil to classroom ratios, pupil to book ratios and pupil to desk ratios which. He adds that these factors make learning unpleasant due to over-crowdedness in the classroom and lack of enough sitting space, in turn this promotes absenteeism among the learners (Ndoye, 2007). Teachers are also unable to give individual attention to learners thereby disadvantaging the slow learners who would have benefitted from remedial and individual attention. And Mbozi (2008), adds that over

enrolment in class made learners fail to concentrate while teachers failed to mark the books and avoided to use group work as a mode of teaching.

2.9.3. Distance to school

According to Kelly and Kanyika (2000), they indicated in their study that the time learners take to get to school lowers their academic achievement because such learners are likely to arrive late at school, have less study time than their classmates who live near the school. They may also fail to do their homework when they arrive home due to tiredness. And Mbozi (2008) also revealed that learners who covered many kilometers as they walked to school daily, arrived tired such that they failed to concentrate in class. As a result, their performance was poor (Muchimba, 2010). Birdsall and Francois (1996) in their study investigating the relationship between location (distance) and school attendance in Mali, about half the villages reported that the school was so far away that many children could not be taken for enrolment by their parents.

2.9.4. Teacher-related factors

Related literature consulted on this study further revealed that apart from the above cited factors on learners' academic performance, there are also some teacher-caused ones. For example, Mbozi (2008) allude to teacher-pupil interaction as another factor that affects academic performance of learners. By this he referred to situations where the teacher would use abusive language, threatening learners or shouting at them for various reasons. This resulted in the learners feeling out of place and inattentive in class due to fear or resentment for the teacher. Eventually such learners tended to abscond from school and perform poorly in the end. According to Mulopo (2010), the proponents of the humanistic paradigm state that an individual has freedom and ability to attain self-development or self-learning and is capable of directing his or her own learning as long as the environment is enabling. He adds that teachers are the custodians of the teaching and learning. Hence, they should take time to learn how their learners learn best and take keen interest in them. Thereby achieving quality education delivery provided the teacher place the learner at the centre of their teaching plans on the learner. In the researcher's view, this implies that the teacher must plan adequately every time, report for work on time, be resourceful and innovative as well as avoiding absconding classes.

2.9.4. Socio-economic status of family

Often the learner's school attendance depends on the income of the family. Pevely in Muchimba (2010), reiterates that cost is a factor that contributes to a learner's failure to access primary education and in a variety of situations the young adults from low income – earning homes have to work for their livelihoods. They would rather go to market places or streets to sell so that they supplement the family's income rather than attend school. This trend has contributed negatively to academic performance of learners who find themselves in such situations because they miss school most of the time, arrive late at school when lessons have already begun and have less or no time to do homework.

According to studies carried out in Sub-Saharan Africa, children coming from larger households are less likely to drop out of school (Muchimba, 2010). He adds that this interesting finding could either be attributed to the fact that the other household members seem to substitute for child labour so that the child can go to school or contribute part of their earnings to enable the younger members of the household pay school fees.

However, children or young adults in smaller households are more likely to carry out household chores and thereby be over-worked. The resultant scenario is that of late-reporting for classes, too to concentrate in class and lack of enough time to do homework or study at home.

Another socio-economic factor that is more likely to affect a learner's academic performance is the parents' educational background. Studies have shown that the children of more educated parents are more likely to perform well and progress further through school (Brahman et al, 1999). They further argue that pupils from developing countries are unlikely to progress further in their in their education because of high illiteracy levels among the adult population. They add that illiterate parents are less likely encourage their children to work hard at school.

Summary of Chapter Two

This review has shown that continuing education mainly refers to learning that is provided outside the formal school system, mostly targeting adults. It is also known as adult education in some countries such as the United Kingdom, and that this kind of education originated in the United States (USA) and Europe before it spread to Africa (Zambia included). It started mainly as a non-formal kind of education which focused on literacy to enable people read the Bible. It then developed into various forms of adult education to meet different types of people's needs and aspirations such as agricultural knowledge acquisition and voter education. In Zambia, according to the reviewed literature, the advent of continuing education is said to have followed the release of the Tyndale – Biscoe's Development Plan of 1938 which among other things stated the need for adult education for the territory, which would enable adults to improve their conditions of life. After the release of this plan, the review further states, there was an increase in the establishment of evening classes on the Copperbelt, Lusaka and other towns particularly after independence. There are thirteen Continuing Education schools in the country today which are run by the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education under the Directory of Open and Distance Learning (DODE). Each Continuing Education school has two sections namely; Skills and Academic sections. And this study is looking at factors affecting performance of learners in the Academic section. According to the review, the goals and objectives of establishing Continuing Education schools in Zambia is mainly to increase access to school drop outs and less achievers in the education system. The resultant poor academic performance borders on many factors. Among those mentioned in reviewed literature include inadequate funding by governments, poor infrastructure, over enrolment, teacher-caused factors and the socio – economic status of the learner's family. Hence the researcher set out to identify more of the factors that affect academic performance of learners in academic section of Continuing Education schools.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains the research design, population, study sample, sampling procedures, and research instruments and data collection. It also discusses ethical issues as well as data validity and reliability.

3.1 Research Design

The study was conducted using the descriptive survey design due to its suitability for describing the state of affairs as they exist. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used to increase participants' participation, hence achieving efficiency and accuracy in the data collection. Qualitative method is a form of research that involves description (Sarantakos, 1995), while Quantitative method of research is a formal, objective, rigorous, systematic process for generating information (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Additionally, the study used participant observation as another source of data collection.

3.2 Population

Population refers to a group from which the sample is drawn, (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2006). The target population for this study included the head teachers, teachers and pupils of all continuing education schools in the country.

3.3 Study sample

A sample in research refers to a subset of the population that is selected for a particular study (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2006).

The sample involved four continuing education schools and comprised one hundred and fifty (152) participants, aged from sixteen (16) and above. This was made up of four (4) head teachers (one from each school), twenty-eighty (28) teachers (seven from each school) and one hundred and twenty pupils (30 from each school) drawn from Grades 10, 11 and 12. The head teachers were involved in the study considering their administrative positions in their respective institutions. The teachers were also considered for the study as they are the ones responsible for delivering lessons, setting and conducting tests, whereas the pupils were involved since they are the recipients of the educational services.

The sampled schools were Mongu, Kabwe, Choma and Mazabuka Schools for Continuing Education.

3.4. Sampling Procedures

Sampling is a process of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group (Kombo and Orodho, 2002). The study used both purposive and simple random techniques of sampling. Purposive sampling is a sampling method where the researcher purposely targets a group of people believed to be reliable for the study; whereas simple random sampling is whereby the researcher selects at random a small group of respondents from a large population.

In the first stage of the sampling procedure, all the eleven Continuing Education schools in the country were written on pieces of paper and put in one box. The box containing these pieces of paper was shaken for the papers in the box to mix. Then a simple random sampling was conducted and the first four schools picked from the box were chosen for the study sample.

In the second stage of sampling, the head teachers were purposively selected while teachers and pupils were randomly selected. In order to select the teachers to participate in the research, the researcher obtained the number of all the teachers teaching academic classes at the selected school. She then wrote 'yes' on seven pieces of paper and 'no' on each of the rest. All the pieces of paper were put in a box which was then rigorously shaken in order for them to mix. Teachers thereafter were asked to pick a piece of paper each from the box and those who picked the ones written 'yes' were the ones who participated in the study.

In the third stage of sampling, 30 pupils were randomly selected from each school from grades 10, 11 and 12. The researcher requested to be given the number of classes in the school. She thereafter, wrote 'yes' on four of the pieces of paper and 'no' on the others. The researcher then asked class monitors to pick a paper there each. Those who picked the 'yes' ones were the ones whose classes participated in the study and those with the 'no' ones did not. Thereafter the researcher proceeded to the classes whose monitors had picked 'yes' and used the same random selection criterion Those who picked papers indicating 'yes' out of the total of all those present in class at that time are the ones who participated and those who picked the ones written 'no' did not participate.

3.5 Research Instruments

The research instruments that were used in the study included questionnaires for the pupils, interview guides for head teachers, focus group discussion guides for the teachers and observation. A questionnaire is a research instrument that gathers data over a large sample. An interview guide is a written list of questions or topics that need to be covered by the interview. Focus group discussion is usually composed of six to eight individuals who share certain characteristics, which are relevant for the study. While observation is a tool which provides information about actual behaviour.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

In research, data collection refers to the gathering of specific information aimed at proving or refuting some facts. Data was collected through questionnaires, semi-interviews, focus group discussions and observations. The researcher physically went to the selected centres to administer the questionnaires, conduct the interviews and carry out the observations. Administering the questionnaires in person ensured that assistance was given to respondents who were in need of help in understanding some questions and that all the filled questionnaires were collected for processing.

3.7 Pilot Study

It is important to mention that piloting the research instruments is a vital pedagogical tool in preparing for an authentic study. The piloting of questionnaires, interview guides, focus group discussion guides for this study was done at Imwiko Centre for Continuing Education and Namushakende Skills Training Centre in Mongu District. The piloting was done to test validity and reliability of the research instruments for the study. Additionally, piloting provided an opportunity for the researcher to establish internal consistency of questions and rephrase questions which might have not been appropriate for the required data.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

Prior to the collection of data, a pilot study was conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instruments. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006) pre-testing and piloting a study is vital for the success of any research.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical concerns are key in the provision of a pleasant atmosphere required for participants to answer questions with open minds. As per research custom, the aim of the study was clearly explained to the participants before commencing the answering of questionnaires and interviews. Furthermore, the researcher assured research participants of maximum confidentiality in their engagement in the study process. Participants in turn consented to participate in the study.

3.10. Data Analysis

The study employed both the qualitative and quantitative means to analyze the data. Quantitative data was analyzed and presented using a computer software called the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to generate charts of frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed and categorized into themes in line with the objectives of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR:

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study in accordance with the research questions and has been outlined according to the categories of the respondents. The tables show findings from the questionnaires with the learners. Findings from focus group discussions and interviews with head teachers and teachers have also been presented in prose and narrative. The findings were in line with the research questions which were as follows;

1. What factors affect the academic performances of learners in Continuing Education Schools?
2. Are there sufficient teaching and learning resources in Continuing Education Schools?
3. How are the staffing levels in Continuing Education schools?
4. What challenges do teachers and administrators face in the provision of education in Continuing Education schools?
5. In what ways may the academic performance of learners in Continuing Education be improved?

4.1. The findings from the Questionnaires with the Pupils:

4.1.1. Pupils were asked whether there were enough textbooks, readers and other educational books available in their schools. Their responses were shown in table 1 below:

Table1: Availability of text books, readers and other educational books.

Question	Type of Response	frequency	percentage
Are there enough text books, readers and other educational books in your school?	Enough	20	16.7%
	Not Enough	85	70.8%
	Not Sure	15	12.5%
	Total	120	100

Table 1 above shows the 70.8% of the pupils indicated that there were not enough text books and readers in their schools, 16.7% that were there enough text books, readers and other educational books while 12.5% were not sure. According to the above information, its clear that there were not enough text books, readers and other educational books in most of the institutions which came under study. This means that the learners lacked access to some useful information and knowledge which they needed in order for their learning to improve.

4.1.2. Pupils were asked whether there were sufficient teachers in their school. Their responses were as shown in table 2 below:

Table 2: Availability of teachers in the school:

Question	Type of Response	Frequency	Percentage
Are there sufficient teachers in your school?	Sufficient	33	27.5%
	Not sufficient	87	72.5%
	Total	120	100

Table 2 above shows that 72.5% of the pupils indicated that there weren't sufficient teachers in their schools while 27.5% showed that teachers were sufficient. It's obvious from the information given above that some subjects lacked teachers. This is a great disadvantage to the pupils because they lag behind in their lessons when there are fewer teachers available.

4.1.3. Pupils were asked to describe the rate of school fees in their school. The responses were as indicated in the table below;

Table 3: The rate of school fees:

Question	The rate of school fees	Frequency	Percentage
How do you find the rate of your school fees?	Fair	33	27.5%
	Very high	87	72.5%
	Total	120	100

Table 3 shows the that the majority of the pupils (73.5%) described the fees as being very high, while 27.5% of them answered that fees were not very high. The majority of the learners find school fees to be beyond their capacity. Therefore it's obvious that this is a big problem that adversely affect their concentration in class due to anxiety, late-reporting and

long absences from school during the times when they are still in search for money to pay at school.

4.1.4. Pupils were asked as to how many days they were absent from school during the previous term. Their responses were as follows in table 4:

Table 4: The number of days the pupils were absent from school during the previous term:

Question	Type of Response	Frequency	Percentage
How many days were you absent from school altogether during the last term?	0 days	22	18.4%
	2 – 3 days	25	20.8%
	More than 5 days	73	60.8%
	Total	120	100

Table 4 above indicates that the majority of the pupils (60.8%) missed school for a total number of more than five days during the previous, 20.8% for 2-3 days while 18.4% did not miss any day during the previous term. It is evident from the responses in table 4 that the majority of the learners were absent from school for more than 5 days during the term under review.

4.1.5. Pupils were asked about the attendance of teachers to their classes. The responses were as indicated in table 5 below:

Table 5: Teachers’ attendance to their classes:

Question	Type of Responses	Frequency	Percentages
How would you describe the teachers’ attendance to their classes?	Good	48	40%
	Not good	72	60%
	Total	120	100

Table 5 indicates that the majority of the pupils (60%) said that teachers' attendance to their classes was not good, while 40% said it was good. It's obvious that the majority of the teachers did not regularly attend to their lessons as indicated in the table above. This robs the learners of valuable learning time and results in learners not performing well in their lessons and school examinations.

4.1.6. Pupils were asked how often their teachers gave homework. Their responses were as shown in table 6 below:

Table 6. How often the teachers gave homework:

Question	Type of Response	Frequency	Percentages
Do your teachers give you homework?	Very often	44	22.5%
	Sometimes	49	40.8%
	Never	27	36.7%
	Total	120	100

Table 6 indicates that. 22.5% of pupils said that their teachers gave homework very often, 40.8% said sometimes they did, while 36.7% said they never did so all. It is evident from the responses given above that the majority of the teachers did not give homework as often as they should, and only a few of them homework at all.

4.1.7. Pupils were asked whether there was a science laboratory in their school. Their responses were as shown in table 7 below:

Table 7: Availability of a science laboratory:

Question	Type of Response	Frequency	Percentage
Is there a science Laboratory in your school?	Yes	50	50%
	No	50	50%
	Total	120	100

Table 7 indicates that 52.5% of the pupils disagreed that there was a science laboratory in their school while 47.5% said there was none. The above information therefore means that out of the four institutions under study two had science laboratories while two did not have. The schools that lacked laboratories denied the learners the opportunity for quality learning necessary in science subjects.

4.1.8. Pupils were asked whether there was a library in their school. Their responses were as shown in table 8:

Table 8: Availability of a library in the school:

Question	Type of Response	Frequency	Percentage
Do you have a library in your school?	Yes	48	40%
	No	61	50.8%
	Not sure	11	9.2%
	Total	120	100

Table 8 above indicates that 40% of the respondents said there was a library in their school, 50.8% of the respondents indicated that there was no library in their school, while 9.2% indicated that they were not sure.

4.1.9. Pupils were asked whether there were some teachers who were fond of going late for lessons. Their responses were shown in table 9 below:

Table 9: Whether teachers observed punctuality:

Question	Type Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Are there some teachers who report late for lessons?	Yes	78	65%
	No	31	25.8%
	Not Sure	11	9.2%
	Total	120	100

Table 9 shows that 65% of the respondents indicated that there were some teachers did not observe punctuality for lessons, while 25.8% disagreed and 9.2% were not sure. It is obvious that the majority of the teachers did not observe punctuality when going for their classes. This made the pupils lose out on learning time and thereby disadvantaging them in terms quality learning time.

4.1.10. Pupils were asked whether they passed to grade 9. The responses were indicated in table 10 below;

Table 10: Whether the pupils had passed grade 9:

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	42	35%
No	78	65%
Total	120	100

Table 10 above indicates that that only 35% of the respondents qualified to grade 10 while 65% did not. According to the information, it is evident that the majority of the learners who were in senior classes had not passed grade nine but were simply enrolled simply according to the goals, objectives and policy on Continuing Education.

4.1.11. Respondents were asked to express whether they found the syllabus content to be okay or too difficult for them. The responses were shown in table 11 below:

Table 11: How the learners find the syllabus

Question	Type of Responses	Frequency	Percentage
How do you find the syllabi in your subjects	Okay	49	40.8%
	Difficult	71	59.2%
	Total	120	100

The table indicates that 40.8% of the respondents found the syllabi to be okay for them. While 59.2% found it to be difficult. More than half of the respondents admitted the fact that the syllabi were complex for them. Only less than half mentioned that the syllabi were within their capability.

4.2. Findings from the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with teachers:

. **4.2.1.** The factors that Focus Group Discussion (FGD) members gave as affecting pupils' academic performance included (i) rampant absenteeism by the learners (ii) overcrowding due to over-enrolment, (iii) insufficient textbooks and other reading materials, (iv) lack of laboratory facilities and non-availability of library services.

(i) Absenteeism;

It came out during the Focus Group Discussions that absenteeism from school was one of the factors that affect learners' academic performance in Continuing Education schools. As one respondent aptly put it;

“Most learners are frequently absent from school. As a result of this they miss out on valuable lessons resulting in their poor academic performance during the end of term and final examinations.”

(ii) Overcrowding;

Speaking on the issue of overcrowding, for instance, one Focus Group Discussion member had this to say:

“Overcrowding in classrooms is one of the factors that hinder pupils from performing well in school. This existence of sixty or more pupils in class, in some cases, makes it impossible for group work to be used as a teaching method or for a class teacher to give individual attention to his/her pupils. As a result of this, pupils lose the educational benefits that accrue from a teacher's use of such a method and provision of individual assistance to his/her learners.”

(iii) Insufficient Textbooks and Reading materials;

During the FGDs with teachers some members bemoaned lack of enough textbooks and Readers to use during lessons as one of the serious impediments to effective lesson delivery. One respondent cited that:

“I find it very difficult to teach comprehension since on average there are only six books for a class of about fifty learners. How do I distribute such a small number of books among so many learners? Or am I expected to write an entire passage on the board? It’s quite laborious and time-consuming”

Some respondents added that lack of pupils and teachers’ handbooks were not available in most subjects. At one school, the respondents said that they were told to source for their own teaching materials either by borrowing from other schools or buy them on their own. They bemoaned this as lack of concern for the quality of learning offered in the school by the school authorities.

(iv) Lack of a laboratory and/or a library;

Non availability of laboratories and libraries came out as some of the factors that adversely contributed to learners’ academic performance during the Focus Group Discussions. One respondent had this to say;

“Teaching science subjects is quite challenging in the absence of a science laboratory and equipment. In many cases I just teach science abstractly without carrying out any experiments since we do not have the apparatus and chemicals in the school.”

4.2.2. Other factors raised by the teachers during the discussions were (i) low staffing levels, (ii) low teacher-morale, (iii) some learners admitted into senior classes did not qualify to grade ten.

(i) low-staffing levels;

During the discussions some respondents bemoaned the issue of being overworked. It came out that subjects like mathematics and science lacked few teachers in most cases. One teacher from one of the schools had this to say;

“I am the only science teacher for all the six senior classes. I have to teach all the three science components; that is biology physics and chemistry alone. I feel overworked and as a result of this, my input is greatly reduced to lack of enough time for preparation since I have classes throughout the day.”

(ii) Low teacher-morale;

And when dealing with the matter of low teacher-morale in particular, some FGD members pointed out that they felt demoralized due to deplorable working conditions which ranged from poor work environment, low salaries and lack of proper accommodation. One member had this to say;

“Lack of proper and decent accommodation makes some of us frustrated. The accommodation allowance we receive is not sufficient for us to rent decent houses. As a result we find ourselves renting houses in shanty compounds where we feel disregarded and suffer a loss of respect.”

(iii) Some learners did not qualify to grade ten;

It came out during focus group discussions that the government policy which allowed pupils who did not pass grade 9 to be allowed into grade 10 in Continuing Education Schools was also a factor that contributed to poor academic performance by learners in these institutions. One respondent cited that,

“How does one expect a pupil who did not pass grade to be able to do well in senior subjects such as biology, physics, chemistry and mathematics?”

Most of the respondents agreed that this policy was a contributor to low academic performance.

4.3. Findings from interviews with Head Teachers:

The interviews held with head teachers brought out a number of important findings relating to the study which included (i) some pupils' failure to pay school fees (ii) long distances of some pupils' homes from school which affected their attendance and punctuality for classes, (iii) abscondment of some pupils from classes and tests, which adversely affected their learning, (iv) insufficient preparation of schemes of work and lesson plans by some teachers, (v) some teachers' lack of punctuality for classes which adversely affected the pupils' learning. (vi) few qualified teachers and (v) erratic and insufficient funding which resulted in delayed implementation of planned school projects and late acquisition of school requisites.

(i) Failure to pay school fees;

It came out during the interviews with the head teachers that many pupils found it difficult to pay the school fees on time. It was revealed during the study that the majority of the learners in continuing Education institutions came from low-income earning households. And as result it was a challenge for them to raise the required school fees. One respondent cited that;

“Due to failure of raising the user fees on time, some learners reported two weeks late from holidays after schools have opened. As a result such pupils lagged behind in their school work and failed to catch up in their lessons and thereby performing poorly at the end of the term. Or they would report then disappear from school to go and source for school fees for several days or weeks only to come back when they have raised enough money.”

(i) Long distances from school;

Some of the head teachers cited long distance from school as one of the factors that contributed to low academic performance. They said this affected some pupils’ punctuality and daily class attendance. They added that the pupils who were affected by long distance from school often missed the first lessons of the day and thereby losing out on valuable school work.

(ii) Abscondment of some pupils from classes and tests;

It came during the interviews with the head teachers that some learners were fond of absconding class tests and end of term exams. One respondent bemoaned this as one of the serious factors that adversely affected academic performance among the learners. He said,

“When a learner does not write tests or end of term exams it’s difficult to assess his or her progress since there is lack of feedback. In turn this makes it very difficult for the teachers to determine where remedial is required in a particular pupil.”

(iii) Insufficient preparation of schemes of work and lesson plans by some teachers;

During the interviews some head teachers cited lack of adequate lesson preparation on the part of teachers as another factor affecting pupils’ academic performance. Some respondents added that insufficient preparation robs the learners of quality learning because the teachers would not be able to deliver quality lessons as required of them. As one member bemoaned;

“If one has not adequately prepared, it’s difficult for them to deliver effectively as some valuable aspects of the lesson which may have benefitted the learner may be omitted and thereby denying the learner of essential knowledge.”

(iv) Lack of punctuality for classes by teachers;

It also came out during the interviews with head teachers that some teachers were fond of going late for classes. And as a result of lack of punctuality, they tended to rush through the lessons to cover up for lost time. By so doing, the slower learners fail to grasp the concepts and lag behind. Thereby adversely affecting their academic performance.

(v) Erratic and insufficient funding;

During the interviews, it came out from some head teachers that erratic and insufficient funding of the institutions resulted into delayed implementation of school projects and procurement of school requisites such as teaching and learning materials. One of the respondents had this to say,

“My school is operating under difficult conditions financially. As much as we would love to buy the required number of books, science equipment and improve infrastructure, we are incapacitated financially. Our funding does not come at the right time and even when we receive it, it’s always insufficient in terms of our requirements as a school.”

Summary of the Findings

The findings from the questionnaires given to the learners were that there were insufficient text books, readers and other educational books. Laboratory and library facilities were also not available in some of the schools which were under study. Yet, it’s imperative that every school should have these facilities if effective teaching and learning is to take place for the benefit of the learner. It was also revealed from the questionnaires that the schools were understaffed, that teachers did not attend to their lessons as they should and that they mainly reported late for classes. During the focus Group Discussions with the teachers it came out that factors that negatively affect the learners academic performance include learner-absenteeism, overcrowding in the classrooms, insufficient teaching materials and deplorable working conditions such as poor work environment, low wages and poor accommodation. Others bemoaned the lack of quality of students enrolled as most of them did not meet the

entry requirements for grade ten. The findings from interviews with the head teachers were; challenges in terms of inadequate funding and pupils/learners failure to pay school fees on time as this delayed the implementation of school programmes, projects and purchase of requisites on time. Other findings were that lack of sufficient lesson preparation on the part of teachers, distance to school and learners' tendency to stay away from class and termly assessments.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings according to the objectives of the study. The purpose of the study was to investigate the factors affecting academic performance of learners in the academic section of Continuing Education schools. The objectives of the study were;

- (i) to determine the factors that affect the academic performance of learners in Continuing Education schools.
- (ii) to assess the availability of teaching and learning resources in continuing education schools.
- (iii) to assess the staffing levels in the academic section of Continuing Education schools.
- (vi) to identify the challenges faced by teachers and administrators in the provision of education in Continuing Education schools.
- (v) to suggest ways in which the academic performance of learners in Continuing Education could be improved.

The study revealed that problems associated with learners academic performance fell under three sub-themes which acted as independent variables. These were (i) learner/pupil-caused factors, (ii) teacher-related factors and, (iii) administrative procedures and practices-related factors.

5.1 .Learner/pupil – Related Factors

5.1.1. Rampant Absenteeism

During in-depth focus group discussions with teachers and interviews with head teachers, it was revealed that learner-behaviour also contributed to negative academic performance. This revelation is not only true but is of great relevance to the study. The admission by the majority of the respondents (60.8%), that they absented themselves from school for more than five times during the previous term provides one reason for the poor academic performance of pupils in continuing education schools. This is because such pupils lagged behind in their school work and had serious gaps in the learnt material. The resultant scenario

was usually reflected in the low marks such learners got during class tests and end of term and final year examinations.

5.1.2. Failure to do homework

Learners' contribution to poor academic performance was also inherent in their not doing their homework, late-coming or leaving school before time. Their failure to do homework robbed them of the benefits of feedback on what their teachers would have indicated on their would-be written work and of the opportunity to do corrections and thereby enhance their knowledge.

5.1.3. Re-admission into school after a long period as drop-outs

Re-admission into school after a long period as drop-out affects pupils in continuing education schools. The same is true of the practice of admitting pupils/learners who did not pass grade 9 into grade 10. Emanating from the government policy on Education for All (MEO 1996) and the objectives of continuing education, this practice is greatly detested by teachers as one of them aptly queried:

'If someone failed to pass grade 9, how can he/she be expected to do well at senior level? How can his/she be expected to do difficult subjects like physics, chemistry, accounts, senior geography and mathematics?'

5.2. Teacher-related factors on learners/pupils' academic performance in continuing education schools

Teachers play a critical role in the academic performance and achievement of learners. They are the custodians and pillars of learning. Academic achievement and pedagogical practice go hand in hand. From the learners' questionnaires, focus-group discussions with teachers themselves and the interviews with the head teachers, several teacher-related factors on academic performance of learners came to light. These included lack of lesson-planning and preparedness, absconding, lack of punctuality, not giving enough homework, not marking exercises, laissez-faire attitude, pro-longed and frequent illness, poor teacher-pupil relationship, punishing pupils during lesson time and some teachers lack of adequate qualifications.

5.2.1 .Lack of adequate lesson preparation.

Teacher preparation such as writing schemes, records of work and lesson-planning is a professional requirement for teachers in Zambia (Malambo, 2012). However, the study revealed few teachers wrote schemes of work, records and lesson plans. This revelation does not only present one of the pertinent reasons for the poor academic performance of pupils in continuing education schools but is extremely disheartening. Schemes of work and lesson preparation are important facets of lesson effectiveness. While the former ensures proper sequence in the field of teaching/learning, the latter contributes to teacher effectiveness. Lack of preparation is undoubtedly a recipe for poor lesson delivery on the part of the teacher and poor academic performance on that of his/her pupils. This trend has, in the researcher's view greater repercussions on the pupils' academic performance. This is because it robs the whole class rather than a few of its members of valuable learning time. It may also prevent the teacher from completing the syllabus and thereby reduce his/her pupils' academic performance in the given year's examination.

5.2.3. Teacher abscondment and lack of punctuality

Closely linked to abscondment is that of teachers' lack of punctuality for classes. This results in such teachers rushing through their lessons which impacts negatively on pupils' comprehension of the taught material or the teacher's failure to complete their planned work which disadvantages the learners.

5.2.4. Non - giving of homework

Another factor which came up as a contributor to poor pupil academic performance during the study was none assignment of homework to pupils by teachers. The study revealed that in most cases teachers did not give homework (60%) as required while some (40%) never gave homework at all. This factor, undoubtedly affects pupils' academic performance negatively.

Kelly and Kanyika (2004: 84) in Malambo (2012) are quoted as saying:

“Learner assessment in form of homework and testing extends the time pupils actually spend learning. It provides them opportunities to practice their skills and display the extent to which they grasp concepts and procedures. It provides teachers with an insight into the understanding gained by pupils”

The homework policy goes hand in hand with the marking of exercises, (Malambo, 2012). If the learners are given homework and the teacher ignores to mark it then the homework has not served its purpose. It came out during the discussions and observation that despite some teachers giving homework, at the end of the day the work was not checked by some teachers. This discouraged the learners and caused them to be reluctant to do homework.

5.2.5. Non- marking of learners' exercises/tasks

Some respondents complained that their teachers rarely marked the class exercises. Class exercises serve a form of assessment of the learners' progress and as feedback for the teacher to discover whether the lesson objectives have been met or not. However, if the teacher gives class exercises and does not mark them afterwards, then it will be very difficult for the teacher to know if the pupils have understood the lesson or not. This is seen as laissez-faire attitude or lack of commitment towards duty on the side of some of the teachers. This results in poor academic performance in the pupils.

5.3. Administrative procedures and management practice – related factors that affect academic performance of pupils in continuing education schools:

Another set of findings that came from the study revealed that some factors were as a result of administrative and management practices. These factors included (i) lack of sufficient teaching and learning materials, (ii) lack of proper and adequate infrastructure, (iii) low staffing levels, (iv) over enrolment, (v) erratic and insufficient funding, (vi) lack of boarding facilities and (vii) the high rate of school fees.

Inadequacy of teaching/learning materials was another management related issue that this study revealed. These included text books, science laboratory chemicals and apparatus, Geographical instruments and many other required tools and equipment. Mbozi (2008:127) states that limited text books affected performance of learners. Often the available textbooks were not enough to cater for the number of students available in a class. It was noted during the research that in one school, for example a class of fifty learners had only seven Readers in English. And one respondent had this to say;

“We do not have enough Readers. Currently, in our school, there is only six books on average per class. How does one manage to distribute these to a class of about 50 to 60 students? In fact we merely rely on past papers to teach to teach comprehension and composition. And these tend to be re-used time and again.”

And this was the same scenario even in the other subjects. It came out during focus group discussions with teachers that a deficit in books made it very difficult for them to teach effectively or to administer homework. Science teachers bemoaned the absence of chemicals and apparatus necessary for teaching science subjects. At one school, the teachers revealed that these were only purchased towards the start of the final grade twelve examinations and were only used during the practical examinations. It was noted that this had a serious negative impact on academic achievement since the learners did not do the practical part during class.

Inadequate and poor infrastructure was among the management factors that were said to be among the reasons for pupils' poor academic performances. Inadequate and poor infrastructure included lack of laboratory facilities, libraries and inadequate classroom space. The majority of the learners and teachers brought out the issue of lack of laboratory facilities, libraries and overcrowding in the classrooms. The lack of science laboratories meant that science was learnt and taught in a classroom like any other subject which shouldn't be the case. For effective learning to take place, learners were supposed to be exposed to a real laboratory situation where the right apparatus and chemicals were available if positive results were to be achieved. One respondent bemoaned that;

“How is one expected to teach proper science in the absence of a laboratory, equipment or chemicals for experiments? And yet we should expect pupils to pass the subject under such circumstance?”

Out of the four schools under study, only two provided library facilities. A library is a source of information and its government policy that every learning institution must have one. The presence of a library with relevant books means that the learners can access any required information easily on their own in different subjects. It is also necessary for the promotion of a good reading culture among learners.

A shortage of classroom space was another factor that was noted. Learners especially adults require enough space to ensure concentration and emotional dignity. However, most respondents cited overcrowding in classrooms as one of the factors that caused discomfort. In addition, teachers to exercise proper class management. All these contribute to poor academic performance among pupils.

It came out during the focus group discussions with teachers that boarding facilities for students were non-existent. Pupils who came from afar had to source for their own accommodation and in most cases they rented cheaper accommodation in shanty townships

where there was no electricity and oftentimes too noisy for them to study. As a result, this impacted negatively on their academic performance. One teacher cited that;

“Since this is the only school which accommodates school drop-outs in the province, many of the students have come from other districts and are forced to rent accommodation in nearby compounds where the environment is in most cases not conducive for study”

The contribution of low-staffing levels, low teacher morale, poor infrastructure to poor academic performance of pupils needs no emphasis. All linked in some ways to administrative and management factors, these issues impact negatively upon pupils’ learning. Teacher shortages results in some pupils lagging behind for not being taught; while teachers’ lack of motivation (due to lack of poor accommodation and low salaries) make such teachers not teach their best. This is partly because of frustration and partly because of doing other things designed to supplement their meagre salaries.

In view of these factors, it is the researcher’s view that government should take issues of teacher supply and motivation with extreme seriousness in order to improve the academic performance of pupils in continuing education schools.

The last administrative and management related factor attributed to pupils low academic performance by some respondents in this study was that of high tuition and user fees charged by PTA and School Boards. Not only did this result in some pupils dropping out of school but in others absenting themselves from school until they raised the required amounts. And as noted earlier, these made them lose out on what was taught and to perform poorly in the examinations. One respondent mentioned cited that;

“The learners in this school mostly come from low-income earning households and as a result they fail to pay the school fees set by the administration. Hence some of them stay away from school for longer periods trying to source for funds to pay school fees. Consequently, they miss out on valuable lessons when they are away.”

In view of this assertion, it is imperative therefore for the school administration to see to it that the fees set are within the means of the majority of the learners so as not to disadvantage those who cannot afford.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter contains the conclusions and recommendations for the study.

6.1. Conclusions

There are various factors inside and outside school that contribute to the quality of academic performance of students. This study only focused on some of the factors within school that influence the student's achievement scores. The key aspect for the educators is to educate their students effectively so that they may be able to show quality performance in their academics. To achieve this objective it is necessary for the educators to understand better about the factors that may contribute in the academic success of students.

The following therefore are the findings which researcher made of this study.

The first is that lack of teaching/learning aids, non availability of laboratory and library facilities and low staffing levels adversely affected the quality of teaching and learning in Continuing education schools.

The second is that pupils' poor academic performance in Continuing education schools was a result of long distances of some pupils from their homes to the schools due to non availability of boarding facilities. This made some pupils miss classes due to their late arrival at school at times or abscondment on some day's altogether.

The third is that the socio-economic status of some of the pupils' parents adversely affected their (those pupils') academic performance. This is when such pupils missed classes when they were sent home to look school fees on various occasions.

The fourth is that lack of adequate funding contributed to non-availability of the necessary infrastructure and school requisites to facilitate effective teaching and learning.

The fourth is that the poor academic performance of pupils in senior classes of Continuing education schools was is a result of those pupils' failure to reach the selection cut off points to grade 10 in the Grade 9 examinations.

6.2. Recommendations

To determine all the influencing factors in a single attempt is a complex and difficult task. It requires a lot of resources and time for an educator to identify all these factors first and then plan the classroom activities and strategies of teaching and learning. It also requires proper training, organizational planning and skills to conduct such studies for determining the contributing factors inside and outside school. This process of identification of variables must be given full attention and priority so that the teachers may be able to develop instructional strategies for making sure that all the children be provided with the opportunities to arrive at their fullest potential in learning and performance.

In line with the findings the following recommendations are made for the attention of policy makers, education officers, and school managers:

6.2.1. Ministry of Education should:

(a) establish Continuing Education Schools in every district in the country in order to lessen the enrolment burden currently faced by the few existing ones. The country's population has grown tremendously since independence and so is the demand for more school places. There is an increased desire for education to meet the socio-economic challenges of the twenty-first century as well.

(b) provide boarding facilities in Continuing education schools so that students who come from rural areas and other faraway places may have decent and safe places to stay. Currently, these learners rent accommodation in shanty townships where they may not be comfortable to study. Moreover, learners who are unable to pay the rentals fail to enroll into these schools.

(c) ensure that there is a laboratory and library in each of these existing institutions in order to facilitate learning of those who enroll in them

(e) increase funding to Continuing education institutions for their smooth operations and increased structure development.

(f). ensure that frequent Monitoring is conducted and reinforced in Continuing Education Schools.

6. 2.2. School Managers should:

- (a) work hand in hand with PTAs and school Boards on measures to increase and improve staff accommodation.
- (b) carry out routine supervision of teachers' work and regularly check, schemes of work, lesson plans and records of work.
- (c) ensure that student fees agreed upon by school management and PTA/Board are reasonable.
- (d) be resourceful and thereby ensure that the necessary teaching and learning materials are available at all times in the school.
- (e) purchase required equipment and furniture in the school.
- (f) ensure that teachers hold and attend INSET meetings regularly.

6.3. Suggestions for Future Research

Further research is needed in other Continuing Education Schools for the purpose of comparing the results on factors affecting learners' academic performance in these institutions. There is also need to assess community participation in the running of Continuing Education schools.

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APPENDIX 1

CONSENT FORM

I am a registered postgraduate student in the Department of Educational Psychology, Sociology and Special Education at The University of Zambia. I am conducting a research on Factors that affect academic performance of learners in Continuing Education Schools. The office of the Provincial Education Officer and that of the District Education Board Secretary are both aware of this study.

You are cordially requested to fill in the questionnaire. Please be assured that the information you give will be confidential. Therefore, if you are willing to participate in this study, please sign your name in the spaces provided below.

Participant

Name.....

Signature.....

Place.....

Date.....

Researcher:

Date.....

Name.....

Signature.....

Place.....

APPENDIX 2

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY, SOCIOLOGY AND SPECIAL
EDUCATION

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS ON 'FACTORS THAT AFFECTING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS IN CONTINUING EDUCATION SCHOOLS.'

I am a student doing a Master of Education in Sociology of Education at The University of Zambia, conducting a research on the above subject. Kindly spare a few minutes to answer this questionnaire. The information you are going to provide will be purely for research and will be used as such. You are advised not to write your name on the questionnaire. Your co-operation will be appreciated.

Questionnaire for the pupils

Name of school.....

DISTRICT.....

SECTION A: PERSONAL DETAILS

1. Gender

(a) Male { } (b) Female { }

2. For how long have you been a student at this school?

(a) 1 – 2 years { } (b) 2 – 4 years { } (c) more than 4years { }

3. what is your age?

(a) 15 – 17years { } (b) 18– 23years (c) 24 – 30years (d) above 30 years

4. How would you describe your overall performance in last term's end of term exams?

(a) Very good { } (b) good { } (c) average { } (d) poor { } (e) very poor{ }

5. Do you have textbooks and other educational books in your school?

(a) Yes { } (b) No { }

6. Do you have teachers in all the subjects you are taking?

(a) Yes { } (b) No { }

7. Did you qualify for grade 10?

(a) Yes { } (b) No { }

8. Is there a science laboratory in your school?

(a) Yes { } No { }

9. Does your school have a library?

(a) Yes { } No { }

10. How often are you absent from school in a month?

(a) never { } (b) 2-3 days { } (c) more than 5 days { }

11. Is your home very far from your school?

(a) Yes { } (b) No { }

12. Who is paying your school fees?

(a) Myself { } (b) parents { } (c) sponsors { }

13. How would you describe the rate of your school fees?

(a) fair { } (b) High { } (c) Very High { }

14. Do all your teachers attend to their classes when they should?

(a) Yes { } (b) No { }

15. How often the teachers give you homework?

(a) Every time [] (b) Sometimes [] (c) Never []

16. Do some of your teachers come to classes late?

(a) Yes (b) No

17. Do some of your teachers come to class drunk?

(a) Yes (b) No

18. In your opinion, are the subjects you are learning at school okay or they are too difficult for you?

(a) okay (b) too difficult { } (c) not sure { }

19. Do most of the teachers always mark your class exercises?

(a) some { } (b) Very few { } (c) all of them { }

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR HEAD TEACHERS

1. How many students do you have in the academic section all together?
2. How is the enrolment of girls in your school compared to that of boys?
3. When you look at the results analysis of your pupils, how would you describe their general performance?
4. What are the factors that you would attribute to their academic performance?
5. Do you feel you have adequate infrastructure in your school?
6. Are the teaching and learning materials in your school sufficient
7. How many double and single orphans do you have in the school all together?
8. Are there some pupils frequently absent from school?
9. If so, what are the main reasons they give?
10. Do you have cases of students discontinuing school due to lack school fees?
11. Are there enough teachers for each subject offered at your school?
12. How many are (i) certificate holders? (ii) Diploma holders? (iii) Degree holders?
13. How often do you receive funding?
14. Do you find the funding adequate or inadequate and if not, why?
15. Apart from government, are there some organisations that assist the school with funding?

16. How would you describe the general work culture of the teachers when it comes to executing their duties, are they very enthusiastic and hardworking?

17. What suggestions do you have for your school's improvement?

APPENDIX 4.

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH TEACHERS

1. It is also important to talk about certain practices that may not promote students' academic performance. What are the classroom elements that may not promote academic performance of the students?
2. Teachers play a critical role in students' academic performance. Could there be some teacher-related factors that may promote or hinder high academic performance of students?
3. Students are also major stakeholders in the learning process. What do you think could be some of the factors that are student-related which contribute to their academic performance, either positively or negatively?
4. Are there any administrative practices and procedures that may hinder teacher-performance? If so, what are some of them?

APPENDIX 5: BUDGET ESTIMATES

SN	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	UNITY PRICE	TOTAL IN KWACHA
1	Transport to and from Mongu	4 trips	K250 X 4	K1000.00
2	Transport from Lusaka to Kabwe and back	1 trip	K100 x 2	K200.00
	Transport to Mazabuka and back	1 trip	K100 X 2	K200.00
	Transport to Choma and back	1 trip	K120 X 2	K200.00
3	Accommodation	2 semesters	K600.00 X 4	K 2400.00
4	Transport during data collection		K1000.00	K1000.00
5	Stationery (Reams of paper and pens), flash disks, CDs.	1 reams	K20.00 x 2	K40.00
		2 blue pens	K2.00	K4.00
		1 flash disks	K150.00 x 2	K300.00
		2 CDs	K250.00	K500.00
6	Food		K500.00 x 4	K2000.00
7	Typing, printing and binding of Proposal	1 copy	K300.00	K300.00
8	Typing, printing and binding of Thesis	4 copies	K300.00 X 4	K1,200.00
9	GRAND TOTAL			K10,344.00

**APPENDIX 5:
RESEARCH TIME FRAME**

Activity	May	July	Sept	Nov	Jan	March	May	July
plan	To	To	To	To	To	To	To	to
	June	Aug	Oct	Dec	Feb	April	June	August
	2013	2013	2013	2013	2014	2014	2014	2014
1	Identification of research topic and Review of related literature							
2	Research proposal writing and							

	departm ental presentat ion.								
3	Submissi on of final version of Researc h proposal								
4	Field work,stu dies and data collection								
5	Data analysis								
6	Report writing and presentat								

	ion								
7	Finalising Report and Submission								