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## **A Comparative Study of Status of Teachers in Selected Urban and Rural Secondary Schools in Southern Province, Zambia**

**Georgina Hamaimbo, OC Chakulimba, Sophie Kasonde Ng'andu**

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to compare the status of teachers in selected urban and rural secondary schools in Southern Province of Zambia and to establish factors that affected their status. The study covered eight secondary schools, four in urban and the other in rural setting. The study revealed that the difference in the status of teachers in the selected urban and rural secondary schools was minimal. This was because the role of teachers in society was the same regardless of the location of the school and factors considered by the public to accord status to teachers were similar. Poor conditions of service such as lack or inadequate housing affected the status of teachers. The study therefore, recommends that; teachers should be accorded opportunities for Continuous Professional Development to act as an incentive and their housing allowance should be comparable to economic rate of house rentals.

**Keywords:** Status, Factors, Teaching profession, Teachers, Urban and Rural Secondary Schools,

### **1. Introduction**

Khurshid, Nazi and Asharaf (2012) <sup>[1]</sup> observed that teaching was one of the most significant professions of the world and that all professions in the society had its base in this noble profession. They further noted that teaching could be described as a platform where significant socializing of the students took place and that schools were important institutions where children followed careers and gave meaning to their lives. They also noted that as teachers play a special role in setting the standards and creating the conditions for children's school attainment, they were considered a key element towards student academic success.

Sidhu (2005:126) <sup>[2]</sup> described a teacher as "A pivot of the system of education, a builder of the nation and that a teacher has not been respected but worshiped and was much more than good curricula and expensive equipment. He further stated that a teacher had a great role to play in education, social and political reconstruction of a country. He noted that it was a teacher who directed and implemented the whole programme of education which in turn affected immensely all-round progress of the nation, stating that" A teacher was a torch-bearer of the human race on him depended the future of the school, village / community, country and mankind. He also observed that the reputation of the school and its influence on the life of the community invariably depended on the kind of teachers working in it.

The concern therefore, about the status of teachers and the teaching profession is not new and cannot be confined to any country, whether developed or developing. This problem has been historical and the present concern about teacher status has been linked to motivation, recruitment and retention of teachers among others (Hargreaves, 2006) <sup>[3]</sup>.

Robb (2002) <sup>[4]</sup>, however, noted that teaching has an ambiguous status as a profession as it was lagging behind other professions such as law and medicine in four significant areas: having a defined body of knowledge and skills, control over licensing standards or entry requirements, autonomy in making decisions about selected spheres of work and high prestige and economic standing.

Though there has been a lot of debate as to whether teaching was a profession, semi-profession or not, Stub (1975:303) <sup>[5]</sup> stated that: "Teaching was generally defined as a profession but full recognition of a profession was frequently denied to the individual teacher". He further stated that many elements contributed to lack of clarity in the status of teachers as well as education in modern society. Some of the ambiguity in the occupational status of teachers termed from the size and heterogeneity of the occupation. He further observed that, professional status usually not only included reasonable security of tenure, but also ensured substantial individual autonomy, commitment and provided substantial social prestige".

According to Stub (1975)<sup>[5]</sup>, personal autonomy was another element of professionalism that had a history in the teaching profession. However, although a considerable degree of autonomy was possible within the confines of the classroom, many areas of decision making relative to teaching were frequently challenged or usurped by administrators, school board members, parents or community leaders. He noted that the large number of persons who leave teaching after a short stay, the lower academic abilities of many who become teachers and inconsistencies in the public attitude towards teaching as an occupational choice were illustrative of the problems involving the teacher's status.

Teachers were entrusted with the task of ensuring children's intellectual growth and preparing new generation to meet the challenges of the future. One might expect that such important work would enjoy high status and considerable respect and reward in society, but this was not always the case.

While teachers in some countries enjoyed high salaries and attractive working conditions, in others, especially in developing countries, they may have had to engage in some form of business to supplement their income.

Since independence in 1964, Zambian teachers had been faced with a problem of declining status (Mwanakatwe, 2013)<sup>[6]</sup>, Tiberondwa, 1975 and Chakulimba, 1986)<sup>[7, 8]</sup>. Teachers were no longer held in high esteem.

According to Tiberondwa (1975)<sup>[7]</sup>, before independence the teaching profession was one of the highly respected and envied profession among the Africans in most African countries. Unfortunately this was no longer the case. Instead, teachers, regardless of the level at which they were teaching, were looked down upon and perceived as poor, lowly paid and generally working under poor conditions of service.

Chavalier (2012)<sup>[9]</sup> observed that the status of teachers in France had severely eroded over the last ten (10) years, working conditions had deteriorated badly and there was an absence of respect and consideration for teachers. He further revealed that teachers were not viewed as education specialists but merely as implementers of an education policy. Similarly, Osunde and Omoruyi (2005)<sup>[10]</sup> revealed that the traditional respect and prestige enjoyed by teachers in the society in Nigeria had been eroded considerably. This scenario indicates that in the past, teachers were highly respected. This was because the teaching profession was among the few available professions at the time. Currently, there are many occupations such as engineering, law, medicine, accountancy, politics that are highly regarded than teaching. They further observed that teachers' salary had always been low compared to that of other professions and that currently teachers had continued to suffer low status in society due to low salary they received. The teaching profession was also perceived as a career that was taken as a last resort because one was not able to enter a career that was more attractive. They also observed that the status of teachers had declined to a point where teachers felt humiliated and devalued as professionals.

VSO (2002)<sup>[11]</sup> in Kayuni and Tambulasi (2007) also revealed that from 1940s to 1970s, teachers were seen as bringers of progress, modernity and development and were respected accordingly, but this was no longer the case. Similarly, Adelabu (2005)<sup>[12]</sup> revealed that prior to independence in Nigeria, teaching was considered by almost all sections of society as a highly respected profession. Teachers played key leadership roles in local communities and acted as role models, but after independence many teachers left the profession to take up other jobs elsewhere in the public and

private sector. Those who remained began to be looked down upon by the public. The growing tendency for school leavers to opt for teaching only if they were unable to find other lucrative public or private employment further compounded the problem of lowered professional status Lawal (2000) in Adelabu (2005)<sup>[12]</sup>.

While a teacher has generally been looked down upon by the public, Sidhu (2005:126) observed that: "The perception of the teacher by the public was relative because teachers were held in very high esteem in some areas and not in others. For example, in rural areas, because of the fewer professions, teachers were held in high esteem, while in urban areas where there were many professions they received less recognition and respect.

This view was similar to that of Ezewu (1975:132) who also noted that: "The perception of the teacher by the public was relative, in the sense that teachers were held in very high esteem in some areas and not in others. He observed that in rural areas, where most professions were absent, the teacher was held in very high esteem and in urban centres, however, where there were other professional people, the teacher's status was not very high.

This observation therefore, meant that in the past teachers in rural areas were more highly regarded than those that were teaching in urban areas where other professions obscured the teachers. Chakulimba (1996) also revealed that teachers did not enjoy the same status in different geographical areas.

Ezewu (1975:132) further revealed that: "Primary school pupils in a rural school had ambitions to be teachers, while primary school pupils from an urban centre wanted to become doctors, engineers, nurses and only a few of them opted for teaching as a career". This was because pupils in urban areas were more exposed to other professions unlike those in rural areas that were confined to very few professions such as teaching and perhaps nursing.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Occupational status depends on the 'public valuing' of the role and contribution of a particular occupation to society. Despite the challenges that the teaching profession faces with regard to its low social status in society especially when compared to other professions such as engineering, it was historically one of the valued professions by the public due to its contribution to society.

Though teachers in the past commanded respect in society, they are no longer respected by the public. Given the important role teachers play in society, one would expect that teaching would be highly regarded profession by the public.

While studies have been conducted on the status of teachers during the colonial and the post-independence periods, not much research has been done in Zambia to compare the status of teachers in urban and rural secondary schools and the factors that affect the status of teachers teaching in urban and rural secondary schools. This study therefore, compared the status of teachers in selected urban and rural secondary schools in Southern Province of Zambia and attempted to determine the factors that affect their status.

### 1.2 Purpose of study

The purpose of the study was to compare the status of teachers in selected urban and rural secondary schools in Southern Province of Zambia and to establish the factors that affect their status.

### 1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Compare the status of teachers in selected urban and rural secondary schools in Southern Province of Zambia.
2. Determine factors that affect teachers' status in selected urban and rural secondary schools in Southern Province of Zambia.

### 1.4 Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study, the research questions for the study were:

1. Are there similarities or differences in the status of teachers in selected urban and rural secondary schools in Southern Province of Zambia?
2. What are the factors that affect the status of teachers in selected urban and rural secondary schools in Southern Province of Zambia?

### 1.5 Significance of the Study

Education is generally viewed to be a critical factor for rapid economic growth, and essential if any country wishes to increase its productivity by providing people with necessary knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed to effectively participate in national economy (Fargierhid and Saha (1989). It should be noted that in the past, a teacher was a critical factor in the teaching and learning process, and the social standing of a teacher in society has a bearing on the delivery of education to the young, who later in adulthood become contributors to the economy of the country.

Zambia like any other developing country needs well skilled human capital in order to achieve the vision 2030 in which Zambia will be a middle income country as well as achieving the Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs) and the Sixth National Development Plan (SNDP). Being a signatory to a number of conventions, she needs skilled human resource to be able to domesticate and operationalize the conventions to benefit the citizens.

At a time when Zambia was implementing a number of interventions to ensure provision of quality education to learners at all levels of the education system as they were the tools to the attainment of vision 2030, a study aiming at comparing the status of teachers in urban and rural selected secondary schools, who are the key factor in the teaching and learning process, is very important to policy makers, teachers and learners.

Zambia has suffered a brain drain in many professions including teaching to the neighbouring countries citing low salaries and poor housing among others, being the push factors. Chakulimba (1986) <sup>[8]</sup> revealed that status was one of the social phenomena which teachers desired to have but which currently had been eroded, a scenario which, if not checked, could affect the quality of education being provided in schools. He further observed that when respect or prestige was not forth coming or when status were threatened, dissatisfaction, frustration and low morale were likely to result.

A study of this nature therefore, is very important and timely because status may affect the morale of teachers and may also discourage potential teachers from joining the profession and determine the retention of those already in the system. The government of Zambia through the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education is currently developing policies and strategies to improve the delivery of quality education in schools. It therefore becomes critical to

consider the value of teachers in society as it is a teacher that is at the centre of the teaching and learning process.

Due to the significant role teachers play in economic development of the nation by educating the young who later become productive citizens, they should be accorded the respect they deserve in society. The findings of the study therefore, may be useful to policy makers in formulating policies pertaining to the teaching profession in general and teachers in particular. These would include policies on teacher training, professional development, teacher qualifications and conditions of service for teachers, for example, housing, salaries and financing of education.

The findings may also be useful to the Teachers' Unions in their endeavor for improved conditions of service which may result into increased motivation, commitment and dedication to duty and consequently improved delivery of lessons, teacher and learner performance. The findings may also add to the existing body of knowledge on the status of teachers in society.

### 1.6 Limitations of the study

The concept of limitations means influences, shortcomings or conditions that cannot be controlled by the researcher that place restrictions on methodology and conclusions. Macmillan Study Dictionary (2009:431) defines limitation as: "Weak points that make someone or something less effective". This study therefore, was limited in its findings in that; there are more than 20 secondary schools in Southern province and in this study only eight schools; four from urban and four from rural setting constituted the sample.

Additionally, the small selected sample of teachers and pupils was also a limitation of the study. Considering that the sample of secondary schools was small, the findings of the study may not be generalized to all secondary schools in the province, let alone, to secondary schools in the entire country but only to the sampled secondary schools.

While the intention of the researcher was to have samples in equal representation of both gender, the samples had more male gender and this may have influenced the results of the study. Sampling methods used in the study may have had also an influence on the respondents since the study employed purposive sampling to sample the secondary schools and respondents. Limited current literature on the status of teachers resulted in the researcher reviewing old data on the subject.

During Focus Group Discussions with parents, there were more men in attendance and generally there was low level of participation by women. Perhaps this may have influenced the findings of the study.

### 1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The study was conducted in seven (7) Districts of Southern Province of Zambia, namely: Chikankata, Kalomo, L/Stone, Monze, Namwala, Pemba and Zimba. The study covered eight selected secondary schools in Southern province of Zambia. Of the eight schools, four (Kalomo, Linda, Monze and Zimba) were located in urban area while the other four (Chikankata, Macha girls, Namwala and Pemba) were in rural setting.

The study also covered communities around the sampled secondary schools from which 10 members from each community, 100 pupils and 40 teachers from each secondary school constituted the sample respectively.

**2. Materials and methods**

**2.1 Methodology**

**2.2 Research design**

The plan for this study was based on the survey method to compare the status of teachers in selected urban and rural secondary schools in Southern Province of Zambia and determine factors that affect their status. The research design for this study was a survey involving descriptions and explanations of status of teachers in selected urban and rural secondary schools in Southern Province of Zambia. The design was found to be the most suitable to ascertain views, attitudes, values and opinions on the status of teachers. Qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were employed in the study.

**2.3 Study Population**

Sidhu (2005:253) defines population as: “The aggregate or totality of objects or individuals regarding which inferences are to be made in a sampling study”. It means all those people or documents who are proposed to be covered under the scheme of study. The study population consisted of all head teachers, class teachers, parents and guardians and pupils in grades 10 to 12 in secondary schools in both urban and rural areas of Southern Province of Zambia.

**2.3 Sample Size**

Sidhu (2005) observed that for studying any problem, it is difficult to study the whole population or universe. It was therefore, convenient to pick up a sample out of the universe proposed to be covered by the study. According to Sidhu (2005:253), a sample is: “A small proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis. It is a collection consisting of a part or subset of the objects or individuals of population which is selected for the express purpose of representing the population. He noted that by observing the characteristics of the sample, one can make certain inferences about the characteristics of the population from which it is drawn. In this study, eight (8) head teachers, 40 class teachers, 800 pupils and 40 parents located around the sampled secondary schools comprised the sample of participants.

**2.4 Sample of Secondary Schools**

The sample at school level consisted of eight (8) secondary schools, four from urban and four from rural areas of the

Southern Province. Since the study was comparative, the inclusions of schools in urban and rural parts of the southern province was done in order to establish whether there were any variations in social status between teachers teaching in secondary schools located in urban and those in secondary schools located in rural setting.

**2.5 Sampling Procedures**

There are various sampling designs that a researcher can use to select the cases for the study. Brayman (2008:168) defines sampling design as: “The part of the research plan that indicates how cases are to be selected for observation”. Sampling designs are generally divided into two broad classes: probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is scientifically more acceptable, although it is not always feasible or economical. Its essential characteristics are that all cases in the population are randomly selected and have a known probability of being included in the sample. On the other hand, in non-probability sampling, the chances of selecting any case are not known because cases are non-randomly selected.

In this study probability sampling design was employed. Purposive sampling, which is considered to be a form of stratified sampling in that the selection of the cases is governed by some criterion acting as a secondary control was employed to select the sample.

Therefore, purposive sampling was used to select the province, 4 urban and 4 rural districts, 4 urban and 4 rural secondary schools and 8 communities from which the 123 parents were drawn to constitute the sample. Purposive sampling was also used to select at school level, one hundred (100) pupils (girls and boys) and 40 teachers from each secondary school and 8 head teachers of the sampled secondary schools.

In schools where the number of pupils present at the time of data collection was 100 or less than 100 all the pupils present constituted the sample.

**2.6 Sample of pupils**

A sample of 800 pupils was drawn from eight selected urban and rural secondary schools in the study sites. Table 1 gives the distribution of the sampled pupils for the study.

**Table 1:** Distribution of pupils by Location and Gender (n=800)

Location of School	Name of Secondary School	Gender of pupils		Total
		Girls	Boys	
Rural	Chikankanta	44 (44.0%)	56 (56.0%)	100 (100%)
	Macha Girls	100 (100%)	-	100 (100%)
	Namwala	40 (40.0%)	60 (60.0%)	100 (100%)
	Pemba	30 (27.0%)	81 (73.0%)	111 (100%)
Total		214 (52.0%)	197 (48.0%)	411 (100)
Urban	Kalomo	45 (45.0%)	55 (55.0%)	100 (100%)
	Linda	41 (41.0%)	59 (59.0%)	100 (100%)
	Monze	24 (27.0%)	65 (73.0%)	89 (100%)
	Zimba	49 (49.0%)	51 (51.0%)	100 (100%)
Total 4		159 (40.9%)	230 (59.1%)	389 (100%)
Grand Total 8		373 (46.6%)	427 (53.4%)	800 (100%)

The number of pupils from rural secondary schools was 411, 214 (52.0%) girls and 197 (48.0%) boys while those from urban secondary schools were 389. Of this number, 159 (40.9%) were girls and 230 (59.1%) were boys.

**2.7 Distribution of Teachers and Head Teachers**

Forty (40) teachers from each of the eight selected secondary schools constituted the sample for the study. However, due to other commitments teachers were engaged in at the time of data collection, it was not possible to find forty (40) teachers in each of the sampled secondary schools as was the design.

To that effect, the sample distribution of teachers was 204. 20 (25.6%) females and 58 (74.4%) males were from rural secondary schools and 46 (36.5%) females and 80 (63.5%) males were from urban secondary schools. Of the eight secondary school head teachers that responded to the questionnaire, 7 were males and 1 female.

A total of 123 parents, (17 (25.0%) females and 51 (75.0%) males) were from rural secondary schools, and (19 (34.5%) females and 36 (65.5%) males) were from urban secondary schools.

**2.8 Research Instruments**

The main data collection instruments that were used to collect data from respondents were structured questionnaires and Focus Group Discussions using guiding questions. Questionnaires were found to be more suitable because participants were literate and therefore able to fill them without difficulty.

Another data collection instrument employed in this study was the Focus Group Discussions guide. The instrument was used to collect qualitative data on status of teachers and factors that affect the status of teachers from parents. The tool was found to be appropriate because it allowed participants to engage and interact with the researcher. It was also found to be the most appropriate to collect qualitative data from respondents because some parents and guardians were not able to read and write.

**2.9 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The process of data analysis, interpretation and generalization involved a number of steps. The huge amount of data collected through the use of different instruments was first organized, edited, classified and tabulated. Quantitative data from pupils; teachers and head teachers through a questionnaire were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). SPSS was employed to generate frequencies and percentages which were used in describing distribution of the single and summated variables. Frequencies cross tabulations and percentages were used in presenting relationships between variables. Categorization, conceptualization and narrations were also used to analyze qualitative data into emerging themes.

**3. Results & Discussion**

Following the objectives of the study, the following questions were asked. Are there differences in the status of teachers in selected urban and rural secondary schools in Southern Province of Zambia? What are the factors that affect the status of teachers in the selected urban and rural secondary schools in Southern Province of Zambia?

**3.1 Teacher’s Status**

The first objective of the study was to compare the status of teachers in selected urban and rural secondary schools in Southern Province of Zambia. The issue of teacher’s status is a concern in many countries, particularly third world countries to which Zambia belongs. Literature has shown that though teachers were accorded high status in the past, their status has been declining and that they were demoralized and fractured (VSO 2002) [11]. Literature further revealed that teachers and the teaching profession was not one of the occupations that enjoyed high status in society due to various reasons among them poor working conditions and that it was a job of last resort, and those that joined the profession were from poor background.

Similarly, available data on the status of teachers in Zambia has revealed that the teaching occupation was not a high status profession. A study conducted in Zambia by (VSO 2002) [11], revealed that teachers were perceived as people of low status by the employer and that while they probably enjoyed high status in the past the situation was now different and that they were not held in high esteem like their colleagues in other professions that had similar academic qualifications.

Though (VSO 2002) [11], has revealed that currently teachers were not respected by the public and that teaching was considered a profession of low status, in society particularly when compared with other professions that were held in high esteem.

While literature has shown that teachers’ status had declined and that they were no longer held in high esteem, this study has revealed that a teacher was well respected in society as shown in table 2.

**Table 2:** Whether a teacher was well respected in society or not by location

Location of School	Name of Secondary School	Frequency /Percent				Total/%
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Rural	Chikankata	27 (27.0%)	42 (42.0%)	22 (22.0%)	9 (9.0%)	100
	Macha Girls	26 (26.0%)	51 (51.0%)	18 (18.0%)	5 (5.0%)	100
	Namwala	33 (33.0%)	58 (58.0%)	7 (7.0%)	2 (2.0%)	100
	Pemba	36 (36.0%)	49 (49.0%)	15 (15.0%)	11 (11.0%)	100
<b>Total</b>		<b>122 (29.6%)</b>	<b>200 (48.7%)</b>	<b>62 (15.1%)</b>	<b>27 (6.6%)</b>	<b>411 (100%)</b>
Urban	Kalomo	34 (34.0%)	50 (50.0%)	12 (12.0%)	4 (4.0%)	100
	Linda	32 (32.0%)	49 (49.0%)	14 (14.0%)	5 (5.0%)	100
	Monze	21 (21.0%)	40 (40.0%)	24 (24.0%)	4 (4.0%)	100
	Zimba	36 (36.0%)	43 (43.0%)	14 (14.0%)	7 (7.0%)	100
<b>Total</b>		<b>123 (31.6%)</b>	<b>182 (46.7%)</b>	<b>64 (16.5%)</b>	<b>20 (5.2%)</b>	<b>389 (100%)</b>

The study has shown that the teaching profession was held in high esteem because of the role it plays in the national economy that of educating the young who later become productive human resource that is needed to develop the nation. The study further revealed that teachers 18 (23.1%) and 36 (46.2%) from rural secondary schools strongly and agreed that a teacher was well respected in society and 22 (17.5%) and 54 (42.9%) teachers from urban secondary schools strongly and agreed that a teacher was well respected

in society. 50.0% of head teachers from rural and urban secondary schools respectively also felt that a teacher was well respected in society.

This view by pupils, teachers and head teachers that a teacher was well respected in society was shared by parents from both rural and urban settings who were also of the opinion that a teacher was respected and appreciated in society. Parents intimated that without a teacher, there would be no other professions and that the role of teachers in society was

considered very important. A teacher was perceived as a source of knowledge and a resource person in a community because he / she was consulted on many issues particularly those pertaining to education of children. Parents felt that teachers were role models for both school going pupils and the out of school as well as to the larger community.

While literature showed that teaching was a job of a last resort, the study revealed that 61 (78.2%) and 96 (76.2%) teachers from rural and urban secondary schools were happy to have joined the teaching profession because it was a respected occupation, they contributed to national development and earned a living.

The study therefore showed that teachers were highly regarded in society despite their poor conditions of service which, according to the reviewed literature did contribute to their low status in society particularly when compared to other professionals such as medical doctors, engineers, lawyers, politicians and others that society perceived to be of high standing.

Though the study showed that 54 (69.2%) teachers from rural schools were of the opinion that teachers in rural setting enjoyed slightly higher status than those in urban setting, the difference is very minimal. The minimal difference in respect between teachers in rural and urban secondary schools could be attributed to the fact that their role in society was similar, that of imparting knowledge, skills, attitudes, competences and values in the young people that would make them responsible citizens in their adult hood. Teachers in secondary schools worked under similar conditions of service and with similar academic and professional qualifications. Their work was also seen in terms of the value or contribution to society. Therefore, teachers whether serving in rural or urban setting contributed to national development and as such society accorded them respect based on their work.

Generally the study has shown that a teacher was well respected in society regardless of whether she / he was teaching in rural or urban secondary school. Since the difference with regard to respect between teachers in rural and urban secondary schools was minimal, it can be said that teachers in the selected rural and urban secondary in Southern Province of Zambia were highly regarded in society.

### **3.2 Teachers most respected in school**

With regard to teachers that were most respected in school, while the study has revealed that participants from rural and urban schools were of the view that generally all teachers were accorded respect by pupils and the community at large, there was some difference in the status accorded to teachers when it came to the gender of the teacher, subject taught, the grade level and how the subject was perceived by pupils.

The study showed that 314 (78.3%) pupils from rural and 285 (74.8%) from urban secondary schools were of the view that male teachers enjoyed higher status in school than females. Similarly, majority of the teachers 109 (53.4%) were also of the opinion that male teachers were accorded higher status by pupils in the selected schools than females. The study showed that the respect accorded to male teachers was not confined to the location of a secondary school but it would appear that regardless of the location, perceptions of pupils, teachers, head teachers and parents regarding according of status to teachers in school were similar. This means gender was a factor that pupils considered when according respect to teachers.

The findings of the study therefore showed that male teachers in the selected rural and urban secondary schools in Southern

Province of Zambia were accorded higher status by pupils in schools than female teachers.

However, it is important to note that though there were differences in according of status to teachers by pupils based on one's gender; the services they rendered to society were not valued based on the gender of a teacher but on the profession. One would have thought that both female and male teachers would have been accorded similar respect by pupils and the public regardless of the differences in their gender. Perhaps this perception could be attributed to the social orientation and socialization in society which makes people not appreciate the role women play in society. Women's work was usually associated with household or family thereby perceiving a female teacher as a women or mother and not as a professional. The study further showed that, male teachers were most respected by pupils because they were perceived to have been rarely absent from school and committed to their work.

However, it is also important to note that while male teachers were accorded respect by pupils based on the perception that they were rarely absent from school, female teachers have triple roles in society; they are teachers /employees, mothers and community workers resulting in them missing some lessons when attending to community work. It is hoped that since cultural orientations that demean women were being discouraged in society, the image of women in schools may equally positively change.

The study further showed that the respect accorded to teachers varied according to the subjects taught and the grade level one was teaching. Participants from rural and urban secondary schools were of the view that teachers of Mathematics, English, Chemistry, Physics and Biology were accorded higher status by pupils in schools than those teaching other subjects. This view was shared by teachers, head teachers and parents. It appears some subjects were considered more important particularly those considered for entry in institutions of higher learning such as colleges and universities. Teaching and passing of these subjects was also indicative of one's abilities or intelligence. Similarly pupils and teachers that opted to study subjects in social sciences were perceived to be of less ability and so were the teachers in this faculty or department.

While there may be some truth in the perception that belonging to a natural science faculty was more prestigious than belonging to social sciences, student teachers choose the subject combinations that they felt comfortable with. In some cases the subject combination requirement at college or university determines the type of subjects one can study to teach at secondary school level.

For example, a subject combination of English and Religious Education entails that whether one wants to be a teacher of English and not religious education, she or he has to take the combination.

This may be one of the reasons that after graduating one may find that teachers whose combination was highly regarded subject and a lower perceived did not teach their minor subjects for fear of being accorded lower status by pupils or parents.

Due to the prominence that Mathematics, English and Science subjects were being given in schools and society and the respect accorded to them, society attaches great importance to these subjects as well. Most parents would like their children to take these subjects at school because they were perceived to be determinants for one's career path.

For most parents, since English was the language of communication, it was imperative that their children studied the subject and learnt how to speak the language and this was a symbol of pride in society.

Parents also perceived mathematics as a subject that was being applied on daily basis especially in terms of business. Given that, majority of parents were engaged in informal sector, it was felt that every child needed to master the subject for business purposes. For example, if a child was sent to the market to buy or sell something as was the trend in Zambia especially among low income families, they should be able to give and bring back correct change and that mathematics was a subject that would enable a child to do business in their adulthood given the high unemployment rate in the country particularly among the youth.

The study further revealed that the least respected teachers based on the subject taught were those teaching Zambian Languages, Physical Education and Home Economics. These subjects were considered not important, easy to teach and learn, not a requirement for entry into institutions of higher learning. In some cases pupils that opted to study the perceived least respected subjects were looked down upon by fellow pupils and subsequently teachers of these subjects were considered to be of lower academic and professional qualifications compared to those teaching highly regarded subjects.

Spotlight Magazine (2003) also observed that there were perceived differences in status within secondary schools in subjects or courses taught for example, English, Mathematics, computing and sciences versus creative arts. The report further showed that creative arts were considered to be of lower subjects than the others because they did not need a lot of effort to study them. However, it is also possible that some pupils may not be aware of the value of the subjects considered to be least respected. For example, learning physical education enables one to keep fit which also prevents one from catching common ailments.

Similarly, Home Economics and Zambian Languages were also sciences but pupils may not perceive them as such hence their low status in schools. Home Economics for example was very wide and among the dimensions were food and nutrition and hygiene, aspects that were very important to the human body.

The fact that teachers and Head teachers were also of the opinion that teachers of Mathematics, English and Sciences were accorded high status in schools may suggest that teachers of other subjects felt inferior to teachers of the highly respected subjects. This feeling could affect some teachers negatively and may think since their subjects were not respected by pupils, they were also of less value in the school and could lose their self-esteem. It could also affect the relationship among teachers, given that team work was critical among teachers for lesson preparation and delivery. In a situation therefore, where some teachers were looked down upon by others, the possibility of team work was minimal.

Due to the low status accorded to some subjects it was very common to find that some teachers, whose subject specialization included the least respected subjects by pupils and those most respected, opted to teach the subject that was respected by pupils and community. For example, teachers whose subject combination was English and Physical Education, English and Zambian Languages or English and Religious education, in most cases opted to teach English because it was a highly regarded subject by pupils, teachers and parents.

On the other hand while some teachers may have wanted to teach the least regarded subjects, most schools did not have the equipment required to effectively teach the subject, for example, foot balls, skipping ropes or even appropriate foot or net ball pitches as in a case of physical education. In most schools therefore practical subjects were being taught theoretically making it very difficult for pupils to master the subject matter.

Most times pupils were being asked to buy ingredients for lessons and given the high level of poverty in the country; a large number of parents could not manage to provide the required ingredients in the right quantities and quality. Therefore, practical subjects such as Home Economics and Physical Education in most schools were taught and learnt in abstract.

It should also be noted however, that all subjects were important and of value in one's life as well as to society. This means all teachers regardless of the subject they taught should enjoy respect from pupils and the public because they all belong to the teaching profession, perform similar duties and contribute to the economy and national development.

While pupils highly regarded some subjects on perception that they were more useful in life, all subjects are important and useful and contribute to making an individual a holistic being with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to be functional in society. It is therefore suggested that changing this culture of demeaning some subjects and their teachers should begin with teachers themselves and the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (MESVTEE) through the curriculum development centre tasked to design the curriculum to sensitize the public and pupils on the importance of all the subjects regardless of the level at which they were taught.

Though the age of pupils or grade level one was teaching affected the status of teachers in schools and community, it should be noted that regardless of the level one was teaching, teachers contributed to the wellbeing of children and laid a foundation for further learning making the role and services of teachers valuable and equally important.

Since a grade level that one was teaching contributed to the status of a teacher in the school and community, it can be said that there was no difference in the status of teachers in rural and urban secondary schools as long as one was teaching a similar grade level.

### 3.3 Type of job to be taken after Secondary Education

Folajimi (2009) observed that teaching had become employment of the last resort among University graduates and secondary school leavers in many countries. This resulted in teachers lacking a strong, long term commitment to teaching as a vocation. He also noted that about half of junior secondary school leavers in Malawi and Tanzania who completed school in 1990 were employed as teachers in 2001. In the absence of alternative employment opportunities, becoming a school teacher was the main avenue for social and economic advancement for graduates in many countries.

While literature has shown that the teaching profession was a low status profession, more prominent in rural setting and more pupils from rural area were likely to choose teaching as a career due to limited number of professions, the study showed that teaching was still an attractive profession to school leavers. 48 (38.1%) girls and 78 (61.9%) boys from urban and 41 (42.3%) girls and 56 (57.7%) boys from rural secondary schools opted to take up teaching as a career after their secondary education.

It might appear that the teaching profession was attractive even to pupils from urban setting where there were more professions than in rural area. This finding may also mean that though the profession was perceived to be a career for women, the trend could be changing because the findings showed that more boys than girls wanted to be teachers after their secondary education.

Since the number of boys in secondary schools wanting to join the profession was large, it might suggest that the profession may eventually gain higher status in society because there will be more men in the profession. Literature has revealed that one of the reasons for the declining status of teachers was the feminization of the profession.

The study further showed that participants from rural and urban secondary schools had varied reasons for opting to join the teaching profession after secondary education. For some it was because the job contributed to national development and others were of the view that it was a well-respected profession, had job security and for some, they wanted to earn a living. Parents were also of the view that teachers were well respected in society and that their work contributed to national development. One parent from rural area noted that: "Without a teacher to teach others who also worked in different professions and capacities such as politicians, there would be no development in this country, this is why teaching was a well-respected profession".

While a larger percentage of pupils 223 (36.7%) opted to take up teaching as a career after secondary education, 384 (63.3%) opted to join other professions such as; medicine, nursing and law. These occupations were preferred because they were considered to have better working conditions and high salary. Teachers' conditions of services were considered poor; with low salary, no or limited housing and opportunities for further education.

Literature has also shown that teachers had poor working conditions of service particularly in developing countries and that it was one of the reasons why many graduates opted for it as a last resort. This was true of teachers in Zambia as well in that they were not satisfied with the general work conditions of service and have always expressed this feeling by either going on strike or go slow in order to press government to improve their conditions of service. This scenario impacts negatively on the teaching and learning resulting in loss of learning time and subsequently poor learner performance.

While some professions such as nursing was considered to be an occupation for females, the study showed that of the 108 (17.7%) participants that opted for nursing, majority 59 (55.1%) were boys. It might appear that more sensitization was being done perhaps at school level to encourage pupils to take any career they were interested in. Zambia being part of the global village, a number of trends particularly with regard to career choices, may be changing as such young people were to chose any career path of their interest.

From the findings, it can be said that teaching was still an attractive and respected profession both in rural and urban setting. Therefore, location of a school did not matter when it came to choosing teaching as a career.

### 3.4 Factors Affecting Teachers' Status

One of the objectives of the study was to determine the factors that affected the status of teachers in the selected urban and rural secondary schools in Southern province of Zambia.

The study revealed that; Level of education one had attained, Teacher's salary, More education; Respect; Accommodation; Position one held in the school; Quality of teaching / Masterly

of the subject matter; Teacher's behavior and Relationship with community members and Contribution the job makes to society were some of the factors that affected the status of teachers.

### 3.5 Level of education one had attained and Teacher's salary

While it may not be easy for members of the community to know a teacher's qualification, it was revealed that the level of education a teacher attained was a factor considered when according respect to teachers. It should be noted that teachers at secondary school level either had diploma or university degree qualification. Perhaps some teachers with higher qualifications could have been showing some superiority to those with lower professional qualifications. This should not have been the case because their role was the same- that of teaching the young people, preparing them for life in their adulthood.

Since it was not possible for parents to know the level of education for teachers, it may appear that communities used the lifestyle of a teacher when according respect, for example, the kind of property or possessions such as a car, big television set and type of dressing.

These things are connected to one's salary- thus if one had property which was a symbol of wealth, then they were perceived as being well to do and well paid. Society perceives people with high education to be well paid and subsequently in possession of property which was a symbol of status. There is a belief in communities that, the higher the level of education one had attained, the higher the salary, the more property one acquired and the higher the status in society.

If teachers in their communities did not have the type of property or were not leading a life style defined by the community, such teachers were perceived to have low salary and therefore were not accorded high status.

Literature has shown that although the economic status of a teacher has been improving steadily, teachers did not receive salaries comparable to those of other professions such as Law or commercial farming. It is worth noting that, though the teaching profession was respected in society, the low salary teachers were paid made many people despise and not respect them. Due to inadequate salaries, some teachers engaged in other income generating activities to supplement their meager income.

Those in rural areas cultivated small plots of land, in urban areas they kept chickens or did petty trading. This scenario portrays teachers as lowerly paid and the teaching profession as a low paying occupation.

Sumra (2009)<sup>[18]</sup> revealed that teachers had minimal material or intellectual support and that their salary was often insufficient to maintain them and their families. He further showed that teachers worked under very difficult conditions. Hall and Langton (2006)<sup>[19]</sup> showed that the drivers of status were power, money and fame and that the amount of training/skill / expertise required did not deliver status unless they resulted in a high level of power, money and fame. They further noted that this was why teachers did not have high status though they were highly skilled and influential in society but were not powerful, famous or rich. With this assertion, it can be concluded that if teachers' salary translated into them being powerful, famous and rich, they would therefore, be accorded higher status in society.



### 3.6 Further Training, Respect and Accommodation

With regard to things that teachers desired to have, the study showed that participants from rural and urban located secondary schools; education and respect. Indeed, in this materialist society, each one would like to have money particularly that it can buy properties; houses and cars that would make one be accorded respect in society.

Opportunity for further education was another thing teachers desired to have. The study revealed that according of status to teachers was based on the subject and grade level one taught. This means the higher the grade level one was teaching the higher the status one was accorded in society and in school. This could be one of the reasons teachers desired opportunity for further training. Literature has also shown that the teaching profession was a source of upward social mobility, hence the need for further education.

However, due to the large size of the teaching force and the budgetary constraints, it was not possible to sponsor all the teachers that wanted to attend further studies. In order to address this situation, the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (MESVTEE) did put in place a programme of distance education which enabled serving teachers to engage in a degree program until they complete without going into full-time.

Another determinant of teacher's status was descent accommodation or type of house one was staying in as well as the residential area. Teachers particularly those teaching in urban areas had a huge challenge concerning accommodation. Majority of them rent houses in places not befitting of a teacher due to low housing allowance calculated based on one's salary. Given the low salary of a teacher, the housing allowance was not enough to rent a descent house and in a good residential area as such most teachers stay in shanty compounds. Folami, (2009) revealed that housing was a major problem generally faced by nearly all teachers and that there were not enough houses to go round, only a small fraction of teachers stay in houses provided by schools.

However, the housing situation was slightly better for secondary school teachers working in government boarding schools where the number of staff houses was in some cases adequate. Teachers that were not provided with houses in rural areas had a problem of finding satisfactory accommodation to rent. Where accommodation was provided, it was usually not in good conditions and in most cases these would be institutional houses perhaps constructed by the early missions in the 1950s. Such structures would be in deplorable state in 2015, causing embarrassment to teachers that occupied them.

### 3.7 Position of the teacher in the school

Position the teacher held in the school was another factor that was considered when according status to teachers. The hierarchy of authority in a secondary school begins with a Head teacher and ends with a class teacher. Pupils and parents therefore accorded higher status to a Head teacher than any other teacher in the school. This means that the Deputy Head teacher was accorded higher status in the school than Heads of departments, whom in most cases parents did not know. It was common for parents to know the head teacher and the deputy head teacher because they were the interface with issues of education of their children. Rarely did parents discuss education related matters with Heads of Departments in schools. It was also common to find pupils running from one corner of the school to the other trying to hide from the head teacher if they were late for classes but may not do so to a class teacher.

Teachers in authority – head and deputy head teachers were accorded more respect by pupils than any other teacher based on the position held in the school which conferred on them power, influence and authority.

Stub (1975) <sup>[5]</sup>, observed that organizational status was another dimension to the issue of teachers' status. Thus the teacher's position and prestige within the organized structure of the school or education system was a significant determinant of status in the school.

It was for this reason that teachers were accorded respect in communities based on the position they held in school or in the hierarchy of the education system. This was because the higher the position one held in the school or education system, the higher their salary, prestige, power and the more influence they had on people.

### 3.8 Quality of Teaching / Masterly of subject matter

Quality of teaching was a factor considered when according status to teachers. A teacher at secondary level was specialized in a particular subject and expected to have a good command of the subject matter. These teachers were believed to have acquired the knowledge, skills and attitudes required in order for them to effectively and efficiently teach the subject.

Sidhu (2005: 133) observed that: "A teacher must be a master of his or her subject and should

love the subject. He further states that: "Any academic weakness on the part of a teacher will

lower his or her prestige in the eyes of the students". Pupils, particularly at secondary level are able to tell a teacher that may neither be unprepared or has limited knowledge of the subject matter. Such teachers were likely not to receive respect from the pupils. Therefore, a teacher was expected to continuously engage in a learning process if he /she had to effectively teach his / her lessons.

Community's judging of the teacher's ability to teach well, basing on the passing of pupils may be the reason why one of the factors affecting the teacher status was said to be the quality of teaching. Communities may not know the quality of teaching unless through the performance of their children.

Therefore, a teacher in rural or urban area that did not have masterly of the subject matter, may not be accorded respect on that basis and not on the location of the school. Teachers perceived to have knowledge of the subject matter can be accorded high status by pupils regardless of the location of their schools.

### 3.9 Conduct / relationship with Community

Conduct or behaviour of a teacher was another factor that was used to accord status to teachers whether they were teaching in rural or urban schools. Since teachers were also members of the larger community, they had a relationship with community members. Teaching remains one of the professions that communities look up to, thus in some cases they consult teachers on a number of issues as custodians of knowledge. The way a teacher related with other members of the community and the conduct did affect the status of such a teacher in society. Communities have a way of life –thus acceptable social norms which every member is expected to observe and exhibit, which if not exhibited by the teacher may adversely affect the teacher's status.

Society expects a certain degree of behaviour from teachers as educated members of the community and as such some teachers were respected by society while others were not. A teacher for example, who drank beer excessively or looked

scruffy was likely not to be accorded respect in community because such behaviour was not expected of a teacher who was a role model in community.

WILSA (2012) [20] revealed that there was sexual violence and harassment in Zambian schools perpetrated by male teachers against female students. The study showed that 57.0% of girls interviewed said that they knew about teachers at their current or former school who had sexually harassed or abused female students and 13.0% of girls interviewed acknowledged that they had been subjected to sexual harassment or violence by a teacher. Incidents of sexual violence by teachers against female students included a range of aggressive behaviours and misuse of authority. This scenario was unfortunate because teachers took the place of parents in schools and were entrusted to provide safety to children. It can therefore be concluded that teachers that did not conduct themselves appropriately were the ones tarnishing the image of the teaching profession. Community members expect a teacher to exhibit a socially acceptable behaviour thus conduct himself / herself in a manner befitting of a teacher.

The conduct of teachers be they in urban or rural setting can entice the young to join the teaching profession or not.

Sidhu (2005: 139) observes that; "A teacher has to act as a building force between the school and community". A well behaved teacher would command respect in the community. Teachers are role models and children look up to them for wisdom, academically and professionally. Therefore, in order for a teacher to command respect in the school, she / he should be of good conduct, have mastery of the subject matter and should be committed to his / her work.

A teacher that did not conduct himself / herself well, regardless of the location of the school one was teaching at, did not command respect in school or community, while those that behaved according to what was befitting of a teacher were accorded higher status by pupils and the public.

### 3.10 Contribution the job makes to society

The study revealed that the contribution the job made to society was a factor that affected teacher's status. The more contribution the job made to national development the higher the status of such an occupation. The study showed that the teaching profession in general and teachers in particular contributed to national development by educating the young people who later took up positions of responsibility thereby contributing to the economy of the country. Due to the role teachers play in society, their work was valued and appreciated by the public and were highly respected by pupils and the public.

### 4. Conclusions

Sidhu (2005:125) the teacher: "Was the educational parent of the child. The foster parent of the child and supplements the role of the parents". "He was the undertaker of the great task of educating the child and a child looks to him for knowledge, wisdom, manners, morals, inspiration and enlightenment". Teachers have a very important role in society; that of teaching the young and preparing the new generation to meet the challenges of the future.

Based on the findings, the study has revealed that:

The difference in the status of teachers in the selected urban and rural secondary school in Southern Province of Zambia was minimal. The lack of difference in social status may be attributed to the fact that the role of teachers in society was the same regardless of the location of the school they were teaching.

1. The lack of difference in the status of these teachers showed that the services teachers offered to society were generally valued and appreciated by society regardless of whether they were in urban or rural area.
2. The major factors which the respondents indicated as affecting the status of teachers were poor conditions of service such as low salaries, lack or inadequate housing, lack of opportunities for professional development.
3. Though teachers from both urban and rural settings had poor working conditions compared to other professions, they were accorded high status by the pupils and public because their profession was considered to be contributing to national development.
4. The factors that affect the status of teachers were: level of education one had attained; subject one was teaching; grade level one was teaching; position held in the school; one's salary; quality of teaching / mastery of the subject matter, conduct of the teacher and relationship with the community members. These factors applied to teachers in rural and urban setting.
5. Though Lenski's theory argues that different locations and different factors may determine the status of teachers, in this study this position was not strongly supported because the study showed a minimal difference in the degree of status of teachers in the selected rural and urban secondary schools in Southern Province of Zambia. This could be attributed to the fact that the things considered when according respect to teachers were similar regardless of the location of the school where one was teaching.

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