

**IMPLEMENTATION OF DISCIPLINE POLICY: A CASE OF FIVE SELECTED
SECONDARY SCHOOLS UNDER ROBERT BLAKE CLUSTER IN DOWA
DISTRICT**

M. Ed. (POLICY, PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP) THESIS

By

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**UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE**

AUGUST, 2017

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B. Ed. (Humanities)-University of Livingstonia

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DECLARATION

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

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

To Wongani, Tawonga Happy, Donwell, Matete and grandparents for their inexpressible encouragement, which supported, guided, propelled me through the process that culminates here. I wish Alick Mackford Chigayilire Kamalong'o Kayira and his daughters Janet Masida Kayira were here to see where I have reached and enjoy their fruits of parenthood.

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ABSTRACT

The Ministry of Education in Malawi introduced the Secondary School Discipline Policy with the intention to maintain discipline among learners amidst rising cases of indiscipline in schools. This study investigated the extent of implementation of the policy in Dowa District to establish whether it was operating according to design. The study attempted to answer the question: ‘To what extent do secondary schools implement the Discipline Policy?’ The study employed a qualitative multi-case study research design comprising five secondary schools. Ninety five research participants comprising of five school Head teachers, Deputy Head teachers, Discipline Committee members, teachers and pupils were involved in the study. Data was generated through semi-structured in-depth interviews with heads and their deputy head teachers, Focus Group Discussions with discipline committee members and pupils. Questionnaires were self-administered to teachers within the Robert Blake Secondary School Cluster. Data was analysed qualitatively by analysing all themes in the study. The key finding of the study was that the Discipline Policy was not being followed to the letter as per its dictates due to administrators’ emotions’ and lack of awareness of the policy by stakeholders. The study concludes that lack of awareness of the policy and the absence of the policy itself in schools is hampering its effective implementation. This implies that unless all stakeholders are made aware of the policy, it remains a blue print and students will continue to be re-instated by MoEST and division persistently. The study recommends training and awareness on the proper implementation of the Discipline Policy.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DP	Discipline Policy
DC	Discipline Committee
(DCM/S/ 1)	Discipline Committee Members from School numbers 1-5
HTs	Head teachers
(HT1-5)	Head teacher 1,2,3,4 and 5
DHTs	Deputy Head teachers
(DHT/1-5)	Deputy Head Teachers from school number1-5
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGD/P/S1-5)	Focus Group Discussion with Pupils from school number 1,2,3,4 and 5.
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
(T3/S1)	Teacher number 3 from school number 1
MoEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
EDM	Education Divisional Managers

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the background to the study, issues and signs of indiscipline in Secondary Schools (SS), the extent and status of discipline including challenges and solutions to the implementation of the Discipline Policy (DP) in SS. It also presents statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study and chapter summary.

1.1 Background to the Study

This study aims at assessing the implementation of the Discipline Policy in selected schools of Central East Education Division (CEED) in Dowa District. In 2009, a study by Sakala was conducted under the title ‘a review of the implementation of the discipline policy in secondary schools of CEED’ under the context of Human Rights in Malawi. The study sought the views of 30 students and 10 head teachers each from Dowa Kasungu, Salima and Nkhotakota secondary schools. The study sampled four conventional secondary schools using questionnaires where 10 students and 2 (a head teacher and a deputy head teacher) participated in the FGD and the interview process respectively. The study found that there still exist more challenges in implementing the discipline policy in the schools studied despite head teachers being trained to streamline

human rights in decision making as they administer schools. No single challenge was however mentioned in the study.

Sakala's study recommended that a study should be carried out to find out whether teachers and students attitudes affect the implementation of the discipline policy. It is against this background that this study will assess the implementation of the discipline policy. However, this study will analyse attitudes of teachers and administrators because their influence could have much impact on the implementation of the policy itself than students. This is because if teachers and administrators are not fully aware of the policy then its implementation would be jeopardised. In addition, the study will focus on level of adherence of administrators to the DP and expound on challenges and recommendations which Sakala's study falls short of since he has not come out clear on challenges affecting the implementation of the policy. Again, despite Sakala's study having mentioned that there still exist many challenges affecting the implementation of the policy, no possible recommendations have thus been proposed. Furthermore, Sakala's study sampled only boarding secondary schools, one from each district in the division as if they are the only source of indiscipline. Hence, this study will integrate by focusing on one national secondary school, one private Community Day Secondary School and three CDSSs but confined to Dowa District and within Robert Blake Cluster. Lastly, the study will not specifically focus on human rights context but will be holistic taking on board even attitude of teachers and administrators. The question is, why are schools losing meagre resources attending and contesting court cases where they end up losing to students instead of utilising such scarce resources in teaching and learning as a core

function of education? Why have most schools ruined their reputation due to massive and unstoppable indiscipline cases despite the availability of the discipline policy? Is the policy really there on the ground? If the discipline policy is there, why is it that we are experiencing all these indiscipline cases in schools?

1.2. Statement of the research problem

Indiscipline cases in secondary schools are increasing at alarming rate; this is worrisome to both teachers and parents (Ajowi, 2013). A commission of inquiry instituted by the state president largely attributed low pass at MSCE to indiscipline in secondary schools, (Malunga, 2000). The simultaneous closure of Rumphi, Robert Laws, Chaminade and Dowa secondary schools in early 2000 indicate indiscipline in secondary schools are on the increase and becoming out of control as reported by Sakala (2009). In Dowa District, within a month during the time the study was being conducted some seven schools were vandalized and closed down due to indiscipline. According to Luhanga (2010), the frequency of occurrence of indiscipline cases and their rates as indicated by several judicial reviews from the courts and other rights bodies' institutions question the effectiveness of the disciplinary handling procedures in schools. Given the high prevalence of indiscipline cases in Dowa, it is critical that a scholarly study is undertaken to appreciate the indiscipline phenomenon. Therefore, this study endeavoured to investigate how secondary schools in Dowa District were implementing the Discipline Policy.

1.3 Status of Discipline, other studies and Legal implications on the Discipline in Malawian secondary schools

Discipline is a national issue according to Chazema (2007 and Sakala (2009). This is because studies conducted in Malawi as well as other countries show that indiscipline is on the rise due to political transition from one party to political pluralism which has caused excitement among learners however, there is not much on how the policy is faring and whether it matches with changes in socio-political and technological changes in space. It is however worth noting that according to Sakala (2009) most of the schools continue to report violent clashes between learners and administrators due to among other reasons, lack of proper knowledge and understanding of the policy. Therefore, it is not clear where the problem is when it comes to implementation of the policy itself. Who is to blame? Is it the policy? Learners? Implementers? or other stakeholders?

In other countries however, there is research evidence that the zero tolerance on discipline and proper use of positive behavioural approaches have helped in instilling discipline in learners which is not the case in Malawi. There is lack of research evidence to assess how the Discipline policy is being implemented on the ground and whether it is still relevant or not in order to make recommendations for refinements. Kuthemba-Mwale and others did a study to determine and describe the impact of the indiscipline on school life and school property, the pupils' life and on society in general. Their study revealed that indiscipline cases had been on increase since the advent of democracy in Malawi citing misunderstanding, misconception and misrepresentation of human rights and

democracy as being the root causes of indiscipline in schools. This implies that the implementation of the DP in schools was at stake citing the findings of the above study.

On legal basis, Malawi Human Right Commission, Office of the Ombudsman including the judiciary have exonerated several students charged with serious offenses ranging from arson and assault to malicious damage to property, according to Kuthemba-Mwale (2006). They add that secondary schools report high incidence of drug and alcohol abuse, cheating in examinations, insubordination, truancy and intimidation monthly. However, most of these students have either been reinstated or had their charges dropped by rights bodies including courts citing unprocedural and unfair dismissals and suspension on the basis that they breached the principles of natural justice provided for both in the Discipline Policy and Malawi Constitution under Section 43 (1) a and b according to Luhanga (2010) and MoEST (2010).

This has led to the concerned schools to lose their integrity and resources in contesting court decisions which unfortunately end up losing to students. Ombudsman report of 1998 confirms that 70% of such investigated indiscipline cases ended up in favour of the complainant, creating an impression that the ombudsman favours the complainant. According to the Ombudsman's report, this assumption is wrong because this office is a neutral player whose main interest is to ensure that justice is done. A report clearly stipulates that among several cases the office is handling, the ministry of Education has topped the list with cases where principles of natural justice have been breached by the Discipline Committees and Head teachers prompting the office to set aside such decisions

and order reinstatement of the children regardless of the gravity of offenses committed from various school. This demotivates the discipline committee. These sentiments were also echoed by Luhanga (2010) who assert that the print media has been awash with numerous incidences where punishment decisions have been challenged in courts in the name of human rights and democracy while in the process affecting the teachers' power to exercise their authority on students in school.

On status of discipline in secondary schools, local literature available show that in 1996, Kuthemba-Mwale, Tizifa and Malunga did a study to determine and describe the impact of the indiscipline on school life and school property, the pupils life and on society in general. The study targeted both government secondary schools and private in all three regions and sought the views of 356 respondents comprising; 19 head teachers, one proprietor, 10 boarding masters/mistresses, 98 teachers, 115 pupils, 30 cooks, 10 matrons, 23 support staff, 32 parents/guardians and 18 politicians. The study found that indiscipline cases were on increase on the advent of democracy in Malawi; sighting; misunderstanding, misconception and misrepresentation of human rights and democracy as being the root causes of indiscipline in schools. Secondly, students' reaction to student-teacher communication, the quality and quantity of school facilities, the quality of teachers and the media sending mixed signals. These affect students' behaviour and the inefficiency of the MoEST in carrying out its policies and were also identified as the major cause of indiscipline. Destruction of school property has been on increase and this has increased mistrust between teachers and students and in the end affecting teaching and learning according to (Kuthemba-Mwale) study cited in Sakala,(2009). While

Chazema (2007) and Sakala (2009) commends the study for being representative of all stakeholders in education sector and hence fit for generalisation, the study was not built on any theory as its major weakness according to Chazema (2009).

This study will converge with Kuthemba-Mwale study on the findings that the ministry of education is inefficient in executing policies properly as one of the reasons why indiscipline cases are on the increase. This is because, this study will be assessing the implementation of the DP in Dowa district to ascertain whether the assertions are reflecting what is on the ground. The diversion will be on focus, as this study will not focus on national level and in terms of sample as it will concentrate in Dowa district.

In 1999, a Presidential Commission of Inquiry was instituted to investigate poor performance of the 1999 MSCE examination results which were the lowest 13.7% in decades. Of the 45,416 students who sat for national examinations, only 6,207 had passed according to Malunga et al. (2000) cited in Sakala (2009). The Commission sought the views of 82 respondents comprising 10 politicians, 3 Ministry of Education officials, 8 Education divisions personnel, 4 Teaching Service Commissioners, 2 Teachers Union of Malawi personnel, 1 Episcopal Conference, 1 Faith Based Organisation personnel, 4 Deans of colleges, 6 HODs of Colleges, 1 Voluntary Service Organisation Official, 6 Registrars and Principals of colleges, 4 DEOs, 4 MIE personnel, 1 National Librarian Service personnel, 2 Administrators of associations, and 1 Private Secondary School Proprietor. The findings revealed indiscipline in schools as one of the major factors leading to poor performance. Other factors found were related to characteristics of

students, teachers and the learning environment. The convergence with this study will be to find out whether the students indiscipline is as a result in poor implementation of the DP, however, the divergence will be on the fact that it will not specifically look at students' performance and indiscipline, but rather how schools were implementing the DP in the district.

In 2007, yet another study was conducted by Chazema on pupils' indiscipline in selected secondary schools in Zomba district. The study sought the views of head teachers, students, teachers and parents/guardians. The study confirmed the continued presence of increased indiscipline cases in secondary schools due to, among others, ineffective discipline committees in handling students' indiscipline. It was revealed by Chazema (2007) that in most schools, discipline committees exists only on paper and that they convene on an ad hoc basis. This study will also try to find out if is true that the implementation of the DP is affected by the ineffective discipline committees. It is also a fact that indiscipline cases exists in secondary schools as alluded to by Chazema but the focus of this study will be on finding the cause of indiscipline in secondary schools besides having the DP in place.

In 2009, a study by Sakala was conducted under the title a review of the implementation of the discipline policy in secondary schools of CEED under the context of Human Rights in Malawi. The study sought the views of 30 students and 10 head teachers each from Dowa Kasungu, Salima, Nkhotakota secondary schools. The study sampled four conventional secondary schools using questionnaires where 10 students and 2 (a head

teacher and a deputy head teacher) participated in the FGD and the interview process respectively. The study found that there still exist more challenges in implementing the discipline policy in the schools studied despite head teachers being trained to streamline human rights in decision making as they administer schools. No single challenge was however mentioned in the study.

Sakala's study recommended that a study should be carried out to find out whether teachers and students attitudes affect the implementation of the discipline policy. It is against this background that this study will assess the implementation of the discipline policy. However, this study will analyse attitudes of teachers and administrators because their influence could have much impact on the implementation of the policy itself than students. This is because if teachers and administrators are not fully aware of the policy then its implementation would be jeopardised. In addition, the study will focus on level of adherence of administrators to the DP and expound on challenges and recommendations which Sakala's study falls short of since he has not come out clear on challenges affecting the implementation of the policy. Again, despite Sakala's study having mentioned that there still exist many challenges affecting the implementation of the policy, no possible recommendations have thus been proposed. Furthermore, Sakala's study sampled only boarding secondary schools, one from each district in the division as if they are the only source of indiscipline. Hence, this study will integrate by focusing on one national secondary school, one private Community Day Secondary School and three CDSSs but confined to Dowa District and within Robert Blake Cluster. Lastly, the study will not specifically focus on human rights context but will be holistic taking on board

even attitude of teachers and administrators. The question again is, why are schools losing meagre resources attending and contesting court cases where they end up losing to students instead of utilising such scarce resources in teaching and learning as a core function of education? Lastly, this study will not specifically focus on human rights context but will be holistic taking on board even attitude of teachers and administrators to fill the literature gap. This study therefore bridges this literature gap and assesses the implementation of the Discipline Policy in selected secondary schools to understand why indiscipline is on the rise in secondary schools in Malawi and unveil challenges of implementing it and make recommendations of addressing them. If the discipline policy is there, why is it that we are experiencing all these indiscipline cases in schools? Something has gone wrong.

1.4 Purpose to the study

The purpose of this study was to assess how secondary schools in Dowa District implement the Discipline Policy in enforcing students' discipline.

1.5 Research questions for the study

The study was guided by the following main research question: To investigate this question deeply the following subsidiary research questions were employed:

1.5.1 Main Research Question

The main research question was: what challenges do Secondary School administrators in Dowa District face when implementing the Discipline Policy in a quest to instill discipline among students.

1.5.2 Subsidiary Research Questions

In order to respond to the main question, the following were the sub-questions:

- What are common students discipline problems in schools?
- To what extent are teachers aware of MOEST policy on school discipline
- How do head teachers understand the DP?
- To what extent do head teachers follow discipline policy guidelines when dealing with indiscipline cases?
- What challenges do school administrators encounter when implementing the DP?

1.6 Significance of the study

The Ministry of Education, Division, Schools, teachers and other policy makers will consider using another work of the new findings in the implementation of Discipline policy in their quest to inculcate the right discipline in learners so as to achieve the goals of secondary school education in Malawi.

Secondly, the study will contribute to the body of knowledge and literature on holistic approach to implementation of the DP since no researcher has investigated the extent to which the policy has been implemented in this district. To that effect, this study will act as an additional reference point for other future studies on the subject.

Lastly, the findings of the study will open a new chapter for administrators to appreciate gaps and challenges of implementing the Secondary School Discipline Policy and in one way or another save school resources from unnecessary court battles with disgruntled students and maintain their integrity.

1.7 Definitions of terms

According to Kruger (1997), a policy can be regarded as a general statement that permits a person to make decisions within certain rigid boundaries. A policy cannot be equated with rules and regulations. According to Kruger and Van Schalkwyk (1993) policy formulation is regarded as a management task by which guidelines for behaviour are set up, to attain which objectives. This is in line with the definition of Haddad (1999) who defined a policy as explicit or implicit single decision or group of decisions which may set out directives for guiding future decisions, initiate or retard action, or guide implementation of previous decisions.

1.8 Organisation of the Thesis

This research project is organised into five chapters. Chapter one presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study and significance of the study. Chapter two outlines the literature of previous studies and conceptual framework that guides the study. Chapter three consists of the research methodology. Chapter four discusses research findings, analysis, interpretation and presentation while Chapter five presents conclusions and recommendations on the findings of the study.

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study and the organisation of thesis. The next chapter presents and discusses literature review related to implementation of discipline policy.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents a review of literature on the implementation of the Discipline Policy in secondary schools of Dowa District. It highlights key studies so far conducted in this discipline, understanding of the meaning of discipline and Discipline Policy, causes, challenges and solutions to the challenges. The chapter also describes and justifies a theoretical framework underpinning this study and ends with a chapter summary.

2.1 Understanding the meaning of “Discipline” and “Discipline Policy”

Wilson (1981) defines discipline as obedience, respect and good behaviour. Kuthemba-Mwale (1996) defined discipline as a process of obtaining and maintaining expected and appropriate behaviour and the prevailing conditions of such expected and appropriate behaviour and order in classrooms and the school. Kounin (1977) defined discipline as a fraternity and enthusiasm whereby there is a warm feeling between school authorities and pupils. Discipline, according to Chazema (2007), originates from the word “disciple” meaning a follower or a pupil of an accepted leader. Nkhokwe et al. (2014) defines school discipline as the system of rules, punishment and behavioural strategies appropriate to the regulation of children or adolescents, while school indiscipline is a contrary act by a student that breaks any of the schools rule and regulation. Chazema

(2007) outlines characteristics of a disciplined pupil which includes; accepting rules and obeying them, being relied upon to obey the rules and obey them willingly without being forced and having a disposition to obey; obeying the established authority and exhibiting good behaviour in dress code and language, among others.

For this discussion, the researcher adopts Nkhokwe's definition which defines school discipline as the system of rules, punishment and behavioural strategies appropriate to the regulation of children or adolescents, while school indiscipline is a contrary act by a student that breaks any of the school's rules and regulation. This definition has been adopted because when compared to other definitions provided, they do not talk of the rewards for behaving contrary to expected behaviour. This definition secondly clearly explains that discipline is a system of rules, punishments and strategies to the regulation of the child, meaning that the aim of discipline is not necessarily to punish again but those that behaves to the contrary after they have been punished, they should be guided by being given best ways of how the school expects them to behave. It is thus comprehensive as it touches to what the researcher is trying to find out in the implementation of the DP.

A policy, according to Wolf et al. (1999), refers to the grand sweeping policy objectives of governments while Haddad (1995) defined it as an explicit or implicit single decision or group of decisions which may set out directives for guiding future decisions, initiate or retard action, or guide implementation of previous decisions. According to Kruger

(1997), a policy can be regarded as “a general statement that permits a person to make decisions within certain rigid boundaries”.

From the definitions of a policy by different authors, it is coming out clearly that one distinctive factor is that a policy has authority because it can retard a decision and at the same time it can give directive on how to manage previous decision. In this case, Hadad's definition fits this discussion. Discipline is therefore the behavioural art displayed by student while the DP is a document meant to regulate the general behavioural pattern of students to ensure it is in line with requirements of schools to ensure its achievements are met.

2.2 The Need for Secondary School Discipline and its Background

Ideally, schools set rules and regulations for the proper governing of the various lifestyles of students containing the dos and don'ts (Okumbe, 1998). Regulations on the other hand, are authoritative orders with a course of law intended to promote order and efficiency in an organisation. Lupton and Jones (2002) also concurred with Okumbe (1998), and argued that effective schools demonstrate sound inclusive practices which include emphasising school rules and regulations, collaborative leadership and their good practice. The school rules and regulations, therefore, prescribe the standard of behaviour expected of the teachers and the students. According to Adams (2003), school rules and regulations are among the strategies designed to instill good conduct in students. This implies self-control, orderliness, good behaviour and obedience to school authority (Adams, 2003). On admission to schools, especially at secondary level, students are given prospectuses which spell out some of the expectations.

According to a study conducted in Uganda, Busiro County, rules and regulations specify, in most cases, what school members should do and what they should not do. Despite this expectation, in most secondary schools in Busiro County in Uganda, students break these rules and regulations with wide spread indiscipline acts such as; escaping from schools, taking of alcoholic drinks, participating in frequent strikes with closure of schools and suspension of students that affect students academic performance. Kabandize (2001) carried out a study on students, control through rules and regulations set by individual schools in Uganda and observed that rules and regulations are enforced through prefects' bodies and councils, disciplinary committees, teachers and involvement of parents. Cotton (2001) also argued that the best results could be obtained through vigilantly reminding students about rules and regulations.

It has become normal in many secondary schools for students to break school rules and regulations with impunity, showing lack of respect to school authority, damaging of school property, beating up their teachers, rioting at any slightest opportunity and even inflicting harm on one another to the extent of using acid as a means of defence (Tshabangu, 2013). The consequences from such undisciplined behaviours may result into poor students' academic performance. Clifford (1993) also concurred with Mafabi et al. (1993) where he noted that discipline should take precedence over other activities and must be enforced. According to Mafabi et al. (1993), punishments are expected to suppress unwanted response during the time students are under teachers' observation. This opinion is also shared by (Cotton et al, 2000), who said that punishments in a school

system are expected to teach students the relationship between their behaviours and the outcome or accountability for their mistakes.

Cowley (2001) also argued that with a well-behaved class, teaching could be among the most wonderful jobs in the world. However, what really occurs on the ground is that unwanted behaviours are on the increase despite the presence of these punishments. Teachers are worried about the aggression being directed to them by both students and their parents. This has resulted into some students being expelled; and others suspended, forced to do hard labour at school, chased out of classes all of which seem to affect their academic performance. This study therefore investigated the existing relationship between administration of punishments and academic performance.

Baumard (1999) shared the same opinion with Mafabi et al. (1993), and argued that punishment is a means of controlling disruptive behaviour. He further stated that if punishment is the logical result of misconduct, the student is likely to accept it without resentment. Teachers need always to help students to realise the appropriateness of punishment before initiating it. Cotton (2000) also contends that uniform punishment can be an effective way of controlling students' behaviour if students, teachers and school administrators know and understand that punishments are firm, fair and consistent. They act as motivators to students in order to improve students' learning and academic performance. On the contrary, discipline has more to do with teaching and self-control. Learning theories indicate that punishment was ineffective for producing significant and lasting behavioural change (Canter, 2000).

2.3 Causes of Indiscipline in Schools

It has been established by Tshabangu (2013) that students engage in unaccepted behaviours in schools due to a variety of reasons including living in dysfunctional homes, going to school hungry, being tired or upset, being bored due to use of drugs and drug abuse, family conflicts and parents separation, peer pressure, teachers' authoritarian nature and lack of commitment on the part of students (Lloyd & Judith 1997; Yahaya et al., 2009; Tshabangu, 2008;); Tshangu, 2013).

Changes signalling maturity in the course of growth and development of students in secondary schools tend to make students disobey (Mukharjee, 1985). These changes are too strong among youth in secondary schools. Rebelliousness and pressure of students result in limitless school and classroom disruptions ending up with many suspensions in a year (Cotton, 2000). These experiences make the offices of the deputy principals a beehive of activities in discipline management among other duties.

2.4 Attitudes of teachers and administrators in discipline

Ndeto (2013) explains that teachers do not generally want to give control to their students especially on matters of discipline. According to him, this is because they are instructed that the mark of a good teacher is the teacher who controls the class. Ndeto (2013) adds that the amount of control that teachers have in the class is often seen by the administration as a measurement of the quality of a teacher. Administrators are usually happy if a teacher never sends a student to the office and interpret this as proof that the teacher is in control and must be doing a good job thus the students are disciplined (Visser, 2009) in Ndeto (2013).

In a study that was conducted by Ajowi, stakeholders were given a chance to express their views on the discipline issues affecting their country. Administrators, students and teachers were found to be the two groups with the least amount of input into discipline problems being addressed in our school systems according to Ajowi (2013).

However, a 1997 “Poll of Teachers’ attitudes Toward the Public Schools Discipline Policy” gives us a brighter picture of discipline than does the general public (Langdon, 1997). The opinions gathered through this poll shared the similarities and differences between public school teachers’ attitudes and attitudes of the public at large. Teachers expressed that they feel schools are doing a relatively good job with discipline with as many as 73% giving the school where they teach a rating of A or B.

Several issues have changed over the years including teacher’s perceptions of lack of parental support. Teachers feel parents do less than they say they will do to support teachers with discipline issues. In general the greatest percentage of teachers believes public schools have improved. All teachers, regardless of where they teach, rate their schools higher than does the public (Krajewski, 1998). Short (1988) explained that administrators, attitude toward discipline of learners is seen in leadership which is the key to determining how schools operate, specifically with discipline structure of the school. He narrated that successful principals do not only make themselves visible within a school but they are also present in the hallways, classrooms and lunchrooms. Principals who lead their school in this way expect teachers to handle the routine discipline

problems and see their role as facilitating the problem-solving skills of teachers and students (Short, 1988).

On administrators' attitudes to discipline, Kiggudu (2009) in a study to assess the effectiveness of rules and regulation in public secondary schools in Kenya concluded that traditionally, teachers are encouraged to believe that the learning environment must be orderly and quiet. He added that to some principals, a quiet classroom means adherence to classroom rules which prohibit noise making in class. Kipprop added that with the growing movement toward cooperative learning, more teachers are using activities in which students take an active role to that effect, he agreed with Kiggudu (2009) when he said that sharing ideas and information with various activities occurring at the same time can make noisy classrooms but argued that it would be a mistake to conclude that in such classrooms students are not learning and that they are violating classroom rules.

2.5 Common discipline cases in secondary schools

Theft is a common activity among secondary school students. For instance in 2003, a student broke into a biology laboratory, stole ethanol and consumed it ending up with loss of sight and even life (Banda, 2004). Mtsweni (2008) maintains that educators often complain about unacceptable forms of behaviour such as disruption of schools by ill disciplined learners, late coming in the morning and during the school day, truancy, a refusal to attend certain lessons, students absconding from study cycles, failure to do homework, failure to adhere to school policies and the flouting of authority. These forms of misbehaviour eventually seem to have a negative influence on teachers discipline too.

Learners' disciplinary problems in South Africa range from the rejection of reasoning, late coming, truancy, neglecting to do homework, noisiness, physical violence, theft, threats, graffiti, vandalism, verbal abuse, lack of concentration, criminality, gangsterism, rape, constant violation of the schools' code of conduct and substance abuse within and around the schools' premises for the educators to manage their classes effectively". Ngcayi (1997, p17)

2.6 The Malawi Secondary school Discipline Policy

Concerned with the ever rising cases of indiscipline problems in secondary schools, in 2008, MoEST came up with a Discipline Policy. The policy was introduced in order to contain indiscipline among students in Malawian secondary schools and promote effective teaching and learning, a core objective of MoEST. The policy document reveals that Malawi has over the years experienced an increase in pupils' general misbehaviour, which include; drunkenness, defiance of authority, vandalism, insolence, use of abusive language, assault and truancy, which according to the policy, has disrupted the tranquillity necessary for effective teaching and learning in school.

The policy contents include an outline of offences that require internal corrective measure, suspension and exclusion from school respectively. The policy has laid down procedures which head teachers must follow when processing students' disciplinary cases under part 6 (a) to (i). Part (a) stipulates that before any cases start, authorities must thoroughly investigate all cases before a decision is made, the accused students be accorded opportunity to be heard by both the Head teacher (HT) and the school Discipline Committee (DC). Besides verbal explanation, the accused student be accorded

the right to submit a written report or statement which s/he must sign. This is also in line with the provision of the Assertive Discipline as postulated by Canter, (2000)

The policy also provides that witnesses in any discipline case must submit written statements which must be signed. In addition, the HT must finally submit comprehensive report with recommendations on each case. The policy also demand that the accused student's report, DC's report, witnesses reports and any other relevant documents must be attached to the HT's final report on submission to the appropriate authorities. All discipline cases warranting rustication from school up to a maximum period of two weeks must be reported to the Education Division Office. All discipline cases warranting suspension up to a maximum period of 6 weeks, must be reported to the Education Division Office with copies to MoEST Head Office. Any case deserving exclusion from school must be reported to the MoEST Head Office with copies to the Division Office.

On national examinations, the policy gives a chance to excluded students to write national examinations but penalises them if in the course of writing national examinations, they engage in very serious indiscipline. However, the policy does not define what constitutes very serious indiscipline, nor does it provide a list of such offenses, giving discretionary powers to administrators to define. On expulsion of pregnant girls, the 1993 policy did not accommodate exclusion of both boys and girls until recently when it was revised to accommodate both sexes around the year 2000.

The policy emphasises procedures which should be followed when handling indiscipline cases, which should be in line with principles of natural justice founded in the national constitution under Chapter IV section, 43 (a) and (b) in order to minimise unnecessary battles with the office of Ombudsman. Under natural justice, the policy outlines steps to be followed, when disciplining students and among others, the policy provides that before commencement of disciplinary action, the concerned individual should be heard and informed in advance in writing of the impending trial. This conforms to Assertive Discipline theoretical framework as advanced by Canter who outlined the same.

2.7 Challenges in implementing the Discipline Policy in Secondary Schools

In many post primary institutions rules and regulations are not popular. Cotton (2000) recommended an open minded approach to school rules and regulations. Most of the school rules and regulations are established without the involvement of the students leading to their resistance (Kabandize, 2004). Consequently many students in many institutions end up setting up their own rules parallel to the ones set by the school. Responsiveness to rules could become a concern of how managers view them (Salzer-Morling, 2000). These make management differ from one school to another. A wide spread violence and misbehaviour exists in many secondary schools (Matsoga, 2003).

Absence of functional discipline committees in secondary schools is another challenge. In a study to establish whether secondary schools had discipline committees and whether such discipline committees were functional in Kenya Secondary schools, it was found by Banda (2004) that around 80% of the respondents agreed that discipline committees are formed in their secondary schools while around 20% disagreed. This implied that

although most of the schools form discipline committees, 20% do not obey the policy guidelines from the government. This would definitely bring chaos in the implementation of the discipline policy. Moyo (2014) argued that the denial of such a resource in a school setup implies that such a school cannot function properly.

Lack of training for the deputy head teachers in managing discipline in secondary schools is another challenge facing the implementation of the discipline policy, according to Banda (2004). However, the results obtained from another Kenyan secondary school research to find out whether it was necessary to train deputy head teachers in managing school discipline indicated that, around 50% of respondents supported the training of all deputy head teachers in discipline management. Similarly, around 50% were against the proposal. This implies that those who objected to the training supported the view that discipline comes from the individual according to Chambers (1983) and Okiemute (2011). However, education and training are vital to any policy implementation.

Matsoga (2003), cited unavailability of established codes of discipline by some schools in his study of 2003 where it was reported that over 80% supported the idea that schools had established codes of discipline while about 20% either disagreed or were not aware of school codes of discipline. This implies that majority of the schools have been able to implement discipline policy and created awareness. However, around 20% of the schools had not created enough awareness or rules and regulations are not popular. Even Cotton (2000) cited similar scenarios in his studies of school discipline management.

From the studies, it can be concluded that implementing the DP is not just a teacher's job alone but needs collaboration and great awareness to all stakeholders. Availability of the policies in schools is fundamental if schools are to implement such policies according to its dictates. Finally having the policies alone without the functional discipline committees which are properly trained it's another crucial element in managing discipline in secondary schools.

Chambers (1983) confessed that another challenge facing implementation of the DP is the unavailability of the DP in secondary schools. In his studies, Chambers (1983) revealed that some less than 10% strongly disagreed with the idea that there was a discipline policy in schools while over 80% confirmed that discipline policy was available in schools. While this implies that the ministry of education have cascaded the policy to secondary level, Chambers argues it is unfortunate that some schools do not have a discipline policy in their schools and wonders how such schools manage to discipline its misbehaving students.

Unclear Discipline procedures in the secondary school is yet another impediment hampering the successful implementation of the discipline policy. Jones, (1978) argued that lack of clear discipline procedures may lead to resentment by the students. Chambers (1983) wondered whether some cases should be left to the Principal to relieve the deputy of the burden. While the available study indicates that most respondents were of the

opinion that some discipline cases should be left to the Principal, some were of contrary view. This implies that deputy principals do not get the desired support from principals on discipline issues contrary to the most code of regulations including that of Kenya (TSC, 2003) where the deputy principal is expected to assist the principal. The above principle is also applicable in Malawian secondary schools.

Banda (2004) stressed the need to listen to students when hearing discipline cases if implementations of the discipline policies are to be met and avert court battles bordering on natural justice, among others. In his recent studies in Botswana secondary schools on whether it was important for administrators to listen keenly to students in the disciplinary process, it was revealed that over 60% were in agreement that students should be listened to in the disciplinary process and 40% of the respondents disagreed. This implies that chances of high handedness still exist in some schools and that the deputy principals are not prepared enough in management of discipline together with the student body.

Banda (2004) also cited obsolete Discipline Policies, which are not in tandem with new generation of students. He argued that it was important that discipline policies should be reviewed periodically as time changes, citing changes in generations and laws. Some deputy head teachers interviewed in his study confirmed in Botswana secondary schools that one of their challenges in implementing discipline was that, in most cases, the policies were outdated and secondly, due to generation gap. Judgments' by Courts are sometimes unfair and perpetrate indiscipline as reported by Manchuria et al. (2014). He

argues that sometimes court judgments' goes against school rules thereby rendering their efforts to instil discipline worthless.

In Malawi, the Malawi Human Right Commission, Office of the Ombudsman including the judiciary have exonerated several students from various government secondary schools charged with serious offenses ranging from arson, assault and others like malicious damage to private and public property in the country, according to Kuthemba-Mwale (2006). MoEST (2010) further reported that during the same period, secondary schools reported high incidence of drug and alcohol abuse, cheating in examinations, insubordination, truancy and intimidation.

Most of these students have either been reinstated or had their charges dropped by rights bodies including courts, citing un procedural and unfair dismissals and suspension on the basis that they breached the principles of natural justice as clearly provided for both in the Discipline Policy and Malawi Constitution under Section 43 (1) a and b Luhanga, (2010). This has led the concerned schools in losing their integrity and resources in contesting the court decisions which they end up losing in most cases. A report by Ombudsman in 1998 confirmed that 70% of the investigated cases before it end in favour of the complainant. The report further revealed that this creates an impression that the office of the ombudsman favours the complainant which is not true.

2.8 Recommendations to Challenges of Implementing the DP in Secondary Schools

There is need to strictly follow principles of natural justice when implementing the policies if authorities are to achieve their objectives. The history of principles of natural justice, according to Matenje (2007), emanates from the principle that someone should be heard in their own defence before they are punished or before some decision adverse to them is made and is of very ancient origin. According to Matenje (2007) adhering to principles of natural justice was traced to the Garden of Eden in Dr *Bentley's* case in 1723 where Mr. Justice Fortes Cue reiterated that even God did not just punish Adam before hearing him. Ombudsman's report of 2010 indicated that his office is a neutral player whose main interest is to ensure that justice is done. Kasunda (2006) and Chatambalala (2010) assert that although many educationists justify the rationale of giving punishments to learners' legal practitioners, while agreeing with educationists and administrators; argue that it is not the reasons for discipline but the process, which worries them more.

Luhanga (2010) explained that there is need to embark on teaching responsibilities in schools to complement their understanding of their rights. Luhanga (2010) pointed out that the problem with democracy to students is that they think they only have rights without responsibilities, which is a cause of many indiscipline cases in secondary schools in Malawi.

Wolf et al. (1999) concedes that many studies in Malawi and Namibia have concluded that the key ingredient to successful policy implementation is the participation of a wide range of stakeholders in the policy formation process. However, complex forces are at work in most countries, and policies are not always created in such a participatory fashion. Nor, for that matter, do many policies of long term benefit to society have the support of the majority of society in the short term?

The importance of parental involvement in the school activities is also emphasised by various researchers. Blandford (1998, p.32) asserts that “an active relationship between parents and educators have great benefits. Parents can have a great impact on their children’s behaviour by ensuring that the learners arrive at school on time, behave correctly, wear relevant clothing, are in possession of required books and complete tasks on time.” Mtsweni (2008) also asserts that if parents and educators possess a mutual appreciation of the role each has to play in the education of their children, opportunities for development are increased.

Furthermore, Dekker (1993) states that when parents become more involved in the teaching programmes of the school, they are more likely to make school a priority for their children and their children are more likely to achieve better grades in the school. Lemmer (2002) adds that the benefits of parental involvement in education for learners regardless of cultural background are well documented as higher scholastic achievement, reduced dropout rate as well as reduced absenteeism. Kruger (2003, p.9) states that, “without the cooperation between the parent and educator, the child cannot be

sufficiently educated”. The parent and the educator have a special and important role to play in the education and discipline of their child.

2.9 Theoretical framework of the study

This study will be guided by the Canter Model also known as Assertive Discipline Theory. According to Canter, discipline rests on how the teacher responds to misbehaviour. Canter et.al (2000) argue that it is up to the teacher to keep students in line during class. In the past the theory focussed on class discipline, however, in a modified model argues that the models now focuses on positive discipline methods than on the use of force. Canter and Canter (1992) described five steps of assertive discipline. First, teachers must acknowledge that they can and do affect student behaviour. Second, teachers must learn to display an assertive response style, which is the most effective style they can have. Third, teachers must make a discipline plan that contains good rules with clear and effective consequences. Fourth, teachers must provide student instruction on the discipline plan. Finally, teachers should instruct students on how to behave responsibly. In summary, Malmgren et al. (2005) says teachers should develop a set of rules for the classroom. Second, teachers should determine a set of positive consequences for following the rules. Third, teachers should establish a set of negative consequences for not following the rules. Finally, teachers should implement the model with the students to obtain discipline. Canter warns that even after being taught the discipline plan, some students will continue to misbehave.

For such students, a one-on-one problem-solving conference should be scheduled to gain insight into the student’s behaviour. The purpose is not to punish the student but to provide guidance. Second, a relationship should be built from the use of positive support.

The teacher should show the student that s/he cares about the student as a person and should make an attempt to get to know the student on a more personal basis. The student must feel that the teacher truly cares about him/her. Finally, an individualised behaviour plan should be developed that is more specialised to the student's individual needs.

Canter models postulates that teachers have the right to determine the environmental structure, rules and routines that will facilitate learning. According to Canter, teachers have the right to insist that students conform to their standards and that they should prepare a discipline plan in advance, including statements of their expectations, rules, and routines and the type of discipline method to be used if and when students misbehave. Finally, Students do not have the right to interfere with others' learning.

Additionally, Canter explains that when students do not behave in a manner consistent with teacher expectations, teachers can respond non assertively by giving up, hostilely by showing anger, or assertively by calmly insisting and assuming that students will fulfil these expectations. The Assertive discipline further add that teachers should use positive and negative consequences to convince students that it is to their benefit to behave appropriately. Teachers should not feel bad if forced to use negative consequences when necessary because students want teachers to help them control themselves.

On weakness, the Canter Model is based on the assumptions that teachers are leaders and that they should use punishment to bring control to the learners, if needed. One major

positive aspect of assertive discipline is the assumption that student behaviour results from what teachers do. Therefore teachers can manage discipline. Canter has attempted to add more proactive methods of preventing management of discipline problems through teaching students about rules and expectations which is good. However, an operational definition of punishment is not given, reliance on threats, warnings, and a discipline hierarchy tend to escalate problem behaviours in the classroom (Nelson, 1996b). When teachers use threats and warnings, students are more likely to become aggressive than when threats and warnings are not used.

Finally, according to Nelson (1996), Canter misuses the term consequence to suggest it refers only to punishment. However, a consequence like a reward is anything that occurs, such as a reinforcer or punisher, after behaviour occurs. Assertive discipline therefore seems to be a behaviour reduction method that can work under certain circumstances. Nevertheless, based on the theories that the researcher has so far reviewed this model is fitting in assessing to what extent secondary schools have implemented the discipline policy on the ground because among others, Matsoga, (2003) and Cotton, (2000) cited unavailability of established codes of discipline by some schools as one of the challenges facing the implementation of the discipline policy in secondary schools.

Assertive discipline provides for principles of natural justice by laying a clear procedure for a misbehaving student to appear before the teacher for warning and counselling before other steps are taken. This is also in line with Procedures for handling discipline in Malawi secondary schools.

2.10 Chapter Summary

The chapter has reviewed literature on the implementation of the DP from both international and local scene. In addition, challenges facing the implementation of the DP have also been discussed in the literature review. The next chapter presents and discusses the methodology of the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter discusses the practical aspects that guided this research process. It begins by presenting the overall design and the rationale for choosing the design. The chapter goes further to describe the setting, sampling techniques used, data generation and analysis techniques. Finally, the chapter closes with trustworthiness of the study.

3.1. Research design

The study employed a qualitative case study research design. This design adopted a multi-site case study, which involves each school within the site as both a research site on its own, and also as a component of the study (Merriam, 1998). The cases comprised five schools in Robert Blake Secondary School Cluster which were sampled purposively. The schools were chosen because they are within easy reach to the researcher. Creswell (1994) defines a qualitative approach as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of participants, and conducted in a natural setting.

According to Kothari (2004), research design is a plan, main blue print strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers for the research questions. Marshall and Rossman (2006) confirm that using qualitative research design enables the researcher to gather information about actions and interactions, to reflect on their meaning, to arrive at and evaluate conclusions to eventually put forward interpretations. This design allowed the researcher to generate more information through semi-structured interviews and Focus Group Discussions from the study participants to assess to what extent secondary schools have implemented the discipline policy in Malawi.

3.2. Selection of Participants

The participants were chosen purposively from five schools under Robert Blake Cluster. Bryman (2008) argues that the goal in purposive sampling is to sample participants in a strategic way so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed. This study involved the following participants: pupils as beneficiaries of the policy, teachers, head teachers, deputy head teachers and discipline committee members as a key participants and implementers of the policy. The case under study, consist of a grant aided national secondary school and five community day secondary schools (CDSSs) of different categories (both approved and non approved) and one of which is private. Four of the CDSSs are government owned and the other one is a private. These were selected because of their proximity to the researcher.

Head teachers were targeted being the key participants for the study because they are well informed about the impact of the policy and as such they provided records by showing trends in the implementation of the policy in their respective secondary schools. In this

case five head teachers from the selected secondary schools provided qualitative data on discipline cases that they handled and challenges they face. Head teachers were also targeted being policy implementers for the Ministry of Education on the ground and to that effect, they are well positioned and knowledgeable about the dynamics and practicability of the policy under investigation.

The study also interacted with the members of the discipline committees being the technocrats and being in direct contact with the concerned students themselves. The members shared their experience in executing the discipline policy on the ground and presented challenges and solutions to the problems facing the policy implementation under investigation. Five members were sampled from the selected schools and where some members were not available; some teachers who once served in the committee were incorporated. Some schools had established discipline committee members while other schools had adhoc committees.

Purposive sampling was used to select a total of six forms three and one class students from participating schools to participate in the study. Form three students were considered because they had been in school for long with more experience in disciplinary case trends and more knowledgeable and to that effect they were thought to be in a position to make good judgments and comparisons of disciplinary cases while at the school particularly those that started form one at the said schools. At the same time, pupils from this class were chosen since they are old enough to speak clearly on issues related to school discipline and how they and others have been affected. From each

specified class, 2 pupils were purposively selected for either being a head boy or monitor. 2 pupils were selected on the basis that they were once suspended and are back in the school to hear from them what really happened in their case as a benchmark.

Purposive sampling technique was employed in sampling 5 teachers per school to provide qualitative data in which priority was given to teachers who joined the profession longer at each participating schools. These teachers are aware of the changes which have taken place in the policy and school discipline. Secondly, these teachers are in better position to provide data and report on issues related to school discipline having been there for long and being in direct contact with learners inside and outside the classroom. Bryman (2008) argues that the goal in purposive sampling is to sample participants in a strategic way so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed.

According to MoEST, rules and regulations regulating discipline in secondary schools, the Deputy Head teacher is legally mandated to preside over all discipline cases in secondary schools. Therefore, in this study, they were targeted to provide the experience they had accumulated in implementing the discipline policy. The deputy heads were interviewed to get their side of the story including challenges they face in the implementation of the discipline policy in secondary schools, being custodians.

3.3 Data Generation Methods and Instruments

Individual interviews and Focus Group Discussion were employed as methods of data generation using unstructured interview guide to solicit participant's views on the implementation of the discipline policy. These instruments have an advantage in that they

are open-ended and respondents were encouraged to express themselves in their own words thereby providing their own perception on the subject under discussion. According to Rossman and Rallis (2003), the purpose of the guided interviews is to bring forth the participants' world view.

Rossman and Rallis (2003) further argues that in this case, the researcher identifies a few broad topics framed as questions to help uncover the participants meaning or perspective and respects how the participants frames and structures responses, the balance of talk is in favour of participant. One of the major challenges anticipated was the late submission of questionnaires from teachers. This was solved by frequent phone calls to concerned teachers and their head teachers in advance.

3.3.1 Questionnaires

25 semi-structured questionnaires were administered to all teachers in the five schools selected to provide qualitative data on implementation of the discipline policy. The first questionnaires were filled by school heads at each participating school to provide the status of discipline and the implementation of the discipline policy itself in their respective schools. The second questionnaires were filled by deputy head teachers and the last ones were filled by teachers. The questionnaire, among other things, contained items on attitudes of teachers towards the discipline and implementation of the discipline policy in the selected secondary schools, whether teachers and administrators were aware of the Ministry of Education Policy on discipline, whether copies of such were available in schools and whether they were adhering to them when implementing the discipline policy on students.

Rossman and Rallis (2003) states that a questionnaire includes all techniques of data collection in which each person is asked to respond to the same set of questions and it is advantageous in that each person answers the same set of questions hence uniformity in the type of responses is achieved. 25 questionnaires in total were physically administered by the researcher himself to teachers who were purposively selected from the five schools sampled for the study and collected back all of them representing a 100% response rate. The advantage of administering the questionnaire physically is that the researcher is assured of targeting the right respondent and this according to Saunders et al. (2003) improves the reliability of the data generated.

However, one major challenge encountered during the exercise was late submission of questionnaires from teachers. This was overcome by making pre arrangements on phone calls to concerned teachers and their head teachers in advance so that the researcher could collect them upon completion.

3.3.2 Focus Group Discussion, (FGD)

Focus Group Discussions (FGD), comprising of a maximum of six teachers, was used to solicit participants' views on the implementation of the Discipline Policy in CEED schools. Krueger and Casey (2000) cited in Gall et al. (2003) defined FGD as a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non threatening environment. It is conducted with approximately seven to ten people by a skilled interviewer. The discussion is relaxed, comfortable and often enjoyable for participants as they share their ideas and perceptions.

Group members influence each other by responding to ideas and comments in the discussion. The FGDs were used on pupils and discipline committee members, because they stimulate the participants to state their feelings, perceptions and beliefs that they would not have expressed if interviewed individually (Gall et al., 2003). The group size of at least seven participants for each FGD encourages a wide sampling of views and is not so large that some individuals could not have the opportunity to speak (Gall et al., 2003). However, the maximum number of participants' FGD used in this study was six. This was due to the fact that most schools targeted were CDSSs and to that effect, have very few teachers.

This means that if the members had increased, then it would be impractical as some would double even triple as respondents. The main challenge was inadequate participants and the solution was to wait until when they were all in, this was time consuming but had no option.

3.3.3 Individual Interviews

Individual interviews were also used to interview the Head teachers and Deputy Head teachers in selected secondary schools. The interviews were administered by the researcher using interview guide to minimise risks associated with hired interviewers such as need for training and knowledge of local culture apart from being expensive considering that the research was not funded by anybody apart from the researcher. One session lasted for about 45 minutes with each of the school heads and their deputies in their respective schools to probe more. Participants were given the option to have the interview in the local language, Chichewa or English but English was given a priority.

Data generation from key participants ended only after data saturation was achieved. All respondents responded in English except some few students in some CDSSs. There was no major challenge encountered during this method of generating data.

3.3.4. Document Analysis

The researcher also used document analysis to collect qualitative data on the implementation of the Discipline policy in the five selected schools. World Bank (2002) asserts that documents are less likely to be subjected to memory decay or memory distortion compared to data obtained from interviews although it may be subjected to selective survival bias. The decision to undertake secondary data analysis was largely determined by the conviction that the analysis of documents can help researchers to gain data objectively without requiring the presence of the participants.

Besides, the nature of some of the research questions targeted to get information of the programme as originally conceived (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1996). Document analysis was conducted on both primary and secondary sources.

Under primary sources, documents reviewed included minutes of cluster meetings on discipline, circular letter by the MoEST on DP articulating the position of the government on how to proceed with the DP policy implementation, and school development workshop minutes, school rules and regulations, Discipline Policies and student essays among others provided this data.

Through this procedure, the researcher managed to code, categorise and thematise the implementation of the Discipline Policy in CEED, Dowa District, using the perspectives of the head teachers, deputy head teachers, teachers, pupils, and discipline committee members. Records for most schools were not available and up to date. This was one of the major challenges during the exercise. Some people who had first hand information or more knowledgeable were asked to give more details on the same as a solution.

3.3.5 Data Analysis Procedure

Bogden and Biklen (1982) cited in Singh define data analysis as a process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others. Analysis involves working with data, organising it into manageable units, synthesising it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned and deciding what to tell others” pp.5-6.

This qualitative data analysis followed a six phase thematic analysis. The first phase involved organising and synthesising the large chunk of text. Rossman (2003) states that data analysis starts with organizing the data by cleaning the field notes to eliminate issues that did not make sense or that would be described as ‘overwhelming and unmanageable’. This is important as it saves time. Furthermore, Rossman and Rallis (2003) assert that data cleaning saves time creates a more complete record and stimulates analytic thinking. In most cases, this entails negotiating the interplay between raw data, semantic themes and codes and the overarching theoretical framework. The exercise of analyzing data

started as soon as data collection began. After data collection the researcher transcribed the data by preparing texts for all the data.

The second phase involved reading and reviewing the data more than once in order to check if there are gaps that need to be filled before generating themes and categories. This was achieved by transcribing all the data verbatim. During this stage the researcher clarified ambiguities, inserted context comments and headings and correct spellings. Then the researcher got immersed into the text. This was done by reading all the written texts several times while posing analytical questions relating to the research problem.

The third phase involved generating themes based on the outcome of the data. Themes are important because they help in grouping the data according to similarities and facilitate expansion through further explanation. The fourth phase was coding. The researcher then coded the data. Strauss (1987) quoted in Singh stresses that coding is important because all further analysis of the data rests on how well the data was coded. Thereafter, a consistency check was done by going through the data several times to check the consistency of the coding system. Emerson et al. (1995) quoted in Rossman and Rallis (2003) defines a code as a word or short phrase that capture and signals what is going on in a way that links it to some more general analysis issue. Coding is important because it links the themes.

Then a thematic analysis followed to establish how the categories are applied to the raw data. Such analyses are useful for comparing the relative frequency of the categories. According to Yin (1994), cited in Donna.... analysis hinges on linking the data to the propositions and explicating the criteria by which the findings are to be interpreted. In this study, the researcher compared the patterns of the results obtained with the patterns in the literature that was reviewed and the theoretical underpinnings of this study in line with Stake (2005).

In the fifth phase, data was interpreted. According to Patton (2002,p.480) , interpretation involves “attaching significance to what was found, making sense of findings, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolates lessons, making inferences, considering meanings and otherwise imposing order.”In this study, interpretation took into account three contexts of interpretation which according to Rossman and Rallis (2003) include: participant understanding, common sense understanding and theoretical understanding. This means that the interpretation centred on storytelling, making sense of what the participant said in the field and relating all participants’ experiences and expression to the theories and other important issues. This means that in the fifth phase all the data and analysis including the themes or categories created led to the narration of a meaningful story.

The sixth stage involved a search for alternative understanding. According to Rossman and Rallis (2003), alternative understanding always exists and the researcher needs to search for identity and describe them and then demonstrate how his/her interpretation is

sound, logical and grounded in the data. Document analysis was also used in data analysis analysing minutes of disciplinary procedures, student essays and only those related to the topic under study.

3.4 Ethical considerations

This study was conducted after obtaining permission from the University of Malawi, Education Foundations Department (EDF) (see appendix 1). Before generating data, the researcher first contacted each institution under study to gain their cooperation. The researcher explained the purpose of the study, and assembled key contact information. Participants were informed that the information sought from them was purely for academic purposes. Since data to be generated and examined included organisational documents, the researcher requested copies of such documents. This was done considering that field researchers need to get permission from *gatekeepers* in getting access to the site of research (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Participants were neither forced to take part in the study nor being enticed by any given or promised form of incentive. Rather, it was in response to the request indicated on the informed consent and introduction letter sought from the sampled targeted population before scheduling the interviews to the extent that they were requested to sign consent form (see appendices 2, 3 and 4) which specified the rules of the interview. The informed consent enhanced the respondents' willingness to participate in the study, and their withdrawal if they decided to do so.

Mindful of Section 21 of the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi, the researcher collected both the secondary and primary data with utmost confidentiality to uphold the participants' privacy. Additionally, participating schools were coded.

During the interviews, the researcher used verbatim accounts of interviews by generating data with details including quotes (Kapanda, 2015). In addition, the study has presented the findings and interpretation honestly and objectively by documenting data sources used in the inquiry. The researcher ensured trustworthiness and credibility through triangulation and use of direct quotations. Triangulation, according to Hamersley (2008, p.24) is defined as “the use of more than one approach to the investigation of a research question in order to enhance confidence in the findings”. This study employed methodological triangulation in which it used more than one methodology of inquiry. Interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions were conducted with head teacher, deputy head teachers, discipline committee members, teachers and students on the implementation of discipline policy in Dowa district secondary schools.

This triangulation ensured credibility and trustworthiness of the study through minimising chances of generating wrong information. Furthermore, in-depth interviews with school heads enabled the researcher to collect ‘rich’ data that provided a comprehensive situation of how schools are implementing the discipline policy to ensure that core objectives of MoEST are achieved. Direct quotations have also been included in the discussion of the study to ensure that the information is easily verifiable.

3.5 Trustworthiness

The researcher made use of multiple data sources for purposes of triangulation that include; head teachers and teachers and documentation, multiple methods of data collection that included; individual interviews, focus group discussions, and analysis of documents (Creswell, 2007). This crosschecked irregularities within the data and added more credibility to it. Technically, this is referred to as triangulation, the use of multiple methods of data generation in order to cross-check and support methods which do not provide adequate data (Yin, 1994). Triangulation is commonly used in education research to counter the systematic selective bias of a single view that can occur when using only one data source, method, or procedure (Maxwell, 2008). This means that the data from interviews with head teachers, deputy head teachers including that of discipline committee members was triangulated with data from focus group discussions and questionnaires from teachers and document analysis. This added credibility and authenticity of its interpretation.

3.6 Study limitations and delimitations

Being a case study, the study was conducted in a selected sample of five schools and this limits the generalisability of the findings to the other schools implementing Discipline Policy in the country. However, to lessen this, the researcher ensured a wide range of participants including students, teachers, school heads, parents and school discipline committees participate in the study. Finally, there was some degree of scepticism over the reliability of some data from some participants as they deliberately exaggerated the information on assuming that the policy change could be very fast and work to their

advantage. To lessen this, the researcher ensured that the participants were fully aware that the study was purely for academic purposes and therefore no need for data manipulation to that effect in addition to limited time and resources available to conduct this study.

3.7 Chapter Summary

The chapter highlighted data generation methods, sampling techniques, and how participants were chosen. The next chapter presents and discusses key findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents and discusses findings of the study on the implementation of Discipline Policy in secondary schools based on research questions and themes emanating from research questions. The data was organised according to themes. All terms used in this section and the document are defined in the key section of acronyms.

4.1 Teachers awareness of MOEST policy on school discipline

The study found that 60% of teachers were not aware of DP, while the 40% indicated that they were aware of the DP. On code of conduct, almost 100% of teachers were aware of the code of conduct. Canter (2000) states that teachers need to set clear rules and regulations for the students and consequences should be attached. Rules and regulations, code of conduct, is developed from the DP of MoEST. However, these findings make it difficult if teachers can formulate relevant and clear rules if they themselves are not aware of the DP. This could be a reason why despite having the DP on the ground cases of indiscipline are still on the rise. According to Canters model, teachers' behaviour affects students discipline and that if students are to be disciplined, and then teachers must provide clear rules in form of a plan. However, clear rules can be set only if teachers are aware of the DP.

Table 1 presents how teachers responded to the question of whether they were aware of the MoEST DP and code of conduct.

Table 1: Level of teachers' awareness of the MoEST DP and code of conduct on school discipline.

School number	Awareness of DP and code of conduct :
1	Yes; to both
2	Yes , code of conduct :not DP:
3	Yes , code of conduct: not-DP
4	Yes ; to both
5	Yes , code of conduct :not DP

Source: Researcher's Data Analysis (2016)

Table 1 shows that out of 5 schools, only 2 were aware of the DP representing 40%. 60% were not fully aware of the DP. This means that schools do not have full knowledge about issues of discipline policy. Additionally, from these discussions, one can just conclude that implementation of the DP is a major issue which needs to be discussed under this cluster so that the schools are on equal footing in implementing the said policy as the majority schools are not aware of the said policy. Head teacher 3 reported that what he knew was that he had rules and regulation from Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, (MoEST) and Jesuit Relief Services, (JRS) and not the DP itself. When head teacher 5 was asked, he reported ignorance of the DP and insisted that if the researcher had carried one with him, should share so that his school can have a glance at it.

Only respondents from schools 1 and 4 agreed that their school had both documents. Ironically, all the schools sampled for this study were under one cluster. This meant that there should be information sharing because according to Kapanda (2015) one of the roles of clusters is to share information among its members. Collaborating with teacher 4 from school 1, Head teacher 2 from school 2 when interrogated as to why they did not have a Discipline Policy and had little knowledge on the same, had this to say:

If cluster workshops on implementation of the DP were enhanced in our schools, I hope uniformity will be achieved apart from sharing knowledge on the best practices in managing learner indiscipline and indeed on proper implementation of the policy under discussion, but these workshops are erratic. [FGD-HT2 at school 2—10/07/15]

The researcher concluded that it is possible to properly implement the DP if it can be pursued under the cluster system as the best tool to instil knowledge gap on implementation of the DP. However, Mtsweni (2008) warns that having a DP is not a complete success in itself but that schools have to follow the correct administrative procedures when disciplining learners as prescribed in the policy itself.

According to Kruger (1997, p.37) “a policy can be regarded as a general statement that permits a person to make decisions within certain rigid boundaries. A policy cannot be equated with rules and regulations, but these three things are related because a policy inevitably leads to rules and regulations that ensure that the policy is executed. According to Kruger and Van Schalkwyk (1993, p.63) “policy formulation is regarded as a management task by which guidelines for behaviour are set up, to attained which objectives”. Squelch (1993,p239) also expressed the view that “in order to promote good

behaviour, it is necessary for schools to have policies on the issue of discipline which would include the details of school rules and expected behaviour, as well as the consequence of deviant behaviour”. From the discussions, it can also be concluded that having a DP is one thing but having a clear DP is yet another milestone in effective handling of indiscipline in schools.

4.1.1 Occasions where Head teachers read out code of conduct to students

This study also asked respondents to indicate occasions where the head teachers avail the code of conduct to learners. Having rules and keeping them in office is just as having no rules and regulation at all. Administrators should therefore avail the available code of conduct to learners. When respondents were asked to describe occasions, their head teachers avail the code of conduct to them responses were that some head teachers read out to learners during assembly, in classes, prefect meetings and PTA. Canter (2000) emphasized on the five steps in implementing the DP when he narrated that of the more important steps in maintaining discipline among learner is giving instructions to students on the discipline plan that teachers have developed adding that after giving instruction, students be instructed on how to behave. Therefore, the best forum where such instruction can be given is an assembly, where the head teacher and teachers would instruct students on how to behave. One student sampled from the FGD from school 4 when asked responded as follows:

Our head teacher communicates code of conduct to us weekly during assembly and again when he happen to teach us English in class he usually remind us. [FGD-pupil—at School 4—08/07/15]

Since teachers do affect students’ behaviour in the class, according to Canter (2000) it is convenient that teachers can use the same class to remind them of school DP and

demonstrate on proper dressing and language to use. Teachers would also use the class to distribute copies of the policy to students and dramatise each clause in the class on special days within the week. This will make every student to know the contents of the DP as suggested by Canter. However, one student from school 1 captured from the FGD conducted in form 3 A had this revelation to the researcher:

He does it during assemblies, but not often as they paste it on notice boards outside classrooms. In short, not very often, but only when we are being admitted in the school and after committing an offence it's when you are being reminded that you have committed a crime. [FGD-pupil—at School 1—10/07/15]

It can thus be concluded that if teachers frequently discuss and communicate the DP to students frequently, in the assemblies and classrooms, issues of indiscipline would be minimised as most of them would know the dictates of the policy unlike the way it is according to the above student captured in the FGD.

4.2 Common student disciplinary problems found in schools

The study found that schools under study in Dowa experienced the following problems: Open defiance of authority, Vandalism of school property, Petty theft, and Drug abuse for example (Chamba smoking). Students absenteeism, Students absconding study cycles , Boy-girl sexual relationships leading to pregnancies, Graffiti (scribbling), Going out of school bounds without permission, reluctance to put on school uniform, Fighting, Reporting late for classes and absconding classes, Teasing and bullying and Sexual harassment.

Table 2: Summary of disciplinary problems experienced in all the five schools

Common Behavioral Problems	No. of Schools where it was Reported	Percentage (%)	Frequency(f)
Open defiance of authority	5	100	Daily
Vandalism of school property	4	80	Weekly
Drug abuse e.g. (Chamba smoking)	2	40	Monthly
Petty theft	4	80	Weekly
Students and teachers absenteeism	3	60	Weekly
Students absconding study cycles	3	60	Weekly
Teachers hostile comments against students	2	40	Monthly
Boy-girl sexual relationships leading to pregnancies	2	40	Monthly
Reluctant to put on school uniform	2	40	Weekly
Fighting	4	80	Weekly
Reporting Late for classes	3	60	Daily
Going out of school bounds without permission	1	10	Weekly
Teasing and Bullying	1	10	Monthly
Sexual harassment	3	60	Monthly
Rioting/unrest	2	40	Termly
Graffiti (scribbling)	5	100	Daily

Source: Researcher's Data Analysis (2016).

Table 2 shows common secondary school behavioural problems, number of schools where each problem was reported, its percentage of occurrence and how often it happens. The table indicates that among many common problems in the school, graffiti, vandalism of school property, petty theft and fighting are the major common problems in the schools happening daily or weekly. The table also shows that going out of bounds, teasing and bullying are occurring but on a small scale according to generated data. This can be attributed to the nature of schools, since out of five schools, only two are boarding schools where issues of teasing are common. From the table, it can be concluded that indiscipline still exist in secondary schools despite availability of the discipline policy. It is therefore important that learners respect authority and follow laid down school rules and regulations if meaningful teaching and learning is to take place.

4.2.1 Open Defiance of Authority

The study found that 100% of respondents complained that open defiance of authority was one of the indiscipline among learners which was taking place almost on daily basis. Gunter (1988, p. 37) maintains that in order to grow up properly and to become self-reliant, “a child has to be subjected to the authority of the person who brings him up, amongst other things, because (s) he has an existential need of authority”. According to him, children have the urge to become adults themselves and must therefore be taught not only how to exert authority, but also how to obey and follow authority. This study revealed that learners in the selected schools often disregard the authority of teachers and lack respect for teachers. This could be attributed to the fact that they come from different background and where rules are not properly enforced; they may not look at it as a major problem. This partly may mean that the DP is not fully implemented in such schools.

The disciplinary problems in schools range from learners' refusal to wear school uniforms to a refusal to accept and acknowledge the teachers' authority and defying them (FGD/P/S3/. HT2 added that they are also experiencing problems like learners making noise in the presence of the teachers and theft of books and monies from friends.

4.2.2 *Absenteeism by students*

The study found that 60% of the schools are facing the problem of students' absenteeism. Out of 5 sampled schools, 3 schools indicated that they experienced the problem weekly. The table 2 shows other common disciplinary problems in schools as reported by students and head teachers. Mtsweni (2008) maintains that educators often complain about unacceptable forms of behaviour such as disruption of schools by ill disciplined learners, late coming in the morning and during the school day, truancy, a refusal to attend certain lessons, students absconding from study cycles, failure to do homework, failure to adhere to school policies and the flouting of authority. These forms of misbehaviour eventually seem to have a negative influence on teachers discipline too.

Head teacher 3, did not hide anything when for example, when he remarked that:

The main problem I discovered at my school is the high rate of absenteeism due to long distance to school, water problems and nature of our students because being in refugee camp; they have to look for their own food. [HT3 –at School 3 – 10/07/15]

With regard to truancy, head teacher 4 explained that 60% of learners always abscond from school during school hours and that they do not wear school uniforms. These problems contribute to the inadequate teaching and learning because the teachers'

programmes are disturbed and the learners' work is submitted late to the teachers thereby affecting them negatively.

4.3.3 *Late Reporting for Classes*

This study revealed that disciplinary problems amongst learners such as late reporting at school in the morning and late reporting to classes are also experienced by the teachers and seem to have a negative influence on education. These sentiments were reported by the Head teacher 1, 2, 5, and 3. Apart from Head teachers, Pupils from Focus Group Discussion, FGD from schools numbers 4 and 3 lamented that much as they had their own problems of late reporting to schools in the morning, they argued this was inspired by their teachers, whom they argued motivate them to come late for classes. Such learner misbehaviour according to Mtsweni (2009) not only disturbs teachers during lessons but also prevents learners from learning effectively. According to head teacher 3:

Late coming causes disciplinary problems, especially in the morning. Imagine, during the first period learners will knock on the door time and again. In most cases this type of late coming result in teachers having to repeat certain instructions or start the lesson all over again, which frustrates those learners who did not dodge their responsibilities and arrived in time for their classes. This is irritating and very common at this school. [HT3—at School 3– 10/07/15]

It is against this background that the relationship between teachers and learners at this school number 3 is very poor. According to the HT3 this is evidenced by several strikes and boycotts by students against certain teachers who are strict disciplinarians because each time they come late, they are not allowed in to their classes.

However, HT 4 while asserting that most of his learners are in the habit of reporting late for classes, to some extent justified their late coming to school and classes when he said:

Late coming to this school is attributed to the fact that most students queue to draw water from a single borehole in the camp, being a special school. So, much as they may have a desire to report early but there is a challenge which needs other stakeholders to work on. [HT3—at School 3 —10/07/15]

4.4.4 Drug and Substance abuse

According to the respondents, substance abuse by learners during school hours is another factor that is contributing to the general lack of learner discipline (HT 1, HT4). Head teacher 5 had no kind words but made it crystal clear as follows:

Disciplinary problems that we experience in our schools, can be classified under serious offences, which are carrying of dangerous weapons and the abuse of substances to the extent of smoking marijuana during break time in toilets. Others take it in form of tea as they eat their roasted maize and other foodstuff. [HT5—at School 5 —10/07/15]

Head teacher 1 added that learners who use drugs or abuse similar substances are a real threat to both learners and teachers because they usually tend to become violent as follows:

They bring water in bottles in class on pretext that they are drinking water but in that water, they add some alcohol particularly spirits and since water is colourless, you may think they are innocent. These learners who abuse similar substances are a real threat to both learners and teachers because they usually tend to become violent. [HT1—at School 1 — 10/07/15].

Cheunyane (2008, P.5) reported that “64, 6% of the learners in the Mpumalanga Province in South Africa use drugs on the school premises while 58, 5% of the learners use alcohol on the school premises”. Cheunyane (2008) further states that 58, 5% of the learners in this province arrive at schools under the influence of alcohol. This perception is supported by Mabelane (2000) who has indicated that drug and substance abuse contribute to the lack of discipline in schools and has become a major cause of unsafe schools.

4.5.5 *Boy-Girl relationships leading to Teenage pregnancy*

This empirical investigation also revealed that many young girls fall pregnant when they are still at school. Although pregnancy in itself is not necessarily an indication of indiscipline, the fact that so many young girls fall pregnant may be a symptom of a promiscuous lifestyle which undoubtedly has a bearing on school discipline. Pairing during the night or being found in dark corners with the opposite sex is a misbehaviour punished by suspension and rustication respectively according to school rules and regulations. Amongst other things, a boy-girl relationship which leads to teenage

pregnancy has an influence on their ability to attend school, submit their school assignments timely and to learn effectively. Head teacher 5 expressed his views as follows:

Teenage pregnancy at this school is prevalent, just as is late coming ... open defiance of authority, noise making and untimely submission of work. Students in safe boarding are behaving just like married couples and to that effect they don't respect us as they don't see any difference. The rate of teenage pregnancies here is pathetic. [HT5—at School 5 —10/07/15]

Even though the pregnancy of certain learners and the ill-disciplined behaviour that results from it may affect other learners, such learners may not be prevented from attending schools until proven as such by qualified medical staff through school matrons according to Mtsweni (2009).

4.2.6 *Graffiti (scribbling)*

This study also revealed that in all 5 schools, representing 100% graffiti was a common indiscipline problem where learners scribbled on school wall, toilets, in classroom, planks things like “I was here before you from 2000-2004, remember me raster nigger who never dies” Head teacher 1, described the situation as pathetic and described it as a daily routine in school among learners.

These views were shared by HT3 who said his school had nasty scribbling, most of which are sarcastic not only to teachers but also to fellow students. When asked during FGD, the motive behind scribbling, one student from school 1 had this to say:

In most cases, it is just a competition; the real motive behind this is that we need fame in the school, nothing else. [FGD/pupil/S1– 12/07/15]

This was also echoed by students from school number 2 and 5 during the Focus Group Discussion in the field. The head teacher from school 1 concluded as follows:

Most students who are culprits' of graffiti are those that are dull in class. These students are desperate of seeking recognition. Intelligent students can't waste this precious time. I tell them that if they want to become famous in the school, they should simply get 6 points in their MSCE but since they know they can't, the only thing they can do is to continue scribbling. [HT1—at School 1 —15/07/15]

However, the researcher did not independently verify this assertion from the head teacher from school 1 to ascertain whether his claim was right and could be justified since it was difficult to attempt to crosscheck such data with their results as most schools did not keep required data for such an analysis. Besides, some students from FGD cited the incident at Lumbadzi Police where the state president made some graffiti at the station, arguing that they were following an example from the top, as their role model.

4.2.7 Going out of school bounds without permission, teasing and bullying

This research also revealed that students' going out of bounds was a big problem in schools with a boarding facility. The study found different motives behind going out of school boundaries without permission, while some students had genuine motives, most students had sinister motives. The researcher was also privileged to witness a case where

two students were caught out of school boundaries during odd hours. The two boys went out of the school to search for girls and were chased by the girl's parents' who followed them to school. An inquiry was launched against the suspected boys who pleaded guilty before the school management at midnight. The father of the girls who paraded both girls and a wife as witnesses was equipped with Panga knives, an axe and a club to deal with the students in question. The parent had this stern warning to both the school and students in question when he said before the inquiry:

These students should thank God that I did not apprehend them because if I could have caught them, I swear.....before you all, I would have killed them and by this time you should have been talking of burial arrangements, While I would have been remanded at prison for murder awaiting trial. Warn your students never; ever to dare to go in my village again as this time I will make sure I strangle them live. [Parent—at School 1—25/10/15]

From the testimony, it was clear that the parents could have either brutally injured the students or murdered them if he could have apprehended them. Head teacher for school 1 confirmed that one of the major problems at his school was students going out of boundaries. However, what was more shocking was the fact that the school had lost most of its disciplinary cases to students due to administrators' emotional way of handling indiscipline cases.

Even the deputy head teacher for school 1 concurred with these sentiments in his testimony as follows:

The major challenge that we face here, as administrators is a situation where we are being ruled by emotions. It pains me when I see students being charged emotionally, no wonder we fail to find evidence for such cases. This is painting a negative picture to my committee, being the chairperson. [FGD-DHT1—at School 3—15/07/15]

Linked to going out of boundaries without permission, is teasing and bullying, in particular, schools with boarding facilities. The study found that senior students abuse their seniority by teasing and bullying junior students in different forms. A form one student during the FGD from school 1 had this to say:

We are asked to kiss one another, frogmarched, being forced to wash clothes apart from calling us “nyawanis” (new comers). It is really hard and had it not been for my friends, I would have walked out of this school already. [FGD-pupil—at School 1—12/07/15]

Investigations found that teasing taking place at school number 1 is very strange because it even involves those just joining a senior class; particularly form 3. This school is known for its notorious teasing. After the interview had been administered, cases of sodomy as part of teasing were reported in the hostels, which were very shocking.

4.2.8 Rioting / Unrest, Vandalism

The other common problem that was reported in schools was the conduct of students going on rampage each time they disagree with administrators and in the process damaging school properties. Asked why they tend to venture into vandalism as if that is a solution to their problems, one student from the FGD said this:

We do that to vent anger if we see that all channels of communication are blocked. You see, sometimes, we are intimidated, harassed by some members of staff. When we see that our views cannot be heard, that's the only option we have to vandalise the school. [FGD-pupil—at School 12/07/15]

During the time of compiling this report, an ugly scene happened at one of the schools, where the researcher was residing. The school was extensively damaged. The random interview with some students revealed that the major reason was that they were dissatisfied with the suspension of their head boy and one house prefect. They argued that the car cannot move without the driver. They added that they went on rampage because, among other reasons, they were tired with their head teacher whom they accuse of stealing their monies, failure to listen to their needs, lack of transparency with their fees and lack of respect. Some students vowed that should the head teacher remain there, when they come back, they would bay for his blood. Dissatisfaction with discipline committee's resolution can therefore be very costly as seen from the millions of Kwacha in damaged school property.

The head teacher 3 confirmed that students' going on rampage is one of the commonest problems in school though some of the reasons leave a lot to be desired. Consequently according to Mtsweni (2009), discipline is crumbling and the relationship between the learners and educators is deteriorating. Moreover, the learners are losing their respect for and trust of educators. Such youth behaviour causes the school effectiveness to break down in many schools and the culture of teaching and learning to collapse. These problems are contributing a lot to the lack of teaching and learning.

Violence is for example prevailing in many schools. In this regard, Mabeba and Prinsloo (2000, p.34) as well as Van Wyk (2001, p.196) state that "these problems make it difficult and often impossible for effective teaching and learning to take place in schools. Learners' disciplinary problems in South Africa range from the rejection of reasoning, late coming, truancy, neglecting to do homework, noisiness, physical violence, theft, threats, graffiti, vandalism, verbal abuse, lack of concentration, criminality, gangsterism, rape, constant violation of the schools' code of conduct and substance abuse within and around the schools' premises for the educators to manage their classes effectively". Ngcayi (1997, p17) corroborates this view. HT1 concluded that most of the riots at his school are perpetrated by students who have a history of drug abuse and were once suspended from other schools. He adds that such students easily contaminate our school due to peer pressure. This assertion, of peer pressure was also alluded to by some students captured in some schools during FGD.

4.3 Understanding of the term Discipline Policy by Head teachers

The study found that 60% of school head teachers had a limited understanding of DP.

Table 3: show common definitions of DP as provided by some head teachers when asked

to explain how they understand it. The definition partly denotes level of understanding of the DP.

Table 3: Understanding of the term Discipline Policy by Head teachers

Definitions on the term Discipline Policy by Head teachers	No. of Participants	%
A guideline for handling indiscipline cases among students and teachers	2	40
Rules and regulations for disciplining students	3	60

Source: Researcher's Data Analysis (2016).

Table 3 shows responses of head teachers on how they understand the term DP. More than half of the interviewed respondents understand DP as a rules and regulations for disciplining students while only 40% defined DP as guidelines for handling indiscipline cases among students and teachers. From the data it can be concluded that most head teachers had a limited understanding of the term DP. However, some head teachers seem not to understand the term correctly. Haddad (1999) defined a policy as explicit or implicit single decision or group of decisions which may set out directives for guiding future decisions, initiate or retard action, or guide implementation of previous decisions.

Head teacher 3 while doubting defined Discipline Policy as:

Measures that are put in place to punish those learner's who behave contrally to the set rules and regulations. [HT3—at School 3—06/10/15]

On one other hand, Teachers 2, 4, 5 and 1 agreed that DP is set of rules and regulations regulating the behaviour of learners. On the other hand however, Head teacher 1 while concurring that DP is about bringing order in the school for smooth teaching and learning, he added that he thinks discipline is about doing the right things in the school with or without supervision when he explained as follows:

Discipline Policy means doing things in the right way at the right time at the right place in the right manner. [HT1—at School 3 – 15/07/15]

This research found that there is indeed ambiguity in terms of understanding this policy clearly as head teachers do with other education policies, as one head teacher from school number 5 rightly and plainly said that he does not have a clear knowledge and understanding of the said policy as follows:

Honestly and frankly speaking I don't know the term Discipline Policy, to me, it is not clear and I have never heard or seen such a document, but rather rules and regulations are available for disciplining our students right for this school not what you are asking for. In fact, is the DP, rules and regulations the same? You can school me since schooling is not being old or being a head teacher. [HT5—at School 5 —15/07/15]

Therefore, while some head teachers have a knowledge of the DP, others do not have it and yet others are not sure whether, they have the right information. This is disturbing because head teachers are implementers of MoEST DP on the ground and yet most of

them are not aware of the same policies. There is a need to strengthen clusters where policies can easily be learnt and communicated to head teachers and their staff. As things are with this limited knowledge by implementers, there repercussions in the implementation of the DP itself in secondary schools. It is against this background that most head teachers argue that following the whole process of the DP is tedious creating loopholes for students' reinstatements by third parties.

4.4 Adherence to discipline policy guidelines when dealing with indiscipline cases.

The study clearly found that 80% of respondents agreed that their school follows the DP when handling students' indiscipline while only 20% of the head teachers were not following discipline policy guidelines when dealing with indiscipline cases. However, when probed further, it was surprising because most respondents confessed that some procedures were skipped arguing it is very long in the interest of time factor. This is a big loophole to indiscipline students because they easily challenge their removal from schools from courts and they are exonerated by the courts in most cases based on the breaching of the principle of natural justice. Canter (2000) explained that one of the reasons what head teachers fail to adhere to the DP is because of the emotional approach to issues of students' discipline. For example, during FGD with students from school number 1, one student narrated that when he was caught out of school boundaries, the head teacher immediately summoned him to office and issued an ultimatum of 5 minutes and said you must pack and go. It was reported that the head teacher was very angry and wanted to slap the student when he wanted to make an apology. This was a verbal suspension. The probable reason could be the assumption of looking at students as beasts incapable of changing their behaviour. This is contrary to the provisions of the DP which

provides for principles of natural justice, adapted from Malawi constitution under Section 43 (a) and (b) which provides for a fair trial to any offender. When the head teacher was asked why he at times sends students home using verbal suspension, he only said that most of them are habitual offenders. However, Canter (2000) explained that for difficult students, teachers should use a one to one problem solving conference so as to understand their personal problems in order to guide them properly. In most cases, administrators fail to show care to most troublesome students by building supportive relationship with them. This affects implementation of the DP.

Table 4: Level of Head teachers schools adherence to policy guidelines when dealing with indiscipline cases.

Response	Reasons for your answer
Yes	Culprits are heard before the discipline committee.
Yes	Concerned students are heard before being punished according to level of offence committed by the discipline committee.
No	Most students and teachers do not know the discipline policy.
Yes	It has a disciplinary committee which give students an opportunity to defend themselves
Yes	There is sanity at school.
No	Most of the times the final say comes from the HT. I don't think at our school the discipline policy is followed.
Yes	It uses the written rules and regulations which are in line with the government policy regarding student's misconduct.
Yes	The school established the discipline committee which handles discipline cases by following necessary measures put forward by the discipline policy to maintain discipline at school.
Yes	Student cases are handled according to set rules and regulations set by the MoEST
Yes	By reading it out to students during assemblies, pasting rules and regulations on notice boards for learners to read.

Source: Researcher's Data Analysis (2016).

Table 4 shows that 80% of the schools adhere to the policy when disciplining learners in their quest to implement the DP in Dowa District while 20% out of the same school had reservation. They either do not adhere to the DP or they do not have the said policy.

However, much as most head teachers responded that they adhere to the policy dictates when disciplining students, research revealed that they do not follow all the requirements of the policy due to among other reasons, time. Head teacher 5 was at pains to explain whether his school adheres to the DP when he clearly said that:

I can learn from you. Honestly, I know nothing whether my school is adhering because in the first place, I doubt whether this school has a DP. Do you mean rules and regulations? [HT5—at School 5—10/07/15]

Deputy Head teacher 1 emphatically narrated that his school tries as much as possible to follow dictates of the DP though at times, they bypass some procedures due to time. The researcher concluded that it was against this background that school 1 had been losing several cases to its students for unprocedural and insufficient evidence. In the interest of administrative justice administrators are supposed to follow the dictates of the DP. From the discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of the DP is affected by lack of knowledge and unavailability of copies of indiscipline in schools. Teachers are thus failing to make relevant reference to a discipline case in point making students appeals successful because teachers' decisions are based on irrelevant facts and provisional requirements of the policy.

For instance, T4 explained that:

The school has a discipline committee where all matters of students discipline are handled according to the dictates of the discipline policy at school. Punishment is given to students according to the dictates of the discipline policy at school. However, it is not easy to follow all the laid down procedures. [FGD-T4—at School 1—10/07/15]

T3 emphatically explained that in as far as he is concerned, his school was following the discipline policy because according to him, the discipline committee is available which enforces students discipline by evoking provisions of the discipline policy. Suspects and witnesses are called and heard before the discipline committee following all laid down procedures in the discipline policy. The HT reads out its rules and regulations to learners during assemblies, hanging them on notice boards, and giving out the same to all new entrants in the school.

However, T4 explained that:

Most of the times the final say come from the HT. I don't think at our school the discipline policy is followed. Everything comes from the HT. He can change the decision of the DC at will and without any major reasons.
[FGD-T4—at School 1—10/07/15]

4.5 Challenges school administrators encounter when implementing DP

The study found that school administrators experience a series of challenges when implementing DP. The evidence of challenges emerged from several appeals from students and parents concerned with indiscipline among others. High numbers of cases recorded per term and academic year indicates that administrators are facing challenges in implementing the DP.

4.5.1 High number of discipline cases schools record per term and in academic year indicating high levels of indiscipline

The number of disciplinary cases indicates the degree of challenges schools face in implementing the DP. The more the cases the school records the more the challenges the

DP faces on the ground as time for studies is being used up to settle students indiscipline instead of the actual teaching and learning which is the core objective of the Ministry of Education Science and Technology. Furthermore, innocent students suffer because instead of learning their teacher is attending to the discipline committee thereby depriving lessons to innocent students who have nothing to do with such indiscipline hearing.

Table 5: High number of discipline cases schools in Dowa record per term and in academic year

School Number	Cases recorded this Term	Cases recorded this Academic Year	Cases Challenged by Students through appeals	Are there cases the school lost to students	
1	17	>30	>5	Yes	3
2	12	20	3	Yes	2
3	>14	>30	4	Yes	3
4	3	8	0	No	0
5	7	15	3	Yes	1

Source: Researcher's Data Analysis (2016).

From Table 5, it is clear that indiscipline cases in secondary schools are high. The figures are actual numbers of indiscipline recorded in school and have not been converted to any percentage. This is enough evidence to indicate that challenges in managing discipline

exist. Results obtained from the field indicate that termly, schools 1, 3 and 2 recorded high numbers of cases compared to other schools. This trend is almost the same when one compares cases recorded within an academic year. The differences are due to the nature and types of school. While school 1 is a National Grant aided secondary school with a boarding facility with dual ownership, school 3 is a CDSS but a private school, with some students residing within the confines of the school and is also a special school with dual ownership. Schools 2 and 5 have arranged boarding facilities, where at school 2 there is only kitchen facility providing lunch to all commuting students while school 5 has a boarding facility for girls' courtesy of the Girls Hostel Initiative Project aimed at bridging gender disparities in education. It can be concluded that indiscipline cases are comparatively high in co-education schools with boarding facilities based on the data captured from the field presented herein.

In conclusion, the research also found that administrators emotions when handling discipline issues, also affect implementation of the DP as others depart from the provisions of the policy itself and lack of awareness of the DP provisions by education stakeholders also hampers successful implementation of the DP which can be solved by civic education. An emotional decision is shown for example from school number one where more than ten students were reinstated by MoEST after students complained appealed against their conviction on the grounds that they never underwent through any disciplinary hearing but rather a verbal suspension.

When contacted to comment on the assertion, the chairperson of the discipline conceded to that when he said that:

It pains to receive the results of failure while in the real sense you have never failed. The students were reinstated by ministry because of our emotions. We never gave them a chance to be heard.

[DHT1—at School 1 – 15/07/15]

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of the DP is facing challenges with reference from the deputy head teacher's assertion, who is the chairperson of the school discipline as explained above. It was surprising in that even the DHT was just told by the head teacher that he had suspended the students. When asked for the minutes the head teacher only said, it was not important at that point in time. Other challenges are discussed through the following sub themes:

4.5.2 Favouritism

This study revealed that some learners in the selected sample of schools often disregard the authority of educators and go unpunished being children or in relationships with those holding very high position either as proprietors of schools or high ranking government officials. Teacher 2 remarked that they are also experiencing some problems whereby learners cause problems in the presence of the teachers and also some defiance of the teacher authority.

However, because they are related to top officials of the school, even if the DC sends them home today, they can be back two days later with parents and they are in class. The teacher went on and said that:

We have had cases very disgusting where sons of reverends' come back to school a day or two after discipline. Sometimes, you find that as DC we have made recommendations but the head teacher makes a complete departure from good recommendations and recall the suspended child or to please his friends or because he has been threatened. These demoralize us and we just watch learners even if they misbehave because it's a waste of time. [FGD-T2—at School 1 —12/07/15]

4.5.3 Higher authorities overturning DCs decision

Respondents also indicated that overturning DCs decision by EDMs office and MoEST is again encouraging misbehaviour among learners. Teacher 2 specifically referred to this problem by saying that:

Imagine students were expelled from school because some 12 students organised an organization in the school which were fighting against activities of prefects, a legally instituted body in the school but what did we hear from MoEST, there was no evidence that the students were habitual offenders to warrant dismissals from school. It pains me to have taken part in that discipline committee. [FGD-T2—at School 2 —10/07/15]

In another interview another teacher 2 from school 2 explained his dismay when he accused the office of EDM and MoEST of being insensitive to indiscipline issues by willy-nilly reinstating students involved in indiscipline. Part of what she said was:

How can an educated person reverse a decision where the school expel a student who steals green maize from the community surrounding the schools? Is that not telling the student to go back to school to be killed by the angry community? They should find out first why in the first place we made such decisions before going ahead to reverse our decisions. Being at EDM office or MoEST is not being too intelligent. [FGD-T2—at School 2 —14/07/15]

From the interview, one can see that there is an emotional tension between schools and their higher authorities regarding the issues of reversing more indiscipline issues which is angering the school. However, confused with these emotional reactions, the researcher thought of requesting some disciplinary files at school 1 where most staff seemed to have shown total dissatisfaction with successful students appeals, the researcher discovered such correspondents indeed instructing authorities to reinstate over 10 expelled and suspended students. When the researcher contacted authorities what they made of the directives and whether the reasons contained in those letters were not valid, they confided with the researcher that they could not blame authorities for the mistakes made by the school. They conceded that they made mistake.

From the researchers analysis and interpretation of correspondents most decisions, were emotional based, on the wording of the ministry's letters quoting the schools report to headquarters. They were emotional because it was strange to have heard that a student can be suspended verbally without going through the normal channel of disciplinary procedure laid down in the DP. Rational decision would be the decision that the authorities arrive at after following all laid down disciplinary procedure on a student.

This gave the researcher that emotional decisions at the school are ruining the reputation of the school, DC members even the teachers at large were not properly informed. In addition to this challenge, some respondents complained of the long time MoEST take to make disciplinary decisions submitted to it. Teacher 4 from school 2 complained that justice delayed is justice denied when she openly said that:

Imagine, students were suspended first term; we were only communicated to two weeks before MSCE examinations. Is this fair/ Is this not justice denied? These students will just increase rate of failures at our school and yet at the end of the examination results we are blamed of not teaching.
[FGD-T4—at School 2—14/07/15]

4.5.4 Misinterpretation of human rights by students to fit their status.

This study found that disciplinary problems amongst learners such as poor dressing which constitutes haircut, late coming to school in the morning and to classes are also being misinterpreted as human rights by students (HT1, HT2, HT5, T4, and T3). Such learner behaviour disturbs the teachers in the course of their duties. Head teacher 3 attacked some human rights defenders organisations like Plan Malawi in perpetrating students' indiscipline when he said that:

Child protection officers from Plan are interfering on issues of indiscipline by securing acquittals for suspended students instead of coming to sort out with us. Students as such are becoming notorious knowing even if we suspend them, Plan will secure their acquittals. This is annoying. **[HT3—at School 3—10/07/15]**

Respondents also raised the issue of religious beliefs interference on haircut as another misconception on human rights in the name of right to freedom of worship. Some head

teachers complained that some parents are not cooperating on issues of haircut for their children. Head teacher 5 narrated as follows:

Some parents and their children come to taste waters. Parents are bringing their children with dread rocks claiming that they have a right to both religion and education. The students too, take advantage of human rights by refusing to shave their hair hiding behind human rights. [HT5—at School 3—10/07/15]

From the discussion, it is evident that misconception about human rights is derailing efforts in the implementation of the DP in the selected secondary schools in Dowa under Robert Blake Cluster. An emphasis on human rights and responsibilities would help in alleviating the challenges the policy is facing. It should be reported that the researcher did not hear the side of Plan Malawi officials on the attack by the HT3 due to time factor.

4.5.5 Some Head teachers do not take heed of DCs recommendation

Respondents interviewed also cited a complete departure by head teachers from recommendations made by the DCs. For example, a member of DC from school1 reported that it surprises them when they see suspended students back after successful appeal because the reasons that are contained in the letters for their reinstatement are always contrary to their recommendations.

Concurring with these views is yet another DC member from school number 5 who reported that:

For their own reasons head teachers are in the habits of changing completely our recommendations at times. This is only known to us after things have backfired. The only problem is that the policy mandates head teachers to make a final say after we have submitted our recommendations. There is no way; a group decision would be bad compared to the one man decisions. We don't trust one another. This is a big challenge. [FGD-DC. member—at School 3—10/07/15]

Although this looks like a problem created by the head teachers, it is still a challenge because in some schools it becomes part of the culture on discipline.

4.5.6 Lack of knowledge about the policy by some members (stakeholders)

It transpired that most stakeholders in education are not aware about the DP. Even among parents themselves, some of them are not aware of the DP. This was revealed and confessed by DHT1 who conceded and revealed to the researcher that most parents too are not aware of the DP when he said that:

Parents' ignorance on the discipline policy toward students is being revealed when they come for guidance and counselling. They confess that they do not know contents of the DP. They cannot therefore properly advise their children. [DHT1—at School 1—10/07/15]

Respondents cited the way some church leaders behave when they want to force the school to accept their children with long hair in the school. Respondents also cited the way some officials from Plan Malawi are interfering in the issues of discipline at school 5

when they fight for acquittals of suspended students. However, the researcher did not have enough time to interview Plan Malawi officials for their side of the story on these allegations.

4.5.7 *Obsolete discipline policy*

Findings showed that some elements of the DP are outdated. For example, DHT 1 argue that some provision of the DP require immediate attention. He cited the provision which regulates radios arguing that we are now in 21st century where emerging issues have not been cooperated into the policy. Specifically, the DHT1 said that:

I feel the DP needs to be revised to incorporate emerging issues. For example a section on radios prevents students from having radios and yet when a student has been found with a cell phone, we charge him or her under this section. Now the dilemma emerge where we claim of having e-schools, yet such radios must be confiscated from students, luckily here we are using a by-law which was enacted by PTA, otherwise, it is not clear and obsolete and a review is long overdue. [DHT1—at School 1 — 10/07/15]

HT5 further argued that the policy does not cover adequately issues of technology because it was formulated sometime, when technology was not there probably in our country meaning that those who formulated it were short sighted, so it needs to be overhauled because according to him, the school policy serves as the guidelines and directs the school in the proper direction and must be clear and not ambiguous. Deputy Head teachers observed that the school policy is the heart of the school, or the engine of the school, because the discipline of the school is centred on the school policy and must

be periodically reviewed so that it is not found to be outdated and a source of indiscipline.

Jones (1978) argued that lack of clear and out dated discipline procedures may lead to resentment by the students. The thinking of these DHTs' is also shared by Banda (2004) who also cited obsolete Discipline Policies, not in tandem with new generation of students as impediment to implementation of DPs. He argued that it was imperative that discipline policies should be reviewed periodically as time changes citing changes in generations and laws. Some deputy head teachers interviewed in his study confirmed in Botswana secondary schools that one of their challenges in implementing discipline was that in most cases, the current policies are found to be outdated to the students, because of passage of time and secondly due to generation gap.

4.6 Chapter Summary

The chapter has discussed how the head teachers understand the DP, their level of compliance to DP. The chapter has also discussed teachers' awareness of the DP in various secondary schools including challenges administrators face when implementing the DP in Dowa District. It has also integrated the theoretical framework in discussing the findings and concluded that if the model could be followed then implementation of the DP would be achieved. The next chapter presents conclusions, recommendations, implications and areas for further studies on how best to implement the Discipline Policy.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

5.0 Chapter overview

This chapter first makes conclusions based on the findings of the study on the implementation of the DP in the secondary schools of Dowa district in line with research questions that framed and guided this study. This is followed by implications of the findings of the study recommendations. The last section presents areas for further study.

5.1 Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to assess implementation of the DP in secondary schools in Dowa District with the following four subsidiary research questions: What are common students discipline problems in schools? How do head teachers understand the DP in Dowa District? Are teachers' aware of the MOEST Policy on school discipline? To what extent do Head teachers follow the DP guidelines when dealing with indiscipline cases in Dowa District? What challenges do administrators face in implementing the DP in Dowa District?

On common student discipline problems in schools, the study found that schools under study in Dowa experienced numerous problems, chief among others include open defiance of authority, vandalism of school property, petty theft, drug abuse (for example, Chamba smoking), students and teachers absenteeism, students absconding study cycles,

Teachers hostile comments against students, boy-girl sexual relationships leading to pregnancies, graffiti (scribbling), going out of school bounds without permission, reluctant to put on school uniform, fighting, reporting late for classes and absconding classes, teasing and bullying, including sexual harassment. The study concluded that educators should be assertive in reinforcing discipline among learners in a bid to achieve teaching and learning as one of the school objectives.

On teachers awareness of MOEST policy on school discipline, the study concluded that a large number of teachers were not aware of DP on school discipline. This was shown where most of the teachers indicated that they were only aware of the code of conduct. from the study, it was concluded that implementation of the DP is not properly being implemented and if it is to be properly implemented then it has to be discussed under the cluster system so that the schools are on equal footing in implementing the DP as the majority schools are not aware of the said policy.

On the question of to what extent do head teachers follow discipline policy guidelines when dealing with indiscipline cases, the study found that head teachers implement the DP selectively. Some schools are trying to follow proper policy guidelines to the letter while others do not follow it citing it is very long and time consuming. The differences were due to the fact that most schools did not have the DP itself and to that extent, most of what they were doing is just for them have a student before the DC. The study found that failure to stick to these guidelines is contributing to massive reinstatement of the indiscipline students by MoEST which in the long term is fumigating anger and resentment among teachers and members of the DC in school. In addition, the researcher

observed that with the advent of democracy cases of indiscipline have increased due to misinterpretation of human rights and democracy. Students are emphasising on their rights without hinting on responsibilities. Therefore, this study concluded that most disciplinary cases are lost to students due to emotional decisions by head teachers.

On challenges administrators face in implementing the DP in Dowa district, it was established that higher authorities rampant overturning of DCs decision is encouraging misbehaviour among learners. However, this study can conclude that this is due to the fact that administrators fail to follow provisions of the DP and this is leading to higher authorities overturning such decisions. Most decisions were emotional not based on provisions of the DP. Bringing up an upright child is the responsibility of both a teacher and a parent. This means that parents and teachers must collaborate and work together. It is therefore concluded that implementation of the DP requires a multi-sectoral approach, where all stakeholders with interest in education like, donors, funders, national and international Non Governmental Organisations should collaboratively work together to achieve the common goal.

In a broader context, teachers have a right to discipline students who contravene school regulations (Nakpodia, 2010). This is in line with the Canter Model guiding this study.

5.2 Policy implications

From the conclusions of the findings, one critical area needs to be addressed by policy makers: Indiscipline continues to hamper effective delivery of instruction. From the

results of the study it can be interpreted that the DP needs multi-sectoral approach if it is to be successfully implemented. Cluster meetings seem the best place where issues of discipline can best be handled for successful implementation. This would allow the exploitation of a variety of skills bestowed in different people. This will in the long run, help to bring in new ideas of implementing the discipline policy.

The implication of the status quo means that indiscipline cases will continue due to the fact that most stakeholders will remain ignorant of fundamental principles impeding the implementation of the policy and this will affect teaching and learning, a core objective of MoEST.

The study has also indicated that most decisions made by authorities are based not only on emotions, but also lack of knowledge on human rights leading to losing such cases to students thereby ruining their reputation and wasting meagre resources available defending their decisions in courts of laws. This study has also identified lack of substantive evidence as a major setback schools face when they submit their reports to higher authorities to effect suspensions and exclusion. Establishing punishment books and files where habitual offenders can be tracked down helps schools to substantiate their claim against habitual offenders in the school. Record keeping will therefore ease administrators' unnecessary anger and hatred towards Education Division Officials who are being accused of siding with indiscipline students by reinstating them to their schools a tendency administrators argue is perpetrating indiscipline issues in schools.

5.3 Areas for further study

From this study, it has been proven that the DP has so many challenges that are hampering its effective implementation on the ground thereby negatively affecting the delivery of the education sector. The researcher suggests the following three areas for further research

First, replicating the study to a wider coverage, for example, taking the study to all schools in the districts in Malawi, or in Dowa since this study was only based on five schools. This is mainly because reports of indiscipline continue to emerge in almost all districts. This is therefore, a national issue which needs to be looked at a national level by either individuals, education stakeholders or the ministry of education itself.

Secondly, a comparative study to evaluate the effectiveness of CEED in handling discipline cases to other division based on the rampant indiscipline in the division. Third and last, a comparative assessment on implementation of DP in Islamic and non Islamic or catholic secondary schools is also required. This is due to the fact that we have not heard much on indiscipline in Islamic and catholic schools. What makes their discipline tick?

5.4 Chapter summary

The chapter has presented the conclusions, implications and some areas for further study. The main argument in this study is that the implementation of the DP is contextual.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter of Introduction



CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

Principal: Richard Tambulasi,
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2nd July, 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR MASTER OF EDUCATION (POLICY PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP) RESEARCH

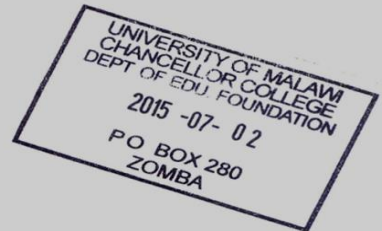
Mr. Ohms Kayira is a student of Education in the Department of Education Foundations at Chancellor College, University of Malawi.

Mr. Kayira is working on his thesis, "**Implementation of Discipline Policy in Secondary Schools: Attitudes of Administrators and Teachers – A Case of Selected Schools in Central East Education Division**". This is meant to be a request to your institution or organization to assist our student in his endeavor to collect data.

Thank you

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "S. Chiziwa".

Symon E. Chiziwa, PhD
Head, Education Foundations Department



Appendix 2: Letter of informed Consent

University of Malawi

Chancellor College

Box 280, Zomba.

Cell: 0999099057/0888658357

Email: ohmskayira@gmail.com

ohmskayira@yahoo.com

7th July, 2015.

Dear Research Participant,

I would like to request for permission to collect data on the Implementation of the Discipline Policy in Secondary Schools (IDPISS) from you. I am a student in the Faculty of Education at Chancellor College studying for the Master of Education in Policy Planning and Leadership. The results of this study will add to a body of knowledge and literature on how schools are implementing the Discipline Policy. Your school has been purposively selected because it is operating within the framework of Robert Blake Secondary School Cluster System.

I intend to collect the data through document analysis, semi-structured interview with head teacher and the Deputy Head teacher, and Focus Group Discussions with the Discipline Committee members and form 1 and 3 students including administration of questionnaires to teachers. The information that you will provide is very important because it will assist various education stakeholders in Malawi in general, and in Dowa district specifically, to think about the current status of Discipline Policy and design ways of improving it. Be assured that this study adheres to research ethics such that none will be subjected to any physical or psychological harm because of this study. Participants' responses will be anonymous and treated with utmost confidentiality. I have attached an introductory letter from Chancellor College, the Faculty of Education, Department of Education Foundation.

I would be very glad if you considered this request, without which this study would not proceed. It would be a great pleasure if you allowed me to collect the aforementioned data as soon as possible. Thank you for your cooperation in advance.

Yours truly,

Ohms G. Kayira

Appendix 3: Sample consent form for Head teachers

CONSENT FORM FOR HEADTEACHER **S (5)**

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DISCIPLINE POLICY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CENTRAL EAST EDUCATION DEVISION IN DOWA DISTRICT

I agree to participate in this interview, whose conditions are as follows:

- The study is aimed at assessing the implementation of the discipline policy in secondary schools in Malawi: a case from Dowa District. For this purpose, semi structured interviews will be conducted with key informants' from one of the secondary schools in Robert Blake Cluster.
- Interviews will last for about an hour and questions will deal with how are head teachers understanding the discipline policy, how are secondary schools implementing the discipline policy, challenges administrators are facing in implementing the discipline policy and suggest solutions to cited challenges in secondary schools in Dowa District.
- The information I give during this interview will solely be used as defined by the study
- At any stage I can refuse to answer certain questions, topics, even putting to an end to the interview without any prejudice to myself
- To facilitate the interviews job, the interview will be recorded. However, the recording will be destroyed as soon as it has been transcribed.
- All interview data will be handled so as to protect their confidentiality. Therefore, no names will be mentioned and the information will be coded.
- All data will be destroyed at the end of the study
- For any information about the study I can contact Dr S Chiziwa on 0888554209 or email him through schiziwa9@gmail.com/schiziwa@cc.ac.mw

Participant's signature _____

Date 13th July, 2015

Interviewer's signature _____

Date 13/07/15

Appendix 4: Sample consent form for Deputy Head teachers

CONSENT FORM FOR DEPUTY HEADTEACHER 1

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DISCIPLINE POLICY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CENTRAL EAST EDUCATION DEVISION IN DOWA DISTRICT

I agree to participate in this interview, whose conditions are as follows:

- The study is aimed at assessing the implementation of the discipline policy in secondary schools in Malawi: a case from Dowa District. For this purpose, semi structured interviews will be conducted with key informants' from one of the secondary schools in Robert Blake Cluster.
- Interviews will last for about an hour and questions will deal with how are head teachers understanding the discipline policy, how are secondary schools implementing the discipline policy, challenges administrators are facing in implementing the discipline policy and suggest solutions to cited challenges in secondary schools in Dowa District.
- The information I give during this interview will solely be used as defined by the study
- At any stage I can refuse to answer certain questions, topics, even putting to an end to the interview without any prejudice to myself
- To facilitate the interviews job, the interview will be recorded. However, the recording will be destroyed as soon as it has been transcribed.
- All interview data will be handled so as to protect their confidentiality. Therefore, no names will be mentioned and the information will be coded.
- All data will be destroyed at the end of the study
- For any information about the study I can contact Dr S Chiziwa on 0888554209 or email him through schiziwa9@gmail.com / schiziwa@cc.ac.mw

Participant's signature _____

Date

15/07/15

Interviewer's signature _____

Date

15/07/15

Appendix 5: Sample Consent form for Discipline Committee Members

CONSENT FORM FOR DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR SCHOOL NUMBER 5

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DISCIPLINE POLICY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CENTRAL EAST EDUCATION DEVISION IN DOWA DISTRICT

I agree to participate in this interview, whose conditions are as follows:

- The study is aimed at assessing the implementation of the discipline policy in secondary schools in Malawi: a case from Dowa District. For this purpose, semi structured interviews will be conducted with key informants' from one of the secondary schools in Robert Blake Cluster.
- Interviews will last for about an hour and questions will deal with how are head teachers understanding the discipline policy, how are secondary schools implementing the discipline policy, challenges administrators are facing in implementing the discipline policy and suggest solutions to cited challenges in secondary schools in Dowa District.
- The information I give during this interview will solely be used as defined by the study
- At any stage I can refuse to answer certain questions, topics, even putting to an end to the interview without any prejudice to myself
- To facilitate the interviews job, the interview will be recorded. However, the recording will be destroyed as soon as it has been transcribed.
- All interview data will be handled so as to protect their confidentiality. Therefore, no names will be mentioned and the information will be coded.
- All data will be destroyed at the end of the study
- For any information about the study I can contact Dr S Chiziwa on 0888554209 or email him through schiziwa9@gmail.com/schiziwa@cc.ac.mw

Participant # 1

Signature [Signature]

Date 22/07/15

Participant # 2

Signature [Signature]

Date 22/07/15

Participant # 3

Signature [Signature]

Date 22-07-15

Participant # 4

Signature [Signature]

Date 22/07/15

Participant # 5

signature [Signature]

Date 22-07-15

Participant # 6

signature _____

Date _____

Appendix 6: Sample Consent form for Teachers

CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS FOR SCHOOL NUMBER 2 (2)

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DISCIPLINE POLICY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CENTRAL EAST EDUCATION DEVISION IN DOWA DISTRICT

I agree to participate in this interview, whose conditions are as follows:

- The study is aimed at assessing the implementation of the discipline policy in secondary schools in Malawi: a case from Dowa District. For this purpose, semi structured interviews will be conducted with key informants' from one of the secondary schools in Robert Blake Cluster.
- Interviews will last for about an hour and questions will deal with how are head teachers understanding the discipline policy, how are secondary schools implementing the discipline policy, challenges administrators are facing in implementing the discipline policy and suggest solutions to cited challenges in secondary schools in Dowa District.
- The information I give during this interview will solely be used as defined by the study
- At any stage I can refuse to answer certain questions, topics, even putting to an end to the interview without any prejudice to myself
- To facilitate the interviews job, the interview will be recorded. However, the recording will be destroyed as soon as it has been transcribed.
- All interview data will be handled so as to protect their confidentiality. Therefore, no names will be mentioned and the information will be coded.
- All data will be destroyed at the end of the study
- For any information about the study I can contact Dr S Chiziwa on 0888554209 or email him through schiziwa9@gmail.com/schiziwa@cc.ac.mw

Participant # 1

Signature

Date

Participant # 4

Signature

Date

Participant # 2

Signature

Date

Participant # 5

Signature

Date

Participant # 3

Signature

Date

Participant # 6

Signature

Date

Appendix 7: Sample Consent form for Pupils

CONSENT FORM FOR PUPILS FOR SCHOOL NUMBER 2

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DISCIPLINE POLICY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CENTRAL EAST EDUCATION DEVISION IN DOWA DISTRICT

I agree to participate in this interview, whose conditions are as follows:

- The study is aimed at assessing the implementation of the discipline policy in secondary schools in Malawi: a case from Dowa District. For this purpose, semi structured interviews will be conducted with key informants' from one of the secondary schools in Robert Blake Cluster.
- Interviews will last for about an hour and questions will deal with how are head teachers understanding the discipline policy, how are secondary schools implementing the discipline policy, challenges administrators are facing in implementing the discipline policy and suggest solutions to cited challenges in secondary schools in Dowa District.
- The information I give during this interview will solely be used as defined by the study
- At any stage I can refuse to answer certain questions, topics, even putting to an end to the interview without any prejudice to myself
- To facilitate the interviews job, the interview will be recorded. However, the recording will be destroyed as soon as it has been transcribed.
- All interview data will be handled so as to protect their confidentiality. Therefore, no names will be mentioned and the information will be coded.
- All data will be destroyed at the end of the study
- For any information about the study I can contact Dr S Chiziwa on 0888554209 or email him through schiziwa9@gmail.com/schiziwa@cc.ac.mw

Participant # 1

Signature [Signature]

Date 13-07-2012

Participant # 2

signature [Signature]

Date 13-07-2012

Participant # 3

Signature [Signature]

Date 13-07-2012

Participant # 4

Signature [Signature]

Date 13-07-2012

Participant # 5

signature [Signature]

Date 13-07-2012

Participant # 6

signature [Signature]

Date 13-07-2012

Appendix 8: Semi-structured Interview guide for Head teachers

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DISCIPLINE POLICY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MALAWI: A CASE OF SELECED SCHOOLS IN CEED FROM DOWA DISTRICT

Bio-data

Sex:_____ **Age:**_____ **Length of experience:**_____

School:_____ **Division;**_____

ExactPlace:_____ **Date:**_____

Introductions

(The interviewer introduces himself and where he is coming from. He then requests the interviewee to introduce himself/herself in terms of names and positions held in the institution. After these introductions, he introduces the study, the visit and the purpose of the interview. He then presents the Informed Letter of Consent and allows the interviewee to read and he clarifies on the Letter).

1. How do stakeholders understand discipline policy

- (a) What are the common indiscipline problems at your school?
- (b) What factors contribute to such problems?
- (c) As a Head teacher, how do you understand the term “Discipline Policy?”
- (d) Explain whether your school has a Discipline Policy?
- (d) Explain whether your school has an established student’s code of conduct?

2. How are the Secondary Schools implementing the discipline policy?

- (a) As a Head teacher, do you avail the code of conduct to students?

- (b) Describe the mode of communication used in your school to make students aware of the established codes of discipline
- (c) Would you describe the level of support you receive from the Deputy Head teachers and other teachers in implementation of the Discipline Policy
- (d) How adequate is the current discipline policy in dealing with indiscipline cases?
- (e) Explain what you do when a student has been involved in an indiscipline case?
- (f) Explain whether students participate in making school rules and why?

(3) What challenges do school administrators encounter when implementing discipline policy

- (a) What challenges, as an administrator, do you face in implementing the Discipline Policy?
- (b) Will you describe some discipline cases in which the school seemed to have lost from students appeals through judicial institutions or higher authority?
- (c) What reasons were put forward for reinstatement of the students and setting aside the disciplines decision
- (d) How satisfied are you with the said reasons

Thank you very much for your cooperation and participation in this interview.

Appendix 9: Semi-structured Interview guide for Deputy Head teachers

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DISCIPLINE POLICY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MALAWI: A CASE OF SELECED SCHOOLS IN CEED FROM DOWA DISTRICT

Bio-data

Sex:_____ **Age:**_____ **Length of experience:**_____

School:_____ **Division:**_____

Exact Place:_____ **Date:**_____

Introductions

(The interviewer introduces himself and where he is coming from. He then requests the interviewee to introduce himself/herself in terms of names and positions held in the institution. After these introductions, he introduces the study, the visit and the purpose of the interview. He then presents the Informed Letter of Consent and allows the interviewee to read and he clarifies on the Letter).

1. How do Head teachers understand discipline policy

- (a) As Deputy head teacher, Would you describe your understanding of the term “Discipline Policy”
- (b) Does your school have a Discipline Policy? if no why not
- (c) As Deputy head teacher, how would you describe the degree of adherence of your school to the Discipline Policy
- (d) Does your school have a Discipline Committee? if no why not ?
- (e) How often does your Discipline Committee meet

2. How are the Secondary Schools implementing the discipline policy?

- (a) How often do you preside over discipline cases in your school
- (b) Describe discipline cases common in your school
- (c) Describe how you handle discipline cases before you in your school.
- (d) Have you been trained to manage school discipline?

- (e) Chapter 4 Section 43(1) a and b provide right to administrative justice in discipline. Are you aware of it?
- (f) Explain whether the views of respondents during discipline taken into consideration? Or do you follow the right to good administrative justice as outlined in S43 (1) a and b of Chapter 4 of Malawi Constitution?
- (g) How many discipline cases have you recorded this (a) Academic year (b) Term
- (h) How many cases have been successfully challenged in judicial institutions or higher institutions by means of appeals by students?

3. What challenges do school administrators encounter when implementing discipline policy

- (a) Describe some challenges you face in the implementation of Discipline Policy as you handle students discipline cases
- (b) What is your opinion regarding the effectiveness of the Discipline Policy currently under use on the ground

Thank you very much for your cooperation

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DISCIPLINE POLICY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MALAWI: A CASE OF SELECED SCHOOLS IN CEED FROM DOWA DISTRICT.

Bio-data

Name of Moderator: _____ **Number of Attendees:** _____ **Length of**
of _____ **experience:** _____ **Number** _____ **of**
Males _____ **Females** _____ **School:** _____
Division; _____ **Exact Place:** _____ **Date:** _____

Introductions

(The interviewer introduces himself and where he is coming from. He then requests the interviewee to introduce himself/herself in terms of names and positions held in the institution. After these introductions, he introduces the study, the visit and the purpose of the interview. He then presents the Informed Letter of Consent and allows the interviewee to read and he clarifies on the Letter).

1. How do head teachers and discipline members understand discipline policy

- (a) As a Discipline Committee, would you describe your understanding of the term “Discipline Policy”
- (b) Would you describe whether your discipline committee has the Discipline Policy
- (c) As a Discipline Committee, what guides your discipline Committee when it comes to handling discipline cases

2. How are the Secondary Schools implementing the discipline policy?

- (a) Describe how students express themselves during disciplinary action
- (b) Describe whether students’ expressions are taken into account after cross-examination
- (c) Describe how witnesses are used in discipline cases
- (d) How does your committee implement the discipline policy?

(e) How does this committee ensure that principles of natural justice are adhered to in its course of duty?

(f) Has your committee's decision ever been challenged by students by means of a successful appeal to higher authority or any judicial institution?

(g) On what grounds did the students successfully launch the appeal?

(h) Were the reasons cited in the appeal satisfactory to your committee?

Describe.

(i) How in your opinion would you want the Discipline Committee to function if it is to achieve its objectives?

(j) How can you describe the support you receive from the Head teacher in implementing the Discipline Policy?

3. What challenges do school administrators encounter when implementing discipline policy

(a) What challenges do you face in implementing the Discipline Policy on the ground?

Thank you very much for your cooperation and participation in this interview.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DISCIPLINE POLICY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MALAWI: A CASE OF SELECED SCHOOLS IN CEED FROM DOWA DISTRICT

Bio-data

Sex:_____ **Age:**_____ **Length of experience:**_____

School:_____ **Division;**_____

ExactPlace:_____ **Date:**_____

Introductions

(The interviewer introduces himself and where he is coming from. He then requests the interviewee to introduce himself/herself in terms of names (optional) and positions held in the institution. After these introductions, he introduces the study, the visit and the purpose of the interview. He then presents the Informed Letter of Consent and allows the interviewee to read and he clarifies on the Letter).

1. How do teachers understand discipline policy

(a) Would you describe your understanding of the term “Discipline Policy”

2. How are the Secondary Schools implementing the discipline policy?

(a) Describe whether the school follows the Discipline Policy as it handles student discipline at school

(b) How satisfied are you regarding the way the school is implementing the discipline policy at your school

(c) How involved are you in issues of discipline

(d) Describe how students indiscipline have affected you as a teacher in your profession in your daily business

(e) How can you describe the discipline committee in the way it handles students disciplinary matters

3. What challenges do school administrators encounter when implementing discipline policy

(a) What do you perceive to be the greatest challenges the Discipline Committee is facing in its bid to implement the Discipline Policy at your school

Thank you very much for your cooperation and participation in this interview

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DISCIPLINE POLICY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MALAWI: A CASE OF SELECED SCHOOLS IN CEED FROM DOWA DISTRICT

Bio-data

Name of Moderator:_____ **Number of Attendees:**_____

Length of experience: _____ **Number of**
Males_____ **Females**_____ **School:**_____ **Division;**_____ **Exact**
Place:_____ **Date:**_____

Introductions

(The interviewer introduces himself and where he is coming from. He then requests the interviewee to introduce himself/herself in terms of names and positions held in the institution. After these introductions, he introduces the study, the visit and the purpose of the interview. He then presents the Informed Letter of Consent and allows the interviewee to read and he clarifies on the Letter).

1. How do students understand discipline policy

- (a) What are common indiscipline cases at the schools
- (b) How are these cases resolved
- (c) Are you satisfied with the resolution process? If yes, explain and if no explain why not?
- (d) Are you are aware of the discipline policy and code of conduct
- (e) How often does your head teacher read out the code of conduct to students?
- (f) How just is the discipline committee in handling discipline cases

2. How are the Secondary Schools implementing the discipline policy?

- (a) Will you describe whether you are given an opportunity to be heard both verbally and in written form by the discipline committee

- (b) How prepared are you as students before you appear for the discipline case when you have contravened school rules and regulations. Are you given enough time to prepare for the disciplinary hearing?
- (c) Are you convinced whether investigations are carried out by staff before you are paraded before the discipline committee? Probing further
- (d) Describe whether you are given an opportunity to be heard in a written form
- (e) Describe whether you are given an opportunity to bring witnesses to the discipline to defend your?
- (f) Describe whether your views are taken into consideration when making determinations.

3. What challenges do students encounter when appearing before discipline

Thank you very much for your cooperation and participation in this interview.