

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENDER EQUITY POLICY AT
CLASSROOM LEVEL: THE CASE STUDY OF THREE
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LILONGWE URBAN**

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

JAMES MASEKO

**UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE**

AUGUST, 2017

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENDER EQUITY POLICY AT
CLASSROOM LEVEL: THE CASE STUDY OF THREE
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LILONGWE URBAN**

By

JAMES MASEKO

B.Ed. (Humanities) - University of Malawi

Submitted to the School of Education, Department of Educational Foundations
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education
(Policy, Planning and Leadership)

University of Malawi

Chancellor College

AUGUST, 2017

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.

JAMES MASEKO

Name

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James', written over a horizontal line.

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis represents the student's own work and effort and has been submitted with our approval.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Symon Chiziwa, PhD (Lecturer)

Main Supervisor

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Tiffany Banda, M.Ed. (Lecturer)

Deputy Head of Department

DEDICATION

To my late parents: Mr Friday Foster Maseko and Mrs Regina Kanama Maseko who did not live long enough to see me grow up this far. I know you happily exist in the world unseen; to see how I have crossed the valleys of life; to collect myself together to more than what you last saw me, and to make your dreams come to pass through me this way.

MAY YOUR SOULS REST IN ETERNAL PEACE..!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the Almighty God for all the support, strength, health and many other things. I would also like to express my deepest thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Symon Chiziwa, for the expert guidance, suggestions, patience and motivation which contributed much towards the completion of this commendable work.

Special thanks to my wife Elizabeth and my sons Peter and Perez for prayers, encouragement and moral support and also for persevering despite the loneliness during the period I was away doing my studies. I am also grateful to my friends, Symon “Cmwa” Chikapaza, Lovemore “Sniper” Kuchonde, Zainab Hussein, Norah Chitete, and all my classmates (PPL 2013) for their support and encouragement to complete my study. You were a great company!!!

Dr. Gertrude Mutharika, Mr Sam Zuze, Prof Mac-Jessie Mbewe, Dr Ken Ndala and Dr Susan Chikagwa-Malunga have all been influential, in some ways, in my life.

God bless you all....!!!

ABSTRACT

The gender disparities in access, retention and success rates that exist at secondary school level can be attributed to a number of reasons, one of them being the classroom interactions. The kinds of interactions that go on in the classroom are among the factors that determine who successfully completes his or her education. These can be interactions between teachers and students of both sexes or among students themselves. The purpose of this study was to investigate how secondary school teachers are implementing the gender equity policy at classroom level. The study used a mixed methods design in which the qualitative approach was predominant. Data was generated from three secondary schools in Lilongwe urban using classroom observations, interviews with teachers, Focus Group Discussions with students and a questionnaire with teachers and students. The results of this study revealed that (i) most teachers were not fully aware of gender equity policies and practices therefore lacked understanding of the policy, (ii) poor implementation of gender equity policy was due to lack of proper policy communication, lack of appropriate training and professional development for teachers, and cultural and religious beliefs among others. The study concludes that most teachers need frequent in-service training to provide them with adequate knowledge and skills geared at enforcing positive attitudes toward gender issues. This will have a positive implication on successful implementation of gender related policies in education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
LIST OF TABLES	xiii
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	xiv
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Chapter Overview	1
1.1 Background to the problem	1
1.1.1 <i>An Overview of the National Gender Policy in Malawi</i>	3
1.1.2 <i>Girls' education in Democratic Malawi</i>	4
1.1.3 <i>Benefits of Gender Equity Policy in education</i>	8
1.1.4 <i>Rationale for implementing Gender Equity Policy in Education</i>	13
1.1.5 <i>Equity beyond access</i>	14
1.2 Statement of the Problem	16
1.3 Purpose of the study	17
1.5 The significance of the study	18
1.6 Definition of Operational Terms	19
1.7 Structure of the thesis.....	20
1.8 Chapter summary	21

CHAPTER 2	22
LITERATURE REVIEW	22
2.0 Chapter Overview	22
2.1 Policy implementation	22
2.2 Gender Equity Policy Implementation.....	24
2.2.1 Gender Equity Policy communication	25
2.2.2 Financial and Human Resources	29
2.2.3 Mobilisation of political support	32
2.2.4 Source of the Policy	33
2.2.5 Implementers' values	34
2.3 Gender equity and education	34
2.4 Classroom interactions.....	35
2.4.1 Teaching style	37
2.4.2 Knowing the students	38
2.4.3 Teachers being friendly to students.....	38
2.5 What influences success or failure to promote gender equity in education.....	39
2.5.1 Girls' attitudes	39
2.5.2 Stereo-typing	41
2.5.3 Child Friendly School Environment	42
2.5.4 Teaching/learning styles.....	43
2.6 Gaps in the Studies at National Level.....	44
2.7 Theoretical framework.....	45
2.7.1 Motivation	46

2.7.2 Information.....	47
2.7.3 Power.....	47
2.7.4 Interaction.....	47
2.7.4.1 <i>Cooperation</i>	48
2.7.4.2 <i>Opposition</i>	48
2.7.4.3 <i>Joint learning</i>	48
2.8 Chapter summary	49
CHAPTER 3	50
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	50
3.0 Chapter Overview	50
3.1 The Overall Research Approach.....	50
3.2 Setting and Population of Interest.....	52
3.3 Sampling and sample size.....	53
3.4 Data generation	55
3.4.1 Data generation methods.....	55
3.4.2 Data generation instruments.....	55
3.4.2.1 <i>Observation Schedules</i>	56
3.4.2.2 <i>Interviews</i>	57
3.4.2.3 <i>Focus group discussion</i>	59
3.4.2.4 <i>Questionnaires</i>	60
3.4.2.5 <i>Document Analysis</i>	61
3.5 Data analysis	61
3.6 Validity and Reliability.....	63

3.7 Negotiation for access to schools.....	63
3.8 Ethical Considerations	64
3.8.1 Consent of the participants.....	64
3.8.2 Confidentiality.....	65
3.8.3 Observation of their human rights.....	65
3.9 Limitations of the Study.....	65
3.10 Chapter summary	67
CHAPTER 4	68
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.....	68
4.0 Chapter Overview	68
4.1 Teachers’ and Students’ knowledge of gender equity policies in education	68
4.1.1 Teachers’ knowledge of gender equity policies in education	69
4.1.2 Students’ knowledge of gender equity policies education	71
4.2 Teachers’ understanding of gender equity policy in education	75
4.3.1 Student Participation	77
4.3.1.1 <i>Questions asked by students</i>	81
4.3.1.2 <i>Classroom interaction among the pupils</i>	84
4.3.1.3 <i>Teachers’ and students’ attitudes</i>	87
4.3.1.4 <i>Teachers’ behaviour</i>	90
4.4 Challenges hindering successful implementation of gender equity policy.....	92
4.4.1 Teachers’ views.....	92
4.4.2 Students’ views	94
4.5 Chapter summary	97

CHAPTER 5	99
CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	99
5.0 Chapter Overview	99
5.1 Main findings	99
5.2 Recommendations	102
5.3 Suggestions for further studies.....	103

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: University enrolment by sex (2003-2007).....	7
--	---

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Enrolment of females from 2000 to 2012.....	6
Table 2: Examination results for MSCE by gender (2002-2010).....	13
Table 3: Description of the sample and setting.....	59
Table 4: Teachers' awareness of gender equity policies and issues in education	70
Table 5: Sources of information for teachers.....	71
Table 6: Students' awareness of gender policies and issues in education	72
Table 7: Sources of information for students.....	77
Table 8: Frequencies of interaction between teachers and male/female students	78
Table 9: Teachers and students responses	87

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questions for interviews with teachers	111
Appendix 2: Questions for interviews with Head Teachers or Deputy Head Teachers .	113
Appendix 3: Classroom Observation Schedule (adapted from Kabira & Masinjila, 1997 and VanBelle-Prouty&Sey, 1998).....	114
Appendix 4: Observation schedule for girls' school.....	117
Appendix 5: Questions for focus group discussions with students	118
Appendix 6: Questionnaire for teachers (tick the column appropriate to you).....	119
Appendix 7: Questionnaire for students	122

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides background information to the increase of gender equity concerns in education sector in Malawi and the statement of the problem. It also outlines the purpose and specific objectives of the study and significance of the study. The definitions of terms used in the study are also written down. The outline of the thesis has been specified in this chapter.

1.1 Background to the problem

Promoting gender equality is now globally accepted as a development strategy for reducing poverty levels among women and men; improving health and living standards and enhancing efficiency of public investments (Bank, 1997). The attainment of gender equality is not only seen as an end in itself and a human rights issue, but as a pre-requisite for the achievement of sustainable development.

According to Bank (1997), gender equity in schooling was first introduced as a goal after the emerging feminist movement in the United States in the 1960s, which assumed the necessity to eliminate unequal treatment of boys and girls in school. In March 1990, the United Nations organised a World Conference on “Education For All” (EFA) in Jomtien,

Thailand, and 1,500 delegates from 155 countries attended. The participants represented 150 governments, non-governmental and inter-governmental organisations. The conference organisers called upon all countries to universalise adequate basic education and to adopt the World Declaration on “Education For All” as a framework for action. “Education For All” was a commitment to provide quality basic education to all children, youth and adults worldwide. This policy advocated for increased access to primary education, eliminating inequalities in enrolment, building a strong socioeconomic base within society and enhancing civic education on the social and economic benefits of education at the community level (Hauya & Makewira, 1996).

The Jomtien Conference of 1990 and Dakar Summit of 2000 called for increase in funding for education and provision of educational facilities. In spite of these laudable conferences, in Africa, including Malawi, the majority of children is still not in school while most of those who enrol in school drop out before the completion of basic education. The levels of poverty and population growth are the main causes of high level of inaccessibility to education (World Bank, 1996). Thus, the closure gender gap was reaffirmed as the central objectives of the conference. Hence, Article 3.3 of the World Declaration of Education for All, states that, the most urgent priority is to ensure access to and improve the quality of education of girls and women, and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation. All gender stereo-typing in education was to be eliminated. The international instruments heralded a new environment for international cooperation and solidarity.

While this focus led to notable progress in terms of gender parity in primary school enrolment, this contracted framing of gender and education meant that broader discussion and achievements were limited. Thus, taking stock of progress towards gender equality between the years 2000 and 2010, the world remains far from achieving gender equality in education and a gender-just society, despite some progress towards EFA goals. Despite tremendous efforts by the Malawi government over the past three decades to increase educational opportunities for males and females, gender equity challenges persist.

1.1.1 An Overview of the National Gender Policy in Malawi

Government developed the National Gender policy in 2000 to guide the inclusion of women and girls in all aspects of social, economic and political development, which also includes improvement in terms of access, and equity in the education sector. The National Gender Policy recognises gender as a cross-cutting issue, in which all aspects that affect sustainable and human centred development have a bearing (GOM, 2000a).

National Gender Policy identifies education and training as one of the key areas in which gender has to be mainstreamed. The explanation given for this is that; firstly, education is a human right. Secondly, education is necessary if both males and females are to meaningfully contribute to the social and economic development of the country. In addition, the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP [GOM April, 2002]), Vision 2020 (GOM, 2000), Policy and Investment Framework (PIF [MoEST, 2000]) and the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (GOM, 2005) regard the education of both males and females as key to poverty reduction. The Malawi Growth and

Development Strategy paper recognises that women, who constitute more than half of the county's population, was socially and economically marginalised because of their low levels of education which prevent them from full participation in the development process.

The National Gender Policy, therefore, aims to achieve the following broad objectives: to increase access, retention and completion to quality education for girls and boys; to increase access to quality education to all school age children at (early childhood) primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The target is to increase female participation to at least 50% of the total national enrolments at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of the education system in Malawi.

1.1.2 Girls' education in Democratic Malawi

Significant progress has been made since 2004 to expand access to basic education for both boys and girls and in moving towards the goal of Education for All through the introduction of Free Primary Education Policy, National Education Policy, and National Education Sector Plan. The educational policy is in favour of basic education and improvement of the whole education system (MoEST, 2000).

In terms of equity and access, the goal of education sector is “to improve the participation of girls and women, children with special needs and other disadvantaged youths” (MoEST, 2000). The target is to increase female participation to at least 50% of the total national enrolments at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of the education system in Malawi.

Education of the girl child is widely acknowledged as being a single and most powerful vehicle of self-advancement and fulfilment of developmental outcomes for present and future generations of children (Maluwa-Banda & Kholowa, 2002). Girl's education is an investment that serves as a way to achieve education for all children (Maluwa-Banda & Kholowa, 2002). According to World Bank (2008), gender equity at the primary level has been the focus of considerable attention within the Education for All Framework of Action, but much less so at the secondary level. Evidence of gender inequity and inequality in terms of access, retention and performance in secondary education in most Southern African countries, particularly Malawi, raises many questions. For example, the transition rate for girls from primary to secondary was 34 per cent compared 32 per cent for boys in 2013. The repetition rates for girls are high (19.4 per cent) but lower than for boys. Yet secondary Gross Enrolment Ratio for girls was 23 per cent compared to 30 percent for boys in 2013 (EMIS 2014). While transition rates from primary to secondary are higher for girls than boys, and the repetition rates are lower, girls still significantly trail behind boys, in regard to secondary Gross Enrolment Ratio.

The gender disparities in access, retention and success rates that exist at secondary school level can be attributed to a number of reasons. In some cases, schooling costs can be quite high and thus households at times have to make harsh decisions on who should benefit from the little that they have. The literature has argued that in such instances households will tend to fall back on established cultural and social beliefs. Kadzamira (2003) observed that cultural factors in Malawi and gender-specific attitudes about the division of labour also shape the decisions about whether a child should or should not be in school.

In addition, the school environment especially the teachers' attitudes, behaviour and teaching practices have perhaps the most significant implications for female persistence and academic achievement (Kigotho, 2011). This problem is rooted in societal beliefs which teachers bring into the classroom scenario. This can therefore be linked to the cultural beliefs which tend to look at females as having less ability than males and this leads to the marginalisation of girls in the classroom and further de-motivates girls in their academic pursuits. Another reason given by girls for leaving school was 'lack of interest' (Munthali et.al., 2006) and although this needs to be further unpacked, this may well reflect concerns over the relevancy of the education being provided. In addition, gender disparities at secondary school level are because very few female students persist to the standard eight class in which students write examinations that qualify them for secondary school education. This is indicated by the small proportions of female students that enrol for Primary School Leaving Certificate examinations.

Table 1: Enrolment of females from 2000 to 2012

Year	Primary		Secondary	
	Female	%	Female	%
2000	1458910	48.3	66205	40.3
2004	1576593	49.7	77470	42.9
2008	1794 483	49.8	137314	43.2
2012	2,099,885	50.13	141417	44.1

Source: EMIS 2012

As shown in the Table 1 above, in the area of enrolment, there has been steady improvement at primary and secondary education levels. At primary school level enrolment for female students has increased from 48% in 2000 to 50.13 in 2012. At secondary school level, female students' enrolment has increased from 40.3 in 2000 to 46.03 % in 2012. At university level, female students' enrolment is increasing although at a slow rate.

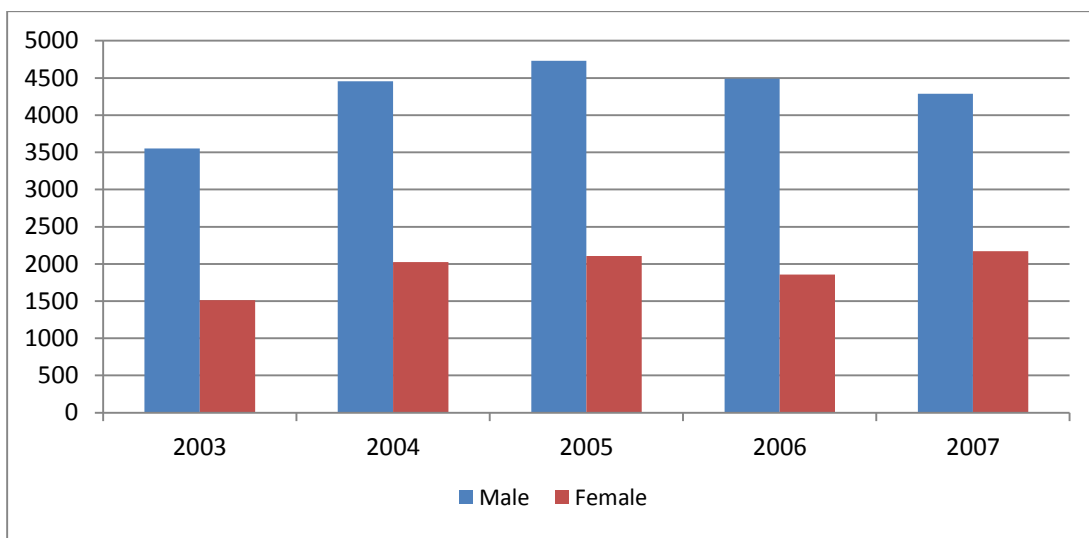


Figure 1: University enrolment by sex (2003-2007) Source: EMIS 2008

Education of female students in Malawi has also been associated with higher failure rates than success rates (Kadzamira: 1996) and specialised subject areas (GOM: 2000a; MoEST, 1995). Before 1995, male students were encouraged to take science subjects while female students were expected to study none science subjects. Furthermore, female students fail more in science than in other subjects (Kadzamira, 1996). Because of all these, bringing gender equity in education has been associated with making efforts to promote girls' education in terms of numbers that enrol in schools as well as in terms of achievement at the end of their school cycle. For female students to be successful in their

education, they need to be given equal treatment and opportunities in the classroom as male students (FAWE, n.d). The kinds of interactions that go on in the classroom are among the factors that determine whether or not the female student will successfully complete her education. These can be interactions between teachers and students of both sexes or among students themselves.

1.1.3 Benefits of Gender Equity Policy in education

Education has also been associated with the realisation of democracy and self-emancipation among individuals, and it is for this reason that deprivation of education, especially to girls, is regarded as social injustice and infringement of a fundamental human right (USAID 2005). There are many benefits that could be realised by providing equitable education to boys and girls at various levels. Education builds the human capital that is needed for economic growth (USAID 2005). It also produces significant improvements in health, nutrition, and life expectancy, and countries with an educated citizenry are more likely to be democratic and politically stable. A study carried out by the African Population and Health Research Centre (2007) noted that secondary education is seen today as being critical for economic development and poverty reduction in Sub Saharan Africa. It further found that the most important strategy for creating economic opportunities and social development for individuals and nations alike was increasing access to quality secondary education particularly for girls. Moreover, the foundation for development and prosperity in Sub- Saharan Africa would be laid through several benefits associated with secondary education for girls.

The Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (2007) also reported that women who attain higher levels of education tend to marry later and prefer fewer children. When girls go to school, they tend to delay marriage as they spend so much time in school, have fewer but healthier children, and contribute more to family income and national productivity. In fact, “educating girls quite possibly yields a higher rate of return than any other investment available in the developing world” (Unterhalter, 2007). Thus gender equity provides that teachers avail learning opportunities to both male and female students.

In addition, Stromquist, (2001) argues that providing girls with an education helps break the cycle of poverty: educated women are less likely to marry early and against their will; less likely to die in childbirth; more likely to have healthy babies; and are more likely to send their children to school which creates a ripple effect of opportunity that influences generations to come. Pillow, (2006) argues that adolescent girls that attend school delay marriage and childbearing, are less vulnerable to disease including HIV and AIDS, and acquire information and skills that lead to increased earning power. Evidence shows that the return to a year of secondary education for girls correlates to a 25 per cent increase in wages later in life.

For any meaningful development to take place in any country, education must be accorded its place of priority in all facets of life. This view is in line with the axiom which says that if you educate a man, you educate a person, but if you educate a woman, you educate a nation. Stormquist (2001) stated that it is only when you educate women that their hidden talents will be manifested. They are first teachers of their children, and

so the nation gain economically and socially in educating her female population. The youths are leaders of tomorrow and their first contact in life comes through women (mothers).

In addition, education is seen as a tool for poverty reduction and economic growth (MoEST 2000, GOM, 2002a; World Bank paper cited in United Nations' Integrated Regional Information Network [IRIN], 2002). Furthermore, secondary education is important because without it primary education cannot expand and economies cannot grow (Vespoor, Mattimore & Watt, 2001).

In Malawi, it is a requirement that primary teachers must have secondary school education. Therefore the expansion of secondary education for both male and female students is necessary for increased numbers of people to acquire primary education.

The Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW, 2007) indicates that education is an important pillar that determines one's health and legal status. Education helps people to become aware of their rights and have adequate knowledge of basic health care skills that include; improving child health and reducing infant mortality, complying with medical prescriptions, observing basic hygienic standards and seeking medical services such as antenatal and postnatal. In addition, the report argues that education enables rationalised thinking and reasoning, providing opportunities for girls and women to learn and understand their rights, making it easier to recognise laws and social attitudes that hinder the enjoyment of their rights. Another aspect outlined by the report, is that education is an important tool in liberating girls and women from historical

discrimination and disadvantage; thus enabling them also to teach the next generation about the benefits of education.

The education of the girl child is also associated with bringing a number of benefits to herself, her family and nation when she becomes a woman. Such benefits include reduction in fertility rates (Herz, Subbarao, Habib & Raney, 1991; GOM, 2002b), and reduction in child mortality rates and improvement of a child's health (Floro & Wolf, 1990). Further, it improves personal and family health through good nutrition (FAWE, n.d), and develops the women's potential to increase productivity in agriculture, trade, manufacturing as well as non-market work (Floro & Wolf, 1990). A study carried out by Wolf and Odonkor (1997) among the DaGoMba in Northern Ghana, showed that an educated woman is likely to send her children or wards to school, to desire to have a small family, to have healthy family and to be empowered socially and economically. Good health will in turn help the woman and the family to have time and strength to engage in work that will bring economic change to the family and nation.

In Malawi, the Demographic and Health Survey Report (DHS) of the year 2000 shows that there are benefits to having the women educated. One of the benefits is that it reduces fertility rates. Fertility rate for the educated women was put at three children per woman while the fertility rate for uneducated women was 7.3 children per woman. Lack of education was also found to contribute to high child mortality rates. Education was also found to empower women to make decisions. The 1985 Malawi Against Polio Survey also showed that it was mothers that had some education that went with their children to hospitals for treatment (Hyde, 1992).

Maluwa-Banda (2004) argues that girls' education is an investment that serves as a way to achieve education for all children. He adds that it has been broadly accepted as being a powerful tool for self-advancement and fulfilment of development outcomes for present and future generations of children. Chege and Sifuna (2006) noted that getting and keeping young people in school, especially girls, dramatically lowers their vulnerability to Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), leads to them having greater independence, equips them to make decisions pertaining to their lives and provides them with higher income earning potential.

The education of the girl child is also necessary if the EFA and the MDGs are to be achieved. For instance, to eradicate extreme poverty, to achieve UPE, and to achieve gender equality and empower women would need education of both males and females. The goals of reducing child mortality rates and improving maternal health especially need the education of all women. Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, sustaining the environment, and developing global partnerships for development all need the collaborative efforts of both males and females who are educated.

As indicated in the foregoing, there is strong agreement that education for girls is important for social and economic development and that discrimination against women is not acceptable. This is reinforced by several research articles which show that globally girls' education has always been associated with multiple benefits ranging from individual, communal to national development. However, the low enrolments for girls in many developing countries indicate aspects of social injustice and gender inequity in

education. Hence, gender equity at classroom level is very necessary so that female and male students graduate out of school as meaningful development agents for their nation.

Table 2: Examination results for MSCE for girls (2002-2010)

Year	Exam entries		Pass	
	Female	%	Female	%
2002	25235	38.44	5612	22.24
2004	25731	39.19	8739	33.96
2006	32602	41.51	9775	29.98
2008	47,419	41.49	12,647	26.67
2010	28,800	41.67	13,604	46.48

Source: EMIS 2014 and other sources

1.1.4 Rationale for implementing Gender Equity Policy in Education

This Gender Equity Policy grew out of a need to ensure that learning opportunities are fair for female and male students in the schools of Malawi. Presently, this is not the case. Recent studies on gender and education clearly show that most schools do not provide a gender-equitable environment. Gender bias in the schools is not due to the actions of any particular individual or group; rather it is built into the very framework of the educational system. In this way, the educational system is simply a reflection of the larger society in which we live (Elaine, 2004). The result of systemic bias is detrimental for individual students, for communities and for society as a whole.

There are four basic reasons for making the achievement of gender equity an objective of Malawi's educational system. These reasons are:

- To further the basic Goal of Education in Malawi, (under ethical and socio-cultural issues) which is to develop in the learner an appreciation of one's culture and a respect for other peoples' cultures.
- To provide basic human rights to all students and to eliminate discrimination against groups of people based on stereotypes. Both the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi and Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) prohibit discrimination in education and employment on the basis of gender.
- To provide an example of fairness and justice to students and to the community, because students learn by observing the world around them as well as through direct instruction.
- To promote the economic and social development of Malawi by ensuring that all individuals are equipped to contribute to the maximum of their ability.

1.1.5 Equity beyond access

There are benefits like the ones cited on the previous page that have influenced the GoM to join other nations in promoting the education of the girls and women. To show commitment to the promotion of girls education in secondary schools, MoEST provides that appropriate affirmative action measures shall be taken to increase the number of girls gaining access to and completing education from 39% in 1998 to 50% by 2012 (MoEST, 2000). Although this statement seems to be concerned with the numbers only, it is clear that the Government is not just interested in increasing access and completion rates, but outcomes also. This can be inferred from statements and actions by MoEST. For instance,

one of the Malawi Integrated In-service Teacher Education Program's occasional papers indicates that the GoM is trying to achieve greater attainment for female students as this has an impact on mortality and fertility rates (MoEST/GTZ,1997). From this statement, it is clear that it is the wish of MoEST that those who have the chance of going through the education system will come out of it with necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes which will improve their well-being.

The National Gender Policy which recognises education as a human right and as important for women stresses the necessity of both male and female students having equal access to and attainment of educational qualifications (GOM, 2000a). For equal attainment of educational qualifications to come about, teachers have a role to play at school and classroom level, to influence both male and female students to achieve what they joined the school for.

The MoEST has also since 2001 been training school managers to equip them with skills for managing their schools. One component of the training is the promotion of female students' education in schools. This component deals with issues of gender role development, awareness of gender issues in education, gender issues in the classroom, sexuality issues and human rights and the girl child. For gender issues in the classroom, the MoEST states that the aim is to reduce the fundamental routine and frequent gender differences that exist in schools and the classroom during instruction.

MoEST further states that gender issues in the classroom will assist trainees (teachers) in providing equitable learning environment to both male and female students. At the same

time, female students' performance, persistence, and achievement will be improved and encouraged (MoEST, not dated). The school managers are expected to transmit the knowledge to teachers in their schools. This also confirms that MoEST is concerned with both increasing access for girls and ensuring that they learn as much as their male counterparts.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The need for a gender equity policy grew out of recognition that gender bias is detrimental for students, communities and society as a whole. For students, gender bias results in gender differences in success rates. Gender equity enhances personal growth and career opportunities and reinforces the social and economic contributions of people of both genders. Realising this, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in the past decade embarked on equipping teachers with knowledge and skills so that boys and girls benefit equitably from the teaching and learning that goes on in the classroom by among other things conducting in-service training for school head teachers on gender issues. Studies by Kadzamira and Chibwana (1999) and Davison and Kanyuka(1990) revealed more interactions between the teachers and male students than between teachers and female students. MoEST also acknowledges this trend (MoEST/USAID, n.d.,MoEST module 4, August, 2005). A study done by Hyde (1993) in secondary schools also revealed that teachers, especially those for Mathematics tended to interact more with male than with female students. The M.S.C.E. examinations written after four years of secondary school education have over the years shown that the pass rates for the female

students are lower than those of the male students (See figure 1). Therefore, the study investigated the implementation of gender equity policy by teachers at classroom level.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the implementation of the gender equity policy in the classroom in selected secondary schools in Lilongwe urban.

1.4 Research question

The study set out to answer the following main and specific questions.

1.4.1 Main research question

The main research question was:

How are secondary school teachers implementing the gender equity policy in the classroom in selected secondary schools in Lilongwe urban?

1.4.2 Specific research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions;

- To what extent are secondary school teachers and students aware of gender equity policy in education?
- How do teachers and students understand gender equity policy in education?
- How are teachers implementing the gender equity policy at classroom level?
- What challenges are teachers encountering in implementing gender equity policy at classroom level?

1.5 The significance of the study

This study contributes to the literature on gender equity in education in several ways. The study revealed the extent to which teachers are implementing gender equity policy at classroom level. It further revealed teachers' level of awareness of gender related policies in education. In addition, the study enlisted the challenges that secondary school teachers are facing in the implementation process of the gender equity policy. Therefore, the study results help to explain if female students' low achievement is related to classroom practice or in other things outside the classroom. In addition, the study findings revealed whether equitable interaction in the classroom is the answer to the educational outcome inequalities between boys and girls.

Girls that participated in the focus group discussions became aware of their potential and the problems that hinder them from performing equitably like male students at class level. This awareness may help them to try to think of ways of reducing the gender gap in performance. They may in turn influence others to work hard. Therefore, the study enhanced the morale of those female students that were involved.

The results of the study added to our understanding of why biased attitudes and practices of teachers towards students continue in the classroom in spite of the presence of gender equity policy as revealed by research (Kadzamira & Chibwana, 1999). In addition, the results further provide valuable information to educational leaders, senior level administrators and principals as they support teachers for successful implementation of gender equity policy and other educational goals. These leaders would then determine if the information provided in this study would be beneficial in their unique setting.

1.6 Definition of Operational Terms

This section elaborates on key concepts used in this thesis:

Policy

Michael (2013) argues that policy is 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. In this study, policy was understood as official statements of intention to act on certain problems.

Gender

Gender describes the differences between women and men which are based on socially defined ideas and beliefs of what it means to be a man or a woman. (Wokocha, 2009). This researcher used the concept of gender to mean the social and cultural construct of roles, responsibilities, attributes, opportunities, privileges, status, access to and control over resources and benefits between women and men, boys and girls in a given society.

Gender equity

It refers to the equal participation of girls and boys in all forms of education based on their proportion in the relevant age groups in the population (UNESCO, 2008). Gender equity policy is therefore loosely used in the thesis to mean what the government expects to be done in order to bring about fairness or equality between male and female students in school. This is the case of an implicit policy inferred from the statements, actions and expectations of MoEST as indicated in the background information.

Gender equality: It is the ability of men and women, boys and girls to enjoy the status and have equal opportunity to realize their potential to contribute to the wellbeing of their community and country at large.

Gender bias: It is showing favour to one gender as opposed to the other (Eitzen, 2003).

Gender balance: It is giving balanced attention in interactions between teachers and students of both sexes (Eitzen, 2003).

Gender parity: It is having equal numbers of males and females in any undertaking. Gender parity reflects “formal” equality, in terms of access to, and participation in, education. “Formal” equality can also be understood as equality that is premised on the notion of “sameness” of men and women, where the male actor is held to be a norm (UNESCO, 2008)

Gender stereotypes: This refers to expectations of what one can do as a male or female (UNDP, 2002)

Classroom interactions: This is how teachers and students relate to each other during classroom activities. It also refers to interactions among pupils themselves (Francis, 2008)

1.7 Structure of the thesis

This thesis has five chapters. The first chapter provides the background information to the problem. It also outlines the significance as well as definitions used in the study. The second chapter reviews literature related to the problem. The third chapter outlines the methodology employed in this thesis. The fourth chapter is a presentation and discussion of the study findings. The fifth chapter provides the conclusions, implications and recommendations made from the study.

1.8 Chapter summary

Chapter one has given the background to the problem that was investigated. Included in this background is the existence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international agreements which have influenced governments to promote the education of the girl child. The chapter has also discussed the social and economic benefits that the education of the girl child brings which have also influenced the Government of Malawi to endeavour to promote the education of girls. The chapter has recognised the gender inequities in classroom interactions as the problem for which field research was done to establish whether these are continuing in the presence of the gender equity policy. The next chapter reviews related literature on gender equity policy implementation in education.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Chapter Overview

The importance of teachers having support and training in order to contribute to the effective implementation of gender equity policy in schools is considered in this chapter. Similarly, pre-service training and professional development in gender equality policies are very important if gender equity policy is to be implemented successfully in schools. The chapter reviews literature on what determines the success or failure of policy implementation. It also reviews literature on the impact of classroom interactions and on girls' education, as well as factors that hinder education of girls at secondary school level.

2.1 Policy implementation

Duemer and Mendez-Morse (2002) explain that implementation of any policy involves the process of moving from decision to operation; thereby understanding efforts to mutate policy during implementation are essential to recognising how policy may change through implementation, from its original form. They maintain that it is fundamental to understand the differences between institutions and individuals since mutation is more likely when policy is developed in a climate that regards implementation as merely a technical detail. Further, they indicate that policy can be changed or revised by

institutional officials from inception to implementation in a manner that more closely meets their conception of what is in their or the institution's best interests.

In trying to answer the question of why policies fail, Stasz and Wright (2005) identified three likely responsible disconnections: initial expectations, local application and its impact. They found that the implementation context is crucial in correctly defining the problem, matching it with available capacity, and considering the beliefs of the locality. Similarly according to Tee (2008), policy implementation is affected by the dynamic interaction between the central government and other system levels, where different values and survival issues of policies take centre stage. He writes that although major education policies are designed at higher tiers of authority, the application of policy depends on lower levels: local authorities, school boards and teachers. In as much as bureaucrats are social agents, they interpret policy goals and use a considerable amount of discretion in the practice of their duties.

Yanow (1993) posits that acts of implementation necessarily entail interpretations by actors in the situation hence multiple meanings and multiple interpretations are anticipated. He further suggests that these multiple interpretations may facilitate or impede the policy interpretation depending on how various actors make meanings of situations. He maintains that such multimodality becomes the reason for, and the explanation of, implementation difficulties as well as successes. The task of implementation analysis is therefore to uncover or anticipate these multiple interpretations. Hence, it is important and desirable to cast the net of stakeholders widely to include the members of the greater public who have interest in the issue and also who are also involved in the creation and sharing of policy meaning.

It can be suggested that for policies in education to be more effective and achieve their objectives, it is vital for them to be consultative and incorporate the views of all stakeholders. This would ensure support of the policies by the public, leading to their full implementation. Any diversity of views and experiences from all stakeholders would ultimately enrich policy formulation and implementation process resulting to full and sustained attainment of its objectives. The findings about public participation in the policy process, confirms Datnow and Park's (2009) study which explains that policy outcomes are determined by local factors since it is at this level that policies are interpreted and enacted. More importantly, public policy, to put it flatly, is a continuous process, the formulation of which is inseparable from its execution. Public policy is being formed as it is being executed, and it is likewise being executed as it is being formed.

2.2 Gender Equity Policy Implementation

This section discusses some factors that determine the success or failure of policy implementation. Literature on policy implementation reveals that the success of any policy is dependent on a number of factors. According to Hartwell (1994), one important factor for successful policy implementation is what he termed "policy communication". Other factors identified in literature are the availability of resources, mobilisation of political support from stakeholders, availability of technical knowledge and personnel to carry out the plans (Haddad, 1995; Dye, 2002; Brinkerhoff & Crosby, 2002).

2.2.1 Gender Equity Policy communication

One factor, which is fundamental to policy implementation, is policy communication. This involves the stakeholders knowing about the policy either through their participation in its formulation or through being informed by the policy makers. In the second case the policy implementers and the beneficiaries at the grassroots may just be told about the policy and what they are expected to do. This is the case in Malawi where policy formulation is the responsibility of the government, donors and non-governmental organisations (SADC, 1998).

For people to turn policies into actions, the policy needs to be communicated to them. Lack of communication is one of the reasons for failure of implementation. As Hartwell (1994) puts it, failure of implementation begins with the failure in the process of policy formulation in the first place; the lack of policy communication between MoEST and teachers, dialogue, consensus and acceptance by implementers. It is only where there is communication that dialogue can result and people can reach consensus if room is provided for such. This is in agreement with the ideas of Blinkerhoff & Crosby (2002). According to them, new policies come about because of the desire to solve socio-economic problems and for this to happen; people need to know what to do and how to do it. That is, the policies should be well-articulated to the people or consumers before being implemented for them to solve the existing problems. Indeed for any policy to yield results it needs to be translated into actions that will bring about what people desire or solve the problems they have. But this can happen only where some kind of communication has taken place.

Poor policy communication leads to less support from the stakeholders, less ownership of the policy by the stakeholders, lack of commitment on the part of the implementers, no collaboration and cooperation, less accurate and consistent approach towards the completion of the policy goals (Rashid, 2004). According to Rashid (2007), inadequate information creates distances between the policy implementers and the beneficiaries and ultimately causes serious obstacles to policy implementation.

Lack of proper policy communication makes policy implementation a problem. People implementing the policy may not know about a new policy or even how to implement it. Thus, the policy may end up failing as policy implementers may ignore it. An example of such failure is the standard eight repetition policy in Malawi (MacJesse-Mbewe, 2004) which, because of lack of proper communication, was misinterpreted or ignored by the implementers; the teachers. The policy aimed at discouraging standard eight repetitions by limiting chances of repeaters being selected to secondary schools. However, pupils were still being encouraged to repeat by some teachers.

Another example of a policy that was not properly implemented because of poor communication was the re-admission policy which was made to re-admit female students who left school due to pregnancy (MoEST, 1993; Wolf et al., 1999; United Nations Integrated Regional Information Networks [IRIN], 2002). GOM/UNICEF report of July 13, 2004 reveals that only 17% of parents in the primary schools where the study was conducted were aware of the readmission policy. This implies that those who were not aware of the policy and had children who had withdrawn on pregnancy grounds still kept their female students at home after they had delivered their babies. In the same way, if the

policy under study was not or was poorly communicated to the stakeholders, there is high likelihood that the implementers would either not know about it, or, would not properly implement it.

As regards the gender equity policy at secondary school level, it is not clear from literature whether or not there was policy communication to all the stake holders at grassroots level. At primary school level, the stake holders probably benefited from GABLE, a project which aimed at increasing enrolment and retention of female students in primary schools (Chimombo, 2000).

The GABLE project conducted social mobilisation campaigns (SMC) aimed at changing peoples' attitudes towards girls' education. They brought awareness and appreciation of the importance of girls' education to many Malawians (Bernbaum et al., 1999). The campaigns were done mainly through focus group discussions with members of communities. There was also a weekly radio programme called 'Tsogolo La Atsikana', a comic book featuring issues around girls' education, T-shirts with GABLE logo with motivational slogans, calendars and books featuring women in traditional and non-traditional jobs to encourage female students to join non-traditional jobs (Robb, n.d). Although GABLE mainly targeted primary school education, the attitude changes and knowledge gained diffused into secondary school education as the targeted primary school female students eventually became secondary school students. With the knowledge and attitude changes, one would expect such people to interact in a way that would promote the education of both male and female students. Whether this is happening or not is what the study wants to examine.

Apart from this, at secondary school level, gender issues were also disseminated through workshops that were conducted for secondary school managers (Head Teachers and Heads of Departments) from the year 2001 under the World Bank's Secondary Education Project (SEP). The workshops dealt with a number of issues, one of which was the promotion of female students' education. The school managers were in turn expected to disseminate the knowledge and skills they had acquired to the teachers in their schools (Chiuye, 2000). With all these initiatives, the assumption is that secondary school teachers know about the gender equity issues in education. One would thus expect teachers to have modified their teaching for the benefit of both female and male students. However, there is need for direct involvement of teachers here because the downward filtration of new policies from school managers to teachers is a challenge in most schools because most school managers just sit on the information or are incapable of holding requisite meetings with their teachers in schools.

In addition, just knowing about the policy whether by diffusion or direct communication may not be a guarantee that the practice will change on the ground. This is why the study wants to investigate how teachers are responding to the policy by observing classroom interactions as well as asking about their knowledge and views concerning the policy. Furthermore, communication through radio, television or newspapers does not ensure that all the stakeholders at the grassroots level are communicated to. This is because most of the population (52.4 percent) is living below the poverty line (GOM, 2005) and as shown earlier cannot afford such things. Even the circulars that are sent to schools may sometimes not be read by everyone they target.

2.2.2 Financial and Human Resources

As indicated earlier, to put the gender equity policy into practice needs both material and human resources. To ensure equity in education for boys and girls, there is the need of not just equal enrolments, but also equity in terms of the numbers that successfully complete secondary school education. To have both male and female students achieving this, a number of actions need to take place. Resources would be required for all the actions. These actions would include in-service training to equip serving teachers with skills, which would help them in the implementation of the policy (Stromquist, 2001). Without new skills of handling male and female students in the classrooms, the aims of the policy would be defeated. In addition, there is need for a policy implementation revolution that starts from families, communities, schools and government. All stakeholders need to work in concert with each other.

Without new skills and knowledge of gender issues, the teachers are bound to use their old styles of teaching and interacting with students. Some of these might be those that do not encourage male or female students to learn. For example, past studies have revealed that teachers tended to be more supportive of male students and tended to interact more with them than with female students (MoESTST/USAID, n.d; Kadzamira &Chibwana, 1999;Jomo, 2003).

Teachers also need training for them to be alert so that they do not carry society's stereotypes into the classroom. Gender differences in education are also seen as a reflection of the society (Colclough, Al-Sammarai, Rose & Tembon. 2003; Stromquist, 2001). Like many other societies, on one hand many Malawians believe that girls are less

intelligent, emotionally and physically weaker than boys (MoEST/USAID n.d.). Boys, on the other hand, are viewed as superior in all dimensions. As future leaders at household as well as at society levels, they are given much more support than girls by their families and teachers to excel in education. Thus, school is seen as an institution that perpetuates the social order by influencing female students to feel and accept that they are mentally inferior to boys. Teachers, thus, need training to have such knowledge to influence them to change the way they teach and behave.

Another action for which resources would be needed is the training of more female teachers to act as role models for female students. Hyde (1994) and MoESTST/USAID (n.d.) recommend more female teachers as role models particularly in Science subjects if female students' education is to improve. The presence of female teachers would encourage female students to work hard to be like their teachers or even better than their teachers if these teachers encourage them to do so. However, it is clear from the yearly intake of education students into the University of Malawi that there are still more males than females being trained to teach. For example, in 2003/4 academic year, out of the 233 students that were enrolled for Bachelor of Education programmes at Chancellor College and the Polytechnic, only 54 were female. In 2005, there were 1906 trained male teachers and 617 trained female teachers in the field (MoESTST, 2005a).

Since it is a known fact that female students perform better in girls' only schools than in co-education schools (Hyde, 1994; Hiddlestone, n.d.), resources would also be required to create more single sex secondary schools, or, where possible, there would be need to

provide separate facilities within co-education schools, a recommendation made by MoEST/USAID (n.d).

Malawi, as one of the poorest of the developing countries, with an average population growth rate of 6.3 per woman (GOM, 2002b) may indeed not be in a position to provide these needed resources. This is supported by the statement of Blinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) that it is clear that even if a policy is made, most developing or transitioning countries either have no resources to carry out the policy or they have resources in the wrong place. Malawi, which depends on donor funding to carry out her programmes is not spared from such a statement and a reality.

Writing on Multi-Sectoral Support for Basic and Girls Education in developing countries, Tietjen (2000), notes that although the education expenditures increased in absolute terms, unit costs decreased because of the increase in school age children and the growing demand for education. The situation was worsened by the structural adjustment programmes, which reduced donor funding. Again, Malawi is one of the countries affected by such issues.

In Malawi, the gender equity policy had an added disadvantage of being introduced after the introduction of the free primary education (FPE) a year earlier in 1994. The FPE used increased resources, which left other sub-sectors suffering (Kadzamira & Rose 2001). MoEST confirms this by stating that secondary education was negatively affected from 1994 because attention was concentrated on the primary sub sector and because of poor economic growth throughout the 1990s (MoEST,2005). The implication of this is that

little or no funds were set aside for the full implementation of the policy at secondary school level. Therefore the study needed to find out the bearing of this on the policy practice at the classroom level.

In addition, MoEST introduced the gender equity policy when it was not in any way ready for its implementation. MoEST did not have proper administrative machinery and adequate trained personnel to help in effecting the policy (Kadzamira, Kunje & Semu, 2003). The three also note that of the few teachers that had received gender training, a good number of them were not sympathetic to efforts towards improving girls' education and achieving gender equity. In the light of this, one wonders if the teachers were made ready to put the policy into practice. However, if teachers are committed to seeing both male and female students benefiting from education they may explore and adopt teaching strategies that will satisfy their commitment. The study also found out to what extent this is being done.

2.2.3 Mobilisation of political support

According to Haddad (1995), one of the ingredients for successful policy implementation is planning for the mobilisation of political support from the providers and the consumers of the policy. In the case of the gender equity policy, this would involve making the teachers and parents aware of the benefits and the likely challenges of the policy. If people are not made to see the goodness of the policy, they are unlikely to support it. For example, a study by Orivel and Shaw (1994) in Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa showed that language and television policies failed because parents did not see anything good in them. As a result the parents did not support the policies.

People who are mobilised to see the value of the policy are usually ready to support it. An example of where such support has worked is in the implementation of the policies for the conservation of the environment and natural resources in Sub-Saharan Africa. Through the NGOs, governments successfully worked hand in hand with local resources users in the management of natural resources and the environment (Blinkerhoff & Crosby, 2002).

At school level, mobilisation would also involve influencing stakeholders to see the goodness of the policy. It would involve equipping the teachers, administrators and the Parent Teacher Associations with knowledge and skills necessary for putting the policy into practice. Without these tools, the implementation of the policy is likely to fail. Yet it is clear that few teachers have been given awareness on using gender sensitive approach (Maluwa-Banda, 2004).

Haddad also sees political mobilisation as necessary because it is through such action that the provision of materials needed for the planned activities as well as the approval for funding can be solicited. Without such support, the policy may not be successfully implemented. He prescribes the participation of those groups that will be affected by the new policy in the process of planning for implementation. This would be done to strengthen the support from the stakeholders.

2.2.4 Source of the Policy

Sometimes people may not or may poorly implement a policy because of the source of the policy. Policies that are from top (government) to bottom (implementers) may not be

properly put into practice as people may not see their value. This policy originated from the work of National Commission on Women In Development and donor agencies (Kadzamira, 1999), which influenced the government to see the importance of girls' education. In other words, it is a policy that was pushed down from the top (government) to the grassroots. The study, thus, also looked at how this fact is affecting the implementation of the policy at school level.

2.2.5 Implementers' values

A study by Wolf, Lang, Beckett Mount, and VanBelle-Prouty (1999), in Malawi and Namibia and another by MacJesse- Mbewe (2004) found that sometimes teachers do not implement policies because they feel they are against their cultural or professional values. This is often observed when such policies do not originate from them. They are policies that are dictated upon them and they see nothing good in them.

2.3 Gender equity and education

As shown in the first chapter, gender equity in education faces a number of challenges. One of these is low female enrolment rates which affect most of the Sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2003/4). Low female pass rates are also problems experienced by some countries in the region. Examples are Malawi, (Kadzamira, 1996), Tanzania (Amugecited in Hyde, 1989), Zambia, (Mumba, 2002). Female students not performing well in science subjects is another challenge. Ndimbirwe (1995) found that girls in Zambia were not performing well in Mathematics. Kadzamira (1996) also reports similar findings among Malawian girls. At classroom level, problems include the gender biases that teachers

show in their interaction with students. Studies by Braimah (VanBelle-Prouty & Sey, 1998) in Nigeria, Okojie et al., (1996) in Niger, Mumba (2002) in Zambia, Kadzamira and Chibwana (1999) in Malawi, reflect these challenges. These problems have been attributed to the influence of the society which either does not value the education of females (James, 1965) or have stereotyped jobs for females which have an influence on how they respond to education and perform in the classroom. Literature also shows that there is hope of having male and female students performing equitably well depending upon how teachers handle their classes.

2.4 Classroom interactions

Schools are settings for gendered interactions with peers in addition to teachers. However, research on gendered peer interactions in developing countries is sorely lacking. The nature of classroom interactions is one of the determining factors of whether students and in particular females will benefit from the teaching and learning processes that take place in the classroom. Within the classroom, there are a number of things that teachers need to take into account for both male and female students to benefit from the learning process equitably.

In general, the existing research suggests that boys tend to dominate the physical and verbal space in the classroom and school (Leach & Humphreys, 2007). In classroom interactions, Johnson-Hanks (2006) found that boys in a Cameroonian school were much more active than girls in terms of both relevant contributions and disruptions. The disruptions often consisted of teasing girls or other boys. In Guinea, boys restricted girls'

movement in class, by, for example, physically blocking a path or not making space on the seating bench (Anderson-Levitt, et al., 2010).

As discussed in the foregoing, teachers were often tolerant of such behaviour, implying that it was appropriate. Student-to-student behaviour is another problem area when boys are permitted to harass girls (and other boys) sexually or otherwise because this is seen as normal male behaviour. Teacher-students need to understand that the recipient of such behaviour cannot be expected to learn well and that those who perpetrate it are also poorly served (Streitmatter, 1994)

Studies of teacher discourse underscore male dominance in the classroom. Teachers unconsciously make males the focus of instruction, giving them more frequent and more precise attention. For some boys, this attention is unwanted. For some girls, the lack of attention may be unnoticed, or even desired (Feldhusen & Willard-Hoyt, 1993), but the impact can be costly. Increased teacher attention contributes to enhanced student performance. Girls lose out in this equation. African-American girls, for example, enter school assertive and outgoing, yet grow more passive and quiet through the school years (AAUW, 1998, p. 49). The power of the teacher's time and attention means that boys reap the benefits of a more intense educational climate.

A 2000 study observed that teachers' impressions of girls were less favourable than of boys. Chimombo et al. (2000) cite teachers in Kainja and Mkandawire as saying, "Boys are perceived to be intelligent, hardworking, motivated and co-operative while girls are perceived to be easy to control, passive, calm, and submissive". Girls were described by

interviewees as being less “serious” and “capable” in Davison and Kanyuka’s study (1992, p. 454). Kadzamira and Chibwana (2000) reported that teachers see girls’ participation in class as a poor use of time, and Davison and Kanyuka (1992) noted that Malawian teachers hold different levels of expectations for girls and boys.

2.4.1 Teaching style

One way of motivating a student to learn, is by making lessons to be learner centred. This is the process whereby the teachers’ focus is on the child rather than the subject (Kochhar, 1985). The teacher must plan his lessons and teach in a way that will encourage and benefit his students. It is learning that encourages student’s participation rather than the teacher seeing himself or herself as the only source of knowledge (Kochhar, 1985). Students can get involved through a number of ways such as; group or class discussions, group activities or through asking or answering questions. Questions stimulate the students’ thinking. A good teacher asks questions frequently and varies the difficulty level of the questions. He calls on those who raise their hands as well as those who do not. He also gives time for students to think before calling someone to answer and students to ask. In a co-education school, teachers should also ensure that both male and female students are given chance to answer questions.

Another way of ensuring that pupils participate actively in the lessons, instead of the teacher lecturing throughout, is by encouraging them to read books. Megg (2000) emphasises that teachers should ensure that they assign a reading to students every day. Advance reading helps pupils to participate in the lessons.

2.4.2 Knowing the students

Knowledge of students ranks high among the teacher capabilities identified by scholars as important to effective teaching (Cohen, Raudenbush & Ball, 2003). Many observe that such knowledge enables a variety of effective classroom strategies, including designing tasks and questions to further student understanding (An, Kulm, & Wu, 2008). How teachers relate to students is also important in having them motivated to learn. Knowing the students individually by name sometimes helps them to develop interest in learning what the teacher is teaching. It creates in students the feeling that the teacher cares and minds about what the students do. In fact, there is enough evidence to suggest that improving teachers' knowledge of students will improve student outcomes (Bell, Wilson, Higgins, & McCoach, 2010 & Tirosh, 2000).

2.4.3 Teachers being friendly to students

Teachers need to create an environment in which they can be liked by their students. However, teachers need to balance this friendship with proper control of the class for effective learning. When teachers are friendly to all students, it may remove fear which students might be harbouring and may encourage them to participate knowing that even when they fail to do things correctly the teacher will correct them in a friendly manner.

However, research suggests that teachers may treat students differently based on the student's sex. This starts at a very young age: in a detailed observational study of preschool classrooms, Martin (1998) documented how teachers monitor and discipline boys' and girls' bodies differently, and how this contributes to: "the embodiment of gender in childhood, making gendered bodies appear and feel natural" (p.495). Several

studies, as mentioned earlier on, have found that teachers believe that boys and girls have different academic abilities, behaviours, and motivations (Anderson-Levitt, et al., 1998; Chudgar & Sankar, 2008; Kirk, 2004; Lloyd, Mensch, & Clark, 2000; Rawal & Kingdon, 2010).

In their interactions with students, teachers draw on normative gender practices. For example, in several contexts, male teachers were described as adopting an informal tone with male students, teasing them and challenging them; they did not interact with female students in the same way (Francis, 2008; Humphreys, 2008; Hurtig, 2008). In some cases, female teachers reported that they could not behave so informally with students, for fear of losing their respect or obedience, highlighting again the link between gender and perceived (or actual) authority (Hurtig, 2008). Finally, teachers may be very explicit about their attitudes about gender roles: Johnson-Hanks (2006) recounts how a female teacher emphasised that it is paramount that women cook for their husbands, regardless of their level of education.

2.5 What influences success or failure to promote gender equity in education

There are a number of factors that affect effective implementation of the gender equity policy at school level. The information used for this section is from two sources; the focus group discussion and the classroom observation.

2.5.1 Girls' attitudes

Literature has shown that policies and efforts to bring about gender equity in education usually fail to achieve their objectives. This failure is attributed to many reasons. One of

such reasons is the attitude of the girls themselves (Delamont, 1996; Jones, 1991). These attitudes are usually influenced by society which stereotypes what males and females do (Stromquist, 2001). They also influence how female students respond to education. Since they look at school as something that is less important, they are bound not to work hard.

Girls' attitudes to school are also influenced by what the society has stereo-typed as jobs for males and females on the labour market. Since girls are expected to become mothers and keepers of the homes, they choose careers that are in keeping with motherhood (Stromquist, 1997). Although the trend is changing, the majority of female students still prefer careers that are traditionally regarded as females'. Such choices in turn influence the way they respond to schooling. For example, if a female student decides to become a typist, she might see no need to study Geography or Physical Science or any other subject which has no direct relationship with typing. The students' expectations of what they are going to do with their education also influence the way they respond to education (Delamont 1996; Herz, & Sperling, 2004).

In a study carried out by Delamont (1996), in which attempts were made to influence female students to aspire for non-traditional subjects and jobs, she found out that although in principle the students showed that they had egalitarian and non-stereotyped views toward women and work, they still aspired for traditional jobs. Such aspirations are likely to have an impact on how they respond to classroom instruction.

2.5.2 Stereo-typing

Another problem that stands as a challenge to fulfilment of the gender equity policy is the branding of girls as less intelligent than boys (Advancing Basic Education and Literacy [ABEL], 1992; FAWE & AAS, 1995), especially in Science and Mathematics. These attitudes are partly influenced by the society. For instance, a study done by Davison and Kanyuka (1990) found that many parents and guardians felt that girls are less intelligent than boys, a thing that affected the female students' perception of their ability. Where parents cannot afford the costs of educating all their children, such beliefs influence decisions to send boys rather than girls to school.

Once in school, this stereotype is shared by teachers (Jomo, 2003). It leads to teachers giving more support to male rather than female students. This practice may also be enhanced by the gender specific roles that the Malawian society attaches to being male or female. Since the society regards males as bread winners and females as care takers of the homes (Chiuwe, 2000), schools too may tend to support male students more than female.

With the gender equity policy, the attitudes of both the teachers and the students need to change for the benefit of both sexes in education. For this to happen in the school and the classroom, the teacher needs to be the spearhead of this change. Teachers need to change their negative attitudes towards female students whom they regard as less intelligent than male students. They need to create attitudes which will make both male and female students to be encouraged to learn (FAWE Information Kit, n.d). This is in line with the suggestions by Hyde (1992) that for female education in Malawi to improve, there is need for the teachers to be aware of the behaviours that they indulge in that discourage or

deter female students from learning. The idea here is that once they know what they are supposed to avoid, they may improve their attitude towards female students; a thing which Odaga and Heneveld (1995) suggest.

2.5.3 Child Friendly School Environment

A school is considered “child friendly” when it provides a safe, clean, healthy and protective environment for children. The learning environments of child friendly schools are characterized by equity, balance, freedom, solidarity, non-violence and a concern for physical, mental and emotional health. That girls learn better in a friendly environment is supported by a study by Papadimitriou (www.education-world.com/a/issues/chat121.tml) which showed that High School female students who liked their science teachers had a positive attitude toward the science subjects. It is also in agreement with what Lindner, Dooley, and Hynes (2000) who argued that although success is partially controlled by students’ behaviour, the instructor must establish the learning climate. The physical environment of schools has been identified as a source of low performance or absenteeism among girls.

A unique study from the Population Council in Kenya examined the association between gendered dimensions of the school environment and adolescents' academic outcomes. Specifically, the authors analyzed the impact of the differences in boys’ and girls’ experiences. They found that several school climate variables were associated with girls’ (but not boys’) school dropout, controlling for individual and family variables. For example, girls had a higher likelihood of dropping out of schools that were less “girl-friendly.” In these less supportive schools, boys did not recognise girls’ experiences of

unequal treatment, teachers rated math as less important for girls than for boys, and there was a greater discrepancy between girls and boys in reported harassment (Lloyd et al., 2000).

This friendly environment can be created by the teacher avoiding gender stereotypes in the way he or she handles his or her class. Where teachers treat male and female students in the same way, female students might be motivated to work as hard as the rest of the students. Where teachers' actions are biased towards the male students, female students are unlikely to be motivated to work hard. For instance, study carried out by Delamont (1996) found that one of the reasons female students disliked Physical Science was that they felt that their teachers favoured male students.

Friendly environment can also be created through the comments that teachers make to students. Negative comments tend to discourage students from learning. Positive comments tend to encourage students. A survey by Chanunkha (1991) in some schools in Zomba urban found that negative comments demotivated students while positive ones tended to motivate and positively affect performance. Thus, if gender equity policy is to make an impact on the education of males and females, teachers need to be aware of such facts and adjust their language accordingly.

2.5.4 Teaching/learning styles

Apart from creating friendly environments for students, teachers also need to adapt their teaching methods to benefit both male and female students. These methods should include use of non- sexist language by teachers and paying attention to female students.

Teachers also need to realise that males and females learn differently and that generally females need more interaction with the teachers than males (Lindner et al., <http://www.tjdl.org/article/1/engagement/introduction-fm>). Teachers, thus, would need to create a teaching and learning environment in which male and female students are given chance to benefit from the teaching and learning process since gender insensitive teaching methodology has led to lower participation of girls as they may be ignored or discouraged by teachers.

How teachers teach male and female students has an influence on how students perform. A study by Kadzamira and Chibwana (1999) in some primary schools revealed that many teachers were still using non-gender sensitive methods in their teaching in which there was little participation from students, especially girls. This is a trend which existed before the gender equity policy came into being (Davison & Kanyuka, 1990; Hyde, 1993). This research intends to find out if such practices as well as those of stereo-typing female students as lazy and less intelligent than male students, are phasing out among the secondary school teachers as they respond to the gender equity policy. (Forum for African Women Educationalists, 1995; Malawi: Girls Face Obstacles to Education, <http://www.algis.com/new/irin/2002/IR0200707.html>; ABEL Information Bulletin, 1992 & Hyde, 1993).

2.6 Gaps in the Studies at National Level

The studies that have addressed gender issues in education have most often focused on primary education. MacJesse-Mbewe's study, (2004), looked at Free Primary Education as a catalyst for inequalities between boys' and girls' education as well as for inequalities

between the rural and urban students. Other studies that have addressed gender equity issues at secondary school level have either been based on document analysis (Kadzamira, 1999; Maluwa-Banda, 2004). Very little research has directly investigated the teacher's role in the implementation of gender equity policy at classroom level.

2.7 Theoretical framework

The importance of the theoretical framework to research design and implementation is that it aids in the development of the research questions and structure of the study (Conrad & Serlin, 2011), while also allowing for a deeper understanding of the assumptions inherent within the methodology selected (Rubin & Rubin, 2009). The theoretical framework of the study is influenced by the Contextual Interaction Theory (CIT). Contextual Interaction Theory uses a deductive, social process approach that employs explicit consideration of several variables, including policy tools (or “instruments”) and strategic interactions between implementers and target groups over extended periods of time (O'Toole, 2004).

The basic assumption of the Contextual Interaction Theory is that the course and outcome of the policy process depend not only on inputs (in this case the characteristics of the policy instruments), but more crucially on the characteristics of the actors involved, particularly their motivation, information and power. All other factors that influence the process do so because they influence the characteristics of the actors involved. The theory does not deny the value of a multiplicity of possible factors, but claims that theoretically their influence can best be understood by assessing their impact on the motivation, information, and power of the actors involved (Bressers, 2004).

This discussion of actors includes the role of the public in policy implementation. Communities and individuals are the ultimate “target groups” of policies and programs and therefore are the ultimate “street-level” implementers, able to demand or reject specific programs. One of Contextual Interaction Theory key assumptions is that the factors influencing the implementation process are interactive. The influence of any factor, whether positive or negative, depends on the particular contextual circumstances. The theory distinguishes a set of “core circumstances” or constructs related to the actors involved, which jointly contribute to implementation. The constructs include the following:

2.7.1 Motivation

The level of importance actors place on a particular policy or program and the degree to which the policy or program contributes to their goals and objectives affects implementation. For example, if actors have low motivation regarding a specific issue, they may ignore the policy; issue a “symbolic policy” not supported by a serious commitment of resources; or, in some cases, actively work to undermine the policy or program. Examining motivation helps stakeholders understand the perspectives of implementers—their belief systems, value priorities, and perceptions of the importance and magnitude of specific problems and policy solutions—often revealing the root causes of implementation barriers (Sabatier, 1991; Kayaba et al., 2005; Deibert et al., 2006).

2.7.2 Information

Successful policy or program implementation requires that those involved have sufficient information. Information includes technical knowledge of the matter at hand and levels and patterns of communication between actors. For example, do those responsible for implementation actually know with whom they should be working and who the policy is supposed to benefit (target groups)? Do they know, for instance, which department is assigned to lead the implementation and how the program will be monitored? Do they know the culture and processes of other organisations in their network? Have guidelines and protocols been developed, and are they readily available? How is information and communication between actors coordinated? Do beneficiaries have sufficient and appropriate information to benefit from the programme? (Bressers, 2004)

2.7.3 Power

It is important to understand who is empowered to implement a policy and to what degree they can implement it. Power may derive from formal sources (such as legal or regulatory systems) or informal sources (such as being dependent on another party for the achievement of other objectives). In most interactive processes, informal sources of power may be highly important and, in many cases, can balance the more formal powers of the implementing authorities (Bressers, 2004)

2.7.4 Interaction

Interactions between actors must be considered to further analyse barriers to implementation. Types of interaction include the following:

2.7.4.1 Cooperation

Active cooperation occurs when both parties share a common goal (including the goal of blocking implementation of a policy). Passive cooperation refers to one or more actors adopting a relatively passive approach to implementation of the policy instrument. Forced cooperation is a form of passive cooperation imposed by a dominant actor (Bressers, 2004).

2.7.4.2 Opposition

Opposition occurs when one actor tries to prevent implementation of the policy or program by another actor (Bressers, 2004).

2.7.4.3 Joint learning

Joint learning occurs when multiple stakeholders overcome a lack of information standing in the way of implementation (Bressers, 2004).

Actors at a particular organization or level within a network know their own and their organisation's role in implementing a policy or program but cannot see the larger pattern of interactions within the network, making it difficult for individuals or single organizations to fully identify where barriers to implementation are occurring (Senge, 1990). Examining the network within which policies and programs are implemented is critical to identifying where barriers arise in the network. Studies from information network diffusion, systems analysis, and game theory suggest that improving implementation may not require large-scale efforts throughout the entire network but rather well-focused actions that create small changes among a few actors in a setting of interdependence (Senge, 1990; O'Toole, 2004; Gibbons, 2007).

This theory is found to be useful tool for consistent, comparative and replicable analyses applied broadly in policy implementation studies. The researcher using the theory assessed the level of knowledge (information) of gender equity policy that both actors (teachers) and target group (students) have, and the interaction between actors (teachers) and target group (students) in the implementation of the gender equity policy.

2.8 Chapter summary

Chapter two has reviewed literature related to the gender equity policy implementation problem. The literature on the gendered organizational and interactional elements of schools, briefly reviewed above, highlights the important role that schools play in reproducing norms and ideas about gender, as well as opportunities for transformation. It has given an overview of the national gender policy in Malawi and gender equity in education. It has also presented the issues pertaining to implementation of gender equity policy in education such as policy communication, availability of resources, political mobilisation, source of the policy, and the implementers' values. The policy environment in the country has been highlighted. The chapter has also reviewed literature that explains how classroom interactions affect learning. Literature on what affects female students' learning has also been highlighted. The next chapter presents the research design and methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter lays out the research design and methods of the study. First, a brief description of the overall research approach employed in the study. Second, the description of the setting and the population of interest, the sampling procedures, the sample size, data generation and data analysis procedures, ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

3.1 The Overall Research Approach

The study used the mixed methods research design which entails collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study (Creswell, 2009). The study used the Concurrent Triangulation Strategy which entails collection of both qualitative and quantitative data concurrently and then comparing the two data sets. The qualitative approach took an upper hand in generating and analysing data because the study aimed at getting a deeper understanding of gender equity policy implementation in the selected schools at classroom level. Some quantitative data was used for two reasons. First, it was used to establish that there was a problem of differences in pass rates of boys and girl at the end of their secondary school cycle. Thus, the quantitative method was used to

produce questions to ask informants, and also to strengthen the trustworthiness of the qualitative data that was generated.

The research was approached as a case study. According to MacMillan and Schumacher (2006), case study is described as a type of descriptive research in which data is gathered directly from individuals or community groups in their natural environment for purpose of studying interactions, attitudes and characteristics of the individual community. A case study, as Yin (2003) defines it, is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used".

In addition, case study was preferred as the researcher tried to understand how gender equity policy was being implemented at classroom level. Yin (2003), Wiersma and Jurs (2005) contend that when the focus is on a current phenomenon within some actual-life setting and the investigator has little control of events, then case studies are the most appropriate strategy. In addition, Yin (2003) emphasizes that for the wholeness and meaningful characteristics of real events to be retained then the use of case study method is important. Case study methodology aligned well with the aims of this study because it illuminated the complexities of human interaction and reveal how gender equity policies are viewed, considered, contested, lived, and potentially implemented by the informants.

Since this study sought to investigate how secondary school teachers are implementing the gender equity policy, all these features justified a case study approach. The focus of

the research was on classroom interactions as a means of checking how teachers are implementing the policy. The study has however resulted in a thick description of how the policy is being implemented in schools. This has provided information on issues surrounding the implementation of Gender Equity policy in the targeted schools.

3.2 Setting and Population of Interest

The study was carried out in three secondary schools in the city of Lilongwe urban, within the Central West Education Division. Two of these were co-education schools and one was a girls' school. The samples of schools used were Secondary School A, B, C and D. Secondary School D was used for piloting the data generation instruments, and main study took place at Secondary Schools A, B, and C.

Secondary Schools A and B were chosen because they were co- education schools. The choice of these co-education schools was dictated by the need to find out if there are any gender differences in the way teachers interact with male and female students during lessons. Secondary School C was chosen because it was a single sex school with girls only and was used to compare the classroom interactions in Secondary Schools A and B. Lastly, the limited availability of resources also influenced the choice of these sites of the schools that were involved in the study. (Refer to Table 3 for the codes of each school sampled).

Within these schools, the population of interest was mainly the teachers and students in Forms One and Three. The study targeted Forms One and Three students because teachers in these classes were less likely to be influenced by the threat of national

examinations in their teaching. Based on the researcher's own experience as a secondary school teacher for five years, many Form Two and Form Four teachers and students work under pressure as they get ready for national examinations. This makes them feel that outsiders are wasting their time if they have to adjust themselves to the needs of the outsiders.

3.3 Sampling and sample size

MacMillan and Schumacher (2006) describe a sample as the collective, group of participants from whom the data are collected. Sampling involves the drawing of the participants from the population for data collection. For teachers, non-probability purposive sampling was employed. This involved handpicking teachers that satisfied specific needs of the study. Creswell and Clark, (2007) recommend that participants who have experience with the phenomenon under study could be deliberately selected to give the needed information. Therefore, in this study, only those that satisfied the research objectives were chosen.

Logistical and time challenges limited the number of teachers for classroom observation to two teachers from each of the targeted forms per school. Each observation lasted for a lesson, between 35 to 40 minutes. A total of four teachers per school were sampled. These same teachers were interviewed and they also responded to the questionnaire.

The in-depth interviews were conducted in order to increase the trustworthiness of the information collected through observation. The in-depth interviews were also used to

clarify some issues that arose during observations. All the eight sampled teachers were interviewed. Each interview lasted between 30-40 minutes.

For the questionnaire, twelve teachers who were observed also took part to respond to the questionnaire. The reason for this was to assess if they had received enough in-service training to enable them to be gender-sensitive in their teaching.

For focus group discussions by students, stratified purposeful sampling was used. According to Rossman & Rallis (2003), stratified purposeful sampling means that individuals are selected because they have experienced the central phenomenon. Students were selected from Form Three and Form One. The focus groups were separated by gender in order to avoid male domination during discussions in the co-education secondary schools. This gave a total of ten discussion groups, eight in the two co-education secondary schools and two focus group discussions in School C. Each discussion group had eight students. This number was decided upon because according to Rossman and Rallis (2003), focus groups may be composed of as few people as four or as many as twelve. In this study, eight had been chosen so that every participant would have enough time to express his or her views. At the same time the eight people would ensure that a variety of ideas are given.

The eight in each gender sub-group were chosen through purposeful sampling. The choice in each school was done by the class teacher. The teacher chose those that she/he

felt would effectively contribute to the discussions. This was done to ensure that they were going to participate meaningfully in the discussions.

3.4 Data generation

A good research must be conducted systematically using appropriate methods to generate and to analyse data (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Bennett (2003) outlined five most commonly used research techniques for data generation which are document study, focus groups, interviews, observation, and questionnaires.

3.4.1 Data generation methods

Methods of data generation are techniques for physically obtaining data to be analysed in a research study (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Qualitative data was generated from the schools through interviews, observations and focus group discussions. According to Rossman & Rallis (2003), these are the main methods of generating data in any qualitative research. The study also made use of documents that shed light on girls' education. However, in order to learn more about whether or not the school norms and values conform to the policy, a questionnaire was administered to collect data from eighty students and twelve teachers.

3.4.2 Data generation instruments

This study employed different techniques of data generation. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), the utilisation of different techniques of data generation is justified on the basis of their suitability and relevance to the nature and purpose of the research.

Merriam (1998) cautioned that exclusive reliance on one method may lead to bias or distortion of the picture of the reality under investigation.

The researcher therefore used triangulation, which refers to the use of two or more methods and sources of data generation to verify my findings and interpretations of the data (Cohen et al., 2007). Triangulation is the attempt to explain more fully the richness of human behaviour by studying it from more than one position. Triangulation enhances the trustworthiness and confidence in the findings of the study and can be achieved by use of multiple data methods, different data sources, member check and time spent in the field. Triangulation also brings about comprehensiveness and the fullest picture of a phenomenon including inconsistencies. It can also be confirmatory about the same results (Stake, 2010). For this case study, the researcher interviewed participants from two different groups namely; teachers and students. The researcher paid particular attention to female students. While observations and interviews were combined in this study, the main source of information was the observation, with interviews used as a supporting strategy.

3.4.2.1 Observation Schedules

Observations were used because the focus of the research was the interactions which can be learnt mainly by seeing. First, the data from observations consist of detailed descriptions of people's activities, behaviours, actions, and the full range of interpersonal interactions and organisational processes that are part of observable human experience (Patton, 2002). Second, information that cannot be obtained through interviews or documents can be obtained through this method (Creswell, 2003; Kane, 1995). Sometimes

people may not say the truth about what they are doing or about their attitudes concerning the policy.

Data for observation was generated through an observation schedule adapted from the ABC of Gender Analysis (Mukabi Kabira & Masinjila, 1997). Some of the elements on the observation list include; teaching methods, classroom physical environment, classroom leadership and classroom management and student engagement. (Refer to Appendix 3).

More significantly, observations were used to check the level of policy practice in the classroom situation. Teacher-student interactions were observed to see if teachers interact fairly with male and female students or favour one sex.

3.4.2.2 Interviews

Interviewing is a specified form of communication between people for a specific purpose associated with some agreed subject matter. Therefore, the interview is a highly purposeful task that goes beyond ordinary conversation and involves several approaches (Anderson & Aresnault, 2006). The researcher prepared a set of open-ended questions for the interviews (See Appendix 1) that allowed him to probe for more information and formulate new questions to be brought up during the session as a result of what the interviewee said (Cohen et al., 2007). Semi-structured interviews helped to illuminate gender equity practices for students, and classroom interaction. This type of interview permits the researcher to obtain clearer responses in greater depth (Lawson & Phiopott, 2008)

In addition, interviews were carried out because they have the advantage of revealing information on what cannot be observed, for example, feelings, and meanings people attach to what happens (Fraenkel & Warren, 2000). Fraenkel and Wallen, (2009) assert that the advantage of this method is that unclear issues can be clarified as well as asking participants to elaborate on responses that are pertinent to the study. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) support the view that interviews allow researchers and participants to discuss their interpretations of the world from their own point of view, bringing out its human nature.

Twelve interviews with teachers were conducted. The interviews focussed on assessing teachers' knowledge of Gender Equity Policy, classroom practices, and teachers' views about the policy. In addition, the interviews also focussed on finding out from the teachers the challenges they meet in putting the policy into practice. Issues that arose during observations were also pursued during the interviews. Information was tape recorded and transcribed later.

During the interviews, the researcher maintained respect and rapport with the participants in order to encourage them to disclose information (Litchman, 2010). Seidman (2006) suggests that rapport implies getting along with each other, a harmony with conformity to, an affinity for one another. The depth of rapport with the participants was limited considering that it was the first time to interact; however, the researcher tried to keep the interview as “a social encounter, not simply a site for information exchange.

The respondents were interviewed in their respective work places after getting permission from the District Education Office. All the interviews were conducted in the vernacular language to allow respondents give more information because most respondents were not proficient enough to respond in English. The length of the interviews ranged from 40 minutes to one hour. At the end of all the interviews, the interviewees were thanked for their participation and contributions. In total, the study involved eighteen interviewees.

Table 3: Description of the sample and setting

School type		Code	
Co-education	Boarding	School A	4teachers 1TF 2TM 3TM 4TM
Co-education	Day	School B	4 teachers 1TM 2TM 3TF 4TM
Single Sex	Boarding	School C	4 teachers 1TF 2TF 3TF 4TM

Source: Researcher's own making **Key: T= Teacher F=Female M=Male**

3.4.2.3 Focus group discussion

A focus group is a type of group interview in which a moderator leads discussion with a small group of individuals to examine in detail how the group members feel and think about a topic (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Focus groups are group discussions which are arranged to examine a specific set of topics (Kitzinger, 2005). The primary aim of a focus group is to describe and understand meanings and interpretations of a select group

of people to gain an understanding of a specific issue from the perspective of the participants of the group (Liamputtong, 2009). According to Barbour, (2007), focus group methodology is useful in exploring and examining what people think, how they think, and why they think the way they do about the issues of importance to them without pressuring them into making decisions or reaching a consensus.

The study therefore employed the focus group discussions as a way of unearthing both teachers' and students' knowledge of gender equity policy in education, to establish teachers' understanding of gender equity policy in education, to assess how teachers are implementing the gender equity policy at classroom level and find out challenges teachers encounter as they implement gender equity policy at school level. Students' knowledge and views concerning the policy and its implementation were enlisted through these discussions. From these discussions, the researcher hoped to discover the roles the teachers and the students were playing in determining the success or failure of implementing the policy. In total, ten focus group discussions were conducted and eighty students participated. Each focus group discussion lasted between 30 and 40 minutes. (Refer to appendix 5).

3.4.2.4 Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a self-reporting data collection instrument filled out by research participants. Johnson and Christensen (2008) pointed out that questionnaires obtain detailed information about the participants. Ninety two questionnaires contained both open ended and closed questions; the open approach was aimed at capturing new ideas,

while the pre-coded approach was aimed at enabling the researcher to quantify the research material (Fisher, et al., (2010). The questionnaire was used to generate data that reflected the norms and values of the schools. Such data included what sex the teachers and students view as more intelligent than the other (Refer to appendix 6,7). The questionnaire also looked for data that show how the schools treat male and female students in the way they distribute subjects, chores, and punishments. It shed light on whether the school environment was conducive to policy implementation or not. This helped in understanding whether the gender equity policy is being practiced or not.

3.4.2.5 Document Analysis

Document analysis involves the reviewing and analysis of official documents that were useful in terms of the information and themes the research was investigating. The most important use of documents in a case study is to confirm and supplement evidence from other sources (Yin, 2003). The strengths of documentary evidence are that they can be reviewed repeatedly. The documents include policy documents, circulars and reports. Some of the documents were: National Gender policy, Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (GOM, 2005) and Malawi Growth and Development Strategy.

3.5 Data analysis

Data analysis is a process of systematically searching, arranging and creating meaning from raw data (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Data analysis requires coding and searching for relationships and patterns until a holistic picture emerges (Biklen & Bogdan, 2007). McMillan and Schumacher (2006) argue that the data to be analysed has

to pass through inductive analysis which involves data coding, data categorizing and interpretation before providing an explanation that makes sense.

To begin analysing data, the researcher used Gay et al.,’s (2009) procedure: a) reading/memoing, b) describing what is going on in the setting, and c) classifying research data.

The first procedure of reading/memoing consisted of reading, writing notes, searching for recurring themes or common threads so that the researcher became familiar with the data and could identify potential themes or patterns. The second procedure was examining the data in depth to be able to provide a detailed description of the setting, participants, and comprehensive descriptions of the participants and the phenomenon studied to understand the rich complexity of the research (Gay et al., 2009). The third procedure had to do with breaking down the data through coding and categorizing pieces of information.

Therefore, the qualitative data gathered through documents, interviews, focus group discussions and observations were read over and over and underwent the process of data reduction whereby unnecessary information was left out. Then data were coded, and grouped according to themes and categories. Visual data displays were made to help show patterns and relationships within the data. After this, the coded data was interpreted in a story form so that the readers can understand the findings well.

The quantitative data was analysed using the Microsoft Excel package and interpreted in a qualitative manner. This is supported by Fraenkel & Warren (2000) who state that data

analysis in qualitative research...relies heavily on description; even when certain statistics are calculated they tend to be used in a descriptive rather than inferential sense.

A data table was created. Bar charts were created to visually show the frequencies of similar responses per item by teachers and students of either sex. These were then given a qualitative interpretation.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Validity is a judgment of appropriateness of a measure. It is important to have validity in relation to instruments used to collect and analyse data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). This study tried to describe and justify all the instruments and methods used in terms of their appropriateness at ensuring validity of data generation and analysis. This was also done by conducting a pilot study to test the interview schedule and improve it.

Reliability is a measure of consistency, which is the extent to which the results are similar over different forms of the same instrument or occasion of data collection (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). The researcher tried to ensure that the respondents felt at ease during the interviews and had time to reflect on the questions to ensure that their answers were genuine.

3.7 Negotiation for access to schools

Permission to access the sampled schools was obtained upon writing the Education Division Manager (EDM) of the Central West Education Division. Upon obtaining permission from the EDM, letters were written to the Head Teachers who were also

requested to be consulted with the desired sample of study. The sample was assured of the confidentiality of the information they gave. For classroom observation, special permission from the targeted class teachers in each school was sought through the head of the school.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted with guidance from codes of behaviour that are acceptable in conducting research. As suggested by Saunders et al. (2008), issues such as voluntary participation of the respondents, maintenance of confidentiality of data provided by respondents and their anonymity, respect for privacy of participants and non-application of pressure on participants were observed in the research as discussed in the following paragraphs.

3.8.1 Consent of the participants

Getting informed consent of the participants was very important. However telling them that the study aims at finding out how teachers implement gender equity policy in the classroom may have led them to be unwilling to allow the researcher to observe them. They may also have deliberately changed their way of teaching to suit my desires. To avoid this, the researcher told them that he was going to check and compare students' level of participation in the science and humanities subjects. Rossman and Rallis (2003) indicate that researchers who have learnt about inequitable classroom interactions would not have done so if they had told the participants the truth about what they were looking for.

3.8.2 Confidentiality

Olesen (2003) argues that confidentiality is another aspect of conducting ethical research. He explains how researchers have to conduct open and honest “negotiations around data gathering, analysis, and presentation. These are closely tied to issues of how and where knowledge is created”. The participants were assured that their identities would be kept confidential. That is, that no name would be attached to any piece of information that they gave and that all data collected will be stored in a secure place and destroyed after the study is completed. Creswell (2002) argues that the ethical code for researchers is to protect the privacy of the participants and to convey this protection to all individuals involved in a study.

3.8.3 Observation of their human rights

Interviews with teachers and focus group discussions with students took place outside their class hours and at the times that were convenient to them. This was in line with protection against human rights violations such as physical, psychological, social, economic, or legal harm of participants (Sieber, 1998).

3.9 Limitations of the Study

There were numerous limitations that were confronted throughout the research process; some were inherent to the methodology selected, while others were due to time and environmental factors. However, every effort was made to counteract the limitations posed by the study.

One of the limitations inherent to qualitative research is the fact that the epistemology of multiple truths generates results that are locally situated and open to interpretation by the researcher and the subjects, making generalizability and replicability nearly impossible (Conrad & Serlin, 2011). However, it is generally recognized that neither of these are goals in qualitative studies, and therefore is of little practical concern as the purpose of this study was not to generalize the findings, but to provide a thick description of the case; so generalization was not a motivating objective. Although case study methodology seems appropriate when investigating how teachers are implementing gender equity policy at classroom level, one should also consider the weaknesses of case studies pointed out by Cohen et al. (2007)

- The results may not be generalizable except where other readers/researchers see their application.
- The results of case studies are not easily open to cross-checking; hence they may be selective, biased, personal and subjective.
- Case studies are prone to problems of observer bias, despite attempts made to address reflexivity. In some sense, these limitations are inherent to case study and are without ‘solutions.’

In addition, the researcher’s presence in the schools and classrooms as an observer might have influenced both teachers and students to stage up their interactions so that the researcher may not get the true picture of the everyday classroom situation. However, interviews with the teachers and the focus group discussions with the students were used to shed more light on what goes on in the classroom. These were conducted after the

observations to prevent the respondents from being influenced by the questions in their classroom interactions. Furthermore, a questionnaire was used to strengthen the trustworthiness of what was observed and said during interviews and discussions. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) explain that triangulation could enrich the overall representation and diversify viewpoints of the phenomenon under study and that triangulation is a significant way of extending and adding richness and depth to any research.

3.10 Chapter summary

Chapter three has outlined the research approach and methodology that was used in the study. The study employed mixed methods approach and used questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as research instruments. The study involved generating quantitative and quantitative data hence mixed concurrent approach was used. The questionnaires were analysed in Microsoft Excel in order to establish logical relationships, themes and inter-dependence. Ethical approvals were sought from the relevant research participants and organisations before the actual research was undertaken. The confidentiality of the participants was maintained throughout the research process and problems encountered during the research were also noted. The chapter also explained the tools the researcher used in analysing qualitative and quantitative data. The following chapter discusses the empirical results of the study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Chapter Overview

In this chapter the results of the study, whose purpose was to investigate how secondary schools are implementing the gender equity policy, are discussed. The issues discussed in the chapter include; teachers' and students' knowledge of the gender equity policy and other policies on gender equity, and how teachers' and students' knowledge of the gender equity policy is influencing classroom interactions. Both teachers' and students' perceptions of the gender equity policy and classroom interactions have also been discussed. The presentation is in a narrative conversation and includes varying use of long and short embedded quotes as the narrative unfolds to describe the gender equity policy implementation.

4.1 Teachers' and Students' knowledge of gender equity policies in education

The first aim of the study was to determine the extent to which secondary school teachers and students are aware of gender equity policy in education. This was done to assess the level of knowledge of the policy which they are part of the implementation process. It was important to assess teachers and students knowledge because if teachers and students have thorough knowledge of gender equity policies in education they are more likely to effectively implement the policy at classroom level.

4.1.1 Teachers' knowledge of gender equity policies in education

To determine the extent to which secondary school teachers are aware of gender equity policy in education, the sixteen sampled teachers were asked about their knowledge of the National Gender Policy, re-admission policy and other policies aimed at promoting gender equity in education. The teachers were further asked about their knowledge of gender equity issues at classroom level, and their sources of such information.

While all the twelve sampled teachers knew about the gender equality issues, only 38% of them were aware of gender equity issues at classroom level. In addition, only 56% of the teachers knew about the National Gender Policy, and only 25% knew specific policies that attempt to address the issue of equity in education. One of the four mentioned two policies. These were the re-admission policy and that of equal enrolment of male and female students. Table 4 is a summary of the findings.

Table 4: Teachers' awareness of gender equity policies and issues in education

Number of teachers interviewed =12

Policy/policy issue	No. of teachers	%	Awareness level
Gender equality issues	12	100	Giving equitable chances to males and females
National Gender Policy	7	56	Just hearing about it
Re-admission Policy	8	69	re-admission of girl mothers in school
Equal enrolment of boys and girls	5	44	Equal enrolment in all schools
Gender equity in classroom	4	38	Equal distribution of questions, balancing examples of males + females, boosting the girls' self-esteem, encouraging girls in sciences

Source: Researcher Analyzed data (2016)

The study findings also revealed sources of information for teachers which included newspapers (100%), the radios, FAWEMA, club. Only 38% of the twelve teachers had pre-service training as their other source of information on gender issues. GoM (2004) found out that only 12% of men and 5% of women are exposed to all the three types of the media as source of information and 13% of the men, and 31% of women have no access to any type of media. 66% of women and 85% of men listened to the radio at least once week (GOM, 2004). Thus, many rural and the poor masses miss out on such modes of communication. Refer to Table 5, for summary of the findings.

Table 5: Sources of information for teachers

Policy/policy issue	Source	No. Of teachers	%
Gender equality issues	Newspaper	12	100
National Gender Policy	Radio	5	44
	Social studies books	4	38
	Internet	6	50
Re-admission policy	Circular from MoEST	1	13
	Social studies books	3	25
Equal enrolment of boys and girls	Other sources	3	25
Gender equity in classroom	Pre-service training	4	38
	FAWEMA	2	19
	College groups	2	19

Source: Researcher Analysed data (2016)

4.1.2 Students' knowledge of gender equity policies education

Based on the data generated, all of the eighty students who participated in the study were aware of the gender equality issues. They were aware that the Government of Malawi desires equal participation of men, women, boys and girls in education and other social activities. Some talked about equal treatment and equal opportunities for people of both sexes as the purposes of the gender policy. Refer to Table 6 for summary of the findings.

Table 6: Students' awareness of gender policies and issues in education

Number of respondents = 80 (10 focus group discussions)

	No of groups	%	Level of awareness
Awareness of gender equality issues	10	100	Giving males and females equal job and education opportunities in life
Awareness of gender equity issues in classroom	10	100	Teachers giving equitable attention to boys and girls.

Source: Researcher Analysed data (2016)

Their major sources of information were the radio, newspapers, television and teachers. The information from teachers was mainly for academic purposes. Social Studies teachers were often mentioned. Other sources included the schools which sometimes during morning assemblies encourage both female and male students to work hard. Church, friends, parents, activities of the non-governmental organisations and village elders were also mentioned as sources of information. Refer to table 7 for summary of the findings.

Table 7: Sources of information for students

Policy/policy issue	Source	No. of groups	%
Gender equality issues	Newspaper	5	100
	Radio	5	100
	Social studies books	5	100
	Church	4	80
	NGOs	3	60
	Television	4	80
	Internet	4	80
	Parents	3	60
	School	4	80
Awareness of gender equity issues in classroom	Unnamed	5	100

Source: Researcher Analysed data (2016)

Based on the findings above, only six teachers that had gender awareness training in their pre-service training had it because of the nature of the subject they were trained to teach. They were all teachers of Social Studies, a subject that has gender as one of its main topics.

The study further revealed that many teachers have their own sources of information rather than the MoEST might be an indication that most of the teachers have still not been trained in gender awareness issues. Failure of MoEST to inform the teachers about the policy may lead to lack of zeal on the part of teachers to implement it. This situation could leave the gender equity policy in potential danger of not being promoted at classroom level by most of the teachers. For instance, one teacher had this to say when asked about his knowledge of policies that promote gender equity in education.

I know one where when a girl is found pregnant; after delivery can come back to school...I think if there are others...I think we are not aware of. May be it is high time that those policies are made known to us (Teacher 2TM at School B, 2014).

In response to a question about what he thought or knew was his role in promoting gender equity at classroom level, the teacher explained

I think in the first place if we knew or were actually told about the policy and what is contained in that policy... we would be in a position to know what role we should play as teachers or implementers. (Teacher 2TM at School B, 2014)

The quotations reflect the lack of knowledge of many teachers concerning what they are supposed to do in the classroom to ensure that classroom interactions are equitable. If they do not know that equity is needed beyond the numbers which the pregnancy policy is trying to address, they may not consciously device their teaching styles towards achieving gender equity. The type of knowledge about gender equity at classroom level that all shared is limited to fair distribution of questions to male and female students followed by encouraging female students to take sciences.

Based on the findings above, it is evident that the main sources of information for the gender policy and the gender equity issues are institutions other than the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. With reference to Tables 5 and 7, teachers and students mentioned the radio, newspapers, television and social media. This situation is detrimental to policy implementation, as indicated in chapter two, lack of communication

or poor communication may lead to policies not being implemented or being poorly implemented.

4.2 Teachers' understanding of gender equity policy in education

The second objective of the study was to establish teachers' understanding of gender equity policy in education. This objective was achieved by examining the perceptions of the teachers on the gender equity policy in education. It was important for the researcher to know how they understood gender equity policy in education because their understanding determined the nurturing of gender equity education practices in their school. Whilst the understanding of gender equity definition, policy and practice was quite varied, many teachers had heard about gender equity policy, either through the radio, newspaper, internet, and teaching training.

All the twelve teachers that participated in the study pointed out that the gender equity policy is good for various reasons. Some of the reasons included the nation having balanced economic development if the policy was properly implemented. It would help the nation to have educated males and females who would contribute to economic and social development. In addition, all the twelve teachers held a view that equitable education would help both males and females to achieve their goals in life, to lessen the problem of discrimination in society, to ensure fair distribution of high positions in society after they complete their education. One female teacher (1TF) from school C said that the policy was one way of ensuring that students are accorded equal rights.

These findings indicate that there is great verbal support for the policy among the teachers. This gives the hope that if teachers were properly trained in the gender issues, they would be capable of implementing the policy. However, what one male teacher (3TM) and some male students said about female students during the interviews indicated that they felt the gender equity policy is futile. One female teacher interviewed at School A had this to say about female students...

I think that girls gravitate to the other things, not all of them like technical subjects, while boys do. It doesn't have to be that way all the time, but it is so in my class...But I think that not every girl likes technical subjects. When they fail, they don't complain like boys do. If boys fail, they try their best next time that they should not fail. Girls do not even complain. They just accept it.

For girls, it is normal may be to fail. For them to fail when they are competing with boys, they look at boys as superior to them. So they don't complain when they lag behind boys. (Teacher 4TM at school A, 2014)

One female teacher from School B stated:

I think that the nature of our society is formed by how we bring up our children. What I always have before my eyes is that when a small girl falls down they will pick her up and console her: "do not cry, sweetie, does it hurt?" When a boy falls down they tell him: "boys don't cry." But it hurts him equally....many girls these days do not have interest in school. They just think of marriage while boys work hard...their behaviour shows they are not keen on education. ...some girls only think of money, they have stopped thinking of school but money. They come to school for business (prostitution). They spend may be about 60% of their time on prostitution so that they can find what they need. ...boys work hard, knowing they will become heads of the families.(Teacher 3TF at school B, 2014)

Such sentiments from the teachers make it unlikely that they see the gender policy and gender equity in education as worthwhile. This being the case, it is unlikely that they would support its implementation. If teachers and male students feel that female students are not ready to learn, they are unlikely to support government's efforts to improve female students' education as the policy desires. This might explain why some teachers tended to interact with male students more than with the female students and why some male and female students sit separately in the classrooms. In one class, two boys even expressed feelings of jealous when a pair of female students excelled in the exercise that the class was given.

4.3 Teachers as implementers of gender equity policy at classroom level

The other objective of the study was to assess how teachers are implementing the gender equity policy at classroom level. The classroom observations in the two co-education schools (School A and School B) focused on student participation, teachers' expectations of the male and female students, and the teacher's behaviour.

4.3.1 Student Participation

Teacher-student interaction was observed with the aim of finding out if the sex of the teacher affected how the teacher interacted with male and female students. Refer to Table 8 for summary of the findings:

Table 8: Frequencies of interaction between teachers and male/female students

Teacher's sex and school	Form	Boy/girl ratio	Times girls picked	Times boys picked	Gender awareness training	Professional qualifications	Remarks
Female A	3S	31/21	15	7	Yes	B. Ed	Girl bias
Female A	3Ns	27/17	19	9	Yes	Dip. Ed	Girl bias
Male A	1S	25/21	5	25	No	U.C.E	Boy bias
Male A	1Ns	23/19	23	9	Yes	B. Ed	Girl bias
Male B	3S	33/17	7	21	No	B. Ed	Boy bias
Female B	3Ns	31/19	9	7	No	Dip. Ed	Fair
Male B	1S	20/18	7	22	Yes	Dip. Ed	Boy bias
Male B	1Ns	24/15	5	15	No	B. Ed	Boy bias
Total		214/147	90	115			

Source: Researcher Analysed data (2016)

Key: S=science. Ns = non-science

Through the eight observations in the two co-education schools, male students participated disproportionately more than the female students. The teachers nominated boys more than on girls by 78%. Thus basically there was no difference with previous studies which showed that teachers tended to call on male more than female students. (Kadzamira & Chibwana, 1999). This was to some extent true of even the lessons by some of the teachers who had received gender awareness sensitization training.

Of the four co-education teachers who had received gender awareness training, only two teachers made efforts to involve both male and female students fairly though one interacted with females more than males. Both of these were science teachers from School A and School B teaching Forms One and Three respectively. The other two who were biased towards male students were female teachers who taught non-science

subjects. One was from school A and the other was from school B. They taught the subject which has gender as one of its major topics.

Of the teachers that had not received gender awareness sensitisation training only one male tried to involve male and female students. However during reports for group discussions, he was insensitive to the fact that eight out of ten of the reporters who were also secretaries were female students. Most of the questions that followed the reports were answered by female students on behalf of their groups. A male teacher in School A, although biased towards male students, visibly tried to involve female students. He picked a female student to answer a question after realizing that most females were not raising their hands.

During the classroom observations, 75% of the teachers used mostly lecture methods punctuated by questions. This in a way encouraged the male students to participate more than the female students in that they raised their hands more promptly than female students. This is perhaps one of the things that influenced the teachers to give them more attention than they did to the female students. The male students also many times answered without being nominated by the teachers.

From these observations one may make a number of conclusions. The first one is that knowledge of gender equity issues has some positive influence on how teachers interact with learners at classroom level. As Table 8 illustrates, two of the teachers that underwent gender awareness training tried to actively involve both male and female students in the classroom. One of the two even went to the extent of involving females more than males.

His actions may be interpreted as positive bias aimed at encouraging female students to be as active as their male counterparts. This therefore is a clear sign of the necessity of training people in the things that they are expected to know.

The second conclusion one may make is that although gender awareness sensitisation training is necessary, it is not a guarantee that a teacher will be gender sensitive in his or her day to day operations in the classroom. As shown earlier, not all teachers that received gender awareness training made use of it. This was shown by two of the teachers who were trained but did not handle their classes as people who had knowledge of gender issues. They were both biased towards boys. Perhaps as literature says, they were being influenced by the boys' active nature (French, 1990) and forgot what they were trained to do. But as trained people, they should have exercised control over the situation and made efforts to encourage both male and female students to participate proportionally to their numbers.

The third conclusion is that having more female teachers as role models in secondary schools may to some extent be a guarantee that there will be gender equity practices at classroom level. Female students may benefit as much as male students would simply because of the presence of female teachers.

The fourth conclusion is that sound pre-service teacher training might be enough to enable a teacher to balance his or her interactions with students of both sexes. The teacher who had UCE may be an example here. Although he seemed blind to the fact that most of

the group reporters were female students, he tried his best to interact with both male and female students on the whole.

4.3.1.1 Questions asked by students

One way through which students enhance knowledge of what they learn in class is by asking questions on things that they have not understood or things they want to know more about. Lack of questions from students might either mean that they have understood the lesson or that they are afraid to ask. The fear might be as a result of an unfriendly environment created by the attitudes and actions of the teachers or their fellow students or both.

In the two co-education schools, few questions were asked by the students. Only in two lessons in two different subjects were students observed asking questions. One was where the teacher gave a dictation. Therefore the questions that were asked were basically about words that the students did not hear properly or spellings that they did not know. In the second subject, questions that were asked were those that showed that students needed clarification of some explanations that were given to them. Two of the questions came from male students and one from a female student. Yet even in this class there were times when the students needed further clarification but could not ask. One example was where male students in chorus said they had understood an explanation but failed to demonstrate to the female students who said they had not understood.

Another example from the same class was that after the teacher had given them an exercise to be done individually, there were some students, both male and female who did

not know what to do. One male student who had not understood and was having problems was being helped by another male student. Again, as the teacher went round marking, he was also helping the students both male and female who were getting the exercise wrong.

In School B, during a science lesson, students were given an exercise to work in groups. Some groups of either sex worked it out quickly. Some male students seemed not to know what they were expected to do. Others seemed uncertain. In one group of three, the active member started to work on his own. The teacher encouraged them to work with others as a group. It was clear that a good number of male and female students had not understood the teacher's explanation, but for some reason they did not want to ask. Yet when the teacher was teaching they indicated that they had understood.

In the girls' school, students there were freer to ask or show that they did not understand than in the co-education schools. Many questions were asked during the science lessons in Form One and Form Three. The questions were on clarifications of the ideas they did not understand as the teachers explained, or what they were expected to do during experiments. One question was asked in a non-science subject in Form One. The teacher was asked to re-explain the task for one group. In Form Three, non-science subject, there were no questions from the students. This might have been partly because the students had done the work as a group assignment and were reporting the findings.

In the co-education school, male and female students seemed not free to ask. One of the reasons for this was fear of laughter from one another. In these schools, few had the

courage to ask questions. The fear to ask questions in co-education schools might be because of an unfriendly environment created by the attitudes and actions of the teachers or students or both. In three of the four focus group discussions in these schools it was indicated that female students fail to ask questions when they don't understand partly because of fear of laughter from the boys. However, it was clear that boys too were not asking questions when they need to. This was probably for similar reasons.

If students cannot ask questions in class, the danger is that they cannot fully understand what they are supposed to know. In this case where the female students seem to be the victims, the students themselves undermine gender equity. Instead of helping one another to receive equal education, they are making it difficult to acquire the knowledge they should have acquired had the classroom environment been conducive to learning for both sexes. An example here would be as shown earlier where boys failed to demonstrate that they had understood what they said they had understood. They had just accepted that they had understood the explanation likely because of pride and fear of being laughed at by the class. During the focus group discussions students alleged that some students, especially females do not ask questions because they do not want their boyfriends to know that they are dull. But as shown earlier, the male students also had problems asking, probably for similar reasons.

These results show that the presence of students of the opposite sex may be a factor that inhibits learning through asking questions in co-education schools. Teachers therefore need to create an environment where students of both sexes feel free to express themselves, an environment of mutual friendship. Helping them to develop self-esteem

and respect for one another can do this. Such training needs to start as soon as they join the schools in Form One.

4.3.1.2 Classroom interaction among the pupils

The study further investigated student participation by assessing students' classroom interactions. The study observed the interactions among students in groups and outside groups in both science and non-science subjects.

(a) Group work

For group work, there were differences noted in different subjects as well as from group to group. In school A, group work was observed in non-science subjects only in both forms under study. In school B, group work was done in Form One science and Form Three in non-science subject.

- *The science and non-science subjects.*

In the co-education schools, male and female students tended to be active in the non-science subject. They all read from books and newspaper cut outs and contributed ideas to the discussions. However, there were some inactive male and female students. In Form Three, every student interacted with another because they were working in pairs. But most of the pairs were single sex. Those who interacted with students of the opposite sex were those that were already sitting together.

But what came out clearly in the science lessons in both forms of school B was that most of the female students did not fully participate in the group work. They tended to leave the group work mostly to male students. This was observed both in group discussions and

practical work. Few female students worked hard in groups where they outnumbered the male students or where they were by themselves. For example, in the Form One class of school B, there were seven groups. Five of them had male and female students. Out of the five mixed groups, only two had active female students. A number of female students were idle, showing an attitude of total resignation to work. Others mixed seriousness with play. One female student played with a male student to the end of the group work. But those in the single sex group worked very seriously. In Form Three the picture was the same

In the girls' only school (School C) where they had no 'brothers' to leave the experiments and the discussions to, they showed zeal for the work. There were few daydreamers who could switch off their minds as others carried on with discussions or experiments. But they would rejoin their friends and continue working with them. There were no signs of total resignation as those observed in school B. This was true of science experiments in the lab as well as classroom group discussions in the non-science subject.

The interactions in the co-education schools seemed to be confirming the beliefs that some teachers and some students have that science subjects are difficult and therefore not good for female students (Ndimbirwe, 1995). This leads to female students' inactivity in science classes and in turn affects their performance and further re-enforces their negative attitudes towards the subjects. This makes gender equity a hopeless hope. On the other hand the situation in the girls' school and girls' only group paints the picture that female students work better on their own rather than with male students.

MoEST/USAID (n.d) echoes this suggestion by recommending the building of more school for female students or separate facilities for male and female students in co-education schools as some of the strategies of overcoming gender constraints. As recommended under section 4.3.2.2, in co-education schools it may be necessary for the teachers to help students of both sexes to develop self-esteem.

(b) Interactions outside group work

Other interactions observed among the students included student to student chats, laughter and murmuring because of wrong answers given by others. For example, in Form Three of school A, during the non-science lesson, there was murmuring and laughter from male students when a female student asked for the spelling of 'legal'. Another female student, in low tone timidly asked for the spelling of 'initiation'. There was no laughter probably because many did not know the spelling but could not ask. When a male student asked the teacher to repeat the word 'technique' she had said, there was no laughter. But when she repeated and wrote it on the board some male students laughed for to them it was probably too easy for the teacher to bother.

Another female student had a problem but instead of asking the teacher, she asked a female student sitting next to her. The two then developed a survival mechanism whereby they continually helped one another in listening and writing in one notebook. This was probably as a reaction to the laughter from the male students which they feared.

In the same class during the mathematics lesson, there was laughter from the class when a male student failed to answer a question correctly, but he tried again and got it right. There was also murmuring and laughter from the male students when a female student

failed to repeat a given answer. One female student talked to a male student behind her. One male student seemingly had problems and was being helped by another male student probably because of fear to ask the teacher.

From these descriptions, it is clear that very few of the interactions were those that could promote education. Actions such as murmuring and laughing at those who fail may be detrimental to the education of the students and especially that of the female student. An example is one that has been described above where two female students resorted to asking and helping one another after the male students had laughed at those who had asked before them. Such actions may hinder the promotion of gender equitable education.

4.3.1.3 Teachers' and students' attitudes

The responses to the question 'who are more intelligent between girls and boys indicated that five out of the eight teachers in co-education schools and forty five out of sixty four students who responded felt that boys were more intelligent than girls (Table 9).

Table 9: Teachers and students responses

Who are more intelligent between boys and girls in the classroom?

Teachers' Responses			Students' Responses	
Boys	5	63%	45	70%
Girls	1	12%	8	13%
Both	2	25%	11	17%
Total	8	100%	64	100%

Source: Researcher Analysed data (2016)

The findings show that most teachers (63%) and students (70%) expected male students to do better than female students. Two of the five teachers were female teachers. This again, as noted earlier, stands as a challenge to the idea of women being employed as role models. Their belief that girls are less intelligent may have a negative impact on the way they interact with them in class.

Also from the descriptions of classroom interactions between individual teachers and students, it was clear that six out of the eight teachers observed in co-education schools expected their male students to do better than female students. Five of these teachers directed most of their questions to male students. Although the sixth teacher distributed the questions proportionally, he tended to give difficult questions to male students and to make the female students repeat answers given by male students. These expectations were probably influenced by his belief that male students are more intelligent than female students. Also in the interviews, two of the science teachers talked about the female students not being active because of the nature of the subject they taught. That is, that the female students find science subjects difficult. One had this to say:

“I think like the sciences, may be they are taken as tough subjects by the girls... the girls feel they wouldn’t do better in sciences like Mathematics and Physical Science ...except few who are quite just good and they would do like boys” (Teacher 2TM at School B,2014).

Another teacher, in response to a question asking if there are any challenges he faces in trying to address gender equity issues in his teaching explained:

There are challenges ... because of the nature of the subjects I am teaching. They (female students) are usually reluctant or they are not ready to answer mathematical science questions in classes.(Teacher 1TM at School B,2014).

With such expectations, it may not be easy for such teachers to be equitable in their interactions with students. These expectations might influence teachers to give more attention to male than to female students. It could be concluded that most teachers need to be visited frequently by the Senior Methods Advisors to inculcate in the teachers the gender sensitive teaching methods.

In response to whether he meets challenges teaching science subjects to female students, one of the science teachers in School C said he does not meet any big challenge. He attributed this to continuous encouragement he gives to the students which stems from his desire to see the status of females elevated and his belief that anybody can perform if given the opportunity and resources. He also said that FAWEMA is also helping in motivating female students to love science subjects. While he believes that science subjects are hard, he does not conclude that therefore they should be for male students only. Here is an excerpt from the interview:

“I don’t meet any challenge because it matters the way you approach them (students). I tell them to be working very hard for them to increase their chances of going to the colleges of the university. ...male students have no upper hand of excelling in science, I mean subjects that are difficult. You know each and every person, given the opportunity and all resources can do very well.”(Teacher 4TM at School C, 2014).

These findings seem to indicate that the nature of the school might influence the teachers' expectations of the female students and consequently how they also interact with them. In co-education schools teachers believed male students were more intelligent than female students and interacted with male more than female students in general. In the girls' school, students are looked at as intelligent. Thus for female students in co-education schools to benefit as males do from classroom interactions, the teachers may need gender awareness sensitisation training.

4.3.1.4 Teachers' behaviour

As shown in Table 8, some teachers tended to direct most of their questions to the male students. The teachers that did this most frequently were the male teachers in School A and School B. Both were science teachers. The teachers' actions were probably influenced by their belief that male students are more intelligent than female students. Sometimes the same male students were chosen several times to answer questions. This echoed what some of the male students said about teachers who give attention to only those that answer their questions well. Some teachers tried to give special attention to female students. For instance, two male teachers that used group work insisted that each group must have a proportional representation of female and male students. One male teacher tried to spread the questions proportionately to male and female students. Two male teachers directed their questions disproportionately more to female than male students. This could be attributed to the fact that both male and female students in this class were very active. However, this might have been deliberately done to encourage the female students because one of the teachers was the one who had learnt about gender

equity issues through a club. The other one may have been influenced by the nature of the subject he was teaching which has topic on gender.

There were also comments that were directed at female students or suggested something about them as observed in the classroom. One teacher made a comment that “we also have girls in this class” after male students had given a number of chorus answers. After the comment, he went ahead and chose a non-volunteering female student to answer the question he had asked. This may have been said to suggest that the male students should stop giving chorus answers so that the female students can also have the chance to participate. Or, he might have been suggesting that they are lazy or incompetent and therefore they need to be reminded that they need to participate in the lesson. The latter idea is supported by what this particular teacher said in the interview that female students are carefree. They do not get bothered with failing. With such attitudes, it may be unlikely that the teacher would encourage them to fully participate in classroom activities. Yet participation is crucial to their education (FAWE, n.d).

In yet another class, there were comments from the teacher about gossip, which followed after female students had failed to answer the questions correctly. The first comment was that it was easier for them to listen to gossip than to what is taught. This came after the teacher asked if the class had understood the explanation given by one of the male students and only female students said no in a chorus. The second comment was that human beings like to laugh and find it easier to listen to gossip than to what is going on in class; and that sometimes they even listen to gossip while the teacher is teaching. This comment followed laughter by the class after a female student failed to repeat an answer

given by a male student and already repeated by another female student. Such comments may make female students feel discouraged as they may create a sense of hopelessness in them. As Chanunkha (1991) found, negative comments demoralise students and affect their performance. This in turn may make them shun participation in class resulting into unequal interactions between the teacher and the male students on the one hand and the teacher and the female students on the other.

4.4 Challenges hindering successful implementation of gender equity policy

The fourth objective of the study was to find out challenges that teachers encounter as they implement gender equity policy at school level. This was done because research has shown that teachers' attitudes and beliefs have a bearing on their interaction with students and hence on their performance (Stromquist, 1997). The students' own beliefs and values also have an effect on the way they perform and interact in the classroom. To find out this, interviews were conducted to hear their opinion on whether the gender equity policy can successfully be implemented or not. To increase trustworthiness of the data, questionnaire was also used to collect data about their opinion and the school culture.

4.4.1 Teachers' views

Six out of the eight teachers that were interviewed face to face in the co-education schools (School A and School B) seemed to see female students as a stumbling block to achieving gender equity in the classroom. The reasons they gave were that female students have inferiority complex, they refuse to mix and interact with the male students, they are shy and they fear male students. Some teachers attributed female students'

inactivity in class to culture, which expects females to be quiet and humble in the presence of men.

Two of the six teachers and the seventh teacher also blamed it on the actions of the male students. These saw the female students' disposition as being a result of the actions of the male students who boo or laugh when female students fail to answer questions properly. This was also supported by three of the four focus group discussions that were conducted in the co-education schools. One of these groups was that of male students. The female students said they were discouraged from asking questions when they do not understand something because the male students murmur and say that what they are asking don't make sense.

One teacher also said that when they are doing group work, the male students are usually not ready to let the female students take leading role in discussions or practical lessons. The male students dominate in the discussions and practical work in classrooms and laboratories and reduce female students to secretaries (teacher in school B). Nonetheless, in his class it was observed that both female and male students played the role of secretary. He attributed this to his persistence in reminding his class that both male and female students can do the same work.

Another reason given for believing that gender equity cannot be achieved at classroom level involved the subject areas. Three of the seven teachers interviewed in co-education schools said that female students do not like science subjects. Two of these were science teachers. They said female students do not participate equally in the classroom because

they find the science subjects difficult. This was again supported by female and male students in the focus group discussions as well as what they had indicated on a question on subject preference on the questionnaire. In both of the co- education schools, they even alluded to female students leaving the classrooms when the Mathematics teachers come in.

4.4.2 Students' views

The male students also said that gender equity cannot be achieved because the female students are lazy, they dislike study and instead, they like chatting. They also said female students were affected by the intimate friendships they develop with people of the opposite sex. This makes them lazy for they say “*adzandisunga*” meaning that even if they fail, they will get married and will be looked after by the husband. As if to confirm what the male students said during the discussion, as the researcher was waiting to conduct a group discussion during lunch hour, the researcher saw four male students in a classroom solving a mathematical problem.

The female students themselves attributed their failure to participate equally with the male students as being a result of unequal time for study. At school A which has a boarding facility, the female students complained that they do not have as much time for study as the male students because they are sent out of the study room ten minutes before the study ends, giving the male students an edge over them. Once in the hostel, they are not given chance to continue to study while the male students are allowed to go back to study after official study time has elapsed.

However, there are very little differences between the times the female students in school A and those in school C knock off from studies. The restrictions given to the female students after study hours are the same. Yet in school C, a number of female students showed alertness and action in class. One may therefore conclude that the presence of male students might be one of the factors in female students' lack of activity in class.

Fear of male students, as indicated earlier on, inhibits the female students' freedom of interaction, which in turn influences the gender insensitive teachers to direct their attention mostly to male students.

In school B, where all students are commuters, female students complained that they do not have the chance to use the library after school because their parents want them to be home early for security reasons while male students stay out for as long as the library remains open. This, they said contributes to their not being able to participate as much as male students do in class. For these then one may conclude that they are affected by inadequate reading, fear of the male students as well as gender insensitive teachers.

Like their teachers, another reason given for believing that gender equity cannot be achieved at classroom level involved the subject areas. This came out clearly from what the students said during focus group discussions as well as what they had indicated on a question on subject preference on the questionnaire. As indicated earlier, in both co-education schools, the students indicated that female students sometimes leave the class when the mathematics teachers come in.

Data from the questionnaire indicated that twenty-four out of thirty-two students felt that if they were given preference to choose subjects for male and female students, they would choose non-science subjects for the females. These were twelve male and twelve female students. Both female and male students expressed this in spite of the fact that the same number of students had indicated that both should study science subjects. The reasons for preferring non-science subjects for female students were that these subjects are easy, the languages are needed for communication and Home economics tallies well with what they as females do in the home. They looked at sciences and mathematics as difficult for female students.

The hatred for mathematics and sciences gives chance to male students to have an advantage over female students in these subjects. On the other hand, in the girls' only school there were no reports of the students leaving classes because they hate the science subjects. All the students that participated in the discussion were very highly motivated. They confessed that they work very hard even in sciences because they want to hold important positions in society when they finish school. Nevertheless, they were also aware that there were students who underrated themselves in the school. The researcher found out that their motivation was partly as a result of the activities of FAWEMA club at the school.

The students in the co-education schools also saw some of their teachers as being responsible for perpetuating the inequities between the female and male students. Some teachers were said to be giving attention in class only to students who answer their questions. These happen to be the male students in most cases. The reason given by

students for this was that the male students have more reading time than the female students.

These findings show that teachers put the blame on students as the ones who would make it impossible for the policy to be implemented. Students too put the blame on the teachers and on each other. This finger pointing in a way is an indication of the need for these stakeholders to be made aware of their roles in the implementation of the gender equity policy.

4.5 Chapter summary

Chapter four has presented and discussed the findings of the study. The study has found out that although the MoEST has tried to communicate the gender equity policy to teachers through the school managers, none of the teachers that were sampled was communicated to. Those who knew about the policy did so through either FAWEMA, or a club, other sources and as part of their teacher training in a specific subject area. Their perceptions regarding the policy were varied. The teachers and some students, especially the female students perceived it as good for the well-being of the women and their families. Other students who were mostly male viewed it as something that is against the social order.

The study also found out that knowledge of the policy through gender awareness sensitization training had some influence in the way two teachers interacted with their students. However, two other teachers who had received gender awareness training did not reflect this in their interaction with students. One other teacher who did not have

gender awareness sensitisation training interacted fairly with both male and female students. The study further found that teacher-student interactions on the whole favoured male students in the co-education schools. The male students' tendency to raise hands promptly and answering without being picked contributed to this. However, it could also have been influenced by the belief that male students were more intelligent than female students. These study findings confirm earlier studies that argue that policy communication is very vital for successful policy implementation. Most importantly, teachers need to be equipped with relevant policy information for them to effectively implement gender equity policy.

Furthermore, the findings of the study confirm that leadership by teachers is key to reforming schools and improving teaching as a career. Schools cannot be changed without teachers' engagement, understanding, and involvement in making classroom improvements that will significantly impact student outcomes. Teachers need to have in-depth knowledge and information about the reality of students' increases the level of commitment by teachers and decision makers to take action in order to respond to the needs of girls and boys in their schools. The next chapter presents the conclusions, implications and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Chapter Overview

Chapter 5 is a summary of the main findings that have been discussed in Chapter 4. The chapter has made some recommendations to address these issues. It has also suggested areas for further research.

5.1 Main findings

On knowledge of gender equity policy and other gender related policies in education, the study found that only a total of four out of twelve teachers were exposed to gender equity issues in education. It also found out that even though MoEST had attempted to train all teachers using their school managers, only four of the sampled teachers had received such training. Of the four who had received training only one had received it as a component of their pre-service training program probably because of the nature of the subject (Social Studies) he was teaching. This is an indication that many teachers have not yet been trained on strategies of achieving gender equity and thus may not be practicing gender equity in their interactions with students.

In addition, the study found that while knowledge of the gender equity policy and gender sensitisation awareness training are necessary, they are not a guarantee that teachers will

put into practice the knowledge they have acquired. Only two of the four co-education school teachers who had received gender awareness sensitisation training were making efforts to be gender sensitive in their teaching. This however, was only in the area of question distribution in the classroom. Comments that may discourage female students from learning were still being made.

The study also found out that, in spite of the expressed desire by MoEST to have girls educated, some teachers' attitudes towards female students have not changed. Female students are still regarded as less intelligent than male students. As a result teachers do not try to explore ways of boosting female students' classroom participation and performance.

Their attitudes may also be the ones that influence them to be biased in the way they interact with male and female students. Some of the interactions among students themselves are a hindrance to equal participation between male and female students. Actions such as negative remarks, murmuring and laughing at those who fail may be detrimental to the education of the students and especially that of the girls. The male students also look at female students as lazy people and less intelligent than themselves. With such attitudes, it is unlikely that they can create an environment that is conducive to learning for female students.

It was also found that having many female teachers as role models may not be a solution of having male and female students receiving equal attention and consequently equitable

education. Two of the teachers that were among those biased towards male students were females who had received gender awareness sensitisation training.

On whether the policy can be successfully implemented, both teachers and students expressed doubt. Teachers felt that the attitudes of the female students and the actions of the male students hinder female students' equal participation. The female students blamed it on teachers and the male students' actions. The male students also said the attitudes and actions of the female students and teachers would make it impossible to bring about gender equity at classroom level.

On the whole, the study found that teachers are ineffectively implementing the gender equity policy such that the policy has had little impact on the way teachers of both sexes interact with male and female students in the classroom. This is partly due to the fact that few teachers have undergone gender awareness sensitisation training. Apart from this, some of the few that have received this training do not show the zeal to make use of it. The students' actions in the classroom also contribute to hindrances of the policy from being successfully implemented.

5.2 Recommendations

The findings of this study cannot be generalised but they indicate some trends which could lead to some recommendations for the improvement of the implementation of the gender equity policy. Policy communication and necessary training through the school managers seem to be ineffective; the MoEST should find complementary means of reaching out to the teachers with the needed information. This could be done through the use of the SEMAs. As they visit schools, instead of informing the observed teachers only, they should spare time to give this information to all teachers. The SEMAs should continue to monitor and advise those that have already received training.

The school heads should help in giving school based in-service training to the new untrained teachers as they join the school. This training should concentrate on strategies that teachers can use to achieve equity in the classroom. For example, by ensuring that equal attention is provided to girls and boys; the potential of girls and other marginalized students is developed; new attitudes are fostered that combat school drop-out and skills are developed that promote learning.

Since teacher training seems to have a bearing on teachers' fair interaction with both male and female students, government should train as many teachers as are required in the field. These teachers should be those that are able to handle both male and female students fairly and to promote the education of the girl child. In their pre-service training, the teachers should be made aware of the National Gender Policy and its expectations of teachers at the classroom level. As they go in the field, they should be encouraged to know and then evaluate themselves on whether their interactions with students of both

sexes are balanced. In-service training should also frequently be provided in order to remind and re-enforce gender equity practices.

Teachers should be provided frequent in-service training geared at re-enforcing positive attitudes toward gender issues. They should be visited frequently by the Senior Methods Advisors. They should further work extra-hard to find ways of motivating the girls whom they feel are less intelligent than boys. Teachers and students should be made aware of how the education of females benefits the individual, the family and the nation for them to be motivated to support the promotion of the education of female and male students.

5.3 Suggestions for further studies

The study used a small sample and therefore the findings cannot be generalised, there is need to conduct a research using a larger sample. This study used only three urban secondary schools from one Educational Division. There would be need to sample rural and urban schools as well as conventional schools and CDSS from all the six divisions. There is also need to find out why teachers who claim to have received gender awareness sensitisation training are not making use of the knowledge and why some school managers are not imparting to their teachers the knowledge about gender issues in the classroom.

REFERENCES

- African Union, (2005). Review of Progress towards Millennium Development Goals in Africa: Executive Summary. Addis Ababa.
- Bank, S (19197). Analysing Gender Equity in Education. San Francisco. Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers.
- Binauli, L. (2002). African Higher Education Institutions: Responding to the Challenge of Gender Equity in the University of Malawi with special reference to Chancellor College. Paper presented at the Association of African Universities Open Day at Kamuzu College of Nursing, Lilongwe on 12th November 2002.
- Blaxter, L., Hughes, C., & Malcom, T. (2000) How to research. San Francisco. McGraw-Hill
- Bruns, B., Mingat, A., & Rakotomalala, R. (2003). Achieving universal education by 2015. Washington DC. World Bank.
- Burchfield, S.A. & Kadzamira, E.C. (1996). Malawi GABLE social mobilisation campaign activities: A review of research and reports on findings of KAP follow-up. Washington, DC: Creative Associates International Inc. and USAID.
- Chilongola, E.E. (1990). An investigation of Girls' attitudes Towards Secondary School Mathematics and their effects on post-Secondary School Mathematics in Malawi. (Dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Malawi)
- Chimombo, J., Chibwana, M., Dzimadzi, C., Kadzamira, E.C., Kukwenzu, E., & Kunje, D. (2000). Classroom, School and Home Factors that Negatively Affect Girls Education in Malawi. Zomba. Center Educational Research and Training.

- Chimombo, J.P. & Chonzi, R. (2000). School dropout and teenage pregnancy: Its causes and magnitude (Final Report). Zomba: Centre for Educational Research and Training.
- Chiuye, G. (2000). Educating Girls and Women in Malawi: Issues and Evidence. A Paper Presented at the Black Women in Africa and the African Diaspora Conference. Urbana-Champaign. University of Illinois.
- Colclough, C., Al-Sammarai, S., Rose, P., & Tembon, M. (2003) Achieving Schooling for All (SFA) in Africa: Costs, commitment and gender. Hants. Ashgate Publishing
- Creswell, J.W. (2003) Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approach (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks. London. New Delhi. Sage Publications.
- Davison, J., & Kanyuka, M. (1990). An Ethnographic Study of Factors Affecting the Education of Girls in Southern Malawi. Prepared for the Ministry of Education and culture and the USAID. University of Malawi
- Dye, T.R. (2002) Understanding Public Policy. (10th ed.) N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc
- FAWE and AAS (1995). Girls and African Education: Research and Action to keep Girls in School. African Academy of Sciences and FAWE.
- Fraenkel, J.R., & Warren, N.E. (2000). How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education. San Francisco. McGrawhill.
- Global Campaign for Education (2003). A Fair Chance: Attaining Gender Equality in Basic Education by 2005.
- Government of Malawi. (2005). Malawi Growth and Development Strategy: First Draft.

Government of Malawi. (2003). A Growth Strategy for Malawi: Strengthening Co-operation between Public and Private Sectors: Final Draft. Ministry of Economic Planning and Development.

Government of Malawi (2000). The National Gender Policy

Government of Malawi (2000).Malawi Demographic and Health Survey Report. National Statistical Office.

Government of Malawi (2004).Malawi Demographic and Health Survey Report. National Statistical Office.

Government of Malawi (2002).The Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

Government of Malawi (2002b).Malawi Demographic and Health Survey Report. National Statistical Office.

Government of Malawi/UNICEF (2004). Country Programme 2002-2006 Mid-Term Review: Evaluation of the Girl Child Education Intervention. Submitted by Centre for Educational Research and Training.

Haddad, W. H. and Demsky, T. (1995). Education Policy-Planning Process: an applied framework. Paris. IIEP-UNESCO.

Hartwell, A. (1994). Education policy in Anglophone Africa: The work of education commissions. In Evans, D.R. (Ed.). Education policy formation in Africa: A comparative study of five countries. Washington DC: USAID.

Hiddlestone, P. (nd). Contribution of Girls only Schools to University Selection in Malawi and A Comparison of the Achievements of Girls' only Schools and from co-educational schools in Final School Examinations.

- Hyde, K.A.L. & Kadzamira, E.C. (1994). GABLE: Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice: Pilot Survey (Draft Report). Zomba: Centre for Social Research.
- Hyde, K.A.L. (April, 1993). Gender Streaming As a Strategy for Improving Girls Academic Performance. University of Malawi. Centre for Social Research.
- Hyde, K.A.L. (1993). Instructional and Institutional Barriers to Girls Achievement in Secondary Schools in Malawi. University of Malawi. Centre for Social Research.
- Hyde, K.A.L. and Kadzamira, E.C. (1994) GABLE Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice: Pilot Survey Draft Research. University of Malawi. Enter for Social Research.
- Kadzamira, E. and Rose, P. (2001). Educational Policy Choice and Policy Practice in Kane, E (2004) Girls' Education in Africa: What Do We Know About Strategies that Work? Africa Region Human Development Working Paper Series, The World Bank, Washington, D.C.
- Lewin, K., and Y. Sayed (2005) Non-Government Secondary Schooling in Sub-Saharan Africa: Exploring the Evidence in South Africa and Malawi. London: Department for International Development.
- Kadzamira, E.C. (1999). Knowledge of Policy Formulation: Reducing Gender Inequities in Sub Saharan Africa: Malawi Case Study. Centre for Educational Research and Training
- Kadzamira, E.C., Kunje, D. and Semu, L. (2003). Knowledge Development and Communication Strategy on girls in Malawi: The Experience of Gender Mainstreaming in Education Policy in Malawi
- Kadzamira, E., Nthara, K. and Kholowa, F. (2004). Financing Primary Education for All: Public Expenditure and Education Outcomes in Malawi. Brighton. University of Sussex

Kadzamira, E.C. (2005). Achievements and Challenges in Meeting Gender Equity Goals in Malawi. Centre for Educational Research and Training.

Lemmar, F.M. (n.d). The Users of Qualitative Methods in Educational Research: Implications of teacher Training in Southern Africa, Department of Comparative Education and Educational Management, Pretoria. University of South Africa.

MacJesse-Mbewe, S. (2004). Analysis of a Complex Policy Domain: Access to Secondary Education in Malawi. Massachusetts. UMI

MacJesse-Mbewe, S. (n.d).Free Primary Education and the Increase of Education Inequalities in Malawi. University of Malawi.

Maluwa-Banda, D. (2004). Gender Equality and Education for All: Gender Sensitive Educational Policy and Practice: The Case of Malawi. Prospects, vol. XXXIV,no.1, March 2004. Pp71-78

Maluwa-Banda, D. & Kholowa, F. (2002).The Status of the education of the girl child in Malawi: A Gender Review in Education (A report for UNICEF Malawi).

Mbano, N.M. (2003).The Effects of Cognitive Development, age and gender on the performance of Secondary School Pupils in Science and other Subjects.Malawi Journal of Development Education. Vol.1. Pp 55-76

Ministry of Education. (15th December, 1993). Circular letter No. C1/31VOL.IV/104

Ministry of Education in Conjunction with the Malawi Institute of Education.
(March, 1995). Executive Summary of the Report on Secondary School Curriculum Review held at Capital Hotel from February 13th to 15th, 1995.

Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, DANIDA Sector Programme Support
(2000).Gender and Secondary Schooling in Malawi.

Ministry of Education. (2005d). Managing Classrooms: Resource materials for
Secondary school management. Module 2.

Ministry of Education. (2005c). Promoting gender equality in secondary school:
Resource materials for secondary school management. Module 4.

Ministry of Education, (2000).Policy and Investment Framework.

Ministry of Education.(May, 2005b).Malawi National Education Plan.

Ministry of Education/GTZ. (1997). Occasional Papers No.3

Musaiwa, C.D. (2004). Factors which cause poor performance of girls in Biology and
Physical Science in Zomba Urban Secondary Schools. Nairobi. The Catholic
University of Eastern Africa. (A project Submitted to the Department of
Education in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Bachelor of
Education).

Ndimbirwe, J. B. (1995). Factors Causing Underachievement in Mathematics Among
Secondary School Girls in Zambia. Nairobi. Academy Science Publishers

Odaga, A. and Heneveld, W. (1995).Girls and Schools in Sub-Saharan Africa: From
Analysis to Action. Washington. World Bank.

Okoje, C.E.E., Onwuka, C., Edoja, O. (1996). Gender Gap in Access to Education in
Nigeria: Focus Group Discussion with Adult men and Women in Beji, Niger
State. Abridge Research Report No. 13. Nairobi. Academy Science Publishers

- Orivel, F. & Shaw, C. (1994). Education policy formation in Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa. In Evans, D.R. (Ed.). Education policy formation in Africa: A comparative study of five countries. Washington DC: USAID. Technical paper #12, bureau for Africa, ARTS. Pp.
- Robb, J.L. (n.d). GABLE Social Mobilisation Campaign: A Component of Malawi's Girls' Attainment in Basic literacy and Education (GABLE) Program. GABLE SMC
- Robson, C (1993). Real World Research: A Resource for Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers. Oxford. Blackwell.
- Vespoor, A., Mattimore, A., & Watt, P. (2001). A chance to Learn: knowledge and Finance for education in sub-Saharan Africa. The World Bank.
- World Bank (2008). Expanding Opportunities and Building Competencies for Young people: A New Agenda for Secondary Education. Washington, D.C.
- World Bank (1996). Priorities and Strategies for Education. Washington, D.C.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questions for interviews with teachers

Teachers' Knowledge of the gender equity policy

1. What policies are you aware of that promote gender equity?

Probe (in case they are outside education):

a) What about those in education?

b) What have been your sources of knowledge about the policy?

Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) and the National Gender Policy both express the policy of bringing about gender equity in education at all levels.

2. What do you know about the Policy Investment Framework?

3. What do you know about the National Gender policy?

4. What provisions are there in the policies to promote gender equity in education?

5. Have you ever received any gender awareness sensitization training?

If yes: a) when did you receive the training?

b) Who gave you the training?

c) For how long did your training take place?

d) Is the training still going at school Level?

Gender Equity Policy practice

1. What measures has the school taken to respond to the policy?

2. What measures have you taken to respond to the policy at classroom level?

a) (If you are not aware of the policy, what measures do you and the school take to promote gender equity at school and classroom?)

3. What challenges do you meet as you try to bring about gender equity in the classroom?

4. What has been your experience on the performance of girls and boys in your school?
 - a) How would you explain this situation?
 - b) If there are differences what could be the contributing factors?
5. What steps has the school taken to address the problems?
6. What steps have you taken to address the problem in your teaching?

Teachers views about the policy

1. In your opinion, is the gender equity policy necessary?
2. Give reasons for your answer in no. 1
3. What do you understand as your role in implementing the gender equity policy?
4. If you received gender sensitisation training, what comments can you give concerning its suitability for policy practice at school or classroom level?

Appendix 2: Questions for interviews with Head Teachers or Deputy Head Teachers

School name_____

School type_____ **Head teacher's sex**_____

Date of interview_____ **Time of interview**_____

1. How long have you been the Head Teacher of this school?
2. Do you have any gender policy documents in your school? (Name them)
3. Do teachers have access to the gender policy documents?
4. How is the gender equity policy being promoted in the school?
5. From your observation, how are teachers trying to be gender sensitive in their teaching?

Probe: If not, what are their problems?

Appendix 3: Classroom Observation Schedule (adapted from Kabira & Masinjila, 1997 and VanBelle-Prouty&Sey, 1998)

1. Pupil participation and classroom activity *Class: _____ Subject_____ Teachers sex_____*

	Boys	Girls	Both
Who are more likely to be chosen to answer questions in class?			
Who are more likely to volunteer to answer questions in class?			
Who are more likely to volunteer to answer lower order questions?			
Who are more likely to volunteer to answer higher order questions?			

- a) Who often need to be prompted before giving an answer?

- b) How much time are boys given to answer questions?

- c) How much time are girls given to answer question?

- d) Who are more likely to respond to the question immediately?
i) boys _____ ii) girls _____
- e) Who are more likely to ask questions?
i) boys _____ ii) girls _____
- f) What kind of questions do boys ask?
i) lower order questions _____ ii) higher order questions _____
- g) What kind of questions do girls ask?

i) lower order questions _____ ii) higher order questions _____

h) Who appears to expect questions more frequently?

i) boys _____ ii) girls _____

i) Who more likely answer or offer to answer questions that are perceived to be difficult?

i) boys _____ ii) girls _____

j) Who are asked most of the questions?

i) boys _____ ii) girls _____

2. Teachers expectations of the male/female students

Do teachers express surprise at girls doing well? _____

Do they reward girls while telling boys to work harder when they score similar grades?

How often do they direct questions to boys? _____

How often do they direct questions to girls? _____

What kinds of questions are directed to boys? _____

What kinds of questions are directed to girls? _____

How often are probing questions and questions seeking opinions directed to girls? _____

How often are probing questions and questions seeking opinions directed to boys? _____

3. Teachers' behaviour

Whom does the teacher ask questions more often? 1) boys _____ 2) girls _____

To whom are most of the jokes or anecdotes directed? 1) boys _____ 2) girls _____

What is the gender perspective of these jokes or anecdotes? _____

What forms of punishment and rewards does the teacher give to boys and girls?

For what reasons are boys punished? _____

For what reasons are girls punished? _____

For what are girls/boys rewarded? _____

For what are girls/boys rewarded? _____

How much time does the teacher give to boys to answer questions? _____

How much time does the teacher give to girls to answer questions? _____

What comments does the teacher give to boys? _____

What comments does the teacher give to girls? _____

What situations does the teacher knowingly or unknowingly use to call attention to the gender of the students?

Appendix 4: Observation schedule for girls' school

Pupil Participation

How often do girls volunteer answer the questions in class? _____

When do they volunteer? _____

In what subjects do they often volunteer to answer? _____

How often are they prompted before giving the answer? _____

How long do they take to decide to answer the question? _____

Do they ask questions? _____

What kind of questions do they ask? _____

Teachers' expectations of the female students

Do teachers express surprise at girls doing well? _____

How do teachers respond to girls' failing to answer the questions correctly in class?

Teachers' behaviour

Does the teacher tell jokes or anecdotes? _____

What is the gender perspective of these jokes or anecdotes? _____

What forms of punishment and rewards does the teacher give girls? _____

For what reasons are girls punished? _____

For what are girls rewarded? _____

How much time does the teacher give to girls to answer questions? _____

What comments does the teacher give to girls? _____

What situations does the teacher knowingly or unknowingly use to call attention to the gender of the students? _____

Appendix 5: Questions for focus group discussions with students

1. What do you know about gender?
2. What is your source of information?
3. Do you think gender equity (*that is, fairness to both boys and girls so that they are given fair opportunities and fair treatment*) can be achieved in this school?
Probe: a) how can it be achieved in a school like this one?
b) What are you as students doing to ensure that boys and girls have equal opportunities and receive equal treatment?
c) What problems are there in this school that can hinder girls and boys from receiving equal opportunities and treatment?
4. What explanations do you have for girls' lagging behind boys in performance at MSCE and JCE levels?
5. How do teachers show fairness or lack of fairness to boys and girls during lessons?

Appendix 6: Questionnaire for teachers (tick the column appropriate to you)

A. Background Characteristics

1. Name of the School _____
2. Teacher's sex: Male Female
3. How old are you?
4. Teacher's Grade _____
5. Which of the following responsibilities do you hold in the school? *(Tick all that apply)*
 - 1) Head teacher
 - 2) Deputy Head teacher
 - 3) Head of department
 - 4) Form teacher
 - 5) Guidance and counselling
 - 6) Other: specify _____
6. On what committees do you serve in this school? _____
7. What is your highest academic qualification? MSCE Diploma Degree
Other: specify _____
8. What is your professional qualification? Dip. Ed. B.Ed. UCE None
9. For how many years have you been teaching since *a) you joined teaching?*
b) at this school?
10. Which of the following subjects do you teach?
 - 1) Physical Science
 - 2) Mathematics
 - 3) Social Studies/Social and Development Studies
 - 4) Biology

What forms are you teaching? Form1 Form 2 Form 3 Form 4

12. What is your total number of periods you have per week _____

Instruction

From your experience as a teacher in this school, tick in the box that is appropriate to what you have observed in this school and the classrooms. You may give reason(s) in column marked E

	Boys	Girls	Both	E
1. Who are more intelligent?				
2. Who volunteer more to answer questions in class?				
3. Who should be given preference to study science?				
4. Who should be given preference to study Social and Development Studies?				
5. Who volunteer more likely to answer questions in non-science subjects?				
6. Who are likely to volunteer to answer questions in Science subjects?				
7. Who are more likely to offer to answer difficult questions?				
8. Who are more likely to ask questions when they need clarification?				
9. Who are likely to be given fairer punishment?				
10. Who are more likely to be given punishments?				
11. For whom is guidance and counselling often more required?				
12. Who should be given the work of cleaning the classrooms?				
13. Who should be given the work of slashing grass?				
14. Who should knock off from evening study earlier?				
15. Who should help teachers do carry books to the staffroom?				

Instruction

In the table below, *tick* in the box that represents your views and observations on the statements provided. You may give reasons in column E

	Yes	No	E
16. Do you think it is appropriate for boys and girls to mix and interact?			
17. Should girls who are suspended due to pregnancy come back to the school after delivery?			
18. Should boys be suspended for being responsible for giving pregnancy to a fellow student?			

Appendix 7: Questionnaire for students

Instruction

From your experience as a student in this school, tick in the box that is appropriate to what you have observed in the school and the classrooms.

The information collected will be used purely for academic purposes. All information collected will be treated confidentially. No names will be attached to any information collected. Therefore, feel free to express yourself as no names of any individuals will be attached to any information in the final product of the research.

	Boys	Girls	Both	E
1. Who are more intelligent?				
2. Who volunteer more to answer questions in class?				
3. Who should be given preference to study science?				
4. Who should be given preference to study Social and Development Studies?				
5. Who volunteer more to answer questions in non-science subjects?				
6. Who volunteer more to answer questions in Science subjects?				
7. Who are more likely to ask questions when they need clarification?				
8. Who are more likely to be given punishments?				
9. Who are likely to be given fairer punishment?				
10. For whom is guidance and counseling often more required?				
11. Who should be given the work of cleaning the classrooms?				
12. Who should be given the work of slashing grass?				
13. Who should knock off from evening study earlier?				
14. Who should help teachers do carry books to the staffroom?				

Instruction

In the table below, *tick* in the box that represents your views and observations on the statements provided.

	Yes	No
15. Should boys and girls be encouraged to interact?		
16. Should girls suspended due to pregnancy come back to the school after delivery?		
17. Should boys be suspended for being responsible for giving pregnancy to a fellow student?		
18. Do teachers sometimes give different types of punishments to boys and girls for the same kind of offence?		

Instruction

In the table below, write what subjects you would *prefer* for boys and girls. List them in order of priority.

Subjects for boys	Reason(s) for preference
Subjects for girls	Reason(s) for preference

THANK YOU FOR ANSWERING THE QUESTIONNAIRE