Implementation of Collaborative Problem Solving in Schools in Malawi: A case of Community Day Secondary Schools in Chitipa Education Cluster.

By

Pima Madumusha Wisimaji Msiska

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education(M. Ed) in Leadership and Management

At

Mzuzu University

June, 2022

DECLARATION

I, Pima Madumusha Wisimaji Msiska hereby declare that the work contained herein including the organization and writing of the thesis titled 'Effectiveness of collaborative problem solving in management of challenges that schools face in Malawi: A case of Chitipa Education Cluster' is entirely my work carried out at Mzuzu University. It has never been submitted to any other institution for similar purpose. It has been submitted to the university in fulfillment for the award of the Masters Degree Master of Education Leadership and Management. All reference materials used in this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Candidate: **PIMA MADUMUSHA WISIMAJI MSISKA**

Signature: _____   Date: _____

Supervisor: **DR. C. MPHANDE**

Signature: _____   Date: _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to all people whose contributions, support, criticism and encouragement were very helpful in writing of this thesis. I recognize love and care that was rendered to me in the time of study from; the family of Mr. Youngman Harawa, my brothers Juston, Boyd, Wizdom, Benjamin and the only sister Tryness. I am also indebted to the heads and teachers of these Community Day Secondary Schools; Yamba, Kameme, Njerengwa, Nhangwa and Chinthekkwe together with their SMCs. I also acknowledge the support I got from directors of Chitipa Restoration Project (CRP), Social Welfare and Tutulane Development Initiative (TDI). I also wish to acknowledge the support from Northern Education Division (NED) office for the support they gave me in data collection. I also extend my gratitude to late Mwakayuni for the guidance and material support he gave me during my data collection May His Soul Rest in Peace. Above all, I recognize the support from my friends Chikondi, Balakiya, Ballon, Dauson, Jacinta and Annie.

I extend my special recognition to my supervisor Dr. C. Mphande whose technical guidance, encouragement and patience have contributed to the completion of this thesis in time.

Above all, I salute the Almighty God for the life and making it possible for me to reach this far. Surely, on my own, I could fail without his presence.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents Mr. Stephen Madumusha Msiska and late Maria Chawing who died 10 days before the thesis submission for external examination. You made me who I am today. You suffered because of my today's being. My lovely wife Usokozi Harawa for persevering throughout my study period. I know you have toiled through. My two kids Steven Wisimaji Msiska and Prince Wisimaji Msiska. Kids I know I have set a mark beyond which you have to go.

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study was to assess the implementation of Collaborative Problem Solving in management of Community Day Secondary Schools in Malawi. The study was a case study using mixed method in data collection, analysis and presentation. The study targeted five CDSS in Chitipa Education Cluster (CEC) that were conveniently sampled. The study targeted a population of 2200 with a sampled population of 123 broken down as follows; students represented by 75 prefects 15 from each school, 65 teachers represented by 29 teachers, 5 head, 5 School Management Committee chairs, 5 mother group chairs 1 from each school, 3 directors of organizations and 1 official from Northern Education Division (NED). The study population was composed of 2282 respondents. Data from head teachers and teachers was collected by semi-structured questionnaires. Study guide collected data from Focus Group Discussions with the students in all schools. Interviews conducted involved SMCs, organization directors where interview guides were used to collect data. Quantitative data was collected from head teachers and teachers and was analyzed by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics such as graphs, pie charts, frequency tables were generated. Qualitative data was collected from students, SMC, NGOs, mother group and official from the NED was thematically analyzed. In this case themes were generated from the codes encompassing responses from respondents. The study found out that Chitipa Education Cluster has a number of managerial challenges that mostly were as a result of poor interest stakeholders had towards solving them. The study revealed that implementation of CPS strategies available was challenged by conflict of interests of stakeholder occurring at different systemic levels in education management. Conclusion from the study was that CPS solutions applied in CEC were found ineffective as they did not satisfy principles of effective collaboration designed by Ring Central Team (2020). The study recommended that school managers have to incorporate different stakeholders in school management through CPS for these challenges to be solved. The study has added information of the need to consider interests of stakeholders in implementation of a strategy to achieve the set goals, to the existing information of implementation of CPS to problem solving in schools with a case of CEC.

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BoG   Board of Governors

CDSS   Community Day Secondary School

CEC   Chitipa Education Cluster

CoP   Community of Practice

CPS   Collaborative Problem Solving

CPTD   Continuous Professional Development

CRP   Chitipa Restoration Project

ECP   Effective Collaborative Principles

EDC   Erea Development Committee

EST   Eco Systemic Theory

INSET   In-Service Training

MESA   Ministry of Education Strategic Analysis

MoEST   Ministry of Education Science and Technology

NED   Northern Education Division

NESIP   National Education Investment Plan

NGO   Non-Governmental Organization

PEDP   Primary Education Development Programme

SMC   School Management Committee

SPSS   Statistical Package for Social Science

TDI   Tutulane Development Initiative

TLM   Teaching and Learning Materials

UCE   University Certificat of Education

VDC   Village development committee

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

The aim of the study was to assess the implementation of Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) in solving challenges Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS) face. In achieving this, the chapter presents a general introduction of the study in which it examines the concept of the CPS in school management. In this case the chapter explains how Malawi has adopted and implemented CPS to solve some of the problems schools, particularly CDSS, face. The chapter also presents the problem statement, objectives and significances of the study.

1.1 Background

This study is about assessing the effectiveness of applying Collaborative Problem Solving in solving challenges secondary schools particularly CDSSs face. Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) is the engagement process where two or more agents attempt to solve a problem by sharing the understanding and effort required to come to a solution (OECD, 2017). CPS was generated by Dr. Ross Green. CPS was created with the aim of identifying a problem that hinders students from meeting their expectations. After identifying the problem these stakeholders should then help solve those problems for these students to meet their set goals. In the case of school, the agents are stakeholders of school management. These stakeholders include management, teachers, parents, organizations, committees like SMC, pressure groups like mother group, clergy and students themselves. These stakeholders engage, share their understanding of the set goals and identify challenges that bar students from attaining their goals. After identifying these barriers, these stakeholders put their skills and effort together solving those problems for students to attain their education.

Education manager assumed that application of CPS in school management would make different stakeholder unit in solving the school problems. Schools still face the challenges intended to be solved (PISA, 2015). These challenges include; shortage of Teaching and Learning Material, infrastructural problems, behavioural problems, financial flow and many others. However, Godfrey (2016) warns that when multiple players of different background are involved in a

committee, there is conflict of interest within the committee which later retards progress of the target activity. Despite meeting a number of challenges in school management, CPS is still being adopted by many countries worldwide mostly because educationists do not assess its implementation. This implementation has to be assessed to find out if the solutions employed by the strategy are, satisfying the interest of a particular group only or the whole group, and if the solutions from the general public are accepted by the multitude. If they do not reflect the general interests then they are not effective.

Many countries worldwide view CPS to have potential of providing long lasting solutions to challenges schools face (PISA, 2015). In the quest to improve education quality, countries have CPS enshrined in their national constitutions and various pieces of legislature, which include educational policies. Based on the PISA report, these collaborated stakeholders have the duty to check the insurficiency of the following: infrastructure, teacher performance, teacher discipline, quality teaching and teacher's absenteeism as they affect day to day running of the school.

In Tanzania, for example, CPS was employed to improve management of school (Mwasulubuva, 2013). Mwasulubuva, (2013) highlighted in Kamunge Report which recommended that there was need for collaboration of different stakeholders in school management to solve challenges schools face. The report highlighted that CPS in Tanzania was manifested through different organizations like Board of Governors (BoG), SMCs organizations and PTAs. The report however, revealed that members in these committees were selected based on their commitment, competences and experiences which would enhance management and development of a given school. The report on the contrary pointed out that it was not always that those members had the same interest at every point in time. The interests were at times different. The differences in the interest dwindled the progress in the school management.

Malawi as one of the signatories of the 'World Declaration of Education for All' which was held in March 1990 in Jomtein in Thailand, incorporated CPS in school management (MoEST, 2013). Particularly, consideration is put on Article 7 of the declaration which emphasizes on strengthening relationship among national, regional and local governments authorities with other stakeholder in school management. The government strengthened application of CPS not only to satisfy the recommendations of the declaration but also to deal with the problems that schools meet due to over-enrolment because of Free Primary Education in 1994 (Galafa, 2019).

2

To improve performance in school management, the government of Malawi strengthened the use of CPS through The Malawi Policy and Investment Framework (MPIF) (2021) by establishing the cluster system of school management. The cluster system was comprised of different school managers from grant aided, private, public and conventional schools. These managers come together and share knowledge and skills of school management. Clusters' establishment targeted uniform and standardized management. However, the financial challenges dwindled the number of activities to be supported. Private schools are profit oriented and other school managers were not ready to financially support their subordinates in their clusters. This difference of interests resulted into failure of clusters to solve content and pedagogical knowledge gaining.

Chitipa Education Cluster (CEC) as well incorporated CPS in the school management. CPS in CEC comprises of stakeholders like parents, organizations, mother group, SMC and students themselves. These multiple stakeholders have multiple roles to perform in solving challenges faced in the schools. Based on the argument of Godfrey (2016) CEC may also meet a problem of conflict of interest due to existence of different stakeholders with multiple interests. For instance, in the case of the established SMC there are chiefs who want cultural ideologies to be upheld in school, teachers and parents want learners to progress with school and organization, like those faith based, want to forward their faith agenda, yet all of them are in the same SMC. In that way there are conflicts of interest which result to retrogression than progression of targeted school activities. There is need therefore to assess the implementation of the CPS strategies applied as to whether they come from the general interest or just satisfy the interest of a particular group of the stakeholders.

1.2 Statement of the problem

CPS has been universally considered as the best strategy to be applied in solving some of the challenges schools face (OECD, 2017). CPS is composed of various stakeholders that collaborate to solve challenges for students to achieve their set goals. These different stakeholders having different roles to perform are supposed to unite in solving challenges school particularly Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS) (Godfrey, 2016 and Santhakumar, 2019). There are still challenges that were intended to be solved in these particular schools.

A study of this nature was needed to assess the implementation of CPS strategies in solving challenges CDSSs face. The assessment was done mostly towards examining whether the used

CPS strategies solved the general problems for all stakeholders. Apart from that, did the strategies used, come from the general public and benefited every stakeholder or just part of them. This study assessed the implementation CPS strategies in solving problems schools face.

1.3.0 Objectives

1.3.1 General objective
The aim of the study was to explore the implementation of Collaborative Problem Solving in management of secondary schools in Malawi.

1.3.2 Specific objectives
Specifically the study had to:

1. Analyze challenges that are faced in solving school problems
2. Examine CPS mechanisms that school managers apply to solve problems schools face.
3. Assess the effectiveness of used CPS strategies in solving challenges in schools

1.4 Significance of the study
The study is useful in many ways. Firstly, the study will equip me with knowledge of effective problem solving strategies through my career in school leadership and management. Secondly, the study adds to the existing information about the benefits school leaders get when they engage collaboration in solving school problems. Thirdly, the study acts as a wakeup call to different stakeholders in school management about their role in management of their school to improve school's standards. Apart from that, the study ignites to light government planners, policy makers and school leaders to inculcate CPS principle in the school management to achieves the vision of self-sustenance of CDSSs by the year 2063 (MoEST, 2019). Lastly, provokes researchers to do more research on the application of collaboration to solve problems in higher education levels like tertiary institutions.

1.5 Chapter summary
The chapter has presented introduction of assessment of implementation of Collaborative Problem Solving in solving challenges Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS) face. The chapter has also highlighted that challenges still exist in CDSSs as such the need which questions the implementation of the CPS strategy hence the need for the study of this nature.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The aim of the study was to assess the implementation of Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) in solving challenges in Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS). Generally, the literature reviewed centered on the general interest of the stakeholders towards implementing the CPS strategy employed to solve challenges schools face in their management. Based on the rationale of the Eco-systemic Theory that all stakeholders of school management at different level should unanimously contribute to the effective school management. These stakeholders must have a unified interest to achieve the set goals (OECD, 2017). The review of literature follows the objectives. Firstly the challenges schools face followed by the solutions school managers employ to solve these challenges and lastly the effectiveness of the applied solutions in solving the challenges.

2.1.0 Challenges CPS has failed to solve

The literature considered in this study mostly was obtained from studies done earlier on the implementation of CPS in solving problems schools face that were conducted both in Africa and elsewhere in the world. The literature shaped the study in designing questionnaires to collect data on challenges schools face and what strategies school managers apply to solve these challenges. Apart from that, the literature helped the study to make informed conclusions on the implementation of CPS based on the conclusions already made elsewhere. The literature reviewed was insightful to the study considering what questions were to be included in the research to investigate the challenges that frequently hit CDSS. Apart from that, the literature helped the study to include and reject the situation under which some problems exist.

CDSSs face a number of managerial challenges in their management. These challenges exist even though CPS strategies are operational in these areas. Challenges still exist despite the presence of stakeholders as agents in the school management (Godfrey, 2016; Santhakumar, 2019; Mwasulubuva, 2013). Reviewed below is the literature of many studies where CPS has failed to provide solutions to challenges school face and situations where CPS has successfully managed to solve some challenges in school management.

2.1.1 Support and monitor education

Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) supports and monitors success of education in schools through removing barriers against children's education success (Durasic and Bunijevac, 2017; MoEST, 2019; Ng'ambi, 2010). They believe that successful students' learning and school managers have strong academic and social support from their involved community particularly parents of students. On the contrary, Uzoechina (2020) in her study about the impact of community involvement through SMC in school management in Anambra State in Nigeria confirmed that very few parents and community members were interested to assist their wards with school work. Apart from that, minority of the parents were involved in decision making process of the school. These stakeholders were not interested in their children's education because they did not feel to be part of the education of their children as they were not involved in the progress of the education of their wards by school management.

Applied in Malawi, particularly in CDSSs in Chitipa Education Cluster (CEC), the strategy could work because there are frequent joint school and PTA meeting where they share notes on students' welfare and progress at school (MoEST, 2019). The literature reviewed revealed the gap in terms of support and monitoring by parents and community which eventually affected children's goal fulfillment in their education. It was revealed that, children only found to be engaged in doing educational activities at school while at home parents do not assume the teachers' position of helping their children in school work. Instead parents furnished them with household chores. Apart from that, parents showed little interest to support their children with resources as school was not considered as worthwhile trade to pursue. Presence of the community especially parents which is one of the stakeholders in CPS as a strategy, would help in providing education needs of children. Now that children are not supported in their education yet community is available as a stakeholder in the school management, there should be problems in the implementation of CPS especially involvement of the community in school management. Much that the literature revealed the poor community involvement as cause for existence of challenges in CDSS, the study was informed to find out if community particularly parents were interested in supporting and monitoring of the children' education in CEC.

2.1.2 Implementation and care of developmental projects

Furthermore, successful implementation of CPS in solving school challenges helps in implementing and caring development projects at school. The government through the school management and education authorities as CPS stakeholders, fight to ensure quality education. it achieves this through establishment of developmental projects to furnish schools with resources. However, traditional and community leaders are not interested in supporting the government effort in implementing and caring for the projects (MoEST, 2020 & MoEST, 2013). These community leaders lack the ownership of the projects since they are not involved in most of the critical stages of decision making as they are only involved in the preliminary stages of the projects. Challenges of lack of interest in implementation and care of developmental projects were also revealed in a study by Kibona (2012). Kibona in her study that aimed at assessing the involvement of the community through SMC especially traditional leaders in school management in Tanzania similarly found out that community and traditional leaders were not interested in participation because they were partially involved. She discovered that, these leaders were mostly involved in the preliminary stages of projects like planning, mobilization and voluntary and obligatory contribution of funds, materials, labour force as well as donation and allocation of construction site for school projects. The community leaders ceased the interest in these projects since they were not involved in the implementation and sustenance of the projects. As a result of not getting involved in these other crucial project stages, they felt they did not own the projects and care for it.

However, the challenges of care and ownership are improved in Malawi since crucial stages of the development projects are discussed and planned at meetings where community attends (MoEST, 2020). The literature revealed the gap that despite the presence of community in school management but they are not involved at every crucial stages of crucial decision for school management. This removes interests in community members to implement the CPS strategy suggested towards the challenge CDSSs face. With the consideration of the gap established, the study designed questions that assessed if the school management involves community at every step of the project implementation for them to own and protect it. Apart from that, the study was also informed to find out about what duties communities perform in implementing CPS strategies towards addressing challenges CDSS face.

7

2.1.3 Lack of mutual understanding and trust

In addition to that, effective implementation of CPS establishes long term solutions to problems schools face. On the contrary, Poor implementation of CPS results into failure to solve some of the problems CDSSs face because there is lack of mutual understanding and trust between school management and the community (MoEST, 2013; MoEST, 2020). The community does not understand other policies, obligations and expectation of school management from them. School managers as well do not understand the community's expectation from them like culture. Ng'ambi (2010) alludes that for there to be effective management of local schools like CDSS, school management and the society have to remove all negative education barriers like adverse cultures, harmful policies and there should be mutual relationship and trust between them.

In Malawi, there are major challenges CDSS face despite having different stakeholders included in the school management. For example, Kamande (2019) reports about the closure of a Christian school led by a Christian head teacher Mmanja Secondary School in Balaka District. The head teacher is a member of the school's SMC. The community wanted students to wear Hijab. There was conflict of interest as to whether follow the schools policy of not wearing Hijab at school or bowing to culture of the society. The end results were conflicts between the head and the community.

Based on the rationale of Eco-systemic Theory the study used, school management and the community are both stakeholders occurring at the meso-systemic level and exo-systemic level respectively. These stakeholders have to unity and be interested to solve the challenges their school faces. Lack of understanding between these school management stakeholders who are also CPS members resulted into conflict of interest. This conflict of interest over dressing codes affected the implementation of CPS strategies of the recommended dressing codes for students. The reviewed literature has revealed the gap of lack of mutual understanding and trust between school management and the community. This gap has an impact on the implementation of CPS strategies to solve challenges CDSSs face. For instance problems of cultural influence in school, policy effects and personal interests affect the implementation of CPS strategy for school problems. The gap found in the literature reviewed shaped the study to consider culture as an aspect that affects the implementation of strategies of problem solving in schools. The literature enlightened the study

include questions that inquires the expectations of the people around the school and trust these people have on school managers to have impact on solutions they render to CDSSs in CEC.

2.1.4 Fear and inferiority complex

Interest variation, hindering implementation of CPS, is also brought about by fear and inferiority complex between school managers and the community. Community feels not educated enough to advise the school leaders and school managers fear to be controlled by the local leaders. Apart from that school managers fear that local leaders will spy on their school running especially financial flow in school (Ng'ambi, 2010; Santhakumar, 2019). In their observation, Onsomu and Mujidi (2011) confirm that in majority of African countries. Onsomu and Mujidi's objective was to find out the extent of community involvement in school management by school managers. Their study revealed that teachers appeared not interested to accommodate community involvement especially SMC. Teachers were found not involving or enticing parents to become more involved. Some teachers felt threatened when parents or traditional leaders are involved in the management of schools. As a result, the role of the community in CPS for a long time has only been construction of school blocks and teachers' houses and fundraising rather than management of school (Santhakumar, 2019).

Malawi also involved CPS in school management to help solve challenges these schools face (MoEST, 2020). However the mutual relationship between the school management and the other CPS stakeholders is not known. The literature informed the study that the problems of fear and inferiority complex come when there is lack of mutual understanding. This information helped the study to design data collection tools that investigated the existence or absence of this mutual understanding between the school management and community in CEC.

2.2.0 Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) strategies applied in schools
2.2.1 Involvement of parents

Involvement of parents in CPS aids students in succeeding in their school. Successful students and school managers have strong academic and social support from their involved parents (Durasic & Bunijevac, 2017; MoEST, 2019; Ng'ambi 2010). The involvement of parents in school management brings solutions to challenges since there is a strong partnership between school, community and family.

In Bangladesh, to solve problems brought by multiculturalism and shortage of resources, school managers employed CPS strategies through involving parents in the school management. CPS in Bangladesh according to Kabir and Akter (2014) was achieved through vesting responsibility on parents as important stakeholder in child's education. These parents have a positive contribution to make in terms of skills, knowledge, resources and talent that is essential to support child's education. Apart from that, parents also organize annual gathering and cultural programs to create family environment in school and creating wider scope for parents to know each other. This helped in three aspects: to become familiar with both teacher and parent's expectations, to know each other and their (parents) social and cultural issues, and to exchange views on how to improve teaching-learning activities. In this case, as Bruce and Meggitt (2006) put, CPS through the knowledge of multiculturalism parents get from these annual gatherings, help to solve school and community conflicts (Jordan and Parath, 2005; McDevitt and Ormrod, 2002).

CPS through parent involvement brought a lot of benefits in Bangladesh, but the same may succeed in Malawi. There is minimal parent involvement in children's education. This allegation is based on the observations made by Durisic and Bunijevac (2017) and Malawi Education Sector Analysis by MoEST (2019). They claim that in satisfying the economic driven globe, parents are preoccupied with distractive and demands to satisfy their daily lives rather than supporting their children's education. Parents engage all their effort in farming, business and work. As a result, there is minimal level of parents' involvement in child's education. The review of this literature helped the study to investigate level of CPS through involvement of parents in students' education in CEC.

2.2.2 Involvement of student body in decision making system

CPS considers students as key stakeholders and beneficiaries of school education, as well as determinant of management performance. Students in this case get educated and also help in solving some of the problems encountered as they get their education (Mwakayuni, 2016; MoEST, 2013). It is, therefore, important to involve them into the school key decision systems. The argument is in agreement with the results of the study conducted by Mati, Gatumu and Chandi (2016). They conducted a research in secondary schools in Embu West Sub-County of Kenya. The aim was to examine the effectiveness of students' involvement in decision- making at school on the school's academic performance. It was revealed that when management made joint decisions

with students at any one step in their educational process, students felt that they owned the decision and were ready to implement it. Ownership was achieved by students' participation in decision making regarding their school choices and in formulation of school rules and disciplinary issues. This resulted in increased efforts in school activities, which eventually resulted into good academic performance of students. Students' involvement increased maturity, responsibility, independence and rationality in their pursuit of excellence in academic performance. In cases where CPS through involvement of students lacked, there was a growing sense of demotivation and demoralization that negatively impacted on student academic performance.

However, in Malawi CPS does not work the way it worked in Embu West Sub-County of Kenya. This is because of noninvolvement of students in critical decision systems by school managers. Students are just the recipients of the decision made by the school management (Ng'ambi, 2010; Kamande, 2019). None involvement breeds unacceptable behaviours such as riots, violence and rooting of school property in secondary schools. These students' negative acts are as a result of disatisfaction with the decisions from school management. The review of literature above helped the study to investigate the importance of students' involvement in the CPS in CDSSs in CEC.

2.2.3 Team work among teachers

CPS uses team work among teachers through education clusters to achieve uniformity and maintain standards in education. In these clusters teachers come together and share content and pedagogical knowledge that enrich their teaching profession (MoEST, 2020). Chapter 14 of the constitution of Malawi stipulates the decentralization of education. Following the decentralization plan of 2014, clusters were made to use resources within localized area to solve the problems in schools within that given area (MoEST, 2019). For instance, shortage of resources and shortage of up-to-date content among teachers were solved through insets within the cluster. Team work in teachers through clusters training to improve their teaching profession was also found out to be practiced in Nigeria.

In the Federal Republic of Nigeria, for instance, CPS was mostly highlighted in Section 11 of their National Policy on Education which emphasizes Education service (Akinyemi et.al, 2019). This policy highlights that 'The goals of education services shall be to promote in-service education' (NERDC, 2004). However, NERDC (2004) observes that most head teachers are not interested to send their teacher to these trainings. These head teachers are afraid that when these teachers get

more education would threaten their positions. Apart from that, head teachers believe that sending teachers for training needs a lot of money from schools accounts. These heads have a conflict of interests; to have quality teachers on one hand and sustaining their position and control school's financial resources on the other hand.

In Malawi like Nigeria, as lamented by MoEST (2019) some head teachers do not show interest to send their teachers for training in the name of managing the school resources. With this literature the study was informed to find out from CEC the teachers team work in improving their professional development. The literature helped the study to include questions that would test the involvement of teachers in bringing solutions to challenges CDSSs face in CEC.

2.2.4 Collaborative Development Agencies in schools

Implementation of CPS solves problems schools face through intervention of the Development Agencies like projects and Non-Governmental Organizations. For instance EQUALS and ISEM 2 projects provide students' bursary and support institutional development programs to improve education in CDSS (MoEST, 2019). A similar study to find out the impact of CPS through Collaborative Development Agencies in providing the schools' needs was conducted in Brazil.

In Brazil, CPS through Development Agencies aimed at mitigating some of the aftermath challenges of floods. These floods involved a school located in a favela in the city of São Paulo, and its surrounding community in Brazil. The floods forced teachers and their families to live in churches and school blocks elsewhere outside the community (Lemos, 2017). The collaborative agency developed by different stakeholders such as Health Care Unit, community members and school team engaged in a joint project. These agencies provided human, material, social and financial support to students and teachers at the school. Through this togetherness, they could plan and implement activities focusing on future education management which in turn made their community healthier to live in.

Like in Brazil, CPS through Collaborative Development Agents in Malawi helps to contribute to the expansion of education management through activities organized beyond school walls. Through collaboration, NGOs support construction projects like building of infrastructure, provide teaching and learning materials (TLM) and provide bursaries to needy studentsm (MoEST, 2020). However, Ng'ambi (2020) points out that there is rampant corruption and mismanagement of donor funds in the education sector. This mismanagement scares donor away from supporting

education programs hence reducing education quality in the country. The literature informed the study to investigate the existence of collaborative development agencies existing in CEC and the support they provide to solve managerial challenges existing in CDSSs there.

2.3 Effectiveness of the CPS strategies

The study also looked at effectiveness of the strategies used in implementing CPS. Effective collaboration occurs when two or more people work together to produce or create something. This can happen either virtually or personally. Effective strategies, therefore, are the ones which when stakeholders apply they achieve the goals intended. In this case these are strategies that stakeholders in school management employ to solve problems CDSSs face and they succeed in bringing solutions to those problems (Durisic and Benijeva, 2017; Ring central Team, 2020). Ring Central Team designed six principles to effective collaboration that are fruitful to CPS implementation.

The first principle is that the strategy should be efficient. This stipulated that the strategy to be applied in solving problems schools face should be a general consensus. Through a meeting stakeholders should suggest, plan, and project would be challenges, implement and evaluate the strategy. The second principle is trust. Trust is where people need to feel safe to give genuine feedback of the strategy to their leaders. Stakeholders have to feel that their leaders have their interest at heart. Apart from that empathy is another principle of effective collaboration. This principle states that 'No member amongst the stakeholders should feel burdened or lighter than others. Feel the feeling of others.' Everybody's' expertise should be respected. Stakeholders should understand working capacity without forcing them, rather every stakeholder should do so out of interest not force. Furthermore, positivity as a principle of CPS encourages stakeholder to be ambitious in achieving the strategy set to be achieved. These stakeholders should not be demotivated by the failures in the past. Additionally, Clarity recognizes that it is natural that people have differences in priorities and interests. Stakeholders have to identify single interest at a time and unanimously work to achieve it. Lastly, accountability as a principle deals with checking the progress in the implementation of the strategy. Leaders have to be on alert to remove all barriers to the progress of the strategy.

The study used these six principles of effective collaboration to assess the implantation of CPS strategies in CEC. The literature on the effective collaboration informed the study to investigate

the effectiveness of the applied CPS strategies outlined in **2.2,** towards solving challenges faced in CDSS in CEC.

2.4. Theoretical framework

The study was guided by an Eco-systemic Theory in discussion of chapter two. According to this theory, problem solving in all formal institutions like schools requires collaboration of different stakeholders to solve challenges the school face. These different stakeholders in school management are considered as systems. These systems have to collaboratively work together to achieve the desired goals which is called the equifinality. The theory was developed by a biologist Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in 1940s. The theory sought to find an approach to the study of life or living systems. This theory was derived from the systems theory that sees different levels and groupings of social context as systems and subsystems where the functioning of the whole depends on the interaction between all parts. A system is a group of interacting parts that form a complex whole. There is **Micro-system** that deals with the interaction by the client influencing the client themselves in the environment. **Meso-system** deals with interaction between systems close to the client but within system. **Exo-system** interaction between the systems with other systems outside the system influencing the client applied on a localized area. **Macro-system** interaction between the systems with systems outside the system influencing the client applied over a larger area (Montuori, 2011). Applied to the study, different school stakeholders will be systems that have to interact to reach **equifinality**. Equifinality is the way systems can reach the same goal through different paths used. Equifinality in this study is reaching at the level of solution to challenges the school management faces in managing CDSSs in CEC. The basic rationale of the Ecosystemic Theory is that different stakeholders (systems) unanimously be interested to work towards achieving the set goal (equifinality). The theory, therefore, helped the researcher to include questions that gathered information about the interest of stakeholders towards implementation of CPS in solving challenges schools face. In this case the study inquired about what are the stakeholders in school problem solving in CEC which the theory calls systems and how are solutions reached at for particular problems which the theory calls equifinality.

2.7 Chapter summary

 The chapter generally has revealed a gap in the literature reviewed of conflict of interest between stakeholders resulting into poor implementation of CPS strategies towards problem solving in CDSS. The chapter specifically, discusses the implementation of CPS strategies with

the basic consideration of the Eco-systemic Theory which depends on the power in unity in solving problems faced in schools. Stakeholders of school management at different levels of the system are not interested to implementation CPS strategies towards challenges that hit hard CDSSs. The literature reviewed revealed that managers do not totally explore solutions from fellow stakeholders in school management. On the strategies employed to solve these challenges, literature also showed that there is need for involvement of different stakeholders that provide various resources like expertise, finances and material. On the assessment of effectiveness of the strategies used in problem solving, the literature recommended those strategies coming from all stakeholders, implemented by all stakeholders benefiting all stakeholders. The theoretical framework also reveals there should be unity between stakeholders falling under different sub systems to complete the whole ecosystem. In short, CPS depends on decisions coming from all stakeholders.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The study was aimed at assessing the implementation of Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) strategy in solving problems Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs) in Malawi specifically Chitipa Education Cluster (CEC). To achieve this aim, the study used specific design and methods

to collect data. This chapter focuses on methods that were used to collect data. It also outlines the research paradigm and also the type of the study. The chapter more than that describes the setting of the study. The chapter also outlines the total population for the study and sampling techniques used to come up with the sample. The chapter also specifies the type of data collected and how data is analyzed, presented and discussed.

3.1 Research Paradigm

The study used the Pragmatic paradigm. Principles of pragmatic paradigm allow the study to emphasize on the research problem and use all approaches available to understand the phenomenon (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). This study being a social science research opted for pragmatic perspective as a suitable approach because it put much focus on research problem and then used pluralistic approaches such as quantitative and qualitative data to derive knowledge about the problem**.**

3.2 Type of study

The study took a case study approach. This approach was used because it provides an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of applicability of CPS just in Chitipa Education Cluster (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Many schools, including those in the Chitipa Education Cluster use CPS which does not perform to the expectation of the schools in solving managerial problems schools face. The study took a case of CEC to assess the application of CPS in providing long term solutions to managerial problems schools face.

3.3 Approach and design for data collection

The study used the concurrent nested embedded mixed approach in data collection. However the study mostly leaned toward qualitative data. Concurrent nested embedded mixed approach is a type of mixed approach of data collection where the study collects and uses both qualitative and quantitative data at the same time. One data type collected supports the other data type to give a complete sense (Kumar, 2019; Creswell and Creswell, 2018). In the study, both data types (qualitative and quantitative) were collected at the same time. This method was used because study needed to find explanations for the some findings mostly where the study wanted to make generalizations for other findings. The study chose mixed method of data collection because there was a need for qualitative data to be backing up the quantitative data. Apart from that the study

wanted to make generalization of the last study objective of the effectiveness of the applied CPS solutions towards solving challenges CDSSs face in CEC.

3.4.0 Data collection instruments

By virtue of using a mixed method design, the study used both quantitative and qualitative data. The study used two sets of semi-structured questionnaires to collect data. Semi-structured questionnaires were used because they gave chance to respondents to explain their responses given. First one was designed to collect data from head teachers for the five CDSSs from the cluster as outlined in appendix 5. The second questionnaire was for teachers in these CDSSs from the cluster as referred to in appendix 6. Apart from that, the study used study guide to collect data from the focus group that was administered to prefecture body in each of the schools as referred to in appendix 2. The study also conducted face to face interviews where it used interview guide to collect data from SMC as in appendix 3, directors of organizations as outlined in appendix 6 and education division officer Northern Education Division (NED) as outlined in appendix 7. The study used the study guide and face to face interviews for data collection because the researcher wanted the respondents to explain their point to have a clear understanding of the points raised.

3.4.1 Quantitative data collecting instruments

The study employed questionnaire to collect quantitative data. Questionnaires are the mostly used instruments gathering quantitative data from individual (Kumar, 2019). These questionnaires contain a number of already printed questions to be answered by the respondent. These questions contain both open and closed questions. Closed questions require yes or no answers or open questions where respondents are free to explain their perceptions. In this study questionnaires used both open and closed question to collect data from head teachers and teachers. These tools were given to them considering the fact that they can understand from reading on their own and can ably write their responses. Apart from that the study assumed the head teachers and teachers as CPS stakeholders, had knowledge and information about challenges schools face as they run the day to day affairs of the school. The data collected by these questionnaires, was mostly addressing objectives one and two.

3.4.2 Qualitative data collecting instruments

The study also collected qualitative data. Interview guide was used to collect data from face to face interviews and focus group discussions. Interview guide was used to collect data from SMC

chairs, directors of organizations, chairs for the mother group and the education division officer. The other qualitative data through study guide was collected from focus group discussions with students' prefecture body from each school. Qualitative data was used to understand the meaning of phenomena involved in the research (Kumar, 2019). This understanding was achieved since respondents were allowed to explain their perception of problem solving in the school as members of CPS. This mostly collected information for objective one, two and three.

3.5 Setting
The study targeted five Community Day Secondary Schools in Chitipa Education Cluster in Chitipa District. This area was chosen due to its convenience. Apart from that, the area was a fertile ground for the research since there is active CPS which is clearly seen through the establishment of SMC in management of CDSS.

3.6 Study population
The study had a total population of 2282, the ones responsible for the school management. The sampled population was 123. The sampled population comprised of students, teachers, SMC members. These students were represented by prefects. The study also involved teacher, head teachers, SMC represented by their chair, mother group also represented by their chair, organization represented by their directors and an officer from the Education Division Manager (EDM).

3.7 Sampling and sample size
The study used random sampling design comprising of both purposeful and convenience sampling techniques with the consideration of gender. Purposive technique was used because the targeted sample, for instance, head teachers, teachers and students from schools and SMC and NGO representatives, as these groups are some of the key pillars in the decision making in solving school day to day problems. This means that they have enough information the study wants for its conclusion. The study used the purposive sampling skills in sampling of these selected schools because these are the CDSSs found in the cluster that would give the right information from their experience.

The study used a purposely sampled sample of one hundred and twenty three (123) of which seventy-five were students from all the five schools. Students' body is one of the stakeholders of school management (Mwakayuni, 2016; Moest, 2013). As one of the stakeholders, they were to

provide their experience in implementation of CPS. Students were represented by 75 prefects, fifteen prefects from each school. Prefects were chosen because they are usually involved in the management of schools. For this group a focus group discussion was used. The study also involved six teachers that were conveniently sampled from each school making a total of thirty. Convenient sampling was used because data collection was done during learning time so the researcher used the readily available sample (teachers) having needed data for the study. In this case, twenty-nine teachers were involved since one of the schools had six teachers including the head teacher who was already interviewed. Purposive sampling was used to sample five Head Teachers who were given questionnaires to answer. Head teachers as part of school management were sampled to provide data on how they manage these schools hence purposive sampling. One respondent (chair) from each of the stakeholders such as Pressure Groups such as the Mother Group and Committees such as the School Management Committee (SMC) from each school were purposefully selected because they were part of school management so they were explaining their experience. The total of 5 chairs one from each school. One representative from each organization that offer their services at district level like The Social Welfare and NGOs Peach, Tutulane Development Initiative (TDI) and Chitipa Restoration Project (CRP) making a total of three were also involved. These directors were purposefully sampled because they are one of the stakeholders that provide services in management of schools in CEC. The study involved the education division officer. The total sample size added up to one hundred and twenty three because at school A there are only five. The table below shows a table of the sampled population.

Table 1: sampled population

No	Respondents	Total population (N)	Target population (n)
1	Students	2200	75**: (15 from each school)**
2	Teachers	65	30 **:(6 each school)**
3	Head Teacher	5	5 **:(1 each school)**
4	SMC chairs	5	5 **:(1 each school)**

5	Mother group chair	5	5 : (1 each school)
6	Directors of organizations	2	2
7	education division officer	1	1
	TOTAL	**2283**	**123**

3.8 Data analysis techniques

Quantitative data for objectives one and two; management problems schools face and solutions applied, from head teacher and teachers, descriptive statistics was used to analyze data using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to find percentages of the frequency of occurrence. Microsoft excel package was used to compute pie chart and graphs. Qualitative data collected for objective one, codes were generated which were grouped into categories that coined themes summarizing problems schools face mostly from students focus group, SMC chairs and EDM official. Qualitative data from the objectives two and three; solutions applied and effectiveness of the solutions used, were analyzed thematically where from the qualitative data collected, codes were generated which were grouped into categories that coined themes summarizing solutions applied to challenges in schools and effectiveness of the applied solutions to challenges in school management.

3.9.0 Validity and Reliability

3.9.1 Validity of the research instrument

Validity is defined as the ability of the research instrument to measure what is designed to be measured (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2017). To make sure that the instrument were appropriate and were measuring what they were supposed to measure, they were presented to the peers for scrutiny before submitted to the supervisor for his opinions. Expertise was also sought from supervisor to determine the relevance and contents used in the data collection tools.

3.9.2 Reliability of the research instrument

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent, stable, dependable and accurate results after repeating trials (Kumar, 2019). In this study to ensure reliability of data collected, the investigator used different tools like questionnaires and interview guides to collect different types of data qualitative and quantitative.

3.10.0 Ethical consideration

Ethics are norms that guide acceptable and unacceptable behavior in research (Resnik, 2011). George and Jones (2012) add that ethics is concerned with moral values or principles that guide behavior and informs us if the action taken is right or wrong. The baseline principle of ethics is to make sure researchers are doing the right thing. Ethical issues however take an array of areas including informed consent, voluntary participation and privacy or confidentiality. To ensure ethical consideration the study followed the following procedures:

3.10.1 Informed consent

Prior to interviews, the study sought consent from leaders of the institutions involved and participants before conducting research. This is in line with the argument of informed consent by (Rensik, 2011). He sternly warns researchers to clearly state the nature of the research to the would-be participants and seek their consent to participate if their freedom of participation is to be respected. Informed consent also takes care of informing participants on the risk they can incur after the research. If the would-be participants understand the nature of the research they will make independent and informed decisions whether to participate or not.

3.10.2 Voluntary participation

To exercise voluntarism participants were told to withdraw from the study and they were also assured that such withdraw will not have any impact on the relationship between us. This act was done in respect to Cohen et al. (2017) claim that participation in social research must be voluntary. Participation in the research should be out of the participants' will. In the same line Creswell & Creswell (2018) add that participants should be made aware that if in the process participants find that the research is against their rights, they have the right to terminate the research.

3.10.3 Privacy and confidentiality

To achieve privacy and confidentiality, the study used anonymous names especially in the discussion of data from interviews and focus group to conceal the identity of the respondents. Apart from that participants were assured that the data will be kept in lockable materials to keep it private. In social research people reveal their personal information that is not known to friends or

associates. As such the participants have to be assured of their personal respect in terms of wellbeing, privacy and confidentiality (Rensik, 2011). In other words, the researcher must make sure that the identity and participants remain anonymous throughout the study. In addition to that Ndengu (2012) alludes that confidentiality will also be achieved if the researcher explains to participant the use of the data collected and how the data will be stored after collection for it not to be accessed by other people except the researcher..

3.11 Trustworthiness and credibility

The data collected in any research has to be trust worth and credible (Cohen et al, 2017). To ensure that the data collected in the study was credible and trustworthy, the data was triangulated. Triangulation according to Cohen et al. (2017) is having multiple sourced data obtained at different times from a variety of methods used to build a picture of what one is investigating. To ensure that the data collected was trust worth and credible, the investigator related data from different sources (head teachers, teachers and students), collected from different methods (interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires) on the challenges schools face and solution applied through CPS.

3.12 Chapter summary

This chapter focused on methods that were used to collect data. It outlined that study used the pragmatic paradigm. The chapter has also explained that the study is a case study. The chapter has described that the study was set in CEC in Chitipa. Additionally the chapter has outlined that the study used a total population of 2283 with random and purposive sampling to come up with targeted sample of 123 comprising students, teachers, head teachers, SMC chairs, directors of organizations and an official from division office. The chapter has also outlined how data was collected from focus group discussions and face to face interviews using questionnaires and interview guide. The chapter has also explained that data was analyzed through description, Microsoft excels and SPSS packages for quantitative data and themes were used to analyze qualitative data. Tables, pie charts bar graphs were used to present the analyzed data. Apart from that the chapter has explained the validity and reliability of research instruments, ethical consideration in terms of informed consent, voluntary participation and privacy and confidentiality of the data given. Lastly the chapter has explained trustworthiness and credibility of the data collected. The following chapter presents analysis, presentation and discussion of data based on specific objectives.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

The aim of the study was to assess the implementation of Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) in Community Day Secondary Schools in Malawi. It was revealed that different systems wanted to serve the interests of their systemic level as such it was difficult to reach the equifinality. Applied to the study, different stakeholders were interested to satisfy their interest as a result there was conflict of interests. There was no general interest set to be pursued as such implementation of

CPS to problems facing schools was a problem. The chapter is organized in three main parts based on the specific objectives of the study. The first part provides managerial challenges schools particularly CDSSs face despite having CPS in operation. These challenges were reported by head teachers, students and teachers. The second part comprises solutions to challenges faced. The study found out that solutions applied are hindered by the conflict of interests from different stakeholders. Lastly the study found out that the solution applied were not totally effective because they were not entirely satisfying the principles of effective collaboration that were designed by Ring Central Team (2020).

4.1.0 Challenges in management of CDSS

The study found out that conflict of interest amongst different stakeholders in school management is a major pulling factor to existence of these challenges in school management. Revealed below is how conflict of interests is brought about by different stakeholders towards school management.

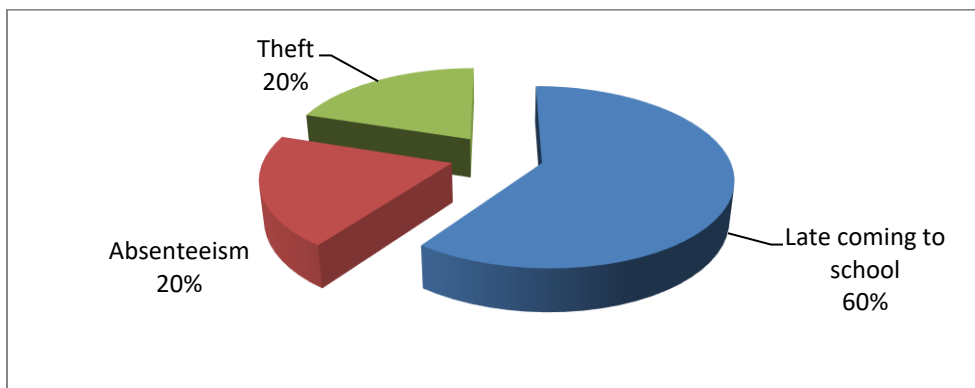**4.1.1.1 Head teachers' challenges from students**

Figure 1: Pie chart presenting head teachers' challenges from students.

The results revealed that late coming to school was the leading managerial challenge head teachers face from students. Absenteeism and theft were other challenges head teachers in CEC were facing in their school management. These challenges were products of students' minimal interest in education. The study also found out from teachers that these students value business, marriage and farming on expense of getting quality education as the goal of the management. They go to school because they are in a school going age. The study also observed from the officer from the division that minimal preference of education to other business by students was due to students not being involved in planning and rules establishment on management of schools. The findings agree with an assertion by Mlangeni & Chiotha (2015) that the rampant absenteeism and students late coming to school is due to little value students put on school due to minimal involvement in the school goal setting. Additionally, theft was another challenge that head teachers face from students. The head teachers indicated that students stole school properties like books and apparatus because they lacked responsibility over the school property and little interest they have over education of the other students coming to school after them.

CPS values students as key stakeholders and beneficiaries of school education, as well as determinants of management performance. This argument agrees with the conclusion by Mati, Gatumu and Chandi (2016) from their research conducted in Embu West Sub-County of Kenya that it is important to ignite students' interest in school management by involving them into the school key decision systems to achieve the school set goals. They also clearly spelt out that CPS flourishes when there is interest from all stakeholders towards achieving the set goals. This therefore means that if the same students were collaboratively involved in CPS, most management challenges would be solved.

In relation to the study in CEC, and judging implementation of CPS as equifinality stage of the theory used, CPS was not implemented. This is evident from the discussion with 3 focus groups with students. Students as a systemic level in education management, indicated that they were not involved in their education improvement planning in the cluster. Mwakayuni (2016) explains that for the successful implementation and protection of improvement planning in education, students themselves should be involved. Since students were not involved in the improvement plan, they were not interested in achieving schools set goal which is improving quality of their education.

Students were rather violating school rules like coming late to school, absenting themselves from classes and stealing school property. In this case CPS would flourish if both students and school management had interest in education of the student as a goal. For collaboration to take roots in CEC there is need for change of mindset of students to start valuing education with due respect to their preferences and cultural ideologies.

4.1.1.2 Head teachers' challenges from teachers

To the extent teaching and learning is affected by teachers' behavior due to shortage of resources at school, the study revealed that 3 head teachers indicated that lack of Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM) affected their management to a great extent. 2 head teachers representing indicated that lack of pedagogical preparation of teachers at school affected their school management to a greater extent. Results of the findings reveal that shortage of TLM and lack of pedagogical preparation of the teachers greatly affected the head teachers' school management.

The finding of under qualified teachers teaching in CDSSs was as well backed up by the data from the interview with an officer from the Education Division. The Education Division officer said that under qualification is a challenge mostly when these teachers themselves do not know that they are under qualified that they need improvements. It was also revealed that most school managers are frustrated by the poor infrastructure in most community day secondary schools. The officer pointed out that in many CDSSs there are books, chemicals and apparatus heaped in the Head teachers' offices lacking laboratories and library rooms. The officer also added that teachers houses are not enough as well.

Relating to the results observed in CEC about managerial challenges head teachers face is the observation made by Mlangeni and Chidothe (2015). They explain that most of the teachers in CDSSs are under qualified who need training to bolster their professionalism. These teachers find problems in teaching some challenging content hence skip topics. Skipping topics according to Mlangeni and Chidothe's (2015) results into poor coverage of syllabi that breeds students' failure in their examinations.

Based on the results, shortage of TLM was major managerial challenges crippling management of CDSSs in CEC. The study also revealed that managers' interest to arrest these challenges was frustrated by little revenue these schools have. However, from the education division officer's

words, the word 'Government' has conquered most of the school managers. They usually pile blame on the shoulders of the government to provide for all the school needs which cannot work. For instance the education division officer reported that there are 212 secondary schools in the Northern Education Division (NED) only. All the secondary schools look up to government to provide them with their needs. The education division officer's argument agrees with Ng'ambi (2010) and MoEST (2019) that there is a high dependency of secondary schools on central government hence the need to devolve the powers to local authority like VDCs EDCs for planning of the development of these schools.

Lack of pedagogical preparation was also indicated by head teachers as a challenge from teachers' behaviuor affecting teaching and learning in schools in CEC. The study found out that teachers lacked interest in fulfilling their professional responsibility of lesson preparation and scheming. It was observed that lack of preparation in some teachers was due to little subject matter they had while other teachers it was just negligence. These teachers behaviuor in one way or another affected their lesson delivery in school.

The findings were in agreement with MoEST (2019) analysis which states that most CDSS have a shortage of specialized teachers in specific subjects. The teachers teaching these subjects were only judged from route basis. They believed that any science teacher could teach any science subject depending on the previous exposure to the subjects in secondary school. In this case the content planed and delivered cannot be of great quality.

Based on the rationale of eco-systemic theory to which the CPS is aligned, teachers as a stakeholder in school management were supposed to contribute towards coming up with solutions to lack of TLM and improvement of their content and pedagogical knowledge. In this case teachers would have been multiplying materials in short supply and share with colleagues about skills of lesson delivery on content and pedagogy through Continuous Professional Development (CPD). As indicated by head teacher, Teachers were interest to resource their teaching. Agreeing to this is Mwakayuni (2016) who indicates that most teachers are not interested to resource their teaching instead they depend on government to provide them with all the resources.

However, in relation to CPS, the extent to which these challenges affected teaching from teachers' behavior portrayed in the study would be minimized if CPS was employed in school management.

CPS encourages the involvement of teachers in problem solving in schools. The involvement of teachers in school management improves teachers' understanding that improves their quality through their interaction in their clusters (Akinyemi et.al, 2019). As teachers meet in clusters, they share ideas, pedagogical and content knowledge and experiences. As groups interact in their learning environment called 'Community of Practice' they enhance Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD). Likewise, as Akinyemi et.al (2019) put school leaders may interact to share skills of managing their schools if they may decide to do so. Applied in the case of CEC, study found out that head teachers faced a challenge of lack of teachers' interest to help solve the problems schools face hence teaching and learning was greatly affected. However other systems like head teacher were frustrating the interest to reach the desired equfinality which in this case is acquisition of knowledge by teachers. Despite the need for the improvement of teachers' professional development, the study found out that head teachers were poorly supporting teacher in these training (INSETs) at clusters level. It was observed that at times teachers were not even supported to attend.

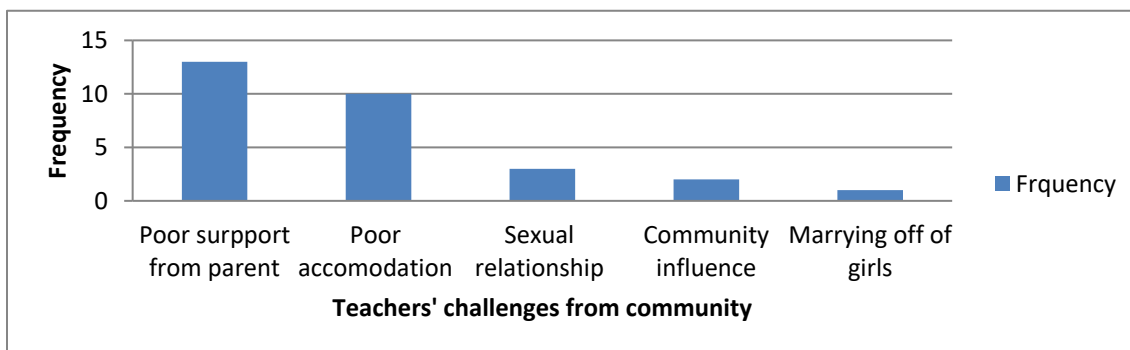### 4.1.2.1 Teachers' challenges from community

Figure 2: Teachers' challenges from community

The results revealed that poor parental support to children's education and poor teachers' accommodation were found to be the leading managerial challenges teachers face from the community.

The results above were backed up by findings from the discussions with students, where the study revealed that CDSS in CEC have an increased dropout rate of learners. Most of the dropouts are girls who go for marriage. These marriages are arranged by relatives to parents.

Results from teachers and students above were also backed up by findings from the face to face interview with the education division officer. The education division officer indicated that some communities were not interested in the girls' education. The education division officer gave an example of a certain school they headed some time back where parents believed that at that school no girl passes MSCE. Therefore when girls reached form three they were just thinking of marriage. When one girl was concerned with the advice by the head she came to the head teacher's office and told him to talk to parents. Parents by then already got the dowry for the girl. The head teacher encouraged her to continue with school. The girl by the time of study was ateacher holding a masters degree Master of Teacher Education.

The study revealed that parents had little interest in their children's education. This was evident in the parents' poor support for their children's education. More than that, the community failed to provide accommodation to teachers. Similar observation were made by Uzoechina (2020) in Anambra State where she found out that parents were not interested to help their wards in education because they did not feel as part of education since they were not involved by school managers in decisions affecting children's education. Since parents were not interested in the education of the children, they did not take education of their children as a worthwhile trade to pursue.

The study also observed that the community members wanted their value and exercise their culture than wasting time in school. This argument was seen from the observations the study found. The study revealed an interesting point that parents were marrying off girls on expense of school. As that was not enough, parents showed dominant control over school operations. Additionally, the study revealed that there were sexual relationships between community members and learners. The results agree with MoEST (2019) and Kamande (2019) who postulate that culture and tradition inflict negative attitude towards children's education in Malawi. They also point out that children

in remote areas are exposed to teen marriages and early child bearing. To deal with these cultural influenced challenges faced in CEC, management and community were supposed to collaborate their effort towards achieving the prioritized interest which obviously is education of children. The demand was in line with the claim by Ng'ambi (2010) who recommends that for there to be effective management of local schools like CDSS, school management and the community have to remove all negative education barriers like adverse cultures, harmful policies and there should be a mutual relationship and trust between them.

However if well collaborated, the community brings solutions to most of the challenges schools face. To achieve this, community has to have interest in achieving the set goals which is education of children. In a similar fashion, in Bangladesh parents are expected to uphold government policy and provide for the needs of their children (Kabir and Akter, 2014). Apart from that, in Pakistan, communities precisely parents, are responsible for the management and provision of learning and teaching materials, undertake management roles and playing as a significant role in monitoring the school funds (Ttlan and Iqbar, 2011). In addition to that the community especially parents in Ghana has the duty to provide educational infrastructure, contribute to teaching and learning process as resources persons and ensure access to education through enrolment and imposing fines on defaulters of the policy of the child's access to education (Takyi et.al., 2014). Furthermore, involvement of parents in school management improves quality in the school's performance as concluded by Mwasulubuva (2013) from his research done in Temeke municipal in Dares Salam.

If CPS is applied, community members converge meetings with school management to share their expectations to be inculcated in school programs. As Santhakumar (2019) puts parents and community share expectations like policies from school managers and cultural expectations from the community. These expectations have to be shared to avoid conflict of interest. The claim is in line with the argument by Kabir and Akter (2014) who state that if school management and community share their interests and needs in school, conflicts of interests among stakeholders in school management are minimized.

Relating to CEC the study revealed that there were challenges of poor parental support to children's education, poor accommodation to teachers, sexual relationships with student, marrying off girls and communities having much influence over school issues because community lost

interest in education since they were not collaboratively involved. If parents, as a system in eco-systemic theory, were made to understand the importance of education of their wards and their role in education of their wards a positive equifinality would be reached where these challenges would not be faced.

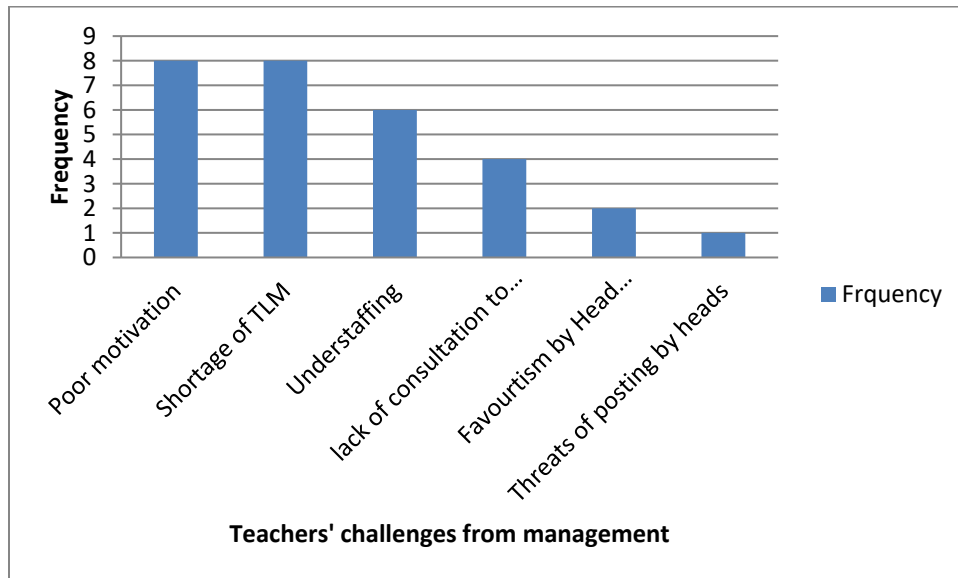## 4.1.2.2 Teachers' challenges from school management

Figure 3: Teachers' challenges from management

Results of the findings displayed shortage of TLM and understaffing as the leading challenges teachers face in their school management.

The results of teachers' challenges from management above were backed up by the information from a face to face interview with the education division. The study revealed that most school managers lack conflict management skills. The study revealed that many head teachers are not knowledgeable of handling conflicts. The education division officer's line of thinking agrees well with Daft's (2011) argument that to achieve CPS in school management, school managers should have conflict resolution skills. This is what the divisional officer had to say;

> *"...as the divisional office one of the duties we perform is to see indiscipline cases and resolutions to cases that are handled by different school managers in the division. Most of the cases referred to the office, there are no cases in them. What dominate are the emotions of the school managers over students…….."*

On the challenge of understaffing in most rural schools, the education division officer was quick to mention that the problem was a craft of their hands. The education division officer said there was poor distribution of teachers cross secondary schools. Most of the school in or around the town or city were overstaffed while those in rural areas were understaffed.

Similar observations were made by Akinyemi et.al, (2019) that most of the school leaders lack human managerial skills of how to manage challenges facing their institutions. In the same channel, Samson and Daft (2012) define Human Managerial Skills in management as the ability of the manager to work with and through other people and to work effectively as a group member. Akinyemi et al's, (2019) observation disagrees with education service policy as highlighted in NERDC (2004) which states that every head teacher has to have the goal to enrich teachers and themselves about school management through in-service education. This in-service education is done through In-Service Training (INSET), Community of Practice (CP) and sending teachers to colleges for their professional development. Through these INSETs teachers and heads can share skills, pedagogical and content knowledge. NERDC also observes that most head teachers were not interested to send their teacher to these trainings. These head teachers were afraid that when these teachers got more education would threaten their position. Apart from that, head teachers believe that sending teachers for training needs a lot of money from school accounts. In CEC the

study also observed that some head teachers were not interested to support teachers who attend these trainings in the cluster. The challenges faced would be minimized if teachers were involved in in-service education where they could share knowledge and skills in their profession.

However, these challenges faced would have been minimized if the head teachers used CPS in their management. CPS calls for school managers who have human skills in management to collaborate with others. In this case, managers should relate with members of staff, have to have ability to motivate, facilitate, coordinate, lead, communicate and resolve conflicts arising at school. In addition to managers' acquisition of human skills, Mwakayuni (2016) puts that for CPS to operate well in school management, school managers have to fight for addressing interests of their staff members which he conceptualized as MOTIVATION. Motivation as he puts it is an acronym for Make Opportunities To Inspire Value Attitude Talent Enthusiasm. Mwakayuni generally defines motivation as a process that stimulated individual behavior and channels it in ways that benefit the school as a whole. With regards to Samson and Daft and Mwakayuni, school managers in CEC, lacked human skill in management and motivation. This was evident in shortage of TLM, understaffing, shortage of motivation and financial support, minimal consultation in dealing with school issues, threats of transfers from heads, lack of transparency in financial management by heads and favoritism. These challenges would have been minimized if the school manager had interests of the staff members at heart.

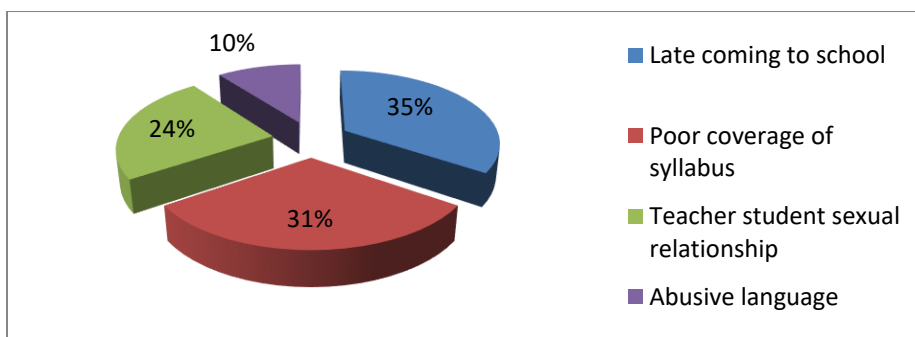**4.1.2.3.0 Teachers' challenges from fellow teachers**

Figure 4: Teachers' challenges from fellow teachers

From the results indicated above late coming to school and poor coverage of syllabus by some teachers were the leading challenges teachers indicated from fellow teachers.

The study found out that teachers come late to school and classes because of lack of interest to teach due to poor motivation. This implies that just accommodating teachers at school is not enough but motivating them as well. The result agrees with the declaration by MoEST (2019) that management has to motivate teachers to make them get interested in teaching and be punctual to school and classes. However it is difficult to wholesomely conclude that teachers' late coming to school and classes is only attributed to lack of interest due to lack of motivation. The statement may lead to misconception that if motivated, all teachers will be punctual and interested at their work, which may not be always true because there may be other contributing factors of teachers' late coming.

The study also revealed that 6 teachers indicated poor coverage of syllabi as a challenge by other teachers. The result agrees with the observation which Akinyemi et.al (2019) found in Nigeria. They found out that teachers especially beginners lack content and pedagogical knowledge in their subject. The study found out that these teachers who lacked knowledge were always behind work schedule. It was found out also that lack of teacher motivation forced teachers to lose interest to work hard in their teaching hence failure to cover their syllabi. The results suggest to school management that teachers have to be motivated for them to be interested in delivering their services.

Results of the findings indicate that late coming to work and poor coverage of syllabi are the leading managerial challenges teachers face in as far as management of schools is concerned. Use of abusive language is revealed to be the least managerial challenge teachers face in school management. All these challenges are due to lack of interest in both teachers and school management towards the education of a student.

From the discussion with students, it was revealed that girls were sexually harassed by fellow students mostly from senior section, the community and teachers.

CPS becomes productive when all school stakeholders are interested in doing their job. The interest in them makes them ever present and actively working in fulfilling their roles. Mwakayuni (2016) points out that teachers, as part of stakeholders in school management, actively participate in the management of school if they are fully motivated. In relation to CEC, teachers indicated late coming to work and classes, poor coverage of syllabi and use of abusive language at school

challenges they face from fellow teachers. Abusive language is mostly used when some teachers are under influence of alcohol. These challenges are true manifestation of teachers' lack of interest in their job. As CPS stakeholders they were supposed to fight for the school goals which are education of children while they earn their living. Late coming to class leads teachers not completing their syllabi which do not only make students not succeed in their examinations but lead to low education quality achievement in Malawi (MoEST, 2020). However, MoEST (2019) points out that late coming and poor content coverage by teachers are challenges that are ranked highly in Malawi because there is minimal care and supervision that is taking place by school managers. The study revealed a very interesting point that there are sexual relationships existing between teachers and students as expounded below.

4.1.2.3.1 Teacher-student sexual relationship at school

The study revealed a very interesting observation. 4 out of 5 teachers who accepted that there is teacher-student sexual relationship were female teachers.

		Teacher student sexual relationship		Total
		Yes	No	
Sex	Male	1	15	16
	Female	4	9	13
Total		5	24	29

Table 2. Teacher-student sexual relationship

The study revealed that female teachers are ready to reveal the sexual relationship between teachers and students. Male teachers' hiding of information led the study to speculate that male teachers are the ones involved in the sexual relationship with female students. This observation is in line with a claim made by MoEST (2013) that male teachers engage in sexual relationship more than female teachers. A further study has to be conducted as to why males hide information of sexual relationship between teachers and students. The case of teachers having sexual relationship with students is fighting against collaborative objective which is education of the student.

CPS calls for all stakeholders to be interested for the education of students. The study revealed that male teachers engage in sexual relationship with female students. These sexual relationships shift the interest of students from school to social life. Resultantly the student fails to perform toward achieving the schools' set objectives. MoEST (2013) laments in reaction to teachers that engage in sexual relationship with students that the malpractice will result in student's failure to achieve their educational goals.

4.2.0 Examine CPS mechanisms that school managers apply.

The study examined a number of mechanisms applied from students, teachers, head teachers, SMC, organization and from the Education Division Office. Based on the results of the study on the solutions applied, implementation of these CPS strategies was negatively influenced by conflict of interests of the different stakeholders of the school management. These strategies were not fully implemented. Below are solutions applied by different stakeholders at different systemic level of Eco-systemic Theory in school management:

The study has grouped the solutions managers apply in solving challenges managers face in their management into three groups. These groups are the sub-systems in the Eco-systemic theory derived from systems theory. The first one was **microsystem** and **mesosystem.** This group comprised solutions done by students as clients and other stakeholders in the system which is school. These other stakeholders included head teachers and teachers. The second being **exosystem.** This group took solutions that were brought about by stakeholder that are outside school but directly linked with the school in that localized area. They included parents, school committees, and mother groups. The last group was the **macrosystem.** This group comprised of solutions emanating from stakeholders that have an influence on students over a larger area. These included NGOs, culture, policies, administration like EDM and programs.

4.1.3 EDM officer's challenges

The study observed a very important managerial challenge from the Education Division Officer about involvement of NGOs in CPS. The observation however, was not directly used in the research conclusion but worthy noting. The Education Division Officer, agreeing with Lemos (2017), indicated that NGOs in most cases help but at times create pressure on management due to their campaigns that are against education policy. In relation to the theory used, NGOs as a systemic level were supposed to fight together with other systems like policies in education system in achieving the equifinality which is education of a girl child. For instance, the Education Division Officer indicated that a well-known organization in Nkhatabay, fought for a pregnant girl to continue schooling while pregnant. They even bought uniform for the girl. The education policy states that the pregnant girl and the partner if is a student as well should stay at home until six months after delivery, it is when they can come to resume school (MoEST, 2013). The Education Division Officer recommended the expulsion of the girl from school since the officer was then the head teacher of the institution. With consideration to CPS, school managers particularly head teachers, who are policy interpreters at school should advise these NGOs according to education policy demands. The literature however helped the study to scrutinize the duties NGOs perform in CEC with regard to violation of education policies.

4.2.1.0 **Microsystem** and **Mesosystem**

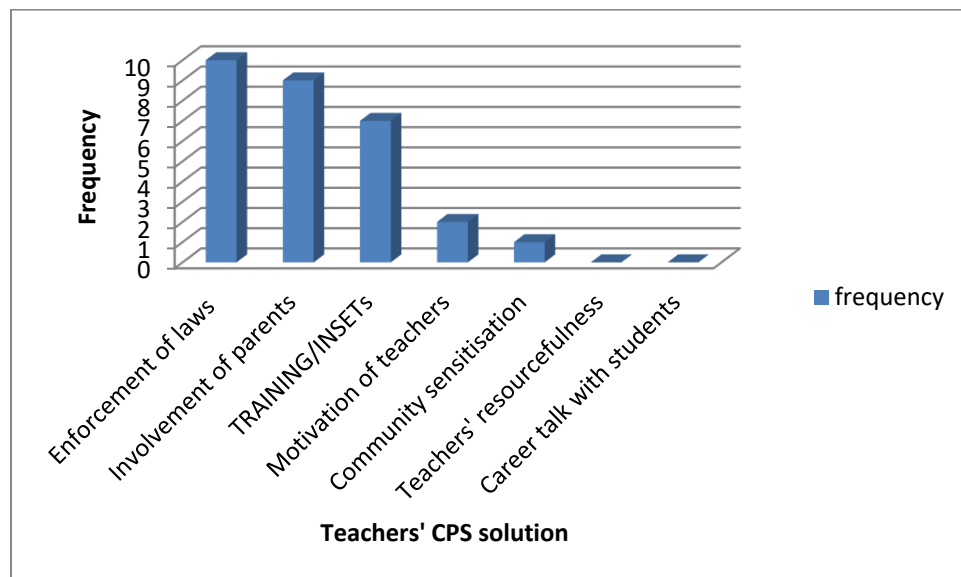### 4.2.1.1 Teachers' solutions to challenges

Figure 5: teachers' solutions to challenges

Enforcement of laws governing schools was revealed to be first CPS strategy to bring solution to managerial challenges teachers face in their schools management. Teachers indicated that students are made to sign a form containing school rule and regulations on the first day the students join the school probably in form one. The form also contains punitive measures leveled against each offence if committed. These rules are countersigned by parent. However the study also revealed that most of the students do not bring these forms to parents to sign. This gives an indication that students are just forced to abide by these rules. If they were part and parcel of the formation of the policy they would also be part of implementation.

CPS is always effective when all stakeholders are involved from policy formulation to implementation. A similar observation was made by Ring Central Team (2020), which states that for there to be effective collaboration in problem solving in schools all, stakeholders of the school management should be accountable. All stake holders should have a schedule of checking the progress of the policy set to achieve the objective established. If there is any barrier it has to be dealt with immediately. In relation to CEC, both students and teachers would have been on alert that the rules and regulation set are adhered to and implemented. Since students did not bring these rules to parents for signing, it meant the implementation was affected.

Apart from that involvement of parents in disciplining of the learner, there was a second CPS solution indicated by teachers. These teachers indicated that when a student has committed an offence at the school, the child was sent to call its parents so that teachers and parent of the students could together counsel the child. The results agree with findings by Altinyelken and Hoeksin (2021); Durisic and Bunijeva (2017) who recommend that involvement of students' parent at school in disciplining the child helps to achieve both cultural and moral uprightness of the student. In relation to CEC, teachers indicated that when parent are called, more information is given from parents either about the developmental history from childhood of the child or the child's behavior at school. However, the study found out that parents in CEC do not reveal more information to teachers for they fear that their children will be exposed to teachers for disciplining.

Parent involvement in school management is a necessity for effective CPS. Presence of parents is a necessity for teachers in school management because it helps teachers in three aspects. Firstly,

teachers become familiar with parent's expectations. Secondly, parents know each other and their social and cultural issues. Thirdly, teachers and parents exchange views on how to improve teaching-learning activities (Kabir and Akter, 2014). If CPS was fully applied, parents would understand the need to reveal the historical background and behavioural traits of their children. This would help teachers to understand these children and decide on how to deal with other behaviours these children portray at school.

The third major applied CPS solution as indicated by teachers was training of teachers in colleges like self-upgrading, conducting and attending cluster INSET. For instance, cluster inserts were revealed to be helping least qualified teachers to attain pedagogical and content knowledge to improve their profession. In these cases, teachers indicated that in these clusters' teachers share experience to improve their professionalism. The observation is similar to the observation Akinyemi et.al, (2019) made in Nigeria. They report that teachers always fight to improve their personal professional development. In relation to the study, teachers reported that they meet in these cluster INSETs where they share ideas, pedagogical and content knowledge and experiences. It was found out that teachers were interested in improving their pedagogical knowledge and professional skills to deliver quality content to students. On the contrary, the study revealed that some head teachers were not interested in motivating teachers for them to effectively deliver their services as they fulfill their social needs. Head teachers lack of interest disagrees with Mwakayuni's (2016) claim that head teachers should take motivation as the first obligation to do to increase service delivery in school.

4.2.1.2 Students' solutions to challenges

When it comes to students relevance in decision making the focus group discussions, revealed that most of their contributions were not taken by the management. Students indicated that they engaged in contact and dialogue with school management to deal with challenges at school. Some of the challenges students engaged the management included the following; management to mobilize community to deal with drug and substance abusers at school, school management to sensitizing communities on importance of education, school management to look for teachers, allow boys like girls to be on self-boarding. A similar observation was made by Mati, Gatumu & Chandi (2016) from their research conducted in Embu West Sub-County of Kenya where students' involvement in problem solving in school was taken to be key principle.

However, the study revealed that the management in CEC did not take some of the decisions from students. For example, it was indicated from the discussion with students that school managements were resistant to exercise equal access to education by allowing boys also to be studying at school at night which was the case in all the five schools investigated. One student said;

"...we have more than once contacted the management that boys also have to be allowed to come and stay at school so that we could be easily studying at night. Guess what we get! 'it will be difficult to control boys here' 'girls are accommodated because they are more vulnerable if travelling long distances' and 'we do not have accommodation for boys...'"

CPS demands interaction of clients in this case actions of students themselves in trying to solve some challenges they face in school as a system. Similarly, Mati, Gatumu and Chandi (2016) clearly stipulate that student are key stakeholders and beneficiaries of education, as well as determinants of management performance. It is therefore important to involve them into the school key decision systems. However, the study found out that most of the students' decisions, for instance allowing equal access to education, were not taken serious in the school management. Management however was protecting the demand by education policy guidelines as spelt out in MoEST, (2019). Education Policy Guidelines outlines that school managers have to counter all barriers of education of the girl child. By accommodating girls at self-boarding in school, the school management had the interest in education of girls. Some of the barriers the school managements were fighting were distance, accessibility and safety of the girl child.

On the other hand, the study found out from students' body represented by the prefects that they demanded equity in education to all students including boy. The study revealed that there was conflict of interests between the management and students body based on equal education to all children. Students demand for equity in accessibility to education as supported by MoEST, (2020) in its National Education Sector Investment Plan 2020-2030. The plan has a goal to promote equitable access to education and improve relevance, quality and governance and management of education sector. CPS fights shared interest to achieve equal access to education. This means, therefore, that there is need for collaboration between school management and students body in CEC to achieve equal access to education.

4.2.2.0 Exo-system

4.2.2.1 School Management Committees (SMCs) solutions to challenges

The study found out from SMC chairs that as CPS stakeholders they were proposing, financing and supervising development projects at school. Apart from that, they were involved in maintaining discipline of both teachers and students at school. SMCs were also involved in construction and maintenance of infrastructure at school and checking financial flow of the school. The need for involvement of the community like SMC in school management agrees with the conclusion made by Mwasulubuva (2013). He concluded that for there to be quality school performance, school managers should involve community especially SMC in solving some of its challenges. However, in CEC the study found out that SMC met resistance in many areas as they were carrying out their duties. The most prevalent challenge was lack of cooperation with other teachers if they were called to the discipline committee on their indiscipline acts. The chairs indicated that the said teachers take them as not made up of educated people and that they interfere with their human rights. In financing development projects, they met a challenge that other chiefs did not finish their target in time for the projects and others chiefs squandered the sourced money. Apart from that SMC in CEC met a challenge that other sponsors in this case politicians did not honour their campaign promises through giving the promised support. Some of the statements SMCs produced are presented below;

"...we were supposed to build five teachers houses but chief misappropriated the raised funds for one house..."

"...we are insulted by teachers that we cannot discipline them calling us uneducated and too local to discipline them..."

"...we failed to provide girls with beds because we were promised by one aspiring candidate who did not honour his promise. But we have looked for another donor to supply us with beds..."

CPS supports involvement of SMC in the school management to achieve effectiveness in addressing challenges schools face. Ng'ambi (2010) claims that for smooth running of CDSS, there is need for collaborative effort from multiple stakeholders like SMC, community, the academic staff and school management. The study revealed differences of interest between school management and SMC with community and teachers from within and outside school system. School management had a goal to maintain school discipline through discipline committee while teachers wanted to exercise their freedom. SMC had the goal to provide teachers' accommodation

through and financing development projects while the community had interest in their human rights and need to misuse the money on their personal business. The result of this conflict of interests was that there was moral decay in some teachers and thereby teachers' house projects that were not finished. This conflict of interest would not be there if SMC, school management, teachers and community served one interest which is education of a child. Collaboration of stakeholders in achieving general interest which CPS advocates was lacking as revealed by the study.

4.2.3.0 Macrosystem.

4.2.3.1 NGOs' solutions to challenges

The study revealed some of the duties being provided by NGOs in solving some of the problems schools face. NGOs as a system in the eco-systemic theory to achieve equifinality which is education perform duties such as; bringing good learning environment for students at school. The learning environments like right to education, ensuring safety and protection of students and ensure good communication between community and school management. However it was indicated by all directors that they were not fully satisfied with school management. Some of the reasons cited being management not willing to take on some tasks assigned by these NGOs. The study also observed from two directors out of three directors of organizations representing 66.7% that school managers were not open to them. The study revealed that there was conflict of interest between organizations and the interests of the school management that resulted into lack of trust between organizations and school management. The study concluded that, as a result of low collaborative interest of these stakeholders in school management, there was high dropout rate, violation of children's rights and increased sexual relationships amongst students themselves and also with teachers and the community. Some on the statements that directors of organizations said are presented below;

"...many drop out of school due to pregnancies while other learners are abused sexually and mentally yet the management is too silent. We are not told of child rights violation as if it is good in their eyes..."

"...there should be open and honest discussion between school management and community so that they are on the same page..."

CPS recognizes the influence NGOs have in achieving effective solutions to challenges schools particularly CDSSs face. A similar argument is made by Ng'ambi (2010) claiming that for smooth running of CDSS, there is need for collaborative effort from multiple stakeholders like development agencies and organizations. These organizations and agencies provide financial support, skilled expertise, planning, monitoring and evaluation of education programs. In relation to CEC, CPS was not based on the results the study revealed. Lack of CPS was evident in lack of openness by school management, lack of trust from directors and dissatisfaction of director to school manager. These negative observations resulted into students' dropout, violation of students' right to education and sexual relationships that eventually affect students' education. If CPS was applied, stakeholder would have fought for the common interest in this case prioritized solution to solve the challenges managements face in managing schools in CEC.

4.2.3.2 Education Division Officer's solution to understaffing

As a solution to challenges of poor staffing in schools, the study revealed from the education division officer that the office has started depopulating overstaffed schools by transferring other teachers to understaffed schools because no teacher was trained to teach in rural or town only. The education division officer said most teacher have an interest to teach in town adding on the already long list of teacher who are following their spouses work in town while the ministry has the interest to teach all students even those in rural areas. Education division officer said;

> *"...if we analyze staff returns from schools that are in the towns and cities have many teachers. Others have more than sixty while schools that are in the remote area have less than five teachers. This is what we want to fight against now. We are posting out more teachers and we do not post teachers in the cities..."*

CPS calls for involvement of the central government to equally put interest in all schools regardless of geographical location. In this case, CPS calls for education division office to intervene in the solutions to the challenges CDSS face. One of the priority issues government through ministry of education wants to address is that teachers are not systematically deployed between years 2020 to 2030 (MoEST, 2020). Systematic deployment of teachers is spreading qualified teachers across the division not concentrating them in schools in towns only. The study found out that the Education Division Office as school management stakeholder at regional level did not put much

interest on the student in rural school hence understaffing them and overstaffing schools in the city.

4.2.3.3 Training of teachers

Results of the study from education division officer indicated that most CDSSs have under qualified teachers. Agreeing to this is the MoEST's (2020) claim that in CDSSs there is inadequate number of qualified teacher mostly sciences. There is need for trainings teachers to enrich their pedagogical content knowledge that improves teachers' professional development. These trainings can be Continuous Professional Development (CPD) through INSETs or Community of Practice (CoP). CoP is where teachers from a given area like education zone meet to share their pedagogical knowledge in a given field. Other teachers may be even sent to colleges. This is what he said

> *"...I said bring to the office all topics that you feel are challenging to you. The head teacher organized CPD through INSETs calling facilitators from other schools who have deeper understanding of such topics. Teachers were happy and free to teach later...."*

CPS allows collaboration of stakeholder with knowledge and skills to interact to effectively achieve the education of the child. In this case the divisional office organizes training like super clusters, SEMASS and upgrading of teachers in colleges through UCE programs.

4.2.3.4 Overreliance on government help.

The study found out from the Education Division Officer that most of the school managers over depend on government as their needs provider. The officer also indicated that just for instance only NED has 212 secondary schools that wait for the government support. The officer indicated that the term government has conquered most of the school managers. Most of the challenges school managers face in the management of schools as indicated by the officer are piled on government's shoulder. They pause themselves as recessive agents in the school development. This is what he had to say;

CPS depends of the effective collaboration between stakeholders at school. Revealed from the study, the education division officer in support of National Education Sector Investment Plan NESIP 2020-2030 supported the idea of encouraged participation of different stakeholders in school like, school management, community and students themselves before thinking of the government's intervention. In agreement MOEST (2020) claims that collaboration of different

stakeholders in school management will help schools particularly CDSS to achieve their independence by the year 2030.

From the findings of the solutions applied to managerial challenges faced in managing in CEC it was revealed that there was little collaboration among different stakeholder in school management because of differences in interests among these stakeholder.

4.3.0 Effectiveness of CPS strategies to problems schools face
The study generally found out that the Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) applied were not entirely effective. These solutions did not satisfy the principles of effective collaboration that were designed by the Ring Central Team, (2020).
The effectiveness of the strategies in this study was judged based on the six principles of effective collaborative solutions designed by Ring Central Team (2020). According to Ring Central Team (2020), effective collaborative solutions to the challenges are those solutions that are reached at when two or more people work together personally or virtually with their interest. These solutions can occur at a work place where employees feel seen, heard and safe to share their thoughts. They concluded that effective collaborative solutions institutions should apply must satisfy the following keys; effectiveness; efficiency, trust, empathy, positivity, clarity and accountability. The effectiveness of the solutions to be applied for management challenges in CDSS has to be out of interest of stake holders involved.

4.3.1 Efficiency of the solution applied

From the discussions with the students' prefects, the study found out that 1 group out of 5 indicated that they were just told decisions already made and they were just following. From the interview with directors of organizations 2 out of 3 directors indicated that they were not involved in the decisions school managers make in schools. When asked about their involvement in school decision making this is what students and directors of organizations had to say;

Students said

> *"...we are not represented in the discipline for our voice to be heard. They just tell us that from the decision made by management and parents, you are going to do A,B,C,D as punishment..."*

"...on development projects they just say management has decided to build a hostel for boys so tell your parents that from next term fees has been raised because of construction of hostel....."

Directors said.

"...head teachers are not open to us on development at school they don't even give us feedback if we ask it from them..."

"...head teachers handle cases of sexual relationships between teachers and students and issues of girls' pregnancies silently without telling us for further action, as if they promote it..."

The applied solutions observed in the study were not efficient because they came from the interest and decision from the meeting which not all members were involved. Similar observations were made by Kibona (2012) in Tanzania where the community as SMC active member was not involved in school programs as such they were not interested in supporting and caring for the school projects. Based on the results presented it was revealed that decisions from meetings school management based their punishments of students on, lacked representation from students' body and NGOs as major stakeholders in school management. According to Ring Central Team, if CPS were to be effective in for the challenges in CEC, these solutions were supposed to be suggested, planned, and projected by all stakeholders at a joint meeting. The implementation plan and evaluation as well was to be done through meetings. In other words every step and process was supposed to be unanimously agreed upon by all stake holders. Based on the study's results that the solutions applied in CEC were not from the interest of every stakeholder, they were not effective.

4.3.2 Trustworthiness of the solution applied

Results from the study revealed that 1out of the 5 SMC chairs indicated that the head teacher lack openness on finances and hides indiscipline behavior of other teachers at the school. Adding on the same, 1 director of the organization indicated that school managers are not honest on the information they give us.

CPS works well if stakeholders trust each other (Ring Central Team, 2020). The study revealed that school managers were not trusted by fellow SMC members in managing the school. This was revealed in the indication of lack of openness to SMC and lack of honest in giving information to

directors of organizations. These findings from CEC are contrary to principles of effective collaboration in problem solving. The principle expects Stakeholders in school management to feel safe to give feedback that inspires the common goal which is the solution to a certain problem at school. This happens if stakeholders have trust in the management (Ring Central Team, 2020). Agreeing with this is Heath (2010) who explains that leaders have to build trust in their followers if they want effective collaboration with the led. This trust will be achieved only if teammates feel that their leaders have their interest at heart. In relation to CEC the study found out that the solutions applied to solving challenges schools face were not trustworthy because they came from leaders that were not trust worth.

4.3.3 Empathy in the stakeholders involved in the solution

The study observed from SMCs that communities were forced to raise a set target within a set time for the projects. The forcing of members to contribute is against the principles of effective collaboration of empathy. Empathy according to Ring Central Team (2020) is a principle that school stakeholders should have to yield CPS solution to management of challenges in CDS. The principle states that no member should feel burdened and another one light because of the project chosen to be done. Members should get to understand each other's capacity. People should do out of interest. Participation should be on the free will. The study revealed that money contributions and participations in the development projects were not out of the community's interest. Below are some of the statements SMC chairs made;

> *"...contributions will be by force if one has passed the date agreed…"*

> *"...(uyo andapereke campaign); those who have not paid beyond the dateline village youths get material that are sold equivalent to the amount due…"*

The study revealed that development projects at school were agreed upon by community themselves. They contribute money towards the project though targets and deadlines were imposed on them by chiefs. The study portrays a similar picture to the observation Galafa (2018) in the research on implementation of the School Improvement Plan in Malawi. Galafa concluded that for any project to be well implemented in the area there is need to lobby not force the community members for it to successfully finish and also to be owned by the community. a similar observation was made by Mwakayuni (2016) who concludes that communities have to be lobbied to solve some of the problems CDSS are facing. In relation to CEC, the setting of targets, setting of dateline

and punishing the defaulters are factors that make the whole process not empathetic. The study revealed that SMCs do not consider capacity of every community member. If CPS was used in coming up with the development projects, the stakeholders would presently propose at that meeting what they could afford given a particular duration. From the results it can be concluded that CPS solution applied to challenges in CEC are not applied in empathy.

4.3.4 Positivity in the stakeholders in the solution

The study found out from the SMC that 2 out of 3 who had some unfinished projects at their school indicated that they were negative to finish them. These unfinished projects are building of teachers houses and building of a changer room. 1 SMC chair out of three with unfinished project which is buying of beds for student indicated that they have found another donor. The results are presented in the table below.

Table 3: Unfinished proposed projects.

SMC's school	Unfinished project proposed	Solution to finish the project	Positivity
B	Buy beds for students	Have found another donor to buy	**positive**
A	Build five teachers houses	One chief misused the money	**negative**
E	Building a changer room for girls	Shortage of fund due to corona holiday	**negative**

Results presented in the table 4. above revealed that the SMCs from school A and E are not positive for their failure in the proposed time was the failure of the project. They felt that those projects would continue failing since that time they failed. However SMC chair for school B indicated that they did not give up they pressed on for another donor to buy beds for girls. The study revealed that lack of positivity from two schools A and E. In these schools, stakeholder give up in coming up with the solutions CDSSs face. The findings from the SMC on positivity revealed that some SMCs were not positive since they gave up the projects planned. Their interest died after being frustrated. The results differ from the conclusion by Lemos (2019) who did his study of the recovery of the aftermath of floods on school in São Paulo in Brazil. The conclusion was that even though they were in the unfortunate situation of floods where class rooms were destroyed

education and health of the people have to continue. The community through the care unit which was a group of the youth to work towards reinstallation of schools donated relief items, renovate class room block and provided flood victims with basic needs. The care unit did not give up but continue working to have education and good health for people.

If CPS was used all the SMCs would be positive, having the interest to finish the projects as planned before. SMCs have to be advised to stand strong in time of problems so to achieve the set objectives.

4.3.5 Clarity of the solution in the stakeholders

The study found out from organization directors that head teachers were not interested to provide information to them who are also stakeholders in school management. The results of the study findings revealed that head teachers had little knowledge of the organizations' interests but they rather saw them as fault finders in their management. One of the statement directors said is presented below;

> **"…**_our interest is to bridge the communication gap that exists between the community and school management especially on barriers to education of children. What is strange is that school managers keep this information away from us…"_

Results revealed that there was communication gap between the school management and organizations that provide services to school. The head teachers were not interested to furnish these organizations with information regarding challenges and solutions they intended to do. That was brought about because head teachers thought they were spied on by these directors. In similar observation, Onsomu and Mujidi (2011) confirm that in majority of African countries, teachers appear not interested to accommodate other stakeholders of school management in the community. The study found out that head teachers do not involve organizations because they feel threatened of being spied or exposed mostly on the weaknesses happening in their management.

CPS demands all stakeholders in school management to clearly understand the solution to be established to win the interest of all. Clarity of the solution comes in when all members unanimously take part in its crucial stages usually done on a meeting. Ring Central Team (2020) puts that it is natural for people to have differences of interests and priotize but the duty of the managers is to clearly direct stakeholders to identify the common interest and priorities it. In this

case the solution to be pursued should be agreed upon and accepted from a meeting. Based on these findings the study concluded that solutions engaged in solving problems in CEC were not clear to all members of SMC; organization directors to be precized. If CPS was used there would be mutual sharing of information to all members of CPS since that is the basic principle of effective collaborative problem solving falling under clarity (Ring Central Team, 2020).

4.3.6 Accountability of the solution's progress

The study observed from 1 SMC chair that one teacher's house was not completed because one chief squandered the money meant for the project. Another SMC chair indicated that beds promised were not given by the aspiring politician. In both cases the SMC lacked accountability to quickly discover the problem and quickly meet to brainstorm solutions to remove barriers to a solution to solve that challenge. The study also discovered that SMC only met often when there was a development project but occasionally met when there was no project.

From the results it was concluded that school managers were not accountable in following the progress of the solutions to challenges CDSS faced. The findings agree with the finding by Kibona (2012). She did her research in Tanzania where she observed that the community was not accountable in implementing and caring for the projects because they were not involved in each of the critical stages of the project like planning, development, evaluation and caring. A similar observation was done by Uzoechina (2020) who recommended for the need of community relationship's impact on quality education. However, the results were against the National Education Sector Investment Plan (NESIP) 2020-2030. NESIP highlights that the government priority in development projects is that all government projects have to be accounted for jointly by all stakeholders (MoEST, 2020). All stakeholders should be accountable from the establishment to evaluation of the projects. These stakeholders are school personnel, students and community to improve the projects outcome.

Applied to CEC, the irregular meeting of SMC to monitor progress of development projects, failure to detect mismanagement of development funds meant for teachers' houses by chiefs and failure to be following the pledged donation of beds indicated that school managers and SMC are not accountable. This propels the study to conclude that the solutions pursued, therefore, are not effective.

Base on principles of collaborative problem solving designed by The Ring Central Team, CPS solutions applied to solve challenges CDSS in CEC were not effective. Mostly the lacked the shared interest from all stakeholders needed. There is need therefore, that the stakeholders in the school management to identify the shared interest from all stakeholder in the school management and collaborate towards achieving that prioritized interest that done CPS will be fruitful and most of the problems that are persistent in schools are to be solved.

4.4 Chapter summary

The chapter has presented managerial challenges from various stakeholders in school management like head teachers, teachers, community, students and government. These problems have been revealed to be there because the involved stakeholders have different interest to achieve at the same time. As a result there is conflict of interest rather than finding solutions to solve problems. In trying to solve the problems the chapter has also displayed different CPS solution that managers of school apply that fall under three subgroups of the ecosystmic theory. Solutions that fall under microsystem and mesosystem are those from teachers, students and head teachers. Those at exosystem are those solutions from parents, pressure groups and SMC. At macrosystem include those solutions affecting a wider are like NGO, EDM, policies, projects and programs. The chapter has also assessed the effectiveness of the solutions applied based of the 6 principles of effective collaborative problem solving designed by The Ring Central Team (2020). The solutions have been found not effective.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The aim of the study was to assess the implementation of Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) in schools in Malawi. The general conclusion was that CPS strategy was found to be ineffective in solving challenges in Chitipa Education Cluster (CEC). Ineffectiveness came in because of conflict of interests amongst systems occurring at different systemic levels of eco-systemic theory referred to as stakeholders in school management. The chapter also presents recommendations to different stakeholders in education management that in trying to come up with a CPS solution, it has to be from the general interest of different systems meaning stakeholders in education.

5.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that Collaborative Problem Solving as a strategy applied in solving managerial challenges in CDSSs were not effective in Chitipa Education Cluster schools. The study believes in rationale of eco-systemic theory that solutions to managerial problems in CDSS belong to different systems of the Eco-systemic Theory. These solutions were not effectively accomplished because the different systems, which are stakeholders in school management, had different interests. As a result there were conflicts of interests that affected the operations of the solution. Eco-systemic theory was used to examine solutions school managers apply in solving these managerial challenges. The ineffectiveness was judged from the solutions' satisfaction of the Effective Collaborative Principles (ECP) which was designed by Ring Central Team, (2020). The solutions applied did not satisfy ECP being; efficiency, trustworthy, empathy, positivity, clarity and accountability.

5.2 Recommendations

The study has a general recommendation to different stakeholders in education management that in trying to come up with a CPS solution, it has to be from the general interest of different systems meaning stakeholders in education. The study found out that CPS met various managerial

challenges in Chitipa Education Cluster (CEC) schools because of differences of interests in stakeholders. These challenges were either from within the school system or outside the school system. The school managers, therefore, should help stakeholders in school management to identify the common interest to be pursued at a time. Apart from that, recommendations go to the would be school leaders to be deployed to CDSS to be prepared in advance so not to be frustrated when they get there and get subjected to these challenges.

The study recommends different stakeholders to have the general interest for them to solve managerial challenges CDSSs are facing. There is need for school leaders to accommodate skills and expertise from different stakeholders to solve some of the challenges these CDSS are facing. In this case the school managers should know that there is no single problem that cannot be solved but managers fail to solve other problems because they are limited in choices. School managers should stop using the phrase **'I can'** rather they have to be using **'we can'** in their management. Managers also have to believe that there is no single system or person who knows it all.

The study recommends school managers that solutions applied should be in the interest of multiple stakeholders in the school management. The solutions should satisfy ECP. Apart from that managers should realize that effectiveness deals with **'uniqueness'.** Every problem is unique, every solution is unique, every manager is unique, and every situation is unique. A specific challenge affecting a specific area will specifically be dealt with by a specific manager at a specific time. In management everything has to be treated special.

The study ignites to light government planners, policy makers and school leaders to inculcate CPS principle in the school management to achieve the vision of self-sustenance of CDSSs by the year 2063.

5.3 Limitations of the study
According to Cohen et al. (2019) every research has its own limitations. This research was also not exceptional in the sense that it has limitations.

To begin with, the study was confined to only 5 CDSSs that are in CEC which is just a small part of Chitipa district one of the 5 districts in NED which has 212 secondary schools. These 5 districts are just part of the 30 districts in Malawi. This, therefore, means that the findings of this study reflect implementation of CPS in CEC. They cannot be generalized for the whole Malawi but only

contextually used. This means that there is a need to support this study to be conducted across the country for generalization for Malawi. However the procedure used in this study and its findings can be equally used to research in other settings.

Regardless of having limitation, the study has opened a platform for the deeper understanding of the challenges in management of CDSS particularly in as far as community participation is concerned. All along it was cheaper to say communities solve challenges CDSSs face but the study has revealed that the claim made is not as easy as it is depicted.

5.4 Strength of the study
Chitipa Education Cluster provided a fertile ground for the research because respondents, from their responses, seemed to have understood the essence of the study, for they were open to relay the information including the sensitive one.

5.5 Chapter summary

The chapter has concluded that there was poor implementation of Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) in solving problems faced in Chitipa Education Cluster (CEC) schools. Based on this conclusion, the chapter recommends stakeholders in education to consider conflict of interests of different stakeholders in school management for the effective implementation of CPS strategies. The chapter has also provided limitations and strength of the study.

REFRENCES

Akinyemi, A.F., Rembe, S., Shumba, J. & Adewumi, M.T. (2019) *Collaboration and*

Mutual Support as Processes Established by Communities of Practice to Improve Continuing Professional Teachers' Development in High Schools. Retrieved from: https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&as_vis=1&q=collaboration+and+mutual+support+by+Akinyemi+2019&btnG=

Altinyelken, H.K. & Hoeksim, M. (2021). *Improving Education Quality Through Action*

Research. Retrieved from: http://www.doi.org/10.1177/1745499921992904 on february 14

Bruce, T. & Meggitt, C. (2006). *Child Care and Education. (4th Ed)*. London: Hodder Education.

Cohen, L., Manion L. & Morrison, K. (2017). *Research Methods in Education (8thEd).* London:

Routledge Taylas & Fransis.

Creswell, J.W. & Creswell, J.D. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative and*

Mixed methods Approaches (5thEd). London: SAGE.

Daft, R.L. (2011). *The Leadership Experience*. Korea: South-Western Cengage Learning

Durisic, M. & Bunijeva, M. (2017). Parental Involvement as an Important Factor for Successful

Education. *Journal of Education.* Vol.7/No3

Galafa, B. (2018). *Challenges education administration and management in Primary Schools in Malawi.* Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326506724

George, J. & Jones, G. (2012) understanding and managing organizational behavior (6thEd).

New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Godfrey, S.M., (2016). *Challenges Impacting Community Participation and Their Effect*

on Teaching and Learning: a Case Study of Rural Areas. Retrieved from:
http://dx.doi.org/10.19044/esj.2016.v12n25p345

Heath, M. (2010). *Leadership Secrets*. London: Harper Collins Publications

Jordan, E.A. & Parath, M.J. (2005). *Education Psychology: A Problem Based Approach*. London: Pearsons.

Kabir, A.H. & Akter, F. (2014). *Parental Involvement in The Secondary Schools in Bangladesh: Challenges and A Way Forward*. Retrieved from:
https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1030575.pdf

Kamande, M.K., (2019). *Mmanga Primary School Standoff Continues*. The nation on Sunday. Retrieved from:
https://www.mwnation.com/mmanga-primary-school-standoff

Kibona, P. (2012). *Involvement of community in secondary school education management in selected community secondary schools in Moshi Rural District.* Open University of Tanzania

Kumar, R. (2019). *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners (5th Ed).* London: SAGE.

Lemos, M. (2017). *Collaborative Agency in Educational Management: A Joint Object for School and Community Transformation*. Retrieved from:
https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=MONICA+LEMOS+(2017)&hl=en&as_sdt=0&as _vis=1&oi=scholart

Mati, A., Gatumu, J.A. & Chandi, J.R (2016). Students' Involvement in Decision Making and Their Academic Performance in Embu West Sub-County of Kenya. *Universal Journal of Educational Research 4(10): 2300-2304, 2016* Retrieved from: http://www.hrpub.org DOI: 10.13189/ujer.2016.041008

McDevitt, T. and Ormrod, J.E. (2002). *Child Development and Education*. New Jersey: Merrill prentice Hall.

Mlangeni, ANJT & Chiotha, S.S. (2015). *Why Rural Community Day Secondary School Students' performance in Physical Science Examinations is poor in Lilongwe West Education District in Malawi*. Retrieved from: http://www.researchgate,net

Montuuori, A. (2011). *The Systems Approach to Creativity. Encyclopedia of Creativity (2ed).*

Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/106775

MoEST, (2013). *National Education Policy (NEP).* Retrieved from:
http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/malawi_national-education-policy.pdf

Moest, (2019). *Malawi Education Sector Analysis*. Lilongwe: Malawi.

MoEST (2020). *National Strategy for Community Participation in Primary Schools in Malawi.*

Lilongwe: MoEST.

Mwakayuni, B.L.T (2016). *Practical Guidelines for Effective School Management for Primary and Secondary School Head Teachers*. Bulawayo: Calben Trust.

Mwasulubuva, J. (2013). Parental involvement in the management of school programmes: A case of Temeke Municipal in PEDP Implementation. (Masters Thesis)Open University of Tanzania.

Ndengu, D. (2012). *Designing and Conducting a Qualitative Research: A guide for Post Graduate Students in Social Sciences*: Mzuni Press.

NERDC, (2004). *Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education.* Retrived

from: https://education.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/NATIONAL-POLICY-ON-EDUCATION.pdf

Ng'ambi, F. (2010). Malawi Effective Delivery of Public Education Services, centre for human

rights and rehabilitation (CHRR). Open society initiative for southern Africa. http://afrimapMalawiweb-redy.pdf

OECD, (2017). *What is collaborative Problem Solving*. Retrieved from: https://doi.org/10.1787/97892642855217-en

Onsomu NE Mujidi J (2011). *Community Schools in Kenya. Case study on Community participation in funding and managing schools. Internal institute for Education Planning*. UNESCO.

PISA, (2015) Collaborative Problem Solving Framework

Resnik, D.B. (2011). What is Ethics in Research and Why is it important? Retrieved from:

http://www.niehs.nih.gov/researchbioethics

Ring Central Team (2020). The Six Keys to Effective Collaboration in the Work Place. retrieved

from: http://www.ringcentral.com/us/en

Santhakumar, V. (2019). Community Participation in School Management: Reasons it may not

work in India. Retrieved from:

https://www.practiceconnect.azmpremjiumuniversity.edu.in/723

Takyi, H., Anin, E.K. & Asuo, Y.K. (2014). The challenges of effective community participation

in district education strategic planning and implementation process in the Salanga Town Council in Ghana. *International Journal of Business and Social Research (IJSBR),* 4(2).y Schools on the context of conflicts and challenges. Management I, (1), 35-40. http://doi.org/10.5923/j.mm.20110101.04

Ttlan, I.A. & Igbal, M.Z. (2011). Role of Board of Governors and Parent Teachers Association in

District Secondar

Uzoechina, G.O. (2020). Analysis of School-Community Relationship in Secondary School in

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Mzuzu University Research Ethics Committee (MZUNIREC)

Informed Consent Form for Research in
Masters of Education in Leadership and Management

Introduction

I am **Pima Madumusha Msiska**, a Master of Education in Leadership and Management student from Mzuzu University**.** I am doing research titled *"Assessment of the Effectiveness of Application of Collaborative Problem Solving in Schools in Malawi: A Case of Chitipa Education Cluster"*. This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the information and I will take time to explain. If you have questions later, you can ask them to me or to another researcher.

Purpose of the research

This research aims at assessing the Effectiveness of application of Collaborative Problem Solving in Schools in Malawi: A Case of Chitipa Education Cluster.

Type of Research Intervention

This research will need your participation in answering a questionnaire/focus group discussions/interview questions.

Participant Selection

You are being invited to take part in this research because you are one of the head teachers/ teachers/students/support staff/SMC member/Director or Organization/community representative in Chitipa Education Cluster.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. If you choose not to participate nothing will change. You may skip any question and move on to the next question.

Duration

The research may take a period of about 3 months from April to July 2021.

Risks

You do not have to answer any question or take part in the discussion/interview if you feel the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable.

Reimbursements

You will not be provided any incentive to take part in the research.

Sharing the Results

The knowledge that we get from this research will be shared with you and your community before it is made widely available to the public. Following that, we will publish the results so other interested people may learn from the research.

Who to Contact

If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact: Mr Pima Madumusha Msiska. Phone +265 999200868.

This proposal has been reviewed and approved by Mzuzu University Research Ethics Committee (MZUNIREC) which is a committee whose task it is to make sure that research participants are protected from harm. If you wish to find about more about the Committee, contact Mr. Gift Mbwele, Mzuzu University Research Ethics (MZUNIREC) Administrator, Mzuzu University, P/Bag 201, Luwinga, Mzuzu 2, Phone: 0999404008/0888641486

Do you have any questions?

Part II: Certificate of Consent

*I have been invited to participate in research about **"Assessment of the Effectiveness of Application of Collaborative Problem Solving in Schools in Malawi: A Case of Chitipa Education Cluster"**.*

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study

Print Name of Participant_____
Signature of Participant _____
Date _____
        Day/month/year

If illiterate [1]

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

---

[1] A literate witness must sign (if possible, this person should be selected by the participant and should have no connection to the research team). Participants who are illiterate should include their thumb print as well.

Print name of witness_____   **Thumb print of participant**

Signature of witness   _____

Date _____

  Day/month/year

Statement by the researcher/person taking consent

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands the research project. I confirm the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent

Date _____

  Day/month/year

APPENDIX 2. : STUDY GUIDE FOR STUDENTS (FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION)

Dear respondents. My name is Pima Madumusha Msiska. I am a student at Mzuzu University. I am doing a research on assessing effectiveness of the application of Collaborative Problem Solving in schools in Malawi: A case of Community Day Secondary Schools in Chitipa Education Cluster. This research is part of the requirements for award of Master of Education in Leadership and Management. I kindly request you to honestly answer my questions. The information you will provide will be confidential and will be used for academic purposes only.

1. As students what are some of the challenges you face;
    a. In terms of teaching and learning?
    b. With relation to management?
    c. With the community?
    d. From students themselves?
2. Suggest some of the ways these problems can be mitigated?
3. Are students involved in the management committee?
4. Do you have any questions on the information we have discussed here?

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SMC)

Dear respondents. My name is Pima Madumusha Msiska. I am a student at Mzuzu University. I am doing a research on assessing effectiveness of the application of Collaborative Problem Solving in schools in Malawi: A case of Community Day Secondary Schools in Chitipa Education Cluster. This research is part of the requirements to honestly answer my questions. The information you will provide will be confidential and will be used for academic purposes only.

Let's answer all questions

1. How old are you?
2. What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?
3. How many years have you been working as a SMC member?
4. What is your religion?
5. What is the ethnic group you belong?
6. What is the composition of the committee in terms of sex?
7. How were you selected to the SMC?
8. In which year was the CURRENT SMC formed?
9. When was the last time that the SMC met?
10. When was the previous time that the SMC met?
11. Are minutes taken when you meet?
12. What are the main powers or responsibilities for the SMC?
13. Besides the powers and responsibilities the SMC already has, what additional kind of powers would you like the SMC to have?
14. During this school year, how many times did the school invite parents for a meeting about the school in general?
15. How open is the head to you in terms of school management information?
16. What are some of the successes the committee has registered in the past two years?

17. Are there other activities the committee wanted to achieve but failed to achieve? (If no go to 20)

18. What was the problem?

19. How are development projects to be done at school proposed?

20. What other information concerning SMC do you want to give?

This is the end of the interview. Thank you for participating in this interview.

APPENDIX 4: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Dear respondent. My name is Pima Madumusha Msiska. I am a student at Mzuzu University. I am doing a research on assessing effectiveness of the application of Collaborative Problem Solving in schools in Malawi: A case of Community Day Secondary Schools in Chitipa Education Cluster. This research is part of the requirements for award of Master of Education in Leadership and Management. I kindly request you to honestly answer my questions. The information you will provide will be confidential and will be used for academic purposes only.

Answer all questions by following answering

Gender:

Male		Female	

Age:

Age range	30 - 40	41 - 50	50+
Tick			

4. What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

Level	JCE	MSCE	DIPLOMA	DEGREE	MASTER	PHD
Tick						

5. How many years have you been working here? ☐

6. Do you hold any position at school?

_____

7. If yes what position

_____

_____

8. As a teacher, what contribution do you make to the management of the school?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. As a teacher what are some of the challenges you face; *(indicate by ticking in the box aganst your choice. Please tick one option)*

    e. In respect to teaching and learning.

Challenge	Tick
Shortage of Teaching and Learning Material	
Absenteeism	
Limited content knowledge	
Lack of motivation	
Poor parental support to students	

Source: researcher's knowledge

    f. From management.

Challenge	Tick
Shortage of Teaching and Learning Material	
Understaffing	
Lack of consultation	
Lack of motivation	
Favourtism	
Threats from management	

Source: researcher's knowledge

    g. From the community.

Challenge	Tick

Poor accommodation	
Sexual relationship	
Community influence on school issues	
Marrying off girls	
Poor parental support to students	

Source: researcher's knowledge

h. From teachers themselves.

Challenge	Tick
Late coming	
Poor coverage of the syllabus	
Teacher student sexual relationship	
Abusive language	

Source: researcher's knowledge

10. Suggest ways how these problems can be mitigated?

(indicate by ticking in the box representing you choice. Tick once)

Challenge	Tick
Teachers' resourcefulness	
Career talk to student	
Training/INSET	
Community sensitization	
Involvement of parents	
Enforcement of laws governing school	
Motivating teachers	

Source: researcher's knowledge

10. How are school management issues/problems handled at this school?

_____

_____

11. Are you satisfied with how school management issues/problems are handled?

_____

12. Any other information about school management you want to give?

_____

_____

Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX 5: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEAD TEACHERS

Dear respondent. My name is Pima Madumusha Msiska. I am a student at Mzuzu University. I am doing a research on assessing effectiveness of the application of Collaborative Problem Solving in schools in Malawi: A case of Community Day Secondary Schools in Chitipa Education Cluster. This research is part of the requirements for award of Master of Education in Leadership and Management. I kindly request you to honestly answer my questions. The information you will provide will be confidential and will be used for academic purposes only.

Answer all questions by following answering

Section A. PERSONAL DATA.

1. Gender:

Male		Female	

2. Age.

Age range	30 - 40	41 - 50	50+
Tick			

3. What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

Level	JCE	MSCE	DIPLOMA	DEGREE	MASTER	PHD
Tick						

4. How long have you been working as head teacher?

_____

5. How many years have you been working as a head teacher at this school?

_____

Section B. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

I would like to ask you about the appraisal (defined below) of teachers in this school.

In this survey, appraisal is defined as when a teacher's work is reviewed by head teacher, inspector or by colleagues through a discussion with the teacher).

6. Are appraisals done at this school? (***If no then go to 2***)

_____

7. How often is the work of teachers in this school appraised by either you, other colleagues in the school, or an external individual or body (e.g. ***inspector***)?

_____

_____

8. Do these teachers' appraisals conducted include written report that is kept as a record? *(**Please demand for the appraisal reports if they are available.**)*

_____

_____

9. Is this school's capacity to provide instruction hindered by any of the following?

Please mark one choice in each row by inserting a code representing the problem..

Not at all =**1**   Very little =**2**   To great extent =**3**

Problem	1	2	3
A lack of qualified teachers			
A lack of laboratory technicians			
Shortage or inadequacy of instructional materials (e.g. textbooks)			
Shortage or inadequacy of computers for instruction			
Other (please specify below)			

10. In this school, to what extent is the learning of students hindered by the following behaviours?

By students in this school:

(indicate by ticking in the box representing you choice. Tick once)

Challenge	Tick
Late coming to school	
Absenteeism	
Theft	

By teachers in this school

Challenge	Tick
Lack of Teaching and Learning Material	
Lack of pedagogical and content knowledge	
Lack of infrastructure	
Late coming to school and class	

Source: researcher's knowledge

By community in this school

Challenge	Tick
Poor parental support to children	
Poor accommodation	
Sexual relationships with students	

Marrying off girls		
Community's influence in school		

Source: researcher's knowledge

l) Arriving late at school			
m) Absenteeism			
n) Lack of pedagogical preparation			

11. Regarding this school, who has a considerable responsibility for the following tasks?

A 'considerable responsibility' is one where an active role is played in decision making.

Please mark as many choices as appropriate in each row.

Head Teacher =**1**   SMC =**2** Government= **3** Politicians =**4** School management (heads plus HoDs) =**5**

Responsibility	1	2	3	4	5
Formulating the school budget					
Establishing student disciplinary policies					
Establishing student assessment policies					
Choosing which textbooks are used					

12. How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about teaching and learning in general?

Please mark one choice in each row by putting a code in the right box.

Strongly Disagree =**1**   Disagree =**2**   Agree =**3**   Strongly Agree =**4**

Statement	1	2	3	4
c) It is better when the class – not the department – decides which teacher should handle a particular subject				

d) The role of teachers is to teach not interfere with administration before his/her turn comes				
e) Teachers are like students; they should be treated as one				

13. When a teacher begins teaching at this school, does he/she undertake a formal induction process?

If 'no' Go to question 35.

Please mark one choice by ticking in the box.

The teacher	Tick here
Yes for all teachers who are new to this school	
Yes but only for teachers for whom this is their first teaching job	
No there is no induction process for teachers who are new to this school	

14. If 'Yes' in the previous question, who organizes the induction process?

_____

_____

15. When a teacher begins teaching at this school, is there a programme or policy by which he/she works with an experienced teacher or teachers who act as their mentor? (If no skip to the end)

Please mark one choice representing your choice.

Training	Tick here
Yes for all teachers who are new to this school	
Yes, but only for teachers for whom this is their first teaching job	
If 'No', there is no mentoring programme or policy in this school then Go to question 37.	

16. If 'Yes' in the previous question, is the mentor teacher's main subject area(s) usually the same as that of the new teacher?

_____

_____

17. How would you rate the importance of mentoring new teachers in helping them to improve their instructional effectiveness?

Please mark one choice by ticking in the box of your right choice.

Not important at all	Of low importance	Of moderate importance	Of high importance

18. How free are you in engaging the following in your management?

Please mark one choice in each row by putting a code in the right box.

Not free =**1**   free =**2**   very free =**3**

Group	1	2	3
Teachers			
Members of the support staff			
SMC			
Organizations (eg Mother Group, Peatch Tree, Social Welfare)			
Students			

19. How often do you call parents to a meeting to brief them about management of school?

_____

_____

20. How can you describe the relationship existing between school and community?

_____

_____

_____

21. How can you evaluate the performance of the SMC?

_____

_____

22. Is there any other information about school management you want to give?

_____

This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your cooperation!

APPENDIX 6: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DIRECTORS OF ORGANISATIONS IN CHITIPA

Dear respondent. My name is Pima Madumusha Msiska. I am a student at Mzuzu University. I am doing a research on assessing effectiveness of the application of Collaborative Problem Solving in schools in Malawi: A case of Community Day Secondary Schools in Chitipa Education Cluster. This research is part of the requirements for award of Master of Education in Leadership and Management. I kindly request you to honestly answer my questions. The information you will provide will be confidential and will be used for academic purposes only.

Answer all questions by following answering

1. What are your roles in school management?

    _____
    _____
    _____

2. How often do you engage with schools management?

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

3. When was your last engagement with these schools management?

    _____
    _____

4. Are you satisfied with the management of these schools?

    _____
    _____
    _____

5. How open are school head teachers in engaging you in the school management?

_____

_____

_____

6. What do you want to be done in school management for the progress of the schools?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

7. Are there activities that you wanted to do at any school but you failed? (if yeas what was the problem)?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

8. What any other information about schools management do you want to give?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

This is the end of the questions. Thank you very much for your cooperation!

APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR OFFICIAL FROM EDM'S OFFICE

Dear respondent. My name is Pima Madumusha Msiska. I am a student at Mzuzu University. I am doing a research on assessing effectiveness of the application of Collaborative Problem Solving in schools in Malawi: A case of Community Day Secondary Schools in Chitipa Education Cluster. This research is part of the requirements for award of Master of Education in Leadership and Management. I kindly request you to honestly answer my questions. The information you will provide will be confidential and will be used for academic purposes only.

Answer all questions by following answering

1. What are some of the challenges that are faced in management of Community Day Secondary Schools in Malawi?
2. Explain some of the solutions that are employed to solve these challenges mentioned?
3. Discuss the effectiveness of the solutions employed in solving challenges faced in school management?

This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your cooperation!