

The Effect of Free Education on the Teaching and Learning of Home Economics: A Case of Selected Schools in Chirundu District of Southern Province, Zambia

Beatrice Kangwa¹, Chanda Chansa Thelma²

¹Mandenga Secondary School, Chirundu District, Zambia, Department of Home Economics and Hospitality

²Chreso University, Lusaka, Zambia, School of Postgraduate Studies and Research

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14779781>

Published Date: 31-January-2025

Abstract: The provision of free education aims to alleviate financial barriers and increase access to quality education for all students. However, its impact on resource-intensive subjects such as Home Economics remains a subject of concern, especially in rural districts. This study investigated the effects of free education on the teaching and learning of Home Economics in three selected schools of Chirundu District. A mixed-methods approach was employed, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative research methods, and a descriptive survey design was adopted. A sample of 152 respondents, including policy makers, educators, and pupils, was selected for this study. Data was gathered through interviews and questionnaires, and analysed using percentages, tables, and charts, supported by software such as SSPSS and MS Excel. The findings revealed that while free education has significantly improved access to Home Economics lessons, there are challenges such as a lack of sufficient teaching materials, overcrowded classrooms, and inadequate support for practical lessons. Despite these issues, pupils and teachers acknowledged the benefits of free education in easing financial burdens. The study concluded that there is a need for improved resource allocation, enhanced teacher training, and stronger community involvement to ensure that free education not only increases access but also enhances the quality of learning in Home Economics. The study therefore recommended for targeted government interventions, including partnerships with local industries, to address these challenges and improve educational outcomes.

Keywords: Free Education, Home Economics, Resources, Teaching/Learning and Quality Education.

1. INTRODUCTION

The introduction of free education in Zambia has significantly impacted the teaching and learning of Home Economics in selected schools in Chirundu District, Southern Province. While the policy has increased student enrolment and broadened access to education, it has also presented challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching resources, and a higher student-to-teacher ratio (Chomba et al., 2023). In Home Economics, a subject that requires practical application, the lack of essential materials such as fabric, kitchen utensils, and food ingredients has hindered effective hands-on learning. Teachers face difficulties in delivering quality instruction due to insufficient funding for practical lessons, leading to a greater reliance on theoretical teaching rather than experiential learning. Furthermore, increased enrolment has put pressure on school infrastructure, with limited classroom and laboratory space affecting lesson quality. Despite these challenges, free education has provided opportunities for more students, especially those from low-income backgrounds, to gain knowledge and skills in Home Economics, fostering self-reliance and economic empowerment (Mahmoud, 2018). However, to maximize its benefits, there is a need for increased government support in resource allocation, teacher recruitment, and infrastructure development to ensure that Home Economics education remains practical, engaging, and effective.

International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social SciencesVol. 12, Issue 1, pp: (18-28), Month: January - February 2025, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

Chikanda & Zulu (2018) says that Home Economics education develops critical-thinking and problem-solving skills to make decisions. The skills acquired in Home Economics equip individuals with practical abilities that enhance their employability, foster adaptability to changing job markets, promote personal growth, and enable them to effectively navigate real world challenges. The provision of free education has been a significant policy initiative in many countries, aiming to increase access to education and improve educational outcomes. Home economics is a crucial subject that equips learners with practical skills related to home management, nutrition, consumer sciences, and family economics.

The introduction of free education has come with mixed feelings, while children from vulnerable homes see it as a game changer, some individuals feel otherwise. Free education means that learners are free from any payments to do with their education (Chanda, 2023). This includes freedom from contributing towards practical sessions in home economics education. Free Education has increased access to education allowing children from low-income homes to go to school without spending any money. "Free Education enhances student's engagement by covering costs that previously hindered participation in resource-intensive subjects," (Boka, 2019). This increase in access to education has come with its own challenges. Home Economics educators expressed concerns about the insufficient resources for teaching practical aspects of the subject, such as cooking and sewing which are central to the curriculum. The increase in enrolment has led to larger class sizes without a corresponding increase in resources, resulting in significant strain on the materials available. "Practical subjects often face disproportionate challenges in resource allocation, especially when educational reforms focus on theoretical subjects (Mwansa, 2020).

The lack of additional funding to meet the demands of increased student numbers is particularly evident in resource-heavy subjects. Without the necessary infrastructure, such as fully equipped kitchens and sewing labs, the practical elements of home economics cannot be adequately taught. The deteriorating state of equipment, as noted by both pupils and educators, underscores the need for more comprehensive planning and investment to support the expansion of free education (Mwale, 2019). Understanding how free education influences the teaching and learning of home economics is essential for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to enhance educational strategies effectively.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the introduction of free education policies in Zambia aimed at improving access to education, there has been growing concern about their effectiveness in enhancing the teaching and learning of Home Economics. In Chirundu District, recent statistics reveal a significant gap in the quality of Home Economics education. According to the District Education Board's report (2023), 45% of students in the selected schools demonstrate inadequate skills in Home Economics, compared to a 30% average in other subjects. Additionally, a survey conducted among teachers in these schools indicated that 60% of them feel that the free education policy has led to a decline in resource allocation and support for Home Economics programs (Chirundu District Education Board, 2023). Before the introduction of free education, classes had enrolments between 65 learners to 70 learners in a classroom but after the introduction of free education numbers increased to between 100 and 150 in a classroom. This discrepancy highlights a critical issue: while free education aims to increase enrolment, its impact on the quality of Home Economics teaching and learning remains questionable (Mwangi, 2018).

1.3. Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

- Assess the effect of free education policy on the availability of resources for teaching home economics in selected schools in Chirundu district, Zambia.
- Identify the challenges of implementing free education in enhancing the quality of home economics curriculum in selected schools in Chirundu district, Zambia.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of free education on the teaching and learning of home economics. By examining the experiences of educators and students in the context of free education policies, the study aimed to provide insights into the potential benefits and challenges associated with these policies in the field of home economics education.

1.5. Theoretical Framework

This research was guided by the "Social Cognitive Theory" (Bandura, 1986) to examine the effects of free education on Home Economics education. Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes the dynamic interplay between personal factors, environmental influences, and behavior, suggesting that individuals learn through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. Within the context of this study, Social Cognitive Theory provides a framework for understanding how free education policies may influence the accessibility, quality, and outcomes of Home Economics education. By considering the interactions between students' individual characteristics, such as motivation and self-efficacy, the educational environment, including curriculum design and instructional practices, and societal factors, such as policy implementation and resource allocation, the study aims to elucidate the mechanisms through which free education policies shape the teaching and learning of Home Economics.

1.6. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to fill a critical gap in the literature regarding the effects of free education policies on Home Economics education. By examining how free education influences the teaching and learning of Home Economics, including aspects such as curriculum development, instructional methods, and student outcomes, this research can offer valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders. Understanding these effects is essential for ensuring that Home Economics education remains relevant, effective, and accessible within the context of evolving educational policies. Furthermore, by identifying strengths and weaknesses in current practices, this study can inform targeted interventions and improvements to enhance the quality and impact of Home Economics instruction. Ultimately, the findings of this research have the potential to contribute to the broader discourse on education policy and practice, particularly in terms of promoting practical life skills and addressing societal challenges related to nutrition, household management, and consumer economics.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study incorporated a mixed-methods approach, leveraging both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. This design allowed for triangulation of data from multiple sources, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings. The quantitative component involved the use of structured surveys or questionnaires administered to a representative sample of the target population, enabling the collection of numerical data on predefined variables. Concurrently, the qualitative component employed semi-structured interviews or focus group discussions to delve deeper into participants' perceptions, experiences, and attitudes related to the research topic. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative data, this mixed-methods approach enabled a holistic exploration of the research questions, capturing both breadth and depth of understanding. Moreover, it allowed for complementarity between different data types, facilitating a richer interpretation of the findings. The target population was 1520; including policy makers, educators, and pupils, with a sample size of 152 participants; 10% of the target population. The quantitative data collected were analysed using appropriate statistical methods, such as descriptive statistics using SPSS and Microsoft excel whereas the qualitative data collected were analysed using research themes. The study upheld research ethical considerations such as voluntary participation of the respondents, confidentiality, honesty, and right of privacy.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The following findings and discussions were presented according to set research objectives:

3.1. Key Factors that Affect Free Education Policy on the Availability of Resources for Teaching Home Economics

Data collected from the study revealed that the increased student population has significantly impacted the effectiveness of the Free Education Policy in ensuring adequate resources for teaching Home Economics in schools in Chirundu District, Zambia. As enrolment numbers continue to rise due to the removal of school fees, the demand for essential teaching materials, equipment, and facilities has outpaced the available supply. Home Economics, a subject that requires practical, hands-on learning experiences, is particularly affected by this resource strain (Banda & Nkosi, 2020). Schools often struggle to provide enough sewing machines, cooking utensils, and demonstration materials, leading to overcrowded classrooms and limited opportunities for individualized instruction. Furthermore, inadequate funding to expand classrooms and procure additional teaching aids results in a decline in the quality of education, as teachers are forced to adapt to large class sizes

International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social SciencesVol. 12, Issue 1, pp: (18-28), Month: January - February 2025, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

with insufficient resources. Benali (2020) added that the shortage of consumable materials such as fabric, ingredients, and cleaning supplies further hinders students' ability to fully engage in practical lessons. Consequently, while the Free Education Policy aims to improve access to education, the rapid increase in student numbers without corresponding resource allocation poses a significant challenge to the effective teaching and learning of Home Economics in Chirundu District.

The lack of equipment for practical lessons significantly affects the implementation of the Free Education Policy in ensuring the availability of resources for teaching Home Economics in schools in Chirundu District, Zambia. Despite the policy's objective of providing equal access to education, many schools struggle with inadequate funding to acquire essential tools, materials, and appliances necessary for effective practical learning in subjects such as food and nutrition, textile studies, and home management. Chanda (2024) supported this finding by stating that this shortage limits hands-on experience, making it difficult for students to develop the required skills and competencies. As a result, Home Economics lessons often remain theoretical, reducing students' engagement and comprehension of practical aspects. Additionally, the lack of proper equipment discourages learners from pursuing the subject, ultimately affecting their ability to apply home management and entrepreneurial skills in real-life situations (Molefe, 2018). To address this challenge, increased investment in infrastructure, equipment, and teaching materials is necessary to enhance the quality of Home Economics education and ensure the Free Education Policy effectively supports practical learning in Chirundu District schools.

Respondents also alluded that outdated equipment is a significant factor that affects the successful implementation of the Free Education Policy, particularly in ensuring the availability of resources for teaching Home Economics in schools in Chirundu District, Zambia. One of the HE teachers expressed that:

“Many schools in the district struggle with obsolete and non-functional equipment, such as sewing machines, stoves, and kitchen appliances, which are essential for practical lessons in Home Economics”.

The lack of modern tools and facilities limits the hands-on experience that students need to develop critical skills in cooking, tailoring, and home management. Furthermore, outdated equipment often leads to frequent breakdowns, making it difficult for teachers to effectively deliver lessons and forcing students to rely on theoretical instruction rather than practical application (Mashigo, 2020). This issue is further exacerbated by inadequate funding for maintenance and replacement of equipment, as the Free Education Policy prioritizes basic operational costs rather than specialized subject needs. As a result, students in Chirundu District may graduate without acquiring the necessary skills for self-reliance or employment in related fields, ultimately undermining the goals of the Free Education Policy in equipping learners with practical competencies. Martinez & Nguyen (2020) noted that addressing this challenge requires increased investment in modern equipment, proper resource allocation, and strategic partnerships with stakeholders to enhance the quality of Home Economics education.

The findings also revealed that resource allocation review plays a crucial role in determining the success of the Free Education Policy and directly affects the availability of resources for teaching Home Economics in schools. The implementation of free education has led to increased student enrolment, placing additional demands on already limited teaching materials, equipment, and facilities. Without a well-structured and equitable resource allocation system, schools struggle to provide adequate sewing machines, cooking appliances, and practical materials necessary for effective Home Economics instruction (Mokoena, 2019). Many schools in Chirundu district face challenges such as delayed funding, insufficient budgetary support, and lack of transparency in the distribution of teaching resources. Additionally, disparities in resource allocation between urban and rural schools further widen the gap in educational quality, making it difficult for learners in rural areas to access hands-on training in Home Economics. Teachers are often forced to improvise or rely on theoretical instruction due to the unavailability of essential materials, which compromises the quality of education and skill acquisition in the subject (Chanda, 2023b). Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive review of resource allocation mechanisms to ensure that funds and teaching materials are distributed efficiently and equitably, enabling all schools to meet the practical learning needs of Home Economics students under the Free Education Policy.

The lack of funds is a critical factor affecting the successful implementation of the Free Education Policy, particularly in ensuring the availability of resources for teaching Home Economics in schools in Chirundu District, Zambia. While the policy aims to provide education without financial barriers, inadequate government funding has resulted in shortages of essential teaching materials such as sewing machines, fabric, cooking utensils, and other practical equipment necessary for hands-on learning. Many schools struggle to maintain and replace worn-out materials due to financial constraints, limiting students' ability to acquire practical skills effectively (Chanda, 2024b). Additionally, the limited budget allocation often

fails to cover the costs of specialized training for Home Economics teachers, further affecting the quality of instruction. Anyangwe & Mtonga (2019) in their study noted that the financial shortfalls also impact the construction and maintenance of specialized classrooms, such as kitchens and textile workshops, which are crucial for a comprehensive Home Economics curriculum. Consequently, students are deprived of the practical exposure needed to develop essential life skills, undermining the overall effectiveness of the Free Education Policy in equipping learners with relevant vocational competencies (Chanda, 2023c). Addressing these funding challenges is crucial for ensuring that Home Economics education remains practical, engaging, and beneficial to students in Chirundu District.

The implementation of the Free Education Policy in Zambia has led to a significant increase in student enrolment, particularly in districts such as Chirundu. While this policy aims to improve access to education, one of the key challenges it presents is the issue of large class sizes, which directly affects the availability of resources for teaching (Moungounga, 2019). Home Economics as a subject requires hands-on learning, practical demonstrations, and access to essential materials such as sewing machines, cooking utensils, and ingredients. However, with the growing number of students in each class, the demand for these resources has exceeded supply, making it difficult for teachers to conduct effective lessons. Limited funding and inadequate infrastructure further exacerbate the situation, as schools struggle to provide enough workspace and equipment to accommodate all learners. Additionally, overcrowded classrooms reduce teacher-student interaction, making it challenging to offer personalized instruction, which is critical for skill-based subjects like Home Economics (Chanda, 2024c). The shortage of materials also forces teachers to rely more on theoretical instruction rather than practical application, which undermines the subject’s effectiveness in equipping students with essential life skills. Addressing this issue requires increased government investment in educational resources, recruitment of more teachers, and improved school infrastructure to ensure that the Free Education Policy does not compromise the quality of Home Economics education in Chirundu district.

Responses on the Effect of Free Education Policies on Resources for Teaching Home Economics

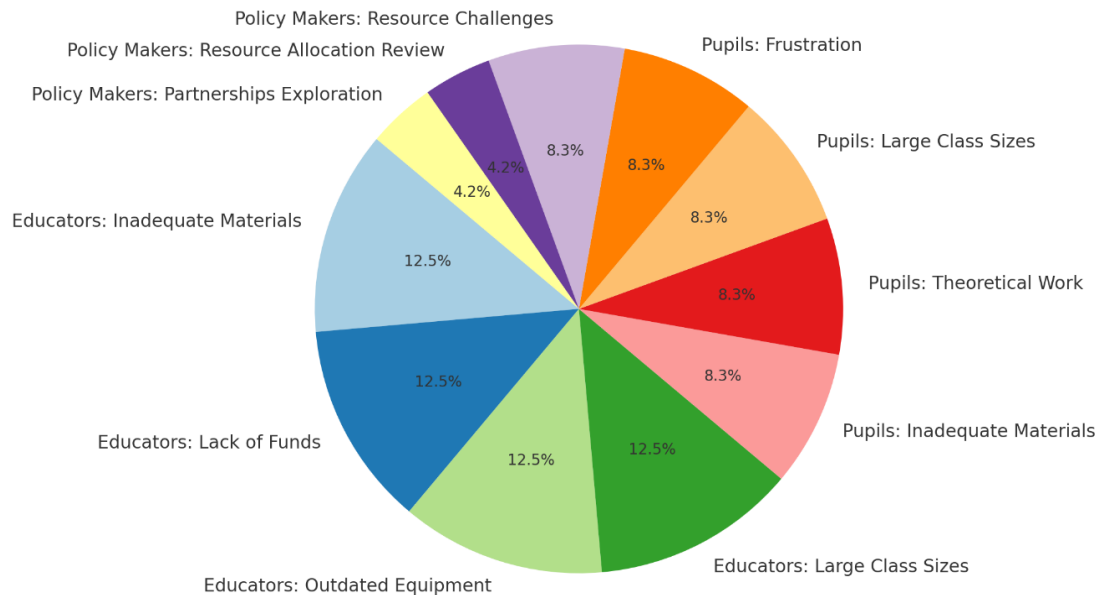


Figure 1: Key Factors that affect Free Education Policy on the availability of Resources for Teaching Home Economics

3.2. Challenges of Implementing Free Education in Enhancing the Quality of Home Economics Curriculum

Data collected from the study shown that the implementation of free education in enhancing the quality of the Home Economics curriculum in schools in Chirundu District, Zambia, faces a significant challenge due to inadequate teaching materials. Home Economics is a practical-based subject that requires a variety of resources such as cooking equipment, sewing machines, fabrics, and other consumables to facilitate hands-on learning. However, with the introduction of free

education, schools have experienced increased enrolment, leading to heightened demand for these materials, which are often in short supply (Brown & Patel, 2017). The lack of sufficient teaching resources limits students' ability to acquire essential skills in food preparation, nutrition, clothing and textile production, and home management. Furthermore, teachers struggle to implement effective instructional strategies when they lack the necessary tools to demonstrate key concepts practically. One of the education policy makers noted that:

“The financial constraints that come with free education policies often leave schools dependent on limited government funding, which may not prioritize the procurement of specialized Home Economics materials. As a result, the quality of instruction is compromised, with students being forced to rely on theoretical knowledge rather than gaining the hands-on experience required to master the subject”.

Bwalya & Mwansa (2020) says that addressing this challenge requires increased budgetary allocation, partnerships with stakeholders, and innovative approaches such as community resource mobilization to ensure that schools are adequately equipped to deliver quality Home Economics education.

The implementation of free education, while aimed at increasing access to learning, has inadvertently led to an increased teacher workload, posing a significant challenge to enhancing the quality of the Home Economics curriculum in schools. With the removal of school fees, enrolment rates have surged, resulting in overcrowded classrooms and stretching the capacity of teachers to effectively deliver practical and theoretical lessons (Abd El-Salam, 2021). Home Economics, being a subject that requires hands-on instruction, individualized guidance, and close supervision, is particularly affected as teachers struggle to manage large class sizes while ensuring that students receive adequate attention and practical exposure. Additionally, the increased administrative duties, coupled with inadequate teaching resources, further burden educators, limiting their ability to innovate and implement interactive teaching strategies that could improve student learning outcomes. The high workload often leads to teacher burnout and reduced instructional quality, ultimately compromising the depth and effectiveness of the Home Economics curriculum (Chileshe & Mukwiza, 2020). Without measures such as hiring more teachers, improving resource allocation, and integrating technology to ease instructional demands, the challenge of teacher workload will continue to hinder the successful implementation of free education in enhancing the quality of Home Economics in schools.

The study results further showed that one of the significant challenges of implementing free education in enhancing the quality of the Home Economics curriculum in schools is the limited practical application of skills due to resource constraints. Mwangi & Nyamu (2021) says that Home Economics is a hands-on subject that requires access to various materials, equipment, and facilities for effective teaching and learning. However, with the introduction of free education, many schools struggle to provide sufficient resources, such as cooking ingredients, sewing machines, and textile materials, due to inadequate funding. As a result, students often rely heavily on theoretical instruction without engaging in meaningful practical experiences, which hinders their ability to develop essential life skills such as food preparation, nutrition management, and home maintenance. Additionally, large class sizes further exacerbate the challenge, making it difficult for teachers to provide individualized attention and ensure that each student gains practical competency (Chanda et al., 2024). Without adequate investment in infrastructure and materials, the Home Economics curriculum risks being reduced to a theoretical subject, limiting its potential to equip students with real-world skills necessary for self-reliance and economic empowerment.

Additionally, Ssentanda & Ssegawa (2020) noted that while free education expands access to learning opportunities, the curriculum often fails to equip students with the practical skills and competencies required in the modern workforce. Home Economics, as a subject, encompasses essential life skills such as nutrition, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and textile technology, which are critical for employment and self-sufficiency. However, due to outdated curricula, inadequate industry linkages, and limited practical exposure, graduates often find themselves lacking the necessary skills to compete effectively in the job market. Furthermore, the absence of collaboration between educational institutions and employers leads to a mismatch between what students learn and what the labor market demands (Chanda et al., 2024b). Without strategic curriculum reforms that integrate market-driven skills, free education may not fully translate into improved employability or economic empowerment for learners. Thus, addressing this misalignment is crucial for ensuring that Home Economics education remains relevant, equipping students with both theoretical knowledge and practical expertise to meet the evolving needs of industries and entrepreneurship.

International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social SciencesVol. 12, Issue 1, pp: (18-28), Month: January - February 2025, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

Poor infrastructure and facilities pose significant challenges in implementing free education and enhancing the quality of the Home Economics curriculum in schools. Many schools, especially those in rural or underfunded areas, struggle with inadequate classroom spaces, outdated equipment, and lack of essential materials such as cooking utensils, sewing machines, and learning resources. Molefi (2021) says that this shortage of infrastructure hampers the practical aspect of the Home Economics curriculum, which relies heavily on hands-on learning to equip students with skills in cooking, sewing, and other domestic activities. Without proper facilities, teachers find it difficult to deliver the curriculum effectively, and students' ability to learn practical skills is compromised. Furthermore, poor infrastructure also impacts the overall learning environment, leading to overcrowded classrooms and insufficient access to resources like electricity and water, which are essential for effective teaching and learning in Home Economics (Mwansa & Ndhlovu, 2020). As a result, the implementation of free education, while beneficial in terms of access, may fall short in ensuring that students receive quality, well-rounded education in Home Economics due to these infrastructural limitations.

The results also revealed that community perception and support play a significant role in the challenges faced when implementing free education initiatives, particularly in enhancing the quality of the Home Economics curriculum in schools. One of the head teachers pointed out that:

“In many communities, there is a lack of awareness regarding the importance of Home Economics as a vital subject that equips students with practical life skills. This results in limited community engagement and support for the curriculum. Some community members may perceive the subject as less valuable compared to other academic disciplines, leading to insufficient resources and minimal involvement in curriculum development and improvement.”

Additionally, there may be a lack of appreciation for the subject's role in fostering self-reliance and empowerment, especially in rural areas where traditional gender roles and economic constraints often limit students' opportunities (Chanda et al., 2024c). Without strong community backing, schools may struggle to secure the necessary funding, skilled teachers, and materials required to effectively deliver the Home Economics curriculum, ultimately hindering the objective of improving the quality of education.

Resistance to curriculum change is one of the key challenges in implementing free education and enhancing the quality of the Home Economics curriculum in schools. This resistance can stem from various sources, including educators, parents, and policymakers who are either hesitant to adopt new approaches or are concerned about the feasibility and effectiveness of the proposed changes (Chifamba, 2021). Teachers may resist because they feel unprepared or lack sufficient training to teach the revised curriculum effectively. Additionally, there might be concerns over the adequacy of resources and materials needed to implement changes, such as updated textbooks, practical equipment, or facilities. Some parents and community members might also oppose changes due to a lack of understanding of the benefits of modernized Home Economics education, viewing it as unnecessary or irrelevant in today's context. Furthermore, entrenched traditional educational practices, where curriculum changes are often seen as disruptive, contribute to a lack of willingness to embrace new teaching methods or content (Zulu & Chilufya, 2018). Overcoming this resistance requires effective stakeholder engagement, adequate professional development for teachers, and a clear communication strategy to demonstrate the long-term benefits of enhancing the Home Economics curriculum as part of a broader effort to improve education quality under a free education framework.

Insufficient professional development is a significant challenge in the implementation of free education, particularly in enhancing the quality of the Home Economics curriculum in schools. Despite the government's commitment to providing free education, the lack of continuous and specialized training for teachers in the Home Economics field hinders the effective delivery of the curriculum. Many educators are not adequately equipped with the latest pedagogical strategies, updated content knowledge, and practical skills necessary to engage students effectively in this subject (Mwale & Sichelwe, 2021). As a result, the quality of instruction remains subpar, affecting students' understanding and skills development in critical areas such as nutrition, textiles, and financial management. Moreover, without regular professional development opportunities, teachers may struggle to adapt to new educational approaches, technologies, and curriculum changes, thereby limiting the potential impact of free education on students' learning outcomes. This gap in teacher preparedness ultimately undermines the broader goals of improving education quality and equipping students with essential life skills (Muwowo et al., 2024).

The implementation of free education, while aimed at increasing access to education, has presented challenges in terms of student engagement, particularly in the context of enhancing the quality of the Home Economics curriculum in schools. With the influx of students, many schools face overcrowded classrooms, which can result in reduced individual attention from teachers. This, in turn, hampers students' active participation and engagement in lessons, especially in practical subjects like Home Economics that require hands-on activities (Mwape et al., 2020). Limited resources, such as insufficient cooking equipment, textiles, and other materials, further restrict the effectiveness of lessons, leaving students less engaged and motivated. Additionally, Okafor & Udeani (2018) supported this finding by indicating that the pressure to maintain high enrolment numbers can lead to a shift in focus from improving curriculum quality to managing administrative concerns. As a result, students may find it difficult to connect with the subject matter or see its relevance, which negatively impacts their overall learning experience and diminishes the potential benefits of the Home Economics curriculum.

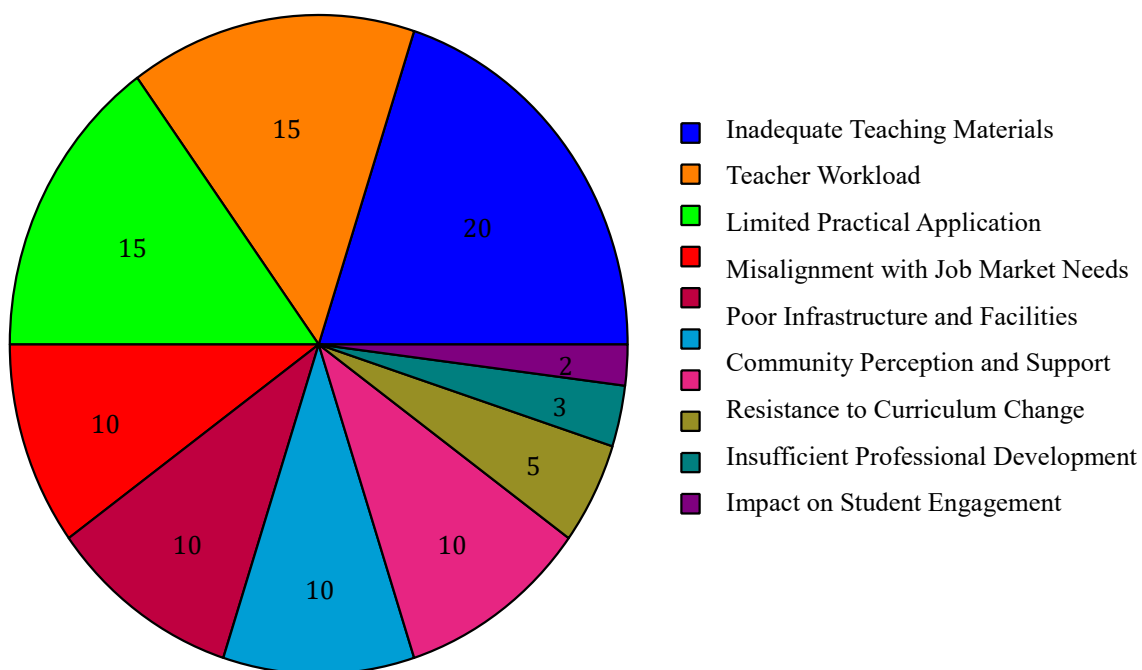


Figure 2: Challenges of Implementing Free Education in Enhancing the Quality of Home Economics Curriculum

4. CONCLUSION

The implementation of free education in Zambia has had significant implications for the teaching and learning of Home Economics, particularly in selected schools in Chirundu District of Southern Province. While it has increased access to education and reduced financial barriers for many students, it has also highlighted challenges related to resource allocation and teacher preparedness. The influx of students due to the policy has resulted in overcrowded classrooms, limiting the ability of teachers to provide individualized attention and effectively manage practical lessons in Home Economics. Additionally, the lack of adequate teaching materials and infrastructure has hindered the full implementation of the curriculum, affecting the quality of learning outcomes. Despite these challenges, the policy has also created opportunities for curriculum expansion and increased student participation in practical learning activities, especially for students from low-income households who previously had limited access to education. Therefore, while free education has been a catalyst for increased enrolment, its success in enhancing the teaching and learning of Home Economics depends on addressing these resource and infrastructural challenges.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings, the following recommendations are made to the Ministry of Education in order to enhance the effectiveness of free education in Chirundu district:

Increase Investment in School Infrastructure:

- The Ministry of Education should prioritize the construction of more classrooms, the provision of desks, and the improvement of sanitation facilities to address overcrowding and create a conducive learning environment. The current situation only allows for access to education but does not pay attention to the quality of education being offered.

Provision of Adequate Teaching Materials:

- A consistent supply of textbooks, teaching aids, and practical resources, especially in home economics, should be ensured. This will help improve the quality of education and reduce the strain on teachers.

Teacher Training and Support:

- Regular in-service training and workshops should be provided to equip teachers with modern teaching strategies and improve their capacity to handle large classes effectively. Additionally, more support staff should be recruited to reduce the teachers' workload.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abd El-Salam, R. M. (2021). Enhancing Practical Skills Development in Home Economics Curriculum in Egypt: A Policy Perspective. *Journal of Education Policy and Planning*, 22(2), 78-91.
- [2] Anyangwe, E. N., & Mtonga, J. M. (2019). The Impact of Free Education Policy on Access to Education in Rural Zambia: A Case of Serenje District. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Advanced Studies*, 6(7), 12-21.
- [3] Banda, R., & Nkosi, T. (2020). Promoting Gender Equality through Home Economics Education in Zambia: Opportunities and Challenges. *Journal of Educational Policy and Entrepreneurial Research*, 7(2), 58-71.
- [4] Benali, M. (2020). Challenges Facing Home Economics Education in Algeria: A Case Study of Selected Schools in Oran. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 27(1), 78-91.
- [5] Boka, K. (2019). Free Education Policies and the Provision of Home Economics Education in the Central African Republic. *Central African Journal of Education*, 25(2), 45-58.
- [6] Brown, L., & Patel, S. (2017). Curriculum and Pedagogy in Home Economics Education under Free Education Policies: A Cross-cultural Analysis. *International Journal of Home Economics Education*, 25(3), 145-160.
- [7] Bwalya, M., & Mwansa, C. (2020). Curriculum Implementation Challenges Faced by Home Economics Teachers in Secondary Schools in Zambia. *Journal of Educational Policy and Entrepreneurial Research*, 7(1), 38-49.
- [8] Chanda, C. T. (2023). Effects of Free Education Policy on Quality Education: A Case of Selected Secondary Schools in Lusaka District, Zambia. *International Research Journal of Modernization in Engineering Technology and Science*, Volume 05, Issue 08, 1850-1857. <https://doi.org/10.56726/IRJMETS44219>.
- [9] Chanda, C. T. (2023b). Challenges Encountered in the Teaching and Learning of Civic Education: A Case of Selected Secondary Schools in Solwezi District of North-western Province, Zambia. *International Research Journal of Modernization in Engineering Technology and Science*, Volume 05, Issue 09, 610-621, September 2023, Available: www.irjmets.com, <https://doi.org/10.56726/IRJMETS44613>.
- [10] Chanda, C. T. (2023c). Challenges of Teaching Vocational Subjects in Rural Primary Schools: A Case of Kalabo District in Western Province, Zambia. *International Research Journal of Modernization in Engineering Technology and Science*, Volume 05, Issue 08, 2107-2114, August 2023, Available: www.irjmets.com, <https://doi.org/10.56726/IRJMETS44257>.

International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social Sciences

 Vol. 12, Issue 1, pp: (18-28), Month: January - February 2025, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com


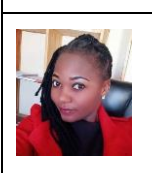
- [11] Chanda, C. T. (2024). "Service Learning and Civic Engagement: Exploring the Linkages". *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, Vol 5, no 4, pp 7056-7064, April 2024, Available: www.ijrpr.com, ISSN 2582-7421.
- [12] Chanda, C. T. (2024b). An Assessment on Government Funding for Teaching and Learning Materials: A Case of Selected Secondary Schools in Lusaka District, Zambia. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, Vol 5, no 1, pp 1772-1778, January 2024, Available: www.ijrpr.com, ISSN 2582-7421. <https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.5.0124.0230>.
- [13] Chanda, C. T. (2024c). Effects of Catch-up Lessons Implementation on Education: A Case of Selected Primary Schools in Kasama District of Northern Province, Zambia. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, Vol 5, no 7, pp 4329-4340, July 2024, Available: www.ijrpr.com, ISSN 2582-7421.
- [14] Chanda, C. T., Mwansa, P., Chisebe, S., Mulenga, D. M., Mwila, M. G., & Phiri, E. V. (2024). The Impact of Educational Leadership on Student Achievement: A Comparative Analysis of Urban and Rural Schools. *Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies*, Volume 50, Issue 8, Page 444-461, August 2024; Article no.AJESS.121711, Available: <https://doi.org/10.9734/ajess/2024/v50i81542>.
- [15] Chanda, C. T., Zohaib, H. S., Shogbesan, Y. O., Phiri, E. V., & Akpan, W. M. (2024b). Digital Literacy in Education: Preparing Students for the Future Workforce. *International Journal of Research (IJR)*, Vol. 11, Issue 08, 149-170, August 2024, Available: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13347718>.
- [16] Chifamba, M. (2021). Gender Disparities in Access to Home Economics Education in Zimbabwe: Implications for Policy and Practice. *Journal of Home Economics Education and Research*, 28(2), 78-91.
- [17] Chirundu District Education Board. (2023). Annual Education Report. Chirundu District Education Board.
- [18] Chikanda, M. E., & Zulu, M. (2018). The Quality of Home Economics Education in Secondary Schools in Zambia: A Case of Solwezi District. *International Journal of Education, Learning, and Development*, 6(2), 50-62.
- [19] Chileshe, M., & Mukwiza, C. (2020). Professional Development Needs of Home Economics Teachers in Zambia: A Case Study. *Journal of Educational Policy and Entrepreneurial Research*, 7(2), 75-88.
- [20] Chomba, M. M., Mwanapabu, N. H., & Chanda, C. T. (2023). Free Education Policy and Quality Education: A Case Study of Kasama District of Northern Province, Zambia. *Global Scientific Journals*, Volume 11, Issue 12, 861-888, December 2023, Available: www.globalscientificjournals.com, Online: ISSN 2320-9186.
- [21] Mahmoud, A. (2018). The Impact of Free Education on Home Economics Education in Egypt: A Case Study of Selected Schools in Cairo. *Egyptian Journal of Education Studies*, 15(2), 45-58.
- [22] Martinez, R., & Nguyen, T. (2020). Promoting Sustainable Development through Home Economics Education under Free Education Policies: Opportunities and Challenges. *Journal of Sustainable Development Education*, 15(2), 201-215.
- [23] Mashigo, T. (2020). Challenges of Teaching Home Economics in South Africa: A Case Study of Selected Schools in Johannesburg. *Journal of Education and Human Development*, 8(3), 45-58.
- [24] Mokoena, N. (2019). Free Education Policies and the Provision of Home Economics Education in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 25(2), 45-58.
- [25] Molefe, L. N. (2018). Challenges in Teaching and Learning Home Economics in South African schools. *International Journal of Education Sciences*, 25(2), 78-91.
- [26] Molefi, L. (2021). Societal Perceptions of Home Economics Education in Botswana: Implications for Curriculum Reform. *Journal of Home Economics Education and Research*, 28(2), 78-91.

International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social Sciences

Vol. 12, Issue 1, pp: (18-28), Month: January - February 2025, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

- [27] Mounougou, G. (2019). Free Education Policies and the Provision of Home Economics Education in Gabon. *Gabonese Journal of Education*, 25(2), 45-58.
- [28] Muwowo, E., Phiri, A., & Chanda, C. T. (2024). The Effect of Teaching and Promoting Creativity in Sewing among Vocational Skills Students from Selected Colleges in Kitwe District of Copperbelt Province, Zambia. *International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning*, Vol 11, Issue 5, pp (21-32), <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13851282>. Available: www.noveltyjournals.com.

Authors' Short Biography:

	<p>Beatrice Kangwa, a teacher of Home Economics as well as Food & Nutrition and has taught for about 9 years now. Currently, she is the acting Head of Department for Home Economics and Hospitality at Mandenga Secondary School.</p>
	<p>Chanda Chansa Thelma specializes in Education and Social Sciences. She has lectured and still lecturing at the University level under the school of Humanities and Education.</p>