

**OLDER PERSONS PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
INITIATIVES: A CASE STUDY OF DEDZA DISTRICT**

MASTER OF ARTS (DEVELOPMENT STUDIES) THESIS

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UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

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By

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Submitted to the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Malawi in Partial
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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Where other people's work has been used, acknowledgments have been made.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my lovely husband, Wales Frank Chigwenembe, and my daughter Tirzah Thokozire Chigwenembe for their moral support and encouragement in this thesis.

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ABSTRACT

With the advancing age of the population and increasing demands on healthcare services, community participation has become an important consideration for healthy aging. The extent to which community participation has been measured objectively in older persons remains scarce. The study adopted a qualitative research approach using a single round approach of cross-section design and purposive sampling approach and snowballing as a form of inquiry to explore older person's participation in development initiatives at the community level in Dedza, Malawi. The survey method was used to collect qualitative data using the Focus Group Guide, the Key Informant Interview guide, and the In-Depth Interview by use of the researcher-administered questionnaire. The target population consisted of all older persons in the Dedza district and 3 key informants and 3 youths using purposeful sampling. The sample size of the study comprised of 54 participants. Data was transcribed, translated, analysed, and grouped into themes which were subdivided into subthemes. The study results on social-economic factors demonstrate that older persons are influenced by self-participation perception, being direct beneficiaries, gaining small-scale business loans, in community development initiatives. On barriers, the study found that factors such as health, physical, sex, age, and social are negatively affecting older persons' participation in community development initiatives. The current study makes recommendations applicable at all levels for older persons participation through a creation of monitoring mechanisms by government to enhance participation and inclusion in all stages of community development activities, raising awareness of the rights of older persons to curb stigma and discrimination against and increased social protection programs that aim at addressing all the rights and needs of older persons.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADCs	Area Development Committees
ASSOM	Aged Support Society of Malawi
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AU	African Union
COMSIP	Community Savings and Investment Promotion
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
IDI	Individual In-depth Interview
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
MANEPO	Malawi Network of Older Persons' Organizations
MASAF 4	The Malawi Social Action Fund 4
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MIPAA	Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing
MNSSP	Malawi National Social Support Programme
MoGCDSW	Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare
NSSP	National Social Support Policy SADC
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SCTP	Social Cash Transfer Programme
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSA	Sub –Saharan Africa
TA	Traditional Authority
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VDCs	Village Development Committee

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Globally, empirical evidence indicates that older persons' participation in community development initiatives is one of the most crosscutting phenomena that contributes to their widespread exclusion and has recently been a contentious issue in most parts of the world even in Africa including Malawi. For example, according to the World Population Prospects, the number of older persons has increased substantially in recent years in most countries and regions, and growth is projected to accelerate in the coming decades (United Nations, 2017a).

The global population aged 60 years or over was 962 million in 2017, more than twice as large as in 1980 when there were 382 million older persons worldwide. The older persons population is expected to double again by 2050 when it is projected to reach nearly 2.1 billion (United Nations, 2017a). In 2050, it is expected that nearly 8 in 10 of the world's older persons will be living in developing regions. Currently, two-thirds of the world's older persons live in developing regions, where their numbers are growing faster than in the developed regions (United Nations, 2017a). Between 2015 and 2030, the number of people aged 60 years or over is projected to grow by 56 percent, reaching 1.4 billion in 2030, which will be nearly 16.5 percent of the global population (United Nations, 2017).

By 2030, older persons are expected to account for over 25 percent of the population in Europe and Northern America, 17 percent in Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, and 6 percent in Africa (UNDP, 2011).

Although the population of older persons is this significant and continues to be projected to be increasing there is a gap in how this layer of population participates in community development. Despite the narrative that participating in the community becomes more difficult with increasing age due to increasing frailty and reduced mobility. However, to remain active out of their homes, older persons need to maintain functional mobility and overcome personal and environmental barriers (Agyemang-Duah, et al., 2019). Many older persons become dependent on community resources and planned activities for meaningful engagement and social interactions. Despite the benefits of community participation, the evidence is sparse regarding how and where older people participate in their communities. Understanding these factors may allow for support and interventions specifically targeting the promotion of participation through the latter stages of life. The increase in the population of older persons has prompted some countries to initiate policies and programs needed for the well-being and life satisfaction of older persons. In Japan, for example, welfare policies, such as the elderly welfare law and the elderly health law, are in existence (Gao, 2017). The increasing trend in the aging population is gradually becoming an issue of concern in many low- and middle-income countries including Africa. The African region will experience a fast-growing number of older persons more than other regions of the world as countries, such as Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zimbabwe will experience a four-fold increase in the population of the older adults by the year 2050 (Gao, 2017). Following the increase in the number of older persons among Africans, some countries,

such as Malawi, South Africa, Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, have enacted policies for their older adults (Agyemang-Duah et al., 2019)

In Sub-Saharan Africa according to the United Nations, (2015), under the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), at the global level, population of older persons is growing faster in urban areas than in rural areas. Between 2000 and 2015, the number of people aged 60 years or over increased by 68 percent in urban areas, compared to a 25 percent increase in rural areas. As a result, older persons are increasingly concentrated in urban areas. In 2015, 58 percent of the world's older persons resided in urban areas, up from 51 percent in 2000 (United Nations, 2015), (United Nations, 2015).

Undeniably, the social components of activities are important in keeping older persons motivated and engaged, because social isolation and loneliness are known to reduce engagement in both the community and social engagements. Social isolation is defined as an objective lack of relationships and social interaction and loneliness as a subjective and distressing feeling (UNDESA, 2017). Older persons have an increased risk of social isolation and loneliness stemming from events such as transitioning into retirement. The risks are also linked to poor sleep quality, increased blood pressure, impaired cognitive function, and depression. Social integration of older persons via community participation has been demonstrated to improve quality of life (United Nations, 2016). There is a need to explore the factors associated with community participation for older persons, to inform interventions which can maximize wellbeing.

The National Policy for Older Persons in Malawi defines older people as all persons aged 60 or more (Government of Malawi, 2011). This definition of older persons is in line with the United Nations (UNFPA, 2012). Malawi is amongst the poorest countries in the world, ranking number 174 out of 189 on the Human Development Index (HDI) (United Nations, 2020). Besides, most Malawians, estimated at around 80 percent of the entire population, live in rural areas and live below the international poverty line of \$1.90 as defined by the World Bank Group. According to a study conducted by Help Age International, Malawi has been ranked as one of the 10 worst places to grow old in the world (Help Age International, 2014). Similarly, at the regional level, the population of older persons has also been on the increase in Africa. According to the UNDESA 2017 report, the pace of growth of the older population of Africa projected for 2040 is faster than any region has experienced since 1950 when the data series began. Over the coming decades, the number of older persons is expected to grow fastest in Africa, where the population aged 60 or over is projected to increase more than threefold between 2017 and 2050, from 69 to 226 million (UNDESA, 2017).

Malawi is not an exception in having its elderly persons increase, for example, at the national level, the data show an increase from the 2008 census results, precisely, out of the 13.1 million persons, 685,316, were older persons representing about 0.5 percent of the national population aged 60 years and above (National Statistical Office, 2008). According to the National Statistical Office (NSO) census results of 2018, most older person populations (817,683) are in rural areas representing 91.6 percent compared to the urban areas (74,122) representing 8.3 percent (National Statistical Office, 2018). It is opined that, Malawi has been experiencing rapid population growth over the years due to high levels of fertility. At the current pace of population growth, it is estimated

that Malawi's population is set to double to around a 35million by 2042. Likewise, if the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) continues at an average of 4.4 children per woman, the population is projected to grow by 42.8 million by 2050. The TFR is still high, but now declining. The steady increase of the older age group in the country's population has economic, social, political, and cultural implications in Malawian society, especially in participation in community development initiatives. Consequently, as fertility declines and life expectancy increases, the proportion of older people is projected to grow at the national level.

However, positive strides have been made at the national, regional and international levels to the effect that the Malawi government has ratified, and domesticated instruments aimed at promoting and protecting the rights of older persons. At the international level, Malawi has ratified the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA). The MIPAA is the international policy framework whose focus is only on older people and has three priority areas namely older persons and development (social protection); advancing health and well-being into old age and ensuring enabling and supportive environments. Another stride is the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which sets out a universal plan of action to achieve sustainable development in a balanced manner and seeks to realize the human rights of all people. It calls for leaving no one behind and for ensuring that the SDGs are met for all segments of society, at all ages, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable including older persons. According to UNDP-AARP Help Age International Issue Brief Paper, preparing for an aging population is vital to the achievement of the integrated 2030 Agenda, with aging cutting across the goals of poverty eradication, good health, gender equality, economic growth, and decent work,

reduced inequalities, and sustainable cities (UNDP, 2017). Therefore, while it is essential to address the exclusion and vulnerability of older people and the intersectional discrimination against older persons in the implementation of the new agenda, it is even more important to go beyond treating older persons as a vulnerable group (UNDP, 2017) but planning their participation and engagement.

Malawi in the African region ratified the Southern African Development Community (SADC) protocol on health. The Article 14 of the protocol has a specific focus on chronic diseases and conditions of older persons namely “States Parties shall co-operate and assist one another to promote healthy lifestyles and prevent and manage chronic diseases and conditions of older persons; and harmonize and standardize guidelines for the prevention, early detection, management, and control of priority chronic diseases and conditions of older persons (SADC, Article 14, 1999). Despite Malawi being a member state of the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights at the African Union, she has not signed and ratified the protocol on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa, as of 16th July 2019 signed list at the AU website (AU,2016).

Malawi has made substantial progress by developing national policies and strategies specifically for older persons. The two policies are the National Policy for Older Persons of 2016 and the National Social Support Policy of 2012. Both policies are linked to the age-specific international and regional instruments, that promote and protect the rights of older persons. The following are some of the instruments at regional and international levels that Malawi’s policies are linked to: The United Nations Plan of Action on Ageing - 1982; the United Nations Principles for Older Persons 1991; the

United Nations Proclamation on Ageing-1992; the MIPAA-2002; the SADC Code on Social Security-2007 and the African Union Social Policy Framework-2008.

The National Policy for Older Persons of 2011 recognizes that every person has a right to age with security and dignity and to continue to participate in society as a full citizen. The Policy also promotes the incorporation of older persons to be full participants in the development process as also detailed in the international and regional instruments. The Policy has integrated most of the MIPAA recommendations and it recognizes that older persons' rights often are violated despite being guaranteed in the Constitution and other national policies and programs. Older people have been excluded, marginalized, and prevented from participating fully in development activities because of their age. Therefore, the national policy for older persons provides a policy that promotes and protects all human rights and fundamental freedoms that are essential for the creation of an inclusive society for all ages in which older persons participate fully equitably without discrimination. The national policy also acknowledges that the policy is a necessary provision for use as an institutional framework for prioritizing and implementing programs for older persons despite the significant number of older persons in the national population and considering the low contribution older persons make to the Malawi economy (Government of Malawi, 2012).

The National Social Support Policy outlines Malawi's strategy in the field of social protection and its operationalization through the Malawi National Social Support Programme (MNSSP) based on its vision of "enhanced quality of life for those suffering from poverty and hunger and improved resilience of those who are vulnerable to risks and shocks" (Government of Malawi, 2012). The initial MNSSP expired in 2016, currently, the MNSSP II covers the period 2018-2023. MNSSP II builds on the

successes and lessons learned from the MNSSP. In the MNSSP, older persons are the target beneficiaries in the priority area of provision of welfare support through the Social Cash Transfers Programme (SCTP). In 2006, Malawi introduced the SCTP with support from the Global Fund to the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare (MoGCDSW). The overall goal of the SCTP is to improve the real income of beneficiary households. The proportion of the older people among the target beneficiaries was 2,018 (65%) in the expired SCTP and the new SCTP, 29 districts have been targeted and 136,933 older people are the beneficiaries this is an increase. This is representing 1.54 % of the older people participating in the SCTP from the total population estimation of 891,805, based on the recent population census report. There is a low percentage of older people participating in the SCTP, due to project limitations and selection criteria for the program.

Both the NSSP and National Policy recognize that aging is a cross-cutting issue, and it is therefore important that the Government creates conditions and broad possibilities for the full participation and active involvement of all stakeholders especially the older persons themselves. Older persons are among the poorest in most societies and their poverty situation is worsened by many factors such as a lack of regular income; being responsible for raising orphans of their deceased children and relatives; and relocation when a husband or wife dies, to places where patriarchal and matriarchal lineage systems of marriage are practiced (Kadzandira, 2008). They have very limited socio-economic means to sustain their daily living. A study conducted in 2005 by the Aged Support Society of Malawi (ASSOM) revealed that poverty and lack of income were serious problems affecting the well-being and livelihoods of older persons. This is because most older persons never worked in the formal sector and, hence, they lack a

pension or social security to help them in old age. In addition to this, they are unable to generate their income as their bodies become frail due to old age and ailments resulting in deterioration in their productivity levels. This makes them dependent on others for their survival and well-being.

The existence of the age-specific international instruments, which promote and protect the rights of older persons, also calls upon the recognition of the old persons in development initiatives. Such international instruments as the MIPAA were the first to make explicit connections between aging, development aims, and human rights. It remains the only global agreement that commits governments to integrate issues related to aging into economic and social development policies and into meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (UNFPA and Help Age International, 2012). The recent 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes the older person for the economic, and social shifts associated with an aging population, and to ensure that there is progress in development. Development refers to a multi-dimensional process involving the reorganization and reorientation of the entire economic and social systems (Todaro, 2015). Todaro and Smith continue to argue that development is a physical reality and a state of mind in which society has, through some combinations of social, economic, and political processes secured the way of obtaining a better life. The definition is applauded for its wider view of the development concept as related to social, economic as well as political changes in society (Todaro, 2015).

Nevertheless, a careful analysis reveals that at each level, a country can have different definitions of development is a multi-dimensional process involving qualitative and quantitative changes in social, political, and economic domains of society and it is undertaken essentially to lead to a better state of life. Within SDGs 3 the older persons

are included and particularly relevant for the achievement of the goals of poverty eradication, ensuring healthy lives and well-being at all ages, promoting gender equality and full and productive employment and decent work for all, reducing inequalities between and within countries, and making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. Therefore, the present study attempted to examine the participation of the older person in community development initiatives in the Dedza district.

1.2 The Problem Statement

The increasing trend in the aging population is gradually becoming an issue of concern in many low- and middle-income countries including Africa. Similarly, Malawi is experiencing a fast-growing number of older persons more than any other country in the regions of the world, such that Malawi will experience a four-fold increase in the population of the older population by the year 2050 (UN DESA, 2017). In Malawi, despite the enormous efforts from the Ministry of Gender, Social Welfare, Disability, and other relevant partners, there are numerous policies nationally that advocate for the improved living of the people, through strategies like national policy for the elder. Such welfare strategies are the SCT program which is an economic program that involves the participation of older persons, and it began as a pilot study in 2006 in Mchinji whereby the existence of low levels of community development initiatives participation by older persons to remain a challenge which has been linked to increased mortality and social isolation (Twea, 2016). It has been assumed that stigma and discrimination contribute to the lack of involvement of older persons in community development initiatives in Malawi. This is due to the negative social and cultural norms existing in different societies in Malawi (Twea, 2016). These factors, if not checked, reduce the quality of

life and participation of the older person in community development initiatives and minimize their benefits. Consequently, this often culminates in loneliness and depression among the elderly population resulting in physical and mental conditions (dementia) which can result in poor project designing, implementation, and monitoring since the needs and rights of the older persons are continuously not addressed and their skills and knowledge untapped. As a result, most older persons may not be able to support their families, and most of them may fail to contribute positively to the social-economic development of Malawi (UN DESA, 2017). Therefore, the extent to which community development initiatives participation has been measured objectively in older adults remains scarce.

Several related studies have been conducted by different scholars around the world and Africa including Malawi but there is scanty information on the factors affecting older persons to participate in community development initiatives. For example, most existing literature has focused on social protection programs and on poverty reduction where older persons have been recognized as crosscutting beneficiaries or as mainstreaming target groups either at the programming level or discussion at the policy level. Similarly, according to the Malawi National Social Support Programme (MNSSP) review report, even social protection programs do not explicitly consider the social protection needs of older persons and has got a lot of implementation challenges. The report states that many older persons and people with disabilities living in poverty are excluded from the relatively restrictive targeting criteria of the Social Cash Transfer (SCT) program and were not even the immediate target of Public Works Programs, as they do not meet the requirements. Furthermore, Claire et al., (2021) in Nigeria conducted a study focusing on the community participation of community-dwelling

older persons in a correctional study. Similarly, Gabremeskel et al., (2021) in Ethiopia studied the fear of failing and its association with factors among older people living in Bahir Dar City Amhara, Ethiopia which was a cross-sectional study. The study found that the prevalence of fear of failure among older people was 59.9% which was significantly associated with advanced age, females, lower education level, and anxiety. In addition, Kadzandira (2008) study found that older persons have been subjected to loss of dignity, respect, and love, and have become victims of difficult circumstances. Similarly, Chilimampunga (2012) study shows that victims of witch-hunts are mainly women and older people though high among the older population than the middle age, the youth, and children. Among the older persons, the older women are the most suspects. According to the findings of Chilimampunga (2012) study, suspected victims of practicing witchcraft are subjected to physical, economic, social, and psychological violence and some particularly women and girls, are vulnerable to sexual abuse and the extreme of which is death. However, these studies, done by different scholars have been generic still a gap noted in the provision of the older person's participation in community development. Therefore, this study aims critically to examine factors affecting older person participation in community development initiatives in Dedza District.

1.3 Study Objectives

1.3.1 Main objective

To examine older person's participation in community development initiatives of Dedza district, Malawi.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- To assess the social-economic factors that influence the participation of older persons in community development initiatives in the Dedza district.
- To explore barriers affecting the participation of older persons in community development initiatives in the Dedza district.
- To determine effective approach pathways influencing participation of older persons in community development initiatives in the Dedza district.

1.4 Research Questions

- What are the social-economic factors that influence the participation of older persons in community development initiatives in the Dedza district?
- What are the barriers affecting the participation of older persons in community development initiatives in the Dedza district?
- What are the effective approach pathways influencing the participation of older persons in community development initiatives in the Dedza district?

1.5 Justification of Study

Several qualitative studies have been carried out on the older person's situation in Malawi through desk and field research. This study contributed to the qualitative data on older people with a focus on full participation and active involvement of older people in community development. The study adds to the data on understanding development issues with an emphasis on the equal participation of older persons in development processes. Thus, able to incorporate and support the Malawi 2063 vision agenda which advocates an enhancement of human capital development.

The information obtained from this study will cover the existing knowledge gap in the areas of older people's participation in development initiatives at the community level. Furthermore, researchers will use findings from this study as a base for undertaking similar studies in wider coverage of older people concerning participation and involvement in development initiatives. This will help to raise awareness about the predicaments of older people, support possible policy interventions, and use study findings to make decisions.

Additionally, the current study will provide direction and prerequisite training on the increased benefit realization through older person community participation in development and make them rely on the socio-economic well-being. Such findings are imperative to provide better lessons that the development project implementers use to alleviate the poverty levels in the country.

In terms of the scholarly perspective, much as different scholars have researched the factors related to older person community participation in development (Claire et al., 2021; Gabremeskel et al., 2021) little have been researched on the linkage of an older person concerning participation in community development in Malawi. It will further help in identifying gaps that need to be filled to enhance the older person in the community to participate in development. Therefore, the study quest to examine factors related to participation in community development initiatives.

1.6 Organization of the Study

The rest of the thesis is organized into four chapters. Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature on older persons in Malawi. Chapter 3 provides the study design and

methodology used in the study. Chapter 4 presents and discusses the empirical results. It gives the interpretation of the results obtained from interviews with community members, older persons, and key informants. Finally, Chapter 5 provides the main conclusions drawn from the study. It also provides the policy implications of the results obtained and proceeds to suggest areas for further study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of both theoretical and empirical literature on the subject under study. For proper contextualization of the study, the theoretical section discusses Emile Durkheim's structural functionalism theory to the study. The empirical session discusses other works of literature on the older person's involvement and participation at the community level. Finally, the empirical section discusses the general challenges and situations experienced by older persons in their situations.

2.2 Theoretical Literature

Social participation refers to the integration of older persons into social networks of family and friends as well as their integration into the communities they live in and into society (UNECE,2009). Older persons play important social roles in assisting their children, taking on care responsibilities, performing household tasks, or working as volunteers in the community. Their contributions in providing wisdom and advice to younger generations and society should be acknowledged.

2.2.1 Emile Durkheim's Structural Functionalism Theory

The study's theoretical framework took inspiration from Emile Durkheim's structural functionalism theory. According to Tromp (2015), Emile Durkheim's theory is a combination of structuralist and functionalist sociological approaches.

The 'structuralist' sociological approach asserts that the behavior of people in society is structured according to a set of rules or laws. Evidence for this assertion is based on the observation that people do not act randomly; instead, their behavior, including their social interactions, is patterned. Using the theory, the behavior of people in the community to participate in the community initiative is patterned on what is said about them, characteristics used to define them, and expectations that will influence the behavior of the individual. Therefore, the study's focus was on assessing the social-economic factors that influence the participation of older persons by defining the set of laws or rules in the Dedza district that pattern the behavior of the older people's participation in community development initiatives. Using focus group discussions, the study understood the patterns that define older person behavior in community development, and the individual interviews contribute to exploring the barriers that affect older person participation in community development and assisted in determining the effective influencing approaches of older persons in community development using the laws and rules that have been set by the society.

While the 'Functionalist' in sociology views society as a system made up of interconnected parts, each of which functions in a specific way to maintain that system (Porter, 1998). Similarly, sociological functionalists argue that the family functions to train individuals into appropriate social roles so that they go about their functions within society to the best of their abilities. The approach argues a particular behavior in a society is influenced by social roles and norms. The assigned social roles contribute to how people participate in terms of sex differences and similarities in social behavior. Its key principle is that differences and similarities arise primarily from the distribution of men and women into social roles within their society. These social roles differ from

one culture and tradition. The approach was used to understand and classify the barriers affecting the participation of older persons in community development initiatives and to determine effective approach pathways influencing the participation of older persons in community development initiatives in Malawi. The origin of contemporary references to the social structure can be traced to the French social scientist Emile Durkheim who argued that parts of society are interdependent, and that this interdependency imposes structure on the behavior of institutions and their members. To Durkheim, the interrelations between the parts of society contributed to social unity an integrated system with life characteristics of its own, exterior to individuals yet driving their behavior. Durkheim pointed out that groups can be held together on two contrasting bases: mechanical solidarity, a sentimental attraction of social units or groups that perform the same or similar functions, such as preindustrial self-sufficient farmers; or organic solidarity, an interdependence based on differentiated functions and specialization, as seen in a factory, the military, government, or other complex organizations. Structural functionalism underwent some modification when the American sociologist enunciated the “functional prerequisites” that any social system must meet to survive developing routinized interpersonal arrangements (structures), defining relations to the external fixing boundaries, and recruiting and controlling members. Parsons (reference year?) classified such structures based on their functions. This approach, called structural-functional analysis (and known as systems theory), was applied so broadly that some sociologists took it to be synonymous with the scientific study of social organization.

Considering such criticism of structural functionalism, some sociologists proposed a “conflict sociology,” which held that dominant institutions repress weaker groups and

that conflict pervades all of society, including the family economy, polity, and education. This neo-Marxist perspective gained prominence in the United States with the social turmoil of the civil rights movement and the antiwar movement of the 1960s and '70s, influencing many younger sociologists.

Other criticisms leveled at structural functionalism from a variety of theoretical perspectives were that it was based on faulty analogs between societies and biological organisms; that it was tautological, teleological, or excessively abstract; that its conception of social change as an adaptive response was inadequate; and that it lacked methodology for empirical confirmation. In structural-functionalism social work is regarded as an adaptive response to some tension within the social system. When some part of an integrated social system changes, the tension between this and other parts of the system is created, which will be resolved by the adaptive change of the other parts.

Therefore, based on the two theories, the behavior of the older persons in the community development initiatives is patterned by the laws and rules that are influenced by the interconnected parts such as family functions, and cultural functions in the given society. However, the actions of the older persons were not explained by the immediate meanings they have for actors as above. In the study, older person's actions were explained by the functions they serve for the wider social group. The level of older persons participation in the community development was not understood independently of the wider system of collective practices and beliefs within which is embedded but was explained by the functions they serve for the system of social life as a whole. Similarly, the study used the argument that what is functional for an individual or group may not be functional for the wider society, for instance the inequality in

community participation may have the function of motivating older persons to perform their different roles in community development initiatives but high degrees of inequality may give rise to alienation of some older persons. The study applies Emile Durkheim's theory to examine the participation of older persons in community development and specifically understand how they are involved as older people; factors that contribute to or limit their participation (laws that pattern their participation) and their impact on such participation as direct or indirect participants (beneficiaries) based on their gender differentials.

2.3 Empirical Review

There have been several studies conducted globally and in Malawi, which have looked at the participation of the older people within the social protection programs and a few on the involvement of the older persons in community development. Older persons are integrated into society in many ways. They are part of social networks of friends and family, are active in clubs and associations, work as volunteers, and are economically active. However, older persons may be vulnerable to exclusion. Potential obstacles to equal social participation of older persons include poverty, poor health, low educational levels, lack of transportation, access to services, and age discrimination.

2.3.1 Involvement of the older persons in development initiatives

Kazeze's policy recommendation paper of 2007 states that the inclusion of older persons in socioeconomic development is important as they contribute significantly to such initiatives. Kazeze concludes by calling for a separate paper that should provide more information on the cause-and-effect factors between active participation of older persons and community development, an area which this study intends to explore.

Kazeze's community participation was in the social protection initiative to reduce poverty levels among the aging population, and he agrees that social protection and development outcomes are linked and complement each other. He suggests that social protection should be viewed as a development strategy for reducing poverty. Older persons face obstacles in social participation such as superstitions and various forms of age-based abuse, including witchcraft accusations and property grabbing.

2.3.2 Participation of older persons in the Social Protection Programmes for the older persons

Policies directed at older persons have garnered increasing attention in some parts of the world partly and literature works on the same because the changing demographics demand it. A study by Munthali et al., (2016) explored the feasibility of developing and implementing a universal pension in Malawi, raising important issues that affect older persons as a formal social security system. The results of Munthali et al., (2016) study had a section that outlined a wide range of challenges that older people experience in their lives and highlighted those developing countries such as Malawi need to develop and implement policies and legislation, which will ensure that this population group has adequate income security.

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing calls on to ensure that people can age with security and dignity and that they may continue to participate fully in their societies as citizens with full rights. In that older people are afforded the possibility to become actively engaged in the development process and society so that their skills, experiences, wisdom, and knowledge can be put to use for the benefit of all.

The National Social Support Policy has identified several formal social security systems in Malawi, and these include the SCTP, Targeted Support to School Meals, Public Works Program, Village Savings and Loans, and Microfinance Interventions. The older persons participate as beneficiaries of the SCTP. The SCTP beneficiaries are in most cases households headed by women and older persons who look after orphans and other vulnerable children. The program delivers regular and reliable cash transfers to ultra-poor and labor-constrained households. The majority (74%) of households benefiting from this program were female-headed, while older persons head 52%. The review data from 2012 to 2016 on cash transfers demonstrated that 114,815 older persons were reached by the SCTP (Malawi Government; 2016). While the SCTP benefits older persons, the proportion of older men and women who are covered by this intervention needs to be analyzed (Munthali, 2016).

Most countries in sub-Saharan Africa are struggling to attain both the financial resources and the political will to implement social protection policies. A recent analysis by the UNDP indicates that the cost of providing a universal non-contributory social pension to all older persons in the region would be between two and three percent of GDP, an amount rivaling public spending on education and health care in some countries (UNDP, 2005a). Given that only five percent of the population in the region is aged 60 or above, compared to 41 percent who are under the age of 15, the relatively low priority given to policies for older persons becomes evident. Their minority in numbers is compounded by the fact that these older persons are less likely to be empowered to draw attention to their concerns.

Many studies to explore the informal social security systems in Malawi have also been conducted. Devereux, (2004) looked at informal social safety nets, which he defined as a subset of coping strategies, which describe only those strategies that involve drawing on support from other households. Such informal social safety nets may include financial support from children or relatives and sometimes-material donations from families, friends, and other people with goodwill such as the church. The majority of the older persons are the major beneficiaries of the informal social security systems in Malawi.

According to Matanda (2016) in his empirical analysis in Tanzania argue that community members will engage in a project if they have the belief that activities that arise out of the project will benefit them and their families. David (2018) argues that society engages in projects that cater to daily needs. Many people participate in development projects to make themselves rich and to empower their socio-economic status Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, (2017). The rate at which the community engages in projects is determined by the ability of these projects to improve their standards of living together with that of their future generations. The results of the study hence reveal that the rate at which people perceive a certain project, the ability of the project to meet the Active participation of older persons is impossible without empowerment. Few organizations, specifically target older persons that have left them not being fully involved. An important means by which the voices of older persons can be heard is through their active political participation, either individually or collectively (Kelly, 2016). To ensure greater participation in society and in decision-making over issues that concern them, older persons should be encouraged to join organizations of their peers. Organizations of older persons provide an important means

of enabling participation through advocacy and promotion of multigenerational interactions, particularly for older women, who as individuals often remain voiceless. Furthermore, these groups can help to harness the political influence of older persons and ensure that they can effectively participate in decision-making processes at all levels of government.

Devereux's, (2001) study focused on the generalized impact, with some specific focus on children and women, but provided no information on the older persons.

2.3.3 General Challenges and Situations Experienced by the Older Person

In their study in 2016, Munthali et al found that poverty rates among older persons aged 60+ years are significantly higher than in the general population, hence they lead very difficult lives. Other studies have demonstrated that older people and people living in households with older persons experience higher levels of poverty (UNFPA & Help Age International, 2012).

Another study, conducted in 2003 by the Aged Support Society of Malawi (ASSOM) with collaboration and assistance from the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (EP&D) and the University of Malawi, examined the situations and challenges faced by aged persons in Malawi (Malawi Government; 2005). The study findings highlighted that, generally, most people surveyed positively perceive aged persons; however, some view them as witches or wizards. Abuse of the older persons is common as nearly half of the respondents (48 %) knew or had heard of some abuse of old persons, though such abuse within households and communities is hardly reported. Kadzandira study conducted in 2006 and 2007 in rural Zomba district, paid

special attention to access to natural resources and found that it was becoming particularly difficult for the older persons to access firewood, clean water, and fish products, with serious negative consequences for their nutritional status and standard of living. As well as facing obstacles in social participation such as superstition and various forms of age-based abuse, including witchcraft accusations and property grabbing. Kadzandira study provided a wealth of insights about various manifestations of poverty among the older people: high levels of ill-health and disability, low household production, low cash flow, poor housing conditions, limited ability to buy from the market, irregular meal consumption patterns, and food insecurity, and problems related to caring for sick children and orphans (Kadzandira, 2008).

2.3.4 Gender Differentials among the Older Persons in situations

Given that women comprise the majority of older persons, special focus and attention should be given to the concerns and rights of aging women (Kelly, 2016). There are gender differentials among the older persons in those households headed by females who seemed to perform poorly on socio-economic issues, whereas those headed by older men perform poorly on sanitation and food consumption (Kadzandira, 2008).

Even in the workplace, women are frequently discriminated against, and the level of discrimination often becomes worse as women age. Part of the problem stems from the fact that sometimes women tend to have lower education and training qualifications, which deny them access to better employment opportunities. But to a great extent, women workers are disadvantaged because they are the victims of discrimination and employer bias. Because of negative stereotypes ascribed to older women as being frail and incapable of working, employers often resist hiring them. Many women throughout

the world dedicate a lifetime of unpaid efforts to acting as caregivers for their children, grandchildren, older parents, older spouses, or other relatives – work that is not reflected in labor force statistics. Moreover, women’s caregiving responsibilities can lead to another form of entrenched discrimination because fewer years in the paid labor force translates. Another study found that older women were more affected by ill health and economic hardships than older men in Malawi (Malawi Government, 2005).

2.3.5 Roles of the Older Persons at the household and Community Level

Older persons play important roles at household or community levels. For example, they are advisors of members of younger generations on social and sexual matters, and traditional healers (Kadzandira, 2008). However, this study explored whether these findings correlate to the findings of this study.

2.4 Literature Gap

The studies reviewed have assisted in the development of the study topic. This study has drawn from Kazeze’s study that had called for a separate paper to provide more information on the cause-and-effect factors of active participation for the older persons in the community development. That, the study topic also relates to Emile Durkheim’s theory 1897, where the paper has discussed how the social laws structure the behavior of the older persons in community development initiatives which results in a positive development outcome based on the theory that one organ can affect the others and ultimately the whole.

From the number of studies that have been conducted on the formal and informal social security systems, this study has also addressed the information gap on the active participation of the older persons in the formal and informal social security systems by

addressing the impact on how the involvement of the older persons contributes to the welfare of the older persons at the community level as it examines older person's participation in development initiatives at the community level in Dedza, Malawi. The study provided a specific impact on the older persons not unlike other studies that had focused on the generalized impact, with some specific focus on children and women. The study identified other influencing factors for the older persons in community development apart from the other factors that other studies have provided. Finally, the study has also contributed to the existing gender differentials information on the active participation of the older persons in community development initiatives that other studies have.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents research methods employed to address the objectives of the study. Specific items discussed include study settings, study design, target population, sampling procedure, research instruments, data analysis techniques, data quality, data validation, data reliability, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study.

3.2 Study Area

The study area was conducted in three traditional authorities of Kambalame village in TA Kaphuka, Chikoleka Village in TA Kachidamoto, and Gwaza Village in TA Kamenyagwaza in the Dedza district. The study site was selected because this is where there has been the implementation of the national Social Cash Transfer Program and other various community development initiatives as shown in Table 3.1. Furthermore, the study site was also selected based on participation in the community development initiatives becomes more difficult with increasing age due to increasing frailty and reduced mobility. Hence, older persons who participate in such activities have a lower risk of functional disability, increased health-related quality of life, and report lower usage of formal healthcare. Despite the benefits of community participation, the evidence is sparse regarding how and where older persons participate in their communities.

For example, the three TAs were selected based on the mapping exercise with the officer at the District Council office, and the shared different geographical locations of the three TAs with TA Kamenyagwaza being close to Dedza town and the 2 other TAs being far from the Dedza town. Furthermore, the different cultural and traditional values also contributed to the selection of the three study sites. Similarly, the Kachidamoto is more of the *Ngoni* tribe and Kamenyagwaza had diverse cultures and tribes being a town, and Kaphuka is more of the *Chewa* tribe. However, these two diversities had the potential of providing diverse data to the study findings and contributing to the analysis of the study findings on how different cultures and tribes perceive the old persons in the community mainly in community development initiatives participation and involvement. Therefore, understanding these factors may allow for support and interventions specifically targeting older persons.

3.3 Study Design

The study adopted a qualitative research approach using a single round approach of cross-section design as a form of inquiry to explore older persons' participation in development initiatives at the community level in Dedza, Malawi. Saunders et. al. (2015) highlights qualitative research as a study used to gain an understanding of the underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations of its subjects. Similarly, Creswell (2014), considers that qualitative research provides insights into the problem and helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research. This approach is considered fast way to research because it provided a quick snapshot shot of information collected under the study. In addition, the study chose qualitative approach because it seeks opinions and the understanding on the older person's participation in community development which involved using verbal descriptions of the older persons'

real-life situation regarding their participation in community development. The study focused on the social processes and situations of the older persons in community development and their participation rather than the older persons' characteristics which is in line with what qualitative research is concerned about (Silverman, 2014). Primary data was captured to address the research question Creswell (2014). A case study approach was used for conducting the research and employed a qualitative method of data collection. Case studies are a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals (Stake, 1995). Stake (2005) aligning with the purposive choice of the population and geography of the study in this research.

3.4 Target Population

The target population is the entire group a researcher is interested in or the group about which the researcher wishes to conclude while the study population is the actual sampling frame from which a sample is randomly drawn (Cresswell, 2009). The primary target population for this study was older persons.

3.4.1 The Recruitment of the Key Informants Interviewees and FGDs

Respondents

The study interviewed 2 key informants using purposeful sampling because of the experience and knowledge that they had of working with the older persons (Creswell, 2009). The first key informant at the District Council works with Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare (MOGCDSW) in the Community Development Office. MOGCDSW deals with the welfare of older persons and champions the implementation of the social cash transfer program in Malawi. The MOGCDSW officer

was the point of entry for the study into the district and the office provided knowledge on the relevant programs that target the older persons in the district. The second key informant was a Network Coordinator from a local Non-Governmental Organization called Malawi Network of Older Persons' Organization (MANEPO) based in Blantyre which works on issues affecting the older persons in Malawi.

MOGCDSW helped in the recruitment of the respondents for the FGDs. The study data collection was approved by the Village head through the Community Development Facilitator.

3.5 Sampling Technique

Sampling is a process used in statistical analysis in which a predetermined number of observations are taken from a larger population (Saunders et al., 2009). Therefore, the study adopted a qualitative approach in which the primary data was collected and analyzed to answer each research question. As such, a purposive sampling approach was used employed to identify a wide array of the respondents that are deemed feasible to achieve and answer the research questions. According to Creswell (2014), the purposive sampling technique applied a principle where the researcher has a preference in making a deduction to choose the sample directed by the research questions. The study used snowballing technique and purposive sampling for the selection of interviewees in the IDIs. From the identified respondents in the Focus Group Discussion, a female old person was identified and interviewed who then helped to identify additional study participants. In that the sample become larger as the study continued.

3.6 Sample Size

The sample size was purposefully selected from Dedza district based on their age within the targeted geographical area. Dedza was chosen because it is nearer and convenient to get to. The study participants were older persons amongst the population aged 60 years and above. They were identified through interaction with the department of community development at the local government authority council and the village headman. Also, the beneficiaries of certain development programmes were purposefully selected. The recruited respondents were selected based on the knowledge that they would provide the best information and would conveniently be available to participate in the study.

The total sample size was 54 respondents sampled in three Traditional Authority. The study selected 3 key informants using purposeful sampling, an officer from a local Non-Governmental Organization, the District Council and Community Development Facilitator working as an Intern, and 3 youths. While 48 respondents participated in focus group discussions and on average each Focus Group Discussion comprised 16 older persons per each Traditional Authority. One older person from each focus group discussion helped the team in identifying other older persons. The table below shows the distribution of Focus Group Discussion by gender in each Traditional Authority in the Dedza district. The sampling technique was based on the nature of the study. The study was trying to get a uniquely deep understanding of the situation as regards the influence of older people in their participation in community development initiatives. The study was trying to get a uniquely deep understanding of the situation as regards the influence of older people in their participation in community development initiatives thereby segregating the FGD by sex to ensure active interaction for the participants. Interaction is key to a successful focus group, mixing up sex might not

yield active interaction from the other sex (Mishra, June 2016) hence segregating by sex in the study. It is argued that such techniques and approaches are paramount as they provide better insights to examine and understand different scenarios to guide further analysis significant to extracting themes and sub-themes that inform the analyses (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, it is argued and reiterated that purposive sampling remains fundamental in the identification of the respondents.

3.7 Data Collection Tools

The study employed qualitative methods to collect data. The primary data sources were collected from the respondents using the key informant interviews (KII) checklist and Focus Group Discussion. The checklist has been recommended to be appropriate for the qualitative data collection process and was used by the researcher to guide discussions and control the flow of questioning for consistency in data across different respondents (Sekarani, 2010; Patton, 2009). On the same note, Creswell, (2014) argues that KII gives respondents the freedom to express their views hence this research utilized this approach to get the views of the respondents through KIIs. The questions were designed in tandem with the study objectives, which give room for an objective analysis of the data. To collect information with minimal error from the respondents, voice recorders were used to collect data during data collection. This process assisted the interviewers in getting quality information during the interview process. Three data collection methods were used, and these were: Key informant Interviews, Focus group Discussions, and In-depth/Structured Interviews.

3.7.1 Key informant interviews

The study conducted KIIs with MOGCDSW officer in Dedza and a Programme Manager at MANEPO. The interviewers went through training on how to conduct the KIIs, a guide for the KIIs and additional notes took place through audio recording and note-taking. Finally, KIIs were conducted with one District Community Development Officer at Dedza District Council within the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare (MOGCDSW) and one staff member at the MANEPO. The two key informants interviewed provided knowledge of the existing community initiatives that are available in Malawi and are targeting older persons. The three youths were selected one in each group to catalyze discussions and provide more insights into their perspective towards the older person in participating in community development initiatives within the catchment area of the study. The information from the key informant at the MOGCDSW provided a form of understanding of the kind of community development initiatives implemented in the district and understanding of the geographical area of the district for the research study area during the data collection.

3.7.2 Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted in three Traditional Authorities namely, Kambalame village in TA Kaphuka, Chikoleka Village in TA Kachidamoto, and Gwaza Village in TA Kamenyagwaza, and 16 people were selected in each village. Below was the guide for the FGDs and additional notes were taken through audio recording and note-taking. Further, three FDGs were conducted with females aged between 23 and 82 years. Three more FGDs were conducted with males aged 18 and 76.

Table 3.1 Shows Traditional Authority against focus group by gender

Traditional Authority	Focus Group by Gender	
	Male	Female
TA Kachidamoto	7	9
TA Kaphuka	7	9
TA Kamenyagwaza	6	10
Total	20	28

The study also includes youths in the discussion to have a view on understanding how the youths perceive the old persons concerning their involvement and participation in community development initiatives and to provide more information on the existing community development initiatives being implemented in the area. The study assumed that due to health challenges and loss of memory among the older persons the involvement of the youths in the study's focus group discussion will assist in understanding the existing community development initiatives in the areas. Despite the youth being involved in the FGDs to provide information on their attitudes towards the older person's involvement in the community development initiatives, the youths were not open enough but this was not a major challenge in the study as the study was specifically interested in the older persons hence being the target for the In-depth interviews (IDIs).. The youths and the middle-aged assisted in listing down the existing community development initiatives in the study sites.

3.7.3 In-depth interviews (IDIs)

IDIs were conducted with the older persons in the three traditional authorities namely Kambalame village in TA Kaphuka, Chikoleka Village in TA Kachidamoto, and Gwaza Village in TA Kamenyagwaza using a tailored guide. Additional notes were collected using an audio recorder and a notepad to gather relevant information from each of the

respondents. The IDIs participants were 48 older persons (20 females and 28 males) whose age range was between 60 and 85 years and one respondent who would not recall her age due to old age.

Table 3.2 Summary of the Study Design

OBJECTIVE	DATA COLLECTI ON METHOD	DATA COLLECTIO N TOOLS	DATA ANALYSIS	RESPONDEN TS/DATA SOURCES
To assess the socio-economic factors that influence the participation of the older person in community development initiatives in Malawi.	Key Informant Interviews targeting older persons aged between 60 and 85 years	KII checklist	content analysis: Thematic	48 Older persons, 2 youths, and 3 informants
To explore barriers affecting the participation of older persons in community development initiatives in Malawi.	Interviews targeting the 3 Key informants and respondents	KII checklist and FGDs Audio Recorder Note pad and Note taker	Qualitative such as thematic analysis and reported quotes	Community Development Officers MOGCDSW and Programme Manager at MANEPO and Respondent's (Older Persons)

To determine effective approach pathways influencing participation of older persons in community development initiatives in Malawi.	Interviews targeting 3key informants	KII checklist and FGDs Audio Recorder Note pad and Note taker	Thematic content and quotations from respondents	Community Development Officers MOGCDSW and Programme Manager at MANEPO and Respondent's
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3.8 Data Analysis

The study used a content analysis process to analyse the interview data. The first process was the formalization step. This was through reading all notes and transcripts to gain an overview of the body and context of the gathered data. The next step was to code the data. This meant highlighting sections of the gathered data (texts, phrases, or sentences) and coming up with labels or codes to describe the content. After coding, the thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Thematic analysis is a method for analyzing qualitative data that entails searching across a data set to identify, analyze, and report repeated patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is a method for describing data, but it also involves interpretation in the processes of selecting codes and constructing themes. The thematic analysis allows a researcher a lot of flexibility in the interpretation of the data and offers the researcher an opportunity to approach large data sets more easily by sorting them into broad themes. (Robinson & Tolley, 2014). In this study, verbatim shall be adopted to present the study findings in line with the objective under study.

3.8.1 Thematic Analysis

Table 3.3 Showing the thematic analysis of the study

Main Objective	Specific Objectives	Sub-Themes	Approaches
To examine older person's participation in community development initiatives using the case study of Dedza district, Malawi.	To assess the socio-economic factors that influence the participation of the older person in community development initiatives in Malawi.	- Economic factor - Self-participation perception - Direct beneficiaries - Small-scale business - Active Status	Qualitative approach
	To explore barriers affecting the participation of older persons in community development initiatives in Malawi.	- Health Factor - Physical Factor - Social Factor - Age Group Factor - Sex Factor	Qualitative approach
	To determine effective approach pathways influencing participation of older persons in community development initiatives in Malawi.	- An outside institution Development agent - Institutions recruit beneficiaries on their own	Qualitative approach

3.9 Ethical Consideration

The study observed several ethical observations, according to Creswell (2012) who emphasized that it is necessary that the institutional heads review questions and approve the study conducted. Given this, the study supervisor reviewed and approved the research plans. A field approval letter from University of Malawi through the Development Studies Program Department to conduct the research. An introductory process such as a letter was provided as evidence that the researcher was a student when she visited the field. Therefore, the study supervisors and the University of Malawi Institution reviewed and approved all instruments and tools of the study. It is also a requirement that any study and its aims should be known by authorities and all gatekeepers in the study area (Creswell, 2014). This allows the free movement of the research team in the area and removes suspicion from study subjects that may compromise the quality of data. As such, the researcher did courtesy visits and had approvals from MoGCSW at the Dedza District Office where an official was assigned to accompany the process. The official was the Community Development Facilitator Intern who assisted in the purposeful selection of the FGDs respondents in the selected TAs.

Besides, verbal ask for participation was read out before the beginning of each interview and upon consent from the informants the interview would begin, and this was recorded on the audio recorder. The researcher also assured every study participant that participation in the study and responding to every question was not mandatory this was an opt in and out approach to participation. As such, the researcher emphasized to every informant that his or her information would be kept confidential. To ensure that privacy and confidentiality were respected, all in-depth interviews were carried out with one and

only one respondent at a time from their households; key informant interviews were carried out from their offices respectively in Dedza at the District Office and Blantyre at the MANEPO office, and for the focus group discussions that were conducted at an open community football ground in all the 3 study sites. To protect participants' confidentiality, the data collected will be treated with the utmost level of confidentiality for this academic purpose.

3.10 Data Quality

The quality of data was ascertained in several ways. Firstly, each data collection tool was accorded a unique number, and pre-testing was done with the view to restructuring unclear questions. Secondly, recorders were used to capture data for accuracy and perfection.

3.10.1 Validation and Reliability

Validity

Validity is the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (Saunders et. al., 2003). The researcher focused on content validity, which is the accuracy with which an instrument measures the factor under study. Content validity was measured through cross-checking of research questions and piloting of the questionnaires formulated for women.

Reliability

Reliability is the precision and accuracy of the instrument such that the instrument should yield similar results when used in a similar context (Cresswell, 2009). Questions

were formulated clearly to avoid ambiguity which may lead to unreliable responses from the respondents. Pretesting eliminated all loopholes for ambiguity.

3.11 Limitations of the Study

The study faced four main challenges during the data collection process, and they were resolved immediately. The first challenge happened during the in-depth interviews where most of the respondents had other health-related issues associated with old age such as hearing challenges and not being able to recall some information. The second challenge identified was while in TA Kachidamoto, most of the IDI respondents by afternoon hours were drunk (*Ngoni* culture where the community brew local beer and sits around with friends and family to drink). These two scenarios caused many challenges in getting responses leading to having few respondents in the area that were interviewed in the morning hours while sober. The third challenge was with the Community Development facilitator from the District Development Office who expected monetary handouts for mobilizing the community to participate in the FGDs. The study budget did not allocate this item. The last challenge was that more women were willing to be interviewed than men because most males were drunk by the time the research team reached their homes and it was also learned that within the *Chewa* culture due to the matrilineal family system the older men directed the research team to their wives for the interview. The study had more women participating in the interviews than men.

The following solutions assisted in minimizing the challenges that the study faced; sitting very close to the study respondents, speaking louder when asking the questions, and repeating questions from the guides to get data during the IDI interviews. The

second challenge was resolved by conducting interviews during morning hours. The last challenge was resolved with the provision of an incentive of 5000 Malawi Kwacha as a stipend allowance to the Community Development Facilitator.

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided the methodology of the study. It has discussed the design; study area; sampling methodology; data collection methods, tools, and techniques. It has also described the data analysis process and discusses ethical considerations and limitations of the study. The next chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the results of the study. The chapter is divided into five sections and the first section gives an overview of understanding the concepts of participation by the respondents, older people's definition, and development and provides a list of the identified community development initiatives in the study area. The second section discusses the social-economic factors that influence the participation of older persons in community development initiatives in the study area. The third section discusses barriers affecting the participation of older persons in community development initiatives in the study area. The fourth section analyses effective approach pathways influencing the participation of older persons in community development initiatives in the study area. Finally, the fifth section provides interaction of the Older People's Participation with the Theory. Throughout the discussion, the researcher has used thematic analysis to discuss the findings, since the study is qualitative.

4.2 Understanding Concept of Participation, Development, and Older Persons

Using the FGDs and the IDIs, the study provided an understanding of the concept of participation, development, and older persons. The following were the key identified themes which were characteristics associated with old age for who an old person is, using age definition; what participation is; and finally understanding development.

(i) Community definition of an older person

The study found that using characteristics associated with old age, almost all the respondents reported that they defined an old person as someone who has no energy to work for a longer period, a person who is not as active as he is, or she was before to participate in activities. Furthermore, in terms of age, the study found that they define age as someone who has more years of age and is from 60 to 90 years of age, with poor health status, always sick and the body is not as active as it used to be. Both respondents in FGDs (the older persons and the young ones) considered an older person as someone who has no strength, has children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, someone who has witnessed more death than anyone else, and in the vernacular language referred to as *amvula zakale* (sages of old) and *a khala kale* (an information bank in the community or at the family level). Similarly, in an in-depth interview, the study results reviewed that the participants defined an older person's characteristics as someone who has reached a point where the energy has gone down and aged. For example, a person who is not able to walk well not due to sickness or disability but due to lack of physical energy, with the person who exhibits declined work performance. The view of old person respondents in IDI conducted at Traditional Authority Kachidamoto on the 16th July 2019 was reflected in the quote:

“Someone with grey hair, less strength/weak physically, the appearance of the skin and is of age from 60 to 90 years.”

4.3 Understanding the concept of Development and the list of the Development Initiative

The study findings revealed that some of the development initiatives were under implementation in all the TAs visited though there are some were completed and had phased out by the time the study was conducted during interviews. Therefore, Table 2

shows the list of the existing community development initiatives mentioned during the study interview.

Table 4.1 Shows the Community Development Initiatives in Dedza District

Development Initiative	Chichewa	Area(s) of Interest	Target Beneficiaries
MASAF 4: Productive Community Driven Public Works.	<i>Makobo</i>	Rehabilitating rural roads to provide transfers to poor households through participation in community-driven public works.	The youths are mainly those that are males than females. The only way for the older persons to take part is by sending their children or grandchildren (<i>adzukulu</i>) to work on the roads.
MASAF 4: Livelihoods and skills development.	<i>Thandizi pakhomo</i>	Nutrition, hygiene, and savings and loan groups to finance grants for increasing household-level incomes and assets through Community Savings and Investment Promotion (COMSIP) groups.	The target beneficiaries are only those that have been royal in the social cash transfer by paying back loans on time and are given access to acquire livelihoods and skills development and few older persons are part of this project.
MASAF 4: Social Cash Transfers	<i>Mtukula pakhomo</i>	Microloans and small-scale enterprises to finance cash transfers targeted to the poorest labor-constrained households, as well as activities for capacity	Targeted to the poorest labor-constrained households. The older persons are part of the direct beneficiaries.

		building and technical assistance.	
Concern Universal		This was a previous project that was implemented in 2016 and used to distribute maize to the underprivileged, which allowed some older persons to benefit from it. Currently, it is no longer been implemented in the district.	The privileged, which allowed some older persons to benefit from it.
United Purpose		Climate Change programs, i.e., tree planting.	The older persons were not involved as direct beneficiaries; their involvement was indirect as advisers in the project.
School and public health programs		Construction of latrines.	The older persons were not involved as direct beneficiaries, their involvement was indirect as advisers in the project
Church groups for the Older Persons	Where the older convene as they cannot walk the long distance to attend the church services. They have their church services being organized by the Parish (Catholic) as they cannot walk to the Main Parish. The Priest is assigned to facilitate the church service for the older persons.		

Source: Data collection through the FGD and IDI

(ii) Participation in development initiatives

The term ‘participation in development’ was assigned different definitions describing roles and stages of participation in development initiatives. Participation in community development in vernacular language was translated as *“kutenga mbali mu nkhani zachitukuko”*. The study found that in the early stage, the concept was defined merely as the presence of an individual at a place where people are undertaking a development initiative, and during discussion one participant stated that:

“To our understanding participation in development is taking part in what is happening at that moment for instance being part of this research interviews can be defined as participation in development. That is my presence here means am participating in community development as I am here with other community members. One should be present everywhere they see that people are gathered.” (Male Respondent, TA Kaphuka, FGD).

The study also found that another dimension of participation in development involved taking action to positively elevate livelihoods and the general wellbeing of the community. Here, individuals perform a visible action that makes a difference as one respondent suggested:

“Here when we say that this person is taking part in development, we want them to do something. Maybe the chief has called that we have to clear the road or mold bricks at church then we have to do that together.” (Male Respondent – TA Kamenyagwaza, FGD)

Therefore, in general, the study results found that all female and male respondents in the FGDs reported having participated in community development work.

(iii) Roles and levels of older persons in development initiatives at the community level

The study findings revealed that in all three Traditional Authority in the study, the respondents reported that older persons are actively participating in development initiatives including the COMSIP program. Where attendance at an activity was described as participation among older persons to be equally participating in development initiatives, such as attending community project meetings, taking out loans, construction of houses for animals, roads, or growing crops. Similarly, like other age groups, older persons reported that they are included in committees running various development initiatives, particularly to ensure and oversee the direction of deliberations. This is consistent with Durkheim theory, which explains that using the analogy theory where she argues that society is like a human body made up of various institutions that acted like the organs of the body, and they all needed to be functioning properly for the body to function (Haralambos, 2013). Therefore, the study found that the role of the older persons is an essential contribution to the efficiency and sustainability of development initiatives through the provision of hands-on experience and strategic advice to the young generation as overseers. During FGD, the older persons reported that they were able to take part in other light jobs in the community such as clearing roads and making vegetable beds in agricultural initiatives and this was concurred by the youth who stated:

“Yes, the older persons have a part in community development initiatives, but their participation is limited since they are old. ... So, when we go to mold bricks, for example. We tell the older persons to do minor tasks like sweeping while we make the bricks. To us, they have taken part even if it’s a minor as compared to our task as they are owners of the community, but our tasks are different”. (Male Youth Respondent, TA Kamenyagwaza, FGD).

However, during the same FGDs, the study found out that some older persons who migrated from other countries like Mozambique and Burundi (who believed to have run away from the Dzaleka refugee camp in Dowa District do not participate in most of development activities in both TAs Kamenyagwaza and Kaphuka due to language barrier and race.

“Some older persons, migrants from Burundi and Mozambique, do not take part in the development activities in this area. We have a number of them residing in this area and we hear that some of them ran away from the Dzaleka refugee camp in Dowa and came here to do business and to seek for greener pastures. Their Chichewa is bad and they fail to communicate properly”. (Female Respondent, TA Kamenyagwaza, FGD).

This contradicts Durkhem’s functionalism which addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements; namely norms, customs, traditions, and institutions. This is agreeing with the Durkhem’s 1960s criticism which asserts that the theory is unable to account for structural contradictions and conflict and it ignores inequalities including race, which cause tension and conflict (Coulhan 2007, *Sociology in America*, p.559).

The study also found that older persons provide strategic guidance and direction on development activities. Meaning that culturally, older persons are the custodians of wisdom and are presumed to have extensive experience in community issues and have been deemed a useful source of advice to other age groups in the community. One of the respondents among older persons said:

“We advise them (the youth) that these people (development institutions) are showing you, love, by bringing you these development efforts. Please work hard in the development work, do not get lazy. I have gone through

hell. I worked in a mine where I was given very little money. You are lucky you are getting soft loans so work hard.” (Male Respondent, TA Kamenyagwaza, IDI)

This role of the older persons was unique in development working groups because the older persons are treated with respect and looked upon as sources of wisdom. The study results also revealed that older persons provide guidance and keep order and monitor the organization of gatherings. One male older person said this:

“When we the older persons are not present; these young people do not listen to each other. You know, you need a foreman at any work. So, when we see that the youth are not listening to each other I tell them ‘I am here, what are you doing? Can you please do what your friend is telling you?’ that way things move smoothly.’ (Male Respondent, TA Kamenyagwaza, IDI).

The older persons reported being good supervisors of the development work people of other age groups in the community. This is because they command the respect of youth and middle-aged groups in the community, older persons were well listened to and they also brought their experience with similar tasks to bear on the current tasks. This is consistent with Kadzandira, (2008) who indicated that older persons are advisors of members of younger generations on social and sexual matters, and traditional healers. The participation of the older persons not only maintained standards of development initiatives but also ensured that other age groups did their work well as it was reflected in the quotes:

If we (older people) do not participate then it means, we have killed development. When people from the government come, they will find the community very quiet.” (Male Respondent, TA– Kamenyagwaza, IDI).

This is in line with Kazeze’s policy recommendation paper of 2007 states that the inclusion of older persons in socioeconomic development is important as they

contribute significantly to such initiatives. The study also found that both older persons and younger ones felt that the older persons do participate in the development initiatives in their communities, and it was reported that they work with the youth and middle-aged persons in planning, executing, and monitoring various development projects at the community level, leadership positions as members of development committees at the Area Development Committee (ADC); Village Development Committee (VDC) and also advisory positions in community structures such as marriage and family. Some of the respondent's views were reflected in these quotes:

“We provide advice to the groups and also at the community level where few of us are members of the Area Development Committees and Village Development Committees.” (Female Respondent, TA Kamenyagwaza, IDI).

4.4 Social-economic factors that influence the participation of older persons in community development initiatives

A recent study defined socioeconomic factors as the ones that denote experiences and realities which help would one's personality, attitudes, and lifestyle (Chase, 2018). These factors could also define regions and neighborhood attributes associated with the individuals. Therefore, socioeconomic factors dwell on economic factors, self-participation perception, direct beneficiaries, small-scale business loans, and Active Status. Many factors were identified as influential on the participation of older persons in development. The study findings found that older persons identified the presence of incentives as the key factor motivating their participation in community development activities. It was reported that older persons most often invest their time and efforts in development programs that directly benefit them financially or economically and it was reflected during the interview.

In COMSIP (MASAF-4) livelihoods and skills development program), more old people participate due to the incentives (access to loans which have less interest), unlike in the tree planting activities where fewer old people participate as you access the money after the piece of work (ganyu). People get MK14, 400 every 12 days of work. (Female Respondent, TA Kaphuka FGD)

The study findings also reported that there are several advantages in community development participation, which directly contribute towards the improvement of their livelihood at household levels of the older person in the study area. The respondents supported the above view that participation in community development provides them with access to loans that contribute to economic empowerment to be able to support their livelihoods and their households, and other benefits include improvement of their health statuses like in hygiene and sanitation projects or asset creation like in goat domestication projects or provision of advice. For example, two participants revealed that:

‘The loans motive us to take part in the community developments’. Many orphans are kept by the older persons in the villages. We like MASAF 4 Livelihoods and skills development (Thandizipakhomo), because of the many activities within it as they help us to know how to properly cook for the orphans, we are taking care of.’
(Female and Male Respondent, in TA Kaphuka, IDI)

‘There is also the provision of community recognition (status) - mainly when providing advice using previous experience. The community believes that we have more knowledge and experience on what is right for the community.’
(Male Respondent, TA Kaphuka, IDI)

The study findings revealed that an indirect factor that influenced the participation of the older persons in development initiatives was the way the development programs are designed where the older persons are the direct beneficiaries. The older persons

reported that they often take part in programs where they are recruited as beneficiaries right at the beginning of the project and their role is clearly defined such as the social cash transfer program. Meanwhile, some projects have criteria to determine who will be recruited into a program and local leaders often select the beneficiaries. As a result, in such projects, the implementer may recommend that no older persons participate in the initiative, or leaders may be biased in selecting who should be in a program such as the MASAF 4, Productive Community Driven Public Works (*Makobo*) (See Table 4.1).

The study findings have revealed that the older persons also reported that they participate in programs that accommodate their age, rather than placing them under undue pressure to step outside their comfort zone. For example, older people would prefer to take part in a loan program that carries a low-interest rate, other than the ones with a higher interest rate would require them to perform beyond their capacity to repay the loan. The following are the views of the participants:

“A lot of old people are getting small-scale business loans from Community Savings and Investment Promotion (COMSIP) because of small interest. (Female Respondent, TA Kachidamoto, FGD).

The study results revealed that the respondents highlighted that the nature of a person influences their participation in development. The respondents described that some persons were born more active than others, and thus maintain that active status late into life. A 72-year-old man in TA Kamenyagwaza had this to say about himself:

“Like me, when I hear that there is a development project, I rush there. Sometimes am even sent back that ‘no you are too old for this. Leave it to your children. You are a grandpa so do not trouble yourself.’ I say ‘no I was raised that way. I always want to lead by example so that these kids should learn.’” (Male Respondent aged 72, TA Kamenyagwaza, IDI).

4.5 The barriers affecting the participation of older persons in community development initiatives in the study areas

In the study through the IDI and FGDs under this objective, a key theme was identified as participation limitation factors. The study findings revealed that most of the respondents mentioned several factors that negatively affected older persons' participation in community development initiatives. The following are the identified factors that were categorized according to health, physical, social, age, and sex.

The study found that health factors were reported as one of the challenges that negatively affect older persons to participate in community development initiatives. This is due to lack of energy, poor eyesight, sicknesses, or disability among older people that affected older persons' participation in the community development.

The study also found that through FGDs and IDI majority reported that physical factors were a barrier for an older person to participate in community development and were sometimes limited by physical capacities in more labor-intensive projects such as MASAF4- Productive Community Driven Public Works (*Makobo*). Furthermore, older persons reported that some development projects require lots of energy and mobility, including walking long distances this limits them to be active to participate in community development. The results also found that to remedy the situation, some older persons resort to sending other family members to work on their behalf. For example, one respondent gave an example of the MASAF 4: Productive Community Driven Public Works (*Makobo*) where he stated that:

“It depends, if you have a grandchild then it becomes easier because the child can go and do the work on your behalf and receive the money which is

later used at the household level but when you don't have a grandchild then it becomes difficult” (Female Respondent, TA Kamenyagwaza, FGD).

The results revealed that social factor was one of the factors that negatively affect most older persons to participate in community development initiatives. Hence, sometimes they do not take part in development initiatives because they are stigmatized or underrated by community members which affect their livelihoods. It was reviewed during the IDI interview that youth and their middle-aged people undermined the capabilities of older persons. Similarly, younger people reportedly that how weak the old are in the presence of other groups, and equally, leaders discriminate against older people, prioritizing other age groups in developmental inclusion. Based on the functionalism theory, the behavior of the older persons in the community development initiatives is patterned by the laws and rules which are defined by the characteristics that define a person in a society and by the norms and roles that are assigned in the given society. In an IDI, an older woman lamented that the village headman discouraged her from taking part in the development initiative and she said:

“I wonder how the village headman looks at us old people. Maybe he thinks we are too old to do anything. However, we also admire working just as others do. Some of us still have the energy to work but we are not included in whatever they are doing. For example, I do take part in COMSIP that's the only development initiative that is allowing old people to take part but the rest we are not allowed. I do not know how they feel about us. I stay alone with my grandchildren, as all my children died.”

The study also found that the age group factor was reported as one of the challenges that negatively affect older persons to participate in community development initiatives. In the study findings, mixed views emerged on the relative proportion of participation exhibited by various age groups in the community. The study reported that even though

all age groups take part at the early stages of participation, mostly younger persons, followed by middle-aged individuals, take a larger role when participation transforms into action. For example, most age groups are present during decision-making in an afforestation project, but it is only young people that are entrusted with the responsibility of planting trees uphill as they are thought of as the most energetic group. In other cases, lighter tasks were assigned to the older persons in line with their depleting energy levels as reported in one FGD:

‘We work together and there is no discrimination. We work together with young people but if a task requires a lot of labor, the young people work more than us. Sometimes we are given small tasks like guarding bicycles for people who are doing development work’. (Male Respondent, TA Kachidamoto, FGD)

Similarly, in other cases, it was reported that the older persons were involved in equally challenging participatory roles to other age groups. In these cases, it was the role of the younger individuals to support the older persons and it was reflected in focus group discussions that:

“We (youth) work together with these old people. We are in the same savings groups because we want them to benefit as well. Sometimes they are not able to make monthly contributions, but we just contribute for them so that we do not trouble them.” (Female Respondent, TA Kamenyagwaza, FGD)

During the focus group discussion, the participants when asked about who takes a larger part in the development initiatives, the study revealed that youths were the most active age group than older people in participating in community development activities. However, they reported that some people like those individuals who are too old aged between 60 to 90 years of age, the disabled, and the sick do not take part in development

initiatives because of their constraining conditions and some of the participants in their views reflected that:

'The youths are more active and participate in many initiatives unlike us the older people; our participation is limited due to health problems. However, many times we are discriminated against and not allowed to take part in other initiatives. The youth say we are old and weak.'

-(Female Respondent, TA Kamenyagwaza, IDI)

The study results revealed that the sex factor was reported to be one of the challenges that negatively affect older persons to participate in community development initiatives. It was noted that some male older persons engaged in a social lifestyle like drinking beer where they spent a lot of their time. However, most of the women were the ones who take a huge role in community development initiatives because of cultural values and norms, where women are regarded as their responsibility, unlike men. This is in line with the sociological functionalist approach argues that particular behavior in a society is influenced by the social roles and norms where the assigned social roles contribute to how people participate in terms of sex differences and similarities in social behavior (Haralambos, 2013). Hence, its key principle is that differences and similarities arise primarily from the distribution of men and women into social roles within their society. These social roles differ from one culture and tradition. Furthermore, consistently with all age groups, participants reported that more female older persons take part in development initiatives than male older persons where most male older persons are lazy as compared to female older persons. During the focus group, the discussion mentioned that some old people are “just stubborn” and do not want to get involved in what is happening around them and one of the female respondents stated that:

“We women have a responsibility to take care of our homes (unlike men). We fetch food and take care of children that is why we always take part in these development initiatives to support our families”. (Female respondent, TA Kachidamoto, FGD)

4.6 An analysis of effective approach pathways influencing the participation of older persons in community development initiatives in the study area

The study findings reviewed that each of the mentioned development initiatives in Table 4.1 has specific criteria for a participant to be included. It was noted that there are two approaches used to selecting project beneficiaries. The first approach is an outside institution, as a development agent where community authorities such as traditional leaders are used to select beneficiaries for the projects. Furthermore, the study found that the second approach is where an institution recruits beneficiaries on their own without involving traditional leaders. For instance, development initiative stipulated in Table 4.1, the older persons are directly involved as direct beneficiaries in the Social Cash Transfer, and they graduate to the Livelihoods and Skills Development component upon satisfying the requirements of the Social Cash Transfer project now using the second selection approach. Similarly, the study reviewed that in other projects older persons are not directly involved as direct beneficiaries due to project requirement criteria that focus on healthy or physical strength which was reflected in the views of participants during the FGDs and the IDI and quotes:

“My children and sometimes my grandchildren do take part in the development initiatives on my behalf mainly working on the road and tree planting. In COMSIP, I tried to, but my grandchildren kept abusing my profits from the business, so I stopped. I fully take part in Social Cash Transfer as I directly receive the money.” (Female Respondent, TA Kamenyagwaza, and IDI).

“We only participate in the social cash transfer program, and we are not allowed to take part in other development programs selected by the village headman”. (Male Respondent, TA Kamenyagwaza, IDI).

The study also found that to accommodate all people in development activities, community members were assigning people to some development projects and not to others, in other words, to distribute the benefits of various projects more equitably. Meaning that even though older persons could show interest or ability to participate in a project, they might be banned from joining a project if they were already participating in another initiative. It was noted that in TAs Kaphuka and Kachidamoto, for example, older persons reported that since they are active in *Ntukula Pankhomo* project, they are not allowed to take in other development programs within the community. However, some social cash transfer beneficiaries complained that benefiting merely from one project is not enough to cater to their needs. For example, one older person lamented that:

“The village leaders are too powerful such that they have got the powers to write only the names of those whom they feel should benefit from the development initiatives coming into this community. I was told I am already in COMSIP and as such I should not take part in the other development initiatives such as this one of CONCERN, which distributes maize, yet I have orphans as well whom I take care of”. (Female Respondent, TA Kaphuka, IDI)

Therefore, the flexibility of the project benefits either direct or indirect participation. It was found that indirectly was more significant to old persons who were participating by sending representatives and recognized as being active.

‘In this community, we participant indirectly by sending our children or grandchildren.’ (Female Respondent, A Kachidamoto, IDI)

4.7 Interaction of the Older People's Participation with the Theory

Durkheim's structural functionalism theory has played a significant role in this study. The study results revealed that all focus groups from all the TAs reported that participation in the community development was inclusive to all age groups even the older people. Participation is either through a direct or indirect approach and deliberate efforts were used for all age groups inclusively in the community developments initiatives. As the theory states that a human society resembles an organism and is made up of structures, the terms social institutions perform differentiated functions on behalf of a larger society. According to the theory, because of being interrelated and interdependent, one organ can affect the others and ultimately the whole. Hence, the whole can also affect one or all the social institutions. In the same way, there is a function that every age group contributes towards such kind of community development as they participate in the community development. Each age group's participation in each community development contributes to the larger society's being. Therefore, involving the older persons (a part of the whole) in community development initiatives benefits their households and contributes to community development and the continuing existence of human society (the whole) towards sustainable development.

4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the major findings of the study. Particularly the chapter discussed how the community defines older people, identified community development initiatives factor that affects older persons to participate in community development initiatives, and how older people's participation in development initiatives at the community level in the Dedza district have been identified and challenges older persons face to participate in developing community initiatives and identified the gender differences among the older persons participating in community development initiatives. Therefore, the next chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the results of the older persons' participation in community development initiatives from three Traditional authorities in the Dedza district. Based on the findings in chapter four, the study gives recommendations on what the different stakeholders and government can consider to make sure that older persons can participate and benefit effectively from different community development initiatives at the community level. The recommendations are provided based on the objectives of the study after which recommendations for further studies are made.

5.2 Conclusions

The principal objective of this study was to examine older person's participation in community development initiatives using the case study of Dedza District, Malawi. Primary data was collected in Kambalame village in TA Kaphuka, Chikoleka Village in TA Kachindamoto, and Gwaza Village in TA Kamenyagwaza and 16 people were selected in each village. A purposive sampling approach was used employed to identify a wide array of the respondents that are deemed feasible to achieve and answer the research questions at the village level.

Using the FGDs and the IDIs, the study provided an understanding of the concept of participation, development, and older persons. The community definition of an older person was provided. The concept of development and list of the development Initiatives was also explained in the study. The study findings revealed that some of the development initiatives were under implementation in all the TAs visited and there are some which were completed and had phased out by the time the study was conducted during interviews see Table 4.1. To understand participation in development initiatives, the study discovered that both older and younger persons felt that the older persons mostly indirectly participate in the development initiatives in their communities, and it was reported that they work with the youth and middle-aged persons in planning, executing, and monitoring various development projects at the community level. For example, in the Social Cash Transfer Programme '*ntukula pa nkomo*' and the Livelihoods and skills development components '*thandizi pa khomo*' under MASAF 4 the older persons directly benefitted to support their livelihood at the household level through cash- savings and loans; nutrition; and hygiene. The findings provide information in the literature that deliberate efforts have been put in place to involve older people in community development. This fills the gap in the Kazeze study that called for a separate paper on inclusion of the older people in community development (Kazeze, 2007). The paper also took note that participation in most the community development initiatives requires strength and manpower thus initiatives like the Productive Community Driven Public Works '*Makobo*' under MASAF 4 mainly targets the youths and the older persons by sending them to work on the rehabilitation of rural roads or tree planting.

The first study objective was to assess the social-economic factors that influence the participation of older persons in community development initiatives in Malawi. Therefore, the study found that socioeconomic factors dwell on economic factors, self-participation perception, direct beneficiaries, small-scale business loans, and active status that influence older persons to participate in community development initiatives. Similarly, many factors were identified as influential on the participation of older persons in development. For example, the study findings found that older persons identified the presence of incentives as the key factor motivating their participation in community development activities. Furthermore, it was also found that there are several advantages in community development participation, which directly contribute towards the improvement of their livelihood at household levels of an older person in the study area. It was noted that the indirect factor that influenced the participation of the older persons in development initiatives was the way the development programs are designed where the older persons are the direct beneficiaries and some were more active than others, thus maintaining that active status late into life. However, the study also found that the other benefit is the social recognition- respect by the other community members since the older persons are given the advisory role at different levels in the community at family, church, and cultural custodians, and supervisory roles in another program implementation.

The second study objective was to explore barriers affecting the participation of older persons in community development initiatives in Malawi. They found that physical factors were a barrier for an older person to participate in community development where some development projects require lots of energy and mobility, including walking long distances which limit them to be active to participate in community

development. Furthermore, it was also revealed that social factor was one of the factors that negatively affect an older person. Age group factor was reported as one of the challenges that negatively affect older persons to participate in community development and most age groups were present during decision-making in an afforestation project, but it is only young people that are entrusted with the responsibility of planting trees uphill as they are thought of as the most energetic group sex factor was reported to negatively affect older persons to participate in community development initiatives that more female older persons take part in development initiatives than male older persons where most male older persons are lazy as compared to female older persons.

The third study objective was to determine the effective approach pathways influencing the participation of older persons in community development initiatives in Malawi. It was noted that there are two approaches used to select project beneficiaries. The study found that the first approach is an external institution selection, this approach entails that development agents collaborate with community authorities such as traditional leaders to select beneficiaries for the projects. Furthermore, the second approach is where an institution recruits beneficiaries on their own without involving traditional leaders. The study also reviewed that in other projects older persons are not directly involved as direct beneficiaries due to project requirement criteria

Durkheim's structural functionalism theory has played a significant role in this study. The study results from all focus groups reported that participation in the community development was inclusive to all age groups even the older people. However, using Emile Durkheim's framework, it is understood that the behavior of the older people is

patterned by development project designs, directives from the community leaders, and the assigned characteristics from the other age groups as seen in how they define the older people during the focus group. These patterns can be viewed as a set of laws or rules in the three Traditional Authorities of the study to pattern old persons' behavior. This is in line with Emile Durkheim's structural functionalism theory where all the benefits are because of the interrelation and interdependence of everyone despite age differences in the community development initiatives. The study discovered that this is also in line with the theory's focus on social integration that forces older people to have ties to the social groups through their participation in the development initiatives. On community ties to social groups the study found that the key factor in social life is being a member of a particular development is an important factor in the community.

5.3 Study Findings Recommendations from participants

Based on the key objectives and findings of the study, the study draws the following policy recommendations;

- During the focus group discussion, the respondents proposed that development agents should reach out to people in the community and ask them about their needs because some elderly persons have specific development needs that need to be addressed by development initiatives, for example, money for commercial agriculture.
- It emerged from interviews that elderly persons propose that the development agents visit communities to intimate people about the implementation strategies, and target groups, and to outline anticipated involvement.
- The respondents recommended that it is good for development agents to directly approach elderly persons to gauge their interest in participating in development

initiatives other than using Traditional Leaders to select beneficiaries. This would result in old people voicing their development needs. The older people could advise development agents best about the larger community's needs.

- The Participants expressed the desire to participate in projects but there should be an inclusive agenda pursuit that positively underline that all people, whether old or young, should take part in initiatives regardless of gender-specific needs.

5.4 Policy Recommendations

- Review the composition of the development structures such as the Village Development Committees (VDCs) and the Area Development Committees (ADCs) to include older persons
- For government to create monitoring mechanisms at all levels to enhance the participation and inclusion of older persons in all stages of community development
- Promote awareness-raising on the rights of older persons at all levels to curb stigma and discrimination against older persons and enhance effectiveness in the improvement of the welfare of the older persons
- Introduce relevant social protection programs that aim at addressing all the rights and needs of older persons at all levels

5.5 Areas for further study

Through the study results, there is a need for further study to be conducted that should focus on the comparison between elderly women and men's participation in community development. The study may focus on gender perspectives, and it could be a field study. And the other further research may be targeted on other groups of older adults of varying health status for example, transitional or residential care to establish possible

relationships between community participation and location to design interventions that promote active healthy aging.

5.6 Summary

This chapter has presented the main conclusions of the study. After putting forward the conclusions, it has laid out possible recommendations from the study findings. Finally, it has suggested areas for further study.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Study Timeline

The research project expected to take 7 months. Above was a proposed timeline.

Activity	2016			2018	2019	2020	2021
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan -Dec	Jan –Dec	Jan - Dec	Jan -Sept
Proposal writing							
Proposal Presentation and Defense							
Developing study tool and testing							
Data Collection							
Data analysis							
Presentation of results							
Corrections & Thesis Submission							

Source: Own from planning

Appendix 2: Focus Group Discussions Male and Female Respondents by Age Characteristics per Traditional Authority held on the 1st -5th July 2019

Traditional Authority	Male	Female
Kachidamoto	60	46
	56	67
	50	67
	67	45
	35	50
	34	25
	76	41
		33
Kaphuka	73	36
	70	67
	51	56
	60	56
	62	49
	54	57
	33	64
		49
		45

Kamenyagwaza	32	71
	43	79
	47	82
	61	56
	62	49
	57	48
		47
		50
		78
		41

Source: Own calculation from the data collected

Appendix 3: Characteristics of Male Respondents for the in-depth Interview in the three Traditional Authority of Dedza District held on the 5th -25th July,2019

	Sex	Education level	Age	Marital status	Dependants	How long have you been in this community	Village / TA
1	Male	No education	72	widower	Grand Children	Since birth	Gwaza Village, TA Kamenyagwaza 2
2	Male	No education	72	widower	Grand Children	Since birth	Gwaza Village, TA Kamenyagwaza 3
3	Male	No education	72	widower	Grand Children	Since birth	Gwaza Village, TA Kamenyagwaza 4
4	Male	No education	72	widower	Grand Children	Since birth	Gwaza Village, TA Kamenyagwaza 5
5	Male	No education	72	widower	Grand Children	Since birth	Gwaza Village, TA Kamenyagwaza 6

Source: Own calculation from the data collected

Appendix 4: Characteristics of Female Respondents for the in-depth Interview in the three Traditional Authority of Dedza District held on the 5th -25th July 2019

	Age	Marital status	Dependants	How long have you been in this community	Village / TA
1	76	Married	Grand Children	Since birth	Gwaza Village, TA Kamenyagwaza
2	72	Widow	Grand Children	Since birth	Gwaza Village, TA Kamenyagwaza
3	69	Widow	Grand Children	Moved from Gothi Village when she was 15 years old	Gwaza Village, TA Kamenyagwaza
4	60	Widow	Grand Children	15 years	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka
5	74	Widow	Grand Children	Since birth	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka
6	74	Widow	Grand Children	Since birth	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka
7	76	Widow	Grand Children	Since birth	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka
8	60+	Widow	Grand Children	Since birth	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka
9	63	Married	Grand Children	Since birth	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka
10	70	Widow	Grand Children	Came in 1994	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka
11	77	Widow	Grand Children	Since birth	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka
12	60+	Widow	Grand Children	Since birth	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka
13	60+	Widow	Grand Children	Since birth	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka

14	60+	Widow	Grand Children	Since birth	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka
15	66	Married	Grand Children	Since Birth	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka
16	60+	Widow	Grand Children	Since Birth	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka
17	64	re married	Grand Children	Since Birth	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka
18	60+	Widow	Grand Children	Came to Malawi at 12 years old from Zimbabwe	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka
19	63	Married	Grand Children	Since Birth	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka
20	60+	Widow	Grand Children	Since Birth	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka
21	60+	Widow	Grand Children	Since Birth	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka
22	60+	Widow	Grand Children	Since Birth	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka
23	63	Widow	Grand Children	Since birth	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka
24	60	Widow	Grand Children	Since birth	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka
25	65	Widow	Grand Children	Since birth	Kambalame village, TA Kaphuka
26	85	Widow	Child mentally ill, and grand children	Since birth	TA Kachidamoto

Appendix 5: Key Informant Interview Question Guide

Verbal Consent

My name is Emma Kalea, candidate for Masters in Development Studies at the University of Malawi, Chancellor College. I am here to chat with you about the participation of elderly in development in your Work site here in Dedza. I will be asking you questions for you to respond. Since we will do many interviews and we may not remember what everybody say we would like to ask to record our discussion. The recording is only for the purpose of this research. No person other than us will have access to it and it will be destroyed as soon as we get the information. Your information shall be kept confidential. No names will be used in the study. Your participation is voluntary; you can choose to not answer any question or stop participating at any stage of the interview.

You were selected for this interview because you work with an institution that works directly with people of different age groups here in Dedza. We consider you an expert in development here in Dedza so we would like to learn from you. Feel free to participate in the discussion. There is no right or wrong answer. The interview is expected not to take more than 1 hour.

Are you willing to participate in the study? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Can we record the interview? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Ice Breaking Questions

1. How old are you?
2. Highest qualification

3. How long have you worked in this organization?
4. In which TAs are you working?
5. Do you have any development programs you are attached to in this community?
6. Is there any officer who is directly involved with development needs targeting older people?

Institutional Background

1. What kind of community development initiatives does your institution implement?
2. Which groups do you target (by age and gender)?
3. Which areas does your institution target (probe for programs implemented in different TAs)?
4. Can you explain who is funding the development programs you have just mentioned?

Objective 1: Social-economic factors that influence participation of older persons in community development initiatives in Malawi.

1. What factors influence participation of older person in community development initiatives? (probe for information)
2. Are there any challenges you think older people face in trying to get actively involved in community development initiatives? What are these challenges? Are they different with those faced by people of other age groups?
3. What role do your institution take to include older people to participate in development initiatives?

4. Why do you think older persons should benefit more in community development initiatives?

Objective 2: Barriers affecting the participation of older persons in community development initiatives in Malawi.

1. Are there any challenges you think older people face in trying to get actively involved in community development initiatives? What are these challenges? Are they different with those faced by people of other age groups?
2. Can you explain if there is a difference in participation between males and females among the older people in your area?
3. In your experience, are the development needs for male and female older people different? ***Probe for the differences, gender differences.***
4. How has the involvement of older persons in development initiatives improved their lives?

Objective 3: effective approach pathways influencing participation of older persons in community development initiatives in Malawi

1. How does your organisation work with old persons in the development of community interventions?
2. What is your experience working with older people in development initiatives in the communities you are working (***probe for strengths and weaknesses in comparison with other age groups***)?
3. Which of the programs do you include the participation of older persons?

Closing questions

1. What are the effects of limited participation (lack of participation) of the older persons on community development?
2. Any comments?

Thank you very much.

Appendix 6: In-depth Interview Question Guide

Verbal Consent

My name is I am working with Emma Kalea, candidate for Masters in Development Studies at the University of Malawi, Chancellor College. I am here to chat with you about the participation of older people in development in your community. Our discussion will be in form of a chat. I will be asking you questions for you to respond. Since we will do many interviews and we may not remember what everybody say we would like to ask to record our discussion. The recording is only for the purpose of this research. No any person other than us will have access to it and it will be destroyed as soon as we get the information. Your information shall be kept confidential. No names will be used in the study. Your participation is voluntary; you can choose to not answer any question or stop participating at any stage of the interview.

You were selected because you are familiar with this area and are the right person who can provide right information about development in this area. You were also identified as one of the people who have experienced life as an older people in this community. Feel free to participate in the discussion. There is no right or wrong answer. The discussion is expected not to take more than 1 hour.

Are you willing to participate in the study? Yes ☐ No ☐

Can we record the interview? Yes ☐ No ☐

Record:

Gender:

Marital Status:

Education in yrs. _____

Ice Breaking Questions

1. How long have you been in this community?
2. How old are you?

Understanding of Participation, Development and older people

1. Who is considered old in this community?
2. Are there any community development initiatives in this community? (Probe kinds)

Assessing level of older people participation in development

1. What role do you and other older persons in this community take in development initiatives? (*probe for MASAF, CASH TRANSFER, MADERF etc.*)
2. How does your role as an older person compare to the role taken by other age groups? (youth, middle age and older people)
3. Do you think your role as older person enough in the development initiatives? How much do you think it should be?
4. Do you think development initiatives in your community allow for old people to participate in them? If yes or no, why?

Objective 2: Factors that influence participation of older person in community development initiatives.

1. What factors influence the older people to participate more in the development initiatives?
2. What do you think would make you participate more in development initiatives?
3. What would make them participate less?

Objective 3: Gender dynamics among the older persons participating in community development initiatives

1. In your perception who participates more from the community development initiative based on sex age probe the gender differences, i.e. *Male versus female young people. Male versus female older, male versus female middle age?* (*Probe who benefits and why*)
2. Is there a difference between the development needs of male and female older people?
3. Do you think development agents consider the differences in needs the when designing their programs?
4. What should development agents do in order to meet development needs of both male and female old people in their development efforts? (*What should the development agents do/consider to encourage participation of the older people in the development initiatives? (probe for sustainability) – Probe for mode of communication, approach?*)

Closing questions

3. Does lack of participation of the older people have any effect on community development?
4. Any comments?

Thank you very much.