

A Critical Analysis of Learner performance in the Content-Based and Outcome-Based Secondary School History Curriculum in Zambia

Nisbert Machila*, Ferdinand M Chipindi, Euston Chiputa and Bestern Kaani

University of Zambia, School of Education, Zambia

**Corresponding Author*

Abstract: In this article a critical analysis of learner performance in the content based and outcome-based history curriculum is explored. The aim of study was to determine whether there was any statistical significance in learners' performance between the content based and outcome-based curriculum in Lusaka, Zambia. The study further sought to ascertain the extent pupils' demographic characteristics influence secondary school history achievement as a function of school type and syllabi. The study focused on six schools in Lusaka district, of which two were government, two private and two Missionary Grant Aided. Data were collected using document study, examination of Zambia reports, observations and scholarly works. The sample of 8,276 grade 12 history learners who sat for the national secondary school certificate in the period 2011 to 2020 in six secondary schools were used. A one-way ANOVA was performed to compare the effect of syllabus type on performance of the learners. The study results show that history learners performed statistically better on Outcome-based education (M 66.24 and SD 31.24) compared to Content-based education (M 28.53, SD20.36). The study also revealed that demographic factors such as type of syllabus and school type were statistically significant in their contribution to learners' academic performance. Another interesting finding of the study was that private and grant-aided schools outperformed government schools in both syllabus types. Most private and grant-aided schools seem to perform better in good governance and human resource management, availability of teaching/learning resources, good pupil-teacher ratio, well trained and experienced teachers, teachers' motivation through awards and better infrastructure development. The findings of the study prompted the proposal of a recommendation to revisit the senior secondary school History syllabus for it to respond to the Zambian changing dynamics such as a shift from emphasis Eurocentric views to Zambianised History.

Keywords: History, Syllabus, Learners, Teachers, Performance

I. INTRODUCTION

Learner performance is not a new phenomenon in Africa and around the world. Academic performance and achievement are one of the major critical variables that shape how education is understood, delivered and measured in most societies. This is because, they influence how individuals within and outside the system perceive the goals of education and shape the incentives for stakeholders seeking to improve educational outcomes (Winter, 2020). Learner achievement and school performance are greatly affected by different education qualities of schools, curriculum type, and school

type. Zambia has national examinations for its secondary school learners which are written at the end of grade 12. The nature of curriculum type and learning strategy use is vital to improving student learning outcomes.

It is important to note that the major goal of teaching history in Zambian secondary schools to ensure that learners acquire and interpret historical events and apply them to real life situations (Machila et al, 2018). The ideological approach used to teach school history in Zambian secondary schools is based on national building, democracy and is skill based. As noted by Kelly (1996) the education system in Zambia has undergone changes from education which was much rooted in the British colonial system. Zambia, like Zimbabwe and other British colonises, inherited a British system of education that was segregated in nature. Similarly, Mwanza (2018) points out that at the time of independence in 1964, Zambia inherited a small and racially segregated educational system from the British. Consequently, the newly independent nations needed to embark on an expansion of education provision in order to reduce racial segregation, fight inequities as well as create an educated workforce for the nation. After independence, Zambia followed a content based curriculum until in 2013 when she adopted an outcome based curriculum. As noted by Mulenga and Kabombwe (2019) most African countries revised their curricula in order to Africanize and decolonize the former curricula so as to meet the growing demands of their societies and to promote their local cultures. Zambia is such an example and the rationale for the change was to ensure the curriculum was more effective and responsive to learners' societal needs.

Despite most African countries shifting from content based curriculum as it did not meet the needed skills for learners, history teachers still encounter various challenges of learner performance. The poor learner performance can be attributed to various reasons; use of traditional approaches that focus on national and Eurocentric perspectives, lack of teaching/learning materials and lack of effective methods (Thorpe, 2016). It is important to note that history teachers have continued to apply traditional methods in their teaching due to various reasons; traditional methods tend to be more easily to use, some teachers are resistant to change and lack of continues professional development.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the 2013 Zambian education curriculum review, the performance of history pupils' still remains low compared to other social sciences. Examination Council of Zambia Performance Report (2015) indicates History was below 40 percent in 2015, the performance for history was recorded at 21.91 percent. The general performance in history (2167/1 and 2) was generally poor to average with majority of the candidates obtaining lower grade divisions from since the new outcome-based curriculum examination was administrated. According to the chief examiners report the poor performance were attributed to unpreparedness of the examination, inadequate study material and revised test design that candidates were unfamiliar with (Examination Council of Zambia Reports 2014-2019). If the situation is not addressed, the country may continue to produce half baked learners. This study sought to critically analyse the content-based and outcome-based history curriculum in, Zambia. This paper is divided into two main parts. The first section looks at statistically significant mean differences between Content-based education and Outcome-based education in general certificate history. In the second section, we consider how school type and syllabus type influence history learners' academic performance. Additionally, and in order to clear understand the educational changes in history in Zambia, this paper shows significant curriculum reviews processes in Zambia and the links this has to history learners' performance. In the next section, we begin with some historical context of curriculum changes.

III. CURRICULUM SHIFTS IN ZAMBIA: A THEORETICAL REVIEW

In Zambia, history teaching can be traced as far back as the colonial period. Formally, the teaching of history was first introduced by the missionaries (Snelson, 1974: 7-8). Since then, the subject has undergone many changes in how the discipline has been taught. In 1924, Zambia was ruled by the British South African Company (BSACo). During this period, missionaries and the company provided education. It is important to note that not much skill-full education was given to Africans. Bulfin (2012) observes that the BSACo did not see the need to educate Africans as they believed they would not add any value to the territory's economic development. Rather than educate the African population to prepare them for a skilled workforce, the British preferred to educate their own British children. It was only later, in 1929, that the first primary school for Africans was created. Secondary education was only provided shortly before World War II (Kuster, 1999). The history subject during this period was taught as an integral part of social studies under the primary section. Social studies combined history, geography, and civic education (Mwanakatwe: 2013:62). It is also important to note that the teaching of history during the colonial period was primarily a narrative of past European events focusing on memorizing important names, places, and dates.

Snelson (1974:8) contends that the social studies curriculum offered by missionaries was balanced more on religious, academic, and industrial elements than on historical knowledge. The school curriculum emphasised religious education and was British and did not include African content. The focus was not much on history, as it aimed to support and promote pupils' character and moral and intellectual well-being. As a result, the content in history in the social studies curriculum focused on a policy of cultural imperialism based on Europeans. It thus was Euro-centric in its content selection, sequencing, and criteria of what was to be taught and not. The teaching focused on learners acquiring historical content knowledge of superior European power over the Africans. For instance, the main topics in history were how Europeans discovered Africa and the sub-topics of European travellers and explorers. In 1950, the curriculum was re-assessed; as a result, issues such as British history, transportation, and communication were added. Several vital aspects of African history were not added to the social studies content. The narrative teaching of historical facts and texts aimed at fostering the development of a British colony. In this model, effective teaching of history and learning meant that learners did not need to go beyond recalling historical knowledge, thereby generating a shared memory. Thus, for many years, history was surprisingly neglected by British policymakers. However, one must ask how history was taught as an integrated subject. First, one would argue that several gaps may have been left out due to its broadness; secondly, the criteria used to select and organise what was taught can be questionable. In supporting the above argument, Cartey and Kilson (1970) draw our attention by observing that the social studies colonial curriculum focused on implementing the British policy to replace African education with Western education.

At the secondary school level, history was taught as a single entity. In the colonial period, the secondary school system was classified into two; junior (form 1-3) and senior secondary (form 4-5). It mainly focused on local, regional, and global history but remained British in nature and scope. Thus, the colonial curriculum did not incorporate topics concerning African issues (Ministry of African Education Report, 1959). Education in Zambia has always reflected an ideology of the superiority of British control and power characterised by inequalities. This is because from the policymaking process, the history included in the curriculum, the history taught in the classrooms and how it was taught reflected a sense of British control. Thus, it is imperative to state that final national examinations were all set and prepared in by Cambridge University Syndicate in Britain. It was thus vital for the United National Independence Party (UNIP) at independent, as a new government, to show change within the education system. However, Muleya (2015:107) points out that "the post-independence educational campaign, as elsewhere in the continent, was aimed at expansive national development. It would appear that the educational campaigns during this period were not necessarily preparing the learners for real social change and transformation". We can note that

the post-independence period in Zambia was faced with several educational challenges.

In the period after independence, Zambia inherited a British education system based on Western education. Despite gaining independence in 1964, the country's education system relied much on mission schools and expatriates who did not understand the African learners and the environments they lived in. For instance, the junior curriculum content grade (8-9) in history included topics on civilisation and the development of ancient kingdoms such as Egyptian civilisation. During this period, the government's focus was to change the curriculum to a more Africanised content to support the policy of decolonisation and Africanisation (Mukoboto, 2014:60). As a result, not much was taught about Zambian history during this period.

Beginning in 1977 there was a philosophical shift toward the teaching of history in Zambia. Zambia undertook its first educational reform, which emphasised education as an instrument for personal and national development. The second educational reform was in 1992, "Focus on Learning" which stressed the mobilisation of resources to develop school education. Later, in 1996 another educational reform, "Educating our Future," was introduced. The policy addressed the entire field of formal education. It paid attention to democratisation and decentralisation. The history syllabus was revised to fully localise the high school examination formerly set by the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate in Britain. The syllabus review was to necessitate the need to improve the quality of education at the secondary school level. The syllabus was formulated as a follow up of the localisation process for high school (Grade 10-12). This syllabus prepared learners for the School Certificate and General Certificate of Education in History administered by the Examination Council of Zambia. This was an important policy as it was meant to overhaul the colonial education system to meet the aspirations of an independent Zambia. The curriculum content included topics from Central, Southern African and World History. The focus during this time was mainly to give the learners a rounded global history. This paradigmatic shift gave rise to national identity as it included vital aspects of Zambian history and appeared linked to learners' needs and environment (Mulubale, 2020).

Despite the changes made in history teaching after independence, it is critical to mention that the history content may have changed in nature. However, how the policy message was transmitted through various levels of the education system might have remained the same and still followed a colonial standard. In October 2013, the Government of the Republic of Zambia, through the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), introduced the new curriculum framework (CDC, 2015), which sought to fulfil the requirements of effective delivery of learning in schools. The OBE approach to teaching underpinned the new curriculum. The OBE curriculum is based on the 'outcomes or the results or performance of the pupils. The objective of this approach to teaching learners in schools was to reduce and

improve the quality of education services. Thus, in 2013; a national educational framework was developed and is currently the framework that Zambia is using (Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), 2015:1). The new curriculum is centred on competencies for learners. According to CDC (2015: 39), "the content, structure, and process of teaching at senior secondary school level and the range of co-curricular activities should all be directed towards developing a learner who is accountable, well-educated, and capable of effective communication, among others. It is worth stating that history learners need to be exposed to a school curriculum that prepares them for lifelong and meaningful guidance. The curriculum was revised to meet the goals of the Education sector Millennium Development Goals and Vision 2030 with emphasis on Zambia becoming a middle-income country (CDC: 2015). In line with the 2013 framework, the history syllabus was reviewed, and it is based on outcome-based education. It aims to link learners' experiences to what is taught.

Pupils' performance is one of the key educational outcomes in any system of education, revealing the attainment of teachers', students', and schools' educational goals. Therefore, poor performance points to the need for not only Zambia but all countries to work towards improving achievement of the intended educational outcomes in all subjects including History as a subject. Therefore, learner performance is of utmost importance in the attainment of the educational goals in Zambia. This can be confirmed from Ko & Chung (2014), who advance that even if some scholars have objected to employing performance through grading to determine the worth of education, the impossibility of using other kinds of assessment to arrive at a conclusion on the learning outcomes or pupil performance, over a specific time, means that almost every institution makes use of grades. This can also be confirmed from the Sixth National Development Plan where the quality of education in Zambia is said to have remained stagnantly low as revealed by poor performance of the pupils through test and examination results (MESVTEE, 2012).

There is strong emphasis on the fact that the basic and traditional standard for measuring performance of a school is by looking at the academic results of learners i.e., whether children at various levels can score better learner outcomes in different subjects to qualify them to different higher levels. It is quite well known that Zambia's performance in national examinations at grades 7, 9 and 12 levels are mere averages in public schools and most private schools. Quality education is the hallmark of the MoGE in Zambia and resonating with and aligned to these philosophical / pedagogical conceptions, the vision of the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) is to provide, quality, lifelong education for all which is accessible, inclusive, and relevant to an individual, national, and global value systems (MoGE, 2019). Motifs of equity, accessibility, quality, relevance, inclusivity, lifelong learning, therefore, must be the guiding principles in developing any education system, platform, curriculum, intervention, or philosophy to sustain these fundamental blueprints for human and national

development (Mulubale, 2019). Consequently, academic performance of learners is one of the most reliable indicators of quality education epitomising quality productive inputs and optimal resources utilisation.

Most psychological studies on learner performance argue that girls are weaker and less intelligent than boys in education. However, according to Ullah and Ullah (2019) the 20th century has seen a gender reversal change in performance as girls outperform the boys in most secondary schools. Conversely, numerous studies link the poor academic performance of learners to socio-economic problems, poverty, and politics (Engelbrecht et al. 1996, Cobbold & Oppong, 2010, Naylor & Sayed, 2014). Kapur (2018) identify poverty and illiteracy as serious barriers in learners' better academic performance. The problem of poverty is considered as one of the critical factors that hinder the academic performance of the students. When they do not possess the essential resources to enhance their learning, then they are unable to improve their grades as well, while the problem of illiteracy is also regarded as an impediment within the course of recognising the significance of education by parents/guardians (Kapur, 2018).

Moreover, the absence of professional coaching is in a way a vacuum making allowance for undesirable learning outcomes. Kapur (2018) indicates that normally in subjects such as mathematics and science, students need coaching. The main purpose of coaching is to make available extra classes for the students, so they can improve their academic performance. The poverty-stricken individuals mainly possess low literacy skills, or they are not educated, hence, they are unable to provide any kinds of instructions and training to their children. Students may achieve low scores because they lack the help obtained from trained and experienced personnel.

IV. METHOD

The research design used in this study was a mixed approach. According to Creswell (2003:22) a mixed methods approach is one in which the researcher tends to base knowledge claims on pragmatic grounds. It employs strategies of inquiry that involve collecting data either simultaneously or sequentially to best understand research problems. The data collection also involves gathering both numeric information as well as text information to understand a given phenomenon. This study adopted a mixed method approach to downplay the shortcoming of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Mixed methods approach was chosen because of its strength of drawing on both approaches and minimising the limitation of either approach. Hence, because both approaches had bias and weaknesses, and the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data neutralised the weakness of each form of data. Purposive sampling techniques were adopted for the selection of the sample of this study area and all participants in the study. Pupils were also purposively selected, using the purposive criterion sampling. Purposive sampling was used in this study as provided a base of the population characterised of history learners. The study was made up of history pupils

who sat for the final national examination in the period 2011 to 2020. It is important to take note that there were two groups of learners that were differently exposed to different curriculum, however, it is vital to clearly understand and explore their performance in the given periods in order to guide teachers and policy makers which curriculum would be better placed. Those who sat for the final examination in the period 2011 to 2015 wrote the examination under the content based examination while those who sat in the period 2016-2020 wrote under the outcome based examination. It's vital to take note that the learners under study were selected from urban area of Lusaka district and had the same educational opportunities such as: availability of teachers and learning resources.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

This study adopted analysis of variance (ANOVA) to answer the research questions. Statistical analysis using ANOVA and multiple comparison procedures resulted in several findings (Thompson, 2006). The study used a one-way ANOVA to compare the means between the performance of history learners in the outcome based and Content based history curriculum from 2011 to 2020. The analysis focused on determining whether any of those means are statistically significantly different from each in the two curriculums. In order to help with further analysis, thematic descriptive analysis was incorporated in order to aid in a clear understanding and interpretation of the results.

VI. RESULTS

The findings of the study are presented below and the show the statistical analysis for six selected schools around Lusaka district, Zambia. The section begins with the frequency and percentage of the selected schools and this is followed by the demographic representation of the pupils who sat for the grade 12 examinations from the year 2011 to 2020. Further analysis of the study is summarised in table 3 and 4.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage according to Type and Category of Schools used in the Study

Category		<i>F</i>	%
Private	Co-education	2	33.3
Government (GRZ)	Co-education	2	33.3
Missionary Grant Aided	Boys	1	16.6
	Girls	1	16.6
	Total	6	100

The sample covered 6 schools around Lusaka which were categorised in three: Government (GRZ), Private owned and Missionary grant aided schools. The table 5.3 shows the type of schools used in the study. Questionnaires were distributed to teachers in the 6 schools. These participants were drawn from 2 Government schools, 2 Missionary grants aided, 2 Private schools that offer history within Lusaka district in Zambia. The return rate was 100%. Government secondary schools are described as schools owned and funded

completely by government. Missionary Grate Aided are schools that are partly funded by a missionary church and government, while a private owned school is one that is completely funded and owned by private persons or corporations but registered with the Ministry of Education. School is classed according to gender; co-education was used to refer to mixed sex that is both male and females, while boys and girls referred to single sex. According to table 5.3 about 33.3% represented the schools selected.

Learners Academic Performance in History in the Period 2011 to 2020

This section presents the analysis and interpretations of the quantitative findings on the second research area of the study; determine if there was any difference between content based education and outcome based education curriculums in history from 2011 to 2020 in the 6 selected schools in Lusaka district. In order to measure the statistical significance of the differences between the content-based education and outcome based, learners were drawn from selected secondary schools

who sat for the final examination from 2011 to 2020. A total of 8,276 made up the sample. See table 2 below.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage distributions according to syllabus type and Pupils who wrote the history final secondary school certificate examination.

Syllabus Type		%
Content Based Curriculum 2011-2015	Paper I & II-5895	71.23
Outcome Based Curriculum 2016-2020	Paper I & II- 2381	28.77
Total	8,276	100

The table 2 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of pupils who sat for the final examination in the period 2011 to 2020 according to the syllabus types. The table shows that in the period from 2011 to 2015 under the content-based curriculum a total of 5895 sat for the examination which gave a 71. 23%, while in the period 2016 to 2020 the number of pupils reduced to 2381 giving a total of those who sat at 28.77%.

Table 3. Description Statistic for Performance of History by Type of School

YEAR	GOV'T SCHOOL		GRANT-AIDED		PRIVATE		TOTAL	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
CONTENT-BASED EDUCATION								
2011	19.87	16.38	56.39	15.08	49.19	18.34	23.69	19.59
2012	20.11	15.93	74.04	17.12	44.37	14.77	24.87	21.34
2013	25.56	16.09	67.43	13.67	48.1	14.78	30.02	19.83
2014	27.57	17.01	67.65	13.88	51.63	23.37	33.05	21.44
2015	26.62	16.8	61.45	13.4	48.39	14.68	31.03	19.62
Total	23.95	16.44	65.39	14.63	48.34	17.19	28.53	20.36
OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION								
2016	53.38	29.79	109.71	25.63	88.06	27.23	60.88	34.05
2017	94.36	34.33	136.27	20.08	111.47	24.7	100.31	35.15
2018	57.5	25.95	108.4	27.91	103.63	20.62	68.31	32.74
2019	49.49	24.75	89.8	24.01	70.47	26.49	53.95	27.34
2020	43.49	23.5	89.69	27.2	69.52	26.33	47.74	26.93
Total	59.64	27.66	106.77	24.97	88.63	25.07	66.24	31.24

In order to determine whether there were statistically significant mean differences between content-based education and outcome-based education in general certificate history, a one-way ANOVA was used. The results in table 3 shows that history learners performed statistically better on outcome-based education (*M 66.24 and SD 31.24*) as compared to content-based education (*M 28.53, SD20.36*). The mean difference observed was statistically significant ($F(1, 8275) = 3699.92, p < 0.01, \eta^2 = 0.96$).

Table 4. Description statistics by Syllabus type & Paper type

	CONTENT-BASED CURRICULUM		OUTCOME-BASED CURRICULUM	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Paper I	13.51	10.88	32.91	18.97
	14.22	11.20	33.76	19.81
Paper II	14.22	11.20	33.76	19.81
	11.20		19.81	

Table 4 above shows the difference of the learners' performance based on the syllabus type and the type of paper. The results showed a significant difference in the two syllabus types and papers. The findings in the table show that history learners performed statistically better under outcome-based

education in both papers, paper I scores of performance ($M=32.91$ and $SD=18.97$) and paper II ($M=33.76$, $SD=19.81$) compared to content based education paper I which is Central and Southern African History ($M =13.51$, $SD=10.88$) while paper II which is World History ($M=14.22$, $SD =11.20$).

Table5: Description Statistics by Syllabus type by Gender

TYPE_OF_SYLLABUS	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
CONTENT-BASED	27.73	20.42	27.72	21.06	27.73	20.71
OUTCOME-BASED	72.75	38.38	60.16	33.85	66.67	36.79
TOTAL	40.25	33.42	37.42	29.56	38.93	31.72

Table 5 above shows the descriptive statistical analysis for the academic performance of grade 12 learners by gender in the period 2011 to 2020. In order to determine whether or not there was any statistical mean significant difference in the performance of grade 12 learners between the males and females a two-way ANOVA was used. The findings of the study are interesting in that there was less statistical significant difference between males ($M=27.73$, $SD=20.42$) and females ($M=27.72$, $SD=21.06$) in the Content based curriculum. The opposite was the case in the Outcome based curriculum as males' ($M=72.75$, $SD =38.38$) performance was statistically better than females ($M=60.16$, $SD=33.85$). Further, the results in the table show that history learners performed statistically better on Outcome based education ($M=66.67$ and $SD= 36.79$) as compared to content based education ($M =27.3$, $SD=20.71$).

Document analysis/observation results: Learner Performance in History According to ECZ

The table 6 below shows the various categories of learners and their characteristics of the writing and answering skills in the final examination. The learners were grouped in three; high performing, average performing and low performing candidates.

Table 6: Characteristics of Learner Performance in History Groupings

No.	Variable	Characteristics
1.	High Performing Candidates	1. Adherence to instructions. 2. Ability to present their work in an organized manner. 3. The candidates applied the historical knowledge to the real-life situation very well. 4. The structure of the paper was favourable to the candidates.
2.	Average Performing Candidates	1. Fairly presented essays. 2. Incomplete work in most parts of one word answer 3. Scanty knowledge about subject matter 4. Generally, lack of knowledge in depth and answering out of context. 5. Failure to demonstrate good 6. Interpretation of questions and to give correct answers. 7. Fairly exhibited appropriate techniques to explain phenomena

		in relation to the subject matter. 8. Failure to give clear distinctions on concepts.
3.	Low Performing Candidates	1. Poor writing skills particularly observed in essay questions. 2. Failure to display knowledge with regard to subject matter 3. Lack of historical knowledge/facts 4. Inability to interpret questions

Source: ECZ Examination Performance 2020.

V. DISCUSSION

The results above show that there was a significant difference between the Outcome based education syllabus and the Content based education syllabus. History learners showed better performance in the outcome based education than that of the Content based education. The findings of the study are in line with the Curriculum Development Framework (2013) that supports the view that unlike the content based education, outcome based education is centred on competences of learners. The framework also notes that the content structure and process of teaching at senior secondary school level and the range of activities should be centred on well-educated and effective learners who can communicate. It is important to note that despite curriculum changes, the performance of history learners has been low with lower performing candidates showing poor writing skills, failure to interpret and understand historical concepts (see table 5). Such students in most cases had a negative attitude toward history. The findings of the study are in line with Cobbold and Oppong (2010) who observed that history learners had a negative attitude toward the subject as they regarded it as a compendium of facts to be memorized.

Further, the findings of the study show that despite having a statistically significant difference between the two syllabus types; content based education ($M=28.53$, $SD=20.63$) and outcome based education ($M=66.24$, $SD=31.24$), government schools still remained the lowest in performance while Grant-aided were the highest. Statistical results of the study show that government schools under the content based education syllabus scored ($M= 23.95$, $SD=16.44$) and outcome based scored ($M=59.64$, $SD=27.66$) while Grant-aided under content based depicted ($M=65.39$, $SD=14.63$) and outcome based had ($M=106.77$, $SD=24.97$).

There are many reasons that support this finding, among them government schools performance is lowest because power and control of the progression rate at entry point to senior secondary (grade 10) is in the hands of government through the MoE. Thus, government schools select low performers, hence it follows that there is a high possibility their performance at final examination may be low. In addition, learners in private and grant-aided schools are allowed to choose the stream of study as opposed to government schools where the power and control is in the hands of the school administration. Government schools are also faced with

challenges of high teacher-pupil ratio, lack of teaching-learning materials, teachers-pupil' laissez-faire attitude toward work, truant pupils and lack of remedial work for learners. This was supported by Ruto and Ndahoh (2013) and Rono (2015) whose studies discovered that there are several factors that contribute to poor performance in history, such as limited history teachers and lack of instructional materials in government schools.

Another interesting finding of the study is that private and grant-aided schools employ very experienced teachers in the subject unlike government schools. This is because in most cases private and grant-aided schools focus on ensuring that they maintain educational standards and quality of passing. As a result their focus is on ensuring that learners pass the final examinations by creating an enabling learning environment, weekly or frequent assessment and highly motivated teachers due to school awards on best results and other school incentives. The findings of the study are supported by Chabatama (2012) who observes that the acquisition of knowledge and skills is not considered important by both teachers and learners in private schools. This is because passing an examination has become more important to schools, learners, teachers and the Ministry of Education than the acquisition of long term critical skills.

Furthermore, the findings of the study showed that demographic factor; school type and syllabus type influence learners' academic performance. On the aspect of age the results show that learners in the adolescents (16-19 years) were more likely to perform better than adults. This implies that the young learners were better performers in academics. This can be attributed to their concentration in the classroom, time management, cognitive development and teacher-learner interaction. According to ECZ (2020) adult learners were classified repeaters who sat for examination under General Certificate Education (G.C.E). It can be argued that adult learners in most cases were faced with life and social changes thus lacked time to study. In addition, adult learners in most cases did not attend physical classes when repeating the course and sat for the final examination without any interaction with their teachers. The findings of the study are in line with Insah, Mumuni and Bowan (2013), whose study in Ghana noted that age was statistically significant in student academic performance. Equally, in Kenya a study by Waseke and Simatwa (2016) observed that students aged 18 years and above showed reduced academic performance. Molokompale and Mhlauli (2014) in Botswana attributed the reduction in performance due to increase in age to lack of preparedness for the examination among adult learners.

In addition, this study considered gender differences in the Secondary school history certificate on learners' academic performance (see table 5). Results of this study show that there is statistical significant difference in academic performance between boys and girls. The findings of the study show that males performed much better than females in outcome based Education curriculum. It is interesting to note that the history Content based curriculum format for the

national examination took an essay form while the outcome based is centred on a structured and essay format. It can be concluded from the findings that girls' performance was better in the content based format than the outcome based one. This finding is in line with Oppong's (2013) study in Cape coast, who found out that female students performed significantly better than males' students on essay test items. The findings are in line with a Study in Kenya on history teaching and learners' attitudes by David (2016), which shows that more males than females like studying the subject. Further, the findings of the study are connected to Cohen (1977) who argues from a psychological view point that people have different cognitive styles in the way they understand and comprehend concepts. In this current study, it is clear from the results that boys had a stronger cognitive style in understanding, organising and analysing historical concepts than girls. Further, in support of this finding, Gobena (2018) in a Study in Eastern Ethiopia observed that males performed statistically significant better than females. Hamer (2022) attributes the low performance of girls in history to lack of female representation in most historical textbooks and curricula. In addition, the study observes that there have been insufficient resources and support to enable women to be properly represented in school history teaching. Thus, the current form in which the secondary school history curriculum is taught is biased against women as it marginalizes their accounts and experiences.

Studies on gender differences and the academic performance of learners contradict this study (Oppong, 2013, Wangu, 2014). Those studies indicate that female learners outperform the boys especially in essay type questions. Parajuli and Thapa (2017) in their study on gender and academic achievement in Nepal show that female students were found outperforming their male counterparts. The study outlines the following reasons for such a finding; sensitization on education government, policies on girls, females rights, skill development among others.

The findings of the study depict a significant difference in the two syllabus types and papers. Generally, it was found that history learners performed statistically better on outcome based in paper I (African history) and paper II (World history) compared with the content-based curriculum. Besides, results of this study equally revealed that learners' performance in paper II was much better in both syllabus types than in paper I. One would expect that learners being African and due to their socialisation from the community would better understand their own histories. However, it is interesting to note that the opposite was the cases in the period under review. Reasons that can be attributed to these findings are that African history is less documented; as a result, learners have little sources to refer to. In addition, the broadness and scope of African history contributes to learners' disliking of the subject and centre their attention more on World history. These results concur with these of Chimee (2021) who argues that African history still faces a problem of periodization carpooled with a broad course of

events as a continent. In addition, the findings are in line with Kabombwe, Machila and Sikayomya (2021) in their study of examination papers who found out that in both the content based and outcome-based assessments concentration of the questions was on low-level leading learners to only remember and memorisation. Their study results further show that in both cases curriculum examination questions lacked higher cognitive levels.

It is interesting to note that the findings of the study revealed that the outcome based much better than the content based curriculum. This can be attributed to improvements in pedagogical approaches used in schools. Despite, the shift from the content based education; the existing model of outcome based education still faces a number of challenges due to the fact that history teaching and the final examination still focus on mastery of content for learners. It clear from the findings that OBE is centred on learner achievements, hence teachers only focus on the end results at the final examination (Kabombwe et al, 2021) . The consequences of such a model are producing a half-baked learner who cannot articulate and critical analyse historical concepts. This is because OBE is centred towards is enhancing outcomes or competencies. This is in line with the study by Bertram (2008) who used an analysis of the curriculum reform and argues that learners were mostly not doing history as they lacked demonstration of strong and in-depth knowledge of history. This is because emphasises of assessment in OBE may encourage a forward looking approach in which the focus is on mastery of the subject content. As a result, most learners produced lack the ability to use and apply the knowledge acquired to real life situations. In addition, the current state of teaching history encourages a backward approach of teaching in which teachers firstly are concerned with the final product (Final examination) and not the skills, values and norms that learners must acquire in order to understand and apply historical concepts.

VI. CONCLUSION

The results in this paper show that there was a significant difference between in learner performance in the outcome based education syllabus and the Content based education syllabus. From the findings, the performance of history learners at grade 12 from 2011 to 2020, the study showed that the general performance of the high performing candidates exhibited characteristics of understanding, adherence to instructions and were able to apply historical knowledge to the real-life situations, while low performing candidates showed characteristics of poor writing skills, lack of historical knowledge and inability to interpret questions. In this regard, it can be concluded that failure by teachers to adhere to the learning objectives set in the syllabus and to apply them to the real-life situations of learners and learners' lack of appropriate application to display knowledge with regards to the subject matter, negatively affects the performance. By implication, there was no real-life teaching that is propounded in OBE curriculum, in that, at the final examination, schools produce

has baked learners as they lack analytical skills since they just memorise the history content to pass the examination.

REFERENCES

- [1] Banja, K.M. (2012b). The Relevance and Adequacy of University Education to occupational demands. The case of Zambia. *Journal of Contemporary Issues*, Vol.29.
- [2] Bernstein, B. (2000). *Pedagogy, symbolic control, and identity: Theory, research, critique* (Revised edition). London: Rowman & Littlefield.
- [3] Bertram, C. A. (2008). *Curriculum recontextualisation: a case of the South African high school History curriculum*. PhD Thesis. University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- [4] Bulfin, M (2012). *Zambia's Education System in Historical Context: Spark Ventures & a qualitative Analysis of Hope Ministers' operational environment*. Chicago: Spark Ventures Publication.
- [5] Cartey, W. and M. Kilson [eds.] (1970). *The African Reader*. New York: Random House
- [6] Chabatama, M. C. (2010). *Contradiction and weaknesses in the teaching an examination of History in Zambian secondary school*. *Zambia Journal of Education*. (3)2, 12-18.
- [7] Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) (2015). *Zambia Education Curriculum Framework Review 2013*. Lusaka: CDC.
- [8] Cohen, J. (1977). *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences* (Revised Ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum
- [9] Cobbold, C. and Oppong, A. C. (2010b). *Re-Echoing the Place of History in the School Curriculum*. *International Journal of Educational Leadership*, 3(3), 89-96.
- [10] Chimee, N. I. (2021). *African Historiography and the Challenges of European Periodization: A Historical Comment*, in: *TRAFO-Blog for Transregional Research*, 31.07.2018, <https://trafo.hypotheses.org/11518>.
- [11] David, R. (2016). *An Assessment of the Attitudes of Students towards History and Government in Selected Secondary Schools in Bomet Country in Kenya*. *Journal of Education and practice*. Vol.7, No. 19.
- [12] Denzin, N. K and Lincoln, Y.S. (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Sage. London. Sage.
- [13] Engelbrecht, P., Kruger, S.M. and Booyesen, M.T. (1996). *Perspective on learning difficulties. International concerns and South African Realities*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- [14] Gobena, G. A. (2018). *Family Socio-economic status effect on students' Academic Achievement at college of education and behavioural Sciences*. Haramaya University. *Journal of Teacher Education and Educators*, 7, (3), 207-222.
- [15] Hamer, J. (2022). *Gender issues in history teaching*. Alphaplus Education Consultancy Ltd.UK.
- [16] Insah, B, Mumuni, A and Bowana, A. P. (2013). *Demographic Factors and students' Academic Achievement in Tertiary Institutions in Ghana: A study of Wa Polytechnic*. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 4, (20), 76-80.
- [17] Kabombwe, Y, Machila, N, and Sikayomya, P. (2021). *A Comparative analysis of the Zambian Senior Secondary History Examination between the Old and Revised Curriculum Using Blooms Taxonomy. Yesterday and today*. 1-22. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/22230386/2021/n25a2>.
- [18] Kabombwe, Y, M, Machila, N & Sikayomya, P. (2020). *Implementing a history competency- based curriculum: Teaching and Learning activities for Zambian school history classroom*. *Multidisciplinary journal of language and social sciences education*, 3, (9). 1-33.
- [19] Kabombwe, Y.M and Mulenga, M.I. (2019). *Implementation of the competency based Curriculum by teachers of history in selected secondary schools in Lusaka district, Zambia*. *Yesterday & Today*, No.22, 19-41.
- [20] Kapur, R. (2018). *Factors Influencing the Student's Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in India*. Retrieved from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324819919>.

- [21] Kelly, J. (1996). *Origins and Development of Education in Zambia. From Pre-colonial times to Present*. Lusaka: Image Publishers.
- [22] Kuster, S. (1999). *African Education in Colonial Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi: Government control, Settler Atagonism and African Agency, 1890-1964*. *Studies on African History*. Vol.23, 368.
- [23] Ko and Chung (2014). Teaching quality, learning, satisfaction and academic performance among hospitality students in Taiwani. *World Journal of Education*, 4(5).
- [24] Leedy, P.D. (1993). *Practical Research: Planning and Design*. (5th Ed). New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.
- [25] Machila, N, Sompaa, M, Muleya, G & Pitsoe, V. J. (2018). Teachers 'Understanding and Attitudes towards Inductive and Deductive Approaches to Teaching Social Sciences. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Language and Social Sciences Education*, (2), 120-137.
- [26] Maluma, P. and Banja, M. K. (2019). Factors affecting pupil academic performance at grade twelve (12) level of selected grant-aided secondary school in Zambia. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Language and Social Sciences Education*, 2, 2, 95-118.
- [27] Manchishi, P. C. and Masaiti, G. (2011). The University of Zambia pre-service teacher Education Programme: Is it responsive to schools and communities' aspirations? *European Journal of Educational Studies*. 3(2). 311-324.
- [28] Manchishi, P.C. (2004). The Growth of Teacher Education in Zambia since Independence, in *Education Research Journal* (online publication of African Educational Research Network), Vol.4 (4).
- [29] Mukoboto, S. (2014). *Development Of A Curriculum Planning Model For Zambian Secondary Schools*. PhD thesis, University of Massachusetts.
- [30] Muleya, G. (2015). *The teaching of Civic Education in Zambia: An Examination of trends in the Teaching of Civic Education in Schools*. PhD Thesis. University of South Africa.
- [31] Mulubale, S. (2020). Understanding the Seriousness of 'Self Identity and Changing Process of HIV among Zambian School Teachers Living with Antiretroviral Therapy (ART). *AJHMS*, Vol.7 (4) pp 197 – 216
- [32] Mulubale, S. (2019). *Identity, Governmentality, Chronicity and Development: A Study of Zambian Teachers Living With and Affected by HIV and 'Therapeutic Citizenship'* (Doctoral dissertation, University of East London).
- [33] Mwanza, P. (2018). "An Assessment of Major Educational Policies in Zambia from 1964 to 2015: Lessons for the Future". In: Masaiti, G., *Education in Zambia at Fifty Years of Independence and beyond*. UNZA Press: Lusaka. 91 - 101.
- [34] Mwanakatwe, J.M. (2013). *The Growth of Education in Zambia since Independence (Reviseded)*. Lusaka: University of Zambia Press.
- [35] MESVTEE. (2012). *The re-entry policy guidelines 2012*. Lusaka: MESVTEE. MOE.
- [36] Ministry of Education (MOE) (2001). *The Basic School Curriculum Framework*. Lusaka: Curriculum Development Centre.
- [37] Ministry of Education (MOE) (2000) *The Basic School Curriculum Framework*. Lusaka: Curriculum Development Centre.
- [38] Ministry of Education (MOE) (1992). *The Basic School Curriculum Framework*. Lusaka: Curriculum Development Centre.
- [39] MoGE (2019). *Ministerial Statement to Parliament – School Fees Reduction in all Public*.
- [40] MolokoMphale, L. and Mhlauli, M. B. (2014). An Investigation on Students Academic Performance for Junior Secondary Schools in Botswana. *European Journal of Educational Research* Vol. 3 (3), 111-127.
- [41] Naylor, R. and Y. Sayed (2014). *Teacher quality: Evidence Review*. Canberra, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- [42] Oppong, A, C. (2013). Gender Differences in Students' Performance in History at Senior High Schools in Cape Coast. *Journal of Arts and Humanities (JAH)*, 2, (1),34-39.
- [43] Parajuli, M & Thapa (2017). Gender Differences in the Academic Performance of Student. *Journal of Development and Social Engineering*. Vol 3. No. 1, 39-47.
- [44] Ruto, Z. J. & Ndaloh, A. M. (2013). The Impact of Secondary school Teachers' attitudes and challenges on the teaching and learning of history and government in Wareng district, Kenya. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 4(2), 369-374.
- [45] Rono, D. (2015). Constraints on effective History and Government instruction in secondary Schools in Bomet district, Rift-Valley province in Kenya. Unpublished M.A thesis, Moi University, Kenya.
- [46] Snelson, P. D. (1974). *Educational Development in Northern Rhodesia 1883-1945* 2nd Edition. Lusaka: Kenneth Kaunda Foundation.
- [47] Tabassum, R., Akhter, N & iqbal, N. (2020). Relationship between social comptences and academic performance of University students. *Journal of Educational Research, Pakistan*, 23. (1). 111-130.
- [48] Ternenge, T. S and Torkuma, T. T. (2021). Socio-cultural and economic factors as correlate of academic performance of undergraduates in the department of library and information science Benue State University, Makurdi. *Library Philosophy and Practice*. 1-22.
- [49] Thorp, R. (2016). *Uses of History in History Education*. Hogskolan: Umea University & Dalarna University.
- [50] Thompson, B. (2006). *Foundations of Behavioural Statistics: An Insight-Based Approach*. New York: Division of Guilford Publications.
- [51] Waseka, E. L. & Simatwa, E. M. W. (2016). Student factors influencing academic performance of students in secondary education in kenya.: A case study of Kakamega country. *International Research Journal*, 7, (3), 72-87.
- [52] Wangu, M. J. (2014). *The Impact of Gender differences on student's Academic Performance in secondary schools in Ndumberi division, Kiambu country, Kenya in science subjects and language*. Postgraduate Diploma, University of Nairobi.

AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHY



Nisbert Machila is PhD student at the University of Zambia in History education. Her research topic: Critiquing the teaching of history in Zambian secondary schools through Basil Bernstein is a unique and educative study as it compares the various curriculums in secondary school history. She is also a lecturer in the department of language and social sciences education under history education section. Before joining the university she worked and taught secondary school history at Chelstone Secondary school. She has published a number of scholarly works in history education and has presented in both local and international conferences. Her areas of research interests include: history education, curriculum, culture, policy and gender



Dr Euston Kasongo Chiputa is a lecturer and researcher in the Department of Historical and Archaeological Studies, School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zambia. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in comparative economic history from Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, a Master of Arts (MA) degree in penal history and a Bachelor of Arts with Education (BA-Ed) degree in History and English Language both from the University of Zambia, a Secondary Teachers Diploma in History and Civics from Kwame Nkrumah Teachers College, Kabwe and a postgraduate Diploma in Human Resource Management from the Zambia Institute of Human Resource Management. Dr Chiputa is an accomplished historian and researcher who has taught History and Education courses and supervised research in History and Education at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels for over 24 years. Dr Chiputa has published several articles and book chapters, and publishes articles in newspapers on historical and contemporary issues on which he is also often interviewed on radio and television. Currently, he is Chief Editor of the relaunched *Zambia Journal of History* and a board member of the *Zango Journal of Contemporary Issues* both at the University of Zambia. His research interests are in African and Asian studies.



Dr Ferdinand M Chipindi is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Zambia's School of Education. His research interests are at the intersection of higher education, political economy, and decolonization. Ferdinand currently leads the department of Educational Administration and Policy Studies, where he teaches various courses in education and development.



Dr. Bestern Kaani is a Lecturer of Educational Psychology, Cross-Cultural Psychology, Educational Research and Special Education at the University of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia, where he also got his Bachelor of Arts in Special Education and Geography (2001), and Master of Education in Special Education (2006). Bestern received his Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Reading and Literacy from Texas A&M University (TAMU), College Station, Texas in 2014 under the supervision of Professor R. Malt Joshi. His PhD dissertation received a Dissertation of the Year Award for December, 2014. Bestern Kaani is a founding Editor-In-Chief (2020 to 2022) of the *Zambia Interdisciplinary Journal of Education (ZIJE)*. He is currently serving as a reviewer for *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal* (2015-todate). Bestern has published a number of peer-reviewed articles in high impact journals and has been involved in a number of NIH-funded projects in Zambia, including the Learning Disabilities Project –Zambia (2004-2006) and Bala Bbala Project in Macha, Zambia (2009-2013). He has won a number of international academic awards, notably the Developing Country Fellowship from the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development (ISSBD) in 2009 and The Witkin-Okonji Award from International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology (IACCP) in 2016. His current research interests include: the effects of orthographic depth on literacy development among bilingual children in the developing world, reading teacher education and how culture affects cognitive development in culturally diverse environments.