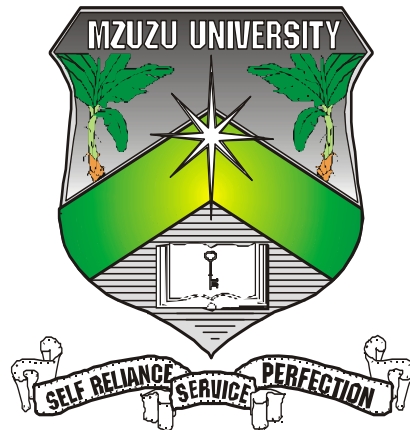


MZUZU UNIVERSITY



**ASSESSING THE ROLE OF EDUCATION MANAGERS IN TEACHER
RETENTION: THE CASE OF COMMUNITY DAY SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN PHALOMBE DISTRICT OF MALAWI**

SUBMITTED BY

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THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND
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Statement of Originality

I, Hartley Kaluwa do hereby declare that the work contained herein, including the organization and writing of this thesis '*Assessing the role of education managers in teacher retention: the case of Community Day Secondary Schools in Phalombe District of Malawi*' is entirely my own and has been carried out at Mzuzu University Education and Teaching Studies (ETS) Department under the supervision of Dr. Dominic Mapopa Ndengu. This thesis has been specifically submitted as partial fulfilment for the award of the degree of Master of Education (Leadership and Management) of Mzuzu University. All reference materials as used in this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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Signature: _____ Date: _____

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all teachers and education managers who continually give their all and are resilient despite the enormous challenges prevalent in the teaching profession. You are my heroes.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to all people whose contributions, support, criticisms and encouragement were very crucial in the writing of this thesis. However, their precious names cannot all be mentioned in this work. Of special recognition is my supervisor Dr. Dominic Mapopa Ndengu, whose technical guidance; encouragement and patience have greatly contributed to the completion of this thesis in time.

My deep gratitude to my Head-teacher, Mr. James Kamphonje, my mother, my brother Christopher, and my fiancée Joyce M'bweza for their support. I am indebted also to a village of friends notable among them Komani Augustine Tembo, Reagan Kaluluma, Babette Juwayeyi (Namantwesa), and Milward Tobias for their constructive criticisms and suggestions and also for their financial and moral support. May they be inspired by this research study.

Abstract

Teacher attrition and turnover is one of the challenges besetting the teaching profession in Malawi. This challenge has a number of implications among them teacher shortage. The profession has been described as ‘a profession at risk’ due to the high turnover rates. Therefore, identifying the factors and understanding teachers who leave the profession, and under what conditions is important for formulating and employing strategies that target and promote teacher retention. The purpose of this study was to assess the role of education managers in promoting teacher retention in CDSSs in Phalombe district. The study sought to establish the causes of teacher attrition and turnover in Phalombe district, the impact of teacher attrition and turnover on the quality of teaching and learning in Phalombe district, strategies education managers currently use to promote teacher retention in Phalombe district and strategies that education managers can employ in order to promote teacher retention in Phalombe district. Employing a qualitative case study design guided by a blend of Herzberg two factor theory and Open systems theory as its theoretical framework, this study was carried out in some selected Community Day Secondary Schools in Phalombe district.

Findings suggest that teacher attrition and turnover in Phalombe is attributed to a plethora of factors which concern three themes namely: job satisfaction, working conditions and issues of staff development. Attrition and turnover have adverse impacts on quality of teaching and learning as they create shortages of teachers, high pupil-to qualified teacher ratio, and lead to stress and burnout in the teachers, demotivation and poor learner performance. However, improvements in aforementioned thematic areas could be strategies to promote teacher retention.

The study concludes by asserting that promoting teacher retention requires a multi-sectoral approach.

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List of abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation.
CDSS	Community Day Secondary School
DCE	Domasi College of Education
DEM	District Education Manager
DEP	District Implementation Plan
DfID	Department for International Development
EDM	Education Division Manager
ESIP	Education Sector Implementation Plan
HIV	Human Immune-deficiency Virus
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
ODL	Open (and) Distance Learning
PqTR	Pupil to qualified Teacher Ratio
PT	Primary Teacher
PTA	Parents and Teachers Association
SHED	Shire Highlands Education Division
SMC	School Management Committee
SMT	School Management Team

TSC Teaching Service Commission

UNIMA University of Malawi

VSO Volunteers Services Oversees

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CHAPTER ONE

Introducing the study

1.1 Background to the study

Qualified teachers are the most expensive and, possibly, the most critical component in establishing quality in education systems (Mulkeen, Chapman, DeJaeghere & Leu, 2007). They are the most valued human resources that are central to achieving quality education. Unfortunately, the teaching profession worldwide is beset of many challenges among them qualified teacher attrition due to among other reasons, turnover which lead to shortages more especially in public schools. Mayhew (2014) defines attrition as a reduction in workforce. From the teaching profession perspective, Mulkeen (2004) expresses attrition as all losses of qualified teachers from the profession, for whatever reason. As noted by Kavenuke (2013), the teaching profession has become a 'profession at risk' as it is losing qualified teachers who join other professions or take up non-teaching posts. As teachers leave the profession to join other professions, they create acute shortages of qualified teachers. The challenges of attrition and turnover, and its effect of shortages of teachers in schools have serious adverse impacts on the quality of the education system. The situation is not any different in Malawi where attrition of qualified teachers rears its ugly face in critical teacher shortages in public schools more especially in secondary schools.

While there is no doubt that many countries face challenges of teacher supply, there are equally serious challenges of teacher deployment. Mulkeen (2004) observes that in many countries there are more qualified teachers in urban areas while there are unfilled posts in

rural areas. In a study conducted in conjunction with the World Bank in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda and Tanzania, Mulkeen observes that governments in Africa have challenges in supplying quality education services in rural areas. He points out that due to poor working conditions in rural schools, there is a high transfer rate of teachers from rural schools in preference to teach in urban areas. Such teacher initiated transfers are high in the least desired schools more especially in the rural areas (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007; Mulkeen et al., 2007; Mulkeen, 2010; Waddell, 2010) and this result into chronic teacher shortages in the rural schools (Mulkeen et al., 2007; Mulkeen, 2010; Waddell, 2010). In Malawi, due to high transfer rates in rural areas, it has been observed that there is an imbalanced allocation of qualified teachers across the country. Accordingly, teacher allocation is highly skewed to urban areas (MoEST, 2008b; UNESCO, 2014). Thus rural areas are utterly deprived of qualified teachers. According to the Malawi Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP), the high transfer rate and its subsequent teacher allocation imbalance largely emanate from the lack of incentives for the teachers to be retained in rural settings.

Amidst skewed teacher allocation, Malawi is also faced by high teacher turnover rates particularly in poorer, lower-performing schools (MoEST, 2008a; Issue Brief, 2008) which has an adverse effect on the student's success as well as attaining quality education. According to Mulkeen (2010), turnover rate refers to the rate at which employees leave an organization. In Mulkeen's words, the term 'turnover' has to do with an employee leaving an organization for whatever reason. This definition was adopted in this study.

As alluded to earlier on, attrition and turnover of qualified teachers in public secondary schools in Malawi result in acute teacher shortages. MoEST (2008b) and UNESCO (2014)

express that shortage of qualified teachers in public secondary schools is very acute more especially in rural areas of Malawi. MoEST and UNESCO bemoan the high attrition and turnover rates in rural schools more especially Community Day Secondary Schools(CDSSs) thereby hampering the quality of education delivery.

Mulkeen (2010) further makes an observation that attrition is broad as it also encompasses inter-school migration. This is so because when qualified teachers leave their schools for another, it often times takes long to replace which in turn, undermines quality of instruction of students (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007; Waddell, 2010). Given this understanding, in the context of this study, attrition must be understood broadly as expressed by Mulkeen.

The problem of attrition and turnover dares education authorities to look for strategies that can cause a *paradigm shift* to focus on promoting teacher retention in public schools more especially secondary schools in rural areas. According to Mulkeen (2010), and Kayuni and Tambulasi (2007), teacher retention is concerned with keeping teachers in the classrooms so as to avert the challenges of teacher shortages which come as a result of qualified teacher attrition and turnover. It therefore calls for new and more effective approaches to the preparation and deployment of teachers, improvements in the working conditions, accompanied by more effective school leadership and management in order to promote teacher retention and therefore achieve higher standards of the education system globally and more especially in Malawi (Mulkeen et al., 2007). The explanation of teacher retention as given by Mulkeen (2010) and Kayuni and Tambulasi (2007) formed the basis of understanding teacher retention in the context of this study.

Mulkeen et al (2007) underscore the importance of effective leadership in promoting teacher retention. Education managers, those personnel charged with the responsibility of managing education and its resources, have therefore a critical role to play to bring about a turnaround and promote teacher retention. These education managers include; head-teachers, Primary Education Advisors (PEAs), District Education Managers (DEMs), Education Division Managers (EDMS) and those at the Ministry of Education headquarters. However, in the context of this study, with its focus on CDSSs, the term education manager is confined to the head-teacher and the DEM as these are charged with the responsibility to manage teachers at school and district level.

In light of the problems of the teacher attrition, the next section talks about formal education in Malawi for one to appreciate the need for teacher retention in public schools more especially CDSSs in rural areas.

1.2 Formal education in Malawi

Formal education in Malawi is categorized into 3 namely: primary, secondary and tertiary. Upon completion of 8 years in primary school education, learners proceed to secondary schools. According to USAID (2007), the gross enrollment rate for secondary schools is 28%. After completion of the 4 years in secondary schools, students enter tertiary education where it takes mostly 2 to 4 years to finish depending on the level of course of study, that is certificate, diploma or degree.

The public school education is provided and centrally managed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST). In 1998, the ministry through a decentralization program saw the management part decentralized to divisions and districts. The primary schools were

devolved to local assemblies and managed by the DEM. The secondary school category is managed at divisional level under the EDM. There are 6 divisions: 3 in the south namely; Shire Highlands Education Division (SHED) South West Education Division (SWED) and South East Education Division (SEED); two in the center namely; Central East Education Division (CEED) and Central West Education Division (CEED), and 1 in the north, the North Education Division (NED). However, there is a challenge in terms of teacher management in CDSSs. This is because most teachers in CDSSs are qualified primary school teachers, managed by the DEM yet the schools being part of the secondary school category are managed by the EDM.

MoEST (2008) puts the annual attrition rate for public teachers in Malawi at 12%. This accounts for all teacher attrition across the formal education system. Among its numerous challenges, teacher retention more especially in schools located in rural areas ranks high above other challenges such as acute qualified teacher shortages, inadequate teaching and learning materials, and skewed teacher deployment.

1.2.1 Secondary school category

Secondary school education is offered predominantly through five types of schools namely: Conventional Secondary Schools (CSSs), Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs), Open schools (run by government through Malawi College of Distance Education), grant-aided secondary school (where government provides some support but are run by independent boards) and private schools.

CSSs (boarding and day) are government supported schools and are the most privileged with regard to educational infrastructure and quality teaching staff (MoEST, 2008;). There are 96

CSSs in Malawi. CDSSs, previously known as Distance Education Centres (DECs), are government schools established with community assistance and they are the most deprived in terms of resources and quality of staff. The MoEST further reports that there are 575 CDSSs (308 approved and 267 not approved). These enroll 47% of secondary school population and 67% of students in government run schools.

1.2.2 Secondary education in Phalombe

The District Education Plan (DEP) for Phalombe reports that the district has 17 secondary schools of these 5 are private schools. The remaining 12 are public schools of which 1 is a conventional boarding school, Phalombe Secondary School and one, a conventional day secondary school, Michesi Secondary School. The rest, 10 in number, are CDSSs and these are located far away from the *boma* with the nearest being 6 km.

Among the many challenges faced, the Phalombe DEP (2010) cites that most of the teachers in the CDSSs are underqualified. It also mentions of high transfer rates of teachers who move out of the district which by status is a rural district. Among the many challenges affecting the education sector in Phalombe, the DEP cites inadequate number of qualified teachers in Phalombe, challenges in teacher deployment as many refuse to be deployed into the district, inadequate proper school infrastructure, and lack of incentives for the teachers so that they are retained in the rural areas. .

This study sought to assess the role of education managers in promoting teacher retention specifically in CDSSs in Phalombe.

1.3 Problem statement

The challenge of teacher turnover in Malawi is well documented (Kayuni & Tambulasi, 2007; Mulkeen, 2004; Pitsoe & Machaisa, 2012). The responsible ministry, MoEST, acknowledges that secondary school sector in Malawi is facing serious challenges among which is inadequate supply of qualified teachers, especially in CDSSs (MoEST, 2008a).

Teacher recruitment and deployment has been likened to pouring water into a bucket with holes beneath. Considering that it is in schools where teachers decide either to leave stay, it is therefore imperative that the education managers take steps to address the situation proactively before attrition and turnover reach critical point. Education managers are the ones that interact and manage teachers on daily basis. However, it is not clear how these managers can help to reduce teacher turnover and promote retention. It is against this gap that this study therefore sought to assess the role of education managers to promote teacher retention in rural Community Day Secondary Schools in Phalombe district.

1.4 Critical research question.

How can education managers in Phalombe support teacher retention?

1.4.1 Sub questions

1. What are the causes of teacher attrition in Phalombe?
2. How does teacher attrition affect the quality of teaching and learning in Phalombe?
3. What strategies do education managers in Phalombe use to promote teacher retention?
4. What strategies can education managers in Phalombe deploy to promote teacher retention in schools?

1.4.2 Research questions matrix

The aim of producing this matrix was to guide how data that directly answer these research questions were to be collected.

	Research question	From whom?	How?
1	What are the causes of attrition in Phalombe?	Teachers, DEM	Interview and participant observation
2	How does teacher attrition affect quality of teaching and learning in Phalombe?	Head-teachers and DEM	Interviews
3	What strategies do education managers in Phalombe use to support teacher retention?	Head-teachers and DEM	Interviews
4	What strategies can education managers in Phalombe deploy to promote teacher retention in schools?	Teachers, Head-teachers and DEM	Interviews

Table 1. 1: Research questions matrix

1.5 Purpose of study

The purpose of this study was to assess the role of education managers in promoting teacher retention in rural Community Day Secondary Schools in Phalombe district.

1.6 Significance of the study

Since this study was aimed at assessing the role of education managers in teacher retention, its findings are valuable to education managers as they provide them with useful information in promoting teacher retention. They are also beneficial to other stakeholders in the education sector such as members of the community, the Parents and Teachers' Association, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) working in the education sector *inter alia*.

1.7 Theoretical framework of the study

There are various theories of teacher attrition and turnover. However, this study was grounded in a blend of the Hertzberg's two factor hygiene motivation theory, as a major theoretical framework and the open systems theory, as a supporting theoretical framework. Hertzberg's theory posits that the presence of motivating and hygiene factors would enhance either satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Therefore education managers can enrich teacher's work through increased motivators while cushioning adequately the hygiene factors. This would promote satisfaction hence ensuring teacher retention. Ludwig Bertalanffy's *open systems* theory was also of great value in this study as it enables managers to check on *boundary management* to ensure effectiveness of the system. A blend of these two theories provided a good theoretical framework to answer the study's critical research question.

Hertzberg's two factor theory of motivation focuses on work satisfaction. Cole (2004) explains that Hertzberg believed that there are certain factors that tend to lead to job satisfaction (which he called **motivators** or **satisfiers**), whereas others lead to job dissatisfaction (**hygiene** or **dissatisfiers**). On the one hand, motivators as noted by Aamodt (2010) are job elements that do concern actual tasks and duties (i.e. they are related to *content*). Examples of motivators would be achievement, recognition, the interest in the job itself, level of responsibility, growth and advancement in the profession. Hygiene factors, on the other hand, are those job-related elements that result from but do not involve the job itself. That is, they are more related to the *context*, or the environment of the work (Cole, 2004). As expounded by Hayden (2011) Hertzberg's theory posits that hygiene factors like; organization policies and its administration leadership, working conditions, salary and job security, do not lead to higher levels of motivation, nonetheless devoid of these factors, there is dissatisfaction. In the words of Aamodt (2010) if a hygiene factor is not present at an adequate level, work is dissatisfying. Hygiene factors therefore are considered maintenance factors that are necessary to avoid dissatisfaction but they do not themselves contribute to the jobs satisfaction and motivation of personnel. That is, they only maintain employees in the job.

Herzberg argued that when motivators are absent, workers are neutral towards work, but when motivators are present, workers are highly motivated to excel at their work. Therefore managers should provide hygiene factors to reduce sources of worker dissatisfaction and be sure to include motivators because they can motivate workers and lead ultimately to job satisfaction.

The Herzberg two-factor theory therefore leads considerably to *job enrichment*. That is, designing the jobs so that they contain a greater number of motivators while also cushioning with hygiene factors.

The supporting theoretical framework, open systems theory, perceives organizations as being receptive to a number of dependent and key variables (Bastedo, 2004). These variables include: people, technology, organization structure and the environment (that is, the external conditions affecting the organization). Lunenberg (2010) notes that the theory assumes that all large organizations consist of multiple subsystems, each of which receives inputs from other subsystems and turns them into outputs for use by other subsystems. That is, the environment feeds the organization with people and information (i.e. **inputs**) among others. These inputs undergo a conversion process (referred as **throughputs**) to yield products, ideas or services (that is, **outcomes**). The outcomes are released to the environment and the process goes in a cyclic form (<http://education-portal.com>). This entails that the organization continuously interacts with its environment.

The open systems theory views the organization as system of interrelated sets of activities which enable inputs to be converted into outputs. The theory in principle, studies elements of the organization in terms of their interface with one another and with their external environment. It therefore endeavors to explain or predict organizational behavior in a multidimensional way by studying people, structure, technology and the environment at one and the same time.

One important aspect of this theory is ‘boundary’. Cole (2004) mentions that boundaries in social systems are based on relationships. He posits that results of management decisions (or

choices they make) determine where the organization ends, and the environment (or the other sub-system) begins. He called this ‘*boundary management*’ which is critical to the adeptness of those in managerial and supervisory roles. In this context, *boundarymanagement* means establishing and maintaining effective relationships with colleagues in neighboring sub-systems.

Feedback is an important element in any communication processes even in organization. In terms of the open systems theory, feedback loops are means of confirming success or signaling corrections that the systems need to be made. A negative feedback loop indicates a problem which needs to be corrected while a positive feedback loop identifies outputs that have worked well (Cole, 2004). Teacher turnover is a negative feedback loop that we get from the school, which therefore requires correction. Studying the boundary management by education managers, would in turn improve the effectiveness of the education system and by extension improve teacher retention.

The foregoing theoretical exposition, with its focus on relationship between job enrichment and boundary management, therefore seemed to provide a platform on which to assess the role of education managers in promoting teacher retention as argued by Waddell (2010).

1.8 Summary to chapter

Teacher retention is a serious problem in public schools especially CDSSs. Thus this chapter has given an overview of the study topic, the critical research question and its sub questions that this study sought to answer. For a better understanding of the reasons for attrition, and to have an insight into effective strategies to promote teacher retention, the study used a blend of two theoretical frameworks namely; the Herzberg two factor theory and the open systems

theory. Herzberg's two factor theory concerns itself in factors that promote job satisfaction and those that lead to job dissatisfaction, while the open systems theory, brings to the fore how interactions between the organization and its environment inter-influence each other. The theoretical framework provides a framework on which to assess the role of education managers in teacher retention.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of related literature

2.1 Introduction to chapter

The concern for teacher retention is a global phenomenon (Cowan, 2010; Mulkeen, 2010; Waddell, 2010). The significance of the issue of teacher retention has led to substantial literature on the subject in the field of education research. Understanding who leaves, when, and under what conditions is important for policy formulations that target teacher retention. This section reviews the literature especially in the area of definition of the concepts of attrition, turnover and retention, causes of teacher turnover, its impact on the quality of teaching and learning and suggested strategies that if education managers effectively employ them, can lead to the promotion of teacher retention.

2.2 Understanding concepts

2.2.1 Attrition

The term, attrition according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, comes from a Latin word “atterere” which means to “to rub against”. Therefore, attrition is defined as “a reduction in numbers usually as a result of resignation, retirement or death” (www.merriam-webster.com/.../attrition). George and Jones (2012) define attrition as number of employees leaving the organization permanently. He also says that attrition is synonymous to the term ‘quit’. Mulkeen (2010) refers to attrition to mean all permanent losses of teachers from the teaching profession, for whatever reason.

Mulkeen (2010) however brings in another dimension to attrition by looking at inter-school migration, or simply transfers. He explains this in relation to preference of some schools over the other or preference of locations over the other. He further observes that while such movements are not technically attrition, as the teachers remain in the profession, however they result into shortage of teacher shortages in the less desired locations.

The definitions attrition show that of concern, is the number of people that leave the organization regardless of the reasons.

2.2.2 Turnover

Croasmum, Hampton and Herman (2002) explain the concept of turnover as the movement of employees out of the organization or any permanent departure beyond organizational boundaries. Armstrong (2006) explains turnover as the analysis of the numbers of people leaving the organization. The definitions of turnover when read together with the definition of attrition, one sees that they talk about one and the same thing. No wonder, George and Jones, and Armstrong use these terms attrition and turnover interchangeably. It is noted from these authors that attrition or turnover is manifested in labor shortage.

As applied to teaching profession, turnover refers to the number of teachers leaving the profession for diverse reasons.

2.2.3 Retention

According to Acom (2010) the word 'retention' connotes a state whereby employees of their own free will decideto work and stay with their organizations. Chinelo and Agbah (2013) define retention as the art of an organization to retain its employees. Furthermore, they also

consider it as relating to the efforts by which employers attempt to retain their workforce. Armstrong (2006) and Mulkeen (2010) both explain retention as an ability to keep employees in the organization.

Humans are the most valuable resource in any organization as observed by Cole (2004) and Armstrong (2006). In the case of the education system, teachers are the engine and drivers of the education system without them, learners cannot be moulded into responsible and productive members of the society. Therefore to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the education system, there is need to offset teacher attrition and turnover, and promote teacher retention.

From the definitions of attrition and turnover on the one hand, and retention on the other, it can be noted that they represent two sides of the same coin. One is the direct opposite of the other. In order to address the problem of teacher attrition and turnover it is imperative that we understand the reasons why teachers leave the profession and how that impacts on the quality of teaching and learning.

The next section therefore reviews literature on what has been cited as causes attributed to qualified teacher attrition.

2.3 Causes of teacher attrition

Concerns about teacher turnover are reported widely as a global phenomenon. In Britain, educator attrition is reported as a 'national crisis' (BBC News Online 2001). In the USA, it is reported that it is a 'serious challenge' (Boyd et al., 2001) and 'a problem with a number of implications' (McKee, 2003). Whereas teacher turnover in developed countries is 'alarming'

as observed by Alam and Farid (2011), the situation is at a ‘catastrophic level’ in developing countries more especially in the sub-Saharan region (Chinelo & Agbah, 2013; Mulkeen, 2001; Mulkeen, 2010; Pitsoe & Machaisa, 2012; & Xaba, 2003).

Teacher attrition from the global context in general and Malawi in particular, is attributed to a plethora of reasons. Ingersoll (2001) states that it is an indicator of underlying problems in how well schools function. This infers that if schools were properly managed or efficiently functioning, and conditions were favorable and that teachers are satisfied with their work, teacher attrition would be greatly abated. Thus understanding why teachers leave provides a platform in finding steps to get them to stay.

Several studies have been conducted to find factors that are attributed to qualified teacher attrition. Through surveys and case studies, it has been found that there are many factors that influence teachers’ attrition. The review of literature identified numerous factors which include: inadequate pay, negative job attitudes, lack of professional development, job dissatisfaction, lack of collegiality with peers, and ability to secure well-paying employment elsewhere (McKee, 2003; Armstrong, 2006; Chinelo & Agbah, 2013); poor working conditions and a growing salary gap between teachers and other graduates (Xaba, 2003; Lacina, 2011); poor school leadership, school location, high school indiscipline cases, death, retirement and dismissals (Ingersoll, 2001). HIV and AIDS has also been found to be among the causes of teacher turnover more especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (Mulkeen, 2010). According to the ILO (2012) teacher attrition is directly related to teacher motivation and morale, which are in turn connected to a whole variety of factors such as working conditions, rewards and incentives, opportunities for continuous professional

development (CPD), conditions of employment, effective management and support, prestige and professional credibility. The interaction of these factors makes the constructs of attrition and turnover multifaceted. In this study, the plethora of factors leading to attrition were analyzed through the lens of the theoretical framework of the blend of the Herzberg's theory of motivation and the open systems theory.

2.3.1 Job dissatisfaction

For a better understanding of teacher attrition, it is noteworthy to pinpoint what teachers cite as their decision to remain in or quit teaching. Herbert & Ramsay (2003) and Xaba (2003) assert that causes of attrition are attributed to organizational factors but chief among them is job dissatisfaction. There are varying aspects of job satisfaction and this makes it difficult to clearly define the construct of job satisfaction (McKee, 2003; Kadzamira, 2006). Among its many aspects include: salary, satisfaction with principal leadership and support, mentors' emotional support, school location, school quality factors such as availability of teaching and learning resources, and satisfaction in general. As observed by Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) teachers in the sub-Saharan Africa have low levels of job satisfaction and are poorly motivated. This explains why most of the teacher attrition studies conducted in this region reveal job satisfaction as a key determinant of attrition.

There are a number of factors that contribute to job or employee satisfaction. These factors include salaries, incentives, administration support, career progression, working conditions, collegiality with peers, and parent-teacher relationships *inter alia* (Herbert & Ramsay, 2003; Xaba, 2003; McKee, 2003; and Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007).

2.3.1.1. Poor remuneration

A lot of literature on attrition and turnover including findings of different studies on the same topic have noted that poor remuneration is one of the factors affecting teacher's job satisfaction and thereby contributing to qualified teacher attrition and turnover. The next section reviews selected literature and studies done in other countries around the globe on how poor remuneration affects teachers' job satisfaction and thereby lead to attrition.

2.3.1.1.1 Poor remuneration and teachers' job satisfaction in other countries

In USA, Certo and Fox (2002) reported that when teachers were asked their perceptions regarding teacher attrition they cited that the complete package of pay, benefits, and other incentives was inadequate. McKee (2003) in a study done in North Texas observes that while teachers do not enter the profession with the notion of getting rich, it cannot be denied that they do need to make enough money to support themselves and their families. Contrary to Herzberg who posited that salary is only a maintenance factor and not a satisfier, McKee found that teachers' salary is an important factor that contributes to teachers' job satisfaction. Hence, her study suggested that an increase in salaries for teachers would be ideal in retaining teachers in the profession. In West Carolina, the study by Cowan (2010) revealed that salary has a bearing on a teacher's decision to stay or leave. According to Cowan, the more a teacher earns the more likely he or she is likely to stay.

In 12 case studies done in Sub-Saharan Africa, precisely in Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Zambia; and other countries in South Asia, more specifically in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan, Bennell and Akyeampong (2007: viii) report that the findings reveal that teachers are seriously underpaid and "that this, more

than anything else, is the key factor undermining teacher morale and motivation.” According to the two co-authors, this is greatly contributing to teacher attrition in the two regions. Furthermore, the authors also report that in many countries teachers apart from being lowly paid, they are also not paid on time. It was underscored in their synthesis report, that late payment of salaries was very common, especially in low-income African countries, with acute fiscal crises. As an example, Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) cited Sierra Leone as one of the countries where late payment of salaries to teachers made them dissatisfied with their job. This tendency, as they observe, had a far-reaching adverse impact on teacher morale.

In Gambia, Kamara (2002) reports of a massive exit of teachers from the profession due to, amongst other reasons, inadequate salaries. Similarly Mukumbira (2001) and Xaba (2003) cite massive teacher attrition and turnover in Zimbabwe and South Africa respectively due to inadequate salaries and that teachers opt to go for greener pastures. Koech, Titiko and Chemwei (2014) also cite poor salaries as the cause of low morale and attrition among teachers in Kenya. The high attrition in these countries has led to apparent shortage of teachers. Kavenuke (2013) also stresses that the Federal Government of Tanzania must re-think of teachers’ salaries and remuneration in order to rescue the teaching profession from being ‘a profession at risk’.

2.3.1.1.2 Poor remuneration and teachers’ job satisfaction in Malawi

The case of Malawi is not any different. Poor remuneration has been cited as one of the critical contributing factors to teacher turnover (VSO, 2002; Kadzamira, 2006; Kayuni & Tambulasi, 2007; Ndala, 2010; Ng’ambi, 2012). In her study Kadzamira (2006) found that teachers in both primary and secondary schools are highly dissatisfied with their remuneration

and other conditions of service. She observes that salaries for teachers in Malawi are both low and inadequate to meet physical and social needs. Kadzamira emphasizes that it is more difficult to retain graduate than diploma teachers because of low salaries and poor incentives. She substantiated that assertion by the findings of the tracer survey she conducted in 2001, which showed that hardly any education graduates over the last 20 years before 2006 had remained as classroom teachers. According to her earlier study, the proportion of education graduates who were still teaching at the time of the survey in 2001 progressively declined according to their year of graduation. For example, none of the 1980 cohort of education graduates were classroom teachers, and only 5 percent and 10 percent respectively of the 1987 and 1994 graduate cohorts.

The study conducted by Moleni and Ndalama (2004) also found that low salaries and poor working conditions were critical underlying determinants of absenteeism and attrition among teachers in Malawi. Ndala (2012) also observes that teachers leave the profession in search of well-paying and prestigious jobs. This means that the remuneration that they get does not suffice. As noted by Waddell (2010), the most common axiom among teachers in Africa is that “teachers take home pay cannot take them home”. Consequently, they opt out of teaching to find other jobs that can remunerate them satisfactorily and suffice their needs.

Therefore poor remuneration and salaries of teachers is one of the domains which negatively affect teachers’ job satisfaction and in turn job commitment. Consequently, it leads to attrition.

2.3.1.2. Lack of professional development opportunities

Professional development opportunities have also been underscored as being critical in a quest to promote teacher retention. Even though teachers generally feel that they have the required competencies, the extent to which they can upgrade their qualifications and undertake continuous professional development are major motivational factors (Xaba, 2003; Waddell, 2010). Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) observe that in most countries, being able to upgrade ones qualifications is a critically important incentive since it provides a sure only way to improve significantly incomes and offers the opportunity to escape the perceived drudgery of the rural classroom. Thus teachers in some countries (such as Kenya) are even prepared to use their own resources to attend courses (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007; Wangai, 2012; and Waititu, 2013).

Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) report that teachers in some countries (such as Malawi) complain that their promotion prospects are considerably worse than for other civil servants in comparable occupations. Through their case studies, they observed that teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia have limited career progressions. They reported that in Bangladesh, only 5-10 percent of teachers manage to get promoted to higher positions during their careers. Even though there are clear guidelines for promotion in Nepal, they are rarely applied. Further in Pakistan, teachers have to acquire additional qualifications in order to be promoted, which many, especially women and those working in remoter areas, find especially difficult to study. Concurring with Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) are Wangai (2012) and Waititu (2013) who observe that in Kenya, teachers who live in remote areas have virtually no chance of being visited by an inspector, which dramatically reduces their

promotion prospects. Kavenuke (2013) observes that in Tanzania, school leaders have not been supportive to teachers who strive to attend in-service training or continuous professional development program such as going for further studies. He further observes that requests for professional development have been poorly handled, and rejected which has led to many teachers quitting the teaching profession.

In Malawi, Kadzamira and Chibwana (2000) while citing the Gender and Primary Schooling (GAPS) survey observe that opportunities for career advancement are limited for teachers unlike their colleagues within the civil service. The career progression in the teaching profession in Malawi is not long enough. As noted by Kadzamira (2006), the career path is hierarchical such that not all teachers can be promoted to higher grades. Consequently, too many teachers are lumped in the lower grades and relatively few are in the higher grades. Kadzamira further observes that a tracer survey of university graduates found that education graduates have had fewer opportunities for further education and training than graduates from other disciplines, which is mainly attributable to the lack of opportunities for training for education graduates as well as career paths that do not reward further education and training. The EFA Global Monitoring Report for Malawi (2014) acknowledges that many teachers have limited prospects of promotion and those teaching in remote areas may be especially affected. Consequently, many teachers leave the profession to join other government departments where there are prospects of further training as well as promotion prospects.

Poor staff development and lack of opportunities for professional development in the teaching profession therefore account for factors of teacher attrition and turnover in Malawi.

2.3.1.3. Loss of status of the teaching profession

Teaching, in many African countries, is one of the most undervalued professions. Teachers face a myriad of challenges in their work and often times their demands to governments are not attended to. In comparison with other professions in the public service, teachers are not particularly well paid and according to Waddell (2010:57), “teaching has become a job that you only do if you could not get another job.”

The HEART help desk report (2013) citing previous studies in Malawi and Tanzania which examined the reasons for students choosing teaching as a career, identified a number of negative images of teaching including seeing teaching as a ‘last resort’, low status, low-paid job; failure to follow a desired career and seeing it as a springboard to an alternative career.

Kadzamira (2006) and Kavenuke (2013) in studies done in Malawi and Tanzania respectively found that the perception of most stakeholders interviewed in both studies was common and it was that the teaching profession no longer commands high status and teachers are undervalued by society. The most contentious issues have been poor remuneration of teachers and its frequent delays which have a norm, and poor working conditions. These are challenges teachers have to cope with unlike other professions (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007; Waddell, 2010) and have contributed to the eroding status of the teaching profession. Kadzamira (2006) highlighted that unlike in the past where teaching was a much sought after profession, it is now widely regarded as ‘employment of the last resort’. Consequently, the level of morale and commitment is generally low leading to burnout and attrition. Teachers therefore leave whenever opportunities for greener pastures arise (Xaba, 2003; Kadzamira, 2006, Kavenuke,

2013). This dwindling status of the profession means that teaching is a ‘profession at risk’ (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007; Waddell, 2010; Kavenuke, 2013).

2.3.1.4. Workplace Conditions

Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) highlight the huge impact that working and living conditions have on teacher morale and motivation and thus their classroom performance. Waddell (2010) stresses that teachers are sensitive to their perceptions of the working environment. Among a wide range of workplace conditions cited as key drivers of teacher attrition include, concerns of administration support, student discipline issues, collegiality or lack of it, lack of resources, location of school, pressure in carrying out their workload, living arrangements and distance to work (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007; Cowan, 2010).

In a study conducted in Texas, in the United States of America, Herbert and Ramsay (2003:2) while acknowledging the fact that “decisions about whether to enter and remain in teaching are ultimately personal ... according to individuals’ needs and circumstances,” they mention that salaries and incentives, besides other factors such as working conditions, induction and professional development, contribute to teacher turnover. Herbert and Ramsay point that there are not enough incentives to keep teachers in classrooms.

Kadzamira (2005) reports that in Malawi, due to absence of basic amenities in the rural areas, schools in these areas are chronically understaffed. She observes that teachers refuse to be deployed to schools in the rural areas. Worse still, once a teacher has moved out it becomes very difficult to find a replacement. In her study, she found that there is high teacher attrition and turnover in remote rural schools.

The working environment is considered to be very significant as there is a relationship between job satisfaction, student learning, and teacher alienation (Ingersoll, 2001; Joiner & Edwards, 2008; Waddell, 2010). Many studies have cited workplace conditions as a predictor of burnout for both rural and urban teachers (Moleni & Ndalama, 2004; Kadzamira, 2006, Kayuni & Tambulasi, 2007; Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007; Acom, 2010; Waddell, 2010; Waititu, 2013).

It is widely agreed that the immediate working conditions can greatly enhance and enrich an employee's job. However, rural teachers in most of African countries including Kenya and Malawi are subjected to very poor physical working conditions (Kadzamira & Chibwana, 2000; Moleni & Ndalama, 2004; Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007; Waddell, 2010; Wangai, 2012).

Koech, Titiko and Chemwei (2014) on Kenya report that teachers' housing mirrored this pattern, with teachers frequently inhabiting dwellings that suffered from poor maintenance and infrastructure and lacked electricity, running water, good sanitation and cooking facilities. The negative impact of poor housing cannot be underestimated. Housing conditions have a majority influence on the health, attitudes, opportunities and quality of life of individual and communities. Though not largely supported by studies, it can be deduced that the teachers' motivation, quality of work and commitment can also be largely influenced by their housing conditions.

2.3.1.5. Lack of accommodation

One of the most cited reasons for dissatisfaction among teachers and teacher attrition is lack of accommodation (Lowe, 2006). In Africa, generally the living conditions of teachers are

poor and such has been attributed to dissatisfaction and attrition (Moleni & Ndalama, 2004). In most schools teacher housing, which is an incentive, is often not provided, and finding one let alone a decent accommodation is a major headache for teachers. Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) highlight that there are particularly acute difficulties in rural areas, where teachers may experience inadequate housing, lack of amenities to which they are accustomed such as clean water, electricity, access to healthcare and telephone coverage. This makes rural areas unattractive.

Lowe (2006) in his study conducted in Idaho State found that teachers who must drive long distances to work because of a lack of housing are more likely to leave their positions than teachers who live in or near the community where their school is located. Moleni and Ndalama (2004) in the study conducted in four districts in Malawi found that accommodation is a serious challenge in rural areas such that teachers have to walk long distances to their duty stations. As noted by Moleni and Ndalama, during rainy season, most teachers are absent from duty as they cannot walk in the rain to teach. Studies conducted by Waddell (2010) in Ghana, and Mulkeen (2010) in Sub-Saharan Africa also have similar findings.

The unattractiveness of living and working in rural areas means that most teachers strongly resist being posted to rural schools and those that are there initiate transfers to move out to schools in town (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007). The result is that rural areas have acute shortage of teachers and attrition is relatively high. With higher vacancy rates, teachers' workload in such areas are huge and this is a key contributor to low morale, stress and burnout. Such scenario is evident in not only Malawi but also in Sub-Saharan Africa.

As reported by Kadzamira (2006), the majority of teacher houses at primary school and CDSSs were constructed by communities and, as such, they are usually of sub-standard quality often without basic amenities (in particular running water and electricity) and, in some areas, are in serious disrepair. In other schools, she found that teachers live in houses with mud walls, and thatched with grass thatched. As observed by Lowe (2006), when teachers' houses are neglected without maintenance to lift their faces, the accommodation ceases to be an incentive and becomes a liability. As noted by Waddell (2010) that teachers are sensitive to the perceptions about their working environment, it is construed that poor accommodation and lack thereof is not an attractive prospect to teachers. Thus, it greatly impacts on teacher's job satisfaction and consequently leads to attrition.

2.3.1.6. School location

School location is another critical factor attributed to attrition in rural schools. Rural schools are especially disadvantaged when it comes to teacher housing and availability of suitable housing within the vicinity of the school. Schools that do not have adequate houses for teachers often being understaffed, especially if located in rural areas (Adedeji & Olaniyan 2011). Moleni and Ndalama (2004) also found that most teachers initiate to be transferred out due to the remote location of the school. Kadzamira (2006) states that even if a school can have decent accommodation and other basic amenities, it may fail to attract teachers due to its remote location. She cites a case of a secondary school in a remote rural area, which by then was newly constructed, with good housing and running water yet it still could not attract teachers because of the remoteness of the school and for lack of electricity.

Mulkeen (2010) observes that remote rural schools are chronically understaffed due mainly to high teacher turnover and the refusal of teachers to be deployed to schools in these areas. Mulkeen further states that schools located at long distances from where basic social amenities can be accessed are more likely to be understaffed. As also noted by Waddell (2010), in the hard-to-staff remote schools, once a teacher is lost through attrition it is usually difficult to find a replacement.

2.3.1.7. Lack of administrative support

Kayuni and Tambulasi (2007) also mention lack of administrative support system as being one of the factors that has contributing to high teacher turnover in Malawi. The authors observe that many teachers feel that they are not cared for. They explain that there are serious problems in human resources functions within the organization. Teachers therefore are expected to work hard yet those who can ably handle their welfare are not adequately available. And most school heads have not been given appropriate training on how to have the welfare of their teachers at heart. Due to poor administrative support to teachers coupled with poor head-teacher and teacher relationships, the end result is that many teachers leave the schools or entirely leave the profession.

Darling-Hammond, as cited by Kerry (2010), and Cowan (2010) stated that “How teachers feel about the administrative support, resources, and teacher voice and influence over policy in their schools” (p.11) was directly proportional to their intentions of staying in the classroom. Cowan (2010) opines that if schools fail to offer teachers support and opportunities throughout the teaching career, they risk losing them prematurely.

2.3.1.8. Collegiality

McKee (2003) reported that research has proved that the quality of collegiality and interaction among peers has a bearing on employee satisfaction and is therefore a determining factor on the decision to leave or stay among teachers. As teachers in lower achieving schools were more dissatisfied with teacher/teacher relationships and school curriculum than teachers in higher achieving schools, it follows that getting and keeping good teachers is a difficult challenge for urban schools. Research suggests alienation is widespread among teachers (Tye & O'Brien, 2002).

2.3.2 HIV/AIDS pandemic

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has also been cited as one of the factors contributing to declining numbers of teachers. The situation is regarded as worrisome more especially in the sub-Saharan Africa as observed by Mulkeen (2010). The pandemic greatly reduces the capacity of the system by increasing teacher attrition and absenteeism due to illness, death or the need to care for the ill-family members (Göttelmann-Duret & Hogan, 1998; Mulkeen et al., 2007). The imposition of additional demands on teachers to provide support for ill family members, means the pandemic also saps the system's energy (Mulkeen et al., 2007). Worse still, HIV-positive teachers ask to be posted away from schools in remote areas that lack health facilities to schools which are near hospitals to have an easy access to medication. However, Ndala (2012) citing different studies conducted on countries affected by the pandemic in Sub-Saharan Africa teachers observes that despite indications of some declining trends in number of teachers, such studies have failed to identify HIV and AIDS as a contributory cause of the decline. According to him, the difficulty is looked at from two angles. Firstly, it is hard

to know that a teacher has left the profession because of HIV and AIDS, and secondly, it is also difficult to speak with certainty that a teacher has died of AIDS without a medical report confirming it. Nonetheless, the impact of the pandemic is looked at and measured by mortality rate. According to Ndala and MoEST (2008a), HIV and AIDS is aggravating teacher loss through mortality.

The attrition rate for HIV and AIDS cases in the MoEST is pegged at 6% per annum (Kayuni & Tambulasi, 2007; MoEST, 2008b) which is a high rate. To combat the effects, the MoEST developed an HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan, which registered some success (Ng'ambi, 2010). It also kicked off a program that encourages those living positively with the virus to form an association called Teachers Living Positively (T'LIPO). The Ministry therefore tops up salaries of T'LIPO members to cater for their nutritional needs.

2.3.3. Lack of comprehensive induction programs

The standard practice in organizations is that new employees must be given an induction in order to be familiarized with their new work and its environment. Unfortunately, this is not the case in the teaching profession. In most schools when a new teacher arrives at a school, be it a beginner or an experienced teacher he or she is only given the necessary books and shown the periods he or she is supposed to teach. There is hardly any induction given to the teacher. The teacher is left to discover things by him or herself. To a beginner, it becomes a 'swim or sink' affair. As noted by Day, Griffith and Gu (2011), without any professional support in terms of induction and mentorship, the work becomes stressful leading to burnout and attrition.

The factors attributed to teacher attrition and turnover across the globe, seem to be revolving around three interlinked key thematic areas of job satisfaction, working conditions and career advancement. These key thematic areas therefore provided a bedrock on which this study was assessed using the theoretical framework guiding this paper, the Herzberg two factor theory and the open systems theory.

2.4 Impacts of teacher turnover

Carroll (2008) discerns that until governments recognize that they have a retention problem, they will continue to engage in a costly annual recruitment and hiring cycle, pouring more and more teachers into their nation's classrooms only to lose them at a faster rate. This will continue to drain public tax money. Qualified teacher attrition and turnover have serious implications on the quality of teaching and learning as briefly explained under the subsequent thematic areas.

2.4.1. Shortages in teacher supply

As alluded to earlier on, qualified teacher attrition creates shortages in teacher supply (Mulkeen, 2004). Consequently, there is always a disparity in terms of pupil-to-qualified teacher ratio. Often times classes are overcrowded as this shortage forces a teacher to attend to many learners than recommended (VSO, 2002a; Xaba, 2003; MoEST, 2008a). This high PqTR compromises the quality of learning and it is a source of stress and burnout.

2.4.2. Lack of continuity

Xaba (2003) further points that teacher attrition disrupts schooling. This is especially so when teachers leave the profession during the academic year or whilst engaged in critical projects in

school. Often there is no continuity when they leave and it is difficult to replace them. Mulkeen (2010) and Waititu (2013) assert that attrition has damaging impacts on schooling as there is lack of instructional cohesion with a change to a new teacher. Kadzamira (2006) reports that in one study she found secondary school students complaining that they were taught by more than three teachers in one term. This poses serious threats to quality of teaching and learning. As asserted by Ingersoll (2001) this affects students' academic performance.

2.4.3. Diminishing teacher quality

Among the many implications of teacher attrition, according to Cowan (2010), is that it leads to diminishing teacher quality. That is, unqualified teachers are recruited to fill the gap which has been created as a result of attrition and turnover (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007; Waddell, 2010). In that scenario, entry standards into teaching are lowered and compromised (MoEST, 2008b; Mulkeen, 2010). As in the case of Malawi, due to shortage of teachers in CDSSs, government recruited qualified primary school teachers to fill the gap. The VSO (2002a) noted that these unqualified teachers were teaching not only many periods but also wider variety of subjects, many of which they have no mastery of the subject content. As noted by MoEST (2008a) and Cowan (2010), such arrangements lead to diminished student achievement and dwindling standards of education.

2.4.4. Staffing disparities

As earlier noted by Mulkeen (2010), attrition in its broader sense, creates imbalances in terms of teacher deployment. This view is also supported by Kadzamira (2006) who states that it

creates serious urban-rural staffing disparities with some schools in remoter areas reported to be chronically understaffed. The result is that in such understaffed schools, with fewer teachers also means a greater extracurricular burden, which teachers do not feel motivated to carry out for no reward (VSO, 2002b). These huge workloads often lead to stress and burnout which in turn contributes to the low and declining teacher motivation.

2.4.5. Demoralization to remaining staff

When teachers leave the profession, more especially those that are successful and more qualified, it results into demoralization for the remaining ones (VSO, 2002a; VSO, 200b; Mulkeen et al., 2007). As earlier noted, the few remaining teachers take on extra workloads left by those that have left. Considering that some of them take subjects that they are not very much familiar with, it often leads to compromised teaching (Ingersoll, 2001), stress and burnout, and dissatisfaction (Joiner & Edwards, 2008). The declining numbers of teachers and the extracurricular burden they bear leads also to demoralization (Kadzamira, 2006).

To mitigate and cause a turnaround from the impacts of attrition on the quality of teaching and learning, there is need to come up with effective approaches through concerted efforts. Since it is in schools where teachers decide to leave or stay, contextual factors need to be analyzed in order to come up with effective approaches that can help to keep teachers in classrooms.

2.5. Strategies to promote teacher retention

As it has been observed, teachers leave classrooms and schools for a variety of reasons. It is in schools that teachers decide whether to leave or not (Xaba, 2003; Ingersoll, 2001; Carroll, 2008). Such being the case, the key to addressing turnover and shortages lies in the schools

and classrooms where teachers must find success and satisfaction (Boyer & Gillespie, 2012). As alluded to earlier on by ILO (2012), teacher attrition is directly related to motivation and morale and in turn connected to a variety of interacting contextual factors. The ILO further posits that effective teacher retention strategies require an understanding of the factors that are currently leading to attrition and strategies for reducing these as far as possible. Considering that motivation encompasses complex interactive factors, retention policies need to be well integrated with other wider policies within and beyond the education system.

Within the school, for instance, school administrators can play a vital role in changing high attrition rates by focusing on improving the workplace conditions and enhancing job enrichment of teachers through an analysis and improvement of both hygiene and motivating factors (Xaba, 2003). The presence of hygiene and motivating factors in equal measure and the improvement thereof would provide a sure way of achieving job satisfaction which is critical to averting attrition and promoting teacher retention (Boyd et al., 2011).

The Charlotte Advocates for Education (2004) stress that the onus to promote teacher retention is upon school leaders. They emphasize that school leaders need to provide a supportive environment that promotes teachers' professional growth, improves their working conditions and thereby achieving job satisfaction. Boyd et al., (2009) also emphasizes that school managers have a critical role in enhancing job satisfaction of teachers under their charge through job enrichment. According to Boyd et al., teachers' perceptions of the school administration have by far the greatest influence on teacher-retention decisions.

The next section focuses on what various literature consider to be effective strategies that school leaders can employ in order to promote teacher retention. It should be underscored on

the onset that these strategies can only be effective if the leadership takes a leading role. It is against this notion that it can be argued that school administration plays a particularly important role in teachers' career decisions including whether to leave or stay in the profession.

2.5.1. Improving workplace conditions

The Centre for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2007) notes that research supports attending to workplace conditions as a means to retain teachers. Since it is in schools where teachers decide whether to leave or stay, improvements in the working conditions are very important in promoting job satisfaction, motivating teachers and promoting retention (Mulkeen, Chapman, DeJaeghere & Leu, 2007). As observed by Hirsch and Emerick (2007:14)

“Teachers with positive perceptions about their working conditions are much more likely to stay at their current school than educators who are more negative about their conditions of work, particularly in the areas of leadership and empowerment”

The onus to encourage or persuade teachers to remain in schools therefore rests upon education managers to improve on workplace conditions that bring in satisfaction to the teachers to make them stay (Xaba, 2003; Boyd et al., 2009; Acom, 2010). Managers need to improve on the workplace conditions to create an environment which is conducive and supportive to teachers' living, growth, and satisfaction. This can be done through a variety of initiatives which include: provision of decent accommodation, promoting collegiality, teacher empowerment and offering administration support (Xaba, 2003; Centre for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007; Acom, 2010).

2.5.1.1. Provision of decent accommodation

There is need to have an improved living condition of teachers. This can be done through provision of decent accommodation. Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) and Mulkeen (2010) agree that finding a decent accommodation in rural schools in the Sub-Saharan Africa poses a serious headache to most teachers. It has been generally observed that most of the rural schools do not have adequate accommodation for staff as such teachers must find their own accommodation within the vicinity of the schools which is hard. Mulkeen (2010) reports that even most of the available teachers' houses are of poor standard: with cracked walls, broken window panes, grass thatched or with roofs that leak during rainy season, and also they lack basic amenities like electricity and running water. No wonder teachers refuse to be posted to rural schools and this poses serious challenge to staff remote rural schools.

The motivation of teachers to work in rural areas and be retained there is determined in part by the level and adequacy of infrastructure in those rural areas (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011). Besides the classrooms, accommodation is central in providing that motivation (Alam & Farid, 2011). Highlighting a study on teacher attrition in Uganda, Waddell (2010) states that provision of a house is a major incentive for a teacher to stay and work in rural areas. A similar study conducted in the Sub-Saharan Africa by Mulkeen (2010) also found that provision of accommodation is a key factor in ensuring teacher retention especially in rural areas. Both Wadell and Mulkeen emphasize that where teachers cannot live near the school, they are likely to spend a lot of time travelling, often to the detriment of their school.

It is therefore incumbent upon school leaders in collaboration with other stakeholders in the education sector to improve on teachers' living conditions by providing decent

accommodation. Considering that the rural society in many developing countries is knitted together, any retention program therefore can only be successful through the collaboration and involvement of the community (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011). In this regard, any improvement of aspects of teaching and school improvement, let alone accommodation, should be done in collaboration with the community members. The school-community partnership can mobilize resources and build houses and also improve on the existing houses by providing them with necessary amenities like running water and electricity. As Miller (2012) argues availability of amenities positively impact on teacher retention. Waddell (2010) state that in Mozambique and Lesotho where the Ministries of Education in those countries do not normally provide accommodation for teachers, some NGOs and even local communities have built houses for teachers in an attempt to make rural locations more attractive.

Provision of decent accommodation therefore is a critical strategy to promote teacher retention.

2.5.1.2. School-Community relationships

As alluded to earlier on schools are *opensystems*. There is a continuous interaction between schools and their communities. Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011) posit that the degree to which a rural teacher becomes involved in community educational and cultural programs can influence his or her decision to stay in a rural area. Therefore, retention requires a coordinated school-community effort.

School-community connectedness is critical in teacher retention (Ingersoll, 2001; Brewster & Railsback, 2003). A positive school-community relationship therefore can help new rural teachers overcome feelings of isolation, acquire a sense of community security and develop

professional competence for rural service (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011). As community support for rural schools, in term of provision of school buildings and other infrastructural facilities, can also help to create an environment that will assist in promoting good teaching in rural schools.

Mulkeen et al., (2007) assert that head-teachers should involve community members in the lives of schools in order to promote quality of education, better student learning, and respect for teachers. Such a positive engagement with the community, as argued by Sergiovanni (2000) and Xaba (2003) can contribute to satisfaction among teachers which is critical for teacher retention.

The VSO (2002a) reveals that in 2001 there was a policy shift towards promoting community involvement in school management and financing. According to VSO, this new community relationship needed to be managed. The VSO observed that teachers reported that there was lack of respect to them by communities and this led to high rates of attrition. However, through connectedness and mutual respect between school and community, teacher retention could be promoted.

2.5.1.3. Fostering collegiality

Networking, team-working, peer interaction or community building are some of the vocabulary that are in common use. Many writers on the teacher retention consider building positive interrelationships in schools as a top priority if teachers are to be satisfied and therefore retained in schools. Lowe (2006) posits that school leaders should foster and celebrate the “people side of school” by continuously working to enrich the culture and climate of their district or campus. According to Sergiovanni (2000) this refers to developing

a community of practice which is critical in school improvement. In order to foster collegiality in schools, Mulkeen et al., (2007: xiv) affirm that head-teachers should

..create learning communities and a sense of cohesion among teachers at the schoollevel—or in pairs or clusters of secondary schools—that include groups of teachersand their principals developing a vision, a strong professional identity, andstrategies for improving the quality of teaching and learning in their schools.

Sergiovanni (2000) and Lowe (2006) concur with Mulkeen et al (2007) by emphasizing that through collegiality and support among members of staff, it helps to builda community of practice. Such connectedness among members of a community of practice creates the opportunity to develop a common vision of teaching and learning. Thus, head-teachers who do this in their schools do a better job in promoting teacher retention (Lowe, 2006).

A research done by Kerry (2010) confirmed that collegial support among peers and interaction appear to influence job satisfaction and in turn retention among teachers. The collegiality starts from administrative support, among staff members and even between students and members of staff. Further, Kerry reported that when the communities are supportive of the activities in the schools, it promotes satisfaction among teachers. According to Kerry, fostering collegiality is a very critical retention factor.

2.5.1.4. Administration support

The head-teacher and school environment are critical to teacher satisfaction. The head-teacher is largely responsible for creating distinct working environments within schools that are highly predictive of teacher satisfaction and commitment (Sergiovanni, 2000; Lowe, 2006). Various researchers have linked principal behavior directly and indirectly to job satisfaction

(Waddell, 2010). As discussed earlier on, the teacher's intent to stay in teaching is related to workplace conditions. Waddell (2010) confirmed through research that collegial support and positive interaction appear to influence job satisfaction and in turn retention among teachers.

School leaders can influence not only administrative and collegial support but also commitment of teachers. Commitment in teachers is linked to principals who provide feedback, encourage teachers, and use participatory decision-making (Lowe, 2006). Mulkeen et al. (2007) affirm that teachers express a strong desire for more professional support in general. Therefore reinforcement of teacher commitment is a likely aspect of successful retention. Committed employees are less likely to leave the organization. As a précis, administration support has been found to have a strong impact on job satisfaction for teachers.

2.5.1.5. Empowerment

According to Hirsch and Emerick (2007), empowerment refers to teachers' ability to participate in shared decision making and feel supported and involved with issues at the school site. Mulford (2003) and Hirsch and Emerick (2007) posit that teachers derive greater satisfaction from their work when they are given autonomy, are actively involved in professional decision making and also able to contribute to professional development experiences.

Mulkeen (2010) advances that school leaders should promote participative decision making, distribute leadership positions and responsibilities among members of staff, promote delegation, and encourage teacher decision making autonomy. This entails that the school manager values his or her teachers and it also helps members of staff expand their professional influence (Mulford, 2003; Charlotte Advocates for Education, 2004; Centre for

Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007; Hirsch & Emerick, 2007; Mulkeen, 2010; ILO, 2012). Studies done by Centre for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2007), Mulkeen (2010) and Waddell (2010) have shown schools in which teachers have more control over key school-wide and classroom decisions, and are more engaged in school leadership roles, have a more committed teaching staff and do a better job of not only for the growth of its staff but also a better job of retaining teachers (Centre for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007; Mulkeen, 2010; Waddell, 2010). Professional growth according to Herzberg's two-factor theory is one of the satisfiers.

Recognition for a job well done is yet another aspect of empowerment. In a study done in South Carolina, where schools with high turnover rates were compared with those with low turnover rates, Hirsch and Emerick (2007) report that the findings showed a variation in leadership and empowerment. More than half of those that left the teaching profession between 2004 and 2005, indicate that their receive better recognition and support from administration in their new jobs, as did 41 percent of teachers that left classrooms for non-instructional position in the field of education. As a strategy for teacher retention therefore, Mulford (2003), Centre for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2007) and Hirsch and Emerick (2007) all posit that education managers should recognize teacher accomplishments formally or informally and communicate support for and belief in the role of teachers as experts in instruction and learning.

As it has been noted from various literature, teacher empowerment is a critical strategy for education managers to use in order to promote teacher retention.

2.5.1.6. Comprehensive Induction and Mentor programs

Personal and professional achievement and success of teachers is among other factors that make good teachers stay on in the profession (Kavenuke, 2013). Therefore teachers ought to be provided with opportunities for success as this adds value to the retention of teachers. Ingersoll (2001) contends that one of the opportunities for success of teachers is a comprehensive induction program. This induction program includes: participation in an external network of teachers and being assigned a teacher's mentor (Ingersoll, 2001; Kavenuke, 2013). Lowe (2006) opines that school leaders must realize that beginning teachers are unfinished products as such they need mentoring.

The need for mentoring and induction need not to be overemphasized as it is one way of averting stress on beginning teachers. Day and Gu (2011) contend that teaching should not be a 'swim-or-sink' experience. Research has shown that many of the teachers that leave do so within their first three years of their work (Carroll, 2008; Mulkeen, 2010; Day & Gu, 2011). It is therefore important that school leaders put in place quality mentoring and induction programs for beginning teachers (Carroll, 2008; Chinelo & Agbah, 2013) which are ideal to deal with teacher turnover (Boyd et al., 2011).

Studies have found that comprehensive induction (which include mentoring) program has *threefold* significance: first, it helps new teachers familiarize and adjust to the school environment, its organization and philosophy (Ingersoll, 2001; Cobbold, 2007; MetLife Foundation Issue Brief, 2008). It therefore provides opportunities for new teachers to engage early in the collegial dialogue that is vital to commitment, growth and effectiveness in one's profession (Kavenuke, 2013). Second, it nurtures self-confidence and gives new

teachers encouragement to only remain in the school, or district but also to remain in the profession as well (Ingersoll, 2001; Lowe, 2006; Carroll, 2008); and lastly a comprehensive induction and mentoring program allows new teachers to expand their teaching skills and knowledge-base (Ingersoll, 2001; Lowe, 2006; Cobbold, 2007; Carroll, 2008). As argued by Kavenuke (2013), studies have shown that a teacher who has worked for one year and received an induction program is likely to produce the same levels of student's achievement as a four years teacher who has not received an induction. Otherwise, without induction, teaching is a 'swim or sink' affair and consequently there is too much stress and burnout and soon the teacher opts for the exit door (Day et al., 2000; Aamodt, 2010).

A comprehensive induction program is not a not just a 'hit-or-miss' process but rather ongoing and focused on providing as much support as possible (Lowe, 2006). It is further argued that an authentic helpful and trusting friendship between the mentor and the mentee may be the difference their success and failure. According to Lowe (2006) and Mulkeen (2010) schools providing comprehensive induction programs for new teachers, appear to have lower rates of staff turnover and thereby promote retention.

One of the issues to form part of the comprehensive induction program has to do with unique challenges in the community (Xaba, 2003; Joiner & Edwards, 2008). An awareness of the challenges one is bound to face in the community helps build a 'thick skin' to cope, and devise strategies on how to surmount such challenges. This reduces attrition both in terms of inter-school migration or quitting the school altogether (Xaba, 2003; Mulkeen, 2010).

This submits that a comprehensive induction program promotes teacher retention. As argued by Kavenuke (2013), it bridges the gap between the initial teacher training and the beginning

of a teaching job. Intricately, induction program brings about what Smith and Ingersoll (2004) perceive as a bridge that facilitates the ‘students of teaching’ to become ‘teachers of students’.

2.5.1.7. Support for staff development.

Hirsch and Emerick (2007) explain staff development as training and opportunities available for a teacher to learn, grow, and develop. They contend that staff development is critical to staff performance. According to the authors, studies have indicated that high-quality staff development programs lead to improved classroom teaching and employee retention, especially in small and rural schools. Schools which encourage and support staff professional development are likely to make their teachers effective in their work and therefore such schools will see improved retention of teachers (Quartz et al., 2008). The Centre for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2007) posits that ensuring that teachers have continued opportunities to develop skills to meet diverse needs of learners contributes to a positive and supportive working environment.

The VSO Malawi in a research conducted from May to June 2002 (VSO, 2002a) notes that teachers, apart from wanting increased remuneration, also need factors such as a structured career path and training to be considered for motivation to be sustained. They report that all qualified primary school teachers teaching in CDSSs want training because they lack confidence and motivation to teach the secondary school curriculum. The EFA Global Monitoring Report on Malawi (UNESCO, 2014) suggests that teachers’ skills need to be improved through ongoing education. Regular supervision and ongoing training have the potential to address knowledge gaps and upgrade and reinforce acquired skills. It further emphasizes that a more appropriate way of motivating teachers to improve education quality

is to offer an attractive career path, with promotion criteria that take into account initiatives by teachers in addressing diversity and supporting weak students.

School leaders should therefore provide and promote opportunities and models of professional development. There are diverse models such as study groups, critical friends groups and action research (Centre for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007). Besides, distributing school leadership, adopting a broader, more collegial concept of leadership and extending leadership training to leadership teams and middle management in schools can also act as staff development opportunities (ILO, 2012)

2.5.1.8. Incentives

One of the strategies that employers can use to promote teacher retention is to come up with incentives (Xaba, 2003; Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007; MoEST, 2008a). The incentives uplift teachers' morale and thereby work towards raising job satisfaction which is critical in retention. The UNESCO (2014) EFA Global Monitoring Report on Malawi emphasizes on the need for financial incentives to teachers more especially those teaching in rural schools. The Government of Malawi acknowledged the need to incentivize teachers and in one of its policy documents it suggested the introduction of a monthly rural teacher allowance of K5000 as an incentive to promote teacher retention in rural schools (MoEST, 2008a).

Another kind of incentive is the access to loans. The VSO (2002a) in its study observed that many teachers complained of the lack of access to loans. It is reported that despite applying for the same, only a few would be given. This practice according to the teachers was found to be very demotivating, especially as they expected the money to come in after the application

is submitted. Failing to access the loans and its subsequent demotivation gradually led to attrition.

Provision of decent accommodation is yet another incentive. As discussed earlier provision of good housing is an incentive as it has the capacity to attract new teachers as well as retaining the old teachers.

2.5.1.9. School leadership and teacher retention

As pointed by ILO (2012) school leadership is a critical human resources issue. Its functions are of course diverse and demanding. These include: setting direction, managing teaching and learning, developing people (teachers and students) within a professional learning community, and developing the organization. Mulkeen et al., (2007) observe that an effective, competent, supportive and fair leadership matters most to teachers and it greatly contributes to motivation and job satisfaction. Day et al., (2000:20) observe that schools that are effective and have the capacity to improve are led by “school administrators who make a significant and measurable contribution to the effectiveness of their staff.”

In a study done by Wangai (2012) it was found that that effectiveness of leaders’ behavior is measured by the degree to which the manager meets both the organizational goals and satisfies the employee needs. If the workers deem the supervisory leader unworthy and incompetent it becomes frustrating to them thus producing job dissatisfaction.

A study conducted in South Carolina, by Hirsch and Emerick (2007) highlighted the importance of trust between administrators and teachers and found it to be strongly correlated with teacher turnover. Among the attributes associated with trust were the communication of a

shared vision among staff, consistent administrative support for teachers, and processes for group decision making and problem solving. Similarly, a survey done by Charlotte Advocates for Education (2004) in North Carolina found that the nature of leadership has an impact on a teacher's decision to leave or stay. They suggested that school leaders need to create a supportive environment if they are to raise teachers' job satisfaction which is critical in retention. According to them, school leaders ought to provide continual feedback to their teachers and find ways to provide teachers with professional development opportunities, both in-house and off campus. Johnson (2006) posits that school leaders must ensure teachers have the opportunity to work collaboratively with their peers and to increase leadership abilities. Furthermore, school administrators must also demonstrate that they value teachers by actively involving them in meaningful decision-making.

Williams and Kritsonis (2007) observe that effective leadership is good as it creates a conducive and collaborative school culture and in the process realize teacher retention. This creates conditions that instil intrinsic motivation for teachers (Carroll, 2008) which is of paramount importance for retention (Johnson, 2006).

Reviews of findings from various studies done by Day et al., (2000), Johnson (2006), Joiner and Edwards (2008) and Williams and Kitsons (2012) reveal that teachers are attracted to, and stay in, the profession where they feel a sense of belonging and believe they are contributing to the success of their school and students. They reveal that teachers prefer principals who are honest, communicative, participatory, collegial informal, supportive and demanding and reasonable in their expectations with a clear vision for the school - principals who work 'with' rather than 'through'. As observed by ILO (2012), a kind of school leadership is based on the

skills, qualifications and personal attributes of the school managers. Traditionally, school leadership has been drawn from the ranks of experience. However, ILO (2012) suggests that such experience must be supplemented by a formal management training, appraisal and continuing professional development opportunities in order to carry out the responsibilities of their positions effectively. This is critical as they will balance in their focus on day-to-day managerial duties, and provision of support and guidance that teachers need (Johnson, 2006; Carroll, 2008; ILO, 2012).

School leadership should therefore create a supportive working environment in order to enrich the teacher's job and therefore promote teacher retention. Mulkeen et al. (2007) assert that the head-teachers' new critical role as instructional leaders within schools, builders of learning communities among teachers, and developers of strong community participation in schools are widely recognized. As such they must be prepared through organized and systematic training in educational leadership and effective and transparent management that goes beyond the occasional workshop presently offered in most systems if they are to carry out this array of responsibilities effectively. Centre for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2007) posits that type of school leadership, professional development opportunities, and teacher empowerment *inter alia* all exert a significant influence on the degree of satisfaction teachers feel in their jobs. As observed by Hirsch and Emerick (2007),

“Teachers with positive perceptions about their working conditions are more likely to stay at their current school than educators who are more negative about their working conditions particularly in the areas of leadership and empowerment”

2.6 Summary to chapter

Qualified teacher attrition and turnover has been attributed to a plethora of reasons as highlighted in the preceding chapter. The reasons have been looked at from different perspectives such as personal and school contexts. From the reviewed literature, causes of attrition and turnover mostly hinge on teacher motivation. The impacts of teacher attrition and turnover on the quality of teaching and learning are adverse. Apart from creating severe shortages in teacher supply, attrition and turnover also lead to diminishing teacher quality, lack of continuity, and lead to demoralization of the remaining teachers which generally affects pupil performance. Literature has suggested strategies that can be used to deal with teacher attrition and turnover and therefore promote retention. These strategies have hinged on interacting factors of teacher motivation which include: job satisfaction, workplace conditions and staff development. These strategies formed the basis of assessing the roles of education managers in teacher retention in Phalombe.

CHAPTER THREE

Research design and methodology

3.1 Introduction to the chapter

This chapter defines the research design and methodology used in the study. Research design is all about the general framework of the study. The reason behind the choice of the given research design have also been given. Upon discussing the research design, it then explains the research paradigm, the study area and the study population and sample. The chapter then delves into the sampling technique used and methods used to generate requisite data. Finally it tackles on the issues of ethics in social research.

3.2 Research design

Research design, according to O'Leary (2004), describes a general framework or overall plan and structure of the research. Ndengu (2012) explains that it serves as a guide to answer questions on what the research seeks to find, where to collect data and how the data is to be collected. It further guides the data analysis process so that in the end the research objectives can be achieved. In essence, research design reflects on the research question and provides the means of answering it.

The study employed the qualitative, case study design. To begin with, qualitative research according to Creswell (1998) aims at exploring a phenomenon or the perspective on what is going on in a specific topic, as well as presenting detailed views of a phenomenon as it takes place in its natural setting. Concurring with Creswell is Sidhu (2005) who asserts that the purpose of qualitative research is to explore or describe experiences by participants.

Qualitative researchers delve into precise particulars of such matters as people's understandings and interactions in order to fully understand the phenomenon under study. To achieve the purpose, Silverman (2005) observes that qualitative research designs work with relatively small number of cases. This is because they have to 'sacrifice scope for detail' (Silverman, 2005:9).

According to Polit and Beck (2008) as cited in Ndengu (2012), case study is an in-depth investigation into a single entity or a small number of entities which include individual, family, institution, organization or any social unit. Bryman (2001) asserts that the most common use of the term 'case' links it with a setting, such as an organization. This view is supported by Creswell (1998) who emphasizes that a case study is done within a bounded system in a given setting or context. Case studies can also "be used as a means of identifying key issues which merit further investigation" (Bell, 1999: 11).

The use of qualitative case study design in this study was justified as the study required an in-depth investigation. In order to understand the role of education managers in teacher retention in CDSSs, as a phenomenon, an in-depth investigation within a bounded system and in a given setting and from the perspectives of 'insiders' was the ultimate option. An exploration and description of the understanding of the issue from the points of views of the people involved, and the scope for detail into their experiences and meanings attached to the phenomenon as well as their interactions were compared with the research findings. The nature of the study, or to convincingly answer the research question, therefore required the qualitative case study research design.

3.3 Research paradigm

According to Lindsay (2010) research paradigm is an all-encompassing system of interrelated practice and thinking that define the nature of enquiry. It clarifies how one views the constructs of social reality and knowledge *affects*, and gives the direction on how the researcher should go about uncovering knowledge of relationships between phenomena and social behavior. Literature presents three key research paradigms namely: positivism, interpretivism and critical paradigms. However, this study took the interpretivist approach.

The interpretivist paradigm posits that meaning does not exist in its own right; rather it is constructed by human beings as they interact and engage in interpretation (O’Leary, 2004). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005) point out that the central endeavor in the context of this paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience. That is, the phenomena being investigated, must be investigated and appreciated from within. Creswell (2009) underscores on the need to understand the phenomena from the individual’s perspective within his or her setting and context. As argued by Willig (2008) and Lindsay (2010) research can only be objectively observed from inside through the direct experience of the people involved. Therefore, the role of the researcher in the interpretivist paradigm is to, “understand, explain, and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants” (Cohen et al, 2005:19). It therefore enables the researcher to have a fuller understanding of how people make meaning in their natural settings. Accordingly, interpretivism works on the principle of ‘*verstehen*’ as it calls for empathetic understanding of the people in their social setting.

Owing to the emphasis on interaction with the participant, interpretivists acknowledge that value free knowledge is not possible given that what is being studied is not independent of the

researcher (O’Leary, 2004). For example, researchers assert their beliefs when they choose what to research, how to research and how to interpret their data.

As observed by Sidhu (2004) interpretive methods, such as open-ended interviews, participant observation and focus groups *inter alia*, yield insights and understandings of behavior and explain actions from the participant’s perspective. The observation by Sidhu is in *sync* with the tenets of interpretivism research paradigm.

The lenses of this paradigm enabled me to interact with the participants. Such a participatory approach brought to the fore participant’s understanding, their experiences and the meaning they attach to the role of education managers in teacher retention in CDSSs in Phalombe. Such active and cooperative interactions were ideal to generate required data and helped greatly to get a ‘*verstehen*’ into the phenomena and therefore ably interpret the findings, and answer the question under study.

3.4 Study area

The study was conducted in four selected CDSSs in the southern district of Phalombe in Malawi. Phalombe, as an education district, is in Shire Highlands Education Division. The district shares borders with Mozambique to the East, LakeChilwa to the North, Zomba district to the North-West and Mulanje, to the south. The choice of Phalombe was based on the fact that there are high teacher initiated transfer rates leading to high attrition rate as noted in the Phalombe DEP (2010).

There are ten CDSSs in Phalombe namely: Holy Family, Mpasa, Migowi, Ngozi, Chiringa, Khongoloni, Nkhulambe and Likani. These schools are all co-educational. According to the

Phalombe DEP, all of these schools have acute shortages of qualified teachers as a result of the high attrition rates. However, typical of a qualitative study relatively small numbers are involved so as to have an in-depth understanding of the phenomena. As such the study focused on four schools which were purposively selected. The table below shows the list of the schools where the research was conducted. The PE in the school name column stands for Phalombe.

School No.	School name
1	PE.A
2	PE.B
3	PE.C
4	PE.D

Table 3. 1:Names of research schools

3.5 Study population and sample

Study population refers to a theoretical specified aggregation of survey element (Babbie, 1979; Sidhu, 2004; Cohen et al., 2005). These authors contend that an element is that unit about which information is collected and which provides a basis of analysis. A study population is therefore that aggregation of elements from which the survey sample is actually selected. As noted by Sidhu (2005) the study population is totality of objects or individuals regarding which inferences are to be made in a sampling study. A sample is defined as a small proportion from the population selected for observation and analysis.

The population of this study were teachers, head-teachers and the DEM. The study involved 13 participants sampled from this population. That is, at each of the 4 CDSSs where the research was carried, 2 teachers, preferably 1 male and the other female were sampled. Where the school did not have any female teachers which is common in most of the CDSSs in Phalombe, the two teachers were both male. The head-teacher of each of the 4 schools was also involved so that I could gather data from the education manager's perspective (at *micro-managerial* level). As an education manager at district (or *meso-managerial*) level, the District Education Manager was also involved in the study.

The table below summarizes the study sample

Study sample	Number of participants
Teachers	8
Head-teachers	4
DEM	1
Total	13

Table 3. 2: Study sample

The choice of 13 participants was arrived at based on the advice given by Creswell (1998) and Cohen et al. (2005). These two authors contend that in a qualitative research design, the sample size should neither be too small nor excessive but manageable, and limited by time and money. According to these authors a sample size within the range of 8 and 15 would be ideal in order to fulfill the requirements of efficiency, representation, reliability as well as

flexibility. To fulfill these requirements 13, as a number of participants, was regarded as an optimum in order to get an in-depth understanding of the phenomena under study.

3.6 Sampling technique

Given that this study was grounded in the Interpretivist paradigm, the sample was purposively selected. As explained by Sidhu (2005) the purposive sampling was done because the sample is considered to mirror the whole with reference to the characteristic in question. Ndengu (2012) also contends that purposive technique is opted for based on the researcher's judgment of the individuals that would provide rich data but also ensures good representativeness of the population. The use of purposive sampling in this study ensured that participants with similar characteristics were picked. These are people that are information rich on the topic. Their ability to share experiences and perceptions on what the education managers should do to retain teachers in CDSSs in the rural district of Phalombe provided the requisite answers to the critical research question.

3.7 Data generation approaches

3.7.1 Face to face interviews

This study used one-on-one interviews with open-ended questions. This method augurs well with the qualitative research design and the interpretivist research paradigm as it enabled to have an in-depth understanding of the phenomena under study. According to O'Leary (2004) and Cohen et al. (2005) an interview is an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, it sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasizes the social situatedness of research data. According to Ndengu

(2012:49), an interview is “a kind of conversation carried out with a definite purpose of obtaining by means of a spoken word”. A one-on-one interview, therefore is a natural way of interaction that allows a researcher to generate enough data even that which he did not expect to generate. Such interaction is crucial for the researcher to have a fuller understanding of the issue under study.

There are different types of interviews but the most dominant are three according to various literature. These are: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews. These are all usually one-on-one. However, what differentiates them is standardization of questions (Ndengu, 2012). According to O’Leary (2004), a structured (or fixed) interview have pre-established questions, asked in a predetermined order, and using a standard mode of delivery aimed at standardization without improvisation. In Semi-structured, as the name suggests, the interview is neither fully-free nor fully-fixed. That is, it is perhaps seen as flexible. O’Leary (2004) states that the interview generally start with a few defined questions but as it develops questions are answered in an order more natural to the flow of conversation. In the unstructured interview, Ndengu (2012) observes that the interview is like an ordinary conversation, and open ended. This study adopted the latter, unstructured, open-ended face-to-face and in-depth interviews as its primary data generation method. Such a method allows the researcher the flexibility to probe more on the initial participant responses, and therefore ensure that the participants provide data in the most elaborate and conclusive manner (Cohen et al., 2005; Hannan, 2007; Stuckey, 2013). As opined by Willig (2008) open-ended questions elicit responses that are meaningful and culturally salient to the participant; unanticipated by the researcher; rich and explanatory in nature. Typical of qualitative research where its objective is to describe and possibly explain events and experiences, the face-to-face

interview was an ideal method as it helped to understand how participants make sense of the world and how they experience the events.

O’Leary (2004) states that recording of responses in an interview can be conducted in diverse ways like note-taking, audio-recording, and video-recording. O’Leary notes that in note taking, it is very difficult to capture verbatim what the participant says. As such, it is hard to keep raw data. As suggested by Stuckey (2013), it is generally, best to tape-record interviews and later transcribe these tapes for analysis. One thing to be clearly understood is that qualitative researchers are frequently interested not just in what people say but also in the way that they say it. As such Stuckey (2013) advises that because it is more important to maintain focus on the participant to build rapport and dialog rather than on the notes, the recorder is ideal in capturing the data. This study therefore used audio-recording to generate data. This allowed me as a researcher to preserve data for review at later stage for transcription purposes. To be safe in case of eventualities, notes were taken.

The interviews were conducted based on an interview guide that was formulated (see *Appendix3.0*). As posited by O’Leary (2004), it is important to develop an interview guide which spells out the relevant questions to be asked or thematic areas to explore. Turner (2010) suggests that the guide ought to be a reflective approach to the knowledge sought and the interpersonal relation of the interview situation. The use of open-ended, face-to-face interviews as a data generation method augurs well with the interpretivist research paradigm as it helps to “understand, explain, and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants” as noted by Cohen et al. (2005:19).

3.7.2 Participant observation

The second data generation approach used was participant observation. Iacono et al. (2009) explains participant observant approach as an approach where there is personal involvement of the researcher in the research process. This is also called as “an inquiry from within” approach. Ndengu (2012) defines it as a strategy by which the researcher makes observations of people under study while participating in the activity. From these two authors, it can be concluded that knowledge acquired through ‘inquiry from the inside’ would be inherently more valid and relevant. The participant observer would seem to be more adept at gaining a foothold on social reality in this way. The participant observation approach was also critical in enriching the data from the respondents. Such an approach provided an opportunity to explore the phenomena from within the bounded system and given setting and context. Understanding how teachers and education managers interact and engage within their natural setting and context, was crucial in understanding the implication it has on teacher attrition and retention. From the observations, key issues were identified which are critical towards offsetting the problem of teacher attrition.

The use of two data generation methods in this study was supported by Turner (2010) who observes that often times, interviews are coupled with other forms of data collection in order to provide the researcher with a well-rounded collection of information for analyses. That is, they are essential for triangulation.

3.7.3 Pilot testing

The data generation techniques were pilot-tested to see how effective they were to generate the required data. Kvale (2007) points that pilot testing assists the researcher in determining if there are flaws, limitations, or other weaknesses within the interview design and which would allow him or her to make necessary revisions prior to the implementation of the study. Turner (2010) suggests that a pilot test should be conducted with participants that have similar interests as those the would-be participants in the implemented study. The face-to-face interview as an instrument was piloted on 3 respondents. However, it was noted that some questions were redundant while others were seen to be ambiguous. The participant observation method was piloted at one school. The pilot test assisted greatly as it allowed me to refine the questions in order to get the necessary data. Findings from the pilot phase thus formed part of the findings in the whole study.

3.8 Ethical considerations

O’Leary (2004) states that researchers are unconditionally responsible for the integrity of the research process. This implies that issues of ethics are a must-consider in any research. Resnik (2011) defines ethics as norms for conduct that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. According to George and Jones (2012) ethics is concerned with the moral values or principles that guide behavior and inform us whether actions are right or wrong. The underlying principle behind ethics is help people do the ‘right thing at the right time and in the right manner’. Which is why ethics must be adhered to at all times in social research as any lapse would significantly be harmful to those taking part in the research.

Ethical issues cover an array of areas including informed consent, voluntary participation, privacy or confidentiality, protecting participants from harm *inter alia*.

3.8.1 Informed consent

The www.bioethics.nih.gov mentions that before research can be carried out, the researcher must clearly state the nature of the research to the would-be participants and seek their consent to participate. The concept of informed consent, as stressed by O’Leary (2004) and Cohen et al. (2005), entails that the participant must fully understand the nature of the research and any potential risks be explained so that the participant makes an independent and informed decision to participate or not. This freedom to make independent and informed decision means the participant should neither be induced nor coerced to participate in the research.

The nature of the study was explained to the participants. From the explanation, it turned out that participants made a voluntary decision to participate. They were then given letters of consent to append their signatures as evidence of their informed consent.

3.8.2 Voluntary participation

O’Leary (2004) and Cohen et al. (2005) emphasize on the need that participation in a social research must be voluntary. As argued in the preceding paragraph, participants should not be induced or coerced into participating in the research but it should be out of their own volition. Creswell (1998) further advises that since participation is voluntary, participants should also be made aware of their right to discontinue at any time should they so wish. This ethical principle in social research means that participants are under no obligation to continue.

In the study participants were told that at any time they wished to withdraw from the study, they were free to do so and inform me. I assured them that such withdrawal would not have any negative repercussions on our relationship.

3.8.3 Privacy and confidentiality

O’Leary (2004) and Woods (2006) emphasize on the need to reflect on the issue of privacy and confidentiality in social research and ensure that at all times these are guaranteed. According to Resnik (2011), social research often requires that people reveal personal information that may be unknown to their friends and associates. As such the participant must be assured of his or her personal respect in terms of wellbeing, privacy and/or confidentiality. In other words, the researcher must do all it takes to make sure that the participants remain anonymous throughout the study. The anonymity can be achieved by use of pseudonyms (O’Leary, 2004; Woods, 2006). In the study, alphabetical letters were used to identify participants.

Another important point on confidentiality concerns how the generated data will be used and kept. As argued by Ndengu (2012) it is reasonable to explain this to the participant as it ensures confidentiality as well as security. In the study, participants were informed that data generated from the study would be used for purely academic purposes. The generated data would be stored on a compact disk (CD) which would be securely guarded and that no other person but the researcher would access it. Participants were also informed that all generated data in this study would be destroyed after 2 years of producing the final dissertation.

3.8.4 Protection from harm

Woods (2006) observes that participants in a social research can be harmed physically or emotionally. Any harm that can befall on the participant must be clearly explained prior to getting their informed consent. As stated by Resnik (2011) the researcher is under obligation to explain potential harm and how the participant can be protected. In the study, the participants were assured that no harm would befall them as a result of their participation in the research. It was stressed that whatever they tell me would not in any way be shared with anyone else or be used against them. Nevertheless it would be used purely for academic purposes.

The ethical principles of informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity, and security of data and protection from harm were therefore fully adhered to in this study.

3.9 Bracketing

Bracketing is a multifaceted term with no single definition. According to Chan, Fung and Chien (2013) it is a methodological device in phenomenological inquiry that requires deliberate putting aside one's own belief about the phenomenon under investigation or what one already knows about the subject prior to and throughout the phenomenological investigation. Tufford and Newman (2010) define bracketing as a method used in qualitative research to mitigate the potentially deleterious effects of preconceptions that may taint the research process.

Running through this thesis is the fact that social research is used to harness and explore lived experiences of the participants. Therefore, the argument that the two authors advance is that in carrying out a qualitative social research, the researcher is bound to have some subjective assumptions, values, interests and emotions in the subject matter under study. This is because the researcher is the instrument for analysis in all phases of the qualitative research (Chang et al, 2013). Such subjective preconceptions, as argued by these authors, have an influence on how data is collected, analyzed and presented. Therefore without holding them in abeyance, the results and interpretations may be skewed (Tufford & Newman, 2010). Therefore, to accurately explore and describe experiences of those involved in the study, and ensure that the acuity of the research was enhanced, all efforts were made to put aside my repertoires of knowledge, beliefs, values and experiences so as to facilitate more profound and multifaceted analysis and interpretation of the findings of the study.

Literature presents different methods of bracketing which are not mutually exclusive (Chang et al, 2013). Tufford and Newman (2010) and Chang et al. (2013) single out three methods and these are: firstly, the researcher may write memos throughout data collection and analysis as a means of examining and reflecting upon the researcher's engagement with the data; the second one is where the researcher engages with an outside source or seek expert views, and the third and last is through making observational comments that allow the researcher to explore feelings about the research endeavor. As discussed under the section of data generation methods, both during interviews and observations notes were being taken, it can be deduced that the first and third methods of bracketing were used. This is because they were consistent with the research design and research paradigm used in this study.

The principle of bracketing is aimed at removing biasness. As a teacher myself, bracketing was important so that my preconceived ideas and emotions should not influence the participants in any way let alone influence the findings of the study.

3.10 Summary to the chapter

The study employed the interpretivist qualitative research design and data were generated through open-ended, in-depth, face to face interviews and participant observation to provide a fuller understanding of how people make sense of the world around them. It has also explained that 4 schools in Phalombe were purposively selected for research based on the fact that Phalombe faces acute shortage qualified teachers due to high transfer and attrition rates. Out of those schools, a total of 13 participants were purposively sampled from the study population of teachers, head-teachers and the DEM. As required in social research, ethical considerations and the principle of bracketing were all adhered to.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data analysis, Presentation and Discussion of findings

4.1 Introduction to the chapter

This chapter covers data analysis, presentation of findings and discussion of the findings. These findings and the discussion thereof are in *sync* with the purpose of this study which was to assess the roles of education managers in promoting teacher retention in Phalombe district.

The chapter is divided into three main parts. It starts with how generated data was analyzed before presenting the themes that emerged from the findings. The last part is a discussion of the findings. However, before tackling these main parts of the chapter, it presents a biographical detail of the participants.

4.2 Biographical details

An analysis of the biographical details of the participants provided some immense insights into the study findings. As it was evident during data collection, there were very few female teachers and in other schools there was none. Again, it was also found that many of the participants were not qualified to teach in secondary schools.

Such revelations were critical as they helped in the analysis and subsequent interpretation of the study findings.

Sex of the participants

Sex	Number of participants
Female	02
Male	11
Total	13

Table 4. 1: Sex of the participants

There are few female teachers in CDSSs in Phalombe. In some schools, there were hardly any female teachers. Findings from the study revealed that most of the transfers out of the schools and the district at large are initiated by female teachers who mostly cite “following husband” as the main reason for their transfer. According to the DEM, some female teachers even bring with them fake marriage certificates just to convince him to approve their transfers out of the district. The DEM further explained that since MoEST always tries not to separate teachers from their spouses, the DEM approves the requested transfers. Kadzamira (2006) and Ndala (2010) also made similar observation in their studies that teachers leave to follow their spouses and for other family commitments.

Academic and professional qualifications of participants

Qualification	Number of participants
Primary Teaching Certificate	7
Diploma in Education	4
Bachelor of Education	2
Total	13

Table 4. 2: Academic and professional qualifications of participants

This was found during the research that most of the teachers in CDSSs in Phalombe are not qualified to teach in secondary schools. The finding agrees with the observation of MoEST (2008a) who recognizes that there is inadequate supply of qualified teachers more especially in CDSSs. Considering this reality coupled with the location of the schools in rural areas without basic amenities that can attract qualified teachers, and given the high attrition rates, these schools are faced with acute shortage of qualified teachers. As a remedy, the qualified primary school teachers, are picked and sent to fill the gaps created by those that left. This suggests that qualified teachers are the ones that leave rural areas and the profession in general more than the less qualified teachers.

4.3 Data Analysis

According to O’Leary (2004) data from qualitative research can be analyzed using different approaches and through different steps. This view is also shared by Ndengu (2012) who further argues that the steps used in qualitative data analysis are not linear but fluid. The objective of data analysis is to bring order, structure and meaning out of the large volume of

the generated data (O’Leary, 2004; Cohen et al., 2005; Woods, 2006). This can be done through different methods and steps as already alluded to. Similarly, analysis of the generated data in the study went through four steps which were not linear but fluid.

4.3.1 Getting to know the data

The first step in data analysis involved reading and re-reading the data in order to clearly understand, find the way through and make meaning of that data. This step was important in order to stay as close to the data as possible –from initial collection right through to the drawing of final conclusions as observed by O’Leary (2004).

During this step, data from each source was reviewed. The audio recordings were re-played and listened to carefully before transcribing them (Ndengu, 2012). As argued by different authors on qualitative research methodology, analysis should be done on data which is in textual format. This is why the recordings were transcribed. Then the transcripts were diligently compared with the recordings to ensure they were in tandem with each other. The field notes from participant observation were read thoroughly to have a fuller understanding of the data.

4.3.2 Content analysis

Upon being acquainted with the data, the next step involved focus or content analysis. This involved identifying from, or in, the data consistencies and differences in participants’ responses to the research questions, and the field notes. All the data were subjected to the content analysis and as the consistencies and differences were being identified, it helped in coming up with codes and categories.

4.3.3 Coding and categorization

From the content analysis, each data set was coded. Coding, according to Cohen et al. (2005) and Ndengu (2012) encompasses categorizing the raw data into descriptive categories. That is, a descriptive code was provided to each data set. This was done by making sense of what the participant was saying. Similar data were then grouped together to form data categories. It was from these categories, that preliminary themes began to emerge.

Code	Code description	Data category
stud.bh	Students' behavior	Stress & burnout
rlshp	Relationships	
sc.loc	School location	
tlm	Teaching and learning materials	
wrk.lo	Huge workload	
tm.wrk	Team work	
ldrshp	Leadership	Leadership style
frnss	Fairness	
t.welf	Teachers' welfare	
adm.sup.	Administration support	
empw	Teacher empowerment	
wrk.con	Working conditions	Working conditions
trn.opp	Training opportunities	Administration support
prom	Promotions	Promotions
Refr.cs	Refresher courses	Training opportunities
Upgrd.opp	Upgrading opportunities	
sal	Salary	Remuneration
ince.	Incentives	Motivation

mot	Motivation	
acco.	Accommodation	
allo.	Allowances	
att	Attitude	Attitude
st.prof	Status of the profession	Status

Table 4. 3: Codes and their categories

4.3.4 Thematic analysis

The final step involved subjecting the data to comparative thematic analysis where common themes emerging from the categories of the data sets were arrived at. A critical look at the categories of the data revealed that they were interrelated. This interrelationship in the data categories meant that the emerging themes were also interlaced.

The matrix below presents the themes that emerged from the study findings.

Theme No.	Theme description
Theme 1	Job satisfaction Categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation • Status of the teaching profession • Attitude • Empowerment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration support
Theme 2	<p>Working conditions</p> <p>Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation • Interrelationships (with community, among members of staff and with students) • Stress and burnout (lack of resources, huge workload, poor interrelationships, school location, and students' discipline) • Leadership style (transparency, fairness and accountability)
Theme 3	<p>Staff development</p> <p>Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training opportunities • Offer of promotions

Table 4. 4: Emerging themes from the study findings

The next section discusses the themes that emerged from the findings and contextualizes such the study findings into the reviewed literature. These themes were compared to the research questions and therefore those that were directly linked to the research questions formed the basis for discussions.

4.4 Discussion of findings

The themes as presented above offer insights into the causes of attrition and turnover, its effects on the quality of teaching and learning, and the strategies that can help reduce attrition and therefore promote retention. The next section discusses these themes and contextualize the findings in the available literature. The aim is to see whether the findings of the current study confirm or deny what have been discussed in different literature as reviewed in chapter 2.

4.4.1 Job satisfaction

This is the overarching theme emerging from the findings. Job satisfaction concerns with the feelings that an individual has towards his or her work. This study noted that the level of job satisfaction among teachers in CDSSs in Phalombe is very low and this has contributed greatly to teacher attrition in the district. As noted from the study, factors contributing to the low levels of job satisfaction are manifold. These factors concern issues of motivation, profession status, attitude, low involvement in decision making, and administration support. These factors play a determining role for teachers to either leave or stay.

4.4.1.1 Motivation

This study revealed that teacher attrition in Phalombe district is largely attributed to low motivational or morale. Factors contributing to the low motivation or morale are myriad and these include: poor remuneration, lack of incentives, poor accommodation *inter alia*.

The general perception of the participants was that they are dissatisfied with the salary that they get at the end of the month which according to them, is “peanuts”. As teacher F of

school **PE.A** puts it, “*The salary we get cannot be equaled to the work we do. It’s just by God’s grace that we survive to the next pay day*”. Teacher **J** of school **PE.D** said,

Teachers leave in search of greener pastures. *Ifenso timafuna kulemera* (we also want to get rich). The money teachers get is far too little for them to live the lives they all desire. We get too little unlike our friends of similar grades like us in other government departments like Agriculture and Health.

The assertion made by teacher **F** that teachers also desire to be rich contradicts what McKee (2003) stated that teachers do not enter the profession to be rich. Perhaps, what this statement means is that teachers desire to get adequate money that they are able to support themselves and their families. That is, they want to lead a decent life. As such getting a good salary would be ideal for them to afford basic essentials of a comfortable life. As asserted by Cowan (2010) that salary has a bearing on one’s decision to stay or leave, statements like the one made by teacher **F** affirms that assertion. Therefore, the issue of salary is indeed one of the factors affecting job satisfaction among teachers in Phalombe.

Statements of teachers desiring an improved remuneration to match with the cost of living were common among the participants. However, some teachers clarified on the issue of remuneration to say, their friends of similar professional grades but working in other government departments like Agriculture and Health are looked at as being better than them because apart from the salary alone, they also get allowances upon attending to workshops. Teacher **E** said,

Teachers only depend on salaries. There are no workshops or field work in this profession which can earn us allowances while our friends in Agriculture and Health have frequent workshops which come with money. Since we only depend on salaries, and with huge responsibilities on our shoulders, the money isn't enough to take us to the next pay day.

The need for incentives as a motivation factor to teachers cannot be given a blind eye. It is a necessary vehicle for teacher motivation and satisfaction as adequately highlighted by Xaba, (2003); McKee, (2003); Bennell and Akyeampong, (2007); MoEST, (2008a); MoEST (2008b) and UNESCO, (2014). The findings of this study confirm this. Otherwise, in the absence of the incentives, teachers in Phalombe engage in other things such as small-scale businesses, or high interest borrowing (loan sharks) from some well-to-do people and usually school dropouts, commonly known as '*katapila*' in order to make ends meet. Failure to repay the loan facility at agreed time lead to frequent teacher absenteeism from work as they try to get money to repay. Often times, their household goods are confiscated which puts them to ridicule. This finding augurs well with findings made by Moleni and Ndalama (2004); and also Kadzamira and Chibwana (2006). Apart from being poor remunerated, the salaries also hardly come on time. Almost on monthly basis, teachers are usually the last to get their pay. This affirms findings of a research done by Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) and Waddell (2010). According to the participants, salary delays insinuate that the teaching profession is held in 'low esteem' and this tendency contributes to teachers' low morale.

Issues of poor salaries have been found to contribute to low morale of teachers in the study. Findings of the study reveal that teachers bemoaned that if compared to other public sectors, they are poorly remunerated. This confirms research finding by Certo and Fox (2002), McKee, (2003) as well as Cowan (2010) that low pay was found to negatively correlate with

job satisfaction. No wonder teachers quit the profession for greener pastures. As advanced by Miller (2012) teachers are more likely to remain if they are adequately remunerated.

Another factor contributing to low morale is lack of incentives in the teaching profession. Many participants cited the issue of lack of incentives as one of the contributing factors of attrition in Phalombe district. Nonetheless, they all indicated their appreciation to the head-teachers and the DEM's office for ensuring that every teacher working in public schools in Phalombe receives the monthly rural teacher allowance of ten thousand kwacha (MK10,000.00). This rural allowance, according to MoEST (2008) is a strategy meant to incentivize teachers working in rural areas and therefore retain them. This practice sharply contradicts the assertions by Kayuni and Tambulasi (2007) and Ng'ambi (2010) who both said that there is no strategy for teacher retention in Malawi. It should be understood on the onset that the rural allowances were introduced some years after Kayuni and Tambulasi, and Ng'ambi had already made their assertions. Apart from this rural allowance, participants observed that there are no incentives initiated at school level that can motivate them to stay. As stated by teacher *F*, *"The head-teacher, his deputy and the accounts personnel travel a lot within the week on official business and at the end of the month pay themselves a lot of allowances while we are left to toil and labor to sweat yet without any allowance let alone a token of appreciation."* Another teacher *B* stated, *"When national examination results are out, we only get a 'thank you' by word without any accompanying monetary reward. They must be considerate. Some monetary 'thank you' can motivate us to do more than just a word of mouth"*. Even head-teachers complain of lack of incentives in the teaching profession like one head-teacher currently at Grade F (P5), a very senior grade in the civil service, had this to say, *"Those at similar grade like me in other departments are living comfortable lives and*

driving expensive cars in town. They have many fringe benefits like a vehicle, free fuel, and external travels among others but here I am walking daily to work?. Statements such as these clearly demonstrate that teachers and head-teachers alike are frustrated and dissuaded in as far as the issue of incentives is concerned. It is has been highlighted by Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) that incentives are an ultimate tool for promotion of employee retention in organizations, let alone in the teaching profession. However, the issue of incentives should not only be looked at from a monetary perspective as the preceding statements would like to make us believe. Incentive is a multifaceted word. Almost all the head-teachers and the DEM conceded that monetary incentives are hard to come by in the teaching profession. As a multifaceted word, incentives can be looked at from *financial* and *non-financial* perspectives. The non-financial perspectives include recognition, encouragement and provision of housing like most of the head-teachers stated. As noted by the DEM, *“Money is not the only motivating factor. We should encourage our teachers to be committed to work and always give recognition for good work. Besides, provide them with decent accommodation. These are incentives too.”* Other notable forms of incentives that the study has found include: use of delegation, distributing leadership positions, and provision of tea and milk during break times. In most of the schools that I did this research, tea with milk was indeed provided by the school during break time and the teachers contributed to buy doughnuts.

Lack of accommodation has also been cited as one of the problems that contribute to low morale to teachers hence attributed as one of the causes of teacher attrition in Phalombe. Agreeing with the findings that Koech, Titiko and Chemwei (2014) from a study done in Kenya and other studies by Lowe (2006), Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) and Mulkeen (2010), the DEM of Phalombe admitted that it is difficult to secure a decent accommodation

in most of the schools due to unavailability of institutional houses. Most of the teachers interviewed concurred with the DEM. One teacher stated, *“I was posted away from school to Migowi CDSS to deputize the Head-teacher but I didn’t manage to get a big and decent house. That failure made me stay at my school.”*

Just to give an insight on this challenge of accommodation, at one of the schools, school **PE.C**, there is no single institutional house for its 13 teachers. Thus they all had to find houses for rent away from the school. Of the 13, 3 live in the vicinity of the school, 2 make a 5 km daily walk to work and the remaining 8 including the head-teacher reside at Migowi Trading Centre, almost 9 km away from the school. The 10 have to endure crossing rivers that are difficult to cross during rainy season. This agrees with Moleni and Ndalama (2004) who found that absenteeism is common among teachers who live far away from the schools during rainy season. At another school, school **PE.B**, there is only one institutional house meant for the head-teacher. The rest reside in the locale of the school at a walkable distance. The school authorities lobbied other stakeholders in the education sector like NGO’s in the area, parents as well as the Member of Parliament (MP) for the area. The MP and the chiefs and their subjects around the school are currently moulding bricks to build at least two teacher’s houses and a girls’ hostel. At school **PE.A**, the head-teacher stated that when he arrived at this school in 2008, there were only 3 teacher’s houses and 3 classroom blocks. Later, Government through the African Development Bank (ADB) in its school improvement and infrastructure development, constructed 2 more classroom blocks each with two classes that are bigger than the initial ones. Besides, it constructed 2 more houses meant for the head-teacher and his deputy. He went further to say knowing pretty well the hassles teachers go through to get decent accommodation in rural areas, he in collaboration with the community

moulded bricks and have so far built additional 5 teachers' houses. He also, in collaboration with the MP for the area, facilitated the electrification of all houses and that each house there is running tap water. According to him, these are incentives given to his teachers to promote retention at his school. One of the teachers at this school when asked if he has intention to leave said, *"I am happy here. I have a decent house, with electricity and running water. Ndikumwa madzi odzidzira a mu fridge (I get cold water from the refrigerator). What difference is there between me and the one in town?"* The study findings concur with Mulkeen (2010) and Waddell (2010) that provision of decent accommodation can be used to incentivize teachers and thereby promote teacher retention. Otherwise, in the absence of accommodation, schools run into the danger of losing qualified teachers.

The issue of motivation takes another twist when a head-teacher on Grade F (P5) stated,

In an ideal situation, the one with a higher grade in public service or any organization plays a supervisory role over others with lower grades. But the story is different in teaching. You see a Secondary School Methods Advisor (SEMA) whose grade is P8 coming to a school and supervising a P7 or P6. It is ridiculous and downright demotivating!

As he uttered these words, his facial expression clearly showed that he was frustrated. Such frustration could be detrimental to performance and consequently lead to attrition and turnover.

4.4.1.2 Status of the teaching profession

Many participants stated that loss of status of the teaching profession is yet another reason attributed to teacher attrition. That is, the profession is often times ridiculed and regarded as 'profession of failures' as such teachers leave the profession for other professions that will

make them stand out and earn respect in society. The findings confirm the observation made by HEART help desk report (2013) that the teaching profession is ridiculed and looked down as a low status job. For instance, teacher **B** stated

Long time ago teachers used to be respected and held in high regard. It was a prestige. These days, the story is different. Teachers are a pathetic lot and most despised. Teachers are poor people in society. If you go into the house of a teacher, even if he has worked for 8 years, it is pathetic.

Agreeing with teacher **B**, one participant at school **PE.D** made the following statement during participant observation, “*A teacher used to be regarded as the most educated in society, a fountain of wisdom. Nowadays, angotengedwa ngati tsache lotsetsera zinyalala kenako nkungosiyidwa osasamalidwa bola mwachotsa zinyalalazo*” (a teacher is regarded like a broom which after sweeping away filth is left unattended to, provided the filth has been swept away). This is in sync with Kadzamira (2006) and Waddell (2010) that teaching no longer commands the high status, prestige and decorum in society as it used to enjoy some 30 or so years ago.

Most participants admitted to have joined teaching as a ‘last resort’ after failing to secure better jobs elsewhere and most of them stated that if an opportunity arose elsewhere they could cease that opportunity and opt out of teaching.

Participants also agreed that late payment of teachers’ salaries has also aggravated the situation as it has made teachers to be a laughing stock in society. It was noted that teachers get their salaries some weeks after the official pay day of the 27th of every month. As they struggle to make ends meet due to meagre salaries and the salaries hardly come on time, it paints a bad image to society that teachers are “low class civil servants” thereby making

teaching to be looked down upon. This confirms observations made by Kadzamira (2006) and Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) that poor salaries and its frequent delays which have become a norm are contributing to loss of status of the teaching profession. The hardships that teachers go through because of delayed salaries make the profession to be undervalued by the society (Ingersoll, 2001; Kadzamira, 2006; Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007; and Waddell, 2010). The study findings therefore confirm that the status of the teaching profession has eroded over years and this accounts for teachers' low morale and commitment thereby leading to burnout and attrition as observed by Xaba (2003).

4.4.1.3 Attitude towards the teaching profession.

The perception of society about the teaching profession has also dampened teachers' attitude towards the profession. The negative attitude has thus contributed to high qualified teacher attrition and turnover. Most of the teachers and head-teachers noted that most teachers that leave are those which have a negative attitude towards the profession. As this statement from one teacher interviewed shows it,

Teaching isn't a good profession. Very stressful and yet poorly remunerated. I joined teaching just to pass time as I searched for a good job. It isn't a profession I have always wanted and I can't encourage anyone to take up teaching as a profession. In fact, to be honest with you, if an opportunity avails itself today ...that I find greener pasture, trust me, I am out of here.

Such sentiments were not uncommon even amongst head-teachers who are supposed to play a vital role in teacher retention. Many admitted that they joined teaching to 'make ends meet' as they keep searching for other jobs. One teacher H who has taught for 29 years now said, *"Teaching to me was just a last resort. I've tried over the years to apply for other jobs but I*

haven't been successful. It's just by chance not choice that I've taught for such a long period of time." It is very worrisome when such sentiments are even expressed by head-teachers who are supposed to support their subordinates and secure their commitment to duty as advanced by Lowe, (2006), Cowan (2010), Kerry (2010). It is however understandable because head-teachers are teachers first and foremost and since they experience what fellow teachers go through, therefore they could not be faulted for their frustrations. The only strategy is to develop a positive mindset or attitude. Such positive attitude leads one to love his or her job as argued by Armstrong (2006) and Aamodt (2010). Teacher C stresses that this positive attitude to teaching profession must be inculcated in the teachers at early stage because, according to him, it is these new teachers that have high chances to quit the profession. He states, *"Through mentorship and offering constant guidance and encouragement to new teachers, we can promote retention."* Head-teacher of school **PE.D** admitted to have joined teaching as a last resort but said with time, he changed his attitude and he realized the profession is good such that he sees none better than it. He stated, *"I got full support from fellow members in the early years and that helped me change my attitude towards teaching."* He thus stated that inculcating a positive attitude in his subordinates and offering administrative support to all teachers (beginning or old), is an effective strategy to retain teachers. This position augurs well with the findings of research done by Day, Griffiths and Gu (2011) and Tye and O'Brien (2002).

4.4.1.4 Empowerment

Teacher empowerment, which is about involving teachers in participatory decision-making, giving them autonomy, engaging with them in leadership roles *inter alia* is yet another

effective contributor to job or employee satisfaction. Throughout the research, it had been found that teachers bemoan the lack of involvement in meaningful and professional decision-making. The findings agree with the observation made by Lowe (2006) that most teachers lament lack of involvement in decision making. Teachers lamented that often times head-teachers do not consult them for their input in decisions yet such decisions affect them in their day to day work. Most participants showed disapproval with how decisions in their schools are made. Teacher **K** for instance said, *“Our head-teacher does not value us. He is a ‘Mr. know-it-all’, he does things single handedly. Perhaps he thinks we have nothing to offer”*. Another teacher at the same school echoed this sentiment by saying, *“often times we just see things happening. We are taken by surprise.”* As argued by Mulford (2003) and Hirsh and Emerick (2007) when teachers are not involved in decision making they develop dissatisfaction which is a recipe for stress and burnout. This can lead to thinking of leaving for other schools where they feel they would be valued and their input taken on board. However, the situation is different in other schools where participants said they are consulted and take an active role in meaningful decision making and leadership roles. As teacher **G** pointed out,

Our head-teacher is open and transparent in his dealings. He consults us in most of the issues that require our input. He respects and listens to our suggestions and sometimes we make decisions together in the staffroom.

A head-teacher of school **PE.B** stated that education managers need to use a *bottom-up approach* in decision making. This according to him makes teachers own decisions that are taken in schools and consequently can help improve on school effectiveness. The assertion by teacher **G** and the head-teacher of school **PE.B** support the view advanced by Mulkeen

(2010) and Waddell (2010) that involvement in decision making provides professional growth which is one of the satisfiers and therefore promote teacher retention.

The second aspect of teacher empowerment concerns distribution of leadership positions or otherwise known as allocation of responsibilities. In all the schools, it was observed that almost each and every teacher has one or two responsibilities allocated to him or her. Some responsibilities and committees like Sports Committee, Sanitation, Patrons of various school clubs and associations, and Social welfare are reshuffled each academic year whereas some committees like Discipline committee, Internal Procurement committee (IPC) and positions of Head-teacher, Deputy Head-teacher and Head of Department (HoD) do not change. Despite these allocations of responsibilities and leadership positions, what is critical is; are these people able to make independent decisions? Or they have to always seek direction from the Head-teacher? In some schools, teachers said they are allowed to make decisions and only report to the Head-teacher on what they have done. Head-teachers for schools **PE.A** and **PE.D** agreed that there are times they leave their teachers make independent decisions and they are only informed but this is dependent on the issue at hand. Head-teacher of school **PE.B** echoed by saying,

There are times when the people can make their own decisions. I cannot be making decisions all the times because managing a school is a shared responsibility. Decisions made in committees and sometimes by individual teachers, if they are for the common good of the school I respect such decisions.

He further went on to say if the decision has already been effected and he has seen flaws, he only advises what else could be done to improve next time they face similar scenario. The situation is different with school **PE.C** where teachers must always consult the school

authorities before any decision can be made. Its head-teacher said, *“I am the Head-teacher here and I have a final say before a decision is made regardless of what position”*. What could be derived from this is that the nature of teacher empowerment is mainly dependent upon the type of leadership the school has. The impact of decision making autonomy affirms the observation by Charlotte Advocates for Education and Mulkeen (2010) that when teachers are empowered to the extent that they make autonomous decisions, it enhances their professional growth as well as their job satisfaction which are critical in promoting teacher retention. But a lack thereof enhances dissatisfaction and lead to attrition.

Delegation is yet another aspect of teacher empowerment. According to most of the teachers they said that being sent by the school authorities to meetings or the DEM’s office or Education division office in Mulanje shows that they are valued and gives them some experience necessary for their work. All head-teachers also pointed out the importance of delegation as a necessary tool for the promotion of teacher retention. As head-teacher of school **PE.A** states,

There is no school for head-teachers. I have an obligation to prepare my teachers for their future roles. Through delegation to meetings, or other errands, and sometimes assigning them some tasks to do in the office they can gain necessary experience. I rotate whom to delegate of course based on nature of task and ability of the one to be delegated.

It was observed however, that in other schools, the head-teacher has his favorites whom he delegates while some are never given the opportunity.

In such schools where the three areas of teacher empowerment are practiced, it has been observed that teachers are willing to do more and there is cohesiveness unlike where it is scantily practiced. This is in line with what has been argued by Mulford (2003), Centre for

Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2007), and Hirsch and Emerick (2007). The study findings therefore confirms that involvement in decision making, autonomy in decision making and delegation are necessary for professional growth and therefore promote teacher retention. But the lack thereof can trigger job dissatisfaction and lead to attrition.

4.4.1.5 Administration support

The nature or quality of support from the administration can play a great role in a teacher's decision to either stay or leave. Teachers in CDSSs in Phalombe emphasized on the importance of administration support if they are to be retained in the schools and let alone the system. The support, as cited by the teachers and head-teachers alike, focused mainly on provision of teaching and learning materials, listening to teachers' concerns and be able to offer immediate action to help, and provision of instructional leadership among others. As teacher C states,

“Our head-teacher is caring. He treats us well and with respect. When we are in problems, professional or personal and approach him, he is quick to offer help” and another teacher says, *“This administration has the welfare of its teachers at heart”*. However, the situation is not the same in all schools. At school PE.C for instance, it was noted that new teachers struggle, and worse still it takes long to begin to receive their salaries, besides they have problems in getting teaching and learning materials like chalk and stationery. As stated by head-teacher of PE.A, *“teachers must be given necessary resources for them to deliver in their day to day work. As regards new teachers, they are delicate eggs. Very fragile. We must give all support and even give them money for them to survive. Unfortunately, we are constrained in terms of resources to do these.”*

As advanced by Kayuni and Tambulasi (2007) and Kerry (2010) teacher support is vital to get their commitment to duty. Mckee (2003) and Kadzamira (2006) also agree that administration support contributes to job satisfaction and the lack thereof causes dissatisfaction and most times lead to stress and burnout. The DEM implored on head-teachers to support their teachers and stressed that showing care and valuing teachers and always being there for them is an effective way of making teachers be committed to work and therefore achieve retention. Findings of this study therefore confirm the views advanced in the reviewed literature like McKee (2003) and Cowan (2010) that administration support is a motivating factor and can contribute to the promotion of teacher retention.

4.4.1.6 Induction/mentorship

The need for induction and mentorship to new members of staff was also cited as being critical if education managers are to promote teacher retention in Phalombe. Each participant stressed on the need for such programs to help the new teachers establish and enhance their connectedness with others as well as enlighten them on the ethos of the teaching profession. That the teaching profession is stressful was highly articulated by all participants. As such it should not be left for the teachers to “swim or sink” but they should be given an awareness and armed with indispensable knowledge, and competencies to not only survive but also thrive. This directly confirmed the position held by Day, Griffiths and Gu (2011). One participant **H** stated that the tendency in Malawian public schools is that when a new teacher arrives with posting, he or she is just given teaching materials and a class to begin delivering without an induction or a mentor. This she said is done on the premise that being a fresh graduate he or she knows what to do and is capable of doing things. According to her, this

swim or sink practice and attitude places a heavy burden on the teacher thereby causing too much stress. Head-teacher of school **PE.A** and the DEM agreed that standard practice is to place the new teacher under the care and direction of an experienced teacher in the same subject area like the new teacher to mentor. Such an arrangement, according to them, makes the new teachers 'build a thick skin and be able to surmount any challenges'. This view supports the observation by Day, Griffiths and Gu (2011) who posit induction and mentorship is a necessary practice to build resiliency in teachers thereby promote teacher retention.

The study findings therefore support that induction and mentorship can be effective factors to reduce stress and burnout in teachers and therefore promote retention.

4.4.2 Poor working conditions

The conditions in which work is done have an impact on decisions of an employee to stay or leave. Teachers bemoaned poor accommodation or lack thereof in their schools, nature of interrelationships in schools and between schools and their communities and stress and burnout which is as result of work-related aspects as well as the location of their schools. Leadership style was also mentioned as being critical in determining whether to stay or quit the profession. This confirms the assertion made by Waddell (2010) that teachers are sensitive to their perceptions of the working environment. As argued by Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) the working conditions have a huge impact on teacher morale and motivation as well as their classroom performance.

4.4.2.1 Accommodation

Due to unavailability of institutional houses in most of the schools in Phalombe, to find decent accommodation in rural schools is a daunting task. As explained by teacher **E**, “*rural teachers are demotivated quite a lot. Due to poor or no accommodation, it is hard to find good house in the villages. We make do with grass thatched houses here, houses that leak during rainy season.*” The observation by teacher **E** confirms observations made by Moleni and Ndalama (2004), Kadzamira (2006) and also Kayuni and Tambulasi (2007) that issue of housing and accommodation for teachers is a major problem and is a leading factor to stress and burnout. Concurring with teacher **E** were the DEM and head-teachers who admitted that teacher’s accommodation in CDSSs in Phalombe is a big challenge. Even those that have institutional houses, most of the houses are in dilapidated state requiring proper maintenance. However maintenance is a problem because schools are constrained in terms of financial resources. Both the DEM and head-teachers emphasized that their offices look to government mainly for funding which they use to run their offices and schools respectively. But, the funding is always inadequate and schools do not have other meaningful sources of revenue which they can use to construct new houses. Due to the challenge of accommodation, schools and the district continue to lose teachers, a view also shared by Kadzamira (2006) and Wangai (2012). Affirming the observation by Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) it was noted that many teachers when posted to schools in Phalombe district they refuse to go and others do come and report but when they fail to find an appropriate accommodation they leave and do not come back. This situation is complicating the already existing shortage of teachers in the district.

In line with Sergiovanni (2000), Brewster and Railsback (2003), Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011), and Miller (2012), participants opined that education managers can mobilize their communities to mold bricks and build houses for teachers in their schools as part of improving accommodation of teachers. They also pointed at the need to maintain the existing accommodation to make them habitable as advanced by Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) and Waddell (2010). The study findings therefore concur with the reviewed literature that lack of accommodation triggers attrition and the availability thereof can promote retention.

4.4.2.2 Nature of interrelationships

These are relationships within the school among members of staff, staff and head-teachers, staff and students, and the school and its community. Education managers need to foster positive interrelationships otherwise referred to as collegiality in schools as found also in diverse studies by Sergiovanni (2000), McKee (2003), and Lowe (2006). Such an environment brings in respect, builds trust and promotes *unity of purpose*.

Poor interrelationships can cause a lot of stress to teachers and therefore lead to attrition. During field visits at school **PE.C**, one of the days there came angry parents to confront teachers. What caused this was that the school had suspended a student on the charge of open defiance to authority which as per school rules and regulations required suspension. When the student reported home to the father, he failed to see the issue warranting such a 'harsh punishment'. The following day the father to the suspended student, her uncle and a brother came raging with anger. There was shouting and banging of tables in the office and this attracted the interest of students who thronged the windows of the office and its entrance to see what was happening. This lack of understanding on the part of the parents and guardians

and conduct towards the school authorities has the capacity to cause fear and cynicism on teachers. While we were sat in the staffroom, one teacher angrily said “*Khalidwe ili likuonjeza kwambiri. Tidzigwira ntchito mwa mantha ife?*” (This behavior is getting out of hand. Should we be working out of fear?). I learnt that this was not the first time for such an incidence to occur, it had happened many times before. Trying to engage with the PTA and SMC had not borne any fruits. It was also learnt that both the PTA and SMC are now dysfunctional due to misunderstandings that have been there between the school and the community for issues to do with students and conduct of the head-teacher. As observed by teacher **B** of school **PE.A**, issues of indiscipline of students in CDSSs spill over to their communities. Since learners commute from the communities to school on daily basis, any suspensions given to the learners have the capacity to mess the relationship between the community and the school.

The relationship between members of staff and the head-teacher at school **PE.C** was observed to be unhealthy. Statements like, “*Pano si pa estate. Mkulu ameneyu akutionjeza*” (This is not his personal estate. He is taking us for granted) could be heard. However, in other schools, the situation were different as there were positive interrelationships between the school authorities and their communities, and even amongst members of staff. At school **PE.A**, the community and the school have managed to construct 5 teachers’ houses. At school **PE.B**, the community in partnership with the school are moulding bricks to construct teachers’ house and also a girls’ hostel. In three of the visited schools, most members of staff shared their time in the staffroom, get cups of tea together. The head-teachers could also be seen taking tea together with the teachers and at times coming for a chat. Teacher **A** said their head-teacher is very supportive and “*he promotes respect and unity of purpose amongst us*

members of staff...we therefore work as a team here.” At another school, teacher **G** narrated that at her former school, the head-teacher refused to sign for her application to pursue a Bachelor of Education degree course at DCE and this forced her to get a quick transfer to a neighboring school. There, the head-teacher signed for it and when she was picked, the head-teacher allowed her to go while procedures to get a study leave were in progress.

On the relationship between school and community, teacher **G** said,

The head-teacher acts as a bridge between the school and the community. He should always strive to maintain positive interrelationship between the two. For the school to be effective and also carry out any meaningful development these two must work as collaborative partners. Otherwise, sour relationship between them will lead to teachers leaving for other school.

The DEM emphasized that his office and the head-teachers of public schools in the district have a responsibility to bridge the relationship between schools and their communities and ensure it is always cordial. According to him, schools do not exist independent of their communities. Granted that the school gets learners from the communities and once they are educated they return to the same community, the DEM stressed that it requires schools and communities to work as collaborative partners in the management of schools. According to the DEM, communities have a role to play in teacher retention through ensuring that the working environment of the teachers is conducive. He stated that if the community is hostile to teachers, it would be difficult for teachers, and stressful for them to effectively discharge their duties under such an environment. As such schools will continue losing teachers. The findings of this study affirm the findings of Sergiovanni (2000), Kerry (2010) and Adedeji

and Olaniyan (2011). These argue that collegiality and positive school-community relationship is ideal for the promotion of teacher retention.

4.4.2.3 Stress and burnout

Stress and burnout has also been attributed to attrition in CDSSs in Phalombe. The study has found out that teachers are highly stressed by a number of factors. These factors include: lack of teaching and learning materials, huge workload in the face of high PqTR, students' unruly behavior, lack of collegiality and school location as being chief contributing factors to teacher attrition in Phalombe. Such conditions are undesirable as they cause work-related stress. As noted from this statement by teacher **E**,

Rural teachers are demotivated quite a lot. Due to poor or no accommodation, we live in grass thatched houses here, houses that leak during rainy season. On top of that challenge, we have inadequate teaching and learning materials, how do we cope up with the expectations of the society that we effectively deliver?

This statement was recurrent in all the interviewees and it clearly shows that stress among the rural teachers is high.

Furthermore, it was stated by many teachers and head-teachers that when schools lose teachers for whatever reasons, it creates the problem of understaffing. Unfortunately, as noted by the head-teachers, replacement of teachers that have left takes time and sometimes, there isn't any. This is in line with what Kadzamira and Chibwana (2004), Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) and Waddell (2010) also found in their studies. Consequently, the remaining teachers are made to fill the gap that has been created by those that left by taking

their subjects and responsibilities left by those that have left and this creates a huge workload on these teachers and a lot of stress. Teacher **D** had this to say,

Achimwene, kuli mavuto osaneneka kuno. Ntchito ikuwawa (My brother, we are grappling with a myriad of challenges here and work is just stressful). We have inadequate teaching and learning materials here and we have very few teachers. Now when someone leaves, the burden is on us to shoulder. Imagine, in my case, I teach English in Forms 2 and 4, and someone left, and I've added Social and Development studies for Form 3. Mind you, each class has two streams with almost 60 learners each stream. Now, to teach, give exercises, mark and give feedback.... Eeerrr, Sir, it is not a joke.

The DEM reported that his office gets requests from teachers for posting most frequently. Most of the requests are from teachers that come from the northern and central regions and the reason given for the request is usually '*to be closer to my home district*'. Teacher **C** who comes from Mzimba district in the northern region, said his request to get transferred was turned down. He was told to search for a teacher in Mzimba with whom he could do a cross-posting something which he failed. "*When I get a message, for instance, that there is a funeral at home, you never know the challenge I face to raise transport to go home. It's hectic my brother*", he said.

On school location, most CDSSs are located in the remote areas with poor road networks, poor telecommunication networks, poor housing, and access to information and healthcare services is problematic. This confirms the observation by Moleni and Ndalama (2004), and Mulkeen (2010) that rural schools are at a disadvantage and usually understaffed because they lack basic amenities. Teacher **F** stated that they have no access to newspapers in their area such that they get information about school opportunities often times, days after the deadline has closed. He thus pleaded with me to be sending him information through phone

whenever I find some useful information. In other schools, for one to make a phone call on a mobile phone there were specific areas one had to go due to poor telecommunication network. On road network and lack of basic amenities, teacher E had this to say,

Mr. Kaluwa, working here is a big sacrifice and requires perseverance. During rainy season, there is a lot of absenteeism on the part of learners and us teachers as the roads are impassable. Rivers swell up and overflow and who can risk his life crossing them just to teach? And for your information, the nearest health centre is 10 km away. During month end, and in case of emergencies requiring, I have to travel over 47 km to Mulanje or 76 km to Zomba just to access banking services....you think I am happy working here?

The DEM further stated that there are a myriad of reasons that people give in order to be posted away within or without the district. Among the plethora of reasons he talked of people requesting transfers to other schools or education zones or outside the district on health grounds so that they are closer to health centres '*for easy access to health care service*', and others, more especially ladies, asking to follow their husbands. Like Miller (2012) who found that schools whose communities lack essential amenities are most likely to lose teachers, the DEM said Phalombe continues to lose teachers. As noted in Table 4.1, the DEM said some lady teachers even bring in fake marriage certificates just to convince him to be posted away and this, he explained, is one of the reasons that most CDSSs have few female teachers and others hardly have any female teachers. The DEM continued that others, especially men feign illnesses and connive with medical personnel to issue medical reports that serve as a basis for their requests to be transferred. He said the bottom line is that the working conditions in most schools in the district are poor hence the increasing teacher-initiated transfers out of schools and the district. This echoes what Kadzamira and Chibwana (2004),

Moleni and Ndalama (2004) and Kadzamira (2006) also found in their studies that rural schools continue to lose teachers for lack of basic amenities and poor working conditions.

Students' discipline has also been cited as one of the causes of stress to teachers. When students are unruly, it affects the quality of teaching and learning as in the case of the school experience I observed and cited in the preceding paragraph. Teacher **D** stated that teaching must be done in an environment that allows positive interaction between a teacher and the learners but if the interaction is not good, it has adverse effects.

Discipline must be enforced at all times to create a conducive learning environment. But if there is indiscipline ...students refuse to obey, and are often times hell-bent to cause commotion in school, I would rather leave for somewhere I can work peacefully.

Teachers emphasized that the issue of discipline requires concerted efforts from both the school authorities and parents. It was generally noted that when parents are supportive and strongly share in the belief that their children should be well-behaved, it makes teaching and learning less stressful and enjoyable. They thus stated that good rapport between the school and the parents is a *sine qua non* for improved discipline in schools and thereby promoting teacher retention. This view supports the observation made by Kerry (2010) that collegial support from communities and between students and members of staff promote satisfaction among teachers and thereby promote retention. Like Sergiovanni (2000) and Lowe (2006) who propagate the need to foster and celebrate the 'people side of the school' and the developing a community of practice which is critical in school improvement, the assertions advanced by teachers in the study seem to kowtow in the same line of thought.

Study findings seem to suggest that stress and burnout is among the reasons that account for high attrition rates in Phalombe. Improvement of factors that lead to stress and burnout can therefore lessen this effect and promote teacher retention.

4.4.2.4 Leadership style

Participants indicated that the style of leadership practiced by the education manager can also contribute to a teacher's decision to leave or stay. Participants stated that they would be willing to stay in schools where the head-teachers conduct the affairs in a transparent, fair and accountable manner. Teacher **G** stated that school management is not a precinct of one man but a shared responsibility. According to him, school management is multifaceted and it requires the input of many if things are to move efficiently and effectively. Another teacher **D** stressed that, *"I would find it satisfying to work with and under a head-teacher who values his teachers, someone who is open-minded, transparent, fair, consistent and strategic."* He went further to assert that head-teachers should be humble because they are also employees and colleagues in the profession.

Head-teachers of schools **PE.A** and **PE.D** agreed with the assertion that the nature of their leadership has the capacity to promote either attrition or retention. They observed that for schools to be managed well, head-teachers need to engage with all their members of staff. This engagement with staff, according to them, helps to build trust which is necessary for enhancing job satisfaction of their members of staff. As emphasized by the head-teachers, school leaders need to frequently engage members in decision making, and be fair and accountable in the dealings. They went on to say that they also need to delegate responsibilities to their subordinates as this can help in equipping their subordinates

with some relevant administrative, managerial and leadership skills which are crucial in professional growth. Transparency, fairness and accountability were noted to be critical pillars of good leadership as they promote cohesion in institutions. According to the head-teachers, school managers that promote these create a conducive working environment for teachers and in turn promote teacher retention.

On delegation, the DEM emphasized that in Malawi there is no school for head-teachers. He stated that the kind of training most head-teachers receive is mostly on-job training. Such being the case, head-teachers should delegate responsibilities to their members as a training to prepare them for their future roles. This, according to him, can help in improving their skills and competencies in leadership and management.

The findings concur with The Charlotte Advocates for Education (2004) and Hirsch and Emerick (2007) who observed that the nature of school leadership has an impact on teachers' decision to leave or stay. According to the authors, leaders that collaboratively work with their staff members and offer them with opportunities that increase their leadership abilities can gain the teachers' trust and therefore promote job satisfaction and in turn, promote teacher retention.

Basing on Herzberg's theory, the findings show that hygiene factors such as working conditions, when they are poor, can cause teachers to be dissatisfied with their job and hence lead to attrition. The study findings concur with the Aamodt (2010), who noted that people seek an enjoyable work environment. The findings are also in support of Xaba (2003) and Waddell (2010) who both agree that working conditions have a large effect on teachers' retention. The findings also support Keeping Quality Teachers (2000), which advances that

new teachers are most likely to leave because of poor working conditions such as lack of job orientation/induction, staff relationships, school policies and regulations, and lack of growth/development opportunities

4.4.3 Staff development

Staff development has also emerged to be one of the critical factors in this study. Participants observed that staff development is at the core of every profession as it improves employees' skills and competencies. According to participants, this makes employees become efficient and effective. They argued that individual efficiency and effectiveness contributes to group and organizational effectiveness since the whole is the sum of its parts. Unfortunately, there are lack of training opportunities, and delayed promotions in the teaching profession which are contributing to teacher attrition in Phalombe district.

4.4.3.1 Training opportunities

Participants explained that there is lack of career advancement in the teaching profession as such most of them quit to get employment elsewhere where they can be accorded the opportunity to advance through trainings and refresher courses. Participants agreed that training is necessary as it equips teachers with additional skills thereby improving their competencies in carrying out their duties. Most of participants explained that MoEST rarely send teachers to go for further education let alone trainings. They all agreed that if anything it encourages that each teacher should embark on self-development. However, for the individual to do that, he or she faces a number of bottlenecks as observed by a teacher of school **PE.C**,

We don't know why the ministry restricts a section of people and favors others when it comes to upgrading. I applied for a Bachelor of Education course at Mzuzu University to do Geography and Social Studies and I was successful. I then applied for a paid study leave to the Ministry. This was before the Ministry released that prohibitive circular which stated that only those going to study for languages and sciences would be accepted. I've been at PT4 for 8 years now and I am denied the chance to upgrade myself. Is that fair?

These challenges faced when teachers want to upgrade themselves to degree level and being denied the chance to upgrade was an outcry from all participants including head-teachers and the DEM. They agreed that the bottlenecks that teachers face in their quest to upgrade their qualifications have an adverse effect to their morale. According to the participants, somebody who has been denied an opportunity to go for further studies cannot teach with that zeal as required of him or her. Participants emphasized that career advancement opportunities are critical in teacher retention. They said in a profession where the career path is defined, employees would work hard to advance and reach the top. Unfortunately this is not the case with the teaching profession. The MoEST circular in question, as said by the teacher of school **PE.C** was seen by many as being counterproductive to the quest for teacher retention. However, some participants stated that the nature of interrelationship that exists between members of staff and their immediate education manager, the Head-teacher, is critical in as far as the issue of training opportunities is concerned. A lady teacher at school **PE.A** stated that at her former school, the head-teacher refused to sign for her application letter to go and study towards a Bachelor of Education at DCE. The reason was that she had just finished her diploma studies and had to finish her probationary period of two years in order to go for another course. She thus stated

I requested the EDM for an immediate posting away from that school to another school. A week later it was approved and went to report to the new duty station. Sooner had I arrived at this new school, than I asked the Head-teacher to sign for my application which he did and forwarded the same to the EDM who also approved the application. He encouraged me to go to school which I did without requesting for a study leave from MoEST. My friends were scrapped off from the payroll but with me the situation was different. He supported me throughout.

Another, a male teacher at school **PE.D**, concurred with this sentiment by stating when MoEST headquarters rejected his study leave application, his head-teacher advised him to go and pursue his studies. For the four years of his studies, the head-teacher shielded him and gave him moral, material and financial support. At the time of the study, he had just resumed his work.

On their part head-teachers agreed that they have a critical role in ensuring that they provide training opportunities to the subordinates. They stated that they always encourage their members of staff to go for further education in order to advance in their career. Head-teacher for school **PE.A** stated that when he arrived at the school he found 10 teachers who were unqualified. Through encouragement many went for upgrading courses at DCE, some on residential and others through ODL. As of now there are only 4 unqualified and he has encouraged them to go for upgrading. Head-teacher for school **PE.D** also stated that he encourages his staff to go for upgrading. He states

I encourage my staff to upgrade themselves academically. So far 2 teachers who were doing their studies at DCE through ODL have graduated and are back here teaching. However, the approval of the study leave is solely in the hands of MoEST headquarters. I do not have the mandate to give study leave but can only recommend.

The DEM for Phalombe also stressed on the need for staff development. He said that his office every two years sends head-teachers, their deputies and PEAs for professional development courses at MIE. Furthermore, he stated that whenever there are adverts on intake applications to tertiary institutions, his office pastes such adverts on its notice boards and also sends the same to schools in the district to encourage members of staff that are willing to apply. He further stated that when the applications pass through his office he appends his signature and forwards the letters to the institutions. He emphasized that when it comes to study leave applications, he scrutinizes the letters to ensure that only those that have finished their probationary period, and meet the requirements, their applications are recommended and forwarded to MoEST headquarters for approval. He stated that this year his office recommended 8 teachers who were successfully approved by MoEST to do Bachelor's degree course through ODL at Mzuni and others are doing their education at DCE and UNIMA. The DEM acknowledged that teachers face bottlenecks especially when it comes to being granted paid study leave. He said,

Not all who apply for a study leave to the MoEST headquarters are granted. In case of being denied a study leave, some head-teachers do help their teachers to go and they shield them. Though I don't encourage this but I cannot deny them the opportunity to excel and advance in the career. For as long as the head-teachers have measures in place to fill the gap created by the teacher who has left, I have no problems.

Almost all participants agreed that in their respective schools they are offered In-service trainings (Insets) especially in the areas of the teaching subjects that they face difficulties. Participants stressed that head-teachers should be encouraged to offer CPD to their teachers in form of Insets. However, participants stated that inasmuch as their head-teachers and the DEM are supportive of the staff development more especially on upgrading, they are let

down by the MoEST headquarters. This is due to strict restrictions it has put on teachers that want to go for further education in institutions of higher learning. According to them the removal of such bottlenecks would encourage many advance in their careers. As observed by Armstrong (2006) and Aamodt (2010), staff development opportunities are critical in enriching employees' jobs and therefore it is very critical in their decision to stay in the job. Likewise, in the teaching profession. The findings therefore are in support with the EFA Global Monitoring Report on Malawi (UNESCO, 2014) which advanced ongoing training has the potential to address knowledge gaps and upgrade and reinforce acquired skills in teachers. The findings also agree with Quartz et al. (2008) who observed that schools that promote staff development are likely to see improved teacher retention.

4.4.3.2 Promotions

Participants stated that promotions in the teaching profession are hard to come by. This has led to many teachers remaining at one grade for over 10 years. Many of the participants despite having worked for more than 10 years, confessed that they have never been promoted. It was observed that there are many teachers who have worked for over 20 years and have retired while stuck at the same grade. As observed by teacher **Bofschool P.E.D** teachers remain at one grade for years and are forgotten. According to him, the only time they are remembered is when they engage in acts of misconduct and a disciplinary case is instituted against them. This teacher stated that he joined teaching in 1984 and was last promoted to Grade PT1 (an equivalent of PO/Grade I) in 1996 by the Teaching Service Commission (TSC).

Head-teacher of school **PE.A** shared his disillusionment on the lack of promotions and delay thereof in the service by stating that he was last promoted to Grade F (P6) in 2003 which he described as ‘an unhealthy situation’. Head-teachers of schools **PE.B**, **PE.C** and **PE.D** also showed similar frustrations that they have been on same grade POE (TJ) for over 10 years without being promoted. Head-teachers and the DEM stressed that as employees themselves, they do not have any powers to promote any teacher. According to the head-teachers and the DEM, the onus to promote teachers rests squarely on the employer, MoEST through the TSC which is mandated to conduct interviews where upon being successful one is promoted. The findings agree with Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) who observed in their report that teachers in some countries (such as Malawi) complain that their promotion prospects are considerably worse than for other civil servants in comparable occupations. The study findings also concur with findings by Moleni and Ndalama (2004), Kayuni and Tambulasi (2007), and Waddell (2010) that promotion in the teaching profession is a serious problem. As also observed by Kadzamira (2006) promotions in the teaching profession in Malawi is a problem such that too many teachers are lumped at one grade for a very long time. Therefore the study agrees that lack of promotion in the profession is a contributing factor to high attrition and turnover. However, the study has noted that education managers at school and district level being employees themselves have no powers to hire or promote but only the employer, MoEST and the TSC.

4.5 Summary of findings

The first research question sought to find the causes of teacher attrition and turnover in Phalombe. The findings of the study have revealed that teacher attrition and turnover in

Phalombe can be attributed to a variety of reasons. The table below presents a summary of what has been found to be causes of teacher attrition in Phalombe.

Cause of attrition	Explanation
Poor remuneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are poorly remunerated and so they opt to leave the profession for greener pastures
Loss of status of the profession in society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching is looked at as a profession for those that have failed to make it to the desired goals. To many it is a ‘last resort’. • Teachers looked at as low-class citizens
Poor interrelationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor relationships among members of staff, the staff and the head-teacher, and the staff and students as well as the school and its community
Administrative support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head-teachers do not have the welfare of their teachers at heart. • School failing to provide necessary teaching and learning materials.
Poor/lack of accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of accommodation in most of the schools and where there are institutional houses most are in sorry state. This greatly contributes to teacher attrition.
Lack of career advancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often teachers’ requests for study leave are rejected at MoEST headquarters. Thus they are

	<p>refused to upgrade themselves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rarely does MoEST send teachers for training or refresher courses. • Promotions in the teaching profession are hard to come by
Low motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of incentives in the teaching profession. • Some officers of low grades yet supervising teachers with high grades
Poor leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of involvement in decision-making • Lack of delegation • Lack of transparency, fairness and accountability
Location of the schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor road network • Poor accessibility to basic amenities
Negative attitude (to the district and the profession)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phalombe is regarded as typical rural and with wayward or ‘village’ life. Thus, the working conditions in Phalombe are not good enough. • Most teachers decide to leave to be near towns. As such they fake marriage certificates and some connive with medical personnel to get fake medical report.

Table 4. 5: Summary of findings to question 1

The second research question was aimed at finding the impacts of teacher attrition and turnover on the quality of teaching and learning in Phalombe. As discussed in this chapter, participants conceded that teacher attrition and turnover negatively impacts on the provision of quality education services in CDSSs in Phalombe. The table below presents a summary of findings of the impacts of attrition in Phalombe.

Impact of attrition on education	Explanation
Lack of continuity in instructional delivery	When teachers leave the gap created takes time to be filled. This affects continuity and proper assessment of learner's progress.
Increased workload	The teaching subject periods and responsibilities left by the leaving teacher are heaped on those that remain.
Leads to increase in stress and burnout	Since teachers have huge workload to carry out, the pressure becomes too much to bear. As they strive to deliver, there is too much stress in them which leads to burnout
Contributes to high PqTR (now around 98:1) and low quality of instruction and performance	Dwindling numbers of teachers lead to increased disparity in pupil to qualified teacher ratio. This then affects the quality of output of the teacher thereby contributing to low performance of the learners

Table 4. 6: Summary of findings to question 2

The third question was meant to find the strategies that are in place in Phalombe to ensure that teachers are retained. The Participants in this study observed that currently there are three strategies which education managers in Phalombe are using in order to promote teacher retention. These strategies are as presented in the table below.

Strategy	Means of meeting the strategy
Provision of accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building additional houses • Maintenance of existing houses which are in sorry state • Asking the community to build houses and offer teachers to let at low cost
Encouraging collegiality in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage networking and/or team-spirit among teachers so that they share ideas. This creates a conducive work environment
Giving monetary incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All public teachers in the district receive amonthly rural allowance of K10, 000.00 that government introduced as an incentive to teachers teaching in ruralareas.

Table 4. 7: Summary of findings to question 3

The fourth and last question sought to solicit from the participants on the strategies that education managers can use in order to promote teacher retention in Phalombe. Participants

gave a variety of strategies which they feel if education managers in Phalombe employed, it would in turn promote teacher retention in the district. The table below summarizes the findings on this question.

Strategy to promote teacher retention	Ways operationalizing the strategy
Improving working conditions for teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving salaries • Provision of decent accommodation and other basic needs like running water and electricity. • Provision of adequate teaching and learning materials
Improving school leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of delegation to empower teachers • Teacher involvement in professional decision-making • Promotion of transparency, fairness and accountability on the part of school managers. • Offering administrative support to teachers • Inculcating a positive attitude and work ethos in teachers.
Creating positive interrelationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building collegiality among members of

	<p>staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating good rapport between the school and its community
Motivating teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentivize teachers through recognition, encouragement and monetary rewards. • Setting up mentoring and induction programs for new teachers
Providing career advancement opportunities and staff development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering training opportunities and refresher courses • Promoting teachers

Table 4. 8: Summary of findings to question 4

4.6 Summary to chapter

The findings of this study revealed that issues of causes of attrition and turnover in Phalombe and what suggested strategies to promote teacher retention have a plethora of factors to be considered. Upon subjecting data generated from this study to a thematic analysis, the findings revealed that issues of attrition and turnover, on one hand, and teacher retention, on the other all hinge on three themes that emerged namely: job satisfaction, working conditions and staff development. To mitigate the adverse impacts teacher attrition and turnover in the district among them being: lack of continuity, high pupil-to-qualified teacher ratio consequently affecting learner performance, education managers in Phalombe need to foster

collegiality, provide incentives, both financial and otherwise, ensure teacher empowerment and administration support to teachers, *inter alia*. Running through this chapter is the argument that educational managers both at school and district level can uplift the morale of teachers by ensuring that they promote teachers' job satisfaction, working conditions and staff development in a bid to promote teacher retention. The three themes emerging from the findings of this study as presented in this chapter provide a platform on which the role of education managers in promotion of teacher retention in Phalombe is to be assessed. Thus, they form the basis for summary, conclusion and recommendation for further research that are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion, summary of findings, recommendations and areas of further study

5.1 Introduction to chapter

The purpose of the current research study was to assess the role of education managers in teacher retention in Community Day Secondary Schools in Phalombe district of Malawi. In this chapter the context of the problem presented in Chapter One is given. Then the chapter presents the summary of findings, and recommendations based on these findings and in sync with the related research questions. These are then followed by the limitations of the study, suggestions for areas for further research and final conclusion.

The critical research question guiding the study was on how education managers in Phalombe can promote teacher retention. In order to answer this critical research question and achieve the purpose of the study, the following were the research questions that guided study.

1. What are the causes of teacher attrition in Phalombe?
2. How does teacher attrition affect the quality of teaching and learning in Phalombe?
3. What strategies do education managers in Phalombe use to support teacher retention?
4. What strategies can education managers in Phalombe deploy to promote teacher retention in schools?

This study employed a qualitative research design and data was generated through face to face unstructured question interviews from a population sample of 13 individuals who were

purposively selected from 4 CDSSs in Phalombe district. These individuals included: 2 teachers and a head-teacher per school and the DEM. Participant observation was also employed as a data generation tool. Typical of a qualitative research design, and interpretivist paradigm, the aim was to get an in-depth understanding of the problem.

Upon subjecting the data to a thematic analysis with the purpose of identifying themes and interrelationships within the data, the following is the summary of the findings from each of the research question.

5.2 Summary of findings

5.2.1 Research question 1: causes of teacher attrition and turnover in Phalombe

From this question it was found that there are a variety of factors which can be summarized into three thematic areas of:

- Job dissatisfaction: this is due to among others, low motivation and lack of incentives, poor remuneration, loss of professional status, negative attitude to the profession by the teachers. These lower the teacher's morale and consequently lead to attrition and turnover.
- Poor working conditions due to among others, lack of administration support, lack of collegiality, lack of or poor accommodation, school location, and high stress and burnout.
- Lack of staff development due to absence or delayed promotions, and lack of career advancement opportunities.

5.2.2 Research question 2: Impact of teacher attrition and turnover on quality of teaching and learning in Phalombe

The study findings reveal that teacher attrition and turnover has negative impacts on the quality of teaching and learning in Phalombe as it leads to:

- lack of continuity of instructional delivery
- increased stress and burnout
- increased workload to remaining teachers
- contributes to high pupil-teacher ratio

The above mentioned negative impacts of attrition lead to low performance of learners. This accounts for the dwindling standards of education in the district, in particular, and the nation in general.

5.2.3 Research question 3: Strategies in use to promote teacher retention in Phalombe

From the study, the following strategies were found to be in use to promote teacher retention in Phalombe:

- Provision of accommodation: though not done in all schools some schools are working collaboratively with other non-state actors like parents, community members and local NGOs to build houses for teachers so that they do not lose teachers for lack of accommodation.
- Provision of the financial incentive of a monthly rural allowance of K10, 000.00 to all public school teachers in the district.

- Promotion of collegiality among teachers, between learners and teachers, and the school and its communities. Such collegiality was found to be ideal for creating a conducive and satisfying environment for teachers' work.

5.2.4 Research question 4: Strategies that education managers in Phalombe can use to promote teacher retention

The results revealed that education managers in Phalombe can employ the following strategies if teacher retention is to be promoted in Phalombe:

- Improvement of working conditions
- Promotion of collegiality
- Provision of career development opportunities
- Promotion of teacher empowerment
- Administration support

5.3 How the critical research question was answered

From the findings of the study, it was found that education managers in Phalombe can promote teacher retention through making improvements in the three thematic areas of:

- Job satisfaction: this can be *inter alia*, raising teacher motivation through incentives, inculcating a positive attitude in teachers, and promotion of teacher empowerment.
- Working conditions: through among others, provision of decent accommodation, promoting collegiality, and providing administrative support
- Staff development: through provision of profession development opportunities like In-service trainings and encouraging their subordinates to go for further education to

upgrade themselves and therefore advance in their career. However, promotion is an area outside the realm of education managers in Phalombe.

5.4 Relationship of findings to theoretical framework

The use of Herzberg's two factor theory of motivation and Ludwig Bertalanffy's Open systems theory provided a good platform on which to assess the purpose of the study. As noted in the study, there are a variety of factors affecting the teachers' intent to either stay or leave. These factors fall within the three themes emerging from the study namely: job satisfaction, working conditions and staff development.

As advanced in Herzberg's theory, the presence of motivators like recognition, the attitude towards the job itself, level of responsibility, and career growth and advancement enhance the teacher's job satisfaction. Hygiene factors, on the other hand, like its administration support, policies, effective leadership, the working conditions and salary are critical for keeping employees in an organization. When hygiene factors are not present at adequate levels, they lead to dissatisfaction and that lead the teacher to the exit door. The three themes that have emerged from the findings augur well with the theory. Education managers should therefore ensure presence of motivators to enrich the teacher's job, while cushioning adequately with hygiene factors in order to promote teacher retention.

The *open systems* theory a *subsystem* theory, ascertains that a school does not operate independent of its community. There is always perpetual interaction sandwiched between the two. In view of the fact that the school gets its inputs from the local community, works on them as *throughputs* and the output is given back to the same local community, it is incumbent upon the two to develop a good working relationship. Such synergy would

promote community participation in the school management. As noted in Herzberg's two factor theory, this school-community synergy is one of the maintenance factors that can promote teacher retention. Otherwise, any animosity between the school and its environment (i.e. surrounding community) would negatively impact on the teachers and increase their dissatisfaction. Thus increase their intent to leave.

In summary, the two theories spell out the '*within*' and '*outside*' school factors that impact on the teacher's decision to leave or stay. However, as noted from the blend of the Herzberg's two factor theory which deals with job enrichment, and the *Open systems* theory, which deals with school-environment interaction, it is clear that the onus to promote teacher retention cannot be on the education managers alone. It calls for collaboration among different players in the education sector like the employer, MoEST, the TSC, and non-state actors like NGOs and the community at large, to play their rightful role in not only enriching the job of a teacher and therefore enhance job satisfaction but also keeping the teacher. Such a multi-sectoral approach would therefore lead to teacher retention in CDSSs in Phalombe.

5.6 Insights into the study findings

The study was thrilling as it accorded me with a rare opportunity to get to the bottom of teachers' concerns. A myriad of issues came out clearly chief among them were issues generally bordering on motivation, and specifically, low remuneration, poor working conditions, lack of administration support and lack of staff development among others. These affect teachers' morale and commitment to the profession.

The findings revealed that head-teachers and DEMs, as education managers on micro level, are cognizant of their role to improve on the teachers' motivation and therefore promote teacher retention. However, they fail to effectively execute their roles as they are constrained by lack of resources and capacity. One important point that they cited was that policies affecting teacher management and motivation are formulated at *macro-level* and they are only implementers at the ground-floor. They can therefore neither question nor go against such policies but just implement them. As managers that cannot influence any policy, they feel their role towards the promotion of teacher retention is marginal. They also mentioned that issues of remuneration and promotion are beyond their jurisdiction. This meant that they look up to central office, the MoEST headquarters to intervene or implement.

The DEM and head-teachers confessed that as teachers and employees first and foremost, they also share in the frustrations and teething troubles that fellow teachers go through. Such being the case, it means their morale and work commitment is as low as those that they manage.

It is a generally believed assertion that to effectively manage teachers, it requires one to undergo some "people management training" which would equip him or her with requisite competences. However, as it was found from the study, some of the head-teachers did not undergo any training and for others, a good number of years had passed by since they last attended one. In view of the dynamics of time and emerging issues in contemporary leadership and management, education managers need to undergo training in human resources management in order to be equipped with requisite knowledge and competencies on how to effectively manage teachers in this day and age. Such skills would enable them to

engage with their teachers in school management and decision making thereby creating an environment full of the hygiene factors. Thereby keeping their teachers in schools and promoting teacher retention.

Additionally, both the head-teachers and the DEM underscored that promoting teacher retention in CDSSs in Phalombe district is not a precinct of one man but requires a multi-level or multi-sectoral approach. According to them, there must be concerted efforts from different stakeholders in the education sector like PTA, SMC, the local communities in general and the Ministry of Education *inter alia* to enrich the teachers' job and therefore improve in the aspects of job satisfaction, working conditions and staff development.

5.7 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, a summary of recommendations for action is being made in consistent with the related research questions:

- Fully aware that it is in schools where teachers make decisions to leave or stay, the onus is on head-teachers to critically analyze school contextual factors that lead to attrition. It is therefore recommended that they should endeavor to improve on all aspects relating to teacher management among others fostering collegiality, administration support, teacher empowerment and participatory decision making, to ensure that they enhance job satisfaction among teachers and thereby promote teacher retention.
- Head-teachers and the DEM should collaboratively work with other stakeholders like NGOs, and local school communities in school management. Through such collaborative efforts resources can be mobilized to improve on availability of teaching and learning

materials and infrastructural improvements like on building new teachers' houses, maintenance of existing houses, and provision of other amenities like water and electricity. This can help in promoting teacher retention in rural areas.

- Education managers should ensure that teachers are valued, always encouraged and their work highly recognized within the school. Through this approach the teachers can develop a positive attitude apart from increasing their commitment to work thereby enhancing teacher motivation and in turn promote teacher retention.
- DEMs and head-teachers should ensure that they effectively play their role not only in the provision of instructional leadership but also in providing staff development activities on regular basis and removing bottlenecks in career upgrading program opportunities.

5.8 Contribution to theory and practice

The findings of this study have implications for both theory and practice. The main theoretical contribution that this study offers regards issues of teacher management in schools. Issues of teacher retention need not only be looked at from a *macroperspective*, but also from a *micro perspective*. As the findings suggest, head-teachers and the DEM, as education managers at a *micro level*, have a critical role to play in order to promote teacher retention. Through provision of aspects that improve on job satisfaction like motivation, teacher empowerment through involving teachers in decision making that affect them and autonomy. Besides, there is also need for improved working conditions that can be achieved through efficient and effective administration support, provision of accommodation, effective school leadership, and fostering collegiality among staff and with community. Education

managers also need also to be concerned with staff development through provision of opportunities for career advancement to their teachers. Through creating an enabling environment that enriches the teacher's work education managers at micro managerial level can raise and gain the commitment of teachers to the profession and therefore promote teacher retention. Such an approach can put to practice the Hertzberg's two factor theory.

It is my considered opinion that findings of this study and recommendations provide a practical guide to education managers, policy makers and other concerned stakeholders in the education sector to enable them recognize and initiate strategies at micro level that will make the teacher's workplace experience in rural areas, a more friendly, enjoying and satisfying. By addressing challenges in aspects of teacher motivation, and initiating effective strategies that promote job satisfaction and improved workplace conditions, it would raise teacher commitment to the profession, and so weaken the teacher's intent to leave.

5.9 Limitations of the study

As noted by Cohen et al. (2006), every research has its own inevitable limitations. In the case of this study, the following were the limitations:

- This study was confined in one Education Division (i.e. SHED), and one district, Phalombe and to only 4 CDSSs out of 10 CDSSs in the district which is not a full representation of the entire secondary school sector, let alone the CDSSs in the country. Therefore, typical of qualitative research design, the findings of this study cannot be generalized but only contextually used. However, the procedure used in this study, and its findings can be transferable to another setting.

- Data was generated from only 13 purposively sampled participants from the research population in the district. The generated data is therefore not exhaustive. It would have been better to research on all the 10 CDSSs in Phalombe and all teachers therein in order to have a fuller understanding issues of causes of attrition and how education managers can promote teacher retention. Suffice to say that, typical of a qualitative research design, only a few are used and the findings study can still be transferable.
- Some participants refused to have the interview recorded and it was difficult to capture all that they said. However, the remedy was to capture the main points from their responses and write down as field notes.

Despite being limitations, they could also be strengths as they provided an opportunity to get an in-depth understanding of the phenomena.

5.10 Final comments

The findings of the study, “Assessing the role of education managers in teacher retention: The case of Community Day Secondary Schools in Phalombe district of Malawi” revealed that managers have a critical role to play to create a conducive working environment for teachers thereby enhance teachers’ job satisfaction. Such an enhanced job satisfaction, as it has been observed, is essential to raise their commitment to the profession which is critical in promoting teacher retention.

The study has found that head-teachers are teachers first and foremost, as such they share in the frustrations and agony as their fellow teachers. Thus, their morale and commitment to duty is as low as the teachers they manage. As employees, the role of education managers to

promote teacher retention is limited. The onus therefore rests upon the employer, in this case, MoEST and the TSC to do a systematic situational analysis on issues of teacher management and teacher motivation. Such an analysis will give the employer insights that will prompt formulation of policies to improve on teacher's job satisfaction, working conditions and issues to do with staff development. These policies and their suggested strategies can therefore not only effectively enrich the roles of Head-teachers and the DEM as education managers at micro-level, but also enrich teachers' work thereby enhance on qualified teacher retention. Otherwise without such policies, and improvements in teacher motivation, retention of teachers in schools, let alone CDSSs in Phalombe, will be a far-fetched dream.

5.11 Suggested areas for further study

Looking at the issue under study, and what needs to be done to address issues of attrition and promote teacher retention, I wish to suggest the need for further studies in the following areas:

- A comparative study on schools with low retention rates and those with high teacher retention rates to ascertain the best and effective strategies for teacher retention.
- A comparative study on management styles that promote teacher retention and those that lead to job dissatisfaction and attrition.
- A study on teachers that have left the profession and those that are still remaining in the system (from the same cohort) to have a fuller understanding on the factors contributing to attrition and effective strategies for teacher retention.

- A study of the roles of various stakeholders in the education sector in the promotion of teacher retention.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1.0: Consent letter

By signing below, I _____ agree to take part in a research study entitled (Assessing the role of Education Managers in teacher retention: the case of Community Day Secondary Schools in Phalombe District of Malawi.) which is being conducted by Mr. Hartley Kaluwa, a Master of Education (M.Ed.) Leadership and Management student of Mzuzu University.

I declare that:

- ⊕ I understand that the information I will give will be used strictly for academic purposes only and that such information will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality.
- ⊕ I understand that my name and that of my school will remain anonymous throughout the research findings and presentation of findings and even in the final document. Instead the researcher will use pseudonyms.
- ⊕ I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurized to take part.
- ⊕ I understand that there are no direct benefits, financial or otherwise, from this study.
- ⊕ I understand that I am free to inform the researcher of my intention to withdraw from the study at any point in time, I feel so doing, and that such act will not lead to any negative repercussions.
- ⊕ I have read and understood the information pertaining to the study as given herein. My questions have fully been addressed.

Participant Signature: Date:

Interviewer's Signature: Print name: Hartley Kaluwa.

Appendix 2.0: Interview guide

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. What are the challenges that you have faced in those years that you have been in the teaching profession? What has made you survive until today amidst such challenges?
3. If an opportunity arose today in the NGOs or other public institutions outside teaching would you quit teaching and take up that opportunity? (Whether Yes or No, a question as to why will be asked)
4. In your opinion, what are the causes of teacher attrition (i.e. what makes teachers leave the teaching profession?) in Phalombe and the nation as a whole?
5. How does teacher attrition affect the quality of teaching and learning (at school level or the district as a whole)?
6. In your opinion, what strategies are in force at school and district level by education managers to ensure teacher are retained?
7. How **can** education managers effectively promote teacher retention at both school and district level? What strategies should be used (from the responses given, further questions to seek clarification)

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

8. Teaching is a stressful job. How much support do you receive from the HT in your day to day activities? Are you recognized when you do good work? (For education managers: how much support do you give to your teachers in their day to day work?)
9. How does the school leadership provide professional development opportunities to members of staff?

FOR HEAD-TEACHERS& DEM (only).

10. Among the many reasons for teacher attrition, poor working conditions has been cited as the main reason. How do you ensure that you provide good working conditions at your school (at district level) in order to retain teachers?
11. As Head-teacher or DEM have you ever gone for training on leadership and management (especially people management)? (If yes, how can such training aid you to promote teacher retention?)

Thank you very much for your cooperation