



Analysis of teachers' perception on examinations in physical education: A case of selected secondary schools in Chipata District

David Charles Zimba, Jacob Manda*

Information and Communications University, School of Education, Zambia Research and Development Centre (ZRDC), P.O. Box, Lusaka, Zambia

Abstract

This article is an extract of one of the objectives to the study that investigated teachers' perception on the introduction of examinations in secondary school physical education and sport in Chipata district. The study objectives were to establish the current status of physical education and sport in the advent of examinations in secondary schools, to determine the challenges of implementing Physical Education and Sport with the introduction of examinations and suggesting coping strategies to the challenges. Sample size was sixty. Three Head teachers, three Deputy Head teachers, three Expressive Arts Heads of Departments and three Guidance and Counselling teachers purposively selected. Eighteen subject teachers and thirty pupils selected through simple random sampling.

Data was collected using semi-structured questionnaires and an observation schedule. One questionnaire was used to collect data from administrators and teachers while another gathered data from the pupils. An observation schedule was used to collect data which seemed difficult to collect through semi-structured questionnaires. Qualitative data was analyzed and presented thematically, while quantitative data was analyzed through Social Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and was presented in form of tables and figures.

The findings of the study were that teachers of physical education held positive perceptions on the introduction of examinations in secondary school physical education and sport. However, most administrators, teachers of other subjects, parents and pupils held negative attitudes towards examinations in secondary school physical education and sport. Numerous challenges to the successful implementation of examinations in secondary school physical education and sport were also revealed. They included: some teachers of physical education and Sport preferring to teach other subjects other than physical education and Sport, little support from administrators especially those specialized in other subjects, lack of teachers of physical education and sport, teachers' limited knowledge of the subject, lack of sports equipment and infrastructure and cultural beliefs.

The study suggested the following coping strategies and measures; Continuing Professional Development (CPD) meetings, increased administration and financial support, provision of sports equipment and infrastructure, sensitization on the importance of physical education and sport to the administration, teachers, parents and pupils, clarifying on the provisions of the revised curriculum on the introduction of examinations in physical education, deployment of enough teachers of physical education and sport and teacher motivation.

Keywords: perception, implementation, examinations, physical education and sport, secondary school

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

The origin of Physical Education and Sport (PES) as a science of human movement can be traced back to the origin of mankind and that the subject forms an element of life. Mwanakatwe (1965) ^[19] alludes that Physical Education was introduced as an academic subject in the Zambia education system during the colonial period. Studies conducted on the history of education reveals that Physical Education and Sport (PES) has always been in existence though regarded with varying degrees of importance and mostly stressing practical activities without formal national examinations in secondary schools.

Physical Education and Sport is one the subjects that has been facing a number of implementation challenges in Zambia. Since independence, the Ministry of Education has

implemented Physical education and Sport mainly through practical performances and only a little bit of some theory. The teaching of Physical Education during this period was not seriously done because there were no public examinations administered at any level of education in the Zambian public schools. With this and many other challenges, most public schools managed to include PE and Sport on their school time tables quite alright but teachers never implemented it in their classes (Mutiti, 2011). ^[18]

Despite the challenges, most schools and the education management never got concerned with what went on in schools regarding the implementation of Physical Education and Sport. Teachers of other subjects and parents also never considered Physical Education and Sport as an academic subject but rather a co-curricular activity. In that case, very little importance was attached to the teaching of Physical

Education and Sport as it was considered a time waster in the preparation of pupils for examinations in the examinable subjects. Teachers of Physical Education and Sport would always complain about how low the subject was ranked on the curriculum. Well meaningful teachers of PE and Sport (PES) would implement the subject but they received negative support and comments from all the stake holders from both schools and community. The kind of teaching that went on in such cases was also haphazardly done since no proper routine was followed. In most cases, pupils would be left on their own playing on the sport field without the guidance of their teachers.

However, the Ministry of General Education realizes that Physical Education and Sport has a unique but not exclusive role to play in the education of children, Ministry of Education (1996) ^[15] and up holds the importance that the subject plays in promoting learners' physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual development. This role is in two-fold; to enhance the children's' physical fitness and wellbeing and to teach them a wide range of motor skills. Physical Education and Sport prepares the learner physically, socially, mentally, emotionally, intellectually and culturally so that they can effectively contribute to national development.

Mufalali (1974) ^[16] adds that PE helps to develop a health mind in a healthy body. Physical education and Sport gives appropriate alternatives to individual learning styles, interests and problems. The subject includes among other things all practices that foster health promotion, character building and acceptable values and attitudes in society. Physical Education and Sport offers scope for experimentation skills, dramatization practices, excitement and freedom. This scope digs up the hidden and undeveloped sources of inherent skills and ability in learners so as to make them aware and develop confidence in their usage. Department for Education (1995) ^[5] asserts that physical education helps to prepare a learner for classroom instruction while Chan (1998) ^[4] maintains that physical activities employed in physical education and sport make learners healthier both mentally and socially.

The teachers of Physical Education and Sport should therefore, have a positive attitudes towards the subject because it helps in the acquisition of skills in the learners and high standards of performance can enable the learners to go into the world of sport with confidence. Physical Education and Sport serves to compliment other educational areas in the curriculum in promoting the desired educational outcomes as physical activity promotes a health mind. In particular, Physical Education and Sport helps to cultivate health habits, the spirit of teamwork, determination and resolve. Physical Education and Sport also enables learners to participate in sports and games both for academic, leisure and competition and as a means of livelihood (Siedentop, 2002) ^[24].

Physical Education and Sport (PES) is the part of the educational process that contributes to the physical, emotional, social and mental development of learners through the medium of physical activity. Physical Education and Sport is that part of the educational experience which provides learners with the opportunity to become aware of and engage in physical activity that is whole bodied, intrinsically valuable and personally meaningful within the context of the learners' social and environmental setting (Pangrazi, 2007). ^[20]

In an attempt to describe Physical education and Sport, Pangrazi (2007) ^[20] states that it is a learning process that focuses on increasing knowledge and affecting attitudes and behaviors related to physical activities including exercise, sports, games, dance, aquatic games and outdoor activities.

While PE ad Sport (PES) is acclaimed as having immense benefits for young people as well as adults, Kilimbi (1991) ^[11] showed that, it is characterized more by neglect than by attention and that in some African primary schools, the status of Physical Education remained questionable due to the fact that the subject was non-examinable. Musangeya *et al*, (2000) ^[17] adds that in schools where Physical Education and Sport was rated lowly and still at its infant stage, teachers had negative attitudes towards teaching it. Negative attitudes arose when teachers were unaware of subject matter, pedagogical knowledge and responsibilities of implementing the subject.

Physical Education and Sport had for so long been perceived by many societies as restricted to sports, and that its importance was to satisfy the play and recreational drives of man (Shehu, 2001) ^[23]. Green (2005) ^[7] argues that, making physical education and Sport another academic subject creates problems of another kind, as it must retain its aspect of enjoyment. From the above explanation it can be assumed that PE and Sport is perceived by many people as a subject that is for fun and enjoyment only and not an examination subject. This popular opinion about PE and Sport according to Kakuwa (2005) ^[10] is that it evolved from this context and as such it is commonly referred to a "ifyakutoloka-toloka" in Bemba language meaning 'sports', and often reduced to 'votaba-taba' in Nyanja language meaning 'athletics.' Previous literature reveals that Physical Education and Sport was easily overlooked in many schools due to time constraints and the desire for extra teaching time in other subjects that were considered important due to the attachment of examination they had.

Despite the cultural and educational significance of Physical Education and Sports as a field of inquiry in Zambia, it was characterized more by neglect than by attention (Mutiti, 2011). ^[18] Moreover, PE and Sport continued to be a marginalized subject in school curricula worldwide (Hardman, 2008). ^[8] In an international survey, which investigated other African nations it was discovered that, the status of PE and Sport was low and the subject was in grave danger of being sidelined. The study established that, some teachers have the perception that replacing cognitive learning with physical learning could have a detrimental effect on a learner's cognitive development. In many Zambian primary schools, physical education and Sport class time was used as a time to take a break from serious class work. Therefore, physical education and Sport teachers felt they had to continually provide justification for the existence of their subject and to plead for actual control of the time allocated to the subject because PE and Sport has been neglected, misunderstood, seen as of little importance and regarded as inferior when compared to other subjects in the school curriculum (Mutiti, 2011) ^[18].

In its quest to improve the quality of education in Zambian schools the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) revised the education curriculum where there was an introduction of formal examinations in Physical Education and Sport

(Curriculum Development Centre, 2013) ^[14]. It is envisaged that the introduction of examinations in Physical Education and Sport and its effective implementation in Zambian secondary schools will provide opportunities for the learners to learn activities that are invigorating and developmental which in turn would lead to the positive physical, social, mental and emotional growth in the learners and thereby raising the status of the subject in Zambian secondary schools.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

For a long time, Physical Education in Zambia has been sidelined as an academic subject due to the lack of national examinations in the subject (Mutiti, 2011) ^[18]. In 2013 the Government of the republic of Zambia through the Ministry of General Education revised the education curriculum. The revision of the Zambia education curriculum by the Ministry of General Education saw an introduction of formal examinations in Physical Education and Sport at both grade nine and twelve levels (Curriculum Development Centre 2013) ^[14] for the very first time in the history of education in Zambia. Since the introduction of examinations in physical education however, little or no research has been conducted to ascertain teachers' perception on the introduction of examinations in secondary school Physical Education and Sport, hence, the need for a research of this nature.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may enable the policy makers in the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) to find remedies in addressing the perceived perceptions among the teachers of Physical Education and Sport. The outcome of this research, might also contribute to the learners, parents and the nation at large to appreciate Physical education and finally this study has contributed knowledge to the scholarly world.

1.4 Study Location

The study was conducted in Chipata District in the Eastern Province of Zambia and three secondary schools were selected to take part in the study. The schools that took part in this study are secondary schools along the Great East Road between Katete and Chipata districts. The researcher knew that the selected schools were in the position to provide him with necessary respondents since they all had an opportunity to choose the vocational subjects to offer to their learners.

1.5 Literature Review

Physical Education and Sport (PES) is an absolutely fundamental and essential part of a balanced education for young people world over. It provides a contrast to the relative inactivity of the classroom setting and has both physical and psychological benefits to health. No other single subject in the curriculum provides the stimulation for mind and body to work together in harmony as does Physical Education and Sport. Price (1980) ^[21] reviewed that body awareness, movement experiences and gymnastics are fundamental to any program of Physical Education and Sport.

Physical Education (PE) has long been positioned on the margins of school provision. As one of the least considered subjects of the family of curriculum subjects (Casey and O'Donovan, 2015) ^[3]. Physical Education and Sport has

repeatedly sought to be seen as a legitimate subject with equal standing to its traditionally more highly valued subjects taught in our schools. The existence of formal examinations in physical education and sport is expected to bring about a significant change in the landscape for teaching and learning of Physical Education and Sport in secondary schools. Previous research conducted in England revealed that the introduction of the General Certificate in Education (GCE) in Physical Education at the beginning of the 1970s in England and Wales brought change in the education of 14-16 year olds. By the mid to late 1980s the introduction of General Certificates in Secondary Education (GCSE) and Advanced Level (A Level) courses established Physical Education's place in the portfolio of academic subjects available to schools. Physical Education in the United Kingdom remains, and is still assessed primarily through performance outcomes. Examining Physical Education rapidly increased its popularity (Casey and O'donavan, 2015) ^[3].

In its first year as an examinable subject in the UK Advanced level (A Level) Physical Education was taken by 34 students (Green, 2005) ^[7]. In the summer of 2011 nearly 21,000 students took the subject. This uptake placed Physical Education as the 14th most popular A level out of the reported 35 individual subjects on offer (Casey and O'donavan, 2015).

^[3] During this time, there was growing resistance to the use of examinations as the sole arbitrator of schooling success and alternative subjects, including physical education, were included as examinable subjects. The rise of Colleges of Advanced Education, the diversification of the higher education offering and the acceptance of students from 'alternative' educational backgrounds paved the way for the emergence of physical education as a popular examination subject (Casey and O'donavan, 2015) ^[3]. The development of examination PE and Sport as a new orthodoxy for teachers in Australia, is further highlighted through the uptake by students at state level. The Board of Studies in New South Wales (NSW) (2001), for instance, reported that 9417 students took Personal Development, Health and Physical Education as a Higher Schools Certificate (HSC) in the year 2000 (Taylor, 2005) ^[25]. By 2010 this number had risen to 14283, placing the subject behind only Biology, Business Studies, Mathematics and English on the list of most popular subjects taken as a HSC in NSW (Taylor, 2005) ^[25].

Although curricula exist which attempt to integrate theory and practice, such as the HSPE in Scotland which integrates practical expertise and analysis of performance with written forms of expression used to record attainment in such analysis, Thorburn, (2007) ^[26] highlight that the challenges of the curriculum have limited the pedagogies of those that teach it. Similarly Brown and Penny (2013) ^[2] suggested that although the Victorian Certificate of Education in Physical Education integrates theoretical and practical elements, the course content reflects the official academic discourses that give it legitimacy within the curriculum and the practical activity have not received comparable status, particularly in relation to assessment. Casey and O'donavan (2015) ^[3], argues that attempts to justify its value "on the same criteria appropriate for an academic subject" distort the nature of physical education.

In her research on teachers' perceptions of externally

prescribed Physical Education examinations in Scotland, MacPhail (2007) ^[13] found that many teachers felt that they and their departments were well positioned to teach examination Physical Education for a number of reasons. These included firstly, that they were motivated in teaching at this level and believed that they would be successful in gaining high grades for their students. Secondly, they also believed that they had sufficient expertise with respect to the teaching of examination Physical Education. From these outcomes MacPhail (2007) ^[13] reported that teachers “admitted that the more attractive feature of the introduction of examinable Physical Education as opposed to addressing pupils’ needs was the rising of their own status.” Interestingly the conviction that teachers of Physical Education have sufficient expertise to teach examination Physical Education and Sport contrasts with concerns about the practical subject content knowledge of neophyte Physical Educators (Siedentop, 2002) ^[24].

In considering a landscape dominated by the academicization of Physical Education in the US, Siedentop (2002) ^[24] argued that as a consequence of Physical Education’s rapid reconceptualization as an academic subject, the practitioner was being increasingly stripped of the basic content knowledge needed to teach practical Physical Education lessons. Siedentop (2002) ^[24] concluded that while a return to the days of courses focusing on practical skills was not the solution, student teachers and coaches did need to understand pedagogy both theoretically and as performers. In other words they needed to greatly enhance their practical subject matter content knowledge.

In his thought on the future of Physical Education, Kirk (2010) ^[12] maintained that the dominant and change-resistant form of the subject has led to a creation of learning that is out of kilter with the needs of the 21st Century. Kirk (2010) ^[10] also proposed, in keeping with the arguments of Siedentop (2002) ^[24], that the examining Physical Education and Sport has led to a form of Physical Education that has seen a “reduction and marginalization of the experience of practical physical activity which in turn has produced teachers better suited to teaching senior high school examination versions of Physical Education than the core programs for younger pupils” (Kirk 2010) ^[10].

Tinning (2002) ^[27] agreed with the arguments of Siedentop (2002) ^[24] that the subject matter content knowledge of Physical Education and Sport needed to be both practical and theoretical. However, drawing on the work of Alexander (1987) ^[1], Tinning (2002) ^[27] argued “pedagogical content knowledge for theoretical subject matter is only covered indirectly in the process of teaching other courses”. In other words, while Physical Education Sport students may know more about the theories of kinesiology when they came to teach them in schools, they may not have had the pedagogical know how to be successful. Thus, although MacPhail (2007) ^[13] held that teachers perceived they had sufficient expertise to teach examination physical education, and Siedentop (2002) ^[24] and Kirk (2010) ^[10] have both argued that physical education theory has been privileged over practice, and hoped there was no gap in teachers’ pedagogical ability to teach examination Physical Education and Sport.

A wide range change of modern education implies that any

measure to reduce the challenges of implementing Examination Physical Education and Sport would demand huge budgetary support which is usually beyond the reach of many developed countries. Commenting on the quality of current provision of education in Zambia, the education policy document ‘Educating Our Future’ reports that, a decline in real funding for the Education sector is an indication of low education in schools (Ministry of Education, 1996). ^[15]

Winnick (2005) ^[28] notes that the lack of qualified Physical Education and Sport teachers in most developing countries to provide a quality comprehensive school program in Physical Education Sport (PES) contributed to the negative implementation Physical Education and Sport in secondary schools. The study therefore recommended for schools to employ qualified teachers of physical education to provide direct teaching responsibilities and program coordination. The study noted that problems came in usually if the teachers not trained in Physical education were assigned to teach Physical Education classes, but if head teachers allocated teachers trained in physical education and were able to demonstrate genuine interest in the field that proved to be helpful. Winnick (2005) ^[28] shows that teachers’ combination of approaches and methods to meet the unique needs of physical education learners is challenging. The study reviewed that it is a requirement for teacher’s skills, interest and needs to achieve the indented goal.

Dunn and Fait (1989) ^[6] advance the issue of lack of interest and humor as indispensable qualities in any good teacher of Physical Education and Sport. They argued that Physical Education and Sport teachers need to be endowed with a generous portion of each of these special qualities, for progress often proceeds very slow when the results for long hours of work do manifest themselves, however, they are extremely rewarding to the learner and the teacher. Creativity and motivation were yet other desirable qualities in the teacher of PE and Sport. Creativity is necessary for the instructor to improve equipment for performing skills. The imaginative teacher adjusts and modifies the available facilities and equipment to fit the needs of the learners and the program (Ibid). ^[6]

The provision of national Examinations in Physical Education and Sport is a new concept in Zambia and is expected to boost the implementation of Physical Education Sport in Zambian secondary schools. A general understanding of this concept is that, examining Physical Education and Sport will raise the importance and status of the subject as most people think that passing an examination is more important than just participating in physical activities and sport for the sake of leisure and enjoyment.

In separate studies, conducted by Kakuwa (2004) ^[9] and Mufalali (1974) ^[16], it is regarded that Physical Education is actively enjoyed by children up to twenty-one although girls usually retired much earlier than eighteen years. This has attributed to the stereotyped attitudes by the Zambian society in general and teachers in particular about girls’ participation in physical activities. Traditionally Zambians thought that a girl’s free time was inclined in the kitchen. In order to effectively implement examination Physical Education and Sport, school administrators, teachers and other stakeholders must work together to support the subject in secondary

schools.

Like any other subjects in the school curriculum, all schools in Zambia are expected to offer Physical Education and Sport (Curriculum Developmental Centre, 2013) ^[14], The learners in secondary schools are entitled to twelve periods of Physical Education and Sport every week but most of the teachers use this time to teach and emphasize other subjects which they feel are most important to bring about immediate academic results.

Dunn and Fait (1987) ^[6] point out that Physical Education and Sport provides experiences that will enhance learners' levels of health and fitness. Teachers must therefore, be encouraged to teach learners concepts and motor skills inherent in a wide selection of physical activities. Ministry of Education (1996) ^[15] states that Zambia needs to improve education in the existing schools as almost all of the factors that determine school effectiveness are in need of special attention. This shows that support for improved equipment in Physical Education and Sport are needed in all schools if PE and Sport is to remain an enjoyable subject for all children in secondary schools.

Mwanakatwe (1965) ^[19] says Physical Education in Zambia was very common during traditional education and that it included practical training designed to provide good upbringing of the individual member of a given group to live a useful and happy life in society. The description of Physical Education by Mwanakatwe (1965) ^[19] emphasizes that it was aimed at the development of the physical, emotional, social and intellectual capabilities of citizens. PE and Sport recognizes the physical, mental, emotional, and social dimensions of human movement and emphasizes the contribution of physical activity to the promotion of individual and group wellbeing. It is stated that the ways in which people use this ability is related to other aspects of their functioning as whole persons. It is also well established that adequate physical activity conducted during PE and Sport lessons is not only essential for a child's health, but is also critical for the child's ability to learn (Mufalali, 1974) ^[16].

Physical Education has so long been perceived by many Zambians as restricted to leisure, and that its importance is to satisfy the play and recreational drives of man and it appears that the common attitude about Physical Education according to Kakuwa (2005) ^[10] advanced from this perspective and that is even why it is habitually referred to as "ifyakutoloka-toloka" in Bemba which means 'sports', and often reduced to 'votaba-tabata' in Nyanja meaning 'athletics.'

Mutiti (2011) ^[18] states that in many Zambian schools Physical Education and Sport class time is used as a time to take a break from serious class work. Therefore, teachers of Physical Education and Sport feel they have to continually provide justification for the existence of their subject and to plead for actual control of the time they are allocated to effectively teach the subject. Hence, the introduction of formal examinations in Physical Education and Sport is believed to have brought a solution to the long awaited recognition of the subject being academic.

Taylor (2005) ^[25] writing on Physical Education and the curriculum in Britain, pointed out that by law schools have to teach all the subjects of the national curriculum. The observation was made when the hours for physical education

were reduced in many British schools to compensate for the perceived academic subjects. This situation is similar to that experienced in the Zambia education system where members of the community, education administrators and teachers do not usually attach more importance to Physical Education. This attitude was developed simply because Physical Education remained a non-examination subject for so long and during that period teachers never seriously taught the subject and instead fused in other subjects in place of Physical Education and Sport.

Hardman (2008) ^[8] indicates that, Physical Education continues to be a marginalized subject in school curricula worldwide. In an international survey, which investigated other African nations he discovered that, the status of Physical Education Sport was low and the subject was in grave danger of being sidelined. This is because the perception of PES as a subject generally is said to be negative.

In Britain examination physical education started slowly and with time the numbers increased. Such was the proliferation of schools offering examination physical education that Reid (1996) ^[22] was prompted to suggest that examination teaching had become the 'new orthodoxy' of the subject. Thorburn (2007) ^[26] supported this claim, suggesting that examination teaching held a dominant place in both the national discourse and in the lives and careers of many teachers in the United Kingdom.

A similar discourse emerged at a state level in Australia. Tinning (2002) ^[27] argued that in the early to mid-1970s the idea of Physical Education as an examination subject in the final year of schooling would have been considered unreasonable. These authors argued that the original purpose of examinations was to screen students with respect to university entry, and in such a process there was no place for a practical subject focused on games and sport rather than academic pursuits.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study was designed in form of a case study. A case study was adopted because it allowed for the collection of data in a particular environment and gave a detailed description about a phenomenon. The study used both qualitative and quantitative techniques with the help of semi structured questionnaires for data collection. This approach helped to get many views from both written materials and those on the ground to enable the researcher come up with concrete conclusions and recommendations. Phenomenological approach was also used to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of individuals. This helped the researcher understand how participants experienced some phenomenon and how they described an extent of the situation since participants had lived the experience as opposed to third party experience.

2.2 Target population

The study targeted all schools in Chipata District, all educational administrators, all teachers of Physical Education and all pupils.

2.3 Sample size

The total sample size of this research was sixty (60) participants who comprised of three (3) Head teachers, three (3) Deputy Head teachers, three (3) Expressive Arts Heads of Departments, three (3) Guidance and Counselling teachers, eighteen (18) subject teachers with emphasis on teachers of Physical Education and Sport and thirty (30) pupils.

2.4 Sampling Procedure

The study used multistage sampling technique. The researcher used purposive sampling method to select Head teachers, Deputy Head teachers, Expressive Arts Heads of departments, Guidance and Counselling teachers, Teachers of Physical Education and Sport and the three (3) secondary schools offering sport. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the pupils from the 3 secondary schools that had participated in the research.

2.5 Instruments for Data Collection

The researcher carefully prepared two different types of semi-structured questionnaires for members of staff who included Head teachers, Deputy Head teachers, Heads of Expressive Arts Department, Guidance and Counseling teachers and Teachers of Physical Education and Sport. The other questionnaire was specifically prepared to gather data from the pupils. In addition to that, the researcher prepared an

observation schedule which he used for conducting observations in the secondary schools that took part in the research.

2.6 Data Analysis Techniques

Data collected was analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 software and used excel to generate figures and tables. Qualitative data was analyzed following emerging themes and sub themes.

3. Findings and Discussion

Figure 3.1 below indicates respondents' view on whether teachers' perception had a major role to play in the implementation of examinations in secondary school Physical education. The analysis indicate, thirty two giving a percentage of 53% of the respondents who strongly agreed while twenty four representing 40% agreed that teachers' perception played a major role in the implementation of examinations in secondary school physical education. On the other hand, four respondents representing 7% disagreed to the statement. The results meant that a majority 93% of the respondents supported the assertion that teachers' perception had a major role to play in the implementation of examinations in secondary school physical education and sport.

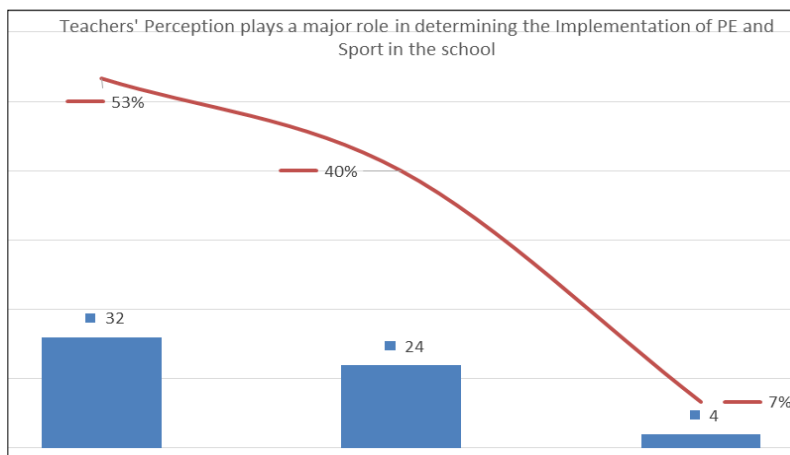


Fig 1: Teachers' Perception plays a major role in determining the Implementation of PE and Sport in the school

The study established that the current status of physical education in secondary schools is worrying. However, the analysis of the research results revealed that the introduction of examinations by the government through the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) in secondary school physical education was expected to result in changing the negative attitudes held by administrators, some of the Physical Education teachers, teachers of other subjects, pupils and parents towards Physical Education and Sport. Change of attitude by administrators was expected to result in more budgetary allocation to the physical education department. More budgetary allocation to the physical education department meant empowering the department with more finances which would enable the department to acquire enough sporting equipment, improving and developing of sports infrastructure in order to facilitate students learning. The findings of the current research were consistent with the

state of physical education in the United Kingdom (UK). Physical education in England is regarded as a valuable and a necessary subject respected and adequately budgeted for (Green, 2005).^[7] In this regard Green, (2005)^[7] found that teachers' perceptions had a great influence on the implementation of physical education in secondary schools. A positive perception and adequate support towards physical education and sport was also expected to reduce the gap that exists between teachers of physical education and those of other subjects since an improvement in the participation in physical activities by the learners would tremendously improve their performance in all the subjects, the situation which would be appreciated by all the stakeholders in the Ministry of General Education and parents.

The current study has established that the current status of physical education in secondary schools is such that there exists a gap between teachers of physical education and those

of other subjects who usually undermine the achievements of the subject and this situation limits the career growth of physical education teachers. The current study was however consistent with Hardman (2008) [8] who noted negative attitudes amongst teachers of other subjects and said physical education was regarded a lower status, peripheral subject, as non-constructive and vocationally non-productive, as non-academic, lacking in educational value and merely as a compensatory recreational activity. In this regard, the current study emphasized the importance of according Physical Education and Sport teachers a status comparable to that of teachers of other subjects, who are often seen as discharging an altogether commendable assignment. Such consideration is an important condition for the success of examinations introduced in secondary school physical education.

The study revealed that if administrators and teachers' perception could be changed toward Physical Education and Sport, in return the learners would be more excited and see Physical Education and Sport as an important subject altogether. The study also established that Physical Education teachers usually faced great difficulty in getting permission from parents to allow their children to take part in sporting activities especially those performed outside the school. The study revealed that at one of the secondary schools under study, a skilled and talented girl in netball, always hesitated to accompany the school team during any organized competition taking place outside the school because her parents could not easily allow her because they thought that the days the child would spend in camp out of school would make her lose focus on academic subjects and affect her performance in the perceived important academic subjects. This scenario indicates that parents currently hold negative perceptions towards physical education and sport.

In trying to establish the current status of physical education and sport, respondents were asked to comment whether they believed that most secondary schools in Chipata district had adopted other vocational pathways other than physical education and sport.

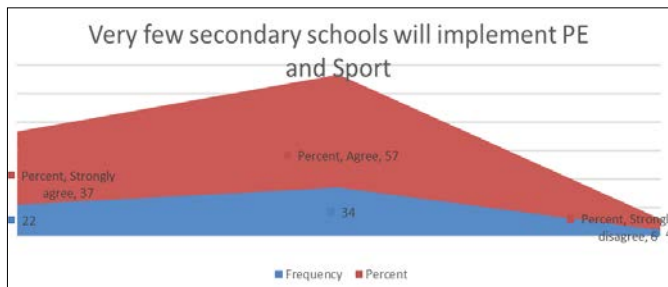


Fig 2: Very few secondary schools will implement PE and Sport

In response, as figure 2 above indicates, it was discovered that twenty two participants of sixty comprising of administrators and teachers and pupils representing 37% strongly agreed to the assertion that only a few secondary schools implemented Physical Education and Sport as their vocational pathway in Chipata district, thirty four representing 57% agreed and only four out of sixty representing 6% of the respondents strongly disagreed to the assertion. This meant that a majority 47 respondents out sixty culminating into 94% were in support of

the statement that most secondary schools adopted other vocational pathways other physical education and sort.

The current study realistically established that out of the three secondary schools that took part in the survey, only one school implemented physical education and sport vocational pathway at senior secondary school level. One secondary school had a mixed and confused pathway, the senior secondary pathway implemented at that school was Performing Arts. At junior secondary school level however, the school implemented physical education and sport in place of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) a compulsory subject on the premise that the school did not have computers to support the subject. Unfortunately, this arrangement was purely temporal and faced a lot of queries from District Education officials who wanted to know why the school had such a mix up of both academic and vocational pathway subjects in one class. During the period of this research the school had already purchased computers in readiness for the implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) the following academic year. What this arrangement meant was that, this was the end of the implementation of physical education and sport at that particular school. Therefore, the current study established that negative attitude towards physical education and sport mainly by the school administration and guidance teachers who are responsible for choosing the pathways to be implemented in schools, were the major cause of dropping physical education and sport from the subjects being implemented in secondary schools.

Respondents were again asked to state what they considered most for them to choose the vocational pathways implemented in their schools.

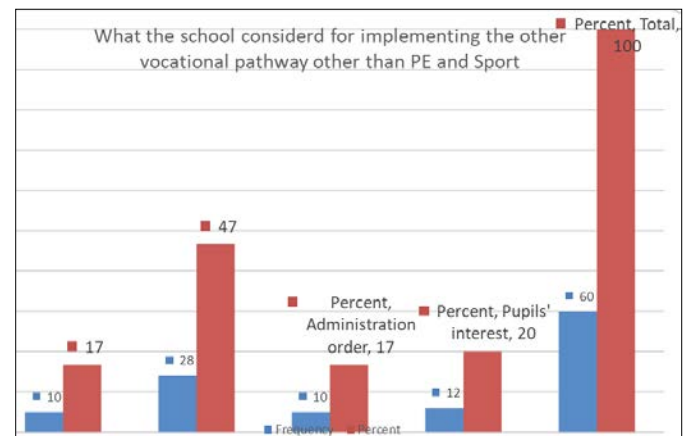


Fig 3: Reasons for implementing other vocational pathways

In response to this, ten of the sixty respondents culminating into 16% indicated that they considered teacher's interest in the subject for them to implement the vocational pathways in their schools, twenty eight out of sixty representing 46% of the respondents indicated that they considered the value of the subject under implementation, ten of the sixty respondents culminating into 17% indicated that it was an administrative order for them to implement a particular pathway while the remaining twelve giving a representation of 20% of the respondents responded that they followed pupils' interest. However, a majority of 46% of the respondents indicated that

they considered the value of the subject for them to implement a particular pathway. The fact that physical education was less implemented in secondary schools as compared to other subjects meant that administrators, teachers including pupils considered physical education and sport to be of less value than other subjects.

The current study advanced other reasons for only a few schools having implemented Physical Education and Sport. They included, the lack of adequate sports infrastructure and equipment in all the schools under study, inadequate trained teachers of Physical education and Sport and the negative perception by most teachers and administrators that it was expensive to implement Physical education and sport as compared to other subjects on the school curriculum. One of the schools felt that a hilly terrain at their schools would not support the implementation of physical education and sport and they automatically considered implementing other subjects in place of physical education and sport. It was however, surprising to note that some schools thought that physical education and sport was still unexaminable subject and indicated that the absence of examinations would make it difficult for most schools to implement Physical Education and Sport.

When asked to comment on whether the introduction of examinations in physical education and sport in secondary schools would raise the status of physical education, a

majority of respondents thought that the presence of national examinations in secondary school physical education and sport would boost the status and value of the subject. It was sad however, to note that though the respondents felt that examinations in physical education and sport would boost the status of the subject, only one school out of the three successfully implemented the subject.

The inferiority of physical education as an academic subject is worrying. The current study revealed that pupils, administrators and teachers who took part in the study considered physical education and sport as an inferior subject as compared to other vocational pathways. When asked to comment on the perception that learners who took physical education and sport as a subject were looked down upon by pupils taking other subjects, twelve out of the sixty respondents who took part in the study culminating into 20% strongly agreed that pupils who took physical education and sport as a subject were indeed looked down upon by fellow students who took other subjects, thirty two respondents representing 53% agreed, while sixteen respondents representing 27% of the total sixty respondents disagreed to the statement. From this analysis, the results indicate that a majority of 73% respondents supported the statement that pupils taking physical education and sport were looked down upon by pupils taking other subjects.

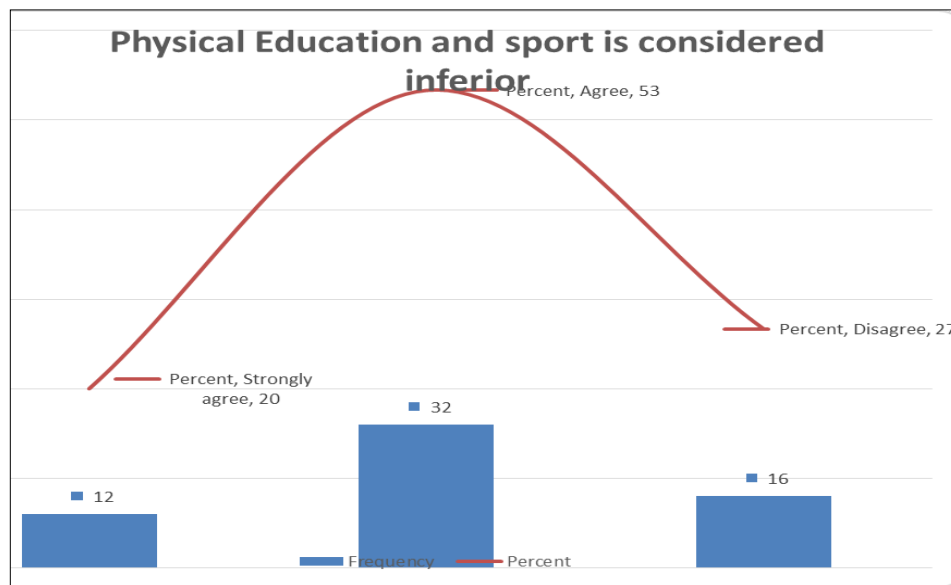


Fig 4: Physical Education and sport is considered inferior

One pupil was heard saying physical education was meant for the academically underperforming students to be kept in school. The perception that most pupils and people hold about physical education is that, it is not an intellectual subject hence, befitting those students with academic performance challenges. The study also established that parents and pupils had fears about pupils taking physical education and sport not easily accessing good jobs in future. This study established that people have a perception that, it would be very difficult for pupils taking physical education and sport to access good jobs after completing school. The current study was however

not consistent with the study conducted by Green (2005)^[7] in England which established that, pupils had a lot of employment opportunities in physical education presented to them in the post school environment. Therefore, physical education and sport in our context and that of England are not the same and this calls for the authority to use appropriate measures of contextualising the subject in order to address issues taking place in our context.

Negative perception towards physical education and sport by most administrators, subject teachers and pupils was one of the areas that hampered the successful implementation of

physical education and sport in most secondary schools.

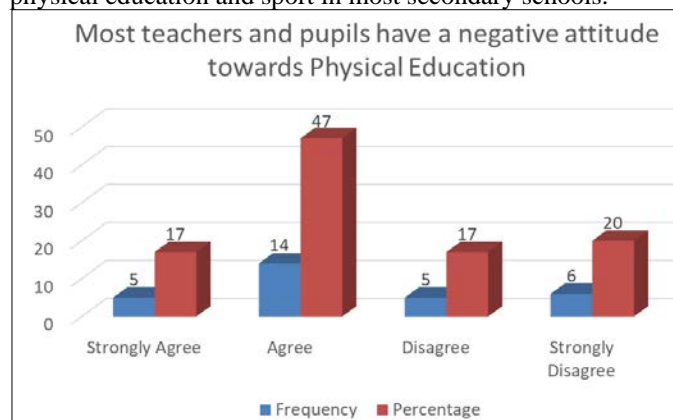


Fig 5: Most teachers and pupils have a negative attitude towards Physical Education

After conducting an analysis, out of the sixty respondents ten representing 17% strongly agreed, that most teachers and pupils had a negative attitude towards physical education and sport while thirty culminating into 47% agreed to the assertion. However, twelve representing 20% of the respondents disagreed and another ten representing 17% of the sixty respondents strongly disagreed to the assertion that most teachers and pupils had a negative attitude towards physical education and sport. The study however, established that a majority of forty respondents culminating into 64% of the respondents perceived that most teachers and pupils had a negative attitude towards physical education and sport. The study revealed negative perceptions of most pupils and teachers towards examinations in secondary school physical education and sport possibly due to the low status of physical education in most secondary schools and the perceived lack of employment opportunities for physical education students after completing school. Most pupil respondents who indicated positive attitudes towards examinations in secondary school physical education seemed to be good at sport and thought this would be a way of continuing their education and getting qualified in something they deem to be their strengths. However, pupil respondents who showed negative perceptions towards examinations in secondary school physical education tend to be the children that are highly academic and as a result tend to pursue more of a scientific area and those students who were not very good at physical education in the first place. Students' participation in physical education and sport has a lot of benefits, for instance; athletes enjoy the increase in physical fitness, introduction to a healthy lifestyle and also to a life-long sport or a career in sport. Despite the advantages outlined, respondents' reported low levels of interest to participate in physical education and sport lessons as they thought the subject was not important in their lives. The current study has further revealed that, teachers trained in physical education did not actually teach the subject in their schools but taught other subjects instead. The reasons advanced for this situation were that administrators and physical education teachers had a negative perception towards physical education and that such schools never implemented physical education pathways hence teachers taught other subjects.

This attitude, resulted in pupils concentrating more on other school subjects which they perceived would contribute to their overall mark in the academic subjects. The situation suggests that examinations in secondary school physical education were very important in contributing to the overall raise of the status of physical education and sport in secondary schools which would in turn influence a greater level of participation in both physical education and extra curricula activities by both teachers and pupils.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

In the light of the analysis and discussion of the teachers' perception towards examinations in secondary school physical education and sport, this research report has established that most teachers of physical education and sport emphasized the need for examinations in the subject which are expected to produce a positive change of attitude towards physical education and sport especially on teachers of other subjects, administrators especially those specialized in other subjects other than physical education and sport and parents as well as the society at large.

Teachers of physical education and sport felt that the introduction of examinations in secondary school physical education and sport would highly motivate students to participate in both physical education and sport as a subject and as sporting activities in secondary schools. The current study established that it is the perception held by administrators and teachers that affected the decision to either implement physical education and sport or implement other vocational pathways in their institutions. The study concluded that teachers' perception played a major role in determining the implementation of physical education and sport in secondary schools. The study established that only one secondary school out of the three secondary schools implemented physical education and sport as their vocational pathway subject while the rest decided to implement other subjects. The study has also revealed that administrators, teachers and pupils reported that learners who took physical education and sport in their classes were looked down upon by learners taking other subjects. Reasons given for such a perception were that, it was difficult for pupils taking physical education to find good jobs after finishing school and that the subject was considered an extracurricular activity and not an academic subject. To add on, this research has established that most physical education and sport trained teachers taught other subjects other than physical education and Sport in their schools. This scenario indicates that physical education and sport was less implemented in most secondary schools.

The study has however made the following recommendations:

1. The Ministry of General Education for instance, Senior Education Standards Officers Expressive Arts (SESO) should review and audit school facilities to ensure students have access to the necessary equipment to meet the requirements of examinations in secondary physical education.
2. The Ministry of General Education and teachers should conduct sensitization campaigns to help correct the perception that physical education and sport is a co-curricular and non-essential subject.
3. School administrations should fully support the Expressive Arts Departments by increasing funding to enable them buy and improve physical education

and sport equipment and infrastructure to effectively implement examinations in physical education and sport in secondary schools. 4. The government should deploy more teachers of physical education and sport to secondary schools. 5. Physical education teachers should be appraised and supervised by qualified physical education personnel since working under a Head of Department (HOD) specialized in other subjects other than physical education impacts negatively on prestige and professional development.

5. References

1. Alexander K. What your method lecturer should have told you. *ACHPER National Journal*. 1987; 117:23-26.
2. Brown T, Penney D. Learning 'in', 'through' and 'about' movement in senior physical education? The new Victorian Certificate of Education Physical Education. *European Physical Education Review*. 2013; 19(1):39-61.
3. Casey A, O'Donovan T. Examination physical education: adhering to pedagogies of the classroom when coming in from the cold. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*. 2015; 20(4):347-365.
4. Chan KL. *Sports and Children*. Windsor: Human kinetics.
5. Department for Education. *Physical Education in the National Curriculum*. London: HMSO, 1995-1998.
6. Dunn JM, Fait HF. *Special Physical Education*. New York: WM C. Brown Publishers, 1989.
7. Green K. Examinations: a 'new orthodoxy' in physical education. In *Physical education: essential issues*, ed. K. Green and K. Hardman, London, Sage, 2005, 143-160.
8. Hardman K. Physical education in schools: A global perspective. *Kinesiology*. 2008; 40(1):5-28.
9. Kakuwa M. *Zambia Traditional Games and Activities*. Lusaka: Kopinor, 2004.
10. Kakuwa M. *Zambian Traditional Games and Activities*, Oslo: Norway, 2005.
11. Kilimbi R. *The place of physical education*. Dar-es-Salaam. University of Dar-es-Salaam, 1991.
12. Kirk D. *Physical education futures*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2010.
13. MacPhail A. Teachers' views on the construction, management and delivery of an externally prescribed physical education curriculum: Higher Grade Physical Education. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 2007; 12(1): 43-60.
14. Curriculum Development Centre, Zambia Education Curriculum Framework. Lusaka: CDC, 2013.
15. Ministry of Education. *Educating our Future*. National policy on Education. Lusaka: Zambia Educational Publishing House, 1996.
16. Mufalali M. *Physical Education for Primary Schools*. Lusaka: Government Printers, 1974.
17. Musangeya E, Kuparara CT, Tanyongana C, Mumvuri DE. *Foundations of Physical Education and Sports*. Harare: Zimbabwe Open University, 2000.
18. Mutiti M. *Factors contributing to the Poor Status of Physical Education in selected Schools of Chongwe District*, Unpublished Thesis, 2011.
19. Mwanakatwe J. *The Growth of Education in Zambia since Independence*. Lusaka: Oxford University Press, 1965.
20. Pangrazi R. *Dynamic Physical Education for Elementary School Children* 15th Ed, 2007.
21. Price RJ. *Physical Education and Physical Handicapped Child*. New York: Lepus Books, 1980.
22. Reid A. The concept of physical education in current curriculum and assessment policy in Scotland. *European Physical Education Review*. 1996; 2:7-18.
23. Shehu J. Indigenous Games as Counterparts to Modern Sports'. *Papers in Education and Development*, Vol. 22. Dar-es-Salaam. DUP (1996) Ltd, 2001.
24. Siedentop D. Content knowledge for physical education. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*. 2002; 21(4):368-377.
25. Taylor J. *The World Sport Examined*. Sydney: MacMillan publishers, 2005.
26. Thorburn M. Achieving conceptual and curriculum coherence in high-stakes school examinations in Physical Education. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*. 2007; 12(2):163-184.
27. Tinning R. Engaging Siedentopian Perspectives on Content Knowledge for Physical Education. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*. 2002; 21:378-391.
28. Winnick JP. *Adapted Physical Education and Sports*. 4thed. Leeds: Human Kinetic, 2005.