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FACTORS TEACHER UNIONS LOOKED FOR IN THE (1997) RE-ENTRY POLICY IN ZAMBIA

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ABSTRACT

Our study was motivated by a gap identified in the existing literature regarding the factors considered by teacher unions, specifically the Zambia National Union of Teachers (ZNUT) and the Secondary School Teachers Union of Zambia (SESTUZ), during the formulation of the re-entry policy in Zambia. To address this gap, we adopted ontological, epistemological, and axiological approaches within the study process. Employing a qualitative case study design, the study was conducted in Zambia, with a sample drawn from schools, zones, districts, and provinces through convenient sampling. The study population comprised 20 Teacher Union Representatives from ZNUT and SESTUZ and directors from the Ministry of General Education (MoGE). Sample size determination follows recommendations by Creswell (1998) and Morse (1994), resulting in 26 participants. However, due to data saturation, interviews are conducted with 11 union representatives and 4 directors. Data is collected through interviews, and thematic analysis is employed for data analysis. Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Zambia Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies. The findings reveal that teacher unions sought inclusivity, adequate resources, quality education, support for teachers, protection of learners' rights, and policy sustainability during the re-entry policy formulation. The study underscores the pivotal role of teacher unions in the formulation and implementation of education policies, emphasizing the importance of their input for policies to be effective, practical, and inclusive, thereby benefiting the entire education ecosystem.

KEY WORDS: Re-entry policy, teacher unions, education policy formulation, girls' education, gender equality, inclusive education, dropout prevention, policy implementation, marginalized learners, stakeholder collaboration, policy development.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era marked by globalization, modern states consistently undertake reforms in their educational systems to enhance various aspects such as teaching and learning outcomes, quality of education, equity, internal efficiency, effectiveness, and global competitiveness(Rizvi *et al.*, 2005; Maassen and Cloete, 2006; Kamens and McNeely, 2010; Adamson, Astrand and Darling-Hammond, 2016; and Zajda, 2018, 2021). These reforms are geared towards rendering education systems more pertinent and adaptable to present challenges and future societal needs. Following Zambia's attainment of independence in 1964, the Ministry of Education embarked on extensive educational reforms spanning the years 1965 to 1996 (Sakyi, 2000 and Mbita, 2001). These reforms encompassed the restructuring of management and administration, curriculum reform, the introduction of a new language policy, a revised examination and assessment system, and the establishment of a new basic education teacher diploma.

Education is widely acknowledged as a pivotal element in poverty reduction, serving as the bedrock for sustained economic growth (Elliot, 1975; Barro, 1996; Krueger and Lindahl, 2001; Sahlberg, 2006; and Fägerlind and Saha, 2016). This sentiment is echoed by entities like the World Bank and UNICEF, emphasizing the direct correlation between a country's economic growth rates and the education levels of its workforce. Education not only breaks generational cycles of poverty but also fosters sustainable development by imparting knowledge and skills for healthy lifestyles, HIV/AIDS prevention, and active participation in societal decision-making. The role of education in shaping informed adults who contribute to family planning, child-rearing practices, and timely school enrollment is paramount (Elliot, 1975; Barber, 1996; Barro, 1996; Krueger and Lindahl, 2001; and Fägerlind and Saha, 2016).

Zambia, since its independence, has had three prominent teacher unions - Zambia National Union of Teachers (ZNUT), Secondary School Teachers Union of Zambia (SESTUZ), and Basic School Teachers Union of Zambia (BETUZ). Aligned with established policies and guidelines, these unions play a crucial role in upholding educational standards, ensuring equity, and safeguarding the interests of all stakeholders(Habeenzu, 2016; Simuyaba, 2020; Muyunda, 2021; and Kabika *et al.*, no date). The Re-entry policy, introduced on October



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13, 1997, stands as a significant measure addressing gender inequalities in national development and bridging the gender gap in education.

Literature underscores the positive outcomes associated with teacher unions' involvement in the policy formulation process, including transparency, stakeholder engagement, improvement opportunities, policy balance, smoother implementation, a deeper understanding of educational realities, reduced legal and ethical concerns, increased ownership, support, and ultimately, higher education quality and student well-being. A lack of involvement may inadvertently introduce biases, disproportionately affect certain groups, face resistance, and diminish effectiveness and legitimacy. In this study we aimed to shed light on the factors that teacher unions considered during the formulation of the Re-entry Policy, a critical policy in addressing gender disparities in education. By understanding these factors, policymakers can make well-informed, equitable decisions, ensuring effective policy implementation and addressing legal and ethical considerations in the process.

SUMMARY LITERATURE REVIEW

Factors teacher unions looked for during the Re-Entry Policy Formulation Process

On account of the fact that policies affect the whole spectrum of the community, people from different walks of life should and could contribute to policy formulation. Many individuals and groups take part in policy formulation. Some are more important participants in this respect than others. The following institutions and factors influence policy formulation: Public bureaucrats, think tanks, interest groups, members of legislative bodies, circumstances of the environment, needs and expectations of the society and political parties (Considine, 2005; Stone, 2005; McGann, 2007; Knill and Tosun, 2008; and Cahn, 2012).

The Public Bureaucrats

The public bureaucrats (i.e. appointed government officials) are responsible for translating lofty aspirations of political leaders into attainable concrete proposals. That is, government bureaucracies are central to policy formulation as Considine (2005) quoting Cloete (1998), points out that those political executive office-bearers are well placed to influence the policies of the institutions entrusted to them. These office-bearers have at their disposal expert officials to advise them. In addition, these office-bearers are leaders in the legislative institutions which have a final say in policy matters.

Think tanks and shadow cabinets

Significant sources of policy formulation are "think tanks". These institutions usually consist of professional policy analysts and policy formulators who usually work on contract for a client. The "think-tanks" tend to be more creative and innovative than public institutions. A "think tank" could be requested by a public institution to solve a specific problem. Reports produced by a think tank have an element of respectability attached to it as they are produced by one or more experts. These "think tanks" have an inherent weakness in that the experts who constitute them have an unfortunate tendency to tell their clients what they want to hear(Considine, 2005; Stone, 2005; McGann, 2007; Knill and Tosun, 2008; and Cahn, 2012).

Interest Groups

These could also influence policy formulation. Numerous associations have been created by members of the public with interests. These groups from time to time approach government on policy matters, either to propose a new policy or an amendment of an existing policy or the scraRe-Entry Policy ng of an unfavourable policy. The aim of the interest groups is to secure tangible benefits for their members through policy adaptations. In particular instances interest groups are represented in policy formulating bodies where their vote could count. This representation enables them to be a force to be reckoned with because they are in a position to bring pressure to bear on legislators (Considine, 2005; Stone, 2005; McGann, 2007; Knill and Tosun, 2008; and Cahn, 2012).

Interest groups participate in policy formulation by identifying public problems. It is up to decision makers to accept or reject policy proposals of interest groups. In general, policy choices advocated by interest groups tend to be conservative, incremental, rarely produce sweeping changes, and serve self-interest(Considine, 2005; Stone, 2005; McGann, 2007; Knill and Tosun, 2008; and Cahn, 2012). A case in point is the educational reforms of 1977 where the elites whose conservative orientation dictated a gradualist approach to educational reform and implementation. This observation suggests that elite and incremental models of policy–making are particularly relevant to the understanding of some general causes and consequences of policy–making in developing countries. These groups broaden the range of interests represented in the policy-making. They provided a balance to the policy process and provide a strong voice for reform and change (Considine, 2005; Stone, 2005; McGann, 2007; Knill and Tosun, 2008; and Cahn, 2012).



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Members of Legislatures

Members of legislature are significant functionaries in policy formulation. A number of them involve themselves in serious policy formulation activities. Just like interest groups, parliamentarians have interest in reform rather than in incremental changes. They use formulation and advocacy as means of furthering their careers by adopting roles as national policy makers instead of emphasizing constituency service (De Winter and Wolfs, 2017).

Circumstances or the Environment

Circumstances refer to the environment as a whole in which the government operates. The environment includes the state of community life with respect to economic, technological and social matters. Dry climatic conditions and land that is not arable have necessitated the formulation of policy with respect to conservation of water and forestry. Other factors that influence policy on the state of community life are: technological developments, expectations of society, population increase and urbanization, crises, natural disasters, War and depression, international treaties and economic and industrial development (McGann and Johnson, 2005; John, 2013).

Policies of Political Parties

Both in democratic countries and one-party state the leaders of political parties govern. The ways in which they govern their countries are based on their policies. It therefore, follows that when a new political party wins an election and thus comes into power, it could introduce policy change. Other matters which could change when a new political party takes over the government are priorities (Knill and Tosun, 2008; Cahn, 2012).

Neo-Institutional Theory

The Neo-Institutional Theory was used to underpin this study. The theory was employed to understand reasons which may have driven teacher unions to participate in the formulation of the re-entry policy which could include societal expectations. Neo-institutional theory helped to explain how external pressures and institutional contexts shape union behavior in policy processes (Lounsbury and Zhao, 2013). For example, if there were legal mandates requiring teacher union participation in education policy development, unions would be more likely to be engaging. In this study teacher union involvement in the formulation of the re-entry policy in Zambia, Neo-Institutional Theory was applied to understand why teacher unions may have participated in policy formulation. It helped analyze how external institutional pressures, such as legal requirements, societal norms, and expectations, influenced the behavior of teacher unions. Specifically, the theory was used to examine whether legal mandates or societal expectations regarding teacher union involvement played a role in their participation in the development of the re-entry policy. Additionally, the theory shed more light on how teacher unions adapted to these external institutional pressures and whether their participation was driven by conformity to institutional norms or coercive forces. By applying Neo-Institutional Theory, the study explored the institutional context in which teacher unions operate and how this context shaped how their engagement fostered their factoring-in expectations of society in the policy-making process (Lounsbury and Zhao, 2013).

Methods

In this investigation, we employed three fundamental dimensions of the study process, namely ontology, epistemology, and axiology, following the framework proposed by Naeem, (2020)). Employing a qualitative case study design, the study was conducted in Zambia, with a sample drawn from schools, zones, districts, and provinces, employing a convenient sampling method. The study population included 20 Teacher Union Representatives selected from the Zambia National Union of Teachers (ZNUT) and the Secondary School Teachers Union of Zambia (SESTUZ), along with directors from the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) Department. To determine the sample size for the qualitative research, we adhered to the recommendations of Creswell (1998) and Morse (1994), resulting in a sample of 26 participants (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007; Mason, 2010; Omona, 2013; Kumar, Kumar and PRABHU, 2020; Bekele and Ago, 2022). However, due to data saturation, interviews were conducted with only 11 union representatives and 4 directors. Data collection involved the utilization of interview guides administered to all participants, and thematic analysis was applied for data interpretation. To ensure validity, content validity was addressed by formulating interview questions based on an extensive literature review and the study's conceptual framework. Construct validity was reinforced through data triangulation from diverse sources and methods (Franklin and Ballan, 2001). Ethical clearance for the study was obtained from the University of Zambia Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies.

Findings

Considering the theoretical framework that served as the study's foundation as well as the study's specific objective, which was to explore how teacher unions were involved in the formulation of the Re-Entry Policy. **Table 1** outlines the all the stated themes and sub-themes which guides the analysis.



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Table 1: Study Themes

Objective	Major Theme	Sub Themes
To describe factors that teacher unions look for during Re-Entry Policy formulation	Factors that teacher unions looked for during Re-Entry Policy formulation.	 Inclusivity Adequate resources Quality of education Support for teachers Protection of learners' rights Sustainability

Factors that teacher unions looked for during Re-Entry Policy formulation

It was established that teacher unions are important stakeholders in education policy formulation and play a crucial role in advocating for the rights of teachers and promoting quality education for all learners. Furthermore, regarding the formulation of re-entry policies, which aim to provide educational opportunities for girls who have dropped out of school due to pregnancy or other reasons, teacher unions typically look for a range of factors to ensure that the policy is effective and meets the needs of learners. The under listed are the established factors which teacher unions looked for during the re-entry policy formulation: Overall, teacher unions look for policies that promote inclusive and quality education, are adequately resourced and sustainable, and are supportive of both learners and teachers. In the case of re-entry policies, these factors are especially important to ensure that girls who have dropped out of school are able to access education and reach their full potential.

Inclusivity

"Teacher unions advocate for policies that are inclusive and that promote access to education for all learners. In the case of re-entry policies, teacher unions look for policies that are inclusive of girls who have dropped out of school due to pregnancy or other reasons" (R9).

Adequate resources

R4 and R6 stated that "teacher unions look at the re-entry policy as a policy that is adequately resourced to ensure that it is implemented effectively. This may include funding for trainings, workshops, infrastructure, and resources such as textbooks and teaching materials".

Quality of Education

R7 said that "Teacher unions are committed to promoting quality education, and they look for a re-entry policy that is focused on improving the quality of education for all learners, including those who have dropped out of school".

Support for Teachers

"Teacher unions advocate for a re-entry policy that support and empower teachers, provide training and professional development opportunities" (R1 and R6).

Protection of Learners' Rights

"Teacher unions look a re-entry policy that protect the rights of learners, including the right to education, the right to be free from discrimination, and the right to a safe and supportive learning environment" (R8).

Sustainability

"Teacher unions looked a re-entry policy that is sustainable in the long term and that can be implemented effectively over time. The policy should also be adaptable to changing circumstances and that it can be scaled up or down as needed" (R7).

DC 1 and 2 "...Right of the teachers Right of children. Ability and management. Organization and management Adequate infrastructure and facilities". DC 3 and 4 "Education funding, ability, organization and management. Rights of the learners and the teachers themselves. The factors teacher Unions look for, are all in line with the standard factors which must be in any policy document"

DISCUSSION

Teacher unions are recognized as significant stakeholders in education policy formulation, as they play a crucial role in advocating for teachers' rights and advancing quality education for all students (Chishimba, 2015 and Nzala, 2022). When it comes to the formulation of re-entry policies, which aim to provide educational opportunities for girls who have discontinued their schooling due to pregnancy



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or other reasons, teacher unions consider several factors to ensure that the policy is effective and meets the needs of learners (Simuyaba, 2020). Many factors have been established as key considerations for teacher unions during the formulation of re-entry policies (Thelma, Phiri and Mutepuka, 2023). Teacher unions emphasize the importance of re-entry policies that promote inclusivity and ensure that all learners, including girls, have equal access to quality education. They advocate for policies that address the specific challenges faced by girls who have dropped out of school, providing them with the necessary support and opportunities to continue their education. Teacher unions look for re-entry policies that are adequately resourced(Habeenzu, 2016). This includes provisions for additional classrooms, qualified teachers, teaching materials, and support services to accommodate the re-entry of girls into the educational system. Adequate resources are essential to ensure a smooth transition and provide a conducive learning environment for all student(Sinkala, Simui and Muleya, 2022)s.

Furthermore, teacher unions recognize the importance of sustainable re-entry policies that can be effectively implemented and maintained in the long term(Simuyaba, 2020b, 2020a and Nzala, 2022). They advocate for policies that consider the financial, infrastructural, and human resource implications to ensure that the re-entry program can be sustained and expanded over time. Additionally, teacher unions advocate for re-entry policies that provide comprehensive support for learners who have dropped out of school (Simuyaba, 2020b, 2020a and Nzala, 2022). This includes counselling services, mentorship programs, life skills training, and other forms of support to address the specific needs and challenges faced by returning girls. Ensuring a supportive environment is crucial for their successful reintegration and academic progress. Teacher unions also prioritize policies that provide support for teachers involved in the re-entry process. This includes professional development opportunities, training on gender-responsive teaching methodologies, and support networks to help teachers effectively engage and support returning girls in the classroom (Simuyaba, 2020b, 2020a and Nzala, 2022).

It suffices to state here therefore, that teacher unions look for re-entry policies that promote inclusive and quality education, are adequately resourced and sustainable, and provide support for both learners and teachers. These factors are crucial to ensure that girls who have dropped out of school due to various reasons, including pregnancy, have the opportunity to access education and thrive academically. By advocating for these considerations, teacher unions play a vital role in shaping re-entry policies that contribute to the overall advancement of education and gender equality(Simuyaba, 2020a; and Muyunda, 2021). However, difference have been noticed between what this study has reported and which literature reports on what teacher unions look for in the formulation and implementation of policy. Due to the wide-ranging impact of policies on the entire community, it is important and feasible for individuals from diverse backgrounds to contribute to policy formulation (Thelma, Phiri and Mutepuka, 2023). Numerous individuals and groups participate in this process, with some playing more significant roles than others. The following institutions and factors have an influence on policy formulation: public bureaucrats, think tanks, interest groups, members of legislative bodies, environmental circumstances, societal needs and expectations, and political parties (Thelma, Phiri and Mutepuka, 2023).

Public bureaucrats, who are appointed government officials, play a crucial role in translating the ambitious visions of political leaders into practical and achievable proposals. Government bureaucracies are central to policy formulation, as highlighted by Considine (2005) quoting Cloete (1998), as the political executives have the ability to influence the policies of the institutions under their responsibility. These officials have access to expert advisors, and they also hold leadership positions in legislative bodies that have final decision-making authority in policy matters. "Think tanks" serve as significant sources of policy formulation. These institutions typically consist of professional policy analysts and formulators who work on a contractual basis for clients. Think tanks are often more innovative and creative compared to public institutions. Public entities may engage think tanks to address specific problems, and the reports produced by these think tanks hold credibility due to being authored by one or more experts (Pempel, 1974; Mentoor, 1995; Stone, 2005; McGann, 2007; Knill and Tosun, 2008; Chopra, 2011). However, a limitation of think tanks is that the experts involved tend to tell their clients what they want to hear. Interest groups also exert influence on policy formulation. Various associations are formed by members of the public who share common interests. These groups periodically engage with the government on policy matters, whether to propose new policies, suggest amendments to existing ones, or advocate for the removal of unfavorable policies. Interest groups aim to secure tangible benefits for their members through policy adjustments. In some cases, interest groups have representation in policy formulating bodies, which gives them a voting power and the ability to exert pressure on legislators (Pempel, 1974; Mentoor, 1995; Stone, 2005; McGann, 2007; Knill and Tosun, 2008; Chopra, 2011).

Interest groups participate in policy formulation by identifying public problems. The decision-makers have the authority to accept or reject the policy proposals put forth by interest groups (Mentoor, 1995). Generally, the policy choices advocated by interest groups tend to be conservative and incremental, rarely resulting in radical changes, as they primarily serve the self-interests of the groups. For instance, the educational reforms of 1977 demonstrated how conservative elites favored a gradualist approach to reform and



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implementation (Mentoor, 1995; Majone, 1996; Stone, 2005; and Chopra, 2011). This observation indicates that elite and incremental models of policy-making are particularly relevant when analyzing the causes and consequences of policy-making in developing countries. Interest groups contribute to diversifying the range of interests represented in policy-making, providing a counterbalance to the process and advocating for reform and change(Pempel, 1974; Majone, 1996; Chopra, 2011; Verger, Fontdevila and Zancajo, 2016; and Peters, 2018).

Members of legislative bodies play a significant role in policy formulation. Many legislators actively engage in policy formulation activities (Mathew, 1994). Similar to interest groups, parliamentarians prioritize reform over incremental changes. They utilize policy formulation and advocacy as a means to advance their careers by assuming roles as national policy makers, rather than solely focusing on constituency service (Mathew, 1994). Circumstances refer to the overall environment in which the government operates. This environment encompasses various aspects of community life, such as economic, technological, and social factors. For instance, dry climatic conditions and non-arable land necessitate the formulation of policies related to water conservation and forestry. Other factors influencing policy include technological developments, societal expectations, population growth and urbanization, crises, natural disasters, wars and depressions, international treaties, and economic and industrial development (Maurice, Kanayo and Nancy, 2014).

Linking the Study Results to the Theory

The study's findings on the factors that teacher unions looked for in the 1997 Re-Entry Policy in Zambia align closely with Neo-Institutional Theory. Neo-Institutional Theory provides valuable insights into how the institutional environment within the Ministry of General Education and other educational institutions significantly shaped the involvement of teacher unions in the policy formulation process(Lounsbury and Zhao, 2013). The legal frameworks, administrative procedures, and historical practices identified in the study resonate with the core tenets of Neo-Institutional Theory, demonstrating how these institutional factors influenced the strategies and approaches adopted by teacher unions. The theory helps elucidate the institutional dynamics that guided the unions' actions and decision-making, offering a theoretical framework to interpret the study's empirical findings (Mathew, 1994).

Contribution to the body of knowledge

Teacher Unions' Influence on Educational Policy Formation: This study provides empirical evidence supporting the active and significant role of teacher unions in shaping educational policies in Zambia. The findings highlight their involvement in formulating the re-entry policy, shedding light on the specific advocacy and negotiation strategies employed. Understanding these strategies offers valuable insights into how teacher unions effectively engage with government officials and stakeholders to represent the interests of educators and students. The study delved into the factors that teacher unions considered crucial during the formulation of the re-entry policy. Factors such as inclusivity, adequate resources, quality education, support for teachers, protection of learners' rights, and policy sustainability emerged as focal points. The research emphasizes the importance of stakeholder engagement, particularly with teacher unions, in policy-making processes. The collaborative efforts between unions, government agencies, and education experts are highlighted as essential for creating more inclusive and robust educational policies.

CONCLUSION

The study uncovered that, in the formulation of the 1997 Re-Entry Policy in Zambia, teacher unions actively sought factors such as inclusivity, adequate resources, quality education, support for teachers, protection of learners' rights, and policy sustainability. These identified factors underscore the critical role teacher unions play in shaping education policies to ensure their effectiveness, practicality, and inclusivity. The study emphasizes the indispensable contribution of teacher unions to the policy-making process, ultimately benefiting teachers, students, and the entire education system. Recognizing the significance of these findings, it is imperative to acknowledge the limitations of the study. To address these limitations, future research endeavors should prioritize expanding the sample size, overcoming time constraints, ensuring generalizability to diverse contexts, and enhancing access to privileged information. This will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the intricate dynamics involved in teacher unions' roles in education policy formulation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Administrative Recommendations

The administrative recommendations stemming from the study align closely with the factors that teacher unions sought during the reentry policy formulation:

I. Strengthening Collaboration: The call for stronger collaboration echoes the emphasis on inclusivity found in the study's findings. Inclusivity, one of the factors sought by teacher unions, is essential for effective collaboration between unions, government agencies, and other stakeholders.



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- II. Formalizing Union Representation: Formalizing teacher union representation in policymaking bodies resonates with the study's identification of factors like protection of learners' rights and support for teachers. This recommendation emphasizes ensuring a meaningful voice for teacher unions in key decision-making processes.
- III. Continuous Evaluation and Feedback: This administrative recommendation aligns with the study's findings regarding the factors of policy sustainability and quality education. Continuous evaluation ensures that the contributions of teacher unions are continuously assessed, reinforcing the importance of sustained quality in educational policies.

Future research Recommendations

The future research recommendations also draw connections to the study's findings:

- I. Increase Sample Diversity: The study identified inclusivity as a critical factor, and expanding the sample diversity in future research aligns with this finding, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of teacher union involvement.
- II. Engage Multiple Stakeholders: The study highlighted the importance of engaging diverse stakeholders, and the recommendation to include a wider range of education stakeholders in future research aligns with this emphasis.
- III. Triangulation of Data: The study's factors such as quality education and support for teachers can benefit from a more nuanced perspective through the triangulation of data, incorporating multiple methods to enhance the richness of information.
- IV. Comparative Studies: The study underscored the importance of factors like policy sustainability, and conducting comparative studies across regions aligns with this emphasis, allowing for a nuanced understanding of contextual factors that influence the impact of teacher unions.

Limitations of the Study

- I. Sample Size: The recommendation to increase sample diversity directly addresses the limitation of a limited sample size in the study, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding.
- II. Time Constraints: Acknowledging time constraints in future research can help address the potential limitations in capturing evolving dynamics over time, ensuring a more in-depth analysis.
- III. Generalizability: The study's findings specific to Zambia may not be fully generalizable, and future research considering comparative studies across regions aligns with this limitation, providing a broader context for understanding teacher union involvement.

In summary, the recommendations and limitations identified in the study are interconnected with the factors sought by teacher unions during the re-entry policy formulation, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity, sustained quality, and contextual understanding in educational policymaking.

About the Authors

Charity Kampamba is currently the General secretary of the National Union of Public and Private Educators of Zambia (NUPPEZ) and currently finalizing her Doctorate degree in Doctor of philosophy in Educational policy studies with the University of Zambia-Zimbabwe Open University (UNZA-ZOU). She holds a Master of Business Administration - Human Resource Management (HRM), Bachelor's Degree in Adult Education (BED- Adult) from Zambia Open University (Zaou). In addition, she has a Diploma in Education (DIP-English and physical Education) and certificate in primary Education. Her research interest includes......

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Halinga Johnathan is a highly skilled professional with a diverse background in demography, research, development studies, mathematics, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Holding a Master of Arts in Population Studies from the University of Zambia and specialized training in M&E, Halinga excels in research design, data collection, and quantitative and qualitative analysis. His commitment to evidence-based decision-making is reflected in his proficiency with statistical tools like SPSS, STATA, and Power Query. Demonstrating exceptional leadership, versatility, and integrity, Halinga has contributed significantly to demography, epidemiology, biostatistics, and public health and among others. His collaborative approach in remote teams showcases his ability to achieve goals in dynamic environments. With a dedication to synthesizing evidence for impactful presentations, Halinga is a valuable



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asset to the academic community. His extensive expertise, combined with a rich history of research, publications, and academic research mentorship, highlights his passion for making meaningful contributions to various fields.

Competing Interests

Authors declare no competing interests.

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Author Contributions

Charity Kampamba concepted the idea and developed it fully, outlined the data analysis plan and provided technical analysis of the data. She provided all the resources for this study. Johnathan Halinga cleaned the data set, analysed the data and drafted the findings. Fidelis Muzyamba provided guidance from the outset of the idea to the finalization of the paper.

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