International Journal for Research Trends in Social Science & Humanities
Volume 4, Issue 4
July-Aug- 2026, PP 1-56

The Effect of Unplanned Teacher and Staff Meetings on Learner's Academic Performance at Kagunda Primary School of Chipata District

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Abstract- The purpose of this study was to assess The Effect of Unplanned Teacher and Staff Meetings on Learner's Academic Performance in Selected Schools of Chipata District, Zambia. The study explored factors that reduced time for teaching and learning and suggested strategies that could be employed to reduce time loss. The concurrent embedded design of the mixed methods approach was used with quantitative data adding detail to the qualitative data. A questionnaire collected data from 1 primary school teachers while interview guides were used to collect data from the primary school head teacher. A focus group guide was used to collect data from 24 learners. The qualitative was analyzed using emerging themes. Quantitative data from the questionnaire was analysed using descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that, the time that learners received for learning was not adequate. Learners being in ninth grade also affirmed that the time that remained for them to cover the remaining content in subjects before they could write their examinations was not adequate. Teachers noted this from the low coverage of the syllabus. The Head teacher also indicated that, the time for teaching was not adequate to cover for content in the syllabi. On factors that reduced teaching time, the study revealed factors such as staff unplanned meetings that took place during learning time, unplanned holidays. Classroom factors included teachers performing disciplinary cases, attending to slow learners and teaching methods that consumed most of the time. However, some measures such as having school councils to monitor teachers, having class registers for teacher's accountability and reducing unplanned teacher and staff meetings were already employed by the school as it was revealed by the head teacher. It was concluded that the time that was utilised for teaching was not adequate and a number of factors revealed in the study contributed to the loss of time in selected primary schools in Chipata district. It was suggested that, there was need for proper planning of teacher and staff meetings and incentives to teachers in order to encourage commitment to duty. It was recommended that there was need for continuous professional development of teachers with regard to strategies of how the limited time could be made manageable such as seminars, workshops and refresher courses to equip teachers and administrators with knowledge, skills and attitude on proper time management practices.

Keywords- Time loss, Learning time, Time utilization, Curriculum implementation.

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I. Introduction

1. Overview

This chapter contains the background of the study, the statement of the problem, aim of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, theoretical and conceptual framework, as well as operational definitions of terms.

2. Background

The main role of teachers in educational institutions such as primary and primary schools is teaching. Education involves the process of acquiring worthwhile and desirable knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary for learners. Education consequently is an essential process for sustainable development in any society as it equips learners with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes they need in order to adopt healthy lifestyles and take active roles in social, economic and political decision making as they transit to adulthood (UNESCO, 2017). It is, therefore, important to realise that all these values, skills and knowledge cannot be acquired without a well-planned and implemented curriculum. It is through a curriculum that the objectives and aims of education are realised. A well-planned and implemented school curriculum is also vital in trying to achieve quality education. However, teachers through effective time use can successfully implement a curriculum. This is because time provides an opportunity for an individual to acquire skills, knowledge and attitude they need for survival.

As noted by Njeng'ere (2014), the role of a curriculum is to identify the education purposes and organize them into goals, objectives and aims to be achieved and implemented at the different levels of education and training. A curriculum as expressed in the 2013 Zambian revised Curriculum Framework implies programme of study for learners in institutions of learning. In another context, Oluoch (1982) described a curriculum as all that is planned to enable the learner to acquire and develop the desired knowledge, skills and attitudes. By planning, it entails that a curriculum has to be well organised and implemented within a specified period. The period can be categorised into specified years, days and eventually hours of study. For instance, in Zambia, the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) through the 2013 Curriculum Framework stated the number of hours that schools should teach specific subjects. For example, the duration of the Senior Primary School programme leading to the School Certificate or General Certificate of Education at Ordinary Level (GCE 'O' level) examinations is three years. These years are eventually broken down into terms, weeks, days and then hours.

However, the attainment of education goals and aims at any level of education such as schools largely depends on effective implementation of its planned programmes. Therefore, all planning and management within the school should be a collaborative effort by those involved in the implementation process of the curriculum. To this

regard, curriculum implementation involves the process of putting all that has been planned as a curriculum document into practice in the classroom through the combined efforts of teachers, learners, school administrators, parents as well as interaction with physical facilities, instructional materials and (Onyeachu, 2008).

Curriculum implementation means translating curriculum documents into action in the classroom by the teacher. All the efforts and resources needed for effective curriculum implementation must be directed to the teaching and learning process as it is the core business of the school. Among the resources needed for effective curriculum implementation, researchers have considered time to be the best resource in any education system. Education researchers such as Farbman (2015) observed that more time enable teachers to cover more material and examine topics in greater depth and in detail. In this case, time has been realised to be one of the most important resources in the implementation of any school curriculum. This was also emphasised in the 2013 Zambian Curriculum Framework that more time in the school must be directed to teaching and learning. However, in Zambia nothing seems to been done in terms of research to realise the importance of how teachers utilise teaching time in implementation of the curriculum. This is evident from the scanty of literature related to the best utilisation of time for teaching and learning in schools.

Furthermore, adequate time for learning promote individualized and differentiated learning. Time is thus important in learning because meaningful learning is made possible when learners spend more days per year in school and more actively engaged in longer school hours learning. In the same vain, the Ministry of Education (MoE) (1996) realised that the amount of time that pupils spent in organised learning activities has a strong bearing on how much they learn and on their subsequent academic performance. Most importantly, enough time for learning has many benefits to the successful curriculum implementation in a school or, more precisely, more time creates the possibility for teachers to extend their work and improve learning. Sahito (2016) stated that if time is managed properly according to needs and the requirements of the matters and phenomenon of any nation then no one can stop any nation to be a developed and successful one.

The importance of learning time especially on the time learners are engaged on tasks or actively learning can be traced to Carroll's (1963) original theory of school learning. He outlined the theoretical importance of time as a resource for student learning. In his model, time is placed at the centre of learning. He illustrated the degree of student learning as a product of the time students spend learning divided by the time they need to learn.

In his model, Carrol (1963) further categorises time for learning in different ways. There is allocated time which is the total time available for teaching and learning. The time should be planned and used effectively to accomplish effective teaching and learning. Allocated time at school is mainly for teaching, learning and assessment.

Allocated time also requires that teachers and learners are always punctual for the task of teaching and learning.

Despite Zambia's success in expanding access to education, there are significant issues the country ranks at the bottom in terms of academic achievement as measured by the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) (2012). The low academic performance had been as a result of the distribution and allocation of resources, which also included the less amount of time leaners are exposed to. According to SACMEQ, critical to an effective education system is the amount, and use, of the limited time the learners had during the school year to master content and grow socially and emotionally. Wales and Chipoma (2016) further reported that, poor performance during the middle stage of primary education is of particular concern as it suggests learners are not grasping key foundational skills and will have challenges at higher levels. As such, an assessment of the use of learning time in the implementation of the school curriculum should be of great concern hence the importance of this study.

Some studies have indicated that time, as a resource has not been paid attention to despite its consequences on learner's academic performance. One of the evaluations conducted by legislative finance committee formed by UNESCO (2016) which aimed at assessing time on task and efforts to extend learning time in Mexico indicated that as instructional time is spent on other activities, student achievement was also decreasing. The evaluators asked teachers to quantify instructional time lost, not counting student or teacher absences. When controlling for other factors including poverty, there was a statistically significant relationship between lost time and performance scores. From the evaluation, it can be noted that time is an important element that need serious attention because of its consequences on academic performance. This is because assessment is one of the measures used to find out whether the education goals and aimed are achieved by the learners. It is therefore, the purpose of this study to assess the use of learning time in the implementation of the school curriculum in Chipata district.

Though curriculum implementation also involves the assessment of learners, the time that is consumed to assess the national examination in Zambia is of great concern. This is because of the consequences it bares on the non-examination classes or grades thus need serious attention. Kelly (1999) postulated that, in most schools, a lot of time is taken up by activities such as assemblies, meetings held by visiting government officials, health talks, variety shows held during lesson time. In addition, teacher service programmes which last the whole day and learners are either sent away or asked to stay away from school, unplanned holidays such as when a teacher dies, teachers' day, women's day, Mother's Day and many other unforeseen eventualities that take place at the expense of learners. Despite Kelly (1999) mentioning some of the factors that reduce time, it is noted that no study was done to assess whether such factors affect the implementation of the curriculum also exist in Chipata district hence this study.

Kraft (1994) also stated that the number of hours given to children for the study of any subject is determined by three factors. These are the length of the official school year in hours, the number of hours given to the subject and the amount of time lost because of school closure, teachers' absence and other interruptions. Thus for this reasons, it is important for teachers to use the allocated instructional time as much as they can. This calls for teachers' consciousness of how he or she uses the given instructional time for the promotion of teaching and learning.

It is against this background that, the effective use of learning time is a challenge on the implementation of a school curriculum. More time can allow greater interaction and more positive relationships between teachers and students, which can also benefit academic achievement (Farbman and Kaplan, 2005). Essentially, Aronson, Zimmerman and Carlos (1998) pointed out that an increase in the raw amount of instruction time does not automatically translate into more engaged time and actual learning time and, consequently, might prove an inefficient use of resources, given the high cost of such interventions. Less time can also lead to learners not being exposed to content they are supposed to learn and lower their academic performance. Less time has strong bearing on the planned curriculum resulting into the disparity between the planned curriculum and the implemented curriculum. Less time is thus likely to result in poor quality education provided to learners. It is for this reason that this study aimed assess the utilisation and adequacy of learning time in the implementation of school curriculum in selected primary schools in Chipata district of Eastern Province, Zambia. The researcher randomly sampled Chipata district in this study because every school as stated by Fisher, (2009) experiences disruptions and interruptions that reduce learning time or divert time away from learning purposes because of unplanned meetings.

3. Statement of the Problem

The amount of time that learners spend on learning activities has a strong bearing on how much they learn and on their academic performance (Ministry of Education, 1996). More effective time management, supported by adequate professional development, translates to improve the quality of teaching provided to the learners (Gettinger, 1995). Additionally, more engaged time for learning, allow broader and deeper coverage of curricula, as well as more individualized learning support.

However, studies show that learners' official annual learning time is almost never completed in classrooms and the losses can be tremendous (Benavot & Amadio, 2004). In Zambia, the Ministry of General Education through the 2013 Curriculum Framework has stated the number of hours and periods that schools should teach specific subjects. Failing to account for proper use of time in learning means missed learning opportunities for learners. However, little has been done to assess the effect of unplanned teacher and staff meetings on learner's academic performance in Zambia specifically Chipata district of Zambia.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the effect of unplanned teacher and staff meetings on learner's academic performance in selected primary schools in Chipata district of Eastern province in Zambia.

5. Research objectives

The research sought to;

- To identify the factors that contributes to the occurrence of unplanned meetings.
- To evaluate the consequences of unplanned meetings on student learning and engagement.
- To propose strategies to minimize the negative effects of unplanned meetings on academic performance.

6. Research questions

The following research questions guide the analysis of this report:

- What are the key factors that lead to the occurrence of unplanned meetings?
- How do unplanned meetings affect student engagement, learning, and academic outcomes?
- What strategies can schools implement to reduce the negative impact of unplanned meetings on academic performance?

7. Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is an explanation of either graphically or in narrative form of the main things to be studied, the key factors, constructs or variables and the presumed relationships among them (McMillan &Schumacher, 1994). This study was guided by school learning time by Carroll (1963). This theory stresses that, what students learn is related to the time they spend learning. Carroll developed a theory of school learning in which the time factor plays a central role in students learning process. According to his theory, the achievement of a student or the degree of learning effectiveness is a function of the actual time needed for learning and the time actually spent for learning. Since curriculum implementation entails putting into practice the planned curriculum into classroom activities, it is on this basis that the utilisation and adequacy of learning time in the implementation of the curriculum in Zambia specifically Chipata district was guided by the above theory in maintaining that, effective curriculum implementation is determined by how time for learning is effectively utilised. The theory requires that teachers prioritize school activities according to the limited school time available. They should give priority to teaching time (class lessons). This should be followed by important school activities which can be done outside teaching hours of school.

8. Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework acts more or less as the map of the territory were the research is being investigated. It can therefore, be conceived as the map for the researcher to navigate. In relation to this study, the conceptual frame in figure 1.1 gives an illustration

of how use of time for learning can bring about positive or negative effects to the process of curriculum implementation. When there is less time for learning, learners fail to be exposed to content which may result into rote learning and compromised education standards. On the other hand, good use of learning time improves learner performance and good coverage of the content or prescribed curricular. Furthermore, more learning and teaching time has a lot of benefits to both the teachers and the pupils. For learners, the key benefit is that, extending learning time is expected to benefit and enhance their academic performance. This is in the sense that learners would have more time for learning, more time on tasks and less rushed lessons. It is also obvious that teachers can cover the curriculum in more depth and breadth and not just focus on subjects tested in national examinations (Farbman and Kaplan, 2005). The diagram below shows the conceptual framework of this study.

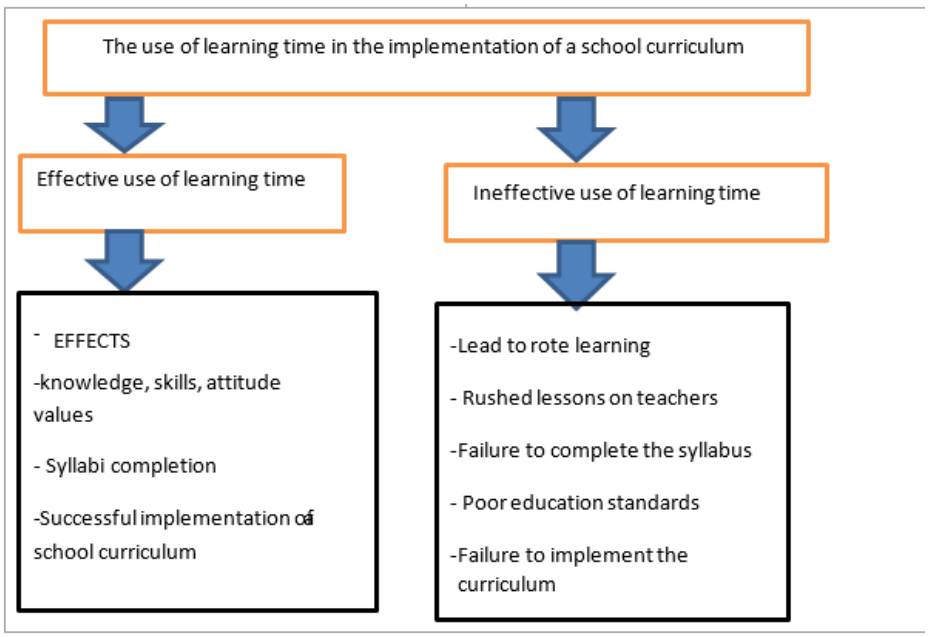

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Effectiveness in this study is the ability of the official curriculum to accomplish its designated purpose. A well-planned curriculum is therefore, determined by its implementation process. In this study, how much time spent on teaching determined the successful implementation process. When something is effective, it means it is adequate to accomplish the purpose. Ogula (2002: 20) argued that "effectiveness measures the degree of attainment of the pre-determined objectives of the project. In relation to this study, Lam, (1996) defined the effective learning time of learners as the percentage on task behaviour of students during lessons; "time on task".

9. Significance of the Study

The study was aimed at bringing to the fore how learning time was used in the performance of learners because of unplanned teacher and staff meetings in selected primary schools in Chipata district. It is therefore envisaged that the findings of this study would unearth the factors that bring about instructional time mismanagement. This would afford the Ministry of Education the opportunity to address this situation. This study could help teachers and school administrators find possible and amicable solutions on how to improve and maximise unplanned teacher and staff meetings for learning which help in the successful implementation of teaching and learning. The study would provide an analysis and policy advice to help actors in the implementation of a curriculum and schools achieve effectiveness and efficiency objectives in education by ensuring that the curriculum was successfully implemented as planned. The results from the study are likely to help school administrators in implementing time usage ideas for effective curriculum implementation.

It is hoped that this study is likely to prove to be valuable by helping teachers to use instructional time profitably and hence help to improve the quality of education in primary schools. Moreover, the study could serve as a guideline to educational planners, policy makers in education and curriculum developers in their quest to make sound policies concerning the unplanned teacher and staff meetings by school administrators and teachers in schools.

10. Delimitation of the study

Creswell (2003) stated that, delimitation is used to address how the study is narrowed in scope. In this regard, the study focused on the effective use and adequacy of time in the implementation of the school curriculum leaving out the use of other resources such as learning materials, finances, learning equipment and many others. This was because time provides learners with the opportunity to acquire desirable and worthwhile skills, knowledge and values through a well implemented curriculum. The study only focused on the formal school curriculum because it is through the school environment where the planned curriculum is put into effect through learning experiences. In addition, this study was only carried out in selected primary schools in Chipata district of Eastern province, Zambia leaving out other schools in the province.

11. Summary

In this chapter, the background of the study, the statement of the problem, aim of the study, research objectives, research questions, and significance of the study, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, delimitations and operational definition of terms are presented. Furthermore, the chapter that follows focused on reviewing of related literature of the study.

II. Literature Review

1. Overview

In this chapter, literature related to the topic under study has been presented. This was done under the sub headings which are; the concept of a curriculum, theoretical conceptions of learning time in relation to the school curriculum, importance of time in the implementation of the school curriculum, review of studies related to the topic under study, the research gap and the summary of the chapter.

2. Types of School Meetings/Professional Development

The major focus of this research being staff meetings, looking at the types of staff meetings that take place in schools can help one to understand the large variety in types of meetings, and benefits that they have. Klein (2005) collected data on six different types of staff meetings that typically occur within schools, and their related effectiveness.

The first is general staff meetings, which are facilitated by the administration and include the entire school staff and teachers, and can vary in terms of topic, based on what the administration deems necessary. Similar to general staff meetings are meetings that involve all the teachers and staff within the school but are facilitated by a group outside of administration such as the counseling department, or the special education teachers. Third are subject/department meetings are meetings in which each teacher meets with teachers of similar subjects (e.g. math, science, social science, art) to discuss updates or issues that pertain to their specific subject matter. Similarly, grade-level meetings occur when meeting groups are based on the grade level the teachers teach. Lastly, there are individual staff meetings, where an individual staff member or teacher meets alone with administrators. Klein's research showed, of all the different types of staff meetings, general staff meetings received the least praise from those in attendance.

3. Criteria for Effective Meetings

Multiple studies have shown that although teachers may engage in a significant amount of formal professional development, this, formal planned professional development may not be the most effective way to engage teachers (Appova & Arbaugh, 2018; dos Santos, 2020; Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikhahmadi, 2016; Tallman, 2019). Research suggests taking a deeper look beyond the current framework of professional development, to find new ways in which teachers can engage in high quality learning opportunities, and apply meaning and relevance to these learning opportunities, while also having access to strategies and skills that could be immediately transferred to their classrooms (Appova & Arbaugh, 2018).

Recent research has suggested the most successful teacher collaboration occurs under the following conditions: topics are applicable to the staff's role, and can be directly applied to the classroom; meetings are organized and planned with staff input; meetings are a space where staff feel safe and there is a sense of trust; and lastly meetings occur

in varying grouping methods to ensure diverse interactions (Appova & Arbaugh, 2018; Dahlberg & Philippot, 2008; dos Santos, 2020; Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikhahmadi, 2016; Tallman, 2019)

Topics

The topics and agenda items covered in a staff meeting has a great influence on whether the teachers and staff view any particular meeting as effective and unplanned. In a research study by Dahlberg and Philippot (2008), they examined the professional development needs of school as perceived by teachers and administrators. Data collected was analyzed comparing teacher verses administrators' responses, and by dividing teachers into four subgroups based on years of experience and comparing the perceived needs of each subgroup. The study found teachers' professional development needs, as perceived by administrators, focused on larger systems, including new state testing, differentiation of instruction, and guided readings, yet teachers did not identify any of those as their most pressing needs.

Interestingly, based on years of teaching experience, teachers answer also varied but trends were seen. That is, teachers early in their career identified mostly noninstructional needs such as disruptive students, bullying, and classroom management as their highest priority, while mid-career teachers identified social and mental health of students as their highest priority. Lastly, teachers late into their career identified student mental health, and technology as their highest priority. One area all groups had in common was the need for more focus on reading comprehension. This study provides evidence that the professional development aims of the school administrators vary greatly from the professional development needs of the staff. A participant of this study directly refers to this idea "If administrators only focused professional development in those areas that they were deemed to be 'important' by teacher they would be overlooking the critical question of the existing levels of expertise their faculty have in those areas" (Dahlberg & Philippot, 2008, p. 37).

Teachers often are aware of the topics they view as most valuable, or necessary for meetings. Because of this, meetings are more beneficial when meeting participants have a voice in determining the agenda. A common pitfall and reason for disengagement in staff meetings is when the staff is not provided a chance for input or the areas of "assigned" growth does not meet the needs of the teachers and are not connected to the classroom (Appova & Arbaugh, 2018). When the knowledge, skills, and information that is taught during professional development cannot be directly and immediately transferred into the classroom, educators will then view the experience as a failure, and not reaching the full potential of what professional development could be (Appova & Arbaugh, 2018; Bubb & Earley, 2009). Additionally, it is not uncommon when administrators do not have vital information to pass on, they may use the time of staff meetings to deliver noncritical information that could have been shared in an email (Klein, 2005). One way schools can ensure successful meetings and greater teacher

engagement is by placing staff development and learning as an equal priority to student learning (Appova & Arbaugh, 2018; Bubb & Earley, 2009).

Research also showed, for teachers to engage in professional development outside their contract hours, compensation is usually necessary, which typically is not cost effective for the school (Appova & Arbaugh, 2018). Yet, when little to no collaborative time is given for effective collaboration, some educators choose to engage in professional development outside of contract hours just to see what other teachers were doing, "Sometimes I would go to talk, just because it was something I didn't know about or something I didn't teach, I just wanted to see how somebody else does it" (Appova & Arbaugh, 2018, p. 14). Meetings should be conducted based on both the admirative needs, and the needs of the teachers, finding a balance in this can create effective and engaging meeting sessions (Klein, 2005). Unfortunately, still one of the only times educators get to communicate and engage in team building is during unplanned, formal professional development meetings (Rothberg, 1986).

Teacher Organized

Whether a meeting is facilitated by an individual teacher, a group of teachers, administrators, or an outside organization these unplanned meetings can also greatly influence the meeting's effectiveness from the eyes of the teachers. Research suggests thinking about ways in which educational settings can an ease classroom boundaries rather than reinforce them. One way to do this is to engage teachers as leaders who can support, informally assess, and build relationships with other teachers (Johnson, 2015). Educators identify that a mild form of positional authority during collaborative meeting is a positive factor, and that allowing teachers to hold position can allow teachers to enhance professional relationships and gain professional knowledge while doing so with less pressure and stress. Creating teachers as leaders allows for the meeting space to be less formal while still encouraging teachers to grow and develop professionally alongside their peers, by providing each other with nonevaluative feedback (Johnson, 2015; Rouleau & Corner, 2020).

On the other hand, when staff development is run by outside organizations or people other than staff members of the school, the staff meetings or professional development sessions do not resonate as a learning opportunity for most staff members (Bubb & Earley, 2009). Productivity and satisfaction due to mandated professional development reflects the androgyny theory, where teachers may feel mandated and assigned professional development implies they are in a passive role, and the responsibility of growth lies in the professional developer, or person running the professional development. Similarly, data of middle school teacher collaboration showed when teachers are engaged in mandated formal collaboration, that is pushed by the school, the satisfaction and productivity is decreased (Tallman, 2019). Again, when professional growth is pushed by the school, the goals of the professional growth often do not align with the actual professional needs of the teachers.

Dahlberg and Philippot (2008) explained it is critical for administration to solicit feedback from teachers when determining professional development topics. When teachers have a voice in determining their needs, they are more likely to engage in the learning, and bring the new knowledge or skills back to their classrooms to be implemented. Tallman's (2019) research supported this idea, when teachers engage in informal teacher-initiated collaboration and have input in designing their professional development opportunities, they feel that the experience is more productive and that they can engage in more successful collaborative learning. One reason for this is that teachers who work most closely with students and the curriculum can often identify the gaps in their own teaching practices, and just need support in closing them (Dahlberg & Philippot, 2008).

What is critical to understand is that for schools to become more successful, individuals in the schools need to learn and change as their students and classes change. An individual's "buy-in" to staff development and willingness to learning and making changes is directly correlated to if they feel have a voice in the decision-making process, and if their needs are being valued, and listened to seriously (Dahlberg & Philippot, 2008). Klein (2005) suggested, whenever possible, staff meetings or professional development should be coordinated by interested staff members. Dahlberg and Philippot's (2008) research suggested a similar notion, that staff development should not be a process that has an entirely top-down approach. Lastly, staff members who dedicated time to developing staff development were seen as highly valued and respected by other staff members within the school (Bubb & Earley, 2009). Dahlberg and Philippot suggested, if teachers voices are heard, and ideas about professional development are honored, the school will experience more buy-in, and allow for the school to experience more productive staff development, and improvements across the whole scope of the school site.

Trust and Safety

The effectiveness of staff meetings also comes down to the level of trust and safety teachers feel toward the school and each other. Tillman (2019) found trust, shared leadership, and respect were the most valuable aspects in building a collaborative learning community. The presence of these three factors allowed colleagues to build stronger support systems with each other, which assisted in problem solving, while also creating a safe place for one another to promote personal and professional growth. Similarly, educators agreed trust and respect were necessary factors for support among educators (Bickmore, 2013). Bickmore's (2013) study showed the high value educators placed on being able to openly discuss and present authentic manifestations of their professional and personal needs in a safe environment free from evaluation. As stated by one educator in this study "teachers need time to talk, debrief, think together and share" (Bickmore, 2013, p. 54).

These characteristics of successful collaboration also support the social capital theory, in which building social capital comes in the form of obligations and expectations,

which depend on trustworthiness of the social environment (Coleman, 1988). As stated previously, positive, and safe interactions and collaboration between educators is a key to overcoming isolation, growing as a professional and improving student achievement (Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikhahmadi, 2016; Rothberg, 1986).

Research published in 2020 explored how building positive working relationships and trust among teachers impacted professional development in high schools (Akinyemi et al., 2020). This study found joint effort by educators at all levels is necessary to build trust and working relationships. In this study, the most frequent ways teachers can prove there is trust and good relationships among one another is due to their ability to support each other and assist each other. Overall, this study reflected that for there to be effective learning, educators need to communicate and interact regularly. Frequent interactions and communication over a common goal is the foundation to building trust and positive relationships among educators and increasing confidence of the individual and the group. This research supported the idea that the professional relationships built, help to foster personal relationships, which in turn allow for greater trust, commitment, and support within the professional setting (Akinyemi et al., 2020).

Similarly, when looking at motivation and work environments of employees outside education, a positive and trusting environment is essential. Employees who have strong relationships that are built through common goals, knowledge, and mutual respect are better able to coordinate their work, improve the organizational process, have increased confidence in speaking up, and increase psychological safety of the workplace (Carmeli & Gittell, 2009). In addition, increased psychological safety allows for effective failure-based learning to occur. Organizations that do not have strong relationships between employees lack psychological safety, and employees show less of an ability to learn from failures and less motivation to improve in their field (Carmeli & Gittell, 2009).

4. The Concept of Curriculum

From the onset, there is a need to understand the meaning of the word curriculum. Many works on education theory offer definition of curriculum in different ways. According to Urebvu (1994), the word curriculum originated from a Latin word “currere” meaning a “race course”. A curriculum can also mean the set of courses and their contents offered at a school or university. According to Kelly (2008), a curriculum is a prescription of all learning experiences that learners go through under the direction of a school and based on a more general syllabus, which merely specify what topics must be understood, and to what level to achieve a particular grade or standard. In simpler terms, a curriculum includes all courses offered at a school and conducted in a formal setting such as a school.

To have an understanding of a curriculum, it was important to note that the concept is a specification about the practice of teaching which involves learners’ experiences. Experience as a general concept comprises of knowledge or skills of something or some events gained through involvement in or exposure to that thing or event. A curriculum

is an important element of education in which overall objectives of education depend largely on the nature of the curriculum. Common sense tells us that when it comes to learning, time matters. An individual simply cannot advance in any given area of study without committing a certain amount of time to grasping new content, practicing and honing skills, and then harnessing knowledge and skills to realize specific aims (Farbman, 2015).

It can be stated that a curriculum involves an organized plan of course outlined with the educational objectives and aims to be achieved by learners through the planned curriculum. Akinsola and Abe (2006) suggested that modern interpretation sees the curriculum as all the knowledge and experience got by a child in and out of the school walls, either on the time table or outside it. A curriculum can therefore be organised in a formal or informal setting. Essentially, it could be said that putting the curriculum into operation requires an implementation agent. And in this case, the teacher is identified as the implementation agent. For the purpose of this study, a school curriculum refers to the combination of subjects studied within a school year and in sequential years as the learner moves through the educational system provided by the school (Urebvu, 1994).

From the description of the concept of a curriculum given, it can be concluded that a curriculum is planned and organised, meaning it has a specific time frame in which the course must run. In Zambia, the periods are stipulated in the Zambian Curriculum Framework (ZCF). The framework has stated the number of periods in terms of minutes allocated to specific subjects taught in schools. In order to use time more effectively as an element of the curriculum, the teachers in the school must demonstrate greater commitment to the purpose of educating the learners. This implies that teaching time in the classroom needs must be used more efficiently. In this regard, it was the purpose of this study to assess the effect of unplanned teacher and staff meetings on learner's academic performance in selected primary schools in Chipata district of Eastern province in Zambia.

5. Implementation of a School Curriculum

As mentioned in the background of this study, the achievement of objectives of any level of education depends largely on effective implementation of its planned programme. Curriculum planning emphasizes that education should serve to enable society to achieve its needs and aspirations. Scholars in the field of curriculum development have explained curriculum implementation in many ways. Onyeach (2008) defined Curriculum implementation as the process of putting all that have been planned as a curriculum document into practice in the classroom through the combined efforts of teachers, learners, school administrators, parents as well as interaction with physical facilities, instructional materials, psychological and social environments. In addition, curriculum implementation can be explained in terms of the planned or officially designed course of study is translated by the teacher into syllabus, scheme of work and lessons to be taught to learners through classroom interactions.

Some scholars like Onyeachu (2008) have argued that, no matter how well a curriculum of any subject is planned, designed and documented, implementation is important. The reason put forward is that, the problem of most programmes arises at the implementation stage. The focus of curriculum developers therefore, should not be centred only on the development side but also on the implementation process. In order to have relevant and high quality education, there is a need for implementers of the developed curricula to put more efforts to improve the education systems of any country. Comprehensive and deliberate efforts should be put in place to ensure the implementation of curriculum is achieved. One of the efforts to effective curriculum implementation is the concern on how teachers utilise time to implement the curriculum. All efforts should therefore, be focused on time because every activity is time dependent. To this effect, the researcher in this study sought to assess how time was utilised in implementing the curriculum in Chipata district in order to equip learners with worthwhile and desirable skills, values and knowledge needed. This is important because the development of any nation largely depends on the skilled and knowledgeable citizens.

In relation to the use of time in the implementation of the school curriculum, Abadzi (2009) contended that curricular objectives are prescribed for coverage within specific timeframes, so the implication is that learners should be engaged in learning 100 percent of the time. It is therefore, imperative to have researched data on the prevailing situation regarding the time spent in the process of teaching and realise the importance of maximising time for teaching, as it is the core business of any learning institution such as schools.

When it comes to classroom activities, the class teacher is the main player. All the key players of curriculum implementation such as school administrators and teachers should see to it that the planned curriculum is implemented as planned in order to achieve the national aims and goals. To achieve this, all the efforts must be directed and to the teaching process as it is the core business of the school.

Since curriculum is planned, Miller and Seller (1990) stated that curriculum implementation as a process of applying the curriculum-planning (programme) in the form of learning activity involves a student-teacher interaction in the context of the school environment. Teachers therefore, play a very important role in the facilitation of the learner's acquisition of the desirable knowledge, skills, values and attitudes (Mulenga, 2015). Nevertheless, several factors can affect the implementation of the curriculum. Studies been conducted on the factors that can affect curriculum implementation and these are discussed in detail in the next paragraphs.

Equally, other factors support successful curriculum implementation in the school. In view of this, effective curriculum implementation is the one that reflects what the learner eventually takes away from an educational experience. In many circumstances, there would be a gap between the intended curriculum and the learned curriculum

Instructional facilities are identified as one of the factors that support curriculum implementation. School facilities are basic structures and facilities necessary for effective teaching and learning.

Factors that may hinder curriculum implementation may be different from country to country. In Nigeria, Adeleke (2007) expressed that education had suffered the plight of inadequate instructional materials, inadequate qualified teacher, poor funding, inadequate instructional facilities and lack of motivation among others. Adeleke further recommended that there was every need to resolve issues surrounding functional education system in Nigeria. Similarly, in Zambia, Mkandawire (2010) outlined factors such as unavailability of school facilities to be a major impediment to curriculum implementation. Though time loss was also listed as one of the factors that affected curriculum implementation, Mkandawire did not explain the effects of loss of learning time on curriculum implementation. From the two studies done, it can be deduced that no attention was given to the utilisation of time in curriculum implementation process. As such, in this study, the researcher sought to bridge the gap assessing how teachers used teaching and learning time to implement the school curriculum.

6. Theoretical Conceptions of Learning Time in Relation to the School Curriculum

Some educational scholars find the concept of learning time to be intellectually unexciting, and of such obvious importance that it only leads to trivial understandings and to findings that have the status of truisms Johnston and Aldridge (1985). The conceptual framework connecting time to learning first took root in 1963 when educational psychologist John Carroll articulated a model of school teaching time.

Carroll's framework reviewed the connection between time and learning, demonstrating in educational terms how quantity of time serves as the pivot point in what he called the degree of learning that any individual achieves. Since then, many studies have confirmed Carroll's theory and, specifically, have argued that spending more time in productive learning environments does, indeed lead to increases in proficiency.

Impressed by Carroll's work, Bloom (1971) extended Carroll's theoretical premises, developing his own theory and model of school learning. He recognized that while students vary widely in their learning rates, virtually all learn well when provided with the necessary time and appropriate learning conditions. If teachers could provide these more appropriate conditions, Bloom believed that nearly all students could reach a high level of achievement and, hence, differences in their levels of achievement would vanish (Bloom, 1971).

The general observation from Bloom's theory is that, variations in learning and the level of learning of students are determined by the students' learning history and the quality of teaching they receive. Appropriate modifications related to the history of the learners, the quality of teaching can sharply reduce the variation of students and greatly

increase their level of learning, and their effectiveness in learning in terms of time and effort expended (Bloom, 1971). These theories give a deeper understanding in this research to assess how time use is related to learning. Both scholars alluded to in the previous paragraph clearly show the importance of having more time for teaching considering that time is an essential element of any curriculum development and implementation process.

7. Importance of adequate Time in the Implementation of a School Curriculum

Time is a very important aspect when it comes to the implementation of any educational programme (Mulenga, 2008). Since the 1990s, undeniable progress towards expanding access to education in the world has been made however; this success has not been matched with comparable progress in the improvement of educational quality and equity. Learning time can be linked to the underlying concerns and the broader concept of quality education as affirmed at the Jomtien Conference, the Dakar Conference and more recently in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 (UNESCO, 2000). In this context, several ways to improve the quality of education such as teacher training, better infrastructure and curricula among other things have been explored. Nevertheless, learning time is occasionally mentioned, but rarely the theme of studies in the context of developing countries. The few studies on the use of learning time show that students' official annual learning time is almost never completed in classrooms and the losses can be tremendous (Benavot & Gad, 2004). It is therefore, important to examine activities that may reduce time for learning so that possible solutions are provided in order to attain the country's educational goals and objectives, which was one on the objectives of this study. In realising the importance of time for learning, this study sought amicable ways of how possible to reduce on the lost time for learning by actors in curriculum implementation at the school level.

Concerns about effective use of resources in schools raise a question of how to distribute, allocate and organise them in a way that would be most conducive to learning. Importantly, the most valuable resource in the educational process is no doubt learners learning time. This is because an individual simply cannot advance in any given area of study without committing a certain amount of time to grasping new content, practicing and honing skills, and then harnessing knowledge and skills to realize specific aims (Farbman and Kaplan 2005). In view of this, Gettinger, (1995) stated that rearrangement of student learning time, next to reduction of the class size and increase of teachers' salaries, has emerged as one of the key ideas for reallocation of newly available resources in countries with a decreasing number of students. For this reason, some education system has realised the importance of increasing learning time in schools. In South Africa for instance, the Organisation for Economic Corporation and Development (2013) realised that optimising this resource has been presented as one of the key measures in improving student achievement.

Furthermore, teaching time, or the total number of allocated classroom hours has also been realised to account for public spending and constitutes a key resource that offers

opportunity to learn (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] 2013). Understanding the effective use of time helped this study to establish the positive effects of time on learner outcome. Similarly, teachers can cover the curriculum in more depth and breadth and not just focus on subjects tested in national or examinations, which can better correspond to students' interests (Farbman & Kaplan, 2005). More time can allow greater interaction and more positive relationships between teachers and students, which can benefit learners academically.

Every event in school is time dependent. Eventually, successfully completed events are measured from total time expended. In school organization, curricular and core-curricular activities depend on the time scheduled like other organizational tasks. Ugwulashi (2013) asserted that, the existence of man is evaluated by the total time spent measured in daily, weekly, term and yearly. Time management has been considered as one factor that can lead to efficient and effective educational improvement. This study therefore sought to assess at how time was used for the benefit of educational productivity. Assessing how learning time was used in schools was likely to help the schools on how best they can work in coming up with strategies to reduce on the lost time for learning.

8. Review of Studies Related to the Topic under Study.

Studies have reviewed some literature on the distribution of time and its use in curriculum implementation. A recent evaluation by UNESCO (2016) was conducted in Mexico in order to assess the time available for teaching in New Mexico public schools. The evaluation further established factors that caused loss in teaching time, and how those factors affected student achievement and different student populations. In the same evaluation, the evaluator also reviewed research-based best practices to promote time-on task and their use by schools. The evaluation used a state-wide representative survey of teachers and principals, along with administrative data, to assess how unplanned teacher and staff meetings affect learner's performance in schools.

From the evaluation, there were some recommendations such as having continued investments in strategies that resulted in increased instructional time, implement better accountability measures for public schools' flexible use of at-risk funding and the school calendar, create a framework for assessing and maximizing the effective use of instructional time through a collaborative process of evaluation, technical assistance and professional development (UNESCO, 2016). The evaluation established factors that reduced time for learning. It is therefore, important to assess whether such practices to reduce loss of time were being practiced in Zambia. As such, this study also aimed at examining factors that may reduce time for learning as compared to those established in that study. This is because, not much has been done to establish the prevailing situation in primary schools in Chipata district of Zambia. It was hence the intent of this study to do so.

Another survey by Rodgers and Mirra (2014) on Learning Time and Educational Opportunity in California High Schools concluded that learning time was an essential resource for addressing educational goals, yet it seemed to be in short supply in many California schools. The researchers in the survey asked a representative sample of high school teachers to report on how factors inside and outside of their schools shaped students' learning time and teachers' work. It was found that high school teachers were constantly racing against the clock in order to pursue the educational goals. The survey also revealed that students across different communities experience these allocated days and minutes in dramatically different ways. California students attending high concentration poverty schools are not able to access as much instructional time as the majority of their peers. Despite receiving different amount of time in terms of learning, teachers had strategies that were put in to cover the content. They pursued many purposes such as providing a strong preparatory curriculum and promoting critical and creative thinking, to meeting students' social and emotional needs. It was concluded in that study that despite the limited time that teachers had to cover the content, measures were put in place in order to race against time to cover the content in the curriculum. However, the fact that those measures were implemented in Californian school may not suggest that the situation is similar in the Zambian context. It was thus important to have researched data from the Zambian schools particularly in Chipata district on whether or not such measures implemented by the teachers in California are being practiced in Zambia, hence the purpose of this study.

It was established in another study conducted by UNESCO (2016) in Mexico on timeon-task and effort to extend learning time. The study contacted superintendents of 15 largest districts and interviewed 12 of the 15 superintendents of the largest districts state wide by student population in person and by telephone conference. The study reviewed that, when primary school teachers were in school, various non-academic activities, especially administrative work, took a considerable amount of their time. While in classrooms, these teachers engaged students in learning tasks more than 80% of the time. However, classroom activities mainly involved routine, traditional teaching and rote learning methods, compared to active and innovative higher-order learning tasks.

In the same study by UNESCO, it was established that when teachers were engaged in teaching activities, students in small groups were found to be "off-task" in more than 80% of the classrooms surveyed. This was especially true in multi-grade classrooms when a teacher was addressing one specific grade and the remaining students were assigned to do tasks in small or large groups. The study clearly indicated that learners were not receiving the expected amount of time they were supposed to receive. This was because of the non-curricular activities that were performed by teachers during teaching. In other words, the survey clearly indicated that time was lost in classrooms during teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the study did not provide solutions to reduce the lost time for learning but rather focused on how much time was used for the learning. One of the objective of this study was to find strategies that can help

curriculum implementers in Zambia to properly utilise time for learning bearing in mind that it is through a well-planned curriculum that learners can acquire worthwhile and desirable knowledge skills and values necessary for them to survive. Besides, it is through education that a nation can develop its social, economic and political will. In this study therefore, the researcher sought to find possible strategies to help teachers reduce on the loss of time in the implementation of the school curriculum in Chipata district.

It is through assessment that curriculum goals and objectives are realised or achieved. Heyneman and Loxley (1983) conducted one of the studies in some Low Developing Countries (LDCs) in Africa. The study examined the impact of instructional time on pupil achievement in LDCs. In Iran, India and Thailand, it was found that more instructional time, which spent on general science, was associated with higher academic achievement. In the same study, increased pupil reading time also had a positive effect on pupil achievement in Chile and India. In Zambia, it was recently indicted by SAQMEC (2012) that the learners ranked at the bottom in terms of academic performance in literacy and numeracy. One of the reason that was put forward was the distribution of resources, which also included the failure to properly utilise teaching time as a resource in education.

Learning time in schools is utilised differently depending on how schools allocate it on the timetable. Studies have been conducted in Africa on how teachers use the allocated time for learning. Information about how teachers and students use their time in the classroom is vital to the development of educational policies to improve the quality of education. Although the time a teacher allocates and uses for instructional activities is important, the amount of time that students actually spend on curriculumrelated activities is critical for improving learning outcomes. Kipkoech (2017) conducted an analysis of time management strategies for instruction in public primary schools in Kenya. The study analysed teacher spending of instructional time in public primary schools and examined teaching interruptions and teachers' commitment to time. It was established in the study that teaching interruptions reduced teaching time. The study revealed that unplanned teaching activities that form teaching interruptions were on a high side. In the same study, head teachers claimed that interruptions of teaching time were not a common phenomenon. According to them, it was only on unavoidable circumstances (emergencies) that interruptions could happen. According to the head teachers, school activities that were planned included half-term breaks, academic days, meetings, sports and games, tours and field excursions and so on. While occurrences which cannot be planned include; teacher's sickness (in cases where one teacher teaches a subject alone), teachers' and students' strikes, staff funerals, school fees breaks (where half-term breaks are not available), impromptu visits by prominent persons among other emergencies. These disruptions in some way suggested that the implementation of the planned curriculum was affected. It is obvious as noted by Farbman (2015) earlier in the background that every school experiences disruptions that hinders proper time use for learning. For this reason, it was imperative to assess

how time was utilised in schools to achieve the set education goals. However, the disruptions that were established by Kipkoech (2017) may be similar in Zambia, there is no study that seems to have been done in Chipata district of Zambia to assess such disruptions.

In Mali, Abadzi (2007) using snapshot conducted a similar study as research instruments to compare time use in countries with different socioeconomic indicators. The study sought to find out how time was utilised in classrooms by teachers. The study revealed that teachers were found to be engaged on task, which in other terms were actively teaching and learning to be at 70.9 percent of the time that they were in the classroom, of which 45 percent to non-curricular activities. When teachers were off teaching, they were most likely performing classroom management roles not directly related to teaching or they were absent from the classroom altogether these two activities accounted for 67.4 percent of their off-task time which was the time learners where involved in performing a task. The study clearly showed that there was a gap between the time learners were expected to actively learn and the time utilised for learning. Although in that study time spent on teaching was indicated, the study did not show the practices that lead to the lost time.

In Uganda, strategies were put in place by the Ministry of Education to ensure effective use of time for academic learning rather than non-teaching activities. CECDE (2008) suggested that, to ensure close monitoring of the school calendar, school authorities on how long the school year was supposed to be informed the education officials and community members. Government ministries informed education officials, stakeholders, and communities about the time the state had allocated time to learning. The government also ensured that students were provided with appropriate instruction by providing teacher in-service training and other activities in which teachers were obliged to participate.

In line with the strategies by the Ministry of Education in Uganda, Walberg (1984) also suggested that, the most common way to increase classroom-learning time was to assign homework to be done outside of school. This can be an effective strategy for increasing learning, provided teachers evaluated the homework. The researcher in this study sought information from the teachers, pupils and head teacher on what measures they had put in place to cover for the lost time specifically in Chipata district.

In another study, Ginsburg and Chudowsky (2012) conducted surveys on instructional time in seven countries, which included Benin, Brazil, Ghana, India, Mali, Morocco, and Tunisia. The survey measured student engagement and disengagement with a given activity in the classroom. The overall rate of engagement for all students for the entire period was 67 percent. The study also suggested that a large amount of teacher time (98 percent) was spent on assessment activity, but this may have been because observations took place during the part of the semester when teachers tended to focus on assessment. From this survey, it can be concluded that most teachers in these countries used

classroom time effectively. In this study therefore, the researcher sought to assess the utilisation of teaching and learning time in Zambia specifically Chipata district.

A case study was conducted in Senegal by UNESCO (2013) to establish the actors or actions in time loss in Senegalese schools. The research indicated that, the loss of school time in Senegal was not only because of a single actor's actions, but originated from multiple actors. These actors or actions were observed from the national level to the provincial school level and at all levels in between. A multi-level stakeholder namely, the national government, the provincial and district authorities, the national teachers' unions, religious bodies, school head teachers, teachers, families and students were held accountable for teaching and learning time loss to some extent.

In addition, the results of the same study by UNESCO showed that the amount of instructional time received by the learners in primary schools in Senegal was generally low, with significant disparities depending on the location and types of school. Instructional time loss was related to structural problems and to the actions of multilevel actors, with various ranks of responsibilities and diverse representation strategies and constraints. The loss of school time in quantity affects the quality of the use of time in the classroom, the coverage of school programs, and ultimately the quality of education. Since that study was done in Senegal, the researcher in this study assessed whether the prevailing situation in Senegal is also similar in Zambia particularly in primary schools of Chipata district.

Benavot (2002) conducted a study in different countries in Africa on actual instructional time in primary schools and factors that reduced school quality in developing countries. In his study, he concluded that, the amount of time students spent engaged in learning tasks was related to learning outcomes. An assessment of the amount of time used in the schools of Tunisia, Morocco, Ghana and the Brazilian state of Pernambuco showed that the percentage of time that students were engaged in learning ranged from 77.9 percent in Tunisia to 38.7 percent in Ghana. As instructional time was spent on other activities, student achievement decreased. In this study, the researcher focused on factors that reduced time for learning and suggested possible strategies for schools manage the available time for learning in primary schools in Chipata district.

A similar study by Abadzi (2007) titled Absenteeism and Beyond Instructional Time Loss and Consequences was conducted in Tunisia, Morocco, Ghana, and the Brazilian state of Pernambuco. That study was undertaken to develop an efficient methodology for measuring instructional time loss. Interviews and observations on a representative sample of schools were conducted as research instruments. Thus, instructional time use was measured in sampled schools. The percentage of time that learners were engaged in learning activities was approximately 39 percent and 63 percent. The study also revealed that learners were often taught for less than the intended time.

Similarly, in the same study in Brazil and Niger, Abadzi (2007) indicated that only a half of the intended instructional time was utilised for learning tasks. Sometimes schools were found closed, particularly before or after holidays due to teacher delays and other engagements, and teachers taught only for two to three hours a day. The study further reviewed that when teachers were present in school, they were found to be engaged in activities other than teaching and spent much class time in handing out textbooks, doing small chores. Lacking parental support, poorer students tend to fall behind early and repeat grades or drop out illiterate. School councils and village education committees often did not know how much time their children should have been spending in learning activities and had no basis for demanding what was due to them. However, the situation in the sampled countries of that study was not known whether it was similar to what is prevailing in Zambia particularly in Chipata District. In this study, the researcher assessed whether such interruptions such as delays in opening of the schools in the countries in that study are similar in primary schools in Chipata district.

Curriculum implementation is a very crucial stage of any curriculum process. The problems that may arise during implementation can cause disparities between the intended curriculum and the implemented curriculum. Lockheed and Verspoor, (1992) postulated that the disparity between official, intended instructional time and actual patterns of time implementation in local schools and classrooms, as well as the factors affecting this disparity, were fundamental issues that deserved scholarly attention. As such, studies have been conducted around the world to address and find out factors that cause disparities and measures to address them. Among the factors that cause such disparities is how teaching and learning time was utilised on curriculum implementation.

Time is a very important aspect when it comes to the implementation of any educational programme. An evaluation conducted by Mulenga (2008) on the Academic and Productive Unit (APU) observed that, all the board members, Quality Assurance and Standards Officers, teachers and head teachers reported that time for teaching and learning was not adequate or enough for learning. The findings about the use and management of time for teaching and learning in the APU programme indicated that there was a lot of time that was not properly utilised for due to teacher absences. The study further suggested that there was a great need for head teachers and other staff in the administration to ensure that time for teaching and learning in the APU programme was given its paramount importance.

Teachers also needed to take their responsibilities to teach seriously in order to implement the curriculum effectively. In that study, the researcher only focussed on how time was lost in APU classes but did not include regular classes (morning classes). Despite the researcher looking at factors that reduced time for learning, the researcher did not clearly indicate how much time was allocated for learning either in form of days

or hours. In this study, the researcher investigated how teachers utilised time to implement the curriculum.

It has been observed from different researches conducted that, linking time to learning requires a common strategy that will compel schools to make use of each minute of teaching time effectively. However, this cannot be achieved if teachers did not fully use teaching periods and maximum punctual attendance of learners. Time is obviously essential for learning. This was noted from the literature that has been reviewed around time allocation and time usage in schools (CECDE, 2008).

9. Research Gap

It is observed from the studies reviewed in this chapter that time use in schools is a valuable resource that has not received much attention despite its benefits and negative effects on the learners and the process of curriculum implementation at large in Zambia. This is evident from the little literature yielded from the Zambian context. It was the purpose of this study to assess the use of learning time in the implementation of the school curriculum in selected primary schools of Chipata district. As noted in the literature, more learning time allows the learners to be exposed or grasp the intended concepts and acquire desirable and worthwhile skills, values and knowledge they need to survive in society. There is no doubt that adequate time for learning improves the academic performance as evidenced in some of the studies reviewed in the chapter. This study was different from the studies that have been reviewed in this chapter in terms of research focus, context and research methodology. While other researches done on time use examined how time was distributed and lost in classroom during teaching, this study focused on both classroom and school factors that may reduce time for teaching and learning that maybe similar to those reviewed in the literature.

10. Summary

Chapter two covered the concept of a curriculum, theoretical conceptions of learning time in relation to the school curriculum, importance of time in the implementation of the school curriculum, review of studies related to the topic under study, the research and the research gap. The next chapter consists of the methodology that was used in this study.

III. Methodology

1. Overview

This chapter contains the methodology used in the study. The chapter is organised under the following sections: research paradigm and approach, study site, target population, sample size, sampling technique, data collection instruments, validity, reliability, trustworthiness, data collection procedure, data analysis and ethical considerations.

2. Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a procedure for collecting, analysing, interpreting, and reporting data in research studies. It represents different models for doing research, and these models have distinct names and procedures associated with them. In other words, a paradigm is a guideline system or framework used for solving a problem (Dawson, 2013). To this study, the researcher adopted a mixed method approach where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study. Mixed methods research is also an attempt to legitimate the use of multiple approaches in answering research questions, rather than restricting or constraining researchers' choices. To this regard, the researcher collected both forms of data at the same time during the study and then integrated the information in the interpretation of the overall results (Creswell, 2003). The mixed method approach was applied for this study because it allowed the opportunity to compensate for inherent method weaknesses, capitalize on inherent method strengths, and offset inevitable method biases (Greene, 2007).

The mixed method was preferred for inclusion in this study because the use of learning time in the implementation of the school curriculum is both qualitative and quantitative in nature because of the number of learning hours spent on teaching and learning. Dawson (2013) postulated that the fundamental principle of mixed methods research is that multiple kinds of data should be collected with different strategies and methods in ways that reflect complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses. This is in line with Creswell (2014) asserts that allowing a mixed methods study provides insights not possible when only qualitative or quantitative data are collected.

3. Research Design

The research employed a concurrent embedded method, which was aimed at providing insights into the topic under study. The embedded design is a mixed methods design in which one data set provides a supportive, primary role in a study based primarily on the other data type (Creswell, 2003). The premises of this design are that a single data set is not sufficient and that different questions need to be answered by different types of data (Creswell, 2012). The concurrent embedded design therefore, enabled the researcher to gain perspectives from the different types of data or from different levels within the study (Creswell, 2014). Researchers use this design when they need to include qualitative and quantitative data to answer a research question within a largely quantitative or qualitative study.

Therefore, the study embedded a quantitative component within a qualitative design in which quantitative data supplemented qualitative data. This means that qualitative was more than the quantitative one. The use of the concurrent embedded design in this research enabled the researcher to answer both the what and why questions for a deeper understanding of the research problem by comparing the qualitative and quantitative findings concurrently.

4. Target Population

A study population is defined as all the individuals the researchers are interested in studying specific characteristics in common (Macnee and McCabe, 2008). A population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which the researcher intend to generalize the findings (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh & Sorensen, 2006). Kombo and Tromp (2006) also explained that a population is the entire set of objects, events or group of people which is the object of research and about which the researcher intends to determine some characteristics. The target population for this study therefore comprised of all the primary school teachers, primary school head teachers and all the grade twelve pupils in Chipata district.

5. Study Sample

Bryman (2001) explained that a sample is the segment of the population that is selected for investigation. The sample comprised of 35 respondents broken down as follows; 1 head teacher, 10 teachers and 24 pupils.

6. Sampling Procedure

Sampling is as the process of obtaining information about an entire population by examining part of it (Kothari, 2004). Sampling is an important aspect in research because it facilitates the representation of the population from a few participants in the study. Therefore, both non-probability and probability sampling techniques were used when selecting respondents for this study.

Schools

In selection of primary schools in Chipata district, simple random sampling was employed. All the names of primary schools in Chipata district were written on pieces of papers and put in a small box. Selection was done at random until the one school was picked from the box. This is because the researcher took into consideration that the curriculum was implemented in every school and that the results of the study may represent other schools that were not part of the sample.

Teachers

In the selection of primary school teachers in Chipata district, the researcher used simple random technique. Simple random sampling is a procedure in which all the individuals in the defined population have an equal and independent chance of being selected as a member of the sample (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Simple random was done bearing in mind that every teacher was involved in the process of implementing the curriculum. Based on the advantages of this technique, the researcher requested for all the names of the teachers in each school, wrote their names on pieces of paper according to gender, and then put them into a box. The names were then raffled and the selection of 5 males and 5 females was done at random in each of the boxes until the required number (10) was attained from the sampled school.

In stratified sampling, each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected and the member is not affected by the selection of other members. The scholars explained that the advantages of simple random sampling are that: the samples yield research data that can be generalised to a larger population; it also allows the researcher to apply inferential statistics to the data as well as providing an equal opportunity of selection for each respondent of the population. Kombo and Tromp (2006) stated that stratified sampling involves dividing the population into homogeneous subgroups and then taking a simple random sample in each sub group. Stratified sampling was then be used in this study to address the problem of non-homogeneous populations in the sense that it attempts to represent the population much more precisely than can be done with simple random sampling (Creswell et al 2003).

Head Teacher

The study used purposive sampling to select the head teacher as advised by Kombo and Tromp (2006) that in purposive sampling, the researcher purposely targets a group of people believed to be reliable for the study. The power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information rich cases related to the central issues being studied which in this case are the school head teachers.

Learners

It is obvious that learners are the direct beneficiaries of the curriculum. Teaching and learning cannot take place without the learner. The researcher sampled grade twelve pupils because they were considered to have been the cohort that had covered the curriculum in depth in their respective subjects. It is for this reason that the researcher sought to sample from them. The researcher used simple random sampling to sample three streams from each of the four schools. The researcher requested for the names of the streams, put them into a box and randomly picked until the third number was obtained. To sample the pupils, researcher requested for the class register of the stream selected and then stratified each class into boys and girls. All the names of each stratum were then put in a box to pick 2 pupils (1 boy and 1 girl) from each stream until a total of 24 pupils was drawn from the four sampled schools.

7. Research Instruments

The researcher collected data using three research instruments; questionnaires, interview guides and focus group guide. The questionnaires were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data that gave answers to each of the research questions. A questionnaire was used to supplement information that was given in interviews and focus group discussion. Focus group guide was used to collect qualitative data from the grade 8 and 9 pupils.

Interviews Guides

The recorded interviews facilitated the extracting of verbatim expressions from the interviewees. While the respondents expressed themselves, the researcher took

handwritten notes. In this regard, unstructured interviews were employed in the study to collect data from the head teachers. Sapsford and Jupp (2006) stated that a semi structured interview does not have a standard format but there is an agenda that is used as a reminder to ensure that all the basic points are covered. The advantage is that semi-structured interviews can give greater depth than a questionnaire, because the researcher can probe or encourage respondents to elaborate their answers and can crosscheck information.

Unstructured Interview Guide for Head teacher

The researcher used unstructured interview with head teachers to get views on school the utilisation of time in implementing the curriculum in the school. The interviewer collected information on the utilisation and adequacy of teaching and learning time, factors that reduced time in the school and strategies to be employed to reduce on time loss. In-depth interviews helped the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of what participants said in interviews and how they said it, their gestures, reactions and emotions.

Questionnaires

The Questionnaires had both open-ended, close-ended questions and the attitude rating scale, which was used to collect information from teachers. The questionnaire collected quantitative data from the teachers. Quantitative data was used to add detail to the study. Questionnaires were preferred because they form a large group of the sampled population. The researcher used questionnaires on the teachers because they can collect objective, consistent data, can give respondents time to consult files, and are a uniform measure of (Sarantakos, 2005).

Questionnaire for Teachers

The questionnaire for teachers consisted of four sections. The first section was designed to collect demographic data about the respondents (teachers). The second section consisted of both closed and open-ended questions collecting information on utilisation and adequacy of teaching time in school. The third section of the questionnaire consisted of information on the factors that reduced time for teaching and learning. In addition, the last section sought information on strategies to be suggested to reduce time loss for teaching.

Focus Group Discussion Guide for Pupils

In this study, focus group discussions were conducted with pupils as key informants on adequacy and utilisation of time, factors that reduced time for teaching and learning and suggestions for reducing time loss in school. The purpose of the focus groups discussions in this study was to get views on the topic under study. Morgan (1993) explained focus group discussion as a type of in-depth interview accomplished in a group, whose meetings present characteristics defined with respect to the proposal, size, composition, and interview procedures. FGD is an interview conducted by a trained moderator among a small group of respondents in an informal and natural way where

respondents are free to give views from any aspect. The researcher also discussed with pupils on what strategies teachers used to cover for the lost time for learning. The researcher used FDG because it simultaneously solicit for opinions and experiences of participants.

8. Reliability and Trust Worthiness

Reliability

Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) defined reliability as a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. In other words, reliability is concerned with the consistency of the results obtained from a measuring instrument. Reliability was done using pre-test technique through pilot. Therefore, to ensure content reliability in this study, the piloting process was done prior to the actual research data collection exercise. This was conducted in Chipata District in Eastern province. This was done to familiarize the researcher with the procedures of the study and most importantly, to test the validity and reliability of the research instruments. Through piloting of questionnaires, the researcher was able to identify possible areas where participants could have encountered difficulties and useful suggestions for improving the research instruments. Piloting this study enabled the researcher to make amendments on the research instruments, which lead to collected appropriate data from the sampled respondents. Piloting questionnaires therefore, was designed to make the instruments as accurate as possible. In addition, to ensure validity and reliability of this study, the researcher used methodological triangulation, which enabled to collect data through questionnaires, Focus Group Discussion Guides (FGD), and interviews guides. This approach was important as it validates, corroborate and ascertain the truthfulness of certain statements from the different sources of evidence consulted.

Trustworthiness

Ensuring trustworthiness begins with the research findings, which must be as truthful as possible. Trustworthiness in this study was done by giving a clear and distinctive description of the research context, selection and characteristics of respondents, data collection as well as the procedure for data analysis. Trustworthiness also included credibility, dependability and transferability.

Credibility

Credibility is the level that the research results are believable from the participant's perspective. In this study, member checking and rich description of the participant's responses obtained. Member checking is an opportunity for members (participants) to check (approve) particular aspects of the interpretation of the data they provided. This was done by asking the participants to check whether the information provided was correct.

Transferability

Transferability is the degree that research can be transferred to other contexts or settings, in this study; transferability was insured by a large description of the participant's responses. The researcher made sure that the sample was representative enough.

9. Data Collection Procedure

The researcher sought permission in advance from the relevant authorities to access and conduct research in the selected primary schools under study. The researcher carried an official introductory letter from the Assistant Dean Postgraduate studies at DMI University, for identification purposes. Before meeting the primary school teachers, the researcher requested for permission from the head teacher of the respective primary school. Appointment was made with the head teacher of the sampled school on when to conduct the study in their respective school. The researcher established rapport between the head teacher and teachers. The researcher further got consent from the respondents and then administer questionnaires to respondents and make appointments for interviews and focus group discussions. This was done to get their views on the use of time in the implementation of a school curriculum. To ensure that all of the information shared during the sessions were retained, audio from the sessions were recorded. A voice recorder was used to record the discussions and the researcher sought verbal consent from the participants before using the voice recorder in all the cases of the discussions.

The recorder was placed in a central and strategic position so that all the information during the discussion was captured clearly for the purpose of transcription and record. Participants were informed prior to each session that it would be recorded. The contact teacher prepared venues which were quiet and with less disturbance for a smooth flow of the interviews. In cases of any interruption, the recorder was put on pause and restarted when convenient. The time for the focus group discussions varied between 45 and 60 minutes. This accorded the participants a chance to take part in the discussions.

10. Data analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative was analysed using descriptive statistics and presented in form of frequency tables and graphs. Descriptive statistics is a collective name for a number of statistical methods that were used to organize and summarize data in a meaningful way (Maree 2008). Descriptive statistics does exactly what they say; they describe and present data for example in terms of summary frequencies, graphs and tables. Using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and excel computer packages, the data was summarised in frequencies and percentages. This served to enhance the understanding of the properties of the data. The researcher opted for the descriptive statistics because of the nature of the data that was obtained in this study. Besides this reason, the study involved a mixed method approach. The complete responses were

separated into categories according to study objectives, frequencies developed and percentages computed.

Qualitative data analysis

Ary, et al (2006) stated that data analysis for qualitative data is often done concurrently or simultaneously with data collection through an interactive, recursive and dynamic process. In analysing qualitative data for this study, the researcher employed the constant comparative strategy for which the researcher combined inductive category coding with simultaneous comparison of all units of meaning obtained (Ary et al, 2006). Usually, qualitative data analysis is broken down in three key stages, which include familiarization and organization, coding and recoding as well as summarizing and interpreting. All interview responses were transcribed and categorized according to topics, which were done as soon as data collection began in order for the researcher to be familiar with the data being collected and be in the position to notice any gaps, which would need further clarification. The analysis in this study involved sorting out of data into various themes according to the objectives raised by the study and discussing the information objectively. This was done by carefully recording conversations in order to interpret, reduce and code key responses. In this regard, the researcher listened to the recorded interviews repeatedly as soon as data collection starts in order to start getting familiar with the data during the collection process.

After familiarizing with the data and organizing it for easy retrieval, the researcher started the coding and recoding process. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) identified several procedure tools in qualitative data analysis. These include analytic induction, constant comparison, typological analysis and enumeration. In this study, the researcher employed constant comparative strategy. Ary et al, (2006) explained that, the strategy combines inductive category coding with simultaneous comparison of all units of meaning obtained. As advised by Maree (2007), the researcher used this strategy of inductive data analysis because it is more likely to help identify the multiple realities potentially present in the data.

11. Ethical Considerations

According to Cohen et al (2007: 51), “Ethics concern right and wrong, good and bad”. Ethics are questions of norms and values. Research ethics seeks to protect human participants, serving the interest of participants and examine specific activities for the ethical soundness and informed consent (Patton, 2002). Based on this knowledge, before data collection, an introductory letter will be obtained from the DMI University and obtain clearance from the Ethics Committee. Informed consent was sought from all participants. Dierner and Crandall (1978) defined the principle of informed consent as “the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decision”. The researcher provided the consent form to the participants before proceeding with the research.

All the participants were made aware of the nature and purpose of the study. This was done to respect the freedom and self- determination of an individual as a democratic right (Zambia being a democratic nation). One way of achieving this was by having participants sign informed consent forms in which they agree to the provisions of the study before they provide data (Creswell, 2014). Moreover, participants were informed about their right to withdraw. The participants' right to privacy and confidentiality were be respected. All respondents were told not to write any name on the research instruments and every response concerning the study was be treated with high level of confidentiality besides being used only for the purpose of the study. All data that was collected during the study was kept secretly and used only for the intended purpose as out lined in the section on the purpose of the study. Subjects were allowed to participate voluntarily. Names of the respondents and of schools were not be disclosed.

12. Limitations of the study

The findings of the study are limited to Chipata and therefore, may not be generalised to other areas. However, this is not to say that the information could not be used in schools with similar situations. This study was further constrained by the scarcity of literature on the use of learning and teaching time from the Zambian context as little research existed on this topic. If such literature was available, the researcher could have learnt one or two things from it.

13. Summary

In this chapter, details on the methodology which were employed for the study have been explained, which incorporated research design, target population, study sample, sampling techniques, research instruments, validity and reliability, data collection techniques, data analysis as well as ethical considerations. The next chapter is the presentations of the research findings.

IV. Presentation and Discussion of the Research Findings

1. Overview

The previous chapter was a description of the methodology used in this study. These findings are a reflection of the data collected through questionnaires administered to the primary school teachers, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) conducted with the pupils and interviews with the four primary school head teachers in Chipata district. Using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and excel computer packages, the quantitative data was summarised in frequencies and percentages. However, the findings were guided by the following research objectives;

- To identify the factors that contribute to the occurrence of unplanned meetings.
- To evaluate the consequences of unplanned meetings on student learning and engagement.
- To propose strategies to minimize the negative effects of unplanned meetings on academic performance.

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2. The impact of unplanned teacher and staff meetings on learners' academic performance.

Quality education depends on having sufficient time for teaching and learning. Schools need an adequate number of days and hours for instruction and well-trained teachers to teach quality lessons, so that learner's engagement in learning is maximised (UNESCO, 2017). The theory of time factor by Carrol (1963) which was used in this study clearly stressed the importance of proper utilisation of time in learner's learning. The theory stressed that, what matters in students learning is the amount of time that learners are supposed to learn. The implications of this theory is that, the more the time given to learning, the more the learner acquires worthwhile and desirable skills, knowledge and values needed for life. As objective number one sought to assess the utilisation and adequacy of time in implementing the school curriculum, the theory by Carroll was contrary to the findings of this study regarding the time that was utilised for teaching and learning. The findings indicated that the time for teaching and learning allocated to particular subjects was not adequate to cover the content in the syllabi.

As already indicated in the overview of the chapter, objective number one sought to analyze the impact of unplanned teacher and staff meetings on learners' academic performance in selected primary schools of Chipata district. This was done in order to determine whether time was used according to the way it was planned. This was important because learning time gives learners an opportunity to acquire the desirable and worthwhile skills, knowledge and attitude through the process of learning.

Syllabus Coverage and adequacy of Time.

In order to determine whether time for teaching and learning was enough, the researcher sought to understand the number of periods teachers taught in a week. To elicit this information, item 4 of teacher's questionnaire asked teachers the number of periods they cover within a week. The table below shows the number of periods covered by teachers in week.

Table 4.1: Frequency Distribution of Number of periods Taught by Teachers in a week

Item		Response
Number of periods taught	*f*	%
Less than 6	1	3.1
6 to 12	8	25
12 to 24	15	46.9
Above 24	8	25
Total	32	100

The table indicates that most of teachers 46.9 percent had 12-24 periods, 25 percent had 6-12 periods, another 25 percent had more than 24 periods and only 3.1 percent had less than 6 periods. The majority of teachers were found to be teaching more than 12 periods in a week and that teachers had too much to cover within the shortest period.

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From table 4.1, the teachers had less contact hours with the learners. Teachers were asked to state whether the time allocated to their subjects was adequate or not and give the reasons as to why time for teaching was not adequate. Several reasons were given by teachers. The reasons had to do with the disturbances that occurred in the school, the practical nature of some subjects that consumed time. Other reasons for inadequate time for teaching were core curricula activities that at time disrupted teaching time.

Similarly, head teachers also had a similar views pertaining to the inadequacy of teaching time. All the four head teachers were of the view that time that was utilised for teaching was not enough. (HT) expressed that:

The time is not enough, for example, social studies in which we have three components that includes civics, geography and history. It is really a big problem to complete the syllabus, so as a result, you will find that teachers are forced to work extra hard outside the allocated time. Otherwise, the time, which is allocated as per revised curriculum, is not sufficient 'to carry out some good work. Yes! This is what we are getting from the other subjects, they struggle, and they work outside the working time to ensure that they complete the syllabi.

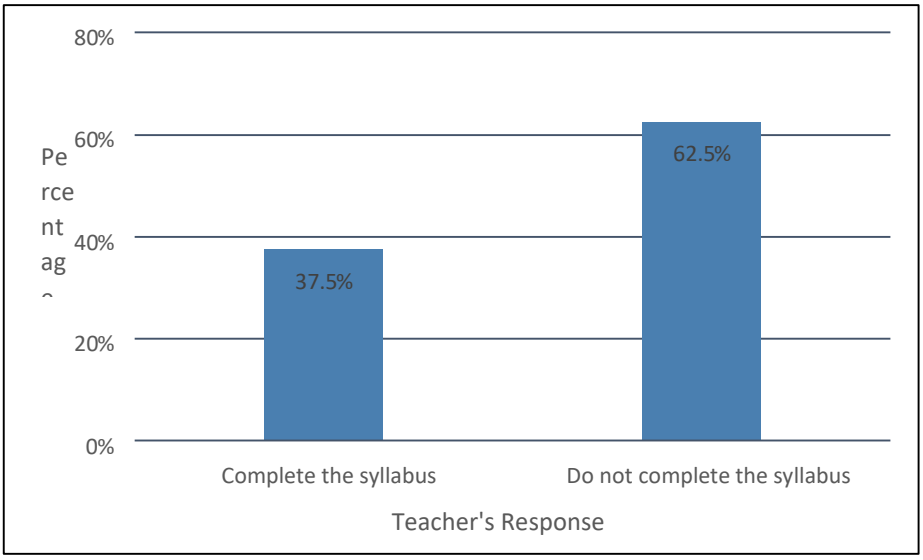

Figure 4.1: Percentage distribution of teacher's completion of the syllabus.

In order for the curriculum to be successfully implemented, there is need for the syllabus to be completed within the stated period. In order to extract this information, item number 5 required teachers to indicate whether the syllabus was completed within

time. Results in figure 4.1 indicate that 62.5 percent did not complete to teach what was in the syllabus and 37.5 percent completed the syllabus.

When the teachers were asked to state the reasons as to why they did not complete the syllabus within time, issues to do with practicality of subjects were raised.

On the other hand, some teachers noted that their time becomes limited due to too many unplanned meetings. Other teachers faced the challenge of compressing the bulky content to fit the limited time.

During focus group discussions, (FGD) pupils were asked using item number 5 in the focus group guide to comment on whether they had covered enough topics in their respective subjects. A pupil (FGD-P4) stated that:

Looking at the time, we have and the content we have covered, I feel we are very much behind in some subjects like chemistry, history and English but for other subjects like RE we have completed the syllabus.

A pupil (FDG- P3) also expressed that:

- We are still very much behind especially in biology, our teacher just comes to give us notes and tell us am committed somewhere.
- Pupils seemed to have been worried with the coverage of the content because of the time that was remaining for them to write final examinations. Another pupil from the same focus group (FDG-P3) added that noted this:
- We are worried whether we are going to pass exams because in subjects that are important, we have not covered much especially in biology. When I compare my notes with others from other schools, I see that we are very much behind.
- To the contrary, one head teacher was not in agreement with the views of the learners pertaining to the coverage of the syllabus within time. He mentioned that despite time being inadequate, some measures were put in place to cover for the loss of time for teaching. This was noted when (HT) echoed that;
- Generally, we have a way of covering the syllabus. We usually have free tuitions were teachers cover the remaining topic and during weekends, we sometimes work. In other words, our school is generally performing well because we cover the content within time.

It was noted that, the respondents had different views pertaining to the completion of the syllabus. This was because in some subjects, teachers completed the syllabus while in other subjects they lagged behind. The teachers, head teacher and learners noted this through different views. However, their syllabus workload indicated to be moderate in the findings. The researcher using item number 9 in the teacher's questionnaire asked teachers to rate their syllabus workload ranging from too much to moderate. Figure 4.2 shows the summary of the teacher's workload.

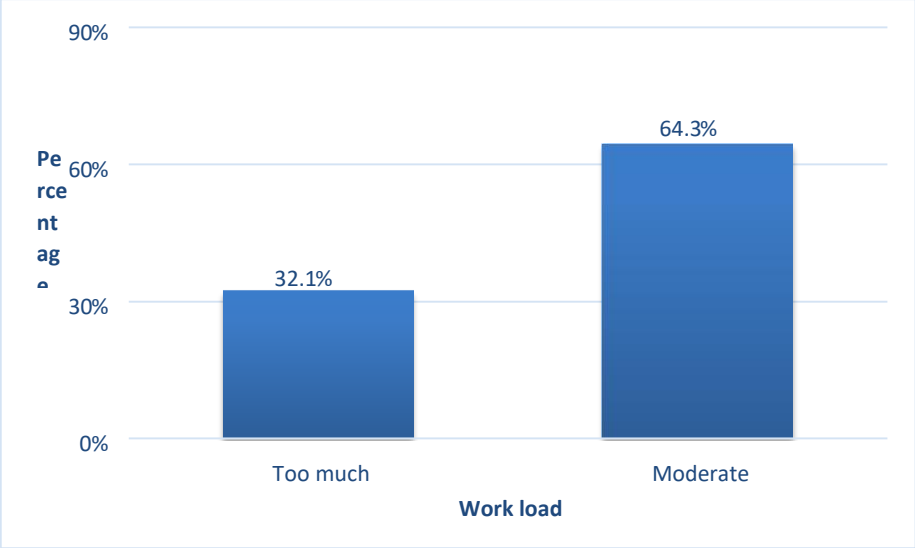

Figure 2: Percentage distribution of Teachers syllabus load.

It was indicated that 64.4 percent of the teachers rated their workload as moderate and 32.1 percent rated it too much. None rated it light. The majority of teachers indicated their workload to be moderate. From the response given from the respondents, it was established that the time for teaching and learning was not enough as compared to the content of the syllabus. Some teachers confirmed that they had no enough time to cover the content that was remaining.

Summary of the Results on Utilization of Teaching Time

It was noted from the findings of objective number one that time for teaching was not adequate. This was noted from the coverage of the syllabus, which was not completed within time and their workloads. However, it was indicated by the respondents that time was not enough and hence became difficult to be well utilized within the stated time. Reasons put forward were that the incompletion of the syllabi was because of the bulkiness of some content in other subjects, which could not be completed within the stipulated period. The inadequacy and utilization of time as indicated in the study shows that there were factors that reduced the time for teaching.

3. Factors that Reduced Time for Teaching

Objective number two sought to assess factors that may have reduced teaching and learning time in selected primary schools in Chipata district. In order to answer this research question, it was cardinal to first establish whether teachers were involved in other duties in the school besides teaching. This was cardinal because teachers are the key implementers of the curriculum who translate the designed and planned curriculum

into classroom activities. Additionally, to answer the research question, it was also important to examine classroom and school factors that reduced time for teaching and learning. Item number 15 in the teacher's questionnaire and 5 in interview guides sought information with regard to teacher's duties in the school duties.

Teacher Duties in the School

It was established in the study that the majority of teachers had other duties in the school that at times reduced on their time to teach the learners. Figure 4.3 shows the summary of the teachers who had and had no duties in the school that affected their teaching.

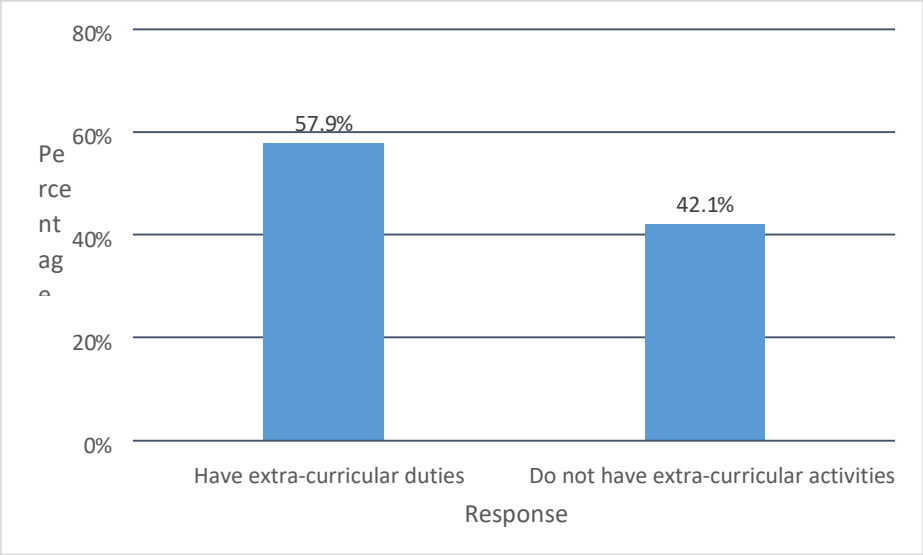

Figure 3. Percentage distribution of Teacher's Responses on Duties in the School

It was established in figure 4.3 that, 57.9 percent of the teachers had extra duties while 42.1 percent had no extra duties besides teaching. The teachers who had duties in the school stated the different kinds of duties they were involved in. the duties that teachers had included that of teachers attending to disciplinary cases, coordination sporting activities, guidance and counselling of the learners, monitored learners in boarding schools and supervising production unit. It was noted that most teachers instead of attending to classes, they were involved in some extra duties that affected their use of time for teaching.

However, during interviews, HT expressed that such duties teachers were involved in was as the result of the education system and policies. The same head teacher HT echoed that:

Sometimes the system and the programmes we have in the education would require a teacher to attend to other national duties, for example marking of exams, taking pupils for sports and attending meetings at DEB or sometimes maybe he or she is going for studies or meetings.

It is worth noting that these duties affected teachers teaching time. Instead of teaching. Teachers were involved in other activities that disturbed their teaching time.

Classroom Factors that Reduced Time during Teaching

It was imperative for the researcher to examine classroom factors that disrupted the process of teaching and learning. To solicit for this information, Item 12 of the questionnaire and one in learners focus group guide sought information on the activities that wasted their time during the process of learning.

The findings reviewed that some teachers faced challenges when it came to managing time in class. These included challenges that were related to some of the teaching methodologies employed to teach such as group work and role-plays. This was noted by common responses from teachers. For instance, teacher A stated that:

Lesson plans are not usually completed during the lessons because of some methods we use to teach such as remedial work.

Similarly, teacher B stated that:

Group work mostly waste my time because the pupils are too many.

Teacher C expressed that some of the teaching methods that were thought to have been consuming a lot of teaching time were not employed during teaching. He further stated that:

Some of the methods of teaching are not employed due to limited time; as such employing them would waste time that cannot be recovered.

Additionally to classroom factors, prominent responses from teachers on activities that reduced time during teaching included calling of class registers by teachers (7 percent), late coming by learners, disciplining the during class giving of announcements by prefects and attending to slow learners.

However, the pupils had different views on factors that reduced time for learning in classroom. Some of the factors were mainly caused by the teachers doing other activities in class instead of teaching. For instance, FDG-P4 indicated that:

Some teachers just come in class instead of teaching they start telling us stories staff like that. Maybe the whole period can finish without writing anything. All is done is sometimes just talking for the whole period.

FDG-P1 also commented that:

Some teachers are just lazy but others teach us. Sometimes they just come to shout at us without teaching. Sometimes they just give us notes to copy and at the end of the day we write the same exams with our friends without learning much.

To the contrary, to what pupil from FDG-P1 and FDG-P4 stated, a pupil, (FDG-P2) was of a view that factors that reduced time for teaching were caused by pupils themselves as she explained that;

Sometimes it's us pupils who loose time because we ask too many questions and end up not learning. Some pupils make a lot of noise causing the teacher to start disciplining us instead of teaching.

It can be noted from various responses that factors that disrupt learning in class range from the learners and teachers. Both the learners and teachers contribute to the loss of time though some causes are beyond the teacher's control. The views implied that some causes in loss of time are beyond the control of both the teachers and learners.

4. School Factors that Reduced Time for Teaching

Activities or events that happened outside the school classroom had a strong bearing on how the curriculum was implemented and eventually on how much learners can learn. As such, it was imperative to look at factors outside the classroom that can affect learning time. To seek information on school factors that reduced time for teaching and learning, the researcher was guided by item number 4 in the head teachers interview guide, item 4 in the pupil's focus group discussion guide and question 19 in the primary teacher's questionnaire. The findings reviewed a number of school factors that reduced time for teaching and learning such core curricular activities such as sports, meetings and unplanned holidays and examinations. This was expressed by the pupils and head teachers.

During focus group discussions, pupils seemed to have had their own views pertaining to factors that reduced time for learning in the school. Some pupils indicated that some teachers did not attend to their lessons due to various reasons. In giving reasons, FDGP2 explained that:

Some teachers come to class and others do not come.

When asked to give the reasons as to why the teachers did not attend to their lessons, another pupil from FDG-P2 echoed that:

Some teachers just like giving excuses that, no! I forgot that it was my period, no, I was busy somewhere attending a meeting and they just apologise.

Adding to the same view, a pupil from FGD-P1 was also in agreement with FDG-2 by stating that:

Our teachers just sit in the staffroom and forget to teach us but when the tests come; they give us what we did not learn. You find that time that is lost is never again recovered by the same teachers who decide to stay in the staff room charting. If only the head teachers could do something about teachers who do not really teach us.

To the contrary, when head teachers were asked to state whether teachers attend to their classes as expected, HT and DH explained that some time teacher absences were not because of teacher's laziness but the demand of the education system and natural circumstances.

DH mentioned that:

Partly as I earlier mentioned eh because of what I would say it's part of the curriculum needs for example if a teacher has taken out pupils for cocurricular activities ,sometimes if he or she has gone out ,especially in subjects that has few teachers like mathematics, it is very difficult to cover all the periods so you find that in such cases ,some pupils will miss lessons.

Some pupils expressed that some of the reasons for missing lessons was due to so main meetings at our school.

National Examinations and Time Use

Assessment is one method in which a curriculum can be measured and whether a learner has attained educational achievements or not. The extent to which they were conducted was worrisome as it consumed a lot of time for learning. To seek for this information, the researcher used a three Likert scale to make the extent to which examinations affected the utilisation of time by teachers. The Likert scale was as follows; 1= to a large extent, 2=to some extent and 3= not at all. The figures 4.4 indicate the teachers' responses on the extent to which examinations affected teaching and learning time.

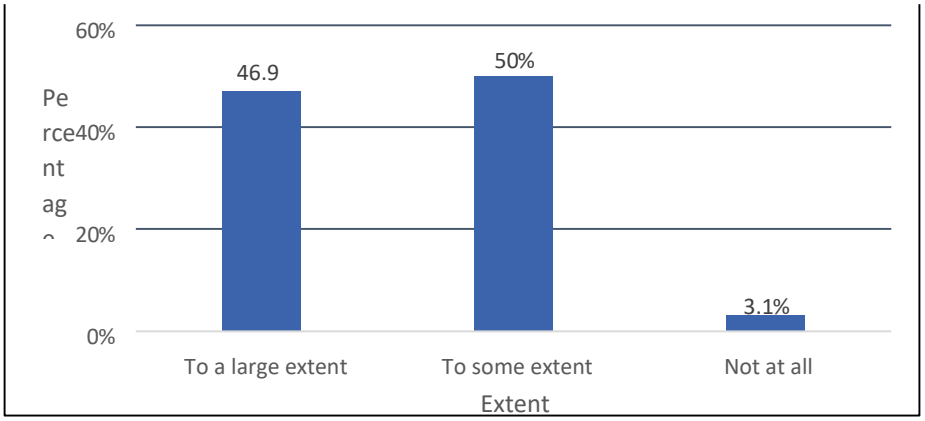

Figure 4.4: Percentage Distribution of Teachers Response of the Extent of Examinations.

The study revealed that 50 percent of the respondents were of the view that exams affected teaching and learning to a large extent, 46.9 percent indicted that to a larger extent teaching and learning was affected while 3.1 percent said exams did not affect teaching and learning time at all. The head teacher expressed concern when it came to the time that was consumed during examination which included grade 7 and grade 9 examinations. To them, the school found it difficult to find time to teach the learners and complete the syllabus. They said that some of the teachers were assigned duties in other schools to invigilate exams.

During the interviews and focus group discussions with the pupils, both head teachers and pupils expressed concern with regard to more time that was used for conducting examinations especially in the third term of every academic year. According to them, the loss of time was because of the ECZ timetable that consumed much of the time. When asked to comment on the teaching time that was used for national examinations, HT commented that:

As you can see around that we have few classes that can both be used for examinations and learning. As a school, there is nothing we can do but just tell our pupils to go home. Sometimes we go even for two months or so without classes because it's not within our powers. I think something must be done by these ECZ people. ECZ is a big culprit the whole of term 3 is claimed by ECZ with limited classrooms furniture and teachers not exam classes are not spared. The ministry should look at reforms with regard to examinations.

Sporting Activities and Time Use

The participants attributed sports activities to be the cause of time loss for teaching in the schools. This was because most of such activities occurred during learning time.

There was a worrisome concern with pupils who participated in sports activities with regard to missing lessons. Learners expressed that they missed lessons when they went for such activities and such lessons were sometimes not covered. Pupil for FDG-4 stated that:

Us who are selected to go for sports stop learning maybe for one month for us to prepare and sometimes we go to camp in other schools leaving our friends learning, and when we come back, we just continue with our friends who were learning.

Another pupil from the same FDG-4 added that:

Whenever there are sports in the school like inter- houses, we do not really learn and at time we even stay back home.

In support of what the pupils said, HT also affirmed that sporting activities were a major cause of time loss as such; there was nothing they could do because it was part of the education policies and programmes. This is what he had to say:

Sports to some extent disturb lesson though they may seem to be important to the pupils. However, some of our teachers are maybe at district level or provincial level that require them to be there. For example, this term we hosted district ball games and provincial ball games where teachers took our pupils who participate. Therefore, in such cases learning usually does not take place accordingly.

Unplanned meetings

It was also established that meetings disrupted learning in the school of which some meetings were not planned. When head teacher was asked whether the school experienced some disruption, the deputy head teacher related the disturbances to unplanned meetings. This is what HT and DH had to say;

HT answered that:

Yes they are there, because you find that for example, the second term is always interrupted they are a lot of Meetings. So even the lessons that were supposed to be held today will be postponed to next week.

DH stated that:

Some of the unplanned meetings really affect teaching and learning. For instance, I can say, if the head teacher calls for an emergency meeting, all teachers are suppose to attend. So it becomes difficult also for our teachers to cover for such time though as a school we have a way of recovering such but that cannot be fully covered.

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It is worth noting from the findings that factors that disrupted learning such as unplanned teacher and staff meetings affected how learners learnt and how much they learnt. The respondents were in agreement that time was lost due to unplanned teacher and staff meetings.

Time Use and learner Performance

Since learners are the beneficiary of the curriculum, time loss can affect how much they learn and their academic performance may be affected. It was therefore, imperative for the researcher to find out whether such factors affected learner performance. To seek this information, the researcher was guided by item number 23 in the questionnaire and item 5 in the focus group guide for learners.

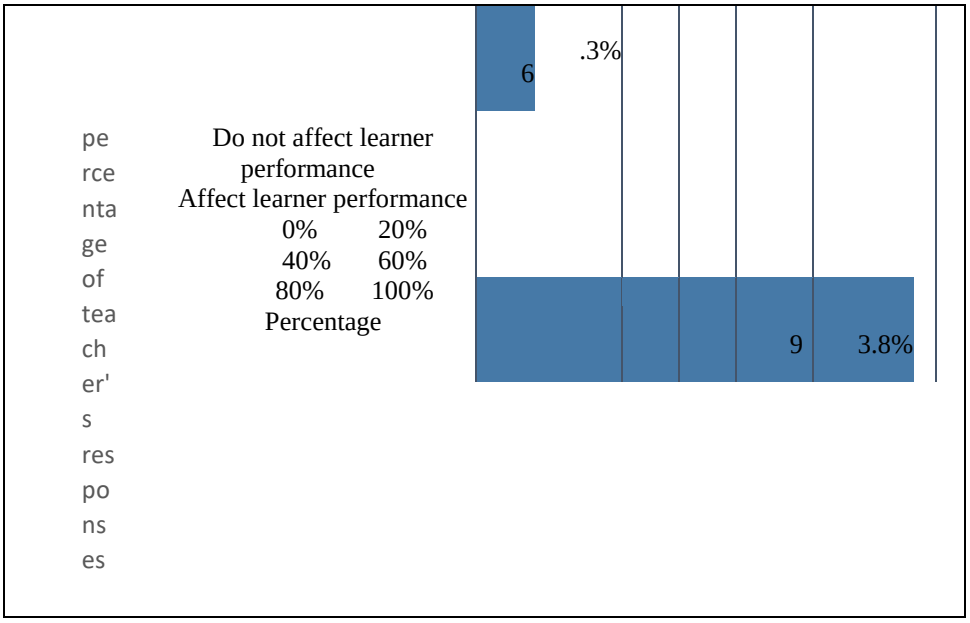

Figure 4.5. Percentage distribution of Time Loss and Learner Performance

Figure 4.5 indicate that events that disrupt learning time affect learner performance as indicated by 93.8 percent who responded to the affirmative while 6.3 percent did not agree that time loss affected learner performance. The teachers were asked to explain how learner performance was affected by such activities. They indicated the following:
-Learning time is lost which affects coverage of work and the syllabi are not completed (60 percent).

- Due to such events, learners who are not involved or selected stop attending classes (7 percent).
- Learners are not taught as per expectations of the planned curriculum because of disturbances (33 percent).

During the focus group discussions (FGD), the pupils expressed how factors that disrupted learning affected their performance. This is what they had to say:

FGD-1 said:

When it comes to the mid-term exams, teachers will just cover what was planned to be taught and we will be asked questions on what we have not covered, as for me, I find it difficult to write that were not explained in class. For example, in biology and stuff like that, so when it comes to study alone it becomes difficult for me to understand what am reading.

Summary of the Factors that Reduced Teaching Time

Research objective two sought information from head teachers, teachers and pupils on the activities that may reduce time for learning. Results indicated that there were many factors that included classroom to school factors that reduced time for learning in schools. These activities included teachers having multiple duties such as monitoring of pupils at the dormitory, guidance and counselling, sports activities and many other. However, it was noted that such activities affected learners because they were exposed to few hours of learning instead of the stated time.

5. Possible Suggestions that Reduced Loss of Time for Teaching

This section consists of suggestions of possible strategies that reduced time for teaching. Item number 16 in the head teacher's interview guide, item number 8 in learner's focus group guide and item 28 in the primary school teacher's questionnaires sought information on strategies that could be employed to cover for the lost time.

Strategies Employed by Schools

When teachers were asked to suggestion what was to be done to properly utilise time for teaching, some suggestions such as having core curricular activities outside teaching hours, reducing on unnecessary meetings and planning properly for activities in the schools. Table 4:2 indicate frequency distribution of teacher's response on the suggestions for reducing loss of teaching time.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Teacher's Response on the Suggestions for reducing loss of teaching time.

Response	*f*	%
Core-curricular activities to be done during free time	11	34.4
There should be proper planning for all activities in the schools	7	21.9
Holiday tuitions to be conducted	5	15.6
Reduce on unnecessary meetings	6	18.8
Revision time should be included in curriculum	3	9.4
Total	32	100

The study indicated that most of the teachers (34.4 percent) suggested that core curricular activities are to be done outside teaching time, 21.9 percent suggested that there should be proper planning of all activities that take place in school, 18.8 percent of the teachers suggested that, there was need to reduce on the unnecessary meetings while 15 percent of the teachers suggested that there was need for holidays to be utilised for tuitions and 9.4 percent suggested the inclusion of the revision time table in the curriculum. It was noted from the suggestions by teachers that there was need for all core-curricular activities to be done outside teaching hours. This will in turn reduce the time lost for teaching.

Despite the suggestions given by the teachers, head teachers argued that measures where been put in place to reduce on time that was lost for teaching. All the head teachers mentioned several strategies that reduced time loss. Schools had already put some measures in place to reduce on time loss. This was seen from different responses that were given. The following were strategies that schools employed to reduce on tie loss for teaching.

HT stated that:

Firstly, we have encouraged teachers to utilise the study time to teach. Secondly, they are encouraged to teach during weekends. Thirdly, during the holidays, we have normally given our selves those first two weeks to be used by teachers to teach the pupils, so we have somehow denied our pupils resting time because part of the resting time has been brought back into learning time.

HT further added by saying that:

The other thing is we have a school council, the school council is really helping in monitoring teachers especially in collecting home works, so in doing that we are able to get what is on the ground, as you know we cannot monitor everyone at the same time, so they are our eyes in the classroom.

In the same interview, DH added that:

The other thing is that we monitor through the suggestion box, the pupils write what they feel is not good when the teacher doesn't come, so we get these suggestions and put them together, sort them out and look into the issue of pupils.

Managing the Limited Time for Teaching

One of the themes that emerged from the responses of the participants had to do with managing the limited time for teaching. During the interviews, head teachers mentioned that, there were some ways in which schools managed the limited time for teaching despite disruptions. The following were the responses from the head teacher and deputy head teacher.

HT pointed out that:

We have a way of recovering some periods. There is remedial work policy. Some teachers sacrifice to teach during the weekend because of time, which is limited, though at times it disadvantages the learners who go to church during weekends. One thing is that we have an incentive that make our teachers work hard, so there is a competition in terms of academic performance.

Similarly, DH stated that;

Firstly, we have encouraged teachers to utilise the study time to teach. Secondly, they are encouraged to teach during weekends. Thirdly, during the holidays, we have normally given our selves those first two weeks to be used by teachers to teach the pupils, so we have somehow denied our pupils resting time because part of the resting time has been brought back into learning time.

Getting another view of how schools managed the available time for learning, HT-4 expressed that:

With us maybe I will say, pupils can go for co-curricular activities after prep. So, you find that pupils have been selected to go for provincial or maybe district teams and they miss classes. In such cases, you find that it is difficult on what to do, because they should be very few who have gone out. You just encourage the teachers to find time for those pupils when they are free but it's a challenge.

However, in a different suggestion, one pupils expressed that as pupils, they have measure that help the recover for the lost time. In response, FGG-2 said that:

Sometimes we have study groups in the afternoon and teach ourselves.

Suggestions for Curriculum Developers

In the same vein, teachers were asked whether people who design the curriculum considered marching the time and the content of the subjects. It was mostly suggested that the curriculum developers should widely consult the teachers in relation to content and time allocation because teachers were the implementers of the curriculum and hence understand it better.

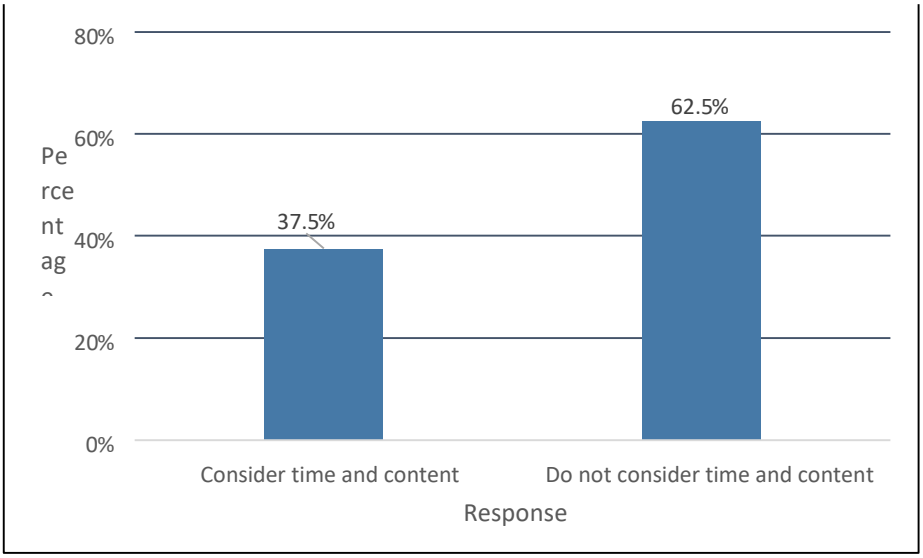

Figure 6: Teachers views pertaining to Time and Content

The majority of teachers were of the view that time factor is never considered while 62.5 percent were of a view that time was considered while 37.5 percent were of the view that time was considered. Teachers expressed that curriculum developers did not consider proper time allocation due to the bulkiness of some content in other subjects. Figure 4.6 shows the responses of teachers who thought curriculum designers did not consider time.

Teachers who were of the view that curriculum developers did not consider time explained that the developers did not take into consideration some activities that disturbed time for teaching and learning. These included the examinations, which are conducted during the learning period. Teachers suggested that, there should be proper and strategic planning on the part of teachers, introduction of weekend tuitions, encouraging responsibility allowances among the teaching staff by incentivizing teaching, and employing more teachers to reduce workloads. There should be equitable sharing of co-curricular responsibilities among teachers. Teachers suggested the involvement of teachers during the development of the curriculum so that the content was matched with the located time. That work coverage could be made realistically manageable by curriculum developers in order to match matching subject content with the allocated time.

Seeking the same information on measures to be put in place in order to reduce time loss, some pupils placed emphasis on teacher's commitment to duty. This was noted when FGD-P1 mentioned that:

Many times our teachers are lazy, they just like giving excuses for no reasons. The administration should do something so that teachers teach us because at the end of the day when we fail, the same teachers punish us that we are not performing well. In addition, our parents don't understand that some teachers do not usually teach us, they will just say that we are too playful so something must be done about it.

To the contrary, a pupil from the same focus group (FDG-P1) had a different view on measures that were put in place that reduced time for learning. His view was that, there was need for pupils to commit themselves to learning. This is what she had to say:

For me it's us pupils who loose time by making noise, so you find that instead of teachers teaching, they start disciplining us maybe for the whole period. So measures should be put in place for pupils who waste our time because some of us are committed to learning.

DH also said that:

Time is an issue in the sense that, if it is not used wisely, people are not going to accomplish what they want to accomplish, so, we always tell our teachers not to make excuses. As such, there is just a need for teachers to be committed to duty in order for us to have a common goal which is helping our learner. Also what I can say is that the ministry should provide workshops so that our teachers are trained to deal with issues of managing time.

Summary of the Strategies that Reduced Time loss for Teaching and learning.
The findings on strategies that reduced time revealed that, schools had measures already put in place such as utilising weekends for teaching and learning, monitoring of teachers through class registers so that teachers attended to their classes and school councils that made sure that teachers did not waste time on other duties besides teaching. Despite the strategies that were put in place, the teachers suggested that there was need for reducing on unnecessary meetings and reducing some of the content that at times was not examined. Some head teachers also suggested that there was need for the planning of both co-curricular and formal curriculum so that time for teaching and learning was not lost.

6. Summary
As earlier stated in the overview of this chapter, the results of the study were strictly guided by the research questions. The questions which were being answered were; (1) how was the utilisation and adequacy of teaching and learning time in implementing the school curriculum in Chipata district? (2) what factors reduced teaching and learning time? (3) what strategies could be employed by schools to reduce on loss of teaching and learning time in Chipata district. The findings indicated that time was not used properly by teachers as implementers of the curriculum due to a number of factors. These factors were sometimes beyond their control and some were as a result of poor

planning of activities by either the school or the Ministry of Education. Prominent factors that reduced time included sports activities that usually take place during the term. Other factors were attributed to teachers having a lot of duties, meetings and teacher absences. However, in some schools, strategies were employed recover for the lost time. These measures included school councils to make sure teachers attend to classes, utilisation of some weekends to cover for the lost time. The respondents further, suggested that there was need to remove some content from the syllabus to make it realistically manageable.

V. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

1. Overview

In the previous chapter, the researcher presented the discussions of the findings. Therefore, in this chapter, conclusions of the research findings that answered the research questions are presented. Furthermore, the study's recommendations and some suggestions on areas for future research are also presented.

2. Summary

From the study, it can be explained that the official perspective concerning learning time was not the actual amount of time received by learners. Sometimes school activities such as staff meetings, administrative work, teacher and pupil absenteeism, and many reduced time for teaching and learning. Though measures were put in place, there was still need to properly plan for activities and events that occur during teaching and learning time.

The findings indicated that time was not used properly by teachers as implementers of the curriculum due to a number of factors. These factors were sometimes beyond their control and some were as a result of poor planning of activities by either the school or the Ministry of Education. Prominent factors that reduced time included unplanned teachers and staff meetings that usually take place during the term. Other factors were attributed to teachers having a lot of duties, meetings and teacher absences. However, in some schools, strategies were employed to recover for the lost time. These measures included school councils to make sure teachers attend to classes, utilisation of some weekends to cover for the lost time. The respondents further, suggested that there was need to remove some content from the syllabus to make it realistically manageable.

3. Conclusions

The topic under investigation was an assessment of the effect of unplanned teacher and staff meetings on learner's academic performance in selected schools of Chipata district, Zambia. The effect of Kagunda primary school in Chipata district of Zambia Eastern Province. The following conclusions were made.

The study established that there was no proper utilisation of time by teachers to implement the curriculum effectively. Despite teachers allocated enough periods to

cover the content. It was established that the majority of teachers, did not complete the syllabus. The failure to properly utilise the available time was seen in the low coverage of the syllabus. The findings clearly indicated that time for teaching and learning was not enough considering factors that at times were beyond the control of teachers. The respondents expressed that a number of factors where at play contributing to the improper utilisation of time.

It was also established in the study that, the failure to properly utilise time for teaching and learning was as a result of factors that ranged from within the school, classroom and outside the classroom. Classroom factors that reduced time for learning where related to some of the teaching strategies that demanded more time. In additional, some factors included disciplining the learners, teacher absences and attending to slow learners. School factors included extra duties by teacher, sports, unplanned teacher and staff meetings and examinations that are conducted during teaching and learning time. With regard to the strategies, respondents suggested that there was need to revise the school time table pertaining core curricular activities. Additionally, teachers suggested that ECZ should consider making the timetable during holidays and employ its workers to conduct exams to avoid teacher absences. There was need to provide continuous professional development to teachers pertaining maximising the limited availability of time for learning.

4. Recommendations of the Study

Based on the findings, the following recommendations from the study were made;

- The MoE and CDC should implement proper and strategic policies pertaining to the proper utilisation and adequacy of learning time. These should include teacher involvement in curriculum development process to enable proper planning of the content and allocation of time because teachers are the implementers of the curriculum.
- There was also need for continuous professional development of teachers with regard to strategies of how the limited time could be made manage. It also recommended seminars, workshops and refresher courses to equip teachers and administrators with knowledge, skills and attitude on proper time management practices. This will help mitigate the time lapse that is created by other activities in schools and help teachers complete teaching their subjects. Loss of teaching time can be caused by low self-efficacy to teach and use classroom management skills so it is important that competencies for effective classroom management be taught during pre-service training.
- Encouraging commitment to duty among the teaching staff is a way of making sure that available time is properly managed. School head teachers can maximise teaching and learning time by reducing unplanned teacher and staff meetings during teaching.

5. Recommendation for Future Research.

- The study only focused on primary schools, there is need to look at other levels of education such as secondary, colleges and universities to assess how time is utilised to implement the school curriculum.
- The study was carried out in Chipata district, there is need to carry out the study in other districts in the province and other provinces.

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