



An Investigation into Prime Factors Contributing to Under Performance in English Composition Writing Among Grade 12 Learners. A Study of Five Public Schools in Kasama District Northern Province of Zambia

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Abstract. This journal explores the causes behind the poor performance of Grade 12 pupils in composition writing in Zambia. The study is based on classroom observations, teacher interviews, and pupil feedback. The journal identifies factors such as limited English exposure, inadequate reading culture, and teacher-centered methodologies as key contributors. Recommendations for improvement are provided, with the goal of enhancing writing instruction and learner outcomes.

Index Terms- Composition Writing, Grade 12 Pupils, Poor Academic Performance, English Language Exposure, Reading Culture, Teacher-Centered Instruction

I. Introduction

Composition writing is a vital skill assessed in the Grade 12 English Language examination in Zambia. However, results from national exams have consistently shown underperformance in this area. This journal seeks to analyze the root causes and recommend strategies for improvement.

II. Methodology

The study employed qualitative methods including classroom observations, interviews with school administrators, English teachers, and questionnaire responses from Grade 12 pupils. Data collection occurred in five public schools in Kasama.

III. Findings and Discussion

Language Barrier

Most pupils use local languages in daily life, limiting their vocabulary and fluency in English. This affects grammar and expression. (Moonga, 2021)

Limited Reading Culture

A lack of access to books and poor reading habits reduce pupils' exposure to good writing models. (Chishimba & Munsanje, 2020)



Teacher-Centered Instruction

Lessons often focus on rote learning and exam tips rather than developing critical thinking and creativity in writing. (Simasiku, 2022)

Overloaded Curriculum

The broad curriculum leaves little time for regular writing practice or detailed feedback. (Mwansa, 2019)

Lack of Feedback

Large class sizes limit teachers' ability to offer meaningful feedback, leading to repeated mistakes. (Zulu & Mwewa, 2021)

Socioeconomic Challenges

Pupils from low-income households lack study resources and quiet environments to practice writing at home. (Chishimba & Munsanje, 2020)

Reflection

Conducting this study has deepened my understanding of the multifaceted challenges that hinder Grade 12 pupils in Zambia from excelling in composition writing. I learned that improving writing skills requires more than just instruction—it demands a supportive learning environment, access to reading materials, and a shift from exam-oriented to skills-oriented teaching.

One major challenge I faced was limited access to current data from some schools due to administrative delays. Additionally, balancing academic responsibilities with data collection and analysis required careful time management. Despite these obstacles, the process was enriching and has equipped me with valuable research, analytical, and academic writing skills.

IV. Conclusion

Improving Grade 12 composition performance requires a holistic approach, including curriculum review, teacher training, investment in reading materials, and family involvement in supporting learning. Addressing these factors will enhance students' ability to write clearly, coherently, and creatively.

Recommendations

- Incorporate regular writing exercises in the English curriculum.
- Promote a reading culture through book clubs and school libraries.
- Train teachers in student-centered writing instruction.
- Provide targeted feedback on writing assignments.
- Reduce class sizes to improve interaction and feedback quality.
- Engage parents to support home reading and writing activities.



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