



## Deconstructing quality education in public secondary schools through the lenses of teachers in Lusaka district, Zambia

Rachael Simwatachela-Simui<sup>1</sup>, Francis Simui<sup>2\*</sup>, Fabian Kakana<sup>3</sup>, Peter C Manchishi<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Munali Girls Secondary School, Lusaka, Zambia

<sup>2,3</sup> University of Zambia, Institute of Distance Education Lusaka, Zambia

<sup>4</sup> University of Zambia, School of Education Lusaka, Zambia

### Abstract

In this study we deconstructed quality education in three public secondary schools through the lenses of 15 teachers in Lusaka District of Zambia. The study applied a qualitative research paradigm with a Narrative design to engage participants through a series of interviews and Focused Group Discussions. The findings of the study revealed fourteen factors that contributed to poor quality education among which were inadequate Teaching-learning materials, negative pupil attitude to schooling, heavy workloads and poor working conditions. Thus, for quality education to be provided to the children in public secondary schools, investment was needed in enhancement of Continuous Professional Development, quality school buildings and improvement of water and electricity access to schools. Furthermore, there was need for an improved teacher pay, supply of adequate and qualified teachers, supply of adequate teaching and learning materials, and provision of adequate grants to secondary schools among others.

**Keywords:** quality education, secondary school, teachers, Lusaka, Zambia

### 1. Introduction

This is an extract from the dissertation for the Principal researcher on Quality Education discourse in Zambia. As part of the requirements for the award of a Masters of Education in Education Management at the University of Zambia (UNZA) in partnership with the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU), students are required to conduct a research project that culminates into a dissertation (Simui, Kasonde-Ngandu, Cheyeka and Kakana, 2018) [32]. The UNZA-ZOU partnership has been running since 2014 via the distance learning mode. The University of Zambia is configured in a dual mode (regular and distance education modes), (Simui, Thompson, Mwewa, Mundende, Kakana, Chishiba and Namangala, 2017 [36]. and Mundende, Simui, Chishiba, Mwewa and Namangala, 2016) [13].

World Bank group (2015) [44]. notes that as an education indicator quality is the most difficult aspect to measure. Often times, quality is erroneously attributed to the optimal provision of education inputs and not the learning achievements. According to the World Bank (2015) [44]. the Quality of education is high if the school is well-resourced with inputs such as highly qualified teachers, teaching and learning materials, infrastructure, relevant curriculum and students. At output level, assessment frameworks focus on measuring demonstrable competencies that benchmark performance and are perceived to provide insights on the quality of education provision. A quality education is supported by three key pillars: ensuring access to quality teachers; providing use of quality learning tools and professional development; and the establishment of safe and supportive quality learning environments (World Bank, 2015) [28]. The meaning of a Quality Education is one that is pedagogically and developmentally sound and educates the student in becoming

an active and productive member of society. Quality education is education that is inclusive and is structured to realize the potential of each child regardless of location or economic status. Quality education is also defined as education that prepares a child for life. It is education that meets needs of the learner, helps learner to have academic qualification (World Bank, 2015) [28].

Quality education has been defined differently by a number of authors. Qorro (2006) [28]. defines quality education as the state of education where society strives to attain based on learning goals focusing on achievement of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes; system goals focus on inputs and outputs while educational goals are focused on dominant ideas within society. Therefore, quality education is the kind of education that equips students to learn and discuss abstract ideas, liberates students from misconception and ignorance, open up new perspective and extend their horizons by widening scope of knowledge (Nagel, 2008) [23]. Also it gives a room to learners take an active part in knowledge creation through critical thinking, discussion, dialogue, asking questions and solving problems as posed by facilitators. Quality education has also been defined as education that meets the set standards of the Ministry of General Education. It is education that is holistic in nature. Whose morals, values and skills are aimed at meeting the future needs of learners, (MoGE, 2017) [18].

Provision of quality academic education in Zambia is key to sustainable development. Quality education has been a corner stone of the development of a country. (Sivakumar and Sarvalingam, 2010) [25], notes that 'Education is one of the basic needs for human development and it enables one to escape from poverty'. Thus, governments and society have a vested interest in ensuring a constant flow of students in secondary education.

Zambia has a serious shortage of secondary school places resulting from inadequate investment in infrastructure over the years. As a result, access to secondary education is costlier compared to primary schools due to limited school places. Although the upgrading of 220 primary schools into junior secondary schools brought about by the policy change from the basic and high school education system to the primary and secondary school education system, there is still a serious shortage of secondary school places in Zambia (BETUZ, 2020) [3].

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Secondary schools are mandated to offer quality education. To date, there is an outcry that the quality of education in Zambian public secondary schools has declined. However, it is not clear what factors are contributing to the decline in quality education in Zambia. If this situation is left unchecked the education system in public secondary schools in Zambia will continue worsening and the education system will be negatively affected. It was in this vain that this study was conducted to explore factors that public secondary school face in the provision of quality education.

### 1.2 Research Objective

1. Explore factors contributing to the inadequate provision of quality education in secondary schools.
2. Explore measures schools apply to enhance quality education.

## 2. Review of Related Literature

### 2.1 Concept of Quality Education

Modi (2013) [20], refers to quality education as the state of education where a society strives to attain based on learning goals focusing on achievement of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes; system goals focus on inputs and outputs while educational goals are focused on dominant ideas within society. From the foregoing explanation about quality education, we may conclude that quality education is the kind of education that equips students to learn and discuss abstract ideas, liberates students from misconception and ignorance, open up new perspective and extend their horizons by widening scope of knowledge. Also it gives room to learners to take an active part in knowledge creation through critical thinking, discussion, dialogue, asking questions and solving problems as posed by facilitators.

### 2.2 Factors that Contributes to Quality Education

Siachifuwe (2017) [31], did a study in Lusaka on Teacher based factors influencing academic performance among learners in open learning classes at Twin palm secondary school in Lusaka. She used both qualitative and quantitative, purposive sampling and collected data using interview guides and focus group discussion. Her findings were that punctuality was a teacher related factor that influenced academic performance. 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 failed to grasp the concepts and lagged behind. Moreover, teachers rushing through their lessons impacts negatively on pupils' comprehension of the taught material or the teacher's failure to complete their planned work which disadvantages the learners thereby adversely affecting their academic performance.

On the lack of enough textbooks, Mbozi (2008) [16], in his study of quality of education in selected Basic schools in Livingstone and Kazungula Districts in Zambia found that limited textbooks is a factor affecting academic performance of learners. He used both Qualitative and qualitative methodology. According to his study, four classes of about sixty learners each shared only four textbooks amongst them, making it difficult for pupils to effectively use them during class lessons. Mbozi (2008:127) [16], found limited textbooks as a factor affecting the performance of the learners. Gap in location of the area where the study was done and only looked at lack of text books.

Modi (2013) [20], did a study on factors affecting the provision of quality in education in public and private secondary schools in central Equatorial State, South Sudan. The findings show that influx of students overstressed the educational facilities in Central Equatoria State. It was observed that in one of the public schools, there were eight (8) streams in first year alone with more than 50 students in each class. This number of streams in schools pointed to a heavy load for teachers, taking into account the scarcity of well qualified and trained teachers in Central Equatoria State. Despite those findings the effect of facilities on student's academic performance by and large has been regarded as less influential. Literature indicates that quality school facilities seems to have an indirect effect on learning, an effect which is hard to measure (UNESCO, 2000) [42].

Right (2008) [29], defines teaching and learning materials as resources which teachers use to deliver instruction. They assist in and support students' learning and increase their success. He emphasizes that teaching materials come in many shapes and sizes, but they all have in common the ability to support student learning. Therefore, teachers who take the time to provide instructional materials and options that take into account the different ways students receive and express knowledge, are more likely to see their students succeed.

Mosha (2004) [19], urges that using trained and qualified teachers is another factor which determines the provision of quality education. In this regard, the importance of competences required in every teacher are mastery of material that is to be taught and skills in communicating that material to students. Both aspects cover a great array of knowledge, understanding and skills that must become integral to every teacher.

The role of parents in the education of their children cannot be overemphasized. Home support or family support for learning helps in producing quality learners. It has however been noted that often, some parents may not have the tools and background to support their children's cognitive and psychosocial development in schools. The level of education of parents has been picked as one of the great contributors to children's ability to learn in school.

There is a common saying that a teacher teaches what he knows. This implies that teacher development must be pursued with vigor if the objective of achieving quality education is to be realized, Craig (2014) [6], noted that effective professional development is of many forms; it should not be limited to formal offsite kinds of Programmes. Dialogue and reflections with colleagues, peer and supervisors' observations are all effective ways for teachers to advance their knowledge, (UNESCO, 2000) [42].

Many things constitute these working conditions. They include among others: salary, retirement age, retirement

benefits, and hours of work, leave allowances, lunch and social benefits. Picking on a salary as an example like how much a teacher is paid determines his devotion to his duties. If a teacher at the end of the month, receives small amount of money that cannot feed half members of his family, he is likely going to look for alternative ways of making up the money. He may decide to open up a shop or get involved in other activities outside teaching. This development is not good for the teaching profession, as many teachers may sneak out of school before closures for their shops or other activities where they struggle for money to argument what they get in schools (Modi, 2013) [12].

The effective use of technologies is another area of concern for any individual or nation that desires to improve the quality of education. Technology can be used to reduce global inequalities through such vehicles as internet – based distant learning, interactive video and educational television. In areas where electricity and telephone lines are available, such approaches to learning may contribute significantly to improve the quality of educational processes. E-learning eliminates the barriers of time and distance, creating universal learning opportunities for people, companies and countries (Simui, Kasonde-Ngandu and Nyaruwata 2017) [35].

Overall, there is little empirical data which examined the extent to which those challenges hinder provision of quality education in secondary schools and little empirical data that suggested intervention measures to challenges hindering provision of quality education in public secondary schools

therefore, This study covered that gap. Provided that no similar study which had been conducted in Lusaka District, the researcher deliberately selected 3 public secondary schools in Lusaka District with the aim of making the study more focused and in-depth.

**3. Methodology**

This is a qualitative study ridging on Constructivism approach with a Narrative design. The study, being qualitative, used a narrative design in order to answer the research questions posed. In terms of data generation, the study used semi-structured interview guides and focus group discussion guides as guided by Creswell (2002) [5]. and (Cohen *et al.*, 2006) [4]. The qualitative approach was used because it provided insights that would assist the reader to visualize the experiences of the people. This design was also appropriate because it sought to get detailed views of participants, since the study focused on deconstruction of the concept of Quality Education in selected public schools.

**3.1 Sample Description**

Three (3) public secondary schools within Lusaka province whose names herein appear as pseudonyms ‘Blue’, ‘Red’ and ‘Pink’ volunteered to participate in this study. In the same vein, twelve (12) teachers and three (3) Head Teachers drawn from the three public secondary schools above whose identity are represented by pseudonyms below volunteered to voice their felt experiences on the quality of education within their respective schools.

Participant	Sex	Age	Experience Years	School Name
Teacher A	Female	36	9	Red
Teacher B	Female	32	7	Red
Teacher C	Female	34	7	Red
Teacher D	Male	37	10	Blue
Teacher E	Female	37	10	Red
Teacher F	Female	30	5	Blue
Teacher G	Male	35	7	Blue
Teacher H	Female	40	16	Pink
Teacher I	Male	42	15	Blue
Teacher J	Male	37	10	Blue
Teacher K	Female	40	15	Pink
Teacher L	Female	30	7	Pink
Head Teacher	Male	56	25	Blue
Head Teacher	Female	55	24	Red
Head Teacher	Male	45	21	Pink

The researchers used purposive sampling which is a non-random technique. This involves identification and selection of individuals or groups of individuals that are proficient and well-informed with a phenomenon of interest. Schools were purposively selected because they had the characteristics that were relevant to the study. Teachers were also purposively sampled because they had the experience to provide the information needed. The head teachers were also purposively sampled basing on their role and experience in school management and the fact that they take overall supervision of all teaching and learning processes in the school. This method was suitable as there was a much higher response rate and clarification of issues which needed clarity.

**3.2 Data Generation Procedure**

Once data capturing instruments were developed and cleared by the ethics committee, permission was sort in the

target schools and participants were interviewed using interview guides, their responses were recorded and notes were taken down. A multi-method approach was used to generate data. According to Cohen *et al.*, (2006) [4], the advantage of using a multi-method approach in data generation is that it eliminates bias or distortions of the researcher’s picture of the particular slice of reality which he/ she is investigating.

Focus Group Discussions were conducted with Teachers. The researcher explained to the Teachers the purpose of the study and they were also informed that, it was not a must for them to take part of the study. It was also stated to them that if they did not want to be part of the study they could withdraw at any time. The focus group discussions were vital in that they gave Teachers a platform to express their views. Interview and focused group discussion allowed the researcher to probe the participants. During the interviews the researcher recorded the information which was being

given by the respondents and at the same time the researcher noted down important information.

### 3.3 Ethical Consideration

Permission was requested from relevant authorities in order to access entry to the selected schools. Firstly, the researcher obtained ethical clearance from the University of Zambia. Then permission from Ministry of Education to conduct the research was sought and the researcher explained of the aims, nature and procedures of the research. The researchers further attested to the important principle of informed consent by giving the participants prior knowledge of the expected information from them. They were informed of their rights, which were right to maintain privacy, right to guaranteed anonymity and avoiding harm, betrayal or deception. Ethical clearance with the Ethics Committee was done before data generation stage was conducted.

### 4. Findings and Discussion

The study findings revealed that they are a number of elements that constitute quality education among these are Teacher motivation and reasonable work load, availability of teaching and learning materials, adequate running water, as well as a conducive environment for both learners and Teachers. What follows is a detailed exploration of the 14 factors that affected quality education.

#### 4.1 Factors that affect inadequate provision of quality education

##### 4.1.1 Inadequate Teacher supply

The study sought to find out if schools had adequate trained Teachers. The study findings revealed that some schools had inadequate supply of Teachers which negatively affected the provision of quality education. The study findings revealed that some schools did not have enough teachers in science and mathematics. Head teacher School Red revealed that schools did not have enough Mathematics and science Teachers, (*Head teacher school Red*, 13.09.19).

##### 4.1.2 Limited Communication between Parents and Teachers.

The researcher sought to find out if there was coordination and communication between Parents and Teachers. Responses from the Teacher J indicated that:

Schools lacked parent involvement in the school affairs of their children. Parents and Teachers normally don't have time to meet and discuss the performance of their children. Mostly the time you get to meet a parent at school is when the child is reporting at school for the first time or when a parent has been summoned by the school when their child has committed an offence, (*Teacher J*, 08.09.19).

Li and Qiu (2018) <sup>[13]</sup>. notes that family factors also play a role in a teacher's ability to teach students. Principals and teachers agree that what is going on at home will impact a student's propensity to learn. Divorce, single parents, poverty, violence and many other issues are all challenges a student brings to school every day. While some teachers and administrators try to work with children in less than ideal family environments, they can only do so much especially when parents are often not willing to partner with the schools to provide for the children (Li and Qiu, 2018) <sup>[13]</sup>.

##### 4.1.3 Inadequate provision of text books

The study findings also revealed that some schools under

study lacked adequate teaching and learning materials such as text books, desks, chalk and stationary. Head teacher School Red had this to say

If our secondary schools could have enough textbooks, teachers may rely on them to set the parameters of instruction and to impart basic educational content. The lack of textbooks in secondary schools is a challenge that hinders the provision quality education in secondary schools, (*Head teacher School Red*, 13.09.19).

The findings revealed that learning and teaching materials were not enough for every Teacher and pupil. The World Bank (2004) <sup>[43]</sup>. notes that lack of teaching and learning materials had been identified as an issue negatively affecting education quality. Further, on the lack of enough textbooks, Mbozi (2008)<sup>[16]</sup> 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.

##### 4.1.4 Funding

This study revealed that public secondary schools in Lusaka District faced the challenge of inadequate funding from the government. Head teachers and teacher's responses showed that funding was not only adequate and it was also delayed. The findings further revealed that funding could not meet all the necessary needs of the school. Worsened with reduced school fees to K200 per term. The accessibility and quality of education are dependent on adequate financing. Without adequate funding schools cannot adequately provide quality education, it is therefore important for this issue to be looked into by various stakeholders.

##### 4.1.5 Over enrolment of pupils

Public secondary schools sampled were found to be over enrolled in terms of numbers of pupils in the classrooms. For instance, Teacher C indicated that, the morning session classes had between 55 and 60 pupils while for the afternoon session classes had between 70 and 90 pupils. She added that numbers of pupils in classes were big. Teacher C stated that, Teacher to Pupil ratio was high....Over enrollment of pupils compromised the quality of education which was being offered because a Teacher could not manage to attend to all the needs of the learners, (*Teacher C*, 16.09.19). Meanwhile, Head Teacher's responses also revealed that the average class size in the school was supposed not to have more than 60 pupils in both the morning and afternoon sessions. The Teachers interviewed in the Focus Group Discussion indicated that the class size range in their schools was large. Evidently, these schools had overcrowded classrooms.

When asked about the consequences of over enrolment in the provision of quality education, the head teachers pointed out that teachers reported that it was difficult to mark pupils' exercise books due to high teacher pupil ratio. Teacher C said that "Teachers find it difficult to mark especially those who teach Mathematics and English. They mark large classes every day; it's a big challenge", (*Teacher C*, 16.09.19). Given the under staffing in schools, concentration on marking pupils' books then contributed to failure in keeping time for learning periods as expressed by Head Teachers. Similar sentiments were noted from the

teachers who reiterated that teachers did not finish marking the pupils' exercise books on time in readiness for the next class. Teacher H during the Focus Group Discussion further said, it is not always that the teacher managed to finish marking all the books on time (*Teacher H*, 13.09.19). The finding is consistent with Tennessee (2017) [41]. that observed that most teachers agree that they cannot effectively teach every student in a classroom, if the class size exceeds about 30.

#### 4.1.6 Pupil classroom ratio and high Teacher Pupil ratio

Teacher C from one of the Focus Group Discussion for Teachers said "our school doesn't have enough classes hence you find some important facilities like libraries are being turned into classes so as to accommodate learners without a class", (*Teacher C*, 16.09.19). The number of classrooms available at secondary school level is lower than at primary school level leading to high Teacher pupil ratio. The researchers further asked the Teachers on the other factors that affect the provision of quality education. High Teacher pupil ratio was noted as another factor. Teacher C stated that increased teacher pupil ratio hinders effective provision of quality since teachers lack enough time to give individual attention to pupils due to the increased numbers that do not match the available teaching staff (*Teacher C*, 16.09.19). Pupil-teacher ratio refers to the average number of pupils per teacher at a level of education specified in a given school year, based on headcounts of pupils and teachers, while the recommended pupil to teacher ratio of 40:1 (MoE, 2007) [17].

#### 4.1.7 Inadequate resources such as limited furniture

The researchers wanted to know if schools had adequate furniture in the classes. Teacher H responded to say not every class has adequate furniture, what normally happens here because our school has limited furniture, the pupils who report late for school normally spend about 20 minutes of their learning time looking for tables and chairs, (*Teacher H*, 13.09.19). Kelly and Kanyika (2000) [12]. 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.

#### 4.1.8 Student Attitudes and Behaviors

Head teacher from school Pink during the interview stated that pupil's attitude leaves much to be desired. He said that most times Teachers spend most of the time counselling learners during teaching time, (*Head teacher from school Pink*, 16.09.19). This is consistent with Simui (2018) [33] and Simui, Kasonde-Ngandu, Cheyeka, Simwinga and Ndhlovu's (2018) [34]. findings on negative attitudes as barriers to inclusive quality education among learners with visual impairments.

#### 4.1.9 Poor Sanitation and lack of water

Teacher A pointed out that "our school at times doesn't have running water and this poses a threat to sanitation for our girls and boys in school", (*Teacher A*, 08.09.19). This is supported by a study done by the WHO (2004) [45]. on factors affecting schools provision of quality education in 2009. The study found that the link between poor sanitation and poor health is evident, lack of adequate sanitation

facilities is a major reason why many children, particularly girls, fail to attend school. Lack of sanitation facilities affects the performance and achievement of all pupils and is detrimental to the working conditions of teachers. Girls and boys must have equal access to adequate sanitation facilities in schools and must be separated with their own wash basins and taps (WHO, 2004) [45].

Diseases related to inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene are a huge burden in developing countries. It is estimated that 88% of diarrhoeal disease is caused by unsafe water supply, and inadequate sanitation and hygiene (WHO, 2004). [45] Many schools serve communities that have a high prevalence of diseases related to inadequate water supply, sanitation and hygiene particularly lack of handwashing. If everyone in the world had access to a regulated piped water supply and sewage connection in their houses, 1863 million days of school attendance would be gained due to less diarrheal illness (WHO, 2004) [45].

#### 4.1.10 Late coming

Responses from Focus Group Discussion and interview guide indicated that pupils lacked enough transport money to go to and from school as a result they ended up reporting late for school. *Teacher B* said that "this made them miss lessons taught in period one and two". The late comers also distract the lesson as they look for where to sit, (*Teacher B*, 08.09.19). Studies done indicate that lateness among school pupils is increasing and spreading. Nakpodia and Dafiaghor (2011) [24]. emphasizes that lateness or tardiness is not just the problem of the late student but it affects the surrounding people. A student coming late in class distracts the rest of the students and disrupts the flow of the teacher's discussion.

#### 4.1.11 Lack of technology and computers

Teacher G from the Focus Discussion Group observed that some schools did not have enough computer to use using the teaching of computer studies. He said "some schools only have 30 computers which are supposed to be used by over 100 pupils, this is a challenge in that when the Teacher is teaching pupils have to share the usage of computers" (*Teacher G*, 16.09.19). Studies have shown that new technologies, if used in an appropriate way, could be a powerful support to develop the students' capacity for logical and critical thinking. Information and communication technologies should be used as tools for teaching and learning in all subjects. The teachers must be offered in-service training in this area to be able to use these technologies in the best way (Fu, 2013). [8].

#### 4.1.12 Administrative styles

Head teacher from school Blue during the interview stated that, administrative styles as well as corrupt administration that comes in office in unprofessional way, does not know how to work with teachers they also make it difficult for schools to provide quality education (*Head teacher school Blue*, 16.09.19). Another Head teacher from school pink observed that administrative systems which are up hazard lack planning and in return negatively affects the running of school Programmes", (*Head teacher school Pink*, 16.09.19). He also stated

That the behavior of in disciplined learners makes the

Teacher to spend more time counselling in disciplined pupils, rather than teaching. He also stated that Poor infrastructure for example classrooms make it difficult for lessons to be conducted smoothly (*Head Teacher School Pink*, 16.09.19).

Currently, most of the administrators are facing problems of applying suitable leadership style in their administration, reported by the Educational Work Unit. Therefore, applying suitable leadership may assist administrators to solve the confusion due to the overlapping of work occurred in work practice, administration, and ordering or commanding among the top level of management team work unit, (Simui, Mhone and Nkhuwa, 2011) <sup>[37]</sup>.

#### 4.1.13 Lack of libraries

During the Focus Group Discussion *Teacher A* revealed that some schools had turned their libraries into classrooms. She said “we do not have library at our school as the one we had has been turned into a classroom”, (*Teacher A* 08.09.19). A school library is a place in the school where vast collections of academic books are kept. Archnahr *et al* (2006) <sup>[1]</sup>. argues that a library is a store house of knowledge. In a library, students can find books on various subjects such as history, geography, environment, political science, literature. A school library is meant to support the students in their studies. Students can borrow books and take them home for further study. Apart of text books, students often need reference books to prepare notes (Archnahr *et al.*, 2006) <sup>[1]</sup>.

#### 4.1.14 Qualification of teaching staff

Head teacher at School Blue during the interview said that There was Improper training of man power in some colleges of Education. He also stated that the student Teachers had Short time to do their teaching practice, this had a negative impact on their practice as student Teachers as the little time did not make them to be well equipped as Teachers (*Head teacher School Blue*, 08.09.19).

Qualifications of teaching staff was found to be one of the most important factors affecting the provision of quality education. This is consistent with Manchishi and Mwanza (2016) <sup>[14]</sup>. who alludes to the relevance of Peer Teaching in the teacher preparation as a critical ingredient to quality education. In addition, Arnon and Reichel (2007) <sup>[2]</sup>. showed that students see two types of images of teachers: the image of an ideal teacher and own self-image as a teacher.

## 4.2 Measures to ensure Provision of Quality Education

### 4.2.1 Provision of Modern Technology

The researchers sought to find out if any measures had been put in place to deal with load shedding and provision of computers. Teacher G had this to say

Our school has now procured a generator to help during load the shedding period, this has helped us to continue teaching computer studies using computer even when there is no electricity”. He further “schools should be provided with enough computers for teaching of information and communication and Technology (*Teacher G*, 16.09.19).

Other responses from Focus Group Discussion showed that schools do receive donations in form of computers. Measures in ensuring quality education includes issues of technology provision. Success in the provision of quality education also depends highly on the availability of modern technological teaching facilities. Galabawa (2003) <sup>[9]</sup>. argues that globalization has encouraged the expansion of ICT in

many quarters of development. Teaching and learning facilities such as computers, internet services, photocopiers and overhead projectors need to be available to secondary schools so as to facilitate teaching and learning processes that fit with the 21st century innovative trends and promote provision of quality education (Galabawa, 2003) <sup>[9]</sup>.

### 4.2.2 Safe and structured environment

Responses from interview guides for Head teachers revealed that Head teachers were concerned about the school environment being conducive. Head teacher at School Red said that

In order to provide quality education schools, need to be in a safe and structured environment. School Administrators do maintain their school’s offices and classrooms where the learning takes place. Schools do maintain infrastructure such as classes and offices by painting them so as to ensure a conducive learning environment (*Head teacher School Red*, 13.09.19).

Many factors combine to promote a feeling of safety, ranging from the physical environment to discipline policies and perceptions of fairness. Cohen (2006) <sup>[4]</sup>. contends that a school’s physical structure and appearance sends important messages. When the physical plan is well maintained and the surrounding grounds are well kept, they convey respect for the school community and the educational mission. Similarly, Eliadou, Lo, Servio and Simui (2007) <sup>[7]</sup>. noted the need for safe learning environment as critical to the academic success of learners in Manchester.

### 4.2.3 Deployment of Teachers

The study findings revealed that some schools did not have enough teachers in science. Responses from Head teacher from school Red indicated that in order to deal with the challenge of Teacher shortage,

The School did request for more Teachers from Ministry of General education in order to ensure that it has enough Teachers. At times schools do employ Teachers on Parent Teachers Association arrangement to cushion teacher shortage. For now, as a school we have employed 2 mathematics teachers and 2 science teachers under parent teachers association, (*Head teacher School Red*, 13.09.19).

As a way of addressing the challenge of inadequate supply of Science and Mathematics teachers the Ministry of General Education in ensuring that they supply enough teachers they are implementing a Fast Track teacher training programme for upgrading diploma holder teachers to degree qualification for Mathematics and Science subject teachers. In 2015, the Ministry was supporting a total of 2,700 teachers under this programme in the three targeted higher learning institutions namely University of Zambia, Zambia Open University and DMI St. Eugene University, (GRZ, 2017) <sup>[26]</sup>.

### 4.2.4 Building of more schools

The study findings on the pupil classroom ratio indicated that in order to address the challenge of space in schools the government has embarked on the building of more secondary schools to reduce over enrolment in secondary schools. Responses from the Head teacher’s interview guide indicated that, Government has built new schools and upgraded existing primary schools to secondary schools. New schools were helping in decongesting existing schools to make it more manageable for Teachers (*Head teacher*

*School Red*, 13.09.19). In order to solve the challenges of increasing enrolment rates leading to shortages in classroom space and furniture in schools, Responses from Focus Group Discussion indicated that schools had introduced the open learning session where other pupils have to report in the afternoon.

*Teacher C* during a Focus Group Discussion further reechoed that schools have introduced open learning classes to accommodate those who have not been enrolled in the morning session (*Teacher C*, 15.09.19). Open learning classes have contributed to double enrolment of pupils in public secondary schools. This education system has allowed pupils of the afternoon session to use the same buildings, academic curriculum and teachers hence helping as a measure to ensure quality education in public secondary schools.

#### 4.2.5 Provision of quality Reference Books

Findings on the measures being put in place to ensure quality provision of text and reference books, *Teacher G* from the Focus Group Discussion had this to say

The Ministry of General Education should provide text books whose content is consistent with what is in the curriculum (*Teacher G*, 15.09.19). Head teacher school Red further stated that as a school we do buy text and reference books for our school in various subjects, this is put in our school budget (*Head teacher School Red*, 13.09.19).

Textbooks, whether designed for use in activities led by the teacher or independently by the students, offer the most explicit instructional design formats. Thus, the availability of these materials has implications for immediate quality improvements in the educational system. This is supported by Mbele and Kataro (2003) <sup>[15]</sup>. Who postulates that availability of textbooks and other educational materials are among of the factors determining the provision of quality Education. The quality of education process is enhanced by the availability of relevant teaching and learning materials (Mbele and Kataro, 2003) <sup>[15]</sup>.

#### 4.2.6 Introduction of Continuous professional development

As a way of improving the provision of quality education public secondary schools study findings showed that schools have now introduced continuous professional development. This is where teachers of the same department meet to teach each other challenging topics. New teaching experiences and are also shared amongst teachers of the same subject. Head teacher school Blue noted that

Introduction of Continuous professional development has helped to improve knowledge and skills of Teachers. Professional qualifications of the teachers give them confidence, competency and ensure skillful delivery of lessons....Conducting of CPDs to keep teachers well informed as syllabus keeps changing Pupil performance is improving. Teachers' access to information and new teaching methods has helped to improve the performance of learners as well (*Head teacher School Blue*, 08.09.19).

Niemi and Nevgi (2014) <sup>[25]</sup>. content that teaching methods that facilitate active student learning rather than promote passivity and rote memorization should be recommended for use by teachers. These methods are normally explored during continuous professionally Development, where Teachers share information and better teaching methods. Simui (2009) <sup>[38]</sup>. Indicated that the professional

development for Teachers was a key guarantee of inclusive quality education for all learners.

#### 4.2.7 Introduction of awards and motivation

As a way of solving the challenge of demotivation, schools surveyed said it is important to award teachers as a way of motivating them. *Teacher I* argued that

I am glad to state that our school has introduced awards giving day when our administrators do appreciate us by giving awards to best performing grade 12 teachers. Apart from awarding grade 12 teachers there is another special package which is given to every teacher in our school when grade 12 results come out. This is motivating to every teacher as it encourages us to continue working hard. We also want our salaries to be increased like other professional (*Teacher I*, 08.09.19).

Lack of motivation at work places is one of the factors which always results into provision of poor quality of education (Sawyer, 2004) <sup>[30]</sup>. Motivation has been called the "core" of management that means, it is one of the crucial factors that determine the provision of quality education. Gupta, Smith and Shalley (2006) <sup>[10]</sup>, further argues that all organisational facilities at an organization or institution remain useless unless people are motivated to utilise these facilities in a productive manner.

#### 4.2.8 Contact hours

As a way of putting up measures to improve the quality provision of quality education *Teacher k* observed that the curriculum development center during the revision of the curriculum in 2015, increased the contact hours for certain subjects like History, (*Teacher K*, 08.09.19). This is supported by Ministry of general education who contend that the scheduled contact hours at junior secondary school level on average are now at 4.2 hours per day, while at senior secondary school level (Grades 10 to12), the scheduled time for teaching is an average of 6.2 hours per day. As is the case for primary schools, pupils in Private schools have more scheduled contact hours, followed by Grant Aided, Government schools and community schools respectively (MoGE, 2017) <sup>[18]</sup>.

#### 4.2.9 Introduction of bursaries

Findings from the study using Focus Group Discussion and Interview guide indicated that schools are now receiving bursaries for learners. Head teacher School Blue had this to say" as a school we do receive bursaries from different Non-Governmental Organisations for our learners who come from vulnerable homes" (*Head teacher School Blue*, 08.09.19).

#### 4.2.10 Provision of School Libraries

The researcher wanted to find out measures being put in place to deal with issues of lack of libraries, *Teacher A* said "as at now nothing is being done about it, we just hope that one day soon a library will be constructed so that our children can have a place to study from during their free time" (*Teacher A*, 08.09.19). Thus, schools should prioritize provision of school libraries for meaningful quality education. A study on the importance of library facilities was done by Smith (2001) <sup>[40]</sup>. who surveyed and randomly selected Texas libraries (503 returned the surveys). Smith found school libraries to have a measurable effect on student achievement. It is therefore, important for secondary schools

to provide facilities like libraries if the performance of learners is to improve (Smith, 2001) <sup>[40]</sup>.

#### 4.2.11 Monitoring of Teachers

The researcher sought to find out measures that could help improve quality provision of education in public secondary schools. Head teacher from School *Pink* during the interview observed that

It is important for Heads of Departments to monitor the Teachers in their department as this would make Teachers to always plan. As a school we do plan all the time at the beginning of each term so as to ensure that the schemes of work are ready on time before schools open, we normally do this at the beginning of each term in week zero” (*Head teacher School Pink*, 16.09.19).

A study done by Poopedi (2011), <sup>[27]</sup>, showed that instructional supervision contributed to students’ academic performance in the examination as well as the overall results of the school. It showed that monitoring by heads of departments improved and maintained quality of teaching in the school. It also helped Teachers identify their weaknesses and also plan effectively for their teaching.

#### 4.2.12 Learning from other schools

Responses from the Head teachers on the measures schools are putting in place to ensure quality education one Head teacher said “as a school we do learn from other schools that are performing better than us academically so as to improve the performance of our learners and also as a way of improving our administrative styles” (*Head teacher School Pink*, 16.09.19). The importance of learning from the people around us cannot be over emphasized. When we’re open to learning from others, we benefit from their experience as well as our own and we can inherit their wisdom and knowledge (Moskaliuk, Bokhorst and Cress, (2016) <sup>[21]</sup>.

#### 4.2.13 Provision of water

The researcher sought to find out if any measures have been put in place to deal with the erratic water problem. Responses from Teacher A in the Focus Group Discussion for Teachers observed that,

schools have now drilled bores as a way of ensuring that there was enough water all the time, though at times the pump could be down, coupled with lack of electricity due to load shedding leading to shortage of running water in the school especially in the toilets. When there is no running water we have to get from the drum and pour in the toilet (*Teacher A*, 08.09.19).

Furthermore, she said “this also affects the learners who also have to get water from the drums in order for them to clean their toilets.” (*Teacher A*, 08.09.19). Studies have shown that children’s ability to learn may be affected by inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene conditions in several ways. These include infections (which affect hundreds of millions of school-age children), long-term exposure to chemical contaminants in water for example lead and diarrheal diseases and infections, all of which force many school children to be absent from school (WHO, 2004) <sup>[45]</sup>.

#### 4.2.14 Improved Communication between Parents and Teachers

Responses from Teachers and Head teachers on the measures of improving coordination between parents and

School Administration indicated that parents don’t normally visit their children in school. *Teacher B* said,

Parents and Teachers normally don’t have time to meet and discuss the performance of their children. Mostly the time you get to meet a parent at school is when the child is reporting at school for the first time or when a parent has been summoned by the school when their child has committed an offence (*Teacher B*, 08.09.19).

Teacher J during the Focus Group Discussion gave the following recommendation to say

It is important for parents to find time to discuss the performance of their children with the subject teachers as this can help improve their children’s performance. Parents also need to be attending the Parent Teachers Association meetings in order to discuss matters concerning the performance of their children (*Teacher J*, 08.09.19).

In the school system, discipline and duty masters are responsible for making sure school Programmes and activities went on as planned (Kachchar, 2002) <sup>[11]</sup>. In addition, parents are stakeholders who can contribute to the success of their children. In other words, parents must take their responsibilities properly in making sure that students are given all they need to go to school, allowed or conveyed in time, prepared in time and be given transport money enough to and from the school. Unless these issues are taken seriously, all the efforts of teachers in school would be in vain.

### 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, Teachers deconstructed quality education as a buy-product of Teacher motivation, teaching and learning materials, reasonable work load, adequate running water, as well as a conducive environment for both learners and teachers among others. In addition, most teachers were not comfortable with their working conditions in all three selected public secondary schools. Equally, electricity supply was erratic at the time. Consequently, teachers of computer studies complained that load shedding negatively affected them as they could not complete their syllabus due to power loss. Nearly all the three schools cited erratic water supply due to unstable electricity supply as they depended on electric pumps to pump water. The findings indicated that there were no enough science teachers in secondary schools under study. As an anti-dot to the cited challenges above, learning from better performing schools was noted to be a measure that could help ensure quality education. In addition, provision of teachers’ houses and construction of school libraries were also noted as intervention measures that would help to remedy the challenges facing provision of quality education in secondary schools. The fore-going discourse contributes to the attainment of the Sustainable Development agenda particularly target number four on education if only the challenges noted above are addressed positively.

### 6. Recommendations

Thus, it is recommended that:

1. The government should consider increasing the grants to secondary schools.
2. Provide in-service teacher training to enable teachers adopt the frequent changes that occur in everyday life and advancement of technology in the contemporary world.
3. Deploy many competent teachers especially to public



secondary schools.

4. Involve teachers in writing textbooks, teachers' guides and preparation of other materials used in teaching and learning process.
5. Make secondary education universal and free for all pupils to attend. This will help many learners to have access to a quality inclusive secondary education which enables them to develop the potentials of life.
6. The government should provide better pay to teachers to satisfy their needs so as to work effectively.
7. The parents, guardians, community and other educational stakeholders should supplement the government efforts by building classrooms, laboratories, teachers' houses, and a library to make sure that good quality education is provided to students.

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