

**AN EXPLORATION OF EXPERIENCES OF BEGINNING
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS IN SELECTED
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MALAWI**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN CURRICULUM AND TEACHING STUDIES-
(SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION) THESIS**

MASTONE LENIAS KACHIKWERETE MBEWE

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

MAY 2022



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– (SOCIAL STUDIED EDUCATION) THESIS**

By

**MASTONE LENIAS KACHIKWERETE MBEWE
MA (TRS) – University of Malawi**

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Education, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
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UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

MAY, 2022

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the text of 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, acknowledgments have been made.

Full Legal Name

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: _____

Dorothy Nampota, PhD (Professor)

Member, Supervisory Committee

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Esther Kunkwenzu, PhD (Senior Lecturer)

Member, Supervisory Committee

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my brothers and sisters namely: Witness, Alineess, Henderson, Diness, Yizimery, Sandrass, Nelson, Mabvuto, Jefita, Mark and Mchacha.

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the problem of high turnover among beginning Religious Education teachers. The study describes and interprets lived experiences of beginning RE teachers in eight secondary schools in the neighbourhood of Zomba in Malawi. It is a qualitative study. It adopted social constructivist and post-industrial perspectives and used the hermeneutical phenomenological research method. Eight beginning RE teachers participated in the study; five men and, three women. Six of the participating teachers were holders of Diploma certificates in Education and Bachelor of Theology degrees. The remaining two were holders of Diploma certificates in Education. Data was generated through three methods, namely; Protocol writing, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. The data from interviews and focus group discussions was transcribed. Significant statements pertaining to the lived experiences of the beginning RE teachers from the generated data were identified and coded. Fourteen themes emerged during the process. These themes were collapsed into three categories: School related themes; pre-service related themes; and individual person related themes. Among the findings of the study are findings that other scholars have reported in the literature and findings that are peculiar to the participating teachers. Findings that are peculiar to beginning RE teachers who participated in this study included uncaring attitudes towards RE and its teachers. In one of the schools, RE was the last subject on the time table every school day. Periods allocated to RE were used for caucus meetings by the school management and makeup classes by teachers of other subjects, without consulting the RE teacher concerned. These findings and other related issues are discussed in the thesis.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ATR	African Traditional Religion
B.K	Bible Knowledge
B.T.	Beginning Teacher
Chanco	Chancellor College
CU	Catholic University
DCE	Domasi College of Education
Dip. Ed.	Diploma in Education
DMI	Daughters of Mary Immaculate
EFA	Education for All.
ESIP	Education Sector Implementation Plan
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
GOM	Government of Malawi
HEI	High Education Institutions
INSET	In-service training
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
MANEB	Malawi National Examination Board
MSCE	Malawi School Certificate of Education
NESP	National Education Sector Plan
NUT	National Union of Teachers
PIM	Providence Industrial Mission
PSLCE	Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education
RARE	Recently Assigned Religious Education
RE	Religious Education

RME	Religious and Moral Education
RRP	Reflective Research Project
SACE	South African Council of Education
SEED	South East Education Division
TRS	Theology and Religious Studies
TUM	Teachers Union of Malawi
US	United States
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This study explored the professional problems that beginning RE teachers experienced in their early years of teaching in eight secondary schools in Zomba and Machinga districts in Malawi. It is a qualitative study. The study adopted social constructivist and post-industrial perspectives and used the hermeneutical phenomenological research method to explore the lived experiences of the beginning RE teachers. Hermeneutics has to do with interpretation of texts while phenomenology is concerned with description of lived experiences. The study, hence describes and interprets the lived experiences of beginning RE teachers.

I have done the study because as a secondary school Religious Education teacher trainer, I have witnessed a high turnover among RE teachers. Hunt and Carroll (2003, p.6), in their summary report of National Commission on Teaching and America's Future in the United States state that, "*the real school staffing problem is teacher retention.*" This is more so for developing countries like Malawi, where the education system has been greatly expanded since independence. This expansion has created a need for increase in education inputs. One of the most important factors in an education system is the quality of teachers in the system. Although the number of teachers trained in a year has increased, a significant number of the trained teachers leave the teaching profession every year (Kayuni & Tambulasi, 2007). Some

beginning RE teachers choose to teach subjects other than RE. Other beginning RE teachers resign from teaching to take jobs other than teaching.

A number of scholars in Africa think that one of the problems that causes the high turnover of teachers is the absence of formal country-wide educational policy on induction of beginning teachers (Keengwe & Adjei-Boateng, 2012; Wachira & Waiganjo, 2014). Apparently, in the absence of formal induction, some beginning teachers find their jobs extremely difficult and consequently leave the teaching profession. It is also claimed that those teachers who stay in the teaching profession without being properly inducted often fail to develop professional skills and attitudes (Betts, 2006, p.10; Clement, Enz & Pawlas, 2000, p.48; Halford, 1999, p.14; Wang & Odell, 2002, p.514). Such teachers develop their own survival skills that may not be in harmony with professional teaching skills (Shulman & Colbert, 1987).

In Malawi, responsibility for inducting new teachers in a school lies in the school itself. According to the *Handbook of Secondary School Administration*, induction of new staff in any secondary school in Malawi is the responsibility of the head teacher of the school. The head teacher is required to organise an induction scheme which should “*involve the head himself or herself, the deputy head, the heads of department, and any other member of staff with whom the new teachers will work*” (Ministry of Education and Culture 1981, p.9). The handbook further states that the head teacher must continually assess the beginning teachers in their work. In addition, the handbook even advises the head teacher to write a letter of welcome to the beginning teacher, before he or she arrives at the school. Furthermore, the handbook requires each school to produce a written document for staff induction in the school.

Although the handbook states clearly things that have to be done when inducting a new teacher in a school, only very few schools carry out instructions of the Ministry to the letter. This gives rise to a variety of practices in handling beginning teachers in schools. In recent years, there have been no courses offered to veteran teachers on how to induct beginning teachers although head teachers have continued to discuss their roles in connection with beginning teachers during head teachers' conferences. It is in these circumstances that I decided to investigate the lived experiences of beginning RE teachers. The reasons for choosing beginning teachers of Religious Education and the purpose of the study are presented later in the thesis.

This introductory chapter is organised into ten sections. Section one gives an introduction to the study. Rationale for doing the study is the subject of section two. Background of the study is presented in section three. Then follow sections on education in Malawi, study context, statement of the problem, purpose, research questions, significance, and overview of the study in sections four, five, six, seven, eight, nine and ten respectively.

1.2 Rationale for doing the study

As a teacher of Religious Education, I experienced a number of problems during my first years of teaching at secondary school, teacher training college and University of Malawi. After graduating from Marist College in Kenya as an RE teacher, I was posted to a national secondary school in Malawi. National secondary schools are schools where only pupils who do extremely well in their Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations (PSLCE) are offered places. The first problem I encountered

at secondary school level had to do with my expectations of student attitudes to learning RE.

I assumed that because the students at the school were selected on merit and had done extremely well in Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations (PSLCE), they would all work hard in their RE lessons. I did not know that it would be my duty to persuade students to develop interest in learning RE. As it turned out, I had to find ways of presenting RE lessons that would attract students' interest in the subject.

My second problem was about lack of opportunities to observe veteran RE teachers in action. During my first year of teaching at the secondary school, I felt the need to be assisted in a special way by the teacher from whom I had taken over the RE classes. I wanted to observe lessons of experienced teachers so that I could learn their ways of presenting lessons to students in the school. I subsequently realised that it was not the practice in the school to let beginning teachers observe lessons of veteran teachers. As time went on, I developed my own skills for teaching the subject.

The need to observe lessons of veteran teachers occurred to me again in 2006 when I was appointed Lecturer in Social Studies at a College of Education. There was no orientation or introduction to teaching of RE at the teacher training college. On my first day of lecturing, I was not sure if I had met the expectations of the second year Diploma in Education students. Just like in my first days of teaching at secondary school level, I wanted to observe at least some lectures of the colleague from whom I had taken over. I was, however, afraid to disclose my desire to do this because I thought colleagues would think of me as someone who was not capable of teaching at an institution of higher learning. No one came to observe my lectures. I developed

my own lecturing skills. I did this mostly by recalling what I experienced when I was a college student. I had no opportunity to learn from more experienced colleagues about lecturing.

When I joined the Faculty of Humanities in the University of Malawi as a lecturer in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies in January, 2010, my experience was different. The Head of Department observed one of my lectures without informing me about it in advance. While I would have loved to be informed about the observation in advance, I appreciated the fact that an experienced lecturer had observed me lecturing. Unfortunately, he did not give me feedback about the lecture he observed. When I asked him for feedback, he simply responded that lecturers were different and my lecturing was unique. He made no suggestions at all about how I could improve my performance as a lecturer.

The greatest motivation for this study, however, is that as an RE teacher trainer, I found that most of the teachers I have trained since 2006 are no longer teaching RE in secondary schools. Some have presumably taken up jobs other than teaching in secondary schools while others are teaching other subjects. During the conception of this study, I visited the participating schools and identified eight beginning RE teachers who were in their first year of teaching after graduating from college. Three months later, I found that seven of the eight beginning RE teachers were no longer teaching RE, with some of them teaching subjects other than RE. Thus, I developed interest to know why the teachers stopped teaching RE and started teaching subjects other than RE. The phenomenological approach to educational research suggests that examining the lived experiences of the beginning RE teachers would enable me to understand their behaviour, in this connection, more fully (Cohen et al., 2000). These

authors, particularly indicate that behaviour can be more adequately understood by examining the phenomena of experience rather than by the external, objective and physically described reality (Cohen et al. 2000, p.23).

In the light of my foregoing experience, I developed an impression that not much had been done in the recent past to meet the needs of novice teachers in Malawi's most secondary schools and colleges. It sounded strange that even at the University of Malawi, newly appointed lecturers receive no assistance from experienced lecturers, hence this study. Having presented my motivation to the study, in the next section I discuss the background of the study.

1.3 Background

In this section I present aspects of educational system in Malawi that are important in understanding the study. These aspects include; Beginning teaching in Malawi, secondary school curriculum, and RE in Malawi. I discuss these aspects briefly, one after another.

1.3.1 Beginning teaching in Malawi

In Malawi, four public institutions are mandated to train secondary school teachers. These institutions are: The University of Malawi; Mzuzu University; Domasi College of Education and Nalikule College of Education. Recently, a number of church owned universities such as the Catholic University of Malawi in Chiradzulu, Daughters of Mary Immaculate (DMI) St. John the Baptist University in Mangochi, Nkhoma University in Lilongwe, Livingstonia University in Mzuzu and Lake View University in Ntcheu have begun to offer teacher training programmes at first degree level. The undergraduate degree programmes take four years to complete.

The degree training curricula include courses in subject content, teaching methods, and foundation courses. An end-on teaching practice session that normally lasts twelve weeks is organised for students enrolled in public universities and teacher training colleges. Private universities make their own arrangements for providing students with appropriate practical teaching experience in suitable environments. Any beginning RE teacher in Malawi will have studied Theology and Religious Studies, teaching methods and education foundation courses for either three or four years.

1.3.2 Secondary school curriculum

The concept of a curriculum is defined as a plan for education of learners or a field of study (Zais, 1976). In the context of the present study, the term secondary school curriculum denotes subjects that an individual student takes in her or his effort to attain a Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE). This curriculum is composed of compulsory subjects and optional subjects and Religious Education belongs to the latter group. Optional subjects generally tend to attract fewer students when compared to compulsory subjects. The compulsory subjects are English, Chichewa, Mathematics, Biology and Agriculture. In addition, students are required to choose two subjects from the route they choose to follow either Science or Humanities. For example, students who choose to take the science route are required to take Physics and Chemistry in addition to the compulsory subjects. Similarly, students who choose to follow the humanities route are required to take History and Geography in addition to the compulsory subjects. Thus, at the time of this study, every student was required to take seven subjects excluding RE in line with Malawi's

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology rules and regulations. This implies that students who enroll for RE take it as their eighth or ninth subject.

The overall picture is that, to attain a Malawi School Certificate of Education, a candidate has to pass at least six subjects including English, and one of the six passes must be a credit or above. Practically, most students usually take seven or eight subjects. Only occasionally do they take nine subjects. Furthermore, schools sometimes select specific optional subjects to offer to students. Due to religious reasons, government assisted church mission schools offer Religious Education. Similarly, public schools with insufficient science equipment, especially in rural areas, offer Religious Education as an optional subject. In schools that stream learners according to ability, RE tends to be offered to the low ability streams. As such, a large number of students who take RE do so out of desperation.

1.3.3 Religious Education in Malawi

Religious Education in Malawi is offered in two forms. These are Bible Knowledge (BK) and Religious and Moral Education (RME). It is incumbent upon proprietors of each school to choose the form of RE to teach in their schools. All Christian missionary schools teach Bible Knowledge. Islamic schools offer RME only. Government schools offer either BK or RME depending on the management of the school (Salanjira, 2009). However, all schools that teach RME do so only up to Form Two which is junior secondary level. This is the case because the Malawi National Examination Board (MANEB) does not test RME at senior school certificate level due to scarcity of candidates.

The number of schools offering Religious Education is decreasing because some schools are dropping the subject. Furthermore, Schools situated in Islamic communities do not offer RE at school certificate level for fear of being seen as trying to have the students converted to Christianity. From time to time, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology conducts short in-service courses for beginning teachers in Mathematics, Natural Sciences and other subjects. No similar short courses have been offered for beginning RE teachers in recent years. It appears no one is willing to sponsor RE in-service training for beginning RE teachers.

The percentage of candidates taking RE was 46%, 42%, and 35% in the years 2006, 2007 and 2008 respectively (MANEB Report, 2009). What is significant is that while the total number of candidates taking MSCE examinations increased during these years, the percentages of candidates taking RE kept decreasing during the same period. This suggests that certain factors discourage candidates from taking RE.

In addition, the number of students selected into public universities in Malawi, based on performance in Religious Education, is very minimal. The foregoing issues affecting RE in Malawi's schools underscore the need to document lived experiences of beginning RE teachers, and generate an understanding of their behaviour and, in turn, suggest possible ways of caring for them or for accelerating their process of becoming expert teachers.

1.4 Education in Malawi

Education in Malawi was introduced by Christian missions which have also played an important role in its development. Actually, the early history of Education in Malawi

is synonymous with the history of Christian missions. As Father Guilleme observes, teaching of writing and reading in early Catholic Schools was a means of attracting villagers into the catechumenate (Linden & Linden, 1974, p.140-141).

Similarly, a senior official in the Presbyterian Church in Scotland maintained that missionaries sent to teach in mission stations were “*not secular teachers but Christian Missionaries sent out to aid the Minister in converting the heathen to Christ*” (Herdman, 1881). Likewise, Pretorius (1957, p.11) indicates that the aim of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) mission was to produce “*a Bible loving industrious and prosperous peasantry.*” With this mentality, the DRC opened a large number of Junior Primary Schools and resisted attempts to develop secondary school education. Furthermore, the DRC did not teach English in teacher training institutions before 1904 (McCracken, 2009, p.219). At present, however, the role of Religious Education in Malawi is not to convert people to Christianity but to promote ethical and moral codes of conduct and good citizenship.

In 2017, there were a total of 372 855 learners in both private and public secondary schools in Malawi (Malawi Education Statistics, 2017). These students were serviced by a total of 14 333 teachers of whom 43% were unqualified. Unqualified teachers are those teachers who have no teaching qualifications for teaching at secondary school level. The beginning teacher in Malawi, therefore, works at a school where 43% of the teachers are unqualified. This means that the beginning RE teachers in secondary schools in Malawi may find themselves working in an environment where a large number of long service teachers are unqualified. The context of the study is presented next.

1.5 Study Context

The study was done in Malawi, a Southern African country located within latitudes 9° 2'S and 17° 3' S and longitudes 33° 4' E and 35° 5' E. The population of Malawi is estimated to be 17 million. Malawi has a three tier education system; these are primary, secondary and tertiary. Foreign missionaries began to arrive in Malawi in early 19th century, preceded by Moslems. The Free Church of Scotland at Cape Maclear in Mangochi established Malawi's first permanent Christian Mission in 1875. The Main Church of Scotland also established a Christian mission station at Blantyre in 1876. The Anglican Church, Dutch Reformed Church and Zambezi Industrial Mission established church mission stations in Malawi in 1885, 1889 and 1892 respectively. The Catholic Church established a mission station in Ntcheu at Nzama in 1901 (McCracken, 2008; Chigona, 2011). Missionaries were clear in their linkage of evangelisation and modernisation through education (Chigona, 2011). With passage of time, responsibility for conducting education in the country shifted from church missionary institutions to public institutions. The present study, was therefore, conducted in an environment in which church institutions do not have the upper hand over education.

1.6 Statement of the Research Problem

The study investigated professional challenges that beginning RE teachers encounter in their early years of employment in Malawi. This was done through examining the status of the professional well-being of beginning teachers in the selected secondary schools in Malawi. According to Kessels (2010, p.65) beginning teachers' well-being can be considered to be positive when the teachers experience no isolation in their schools, appreciation of their work by colleagues, and are confident in their teaching.

Ironically, while these factors are normally addressed by induction programmes, Kessels (2010) argues that Malawi has no induction programmes for beginning RE teachers and no study has ever been conducted in the country regarding the status of these factors among beginning teachers. The present study, hence, explored the professional well-being of beginning RE teachers, and used experiences of other nations to suggest possible ways of improving the professional well-being of future RE teachers.

1.7 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was threefold. Firstly it sought to determine the status of professional well-being of beginning RE teachers in the selected secondary schools. Secondly, it endeavored to use the knowledge about the status of professional well-being of beginning RE teachers and established programmes presented in the international literature to suggest ways of improving the professional well-being of future beginning RE teachers in Malawi. The third purpose was to establish whether there were other factors other than those reported by Kessels (2010) that affect the professional well-being of beginning RE teachers in Malawi.

1.8 Research Questions

The central research question that gave direction to this study was:

“What are the lived experiences of beginning RE teachers in secondary schools in Malawi?”

In answering this question, the study sought to establish from the sampled teachers any relevant factors operating among them. This study was informed by English and English (1958) as cited in Cohen et al. (2000, p.23). These authors argue that the

behaviour of an individual is determined by the phenomenon of experience rather than by external objective and physically described reality (Cohen et al., 2003, p.23).

This study hence focused on the lived experience of the beginning RE teachers. To guide the study, the following specific research questions were posed:

1. What are beginning RE teachers' professional well-being-related lived experiences in the participating schools?
2. What professional development opportunities were the beginning RE teachers offered in the schools?
3. What professional development challenges did the beginning RE teachers encounter in the schools?
4. Why do beginning RE teachers experience the professional development challenges that emerged from the answer to question three above?

1.9 Significance of the study

This study is significant in that its results can potentially influence the improvement of the professional well-being of beginning RE teachers. Its findings are, for example, likely to be useful to RE teacher trainers, secondary school management, education officers and the beginning RE teachers themselves. The concerns of beginning RE teachers that this study has indicated, may lead to better teacher pre-service training programmes. Similarly, head teachers and their deputies might benefit from the findings of the study by becoming aware of lived experiences of beginning RE teachers. Education officers shall find useful suggestions for handling or caring for beginning RE teachers.

To scholars the study will provide snapshots of professional well-being related lived experiences of beginning RE teachers in Malawi. Scholars will hence be able to compare lived experiences of beginning RE teachers in an underdeveloped country environment with those of teachers in the developed world. In Malawi, the study is particularly likely to stimulate further research concerning what could be done to improve the welfare of beginning teachers in general and RE teachers in particular. All in all, the study shall expand frontiers of knowledge about professional well-being related lived experiences of beginning RE teachers in Malawi.

1.10 Overview of the Study

This study explored factors that affect beginning RE teachers' professional well-being. It is a hermeneutical phenomenological investigation of lived experiences of eight beginning RE teachers. Chapter 1, the introductory chapter, has presented the study's rationale, background, research questions, significance of the study and overview of the study, among other topics. Chapter 2 is divided into two parts. Pertinent literature pertaining to issues of beginning teachers that are considered relevant to this study is reviewed in the first part, and the second part presents theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study. The design and methodology of the study are presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 presents and discusses findings of the study. The thesis is concluded in Chapter 5 which also presents implications of the study, recommendations for practice, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND FRAMEWORKS OF THE STUDY

2.1 Review of the literature

A literature review is a critical summary and assessment of the range of studies and other scholarly writings dealing with knowledge and understanding in a given field (Blaxter et al, 2001, p. 122). It is based on the assumption that knowledge is cumulative and that as scholars, we learn from and build on what others have done (Neuman, 1997, p. 89). Neuman (1997), defines research as a collective effort of many scholars who share their results with one another and pursue knowledge as a community. Similarly, Tuckman (1978, p.38) argues that past work in a field of knowledge can and should be viewed as a springboard into subsequent work, with the latter building upon and extending the former. It was hence important in the present study to include a chapter on literature review.

As stated earlier, this study, sought to investigate the professional well-being of beginning RE teachers through their lived experience, and to determine what could be done in Malawi in order to improve the professional well-being of future RE teachers. This chapter reviews literature concerning Religious Education, landmark studies of beginning teachers, induction and induction programmes, and beginning teachers around the world. The review has three purposes: Establishing and documenting what is relevant and important in the study of Religious Education and beginning teachers; broadening my knowledge base for conducting the present study; and enabling me to

synthesise the literature with my findings in line with van Manen's (1997) four life-world themes: Spatiality; corporeality; temporality and; relationality. These terms are explained later in the thesis.

The literature reviewed falls into six broad categories namely literature about: Religious Education as a subject taught in schools; landmark studies of beginning teachers; issues arising from landmark studies; induction and comprehensive induction programmes; stages of development of beginning teachers; and, African studies of beginning teachers. The literature review is followed by a summary of pertinent findings from it.

2.1.1 Religious education as a subject taught in schools

Religious education is taught through folkways and proverbs and has been a carrier of moral education to learners for many years (Hawes, 1979, p.25). Ancient Greeks drew moral lessons from Homeric poems while Jews drew their moral lessons from the Mosaic Law (Brubacher, 1966, p.304). The teaching of morality through folkways was followed by the teaching of morality through reflection, which Socrates is widely known for. Socrates' argument was that no one would knowingly do wrong. If one did evil, "*it was merely because he or she was ignorant of the right or good*" (Brubacher, 1966, p.304). In modern times, the teaching of morality has tended to use both rational thinking and listening to stories with moral lessons.

The relevance of RE to education of learners has varied from time to time globally. As Ashton (2000, p.172) reports, until 1988, in England RE was the only compulsory subject on the school time table. It was only following the enactment of the Education

Reform Act 1988 that RE became the only subject from which parents and guardians had the right to withdraw their children from. Similarly, teachers have the right to refrain from teaching Religion to their pupils when they find it necessary. Attitudes towards RE which were projected in the 1988 Education Reform Act in England appear to be spreading to various countries around the world including Malawi today. In Malawi, RE is used to inculcate moral values that are in tandem with Biblical teachings, and stories are the main teaching method. The importance of stories in teaching moral education has been widely recognised by scholars around the world. In 1968, the Central Advisory Council for Education in England recommended the use of fictional, historical or religious stories in the teaching of moral lessons (Dearden 1968, p.180). The understanding is that “*susceptibility to example is greater when children are not directly ‘got at’*” (Dearden, 1968, p.180). This suggests that moral lessons are best taught through indirect moral lesson-bearing stories.

Making children to see how they ought to behave is only half the task of moral education. The other half is to make it “*second nature with them to act upon what they know*” (Dearden, 1968, p.166). The important question that arose in the course of time is whether moral education can be taught without using religious stories. A critical look at the question reveals that it is about the autonomy of ethics. The question seeks to establish the possibility of teaching good behaviour apart from using Religion. A positive answer to this question points to secular presentation of moral education. On the other hand, the multiplicity of religious faiths and institutions has led to the development of situations in which it has become necessary to exclude religion altogether from public schools (Brubacher, 1966).

The fact that RE is considered to be a transmitter of moral values and “*an instrument in building up attitudes necessary for an active citizen: co-operation, integrity, industry and many more*” (Hawes, 1979, p.25) cannot be over emphasised. Current issues such as HIV/AIDS, drug abuse and environmental degradation are, for example, also taught in RE. In government and government assisted schools the teaching of RE is adversely affected by secularisation. Secularisation according to Matemba (2011, p. 12), “*is the process in which explicit religious thinking, practice, and institutions lose their significance in public life*”. Government schools, government assisted schools and community secondary schools are at liberty to choose whether or not they should teach RE. Community secondary schools are essentially public schools run by local communities. However, it is in the government and community secondary schools where the teaching of RE is contested due to secularisation or multiplicity of religious faiths.

Structure of secondary education sector in Malawi

Malawi has four types of secondary schools namely government, government assisted, private and community day secondary schools. Government secondary schools are those that were constructed by the Malawi Government and are run solely by Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Government assisted secondary schools are usually constructed by religious institutions but receive financial assistance from the government in running the schools. Community day secondary schools are constructed by government or religious institutions but are administered by local communities. Some community secondary schools were constructed by the communities themselves. Government pays teachers’ salaries in all government assisted and community secondary schools. Government schools teach BK like any

other examinable subject. Most of the government assisted secondary schools and private secondary schools belonging to church organisation teach BK as a means of teaching aspects of Christianity and moral lessons to students. This study sampled four government schools, one government assisted school and three community day secondary schools.

The introduction of Religious and Moral Education in Malawi

In 1991, Malawi introduced Religious and Moral Education (RME) syllabus for primary schools (Salanjira, 2009). This was after the introduction of elements of African Traditional Religions (ATR) in the school curricular that occurred in Zambia in 1971 (ter Haar, Moyo & Nondo, 1992, p.39). The extension of RME to secondary schools in the country was strongly contested by Christian organisations. Leaders of the Christian organisations argued that RME syllabus was introduced in the country without consulting them. They hence demanded that the teaching of RME in secondary schools be discontinued and that the previous subject called Bible Knowledge be reinstated. According to Salanjira (2009), government eventually decided to maintain both Bible Knowledge and Religious and Moral Education as secondary school subjects, with the provision that each individual school should choose the form of RE that it would teach.

The general feeling at that time among the leadership of Christian institutions was that Bakili Muluzi, the then President of the country, was attempting to islamise the country because he himself is a muslim (Salanjira, 2009). The aims of RME and Bible Knowledge are quite different. While RME, as pointed out earlier on, is taught

only in Forms 1 and 2 aims at enabling children to understand and appreciate religions including Christianity, Bible Knowledge aims at enabling children to learn about Christianity and to promote morally responsible behaviour. The changes that have occurred in RE could make the teaching of the subject difficult for beginning teachers. For instance, a teacher who is prepared to teach RME may find himself or herself at a school that teaches Bible Knowledge only. As such, he or she may have to work out his or her own way of teaching Bible Knowledge. These observations underscored the need to find out the experiences of those who were in their first, second or third year of teaching RE.

Rationale for teaching RE in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi

Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi have the same rationale for introducing RE in their secondary schools, namely; communicating ethical and moral values to learners in the school systems. The government of Zimbabwe has since its inception emphasised the need to build the new nation on firm moral principles (Maveneka, 1999, p.21).

Thus, according to Maveneka (1999, p.24), in 1980, the country's Curriculum Development Unit was, directed to design a curriculum that would provide firm moral principles on which to build the nation while reflecting the heterogeneous nature of the Zimbabwean society. Similarly, in his study about teaching RE in Zambian secondary schools, Chizelu (2006, p.56) states that Moral and Spiritual Education was important in Zambia because it was linked to the philosophy of Zambian Humanism. Chizelu further states that the aim of spiritual and moral education in Zambia was to enable learners to appreciate spiritual, moral and religious values and behaviour based on them (p.56). Likewise, the National Secondary School Curriculum Review

Symposium in Malawi in 1995, cited the purpose of RE as “*to promote ethical and moral values*” (Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) (1995, p.14). The symposium directed that RE in the country should cater for all religious beliefs. In the following section I review landmark studies of beginning teachers in general.

2.1.2 Landmark studies of beginning teachers in general

Landmark studies are conspicuous or seminal studies in a particular field of inquiry. Early major studies in the field of beginning teachers are Lortie (1975), Corcoran (1981), Veenman (1984), Veenman (1987) and Huberman (1989). Recently published studies include Kagan (1992) and Cherubini (2009). This section begins with reviews of four seminal studies about beginning teachers. Veenman (1984), Kagan (1992), Cherubini (2009), and Lortie (1975), have been chosen for detailed review in this study because of their relevance, comprehensiveness and frequency of citation in current education literature. Veenman (1984) was concerned with quantitative studies while Kagan (1992) examined forty qualitative studies.

Veenman (1984)

Veenman (1984) analysed 83 empirical studies to determine the most serious problems that beginning teachers encounter in their schools at the beginning of their careers. His study defined a problem as a difficulty that beginning teachers experience in the “*performance of their task so that intended goals may be hindered*” (Veenman, 1984, p.143). Teachers who were in their first, second and third year of teaching were taken to be beginning teachers in the study (Veenman, 1984, p.143). These definitions of a problem and a beginning teacher have been adopted in this study.

In his analysis of the eighty three empirical studies, Veenman (1984) identified twelve most serious problems that beginning teachers encountered and, in turn, ranked them according to their level of seriousness, as perceived by the beginning teachers themselves (See Table 1).

Table 1: Most frequently perceived problems of beginning teachers

Rank order	Problems
1	Classroom discipline
2	Motivating students
3	Dealing with individual differences
4.5	Assessing students' work
4.5	Relations with parents
6.5	Organisation of class work
6.5	Insufficient materials and supplies
8	Dealing with problems of individual students
9	Heavy teaching loads resulting in insufficient preparation time
10	Relations with colleagues
11	Planning of lessons and school days
12	Effective use of different teaching methods

Source: Veenman (1984, p.154).

The findings in table 1 were confirmed in Kagan's (1992) study which is reviewed next.

Kagan (1992)

In her study of professional growth among pre-service and beginning teachers, Kagan (1992) examined forty qualitative studies published or presented between 1987 and 1991. Of these studies, twenty seven were about pre-service teachers and the rest were about beginning teachers. The purpose of her study was threefold: To determine whether recent-learning- to-teach studies form a coherent body of knowledge; to use any common themes that emerged from these studies to construct a model of professional growth for beginning teachers; and, to draw inferences from the model concerning the nature of pre-service teacher education programmes likely to promote growth, by capitalising on naturally occurring processes and stages. Kagan concluded that a novice teacher has three tasks to accomplish namely:

- Acquiring knowledge of pupils
- Using that knowledge to modify and construct their personal image of self as teacher
- Developing standard procedural routines that integrate classroom management and instruction.

In her opinion, pre-service teacher training programmes generally fail to address these three tasks adequately. Kagan's (1992) study confirmed that teachers join teacher training programmes with personal beliefs, expectations and visions of good education practices. Some of these beliefs and expectations are memories of themselves as students. According to the author, these personal beliefs and memories of pre-service teachers remain unchanged by pre-service training programmes. The beginning teachers' personal beliefs and expectations clash with real teaching practices causing frustration and disillusionment among them. Kagan's (1992) study

confirmed the existence of problems that Veenman reported in his seminal studies (Veenman, 1984 & 1987). Cherubini's (2009) chronological study is presented next.

Cherubini (2009)

Cherubini (2009) carried out a chronological review of studies of beginning teachers from 1969 to 2005. The study had three purposes: To test an assumption that many of the problems experienced by beginning teachers were the same as those that had been documented in the past thirty-five years; to examine core themes that have been identified in the respective periods of time; and, to propose how the tension between new teacher identity formation and socialisation into the school can be reconciled. The emerging themes of his study included teachers' perception of self (1969 to mid-1980s), professional sustainability (mid-1980s to late 1990s) and emerging new teacher identities during the process of socialisation into the school culture (2000 to 2005). School culture is defined as "*the distinctive blend of norms, values and accepted modes of professional practice, both formal and informal that prevail among colleagues*" (Cherubini 2009, p.83).

Cherubini's (2009) study reviewed both qualitative and quantitative studies. An initial search using *Academic Search Premier* yielded 257 articles. Only those studies that were reported between 1969 and 2005 and were published in refereed academic journals were included in the review study. The author also selected studies for review on the basis of robustness and the appropriateness of conclusions drawn in the studies. Content analysis was used to analyse the data.

The study found that new teachers experience a progression through identifiable stages during professional socialisation into the teaching culture from those of the self to those of confident and capable teacher. Self-concerns become related to personal concerns. The initial years confirm the teacher's choice of occupation in life and provided a base for future professional development. Details of themes in the professional development of beginning teachers that emerged in the periods 1969 to mid-1980s, mid-1980s to late 1990s, and 2000 to 2005 were respectively called; "new teachers' perceptions of self," "professional sustainability", and "emerging new teacher and the school culture". The thesis now reviews chronological studies of beginning teachers from 1969 to 2005.

New teachers' perceptions of self (1969 to mid-1980s)

Cherubini (2009) refers to this period as a period of enculturation. During this period the new teachers were seen as progressing through identifiable stages in their professional socialisation into the teaching culture. Self-concerns become related to teachers' adequacy in terms of managing students and being a productive member of the school faculty. The professional cultures into which the teachers were inducted are important because the early years of work confirm the new teachers' choice of occupation in life, and lay a base for future professional development (Newman & Wehlage, 1983, p. 225).

Professional sustainability (mid-1980s to late 1990s)

Cherubini suggests that in mid-1980 and late 1990s beginning teachers were assumed to pass through stages of development during their socialisation into the teaching profession. During this period, scholars focused on the novice teachers' progression

through the fantasy stages that denote an intense struggle, whereby the self-worth and identity of the beginning teacher are profoundly challenged. Any experiences with failure are potentially public and subject to the school community at large. Unsuccessful practice is associated with public shame. Teacher development was described in terms of survival, mastery and impact period. Frustrations and failure to cope with classroom issues resulted in self-doubt and possibly resignation.

The fact that beginning teachers were required to perform as experienced professionals caused them to get frustrated and to experience burnout (Greene, 1997). This was especially the case in schools whose cultures curtailed beginning teachers' enthusiasm through a swim or sink mentality. Thus, the school management felt that beginning teachers needed to find their own ways of surviving in their schools. Put differently, in the words of Halford (1999, p.14), 'teaching became a profession that ate its young because beginning teachers were expected to survive before mastering the teaching craft or skills'. According to Halford, almost half of beginning teachers in Western countries were resigning because of failure to cope with the task of teaching during their first years of employment.

Emerging new teacher identities and school culture (2000-2005)

Cherubini (2009, p.90) observed that at the beginning of their careers teachers socialisation into the teaching profession involved understanding of what is taught, why we teach what we teach, how certain subjects are effectively taught, and alternative ways of teaching. In the course of this period, it was noted that beginning teachers' work lives were centred on their relationships with fellow teachers in terms of validating membership within the school culture. Culture was thought of consisting

differentiated network of relationships which shared some assumptions and established practices. To appreciate organised cultures, one needed to understand the dynamics of the individual's subcultures. Towards the end of his paper, Cherubini presents the post-industrial perspective as a means of understanding the behaviour of beginning teachers. He maintains that beginning teachers are trained under the post-industrial perspective through which they are told they are emancipated individuals who are defined not by external agencies of social and institutional membership but by self (Cherubini, 2009, p.94). The beginning teachers, according to Cherubini (2009), perceive themselves as autonomous and mature professionals who can exercise their unique capacities and skills in the schools. However, in the schools, the beginning teachers are perceived as passive individuals who are subject to the recognition and decision of the head teachers and their assistants. This to Cherubini, is one of the problems that beginning teachers face in schools.

The present study adopted Cherubini's conceptual framework of post-industrial perspective because it explains observations made in the international literature and in the present study. The observations are presented later in the thesis.

School culture is considered the most important element in the retention of teachers in the school. The next section reviews another landmark study by Lortie (1975). Lortie's 1975 study is being reviewed after Cherubini's (2009) study even though it came far much earlier than Cherubini's because it provides a link to the review of subsequent studies.

Lortie (1975)

Lortie used historical methods, intensive interviews, observations and surveys to determine defining characteristics of the teaching profession (Lin, 2016). Adopting the perspective of symbolic interactionism, Lortie examined the ways in which teachers were recruited, socialised, and rewarded in their careers. Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical perspective, derived from American pragmatic philosophical tradition, that considers reality as being characterised by indeterminacy, fluidity and susceptibility to multiple interpretations (Charmaz 2010, pp.188-189). This means that reality is not fixed and depends on the interpretation one makes of it. As far as beginning teachers are concerned, Lortie's findings fall into three categories namely; apprenticeship of observation, individualism, and culture of the teaching profession. These categories are reviewed below.

Apprenticeship of observation

Apprenticeship of observation refers to influence of thousands of hours that pre-service teachers spent as pupils; observing and evaluating teachers in action (Borg, 2004, p.274; Denise et al., 2006, p.30). Introducing this concept Lortie argues that:

There are ways in which being a student is like serving an apprenticeship in teaching; students have protracted face- to-face and consequential interactions with established teachers (Lortie, 1975. p.61).

During the apprenticeship that Lortie refers to in this quotation, pre-service teachers internalise teaching models used by their teachers. The model of teaching that school children develop in the course of learning, has according to Lortie, a major influence on the shaping of teachers' conceptions of their teaching roles. Formal teacher

education, has in Lortie's view, limited impact on altering cumulative effects of teaching models developed when the pre-service teachers were school children. He explains that students' predispositions to teaching exerts a much more powerful socialising influence than do pre-service or in-service training. In his view, school reforms, and staff development fail to alter these predispositions of teachers.

A number of studies have confirmed Lortie's finding on the importance of teachers' predispositions to their socialisation in the teaching profession (Pigg & Marso, 1987; Zeichner & Gore, 1990, p.329-348; Borg, 2004; Mc Glynn-Stewart, 2015 Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020). In their study of Lortie's apprenticeship of observation, Newborne and Tyminski (2006), reported success in reducing the effects of teachers' predispositions to teaching and learning through critical examination of their predispositions in relation to visions of good teaching. The weight of the evidence is, however, still in Lortie's favour. In 2002, Lortie's book was reprinted with a new preface in which he observed that schools have not changed since he authored the book.

Individualism

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1995), individualism is the habit or principle of being independent or self-reliant. However, individualism also refers to the social theory that favours free action of individuals. Lortie argued that teachers, as people, were unwilling to change because they were trapped in workplace cultures of individualism that shielded them from the knowledge and expertise of their peers. Elliott (1975, p.259) explains that the absence of professional culture sustained by the individualistic manner in which teachers are inducted,

weakens the teachers' claim to be called professionals. It seems, in his view, teachers have no body of common professional understandings. According Elliot (1975), examples of individualism include situations in which classroom teachers show unwillingness to co-corporate with their colleagues.

Hargreaves (1993) explains that individualism is associated with qualities of uncertainty and anxiety. These qualities cause teachers to rely on old doctrines and their own past experiences as students when forming their styles and strategies of teaching. Recent studies show that collaboration has a more superior impact on student learning than individualism (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020).

Culture of the teaching profession

In their study of teacher recruitment and retention in Miane, Rydell, Gage and Colnes (1986) reported that Lortie identified five themes that attract people to join the teaching profession, namely; interpersonal, service, continuation, material benefits, and, time compatibility. The interpersonal theme has to do with people who join the teaching profession because they like to work with people. Some teachers in this category express the desire to work with young people. Other recruits consider teaching as a valuable service of moral worth by perceiving themselves as performing a special mission in their societies. Lortie called this, a service theme.

A continuation theme is a desire to remain and work in education service. Teachers in this category liked the school and were intrinsically interested in subject matter field. Lortie tells us that the continuation preference, means that teaching is less likely to attract change-oriented people. Teachers are more likely to be conservative people. Material benefits refer to such things as pay and alternative employment opportunities

for women and minorities. Time compatibility refers to fewer work days per year. In general, teachers work for about 181 days while people of other professions work for 237 days (Rydall, Gage & Colnes, 1986).

According to Lortie cited in Veenman (1984, p.167) the teaching profession “*has no codified body of knowledge and skills*”. Furthermore, he explains that no way has been found to record and crystallise teaching for the benefit of beginning teachers (Lortie as cited in Veenman, 1984, p.167). Thus, to analyse problems of beginning teachers, the present study following Lortie’s (1975) study, investigated work place problems which vary from school to school and problems that are intrinsic to the teaching profession itself.

The axiom that beginning teachers experience problems is borne by words that various scholars have used to describe the first year of teaching. The first year of teaching has been variously described as reality shock (Veenman, 1984; Gaede, 1978), as sink and swim experience (Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Lortie, 1975; Podsen & Denmark, 2000; Varah et al 1986), and lastly as riding a roller coaster (Normore & Floyd, 2005; Ryan, 1992). As indicated earlier on, the teaching profession has, in this regard, been described as a profession that eats its young (Halford, 1999, p.14).

Current research about beginning teachers continues to confirm findings of the landmark studies. According to these landmark studies, problems of beginning teachers spring from the school as a work place and from the teaching profession itself (Brock & Glady 1997; Johnson & Kardos, 2005, Cherubim, 2009, Keerney &

Lee 2014, Ingersoll, 2001; Goldon & Maxey, 2000). Gordon and Maxey (2000) have sorted out the situational problems that have been highlighted in Lortie's (1975) landmark study, into four categories: Work assignments; unclear expectations; isolation; reality shock; and attrition. These issues are reviewed separately below because of their significance in current thinking about beginning teachers.

2.1.3 Issues arising from the landmark studies

The issues reviewed in this section, as indicated previously, include work assignments, unclear expectations, isolation, reality shock and attrition.

Work assignments

Feiman Nemser (2001, p. 1026) argues that beginning teachers have two jobs to do namely; teaching and learning to teach. Unlike in many professions where responsibilities for new workers are increased gradually over a period of time, in many schools beginning teachers are expected to perform the same tasks and sometimes more tasks than veteran teachers (Brock & Glady, 1997, Marso & Pigge, 1989, Veenman, 1984). For example, new teachers are often asked to take charge of certain extra-curricular activities in addition to their regular teaching responsibilities (Ligon 1988). Beginning teachers' burdensome workloads take different forms. Novice teachers may be assigned more teaching periods or difficult teaching assignments as reported by Veenman (1984). The beginning teachers may also be assigned to teach subjects that are outside their field of specialisation (Darling-Hommond, 1997). Actually, Ingersoll (2001c) reports that beginning teachers are more often assigned to teach outside their fields of specialisation than veteran teachers. Considering that highly qualified teachers become highly unqualified when they are asked to teach subjects outside their field of training, assigning unfamiliar

subjects to beginning teachers inconveniences them greatly (Betts, 2006). It practically causes them to spend a lot of time preparing lessons, which is synonymous with teaching oneself before teaching one's students. Johnson and Birkland (2003) suggest that a novice teacher may resign from teaching if poor fit compromises their effectiveness and sense of success.

Certain classes are considered to be difficult to teach. Such classes include: classes in which misbehaviour is the norm; those of slow learners; and those preparing to take a national examination at the end of a particular academic year. These difficult classes constitute a workload burden. Many studies indicate that these difficult classes are more often allocated to new teachers than they are to veteran teachers (Marso & Pigge, 1989; Clement et al., 2000; Gordon & Maxey, 2000). Heavy work assignments also do constitute workload burdens that may affect beginning teachers' professional well-being.

Unclear expectations

A school is not just the buildings we see, it includes; a community of learners, teachers, support staff, parents, ministry officials and other stakeholders. To function effectively in such a community one needs to know both its formal and informal rules and procedures for doing things. It takes time to learn the necessary formal and informal rules and procedures for proper living in the school community. Therefore, the beginning teacher finds himself or herself in a situation of endemic uncertainties (Lortie, 1975, p.159). Unclear expectations sometimes arise from conflict of expectations of various groups or individuals in the school community (Corcoran, 1981).

Another unclear expectation is the one that arises from the nature of the teaching profession itself. The absence of a codified body of knowledge and skills and the inability to record and crystallise knowledge of teaching for beginners (Lortie 1975) means that new teachers find it difficult to determine appropriate teaching strategies in teaching situations they encounter in their schools.

Isolation

To isolate is to place apart or alone (The Oxford Concise Dictionary, 1995). Beginning teachers in schools are definitely not alone. Writing from the context of the United States, Flinders (1988, p. 13) notes that on average, secondary school teachers see 121 students per day; and engage in about 1000 interpersonal interactions each day. When teaching, however, teachers are invisible to each other (Betts, 2006, p.16) and generally have no knowledge of what their colleagues do in their classrooms (Rosenholtz, 1989). No wonder Lortie (1975) explains that teachers generally suffer from lack of opportunities to share their knowledge and experiences with their colleagues. Ingersoll and Kralik (2004, p.2) agree that the work of teachers is still largely done in isolation from other teachers. Halford (1999, p.13) observes that generally teacher preparation programmes do not prepare teachers for the isolation they will experience during teaching.

In his analysis, Flinders (1988, p.19-20) identifies two sources of teacher isolation: The egg-crate architecture and cellular organisation of schools, and the manner in which teachers perceive and experience collegial interaction. A crate is a container made of wood, plastic or paper that is divided into components and is used for transporting fragile objects. In an egg-crate each egg occupies one compartment.

When teaching, teachers in a school normally occupy one class each, thereby appearing to be like eggs in a crate. Thus, the egg-crate structure of schools makes each teacher to work alone in his or her own classroom (Johnson & Kardos 2005, p.10). This makes sharing of knowledge and experience between beginning teachers and veteran teachers rather difficult. Although many teachers express the need to observe other teachers at work (Goodlad, 1984, p.188), the school egg-crate structure prevents much of such observations from happening. According to Rosenholtz (1989, p.430) the professional isolation that the egg-crate structure of the schools creates has important implications concerning the professional growth of beginning teachers. Professional development of a beginning teacher involves veteran teachers guiding the beginning teachers' reflection process through asking questions and reflecting on the beginning teacher's response (Kessels, 2010). Unless special arrangements are made to facilitate this process it is unlikely to occur in the egg-crate structure of most schools. In addition, Kessels (2010, p.65) identifies absence of isolation of beginning teachers in a school as one of the indicators of beginning teachers' sound professional well-being.

The second source of isolation is teachers' attitudes to collegial interaction in the schools. Flinders (1988) advances the view that teacher isolation in schools is self-imposed. It is a strategy for getting the functions of teaching done within the school day. Teachers in schools are generally busy with marking, entering grades, preparing schemes of work, and writing lesson plans. There is hardly time for social or professional collegial interaction. Consequently, teachers isolate themselves from getting involved in social interaction within the school.

When beginning teachers join a school they suffer from social isolation (Gordon & Maxey, 2000). On the one hand, beginning teachers being strangers in the schools, veteran teachers are unlikely to assist them even when they know that the beginning teachers need assistance. On the other hand, many beginning teachers also think that asking for help from veteran teachers amounts to admission of failure and incompetence (Betts, 2006, p. 18; Halford, 1999, p.13 & Dinham, 1992). Therefore, in this regard, beginning teachers experience more isolation than veteran teachers.

Reality shock

Beginning teachers generally assume that teaching is an easy job, hence their unrealistically optimistic beliefs about their success in the teaching job. Reality shock occurs when such mistaken beliefs of the beginning teachers encounter an unexpected difficulty that they cannot surmount. Veenman (1984, p.143) refers to this shock as *“the collapse of missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of everyday classroom life”*. In this regard, Lortie (1975, p.175 – 176) explains that beginning teachers often underestimate the actual time it takes to complete their teaching load, causing the teaching load to become the reality when they fail to finish the work within the expected time frame.

There are many factors that can cause reality shock for beginning teachers. Veenman (1984) and Gaede (1978) cite personal attitudes and attributes, professional experience inadequacies, and job situational factors, among others. Furthermore, Bolam (1997, p.684) and Hoerr (2005, p. 82) state that reality shock occurs often when beginning teachers move from their relatively sheltered positions as students on training, to where they are held responsible for whatever happens as they discharge their responsibilities.

Like other scholars, Betts (2006, p.22) calls the shock that engulfs beginning teachers as they join the teaching profession, a reality or a transition shock. This is the case because what the teachers learn when training is not exactly what they experience in their schools. This may lead to loss of interest in the teaching profession and sometimes resignation. It seems that beginning teachers are in most cases not trained to face actual teaching experiences in the schools.

Attrition

The International Task Force on Teachers for Education For All (EFA) (2010, p.VII), defines attrition as all permanent losses of teachers from the teaching profession, for whatever reasons. The Task Force on Education For All (2010) considers teacher attrition to fall into four categories: Demographics; personal factors; pull factors; and, push factors. Demographics refer to retirement age and policies. Personal factors are things such as marriage, family responsibilities or illness. Pull factors are labour market conditions, pay and progression of teachers' salaries. Push factors include: Conditions of schools; living and working conditions at posts; internal and external management of the schools; poor school climate; and, low job satisfaction. The present study examines the factors mentioned above from the perspective of professional well-being of beginning RE teachers. As previously indicated the concept of professional well-being involves assessment of isolation of beginning teachers in a school, collegial appreciation, and ability to teach with confidence. Several authors have reviewed the literature on teacher attrition. The concept of beginning teachers' professional well-being forms the conceptual framework of this study and is presented in the next chapter.

According to Veenman (1984), the more problems beginning teachers encounter, the more likely they are to leave the teaching profession. Agreeing with Veenman's views, Varah et al. (1986, p.30) state that "*what beginning teachers believe in their initial year of teaching contributes to the gap between what they are capable of becoming and what they ... actually become*". Similarly, Kardos et al. (2001) advances the view that experiences that beginning teachers encounter determine not only their long term performance in class but also their decision to leave or stay in teaching.

The problem of beginning teacher attrition has been a subject of discussion for more than thirty years now from the time Veenman wrote about it. Despite that long-standing awareness and concerted efforts, the teacher attrition problem is still seriously affecting the education sector in various countries, posing a big challenge to the teaching fraternity. In his study of the problem of beginning teacher attrition in South Africa, Pitsoe (2017) states that teacher attrition has great impact on the quality of teaching and learning for the millennium development goals. It is, therefore, important that new avenues for reducing the problem within the framework of educational policies be explored.

Craig (2017) refers to attrition as a perennial problem receiving heightened attention due to intensity, complexity and spread. According to Craig, the theme of attrition appears in scholarly literature emanating from Canada, Ireland, Sweden, Finland and elsewhere. It is, however, reported that even in heavily populated countries e.g. China, it is difficult to retain quality teachers in rural schools (Liu & Onwuegbuzie,

2012). No wonder the Organisation for Economic Corporation and Development (OECD) calls teaching as “*a career of moving in and out*” and that this kind of movement may be permanent (Skilbeck & Connel, 2003, p. 32-33).

In their studies of long time problem of beginning teacher attrition, Brighton (1999) and Betts (2006, p.22) found four major reasons for its existence:

- a) The overwhelming expectations and scope of the teaching profession as experienced by beginning teachers;
- b) The disparity between beginning teachers’ preparation experiences and the expectations of the job;
- c) Feeling of isolation and lack of support in the beginning teachers’ classrooms; and,
- d) Emerging gap between the novice teachers’ expectations and the realities of the job.

As reported at the beginning of this section, Veenman (1984) noted teacher attrition and suggested that many beginning teachers are likely to leave the teaching profession if they continue encountering more problems.

A study by Hong (2012) revealed that in order for us to understand the issue of teacher attrition there is need to consider major psychological factors such as; values, self-efficacy, beliefs and emotions. According to Hong (2012), these factors enable scholars to understand psychological characteristics of teachers who leave the teaching profession and those who continue to work as teachers. In Hong’s (2012) study, a total of fourteen research participants were involved, seven of whom were teachers who had resigned from the teaching profession while the other seven were

those who continued teaching. The study found that teachers who resigned and those who continued teaching had intrinsic interests in working as teachers. Both groups of teachers identified similar challenges of the teaching profession such as classroom management and effective classroom delivery.

Hong's (2012) study suggested that teachers who resign from the teaching profession demonstrated weak self-efficacy beliefs when compared to those who continued teaching. It was also found that those who continued teaching tended to get more support from the school administration than those who resigned. The importance of supportive school administration to beginning teachers cannot be over emphasised. Hong's (2012) study significantly suggests possible use of psychological characteristics in selecting candidates for teacher training.

2.1.4 Induction and comprehensive induction programmes

This section begins by reviewing literature concerning the concept of induction and, in turn reviews literature on comprehensive induction programmes.

Concept of induction

Writing from the perspective of higher education, Ndebele (2013, p.103) observes that most definitions of induction “*seem to focus on the purpose of induction*”. Huling-Austin (1990, p.536) defines induction programmes as programmes “*intended to provide some systematic and sustained assistance specifically to beginning teachers for at least one year*”. Similarly, McBride (2012, p.13) conceptualises induction as “*comprehensive training and support process that continues for two or three years and fosters a lifelong development of new teachers in order to improve their*

effectiveness”. To Bierbaum (2014, p. 14), induction is a purposeful programme with the intent of providing a systematic and sustained assistance to beginning teachers for at least one year. It seems from these definitions that when induction is considered to be a programme, the programme’s purpose statement is included in its definition.

In her study of the influence of induction programmes on beginning teachers’ well-being and professional development Kessels (2010, p.9) defines induction as a “*process of initiating new teachers into their new roles both as teachers and as members of the school organisation*”. She particularly conceptualises induction as a continuation of the process of becoming a teacher. In this sense induction, can be considered to be “the stage in the career cycle of a teacher that begins when a teacher starts his or her career and continues for up to a maximum of three years, depending upon the ability of the beginning teacher concerned. Professional development of teachers, however, continues until the teacher” retires from the teaching profession (Chatlain & Noonan, 2005, p.500). Induction then can be considered to be either a programme that provides assistance to beginning teachers or a period in the cycle of development of a professional teacher. The subsections that follow review studies pertaining to features of an ideal induction programme.

Features of comprehensive induction programmes

In her study of beginning teacher induction in the state of Colorado in the United States of America (USA), Bierbaum (2016) identified nine features of comprehensive induction programmes, namely; orientation, mentoring, adjustment of working condition, release time, professional development, opportunities for collegial

collaboration, beginning teacher assessment, programme evaluation, and follow-up. Studies pertaining to these features are briefly reviewed below.

Orientation

In the USA context, the purpose of orientation is to introduce new teachers to a concerned school district; its mission, vision and goals as well as the main facets of the school in which the teachers will be teaching (Bierbaum, 2016, p.27). In some countries, orientation activities may include a tour of the school, a statement of the novice's duties, a discussion of the school rules and procedures for handling various aspects of school work. Beginning teachers may also be introduced to their mentors during orientation (Bolam et al, 1995; Brock & Glady, 1997; Heyns, 2000). Orientation usually takes place before the beginning of the school year and varies in length from a half day to one week. According to Arends and Rigazzino- DiGlio, (2000), orientation focuses on familiarising beginning teachers with the districts' and schools' culture. It is the beginning of the process of socialising the beginning teachers into the school culture and community. In their study of beginning teachers perceptions of induction programmes, Algozzine et al. (2007, p.139) found that beginning teachers rated more favourably activities concerning understanding school policies and rules and locating materials, supplies, equipment or books. They however rated unfavourably, system wide orientation.

Mentoring

A mentor is a veteran teacher who has been paired with a beginning teacher to provide systematic and sustained assistance (Bierbaum (2016, p.14). Mentoring is a very old concept in a new guise as it may be traced back to Greek mythology.

Odysseus is reported to have entrusted his son Telemachus to the Goddess Athena, who disguised herself in human form as a mentor and old friend of Odysseus. Her function was to act as a wise counsellor and a helper to the youth (McKimm, Jollie & Hatter, 2007; Homer, 1969). Mentoring became a common practice in the time of the guilds and trade apprenticeship. During that time young people acquired technical skills often to the benefit of the patronage. Today, talented young musicians benefit from established stars who instruct and assist them in their professional development. Most successful people in any walk of life have had one or more people over the years who have exerted particularly strong influences over their lives and careers in a similar manner to mentors in the teaching profession (Channel 4, as cited in McKimm, Jollie & Hatter, 2007).

Moore (2007) states that the mentor should be an expert teacher who is both exemplary and highly skilled in the teaching of his or her subjects. Mentoring is the most commonly found element of induction (Feiman-Nemser, Schiwill, Carver & Yusko, 1999). Elements of mentoring are training, careful selection of mentors, careful matching of beginning teachers with appropriate mentors, and evaluation of the programme. Mentors should be trained and their training should include understanding of adult development and learning, supervision, relationship building, and communication skills (Arends & Rigazio-DiGilio, 2000). Through exemplary teaching and observation, and through commenting on beginning teachers' lessons, mentors create opportunities for professional development of beginning teachers. In her study of beginning teacher induction in Colorado, Bierbum (2016, p.28) argues that mentors should make efforts to help beginning teachers to remain "*focused on*

student' learning". The author further says that mentors should provide guidance and examples of more reflective teaching practices (Bierbum, 2016, p.28).

Adjustment of working conditions

To enable beginning teachers carry out induction activities, it is necessary to reduce not only their workload but also the difficulties inherent in their work. This would minimise the difficulties arising from heavy workloads and learners behaviour (Brooks, 2005). It is necessary to reduce class sizes and numbers of periods of teaching for beginning teachers to enable them to prepare adequately for their lessons. It is also important to keep to the minimum the number of subjects or disciplines a beginning teacher teaches (Bierbum, 2016 & Williams, 1999). The purpose of such adjustment is to create an environment in which the beginning teacher performs his or her duties and continue learning the art of teaching.

Release time

The purpose of release time is threefold: To enable the beginning teachers to take part in induction events that happen during official working hours; to provide mentors with time away from their responsibilities; and to enable beginning teachers and veteran teachers to observe each other's lessons (Bierbum, 2016). The induction events that may be undertaken by beginning teachers during release time may include: observation of mentors and peers, team planning, collaborative problem solving and reflection (Arends & Rigazio-DiGilio, 2000). During release time, mentors can observe beginning teachers, help beginning teachers in planning their lesson, and provide feedback (Horn, Sterling & Subhan, 2002). It is important that the beginning teachers should observe lessons of their mentors and lessons of other exemplary

teachers from the beginning teacher's own field of specialisation as well as from outside that field (Barnett et al., 2002, Britton, Raizen, Paine & Huntley, 2000).

Professional development

Kessels (2010, p.33) identifies three components of professional development of teachers, namely; classroom management, pedagogy, and, psychological and moral development of students. Under classroom management, a teacher is supposed to develop the ability to lead students and create a quiet, clear and organised learning environment. Pedagogy refers to the ability to create a powerful learning environment in which students can develop skills and obtain the required knowledge. Psychological and moral development of students refer to a teacher's ability to create a safe learning environment, sustain the social-emotional moral development of students, and help students become responsible persons. The present study adopted Kessels' (2010) definition of professional development of teachers as outlined above.

Professional development opportunities should be linked to beginning teachers' learning processes (Bierbum, 2016, p.30). The opportunities have to be designed around real life processes and problems. In this regard, Algozzine et al. (2007, p.141), explain that:

in general teachers in our study reported that induction activities focused on specific aspects of teaching were more favourable than diffused global opportunities such as district wide orientations and workshops

The purpose of professional development is to advance the dissemination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are necessary for a career in education, and to build a foundation for understanding the nature and role of the teaching profession

(Darling-Hammond, Berry, Haselkorn & Fideler, 1999). A professional development programme should promote professionalism, collegiality with others and experimentation (Ben, as cited in Bierbum, 2016, p.30). Professional development practically takes the form of short courses on various aspects of teaching and of the nature of the teaching career. In recent years, forms of professional development have included teacher networks, study groups, and teacher inquiry (Darling-Hamond & Ball, 1999).

Opportunities for collegial collaboration

Collegial collaboration can help teachers in fighting the feelings of isolation (Fallon, 2004). According to Wong (2004), collegial conversations must become the norm for beginning teachers. The use of support groups focused on topics of relevance to beginning teachers can help generate an understanding of isolation related difficulties which they experienced in connection with isolation (Britton et al., 2003; Horn et al., 2002).

Assessment of beginning teachers

Observation of a lesson of a beginning teacher by a mentor should be followed by provision of friendly and constructive feedback. The feedback helps the beginning teacher to develop his or her skills and to prepare for a successful summative evaluation (Brooks, 2005; Darling-Hamond et al., 1999; Yopp & Yooung, 1999). Available literature clearly shows that beginning teacher induction loses its effectiveness when a mentor assumes an evaluative role (Brooks, 2005). Mentors should avoid condemning or appearing to be condemning the observed lessons of beginning teachers under their charge.

Programme evaluation

Induction programmes should be evaluated and the evaluation should involve all the participants and stakeholders of the induction programme (Britton et al., 2000; Biebum, 2016). The cost effectiveness of the programme should also be assessed. The evaluation of the programme should investigate the participants' satisfaction, programme usefulness and attainment of its intended goals.

Follow-up

The follow-up feature of induction has to do with meeting needs of beginning teachers beyond the first year. The majority of the beginning teachers may need support in the second or third year of teaching. Their needs in this case will be different from those of first year teachers (Horn et al. 2002). The follow-up feature of induction has to do with meeting needs of beginning teachers beyond first year.

Induction practices in countries other than the US

The comprehensive induction programmes described above were drawn mainly from the United States based sources. This subsection briefly discusses beginning teacher induction programmes in three countries, namely; Japan, England and Wales, and, South Africa. The purpose of these presentations is to learn more about induction of beginning teachers in various environments.

Japan

Continued training of teachers beyond pre-service programmes in Japan is the responsibility of the following three institutions; Monbusho (Ministry of Education in

Japan), Boards of Education, and Local Schools (Williams, 2003). Every beginning teacher is expected to have 90 days of in-service training spread throughout the year.

On average, 60 days involve training in the school and 30 days have to do with training outside the school. Each beginning teacher is assigned a mentor or a supervisor from among veteran teachers in the school. Additionally, some beginning teachers are assigned subject specialist teachers. Every beginning teacher is provided with release time funded by the Japanese Ministry of Education. San (1999), however, observes a gap between theory and practice in Japan.

England and Wales

In England and Wales, induction of beginning teachers is a statutory requirement. Schools are responsible for induction of beginning teachers in England. In each school, the head teacher and the whole school is expected to support beginning teachers throughout the induction period which lasts one academic year (Welsh Government, 2017). In particular, every school is required by law to give each beginning teacher a mentor or an induction tutor.

In England and Wales, beginning teachers are expected to be assigned 90% of an average qualified teacher's workload. This contrasts sharply with a similar law in Scotland that requires that beginning teachers be allocated no more than 70% of an average veteran teacher's workload. Standards for evaluation of beginning teachers were established in England (Abbott, Moran & Clarke, 2009). The law requires that teachers be evaluated using the standards twice a year. The standards stipulate the knowledge and skills that beginning teachers should acquire in the course of the

induction year. For instance, one of the standards states that a teacher must set high expectations which inspire, motivate, and challenge pupils. Another standard requires a teacher to adapt teaching to respond to strengths and needs of all pupils (UK Department of Education, 2011). In the event of failure, newly qualified teachers lose their qualifications with the General Teaching Council of England. Teachers who fail to meet the standards may not be employed in public schools, such teachers, however, can be employed in private and independent schools (Abbott et al., 2009).

South Africa

In South Africa, like in other developing countries, there is no organised induction of beginning teachers. However, plans to introduce induction programmes for beginning teachers graduating from institutions of higher learning were tabled and stirred by South African Council of Education (SACE) in 2015. It was decided that beginning teachers be inducted for a period of one full year after completing their studies before certifying them fully in the teaching profession. Apart from graduating students in South Africa, the target groups for induction were South Africans and foreigners who studied outside South Africa but wanted to join the teaching profession in the country. According SACE, induction would have ensured that beginning teachers are put to the right fit for the profession. The decision was made after consultations with teachers' unions, government departments and various stakeholders in the teaching profession. The plans are yet to materialise.

Some thoughts about induction programmes worldwide

Some of the foregoing features of induction may be hard to appreciate in developing country situations for various reasons. In Malawi, for example, unqualified teachers i.e. those who do not have qualification for teaching in secondary schools are allowed

to teach in secondary schools. Secondly, in line with the proverb a “new broom sweeps clean”, many people in Malawi expect new teachers to teach better than veteran teachers.

International literature suggest that not all beginning teachers need to experience every feature of a comprehensive induction programme. For instance, Dinham (1992, p.237) relates a situation in which two fully qualified beginning teachers indicated to him their unwillingness to see supervisors in their classes. These teachers considered themselves to be autonomous professionals and wanted to be free to teach as they thought. This means that even in the Western countries where teacher induction is greatly emphasised, a comprehensive induction programme does not suit every teacher. It is, hence, important to find out what could be done to facilitate the professional development of teachers in the third world situation. In other words, the literature about comprehensive induction programmes reviewed above serves only to provide possibilities that could be considered for inclusion in an induction programme in developing countries, depending on the beginning teachers’ needs.

The importance of comprehensive induction programmes that involve trained mentors and other veteran teachers is that it reduces the time it takes a beginning teacher to start working as a fully qualified teacher from seven years to three years (Alliance For Excellent Education, 2008, p.6). Literature on developmental stages of beginning teachers is reviewed next.

2.1.5 Stages of development of beginning teachers

It is useful to think of professional development of teachers as occurring in distinct stages which reflect specific needs of the teachers (Katz, 1972). It is therefore important to know the stages of development of teachers if adequate assistance is to be provided to them at each stage as needed.

Cited in Betts (2006), Moir and colleagues, working with 1,500 new teachers identified five different developmental stages, namely; anticipation, survival, disillusionment, rejuvenation, and reflection. Some authors add a sixth stage called maturity stage proposed by Katz (2005). Following Betts (2006), this study considered the anticipation stage as the first stage and maturity stage as the final stage in the development of beginning teachers with full awareness that not all teachers pass through these stages. Studies about these stages are reviewed below.

Anticipation phase

The anticipation phase usually begins during the student practicum period and lasts first few weeks of the first school term. Betts (2006, p.25) reports that at this stage beginning teachers are “*very energetic and often eager to make a difference*”. They want to accomplish the idealistic goals that they set themselves. With these goals, they work very closely with students so that they can accomplish their assignments. In the process, they get excited and anxious about the teaching profession. Moir (2011) explains that at this stage beginning teachers start teaching with a tremendous commitment to make a difference and have somewhat idealistic views on how to accomplish their goals. Veenman (1984) and Katz (2005), however, omit this stage of

development of beginning teachers in their discussions of beginning teacher development.

Survival stage

Veenman (1984, p.160-161) states that beginning teachers at this stage are concerned about their adequacy and survival as classroom masters who must control all the activities in the class. The beginning teacher becomes preoccupied with the daily routines of teaching. According to Veenman (1984, p.160-161), survival stage involves “*concerns about adequacy and survival as a teacher, class control, being liked by pupils and being evaluated*”. In this regard, Moir (2011) observes that the first month of the school term, tends to present beginning teachers with a variety of challenges that they hardly expected or planned for. For example, they need to learn a lot at a very rapid pace during this stage and they have little time to reflect on their experiences due to the magnitude of duties and responsibilities they are required to execute. Betts (2006) adds that despite the various courses the beginning teachers took during their pre-service training they are still caught off guard due to the realities of the teaching situation.

Disillusionment stage

Although Veenman (1984) does not specifically mention disillusionment as a stage in the development of beginning teachers, aspects of disillusionment are included in his “*survival stage*” (Veenman, 1984, p. 160-161). Veenman combines survival stage and disillusionment stage and calls the combination survival stage. According to Moir (2011), the disillusionment stage is a stage which occurs after six to eight weeks of hard, non-stop work. The beginning teachers have to survive these experiences if

they are to continue working as teachers. (Betts, 2006) for example, explains that at disillusionment stage beginning teachers start to question their levels of competence and commitment thereby displaying self-doubt and low self-esteem. Moir (1999) argues that getting through this phase may be one of the most difficult challenges that beginning teachers face.

Rejuvenation stage

The rejuvenation stage is often reached when schools break and beginning teachers gain new coping strategies and skills to manage their challenges and problems (Clement et al., 2000, p.51). The break gives the beginning teachers an opportunity to reflect more and more on their profession thereby returning to school either more rejuvenated or more discouraged with the teaching profession (Betts, 2006, p.27).

Reflection stage

Veenman (1984, p.161) considers the reflection stage as a stage of concerns. According to Veenman, the beginning teachers are concerned about the pupils, learners' learning, learners' social life and learners' emotional needs as they relate with pupils as individuals. Betts (2006) adds that this stage usually occurs during the last six weeks of the school year. It is during this phase that the beginning teacher assesses the various activities related to teaching as successful or not in order to get ready for the next academic year. As the beginning teachers approach the end of the school year, they envisage the next academic year.

Maturity Stage

Katz (2005) identifies a maturity stage in the development of beginning teachers which some teachers may reach within their first three years of teaching. At this stage, beginning teachers come to terms with themselves as teachers and reach their comfortable zone of teaching. This is because they develop confidence and competence in their teaching. Throughout the maturity stage, teachers benefit from in-service courses or seminars. Most of them learn much through interaction with their more experienced colleagues. At this juncture, it is important to note that although this section has discussed six different developmental stages of beginning teachers, Veenman (1984) and other scholars do not mention some of these stages.

It is accepted that regardless of the kind of preparation beginning teachers may receive, some aspects of the teaching profession can only be learnt on the job (Betts, 2006; Melnick & Meister, 2008, p. 53; Barrett et al., 2006, p.78). It is, therefore, important to facilitate novice teachers' acquisition of skills and knowledge that can be learnt only on the job. When teachers are assisted through induction programmes, they reach the maturity stage at the end of three years. However, when beginning teachers are not assisted through induction programmes, they take seven years to reach the maturity stage (Alliance For Excellent Education, 2008, p.6). Teachers cannot reach the maturity stage of their development without learning the skills learnt only on the job.

2.1.6 African studies of beginning teachers

This section reviews studies by Kunkwenzu (2007), Keengwe and Adjei-Boateng (2012), Wachira and Waiganjo (2014), and Middlewood (2003) selected for review

on account of their availability and comprehensiveness. What follows is a review of these studies seriatim.

Kunkwenzu (2007)

Kunkwenzu (2007) studied professional experiences of six beginning Home Economics secondary school teachers in Malawi. She used a grounded theory approach, and for her research methods she used a questionnaire, face to face interview, reflective diary, class observation and focus group discussions. The study particularly sought to explore opportunities, challenges and problems the teachers experienced or encountered in their first year of teaching. In agreement with existing literature, it found that the school context and expectations of beginning teachers play a significant role at the beginning of the teacher's career (Kunkwenzu, 2007, p. 175).

Keengwe and Adjei-Boateng (2012)

In their study of induction and mentoring of beginning secondary school teachers in Ghana, Keengwe and Adjei-Boateng (2012) examined experiences of beginning secondary school teachers. They used a questionnaire and phone interviews to collect data from 30 beginning teachers drawn from 6 secondary schools in three districts. The study was done in one region of the country due to time and capital constraints. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, coding, categorising and constant comparison. The study's results are similar to those that are reported in the education research literature. In particular, the authors state that the challenges that teachers face in Ghana include:

delayed processing and payment of salaries, heavy workload, ..., teaching of large classes, difficulty with assessing work, difficulty with classroom management and discipline, living accommodation

problems, difficulty in dealing with individual differences among students (Keengwe & Adjei-Boateng, 2012, p.255)

Apart from the delayed processing of salaries, all the other challenges listed are those commonly experienced by beginning teachers in other countries in Africa. The authors found that about one third of their sample intended to leave the teaching profession for reasons that include low salaries, lack of support and unattractive conditions of service. They also indicated that state level teacher induction and mentoring programmes would alleviate the problem of teacher attrition. Considering the study interviewed beginning teachers only, its recommendation should be taken with a pinch of salt because it has been shown that perceptions of beginning teachers differ significantly from those of veteran teachers or principals (Middlewood, 2003). The experiences of some developed countries indicated previously in this thesis suggest that state level programmes do not necessarily solve the problem of teacher attrition. Results similar to those of Keengwe and Adjei-Boateng (2012) have been reported by Mokgatle and Acker (2002) in their study of induction needs of Agriculture teachers in Botswana.

Wachira and Waiganjo (2014)

Wachira and Waiganjo (2014) used a descriptive research design to investigate factors affecting implementation of induction programmes in public secondary schools in Kamukunji District in Kenya. Their sample consisted of 25 teachers drawn from different schools in the district. Using semi-structured questionnaires, the study generated discrete numerical data that revealed that the implementation of induction programmes in public schools in Kenya was less successful due to financial resources,

workloads of inductors and inductees, head teachers leadership styles, and induction methods used, among other factors.

Wachira and Waiganjo's (2014) study is difficult to understand because the authors do not describe their sample properly, it changes from time to time. For instance, on p.22, the number of teachers responding to the item on the rate of parents' response on paying fees is 25 while on page 26 the number of teachers who responded to the item on the rates of success of induction programmes in public schools is 36. Furthermore, the number of teachers who responded to the item concerning who conducts induction programmes in schools, is 40. Thus, the sample varies from 25 to 40.

Another weakness of Wachira and Waiganjo's study is that although the study is about factors affecting implementation of induction programmes in public secondary schools in Kenya, only beginning teachers were interviewed. However, to get a more balanced picture of factors affecting induction programmes in public secondary schools in Kenya, one would have to interview the beginning teachers, principals, as well as other relevant officers in the Ministry of Education in that country. Furthermore, in Veenman's view, the authors did not distinguish between 'complaining about' and 'true experience' (Veenman, 1984, p.166). According to Veenman (1984), it is necessary to distinguish perspectives of beginning teachers from true experiences of a particular country. To him, a country's experience is the averaged sum of the reports of the beginning teachers, principals, veteran teachers and relevant Ministry of Education officers.

Despite these weaknesses, the study presents results that are in agreement with results published in other countries on this subject. It makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the state of beginning teachers in Kenya. The studies done in Africa are all small exploratory studies and there are no stable, planned induction structures in most of the countries. Besides, these studies give a picture of what is happening about beginning teachers in a small part of a particular country. The African studies have been reviewed separately because their function is to give snapshots, as it were, of beginning teachers' situations in Africa. The following sub section presents a review of Middlewood' (2003) work on induction of beginning teachers in South Africa.

Lumby, Middlewood and Kaabwe(2003) published a book on Managing Human Resources in South African Schools. Chapter Five of the book is about induction of newly appointed staff in schools and was written by Middlewood. This chapter is reviewed in this sub-section.

Since 1994, the National Department of Education in South Africa has through legislations and policy initiatives produced a vision of education for the “new” South Africa. The education system, however, continues to be influenced by systems and practices inherited in the apartheid era. The book: *Managing Human Resources in South African Schools* edited by Lumby, Middlewood and Kaabwe attempted to suggest ways of speeding up the realisation of the said vision. According to the editors, the vision of the “new” South Africa in Education could be achieved by providing principals and teachers with knowledge of the legislations, policies, management skills and practices that would facilitate the realisation of the country's

“new” vision of education. In particular, the head teachers and veteran teachers need to know what they could do to shorten the time it takes for beginning teachers to become expert teachers and to prevent beginning teacher attrition in South African schools.

In the opening paragraph of the chapter five, Middlewood (1998) emphasises the need for beginner teachers to “*get the best possible start*” (p.81). The author emphasises the importance of induction to new staff and new principals. He defines induction as: “*The process by which a newly appointed person is initiated into the job and organisation*” (p.81).

He however, appears to be confused in his use of the words “induction” and “mentoring”. In the first paragraph of the chapter, for instance, he writes:

This chapter focuses on the induction of beginner teachers but recognises that effective induction is relevant to all new staff including principals. The same point applies to management processes such as mentoring which may be found to be relevant to the support of all school staff (p.81).

In the excerpt, mentoring is presented as another process outside induction. In his conclusion, however, he shows that to him mentoring is a different process from induction. For instance, on page 93 the author writes:

The school manager needs to recognise that no single process such as induction or mentoring – or even both- offers all the answers.

Mentoring is presented as a different process from induction in the excerpt above. Further down in the conclusion of his chapter, he writes:

In this way, the manager recognises that processes such as induction or mentoring are not important in themselves but they help to foster development of teachers (p.93).

All these excerpts show that he uses the terms “induction” and “mentoring” loosely. This confusion is exacerbated on page 88 of the book. On this page the author quotes Andrews (1988, p.79-85) claiming that Andrews “*identified five different paradigms of teacher induction*” (p.88), when the reality is that Andrews wrote about mentoring and paradigms of mentoring. I checked his references and found the following entry:

Andrews, I. (1986). The Mentor and Beginning Teachers Differing Relationship within Five Paradigms in Gray W. and M. Gray eds *Mentoring: Aid to Excellence in Education, the Family and the Community*. Vancouver: International Association for Mentoring.

As indicated above, Andrews wrote about mentoring and paradigms of mentoring but the author has presented them to us as paradigms of teacher induction. In terms of usage of these terms in current education literature, what the author has done is to say the least, surprising. It may cause confusion among students reading the book.

Despite the weaknesses presented above, the author has mentioned some aspects of induction and mentoring that readers of the chapter need to take seriously. For instance, the author advises that when a new teacher arrives at a school, the principal should assign responsibilities of inducting the new teacher to various officers in the school. He also suggests that the principal of the school could talk to the new teacher about the vision, values and partnerships of the school. Similarly, the deputy head teacher could talk about systems of school organisation while the school caretaker could take the new teacher around the buildings of the school. The secretary could

brief the new teacher on the records kept by teachers in the school. In this way, he suggests, much information could be given to the new teachers in digestible chunks.

Middlewood (1998) also mentions the need for school principals to be alert to the gap that exists between perceptions of beginning teachers themselves and perceptions of principals and their deputies regarding the induction process. He furthermore points out the need for constant and careful monitoring of the induction process by principals or deputy principals to ensure that beginning teachers get the best possible start. He admonishes principals and deputy principals not to lose sight of the fact that the central purpose of induction is to improve learners' learning in the school. He recommends a structured approach to induction of beginning teachers. This means that induction of beginning teachers should not be left to chance but should actually be planned and facilitated by the principal of the school concerned.

In the management of induction of beginning teachers, he recommends the use of both soft and harder approaches. He gives a case example to illustrate these approaches. In the case example, a newly appointed teacher who lived far from school started reporting to school late a few months after appointment. The head teacher decided to tackle the problem through driving to the teacher's home every morning to take the teacher to school, even though the teacher's home was 40 miles out of principal's way. This was done for a week. At the end of the week, the teacher asked the principal to stop taking him to school and started arriving at school in time. In the process the principal came to know the new teacher better. The principal did not use the rules and authority to sort out the problem. He used a soft approach which

worked very well. The author urges principals and veteran teachers to give allowance for mistakes made by beginner teachers in their behaviour and thinking.

Apart from the weaknesses cited above, the chapter can be used as an occasional resource for teaching pre-service teachers various aspects of mentoring. Like the whole book, the chapter fails to live to our expectations. It leaves a lot of issues about induction untouched. For instance, there is no indication about appropriate workload for beginning teachers in South Africa. In addition, there is no discussion about release time and rewarding system for mentors. There is no mention in the chapter about the need for beginning teachers to observe exemplary teachers in their field of specialisation as well as exemplary teachers outside their field of specialisation. The author does not tell us the problems of dealing with the management of induction and how the legislations passed and policies introduced help to solve or alleviate them.

2.1.7 Pertinent findings drawn from the reviewed literature

Four sets of findings have been presented. The first set of findings has to do with RE as a subject taught in secondary schools. The second set concerns landmark studies and issues arising from the landmark studies. The third set has to do with induction and stages of development of beginning teachers. The last set concerns studies of beginning teachers done in Africa.

RE as a subject taught in secondary schools

On examining various national documents from Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi concerning RE, it may be concluded that the role of RE in these countries at national level is to promote moral values (Maveneka, 1999, p.24; Malawi National Secondary

School Curriculum Review Symposium, 1995, p. 16; Chizelu, 2006, p.56; Hawes, 1979, p.25). As Dearden (1968, p. 166) suggests, the task of a teacher of moral values is not completed when learners see how they ought to behave. The task of the teacher on moral values is completed when the learners make the good behaviour their second nature and begin to act upon what they know. In teaching RE in a form of Bible Knowledge, moral values are elucidated and advocated. If religion is only to be elucidated rather than advocated as Phillips (1970, p.13) and Hirst (1970, p.33) maintain, then the purposes of the three countries, in this connection, cannot be met by a multifaith RE. Multifaith RE requires that religion should only be elucidated. Dinama (2010, p.1) for instance, argues that in Botswana multifaith is:

A curriculum whose content is a variety of religions and whereby students are helped to know, understand and reflect on basic tenets that form the concept of religion.

In contrast to Dinama's (2010) position presented in the excerpt above, Ndlovu (2013, p. 174) found that in Zimbabwe:

Religion Education stakeholders prefer an authentic values-oriented multifaith model that would contribute to values such as citizenship, human rights, ubuntu / unhu / nationhood etc.

From the excerpts above, it may be concluded that as long as the purpose for RE in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe remains to be promotion of moral values, multifaith RE that aims at solely elucidating Religion will continue to remain irrelevant to the needs of the three countries.

The condemnation of RE as a confessional course that is unsuitable for learners in societies that are becoming secular and pluralistic (Manaveka, 1999; Gwaravanda,

Masitera & Muzambi, 2013) is unjustified. What is done in teaching RE in public schools is not persuading learners to join a particular sect of any religion but to persuade them to accept and adopt morally acceptable behaviours as they live in their societies. What is advocated in the teaching of RE is not a particular religion, but forms of good behaviour that are accepted by the society in which the learners live. Multifaith RE might be appropriate in some developed countries. In the developing countries, however, RE as a carrier of moral values has to advocate good behaviour.

Failure of the Government of Zimbabwe to ensure that the Curriculum Development Unit in that country implements its directive on multifaith RE policy that Manaveka (1999, p.26) reports, may be a reflection of the Government's realisation that multifaith RE is unlikely to achieve the Government's objectives. Similar failure has taken place in Malawi and Zambia (Malawi Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Symposium, 1995, p.15; Chizelu, 2006, p.56). The fundamental question that these observations raise is: Can multifaith RE promote the moral values that citizens in these countries would want to promote? It seems that the governments of these countries are not convinced about the effectiveness of multifaith RE in promoting moral development of learners, as it is currently conceived. The reasons for suspecting that multifaith RE would not meet the purpose of RE as seen by governments of the three countries are not farfetched. Multifaith RE, as it is portrayed in the reviewed literature, would give rise to conflicting moral values and would not allow the teacher of moral values to advocate any values, since acceptable behaviour is only to be elucidated and not advocated in multifaith RE.

If what has been written above about multifaith RE gives the impression that multifaith RE is of no value in schools in the country, then it has given a wrong impression. As Simone Weil cited in Phillips (1970, p.14) maintains:

We do injury to a child if we bring it up in a narrow Christianity which prevents it from ever becoming capable of perceiving that there are treasures of the pure gold to be found in non-Christian civilisations. Lay education does an even greater injury to children. It covers up these treasures and those of Christianity as well.

As indicated in the excerpt above, multifaith RE is superior to mono-faith RE. What this implies is that for our countries we need a multifaith RE that would function as a carrier of moral values to learners.

Landmark studies and issues arising from landmark studies

The review of landmark studies confirms the existence of problems that beginning teachers' experience. These problems were extensively studied and published in 1984 by Veenman. Topics of studies in the scholarly literature about beginning teachers have varied from time to time as Cherubini's (2009) chronological study has demonstrated. The problems experienced by beginning teachers, however, have remained essentially the same.

The landmark studies draw scholars' attention to the school as a work place and to the teaching profession itself as sources of problems for beginning teachers. The absence of codified body of knowledge for teaching any subject, makes initial years of teaching a hit or miss affair. Beginning teachers need emotional and professional assistance in their beginning years of teaching.

Induction and stages of development of beginning teachers

A number of developed countries have attempted to address the problems that beginning teachers encounter through induction programmes. Kessels (2010) maintains that not all induction programmes are successful. According to Kessels, induction programmes that are conducted on a zonal basis and have a strong mentoring element are likely to succeed. Some authors including Karts (2005) have suggested that the thinking in terms of stages of development of beginning teachers is useful because it enables us to know and address problems that beginning teachers encounter at each stage of their development. These authors have identified six stages of development that have been named and discussed in this chapter.

Studies of beginning teachers done in Africa

The studies done in Africa are all small studies and their function is to present snapshots of the situation of beginning teachers in various countries in Africa. Two conclusions can be drawn from these studies. The first is that there are both similarities and differences in the experiences of beginning teachers in the developed countries and in the developing countries. The differences in the problems experienced by the beginning teachers in Africa are due to stages of development of education systems in Africa. For instance, beginning teachers in Zambia often find in their schools, veteran teachers and head teachers who are pleased when the beginning teacher fails to teach effectively (Banja et al. 2016, p.77). The second conclusion is that management of schools in most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa leaves much to be desired (Keengwe & Adjei-Boteng, 2012; Wachira & Waiganjo 2014).

2.2 Theoretical and conceptual frameworks

The first part of this chapter, reviewed pertinent literature pertaining to: Religious Education as a teaching subject in schools; beginning teachers in Africa and other continents; and, aspects of teacher induction. The present chapter presents the theories that I assumed when thinking, planning, and executing this study.

Following its publication in 1962, Kuhn's landmark book: *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, has become generally accepted that studies are conducted within a set of assumptions called a paradigm. Hatch (2002, p.11) defines a paradigm as a set of assumptions that distinguish fundamentally different belief systems concerning how the world is ordered, what we may know about it, and how we may know it. It is important for scholars to declare these assumptions to enable readers of their work to understand them easily.

This section opens with a discussion about the study's theoretical framework in section 2.2.1. The section on theoretical framework is followed by a presentation and discussion of the conceptual framework in section 2.2.2. Section 2.2.3 presents and discusses value of the knowledge produced in this study. The summary of the chapter is presented in Section 2.2.4.

2.2.1 Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework is *a structure that guides research by relying on formal theory ... constructed by using an established, coherent explanation of some phenomena and relationship* (Eisenhart, 1991, p.205). Similarly, Grant & Osanloo (2014, p.16) explain that:

A theoretical framework is derived from an existing theory or theories in the literature that has already been tested and validated by others and is considered to be generally acceptable theory in the scholarly literature.

In the light of these two quotations, a theoretical framework can be defined as an established theory or theories that a researcher assumes as he or she conceives, plans and executes a research project.

2.2.2 Constructivism and post-industrial perspective

As stated previously, constructivism and post-industrial perspective are the theories that form the theoretical framework of the study. I discuss these theories together with my reasons for choosing them in the following sub-sections.

Constructivism

Constructivism is a theory of both learning and knowledge. As a theory of learning, constructivism advances the view that knowledge is not acquired mechanically, it is constructed by the learner in his or her mind (Bodner, 2004). More importantly, as stated by Duit and Tregust (1998, p.8), constructivism implies that “*conceptions held by the individual guide understanding*”. In other words, as Lauzon, (1999, p.262) puts it, constructivism is a philosophical position that holds that although reality may be experienced directly, “*meaning is constructed*”. It is against this background that Glasersfeld (1991, p.19) argues that, “*the self we come to know and the world we come to know are both assembled out of elements of our very own experience*”. In other words, individuals’ perceptions of experiences depend on their previous experience.

As a theory of knowledge, constructivism takes knowledge to be an individual construction. It assumes a world in which universal and absolute realities are unknowable (Hatch, 2002; Glasserfield, 1991). Reality in the constructivist perspective is a product of human intelligence in the real world (Andrew, Pedersen & Mc Evoy, 2011). Thus, objects of research are, in the constructivist view, individual perspectives or constructions. In turn, differences in individual perspectives and constructions lead to multiple realities. It is hence expected that in construing and assigning meaning to their lived experiences, the beginning RE teachers will use their prior experiences. Consequently, the meanings assigned to their lived experiences will differ according to differences in their prior experiences. This underscores the existence of multiple realities which is in accord with the constructivist perspective as presented by Hatch (2002, p.13) and Creswell (2009, p.8).

Constructivism was chosen as a framework for this study because it enabled the researcher to understand some of the results reported in the literature. It seems that there are exceptions to generally expected behaviours among beginning teachers. For instance, although many beginning teachers in the international literature like to be observed by supervisors or veteran teachers, Harvey and Dowson (2003, p.237) reported a case of two beginning teachers who complained about “*being watched and judged*”. Dinham’s (1992, p.4) study about teacher induction also reported a case of beginning teachers who complained about being “*watched*”, “*judged*”, but not “*helped*” by their supervisors. These are clearly cases of multiple realities expected in the constructivist view of reality.

Since the knowledge we have about ourselves and about the world is assembled from our own experiences (Glaserfeld, 1991, p.19); the participating teachers in the present study were likely to respond differently to similar situations due to differences in previous experience. Another reason for choosing the constructivist theory was that it enabled the study to make sense of the observations found in the literature that demonstrate the individuality of teachers. For instance, although some teachers resign from the teaching profession due to low pay, others work to retirement in spite of the low pay.

Post-industrial perspective

Cherubini, (2009) suggests that the problems that beginning teachers experience during their socialisation into the school culture may be explained by “*post-industrial understanding*” (p.94). During the industrial era, managers of companies issued instructions to workers, and in turn the workers submitted reports to the managers. Relationships between managers and workers often went sour. In the post-industrial period, managers are expected to work through persuasion, consultation, consensus and consent. In the schools, however, beginning teachers often find head teachers who make decisions that affect the teachers without consulting them or seeking the consensus from their staff. Such head teachers can be said to work in the industrial perspective. The problem comes when head teachers working in the industrial perspective meet beginning teachers who expect the head teachers to be professional officers, and to in turn treat them as professional officers. The beginning teachers expect head teachers to consult them when making decisions about matters that affect them. The industrial type school management frustrates the newly qualified secondary school beginning teachers. The theoretical frame work is summarised in Figure 1.

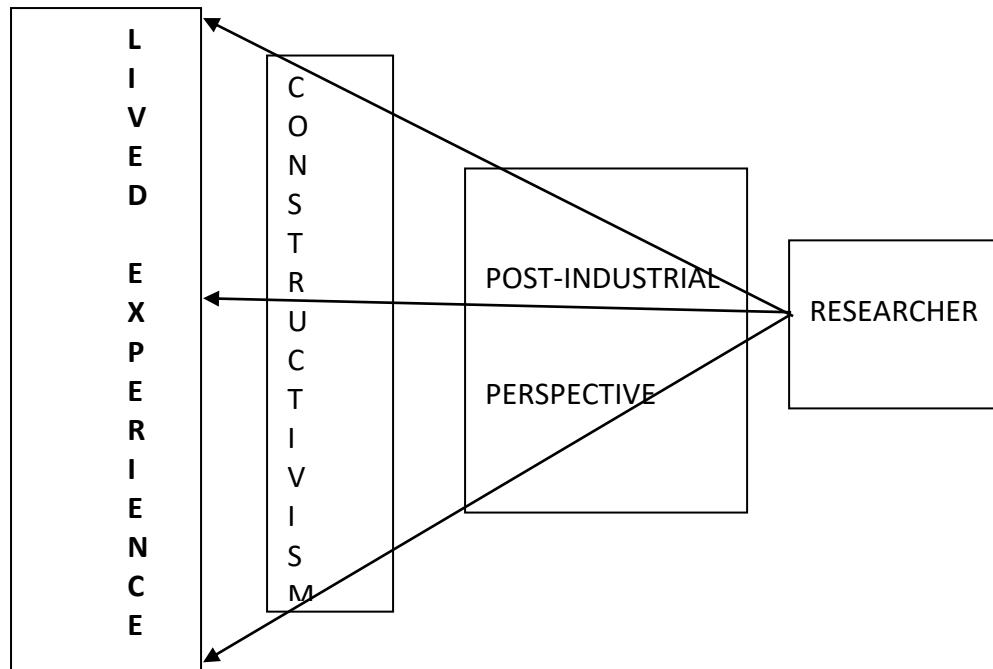


Figure 1: Diagrammatic summary of the Theoretical framework

Source: Researcher

In figure 1, the researcher examines the lived experiences of the beginning RE teachers through the lenses of constructivism and post-industrial perspective. The two theories serve as perspectives. Phenomenological studies are supposed to be based on direct examination of the things under study in order to avoid proceeding from any theory because all previous knowledge and experiences have to be bracketed. In this light, Hatch (2002, p.29) states that phenomena should be studied without preconceived notions. Similarly, as argued by Creswell (2009, p, 52) phenomenological researchers should set aside all prejudgments and should not allow their experiences to influence their observations.

2.2.3 Reason for using two theories in the theoretical framework

When scholars use two theories in the theoretical framework of their study, they are required to justify their choice of theories (Kishindo, personal communication, April, 2018). The study chose to use two theories for this study because one theory could not explain all the observations made. The post-industrial perspective can explain common reaction of beginning teachers to management in their schools. Many beginning teachers do not like the manner in which schools are run. For instance, Banja et al. (2016) in their study of newly qualified secondary school teachers in Zambia describe situations in which head teachers and veteran teachers appeared pleased when a beginning teacher failed to teach effectively. Such head teachers and veteran teachers are an important cause of frustration of beginning teachers. The post-industrial perspective enabled this study to appreciate the effect of head teachers and veteran teachers who employ the industrial mode of management in schools to the frustration of beginning teachers. Another reason for including post-industrial perspective in the theoretical framework of the study had to do with professional aspects of the teaching profession as discussed below.

Teachers who graduate from the University are taken to be professional officers when they join the teaching profession. Becoming a professional assumes that certain behaviours, beliefs and actions will ensue as beginning teachers develop further their status as professional officers. Carr and Kemmis (1983, p.189-190) describe some of these behaviours, actions and beliefs as follows:

.....that the methods and procedures employed by members of the profession are based on theoretical method and research; that the members of the profession have an over-riding commitment in the well-being of their clients; and that individually and collectively, the members of the profession reserve the right to make autonomous and independent judgments, free from external non-professional controls and constraints, about the nature of particular practices or causes of action to be adopted in any particular situation.

The teaching profession in Malawi is far from realising the characteristics outlined in the excerpt above. Procedures employed by teachers, head teachers and education officers are frequently hardly based on theoretical knowledge and research. Teachers in schools have minimal opportunities to make autonomous independent judgments that are free from external controls. This is why it has become necessary for this study to adopt the post-industrial perspective. During pre-service training, teachers are given the impression that they will develop into fully-fledged professional officers. When they go to schools, however, they are most often treated as workers in an industrial establishment.

2.2.4 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework is defined by Grant and Osanloo (2014, p. 16-17) as “*the researcher’s understanding of how the research problem will best be explored, the specific direction the research will have to take, and the relationship between the different variables in the study*”. Similarly, Miles and Huberman, (1994, p. 18) state that a conceptual framework explains, either graphically or in narrative forms, the main things to be studied such as; key factors, constructs of variables, and the presumed relationships among them. A conceptual framework is therefore a structure

of connected ideas or connected concepts that helps to show how ideas in the study relate to one another within the theoretical framework (Grant & Osanloo, 2014, p.17). The conceptual framework of this study is the professional well-being of beginning teachers.

Beginning teachers' professional well-being

The central concept to be investigated in this study is beginning teachers' professional well-being. Kessels (2010, p.65) considers a beginning teachers' professional well-being to be positive when the beginning teacher; experiences no isolation in the school, experiences appreciation by colleagues, and is confident in his or her own teaching. This study sought to find out the status of beginning teachers' professional well-being. These aspects of professional well-being are discussed below.

The absence of isolation of beginning teachers in a school is usually a result of deliberate policy by school management aimed at ensuring that beginning teachers are not isolated by management, veteran teachers or support staff. This study sought to determine through beginning RE teachers' own lived experiences the extent to which management and veteran teachers of the participating schools work to promote the professional well-being of beginning RE teachers in their schools. Appreciation by colleagues is usually facilitated when veteran teachers make deliberate efforts to demonstrate to beginning teachers that their presence in the school is valued and their contributions to the school are recognised and appreciated. The study determined the extent to which beginning RE teachers' contributions in the schools are appreciated by their colleagues and school administration. The third aspect of the conceptual framework is beginning teachers' teaching with confidence. This aspect of

professional well-being of beginning teachers is related to the quality of pre-service training undertaken by the beginning teachers. The study sought to determine the extent to which the beginning RE teachers felt confident when teaching RE. In those situations where the beginning teachers felt that they were not confident in their teaching of RE, the study sought to determine their perceived reasons for not being confident. A search for meanings of three components of Kessels' (2010) professional well-being, in the international literature, resulted in the expounded diagram in figure 2.

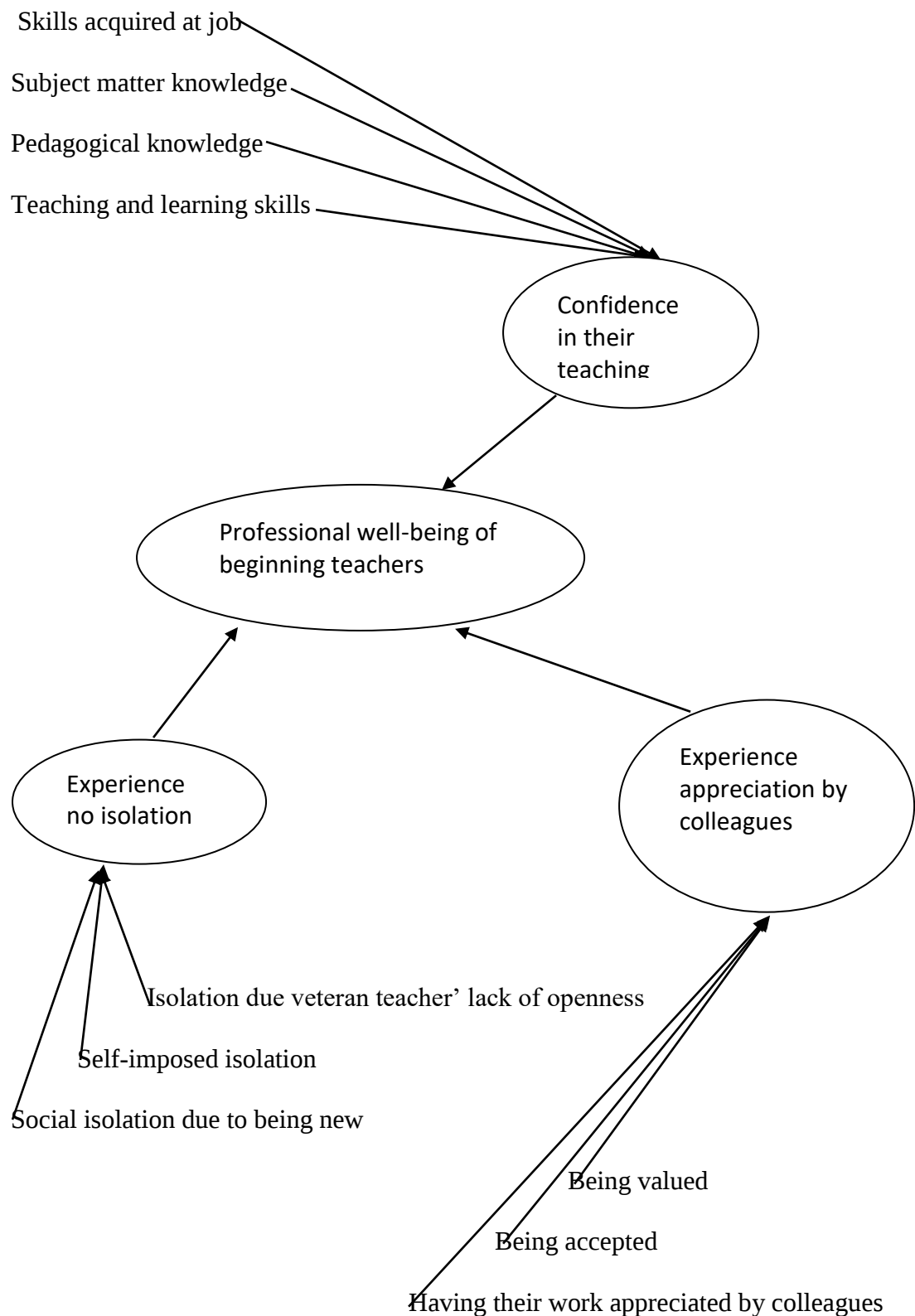


Figure 2: Kessels' concept of professional well-being

Source: Adapted from Kessel (2010)

Figure 2, shows the components of Kessels' (2010) concept of professional well-being of beginning teachers. The three major components are: Confidence in one's teaching; absence of isolation in the school; and, collegial appreciation. A confident beginning teacher is expected to have subject matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge. Forms of isolation that beginning teachers experienced in their schools include: Self-imposed isolation; social isolation due to being new in the school; and, isolation due to veteran teachers' lack of openness.

The phenomenological approach adopted in this study required that all the statements about the well-being of the beginning RE teachers should be produced by the beginning RE teachers themselves. I expected the beginning RE teachers to construct knowledge about their experiences with respect to their professional well-being. This is in agreement with the constructivist perspective which stipulates that knowledge is constructed in the minds of the individuals experiencing the phenomenon concerned. The phenomenon in this instance is being a beginning RE teacher in a secondary school in Malawi. A diagrammatic summary of the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study is presented in figure 3.

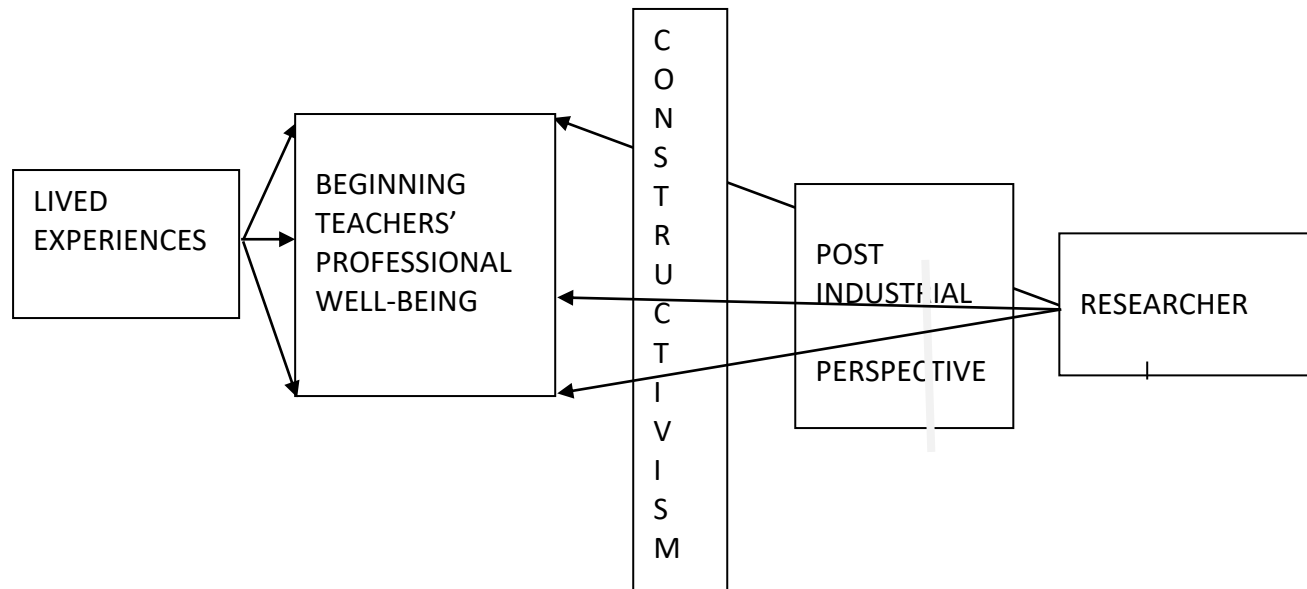


Figure 3: Summary of the theoretical and conceptual framework .

Source: Researcher

In the figure, the researcher uses the concept of professional well-being of beginning teachers to study the lived experiences of beginning teachers. Constructivism and post-industrial perspective are the theoretical assumptions that I made when carrying this study.

2.2.5 Value of knowledge produced in this study

The knowledge generated in this study, is as previously stated, not a reflection of some ontological reality that exists out there, independent of the researcher. It is rather knowledge that can be used to improve the professional well-being of future beginning teachers. To ensure that the knowledge produced in the study would form a basis for making recommendations to school management and Ministry of Education officers, beginning teachers perceptions of their lived experiences, were where necessary, crosschecked with head teachers or their deputies. The value of the knowledge generated in this study lies in its possible utility in improving the professional well-being of beginning RE teachers who may not have a way of making their situations understood by relevant authorities. The ultimate value of knowledge produced in this study, however, lies in its potential to improve students' performance. The knowledge generated may also help to extend our understanding of variables that affect beginning RE teachers' professional well-being, other than those suggested by Kessels (2010).

2.3 Chapter Summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter portrays similarities and differences in experiences of beginning teachers in various countries. Landmark studies of beginning teachers, issues arising from landmark studies, induction and comprehensive induction programmes, and phases of development of beginning teachers are reviewed in sections 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6 respectively. Studies of beginning teachers in Africa done in Malawi, Kenya, Ghana and South Africa are reviewed in section 2.7. Pertinent findings drawn from reviewed literature are presented in section 2.8 and the chapter ends with a summary in section 2.9. In

general, the studies reviewed emphasise the need for schools to organise induction programmes for beginning teachers that are supported by mentors and other veteran teachers to speed up the professional development of beginning teachers. The last part of this chapter has presented the theories that guided the development and execution of the study. These theories are constructivism and the post-industrial perspectives as suggested by Cherubini (2009). The study adopted Kessels (2010) concepts of professional well-being of beginning teachers as its conceptual framework.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

According to Durrheim (2006, p.34) research designs are plans that “*guide the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure*”. Similarly, (Creswell, 2009, p.5) considers a research design to be a “*plan or proposal to conduct research*”. Each research project has an objective to achieve. The way to the objective is the method of the research. In this study, the goal was to describe and interpret lived experiences of beginning RE teachers in selected secondary schools in Malawi. Three methods were used to generate data that would facilitate attainment of the goal. These were protocol writing (asking individuals to write down their experiences), focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews. This chapter discusses these aspects of the research design and methodology of the study together with the methods and procedures used.

The chapter falls into fourteen sections. It opens with an introductory statement that is followed by a section that presents a restatement of the research questions. In the third section, a recapitulation of the theoretical framework of the study is presented. The fourth section discusses the research design of the study. The methodology of the study is presented and discussed in section five. Section six presents methods that were used to generate data. The research context of the study, selection of research

participants, data analysis procedures and pilot study are discussed in sections, seven, eight, nine and ten, respectively. Trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and scope and limitations of the study are presented in sections eleven, twelve and thirteen. The last section presents a summary of the chapter.

3.2 Restatement of the research questions

The research question that gave direction to this study is: *What are the lived experiences of beginning RE teachers in secondary schools in Malawi?*” To guide the study this research question was broken into four sub-questions as follows:

1. What are beginning RE teachers’ professional well-being-related lived experiences in the participating schools?
2. What professional development opportunities were the beginning RE teachers offered in the schools?
3. What professional development challenges did the beginning RE teachers encounter in the schools?
4. Why do beginning RE teachers experience the professional development challenges found in answer to question three above?

3.3 Recapitulation of the theoretical framework

This is a hermeneutic phenomenological study of the lived experiences of beginning RE teachers undertaken under the influence of assumptions of social constructivism and post-industrial perspective. It is hence a qualitative study. Constructivism assumes a relativist and realist ontology (Hatch 2002). According to the constructivist perspective there are multiple realities that are ready to be explored. Realities are socially and historically constructed over time. Meaning is socially constructed by

individuals in interaction with the world. Reality hence, is not fixed but consists of multiple constructions and interpretations that change over time. Knowledge in this perspective is composed of individual constructions of reality. It is symbolically constructed and is not objective. In the constructivist perspective, the researcher and the participants join together in co-constructing knowledge (Hatch, 2002, p. 15).

If we assume that knowledge evolves continuously, then the truth at any time is what people at that time, accept as the truth. The accepted truth becomes a stepping stone to future knowledge (Tuckman 1978, p.38). The value of knowledge generated in studies of this kind lies in its role of improving the lives of individuals in their societies. These studies help to take sufferings of marginal workers in public or private institutions to the attention of the general public and superiors of the workers who may take necessary corrective action to alleviate the problems (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The other theoretical assumption used in the study is Cherubini (2009) post-industrial perspective.

The post-industrial perspective propounds the view that individuals have an emancipated identity defined not by external agencies of social and institutional membership but by self (Cherubini, 2009, p.94). Such individuals are willing to challenge the readily accepted assumptions of organisational realities and aim more towards furthering personal identities and goals. The perspective draws scholars' attention to the individualistic character of beginning teachers. The beginning teachers in the schools today go to institutions where the individual relies on organisations' values and hierarchy for meaning and direction. This implies that while the teachers on training are encouraged to assume that they will be going to work in a post-

industrial environment when they graduate, however, they find themselves working in the schools that have an industrial like working environment. These are schools in which the head teachers make decisions like managers did in industries during the industrial revolution. Managers during the industrial revolution made decisions without consulting the workers. This failure to consult employees when making decisions that affect them is according to Cherubini (2009) the main reason why the beginning teachers feel like being pushed overboard. As indicated in chapter three, it is necessary to incorporate the post-industrial perspective in the theoretical framework of this study to make sense of some of the findings reported in the international literature and in the present study. In doing this, the study followed a path well-trodden by Cherubini (2009).

3.4 Research design

This qualitative study of lived experiences of beginning RE teachers used three data generation tools, namely; in-depth interviews, protocol writing (diaries) and focus group discussion. As stated previously, the study was conducted in three stages. In the first stage, eight beginning RE teachers used a reflective diary to record their experiences as beginning RE teachers for one academic year. In the second stage, the beginning RE teachers were interviewed about their experiences as novice RE teachers. In addition, two focus group discussions were conducted. One at the beginning of the data generation period and the other at its end. The interviews and focus group discussions were voice recorded and subsequently transcribed. The transcribed interviews and focus group discussions were then coded and grouped into themes as suggested by Creswell (1998, p.139-165) and Colaizzi (1978). The reflective diary entries were coded separately in a similar manner. The codes of the

reflective diaries were also grouped into themes in the same manner as those of the interviews and focus group discussions.

My reasons for choosing a qualitative research design and the hermeneutic phenomenological method of data analysis suggested by Colaizzi, (1978) are presented below.

3.5 Research methodology

Methodology is defined as theory of methods or the study of methods (van Renseburg, Kilian & Landman, 1979, p. 299). Da Silva (1982, p.15) considers methodology to be the logic of justification of decisions made in a study. Sapsford, (2006, p.175) defines methodology as a philosophical stance of world view that underlies and informs the style of research that one adopts. Sapsford further states that there is a theoretical perspective which is a philosophical stance that informs the methodology, grounding its logic and criteria for selection. Crotty (1998) maintains that methodology is the strategy, the plan, and action, the process or design lying behind the choice and use of a particular method.

This section is organised into three sub-sections. In the first sub-section, I present my reasons for choosing a qualitative research strategy for this study. The research approach in this study is phenomenological and hermeneutic. This approach *“highlights the human experience through the analysis of meanings”* (Ruohotie-Lyhty & Kaikonen, 2009, p.299). In sub-section two I discuss my reasons for choosing a hermeneutical phenomenological research approach. The rationale for choosing protocol writing, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions as data generating methods is discussed in sub-section three.

3.5.1 Rational for using qualitative study strategy

According to Creswell, (1998, p.17-18), it is appropriate to conduct a qualitative study when some of the following conditions apply:

- The research question starts with a how or a what
- The topic to be investigated needs to be explored
- There is need to present a detailed view of the topic
- Individuals are studied in their natural setting
- There is interest to write in a literally style
- There is sufficient time and resources to spend on extensive data collection and detailed data analysis of “text information”
- The audience are receptive to qualitative research
- One wants to emphasise the role of an active learner who can tell the story from the participants’ view

The study set out to explore lived experiences of beginning RE teachers in their natural settings. Three of the research questions begin with the word what. The lived experiences of the beginning RE teachers needed to be explored since no similar studies have been done before. I also had sufficient time and resources to work for a long time in the field in collecting and analysing data. In these circumstances, a qualitative approach was considered to be the most fitting strategy for the present study. As Guba and Lincoln (1994, p.90) suggest, the choice of a research strategy to be used in a research programme should be determined by assessment of fitness to the area under study. I decided that a qualitative research strategy was most appropriate means for exploring the lived experiences of beginning RE teachers.

3.5.2 Reasons for choosing phenomenological method

Before discussing reasons for choosing the hermeneutic phenomenological research method, I present a discussion of phenomenology and hermeneutics.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a type of qualitative study that originates in the philosophical perspectives of Edmund Husserl, (1859- 1938). Edmund Husserl, in a quest for reality, called for “*a return to the things themselves*”. To understand Husserl’s call, it is important to realise that during classical times there were two schools of philosophy about appearances in reality: Realists’ and idealists’ schools. The realists’ school took appearances of reality to be objects outside the mind. Reality according to this school makes impressions on the mind and knowledge gets formed in that way. The idealists’ school, in contrast, assumes that appearances are ideas in peoples’ minds roused by reality but essentially in-natal (Viljoen & Pienaar. 1971, p.29). To the idealists, phenomena are the content of the mind. Edmund Husserl’s view is that reality is neither inside nor outside the mind but is lived space which is essentially human. These ideas of Husserl have been adopted in the study of Psychology.

Phenomenology as understood in Psychology is based on the assumption that: “*All behaviour without exceptions, is completely determined by and pertinent to the phenomenal field of the behaving organism*” (Kelly, 1991, p.28). This implies that the outlook of any individual is itself a real phenomenon even if it misrepresents the rest of reality to himself or herself. Cohen et al. (2000, p.23) concur with Kelly when they write:

In its broadest meaning, phenomenology is a theoretical point of view that advocates the study of direct experience taken at face value and

one which sees behaviour as determined by the phenomena of the experience rather than by external objective and physically described reality.

In the excerpt above, the writers are advancing the view that phenomenology advocates the study of direct experience taken at face value because one of the steps in the phenomenological study is bracketing. Bracketing means putting aside all theories and beliefs and studying the phenomena as it appears to the researcher.

Writing from the perspective of interviews, Kvale (1996, p.52) agrees with Cohen et al., (2000) in the excerpt above, and argues that the world should be described as experienced by the subjects and with the assumption that “*the important reality is what people perceive it to be*”. The present study sees the lived experiences of beginning RE teachers as the important reality that needs to be investigated in order to understand their behaviour. The study seeks to describe and interpret the lived experiences of beginning RE teachers in order to generate knowledge that would be used in understanding and caring of future RE teachers.

The phenomenological method outlined by Giorgi (1994) includes description, investigation of essence and phenomenological reduction. Phenomenology, according to Kvale (1996, p.53), is an attempt to describe experience without considering the origin and cause of the experience. Merleau-ponty as cited in Kvale (1996, p.53), emphasises the importance of describing experience precisely and completely without attempting to explain or analyse the experience. Description of experience leads to revealing the essential structure of that experience or phenomenon.

Phenomenological description is, according to Landman as cited in Viljoene & Pienaar (1971, p.35), an “*essence revealing reflection*”.

Before describing the phenomenon or experience, it is important that the investigator should set aside all previous ideas about the phenomenon. All faiths, superstition, dogma, opinions, theories and philosophies of life and the world should be set aside during the investigation. This process of setting aside previous beliefs and knowledge is called epoche or bracketing. The setting aside of beliefs and previous knowledge is meant to enable the investigator to study the experience of the phenomenon without any prejudice (Viljoen & Pienaar, 1971, p.38).

The best known descriptive approach in phenomenological research is that of Giorgi (1985). Giorgi pioneered a phenomenological method that can be seen as a form of distillation. In his method, the investigator step by step takes away everything that is not essential to the adequate description of the phenomenon (Morrow, et al., 2015). The method that is used in this study is one proposed by Colaizzi (1978).

As a method of investigation phenomenology is the description of the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or phenomenon (Creswell, 1998, p.51). The phenomenological method includes description, investigation of essences, and phenomenological reduction. As Kvale (1996, p.53) maintains, phenomenology is “*the attempt at a direct description of experience without any consideration about the origin or cause of an experience.*” Morrow, Rodriguez and King (2015) state, in this connection, that descriptive phenomenology is concerned with revealing the “essence” or essential structure of any phenomena under

investigation. The essence are those structures that make the phenomenon what it is. Hermeneutics is discussed next.

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is the science which “*investigates, according to which principles and with what aids the meaning of documents must be determined*” (Van Rensburg et al., 1979, p.280). Other authors, for example, Zalta (2016) defined it as the methodology of interpretation. It often involves reading a text in order to understand the intention and meaning that the writer of the text intended to communicate. Hermeneutics also seeks to appreciate the cultural and social influences that may be embedded in a given text. It deals with problems that arise in the study of meaningful human actions and the consequences of such actions. What follows are my reasons for choosing hermeneutic phenomenological method for this study.

Hermeneutic phenomenological research combines both interpretative and descriptive phenomenological methods in examining lived experiences or life worlds of people being studied. It highlights human experience through the analysis of meanings (Van Manen 1990, p.9; Hatch, 2002, pp.29-30). The word ‘Phenomenology’ describes how one orients to lived experiences whereas the word ‘hermeneutics’ refers to how one interprets the ‘texts’ of life’. Van Manen (1990) describes hermeneutic phenomenology as the approach most widely used in education. Morrow, Rodriguez and King, (2015) hold the view that descriptive phenomenology is very valuable in areas where there is little existing research. In the area of lived experiences of beginning RE teachers in Malawi, there is very little existing research. Furthermore, this study did not only seek to describe the lived experiences of beginning RE

teachers but also to understand the meanings of these experiences as far as the teachers themselves and the education system in Malawi are concerned. For these reasons, hermeneutic phenomenological approach was seen to be the most appropriate method for this study.

3.5.3 Rationale for choosing the data generating methods used

The study used three data generating methods, namely; protocol writing, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion. Reasons for choosing these methods are presented and discussed in the following paragraph.

Giorgi et al. (2017) observe that data for a descriptive, phenomenological and psychological study can be obtained by “*either having participants write an experience or by interview*” (p.183). Similarly, Hatch (2002, p.30) states that methods used to gather experiential descriptions from participants in a study include “*protocol writing, interviewing and observing*”. The use of protocol writing and interviews in this study was justified by the quotations taken from the works of Giorgi et al. and Hatch as indicated above. The focus group discussions were included because previous research suggested that sometimes interviewees respond more readily when interviewed in groups than when interviewed individually (Dzama, 2007). An additional reason for using the three methods was to triangulate the data in order to assess its credibility. The accounts of lived experiences written in the diaries were compared with those offered during in-depth interviews. However, no inconsistencies were detected. The following section discusses methods and procedures for the study.

3.6 Methods

The method that was used for conducting this study was hermeneutic phenomenology. Since phenomenology and hermeneutics have been discussed under methodology, this section does not discuss them again. Thus, what follows is a discussion of the methods used in data generation, namely; protocol writing, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion.

3.6.1 Protocol writing (diaries)

The original idea of the study was to use a reflective dairy as a method of generating data about the participants' lived experiences. Hard-cover notebooks were distributed to the research participants and the research participants were asked to write down in the note books any significant experiences that, in their opinion, were related to their status as beginning RE teachers. It turned out that some of the beginning RE teachers recorded only their experiences and did not include their reflections about them. As previously indicated, the teachers kept the diaries for one academic year. In the course of the year, whenever I visited the schools, I spent some time looking at what the beginning RE teachers had written in their diaries.

As a data generating method, the study found protocol writing to be superior to other methods such as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. This was the case because the teachers were asked to judge the significance of any event in their status as beginning RE teachers. The result was that in the notebooks both professional development promoting experiences and the professional development retarding experiences were recorded. In studies of experiences of beginning teachers worldwide, the focus of discussions is on professional development retarding experiences. This study is an exception because the teachers reported both

professional development retarding experiences as well as professional development promoting ones. One of the disadvantages of the diaries is that when a teacher is posted away from the research site he or she stopped maintaining his or her diary. The other disadvantage is that in the course of the year, some of the beginning RE teachers participating in the research were assigned to teach subjects other than RE. Although such teachers continued maintaining the diaries and participating in the study, they were however, not RE teachers, hence their experiences had little to do with RE as a subject.

3.6.2 In-depth interviews

An interview is essentially a conversation that is initiated “*by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining relevant information and focused by him or her on content specified by research objectives of systematic descriptions, prediction, or explanation*” (Powney & Watts, 1987, p.6). Similarly, Merriam (1988) considers an interview to be a method of generating data that cannot be directly observed. In the same vein, Bogdan and Biklen (1992, p.96) consider the interview to be a “*purposeful conversation between two people but sometimes involving more... that is directed by one in order to get information from the other.*”

The interview method of data generation was used to crosscheck the information that had been provided to the researcher through the diaries. An interview guide was developed through several trials and used during the actual interviews. I was free to ask probing questions wherever necessary. All the interviews were voice recorded and transcribed. In some occasions, head teachers or their deputies were interviewed to find out the trustworthiness of claims made by beginning RE teachers. For instance,

in the school in which the beginning RE teachers complained that the school's policy did not allow them to teach Form Two and Form Four classes, I interviewed the head teacher to find out the truth of this claim. This matter is discussed further in Chapter Five of this study. As for the development of the interview protocol, see pilot study in section 4.10 in this chapter.

3.6.3 Focus group discussions

A focus group is “a group comprised of individuals with certain characteristics who focus discussions on a given issue or topic” (Anderson, 1990, p.241). In focus groups, participants interact with each other rather than with the interviewer in such a manner that views of the participants can emerge (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 288). In this study, focus group discussions were conducted on 27th October, 2013, and on 11th June, 2014, using the individual interview guide discussed in Section 4.6.2. On both occasions, the beginning RE teachers met at a suitable place within the research area. During the group discussion meetings, the beginning teachers shared the experiences they have had as beginning RE teachers in the schools. The teachers that had been assigned to teach subjects other than RE were not left out of this study. They participated in all activities throughout the study. They however, shared their experiences in the teaching of the subjects they had been assigned.

The participation of beginning RE teachers in the focus group discussions was very lively. One advantage of the focus group discussion was that it provided the beginning RE teachers the opportunity to realise that problems experienced in their schools were also experienced by beginning RE teachers in other schools. There was, however, one school in which the management had made careful arrangements to facilitate the transition from pre-service teacher to a professional teacher. The research participant

of the school (B.T.6) explained to the other beginning RE teachers the arrangements that were made by the management of his school in facilitating the socialisation of beginning teachers in their new roles as teachers and as staff of the school.

Another advantage of focus group discussion is that it gives opportunity to the marginalised groups to express their feelings about their needs and problems (Dilshad & Latif, 2013, pp. 191-198). The beginning RE teachers were a marginalised group because RE in many schools was considered to be a less important subject than other subjects such as English, Mathematics and the Sciences.

3.7 Research context

Malawi is divided into six educational divisions. The study was done in a division called South East Education Division (SEED). The participating schools were located in two districts, namely; Zomba and Machinga. These districts are located in the Southern Region of Malawi. As previously indicated, eight schools took part in the main study. The reason for choosing schools in these districts was to minimise travel costs on my part. From the chosen schools, eight beginning RE teachers were selected to participate in the study. As stated earlier on, three of the schools were community day secondary schools, one was a grant aided mission secondary school, and four were government secondary schools.

I got access to the teachers through letters from the Head of Department of Curriculum and Teaching Studies and the Secretary for the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. I began by obtaining a letter of introduction from the Head of Curriculum and Teaching Studies at the University of Malawi. This letter enabled

me to go to the schools as a visitor. As a visitor, I found out the schools in which there were suitable beginning RE teachers who could participate in the study. A copy of the introductory letter that was written by the Head of Curriculum and Teaching Studies Department in the University of Malawi, is available in Appendix 3.

To do the main study I needed permission from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. To this effect I attached the letter from the Head of Curriculum and Teaching Studies Department to my application for permission to conduct the study. I addressed the application to the Secretary for the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. A copy of my application to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is available in Appendix 4. The Ministry responded through letter reference number C1/31/1/1 of 9th August, 2013, a copy of which is available in Appendix 5. Access to the teachers themselves in the schools was authorised by the head teachers after presenting them with letters from Secretary for Education, Science and Technology and from the Head of Curriculum and Teaching Studies Department. The beginning RE teachers were treated as autonomous individuals and their participation in the study was negotiated with the teachers themselves. Each teacher was required to complete a consent form before taking part in the study. A copy of the consent form used in the present study is available in Appendix 6.

On arrival at a school, I reported to the head teacher or his / her deputy and presented letters of permission to conduct research from the Secretary for Education, Science and Technology and from the Head of Curriculum and Teaching Studies Department. The head teachers invariably called the beginning RE teachers concerned to their offices where I met them. At each school, the head teachers organised a convenient place for me to meet the beginning RE teachers. I met the beginning RE teachers in

various places including offices, libraries, classrooms and sometimes under trees. Meetings under trees occurred in those schools where there were no available office spaces or classrooms in which I could meet the beginning RE teachers.

I visited each beginning RE teacher eighteen times within a period of two years. The purpose of these visits was at first; to familiarise myself with the beginning RE teachers themselves and the environments in which they worked. In such visits, I talked to the beginning RE teachers about their experiences and sometimes I did not even record my conversations with the teachers especially at the beginning of the study. I sought to establish a good working relationship with the teachers and did not insist on interviewing them until later in the study. In such visits, I used to peruse through their diaries. It was during these visits that I learnt that one school had rules forbidding beginning teachers from teaching classes that were destined to take national examinations in that year. According to the head teacher concerned, the purpose for disallowing beginning teachers to take classes that were destined to take national examinations was not to decrease the teaching load of the beginning teachers as suggested by the international literature but to prevent massive failure in national examinations. This matter is discussed further in Chapter Five. It seemed that the management in the school concerned, assumed that all beginning teachers were incompetent and this assumption gave rise to opposing reactions from beginning teachers themselves as indicated in Chapter Five.

Before interviewing the beginning teachers, I visited each of them at least three times to establish familiarity and a good working relationships with them. I began interviewing them about their lived experiences on my fourth visit. The interviews

were conducted on mutually agreed times and places within their respective schools. As previously indicated, an in-belt voice recorder was used and the interviews were transcribed. A sample copy of a transcribed interview is available in Appendix 7.

The focus group discussions were conducted twice at times that had been agreed upon by all the research participants and myself. The proceedings of the discussions were voice recorded and subsequently transcribed.

3.8 Selection of research participants

During the planning stage of this study, it was envisaged that participants in the study should be RE teachers who have taught Religious Education for not more than three years since such are teachers who are considered to be beginning teachers (Veenman, 1984). The legal definition of beginning teacher in the US stipulates that a *“beginning teacher” means a teacher who has been teaching in a public school for not more than three years (UsLegal, 2022)*. Due to financial and time constraints, and in view of the fact that I was doing the study while working full time as a lecturer at the University of Malawi, Chancellor College, the research sites were confined to two districts, Zomba and Machinga, to enable me to visit the research participants as regularly as possible. The confinement of the research to Zomba and Machinga may not have affected the trustworthiness of the study because the participating schools were stratified to ensure that all types of public secondary schools were represented in the sample. What possibly may have affected the trustworthiness of the findings is the fact that some teachers stopped teaching RE in the course of the study. They were assigned to teach subjects other than RE. Judging from the responses of the teachers who taught RE throughout the period, however, it appears that the three

teachers who were teaching subjects other than RE may not have significantly influenced the findings of this study. This is the case because the reports of the four out of the five beginning RE teachers were very similar as indicated in Chapter Five of this study. One of the teachers who taught RE throughout the academic year went to a school that has an elaborate procedure for welcoming beginning teachers in the school. His experiences were quite different from those of other beginning RE teachers as shown later in the thesis.

3.9 Data analysis procedures

Giorgi (1985) is widely considered as the one who pioneered the use of phenomenological thinking in Psychology. His method of data analysis has been described as a form of distillation “*in which the analyst step by step sifts away everything that is not essential to an adequate description of the phenomenon*” (Morrow, Rodriguez & King, 2015, p. 643). Giorgi’s method is, however, not the only phenomenological descriptive method of data analysis. In analysing data generated in this study, I chose to use Colaizzi’s (1978) phenomenological method of data analysis. Colaizzi’s (1978) method of data analysis was chosen as a method to be used in this study for the following reasons. The first reason is that Morrow et al. (2015, p. 643) rightly argue that Colaizzi’s method has “*considerable potential for qualitative psychologists, especially those coming fresh to descriptive phenomenology*”. I was new to descriptive phenomenology, hence, my adoption of this method. The second reason is that Colaizzi’s method is much simpler to use than the methods suggested by Giorgi (1985). I present Colaizzi’s (1978) seven step descriptive phenomenological method in table 2.

Table 2: Steps in Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method

Step	Description
1. Familiarisation	The researcher reads and rereads the transcribed interviews to understand thoroughly the interviewees perspective
2. Identifying significant statements	The researcher identifies significant statements that are directly related to the phenomenon or experience under study.
3. Formulating meanings	The researcher formulates meanings of significant statements. The researcher brackets his or her previous knowledge or assumptions about the phenomenon.
4. Clustering themes	The interpretive meanings are arranged in clusters which allow themes to image. The researcher avoids repetitive themes and notes any discrepancies.
5. Developing an exhaustive description	Themes are integrated into an exhaustive description. The researcher writes an exhaustive description of the phenomenon, incorporating all themes produced in step four.
6. Producing the fundamental structure	The researcher produces a concise description and provides a fundamental statement of identification.
7. The researcher presents	The researcher presents the exhaustive description to the studies participants to verify the conclusions drawn.

Source: Adapted from Morrow, Rodriguez and King, 2015 and Schuemann (2014, p.88).

Following Table 2, I read and reread the interview transcripts, the focus group discussion transcripts and the diaries to identify significant statements pertaining to the lived experiences of the eight beginning RE teachers. I ended up with one

hundred and fifty one (151) statements. After removing repetitions by the same participant, 55 statements were realised. These statements are available in appendix 8. The realised statements were grouped into 14 themes. These themes were further collapsed into three (3) main categories namely school related experiences, pre-service related experiences and individual characteristics related factors. The themes are presented in Chapter Five. A summary of data generation and analysis procedures and findings is presented in figure 4.

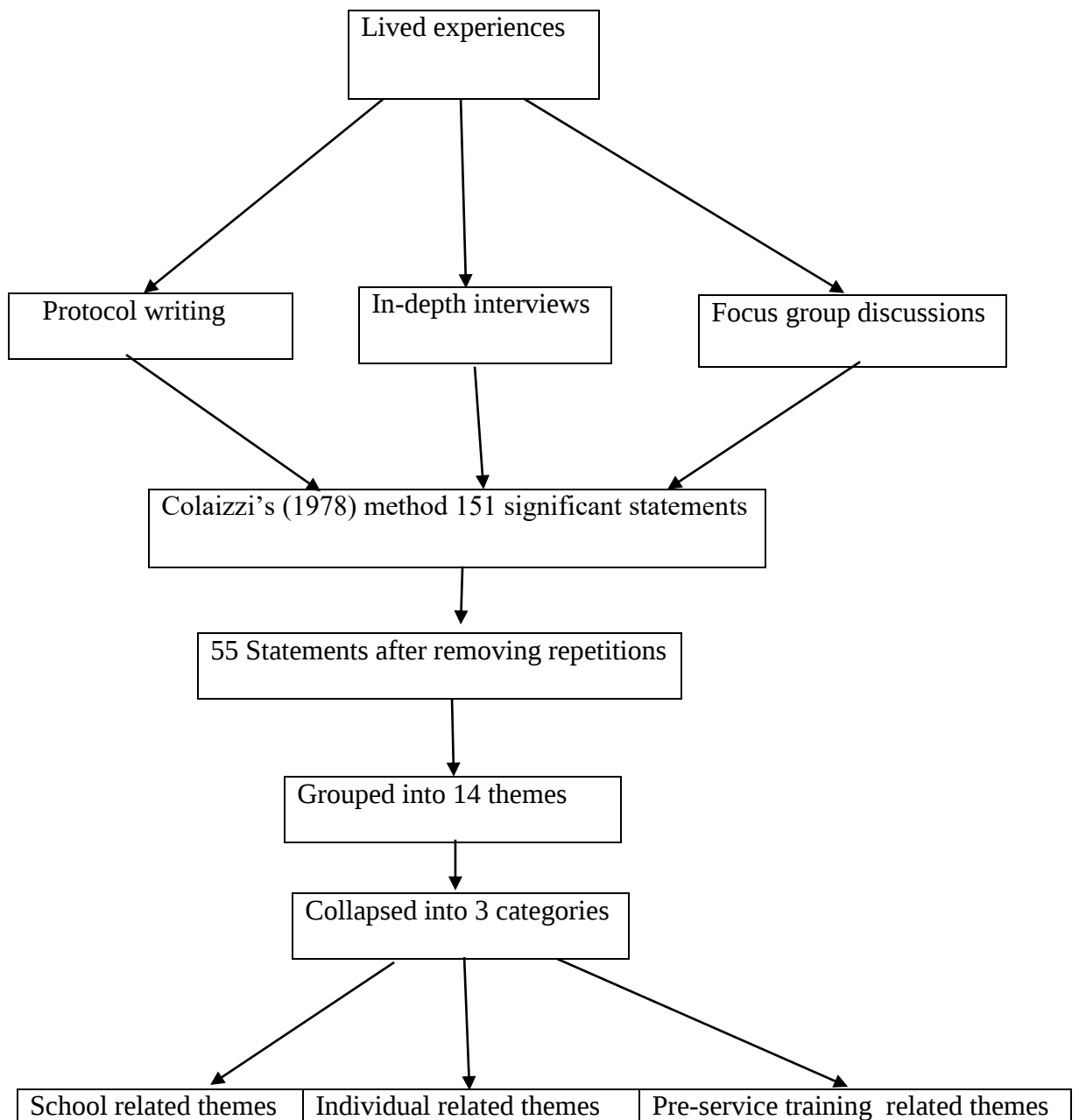


Figure 4: Summary of methods, procedures and findings

Source: Researcher

As indicated previously, figure 4 summarises the processes and procedures followed in carrying out the study.

3.10 Pilot study

A pilot study is a small scale trial study that is conducted before the main study and it has three purposes, namely; to assess possible functioning of elements of the main study, to detect any problems that may arise in the course of doing the main study, and to acquaint the researcher with the processes of tape recording and data analysis (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000, p.618).

Drawing on studies by Betts (2006), Biebum (2016), and Chizelu (2006) the study generated a tentative interview guide. The initial interview guide is available in Appendix 1. As can be noted in Appendix 1, the initial interview protocol looked like an examination paper.

Later, the initial interview guide was given to three academics for comments. Their comments were incorporated in the improved guide which is available in Appendix 2. The improved guide was piloted in two schools that did not take part in the main study. The pilot study helped me to arrive at appropriate distances in positioning the tape recorder between the interviewee and myself in the course of an interview.

The data collected in the pilot study was analysed using Colaizzi's 1978 method to determine significant statements, themes and categories. The interviewees in the pilot study were two beginning RE teachers. The interviews were transcribed and analysed to determine the effectiveness of the instruments and procedures used. The teachers who took part in the pilot study did not participate in the main study. One result of the

pilot study was that the tape recorder was replaced by an in-belt voice recorder which did not require me to change tapes during interviews.

3.11 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the soundness of a research study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) use four criteria to assess the soundness of a research study, namely; credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Shenton, 2004, p.64; Betts, 2006, p.63). On the one hand, credibility refers to the extent to which results of a research study are believable while, on the other hand, dependability refers to the extent to which the results are consistent and could be repeated. Confirmability refers to the extent to which the findings of the study are supported by the data collected. The degree to which research findings can be transferred to other research contexts is the transferability of the study.

To enhance the credibility of the present study, I adopted well recognised data generating and analysing methods for studies of this kind. These methods were protocol writing, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. In analysing data, Colaizzi's (1978) method was used. The research approach used as stated previously was hermeneutic phenomenology. Some of the data provided by the beginning RE teachers was crosschecked with the head teachers or their deputies to ascertain its authenticity. Participants were requested to write down their reflections regarding their lived experiences in their diaries. This ensured the credibility of the study.

Regarding confirmability I used triangulation to reduce the effect of researcher bias. This meant crosschecking the data generated from one data generating strategy to that realised from another data generating strategy. For instance, responses from in-depth

interviews were compared with entries in the reflective diaries. In describing this study, sufficient information about the context of the study and the phenomenon being investigated have been provided to enable other researchers to make comparisons with their own similar studies in similar environments. Thick descriptions are provided in Chapter Five to promote confirmability of the study. As indicated in the foregoing discussion, I made efforts to ensure soundness of the findings of this study.

3.12 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations were taken into account in the planning and execution of the study. My ethical thinking in this study was guided by the Belmont report. The Belmont Report (1979) summarises basic ethical principles that were identified by the National Commission for the protection of the human subjects of biomedical and behavioural research in the US. The report mentions three principles on which standard ethical conduct in research should be based. The principles are; respect for persons, beneficence and justice. The measures I took to protect rights of research participants are discussed below under these principles. The rationale for using the Belmont Report (1979) is because it was recommended by the University-wide Research and Publications Committee of the University of Malawi (Dzama, 2007).

Respect for persons

Consistent with the principle of respect for persons, I obtained voluntary informed consent from all the beginning RE teachers who participated in this study. Each research participant completed the consent form a copy of which is available in Appendix 6. The consent forms and the diaries are all kept under lock and key to ensure that no unauthorised person will have access to them. No names were written

on the diaries. In referring to the teachers and the schools, codes have been used to ensure the confidentiality of the information that participants gave me.

Beneficence

The principle of beneficence requires that potential benefits to the research participants are maximised and potential risks of harm are minimised. Benefits to the research participants or benefits from knowledge to be gained should outweigh the risks. One of the benefits for research participants, in this connection, was beginning RE teachers' opportunity to meet as a group and share their experiences. This has had the effect of enabling them to see that their colleagues in other schools also experienced the problems they were facing.

Justice

Justice means that the participating subjects should be selected fairly, and that the risks and benefits be distributed equally among the participants. The selection of subjects in this study was done fairly in that all eligible beginning RE teachers who were working in schools situated in the research site had equal chances of being included in the study. The participating teachers, however, were chosen to take part in the study on the basis of easy availability to the researcher. This was necessary to reduce the cost of travelling to the schools in the course of the study.

3.13 Scope and limitations of the study

This is a qualitative study of lived experiences of beginning RE teachers. The study aims at determining the status of some of the factors that affect the professional well-being of beginning RE teachers. It may be recalled that the point of departure of this study is my observation of a rather high turnover of beginning RE teachers that I have

witnessed in schools since 2006 when I started lecturing at a teacher training college. The study used the hermeneutic phenomenological approach to research in education to understand the behaviour of beginning RE teachers. The study hence focused on understanding the behaviour of beginning RE teachers and the factors that bring about such behaviour in the selected secondary schools. Beginning RE teachers are a subset of beginning teachers of all the other subjects. To understand issues concerning beginning teachers this study inquired about problems that affect beginning teachers in general. The study, as indicated above, is limited to understanding the said demonstrated behaviour of the beginning RE teachers.

I used an expounded concept of professional well-being as suggested by Kessels (2010) in carrying out the study. According to Kessels (2010), the professional well-being of a beginning teacher is considered to be positive when the teacher; experiences no isolation in the school, is appreciated by colleagues, and, is confident in his or her teaching. The study sought to determine the status of these factors among the beginning RE teachers in the participating schools. Undeniably, there are other factors that may affect the professional well-being of beginning teachers other than the ones suggested by Kessels (2010). These factors may include; internal and external administration of the school, living conditions on site, the school climate, and availability of resources. Events such as persistent delays in processing salaries for beginning teachers as reported in Keengwe and Adjei-Boateng (2012) can arguably affect the beginning teachers' professional well-being. The absence of institutional accommodation in a school was taken to be one of the factors affecting the professional well-being of beginning teachers posted to such schools. The study used a wider conception of the professional well-being of beginning teachers than the one

suggested by Kessels (2010) because it seems that in the developed countries factors like administration of the school, availability of resources and school climate do not affect the kind of schools that Kessels (2010) worked with. It appears that management in the schools in which Kessels did her research causes no problems to beginning teachers. The wider concept of professional well-being adopted for this study is presented in chapter six.

3.14 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have presented and discussed the methods and procedures that I followed in doing this hermeneutic phenomenological qualitative research. Beginning with a recapitulation of the research questions and the theoretical framework of the study, the chapter proceeded to present and discuss the research design, methodology and methods of data generation in sections 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 respectively. The research context and selection of participants were presented and discussed in sections 3.7 and 3.8. The remaining sections presented and discussed data analysis, pilot study, ethical considerations and scope and limitations of the study. Writing this chapter has been the most exciting and challenging part of the thesis in the sense that, I have in the process, learnt about the ways in which hermeneutic phenomenological studies are done.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This study explored the lived experiences of beginning RE teachers in selected secondary schools in Malawi using the qualitative research strategy. As a teacher trainer for RE, I was motivated by the need to understand factors that account for the rather high turnover of beginning RE teachers in secondary schools in the country. Following Kessels' (2010) definition of professional well-being of beginning teachers the study sought to determine the status of the professional well-being of the beginning RE teachers through their lived experiences in their schools.

My hope in studying the lived experiences of beginning RE teachers was that I would understand their behaviour and in turn, sensitise head teachers, heads of department and appropriate officers in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology about the factors that contribute to professional well-being of beginning RE teachers. Data generation and analysis were carried out according to methods indicated for phenomenological studies in the scholarly literature. The aim of the study was to try to grasp the beginning RE teachers' perspectives on their lived experiences. Four research questions guided the study. The research questions are:

1. What are beginning RE teachers' professional well-being related lived experiences in the participating schools?

2. What professional development opportunities did the beginning RE teachers; experience?
3. What professional development challenges did the beginning RE teachers; encounter?
4. Why do beginning RE teachers experience the professional development challenges found in answer to question three above?

This chapter is divided into two major parts. The first part presents findings of the study while the second part discusses the findings.

Part One Presentation of findings

The first part begins with a description of the participants of the study and their characteristics. Descriptions of the school of best practice in inducting beginning teachers, and the most resourceful beginning teacher found in the study are presented in section two. Themes, sub-themes and categories that emerged from the analysis of the study are presented in sections three, four, five and six. Findings concerning professional development opportunities and professional development related challenges that the beginning RE teachers encountered are presented in section seven and eight, respectively. Synthesis and interpretation of findings of the study as suggested by Van Manen (1997) are presented in section nine.

4.2 Research participants

This study recruited eight beginning RE teachers who were at the time of the study working in eight different schools. Three of the teachers were female while five were male of ages ranging from 21 to 35. Six of the beginning RE teachers had previously

worked as qualified primary school teachers before they were upgraded to teach in secondary schools. To be upgraded they had to be admitted to either a College of Education, or to the Faculty of Education in the University of Malawi.

When primary school teachers join these institutions of higher learning, their previous primary school teaching certificate and experience are not recognised. They join classes of students who have had no teaching certificate and experience. They are all required to do the twelve week teaching practice. It is for this reason that I decided to classify them as beginning teachers at the secondary school level. The details of participating teachers are summarised in table 3.

Table 3: Research participants

SN.	QUALIFICATION	INSTITUTION	EXPERIENCE	SEX	AGE
BT.1	Dip. Educ. BA (Theology)	Teachers' College University of Malawi	3 years	Male	35
BT.2	Dip. Educ.	Teacher's College	1 year	Male	22
BT.3	Dip. Educ. BA (Theology)	Teachers' College University of Malawi	2 years	Male	33
BT. 4	Dip. Educ BA (Theology)	Teachers' College University of Malawi	2 years	Male	34
BT. 5	Dip. Educ.	Teachers' College	1 year	Female	21
BT. 6	Dip. Educ.	Teachers' College	2 years	Male	35
BT. 7	Dip. Educ. BA (Theology)	Teachers' College University of Malawi	2 years	Female	35
BT.8	Dip. Educ. BA (Theology)	Teachers' College University of Malawi	2 years	Female	34

SN: Stands for Serial Number

There were no formal induction programmes in all the schools except at B.T.6's school. B.T.6's school has had a well-articulated formal induction programme for beginning teachers. Among the beginning teachers, B.T.2 stands out as an exceptionally resourceful and competent beginning teacher. In the following paragraphs, I present descriptions of B.T.6's school, and B.T.2 as an exceptional beginning teacher. These descriptions are provided to enable scholars and other readers to understand what was happening in the exceptional school, and to appreciate standard of performance of a competent beginning teacher among the participating teachers.

4.2.1 B.T.6 and his school

B.T.6 is an ordinary Diploma teacher who started as a primary school teacher. He taught in various primary schools for 10 years. He completed a Diploma course in Education at one of the colleges of Higher Education in the country. His teaching subjects were Bible Knowledge and Social Studies. He was posted to his present school on completion of his Diploma in Education Studies.

The school in which B.T.6 works was established in the late 1930s as a primary school and was later converted into a secondary school. At the time of this research, it had 38 teachers two of whom were on study leave in Japan. The learner / teacher ratio was 14.2. This was slightly lower than 15.8 the learner / teacher ratio in government secondary schools in Malawi. To find the learner / teacher ratio, the total number of learners in a school is divided by the total number of teachers in that school.

The school has had a tradition of assisting new teachers when they are posted to the school. In answering the question: What support did you receive as a beginning RE teacher? B.T.6 responded:

The support I got here was very good. Experienced teachers that I found here, assisted me in areas like how to teach Bible Knowledge, discipline cases, how I can make students to be attentive to the lessons. They also assisted me in other areas other than the ones I have named.

In addition to the support mentioned in the excerpt above, B.T.6 considers being given an opportunity to observe veteran teachers' lessons for one week before beginning the actual teaching to be the most important support that he received from the school. Assistance to beginning teachers is at this school provided even when the beginning teacher does not ask for it. According to B.T.6:

Here at school there is a tradition of assigning a beginning teacher to a veteran teacher even without the beginning teacher asking for a mentor.

According to the excerpt above, beginning teachers are assigned mentors whenever they report at the school.

At B.T.6's school, beginning teachers and veteran teachers take turns in making announcements to the school during assemblies. B.T.6 says that the purpose for making teachers participate in making announcements is to "*equip them to become good public speakers*". The school considers it its responsibility to prepare its teachers for future responsibilities.

There is a teacher motivation scheme in the school. The scheme was established by the school's Parents Teachers Association (PTA). On the motivation scheme, B.T.6 reports:

It has been noted that teachers are awarded yearly in the form of money. For example, for every student who achieves a distinction the teachers concerned are paid K1 500. Similarly for every student who achieves a strong credit K1 000 is paid to the teachers concerned. The school pays K750 for a weak credit.

One thousand and five hundred kwacha is equivalent to two United States' dollars.

The head teacher of the school was trained at an institution in Kenya.

4.2.2 B.T 2 the exceptionally competent beginning teacher

B.T.2 was an exceptional beginning RE teacher. He was one of the youngest beginning teachers but was assigned more responsibilities than some of the veteran teachers in his school. When he reported at his school, B.T.2 was persuaded to teach English Literature instead of Bible Knowledge. An in-service course was conducted at a time he reported for duty at the school. He writes:

By chance, when I arrived, the school had organised an in-service training workshop which helped me a lot.

In the excerpt above, B.T.2 expresses the importance of in-service training that his school organised. In the following excerpt, he indicates the necessity of learning among teachers. He writes:

I do not say that teachers come to a school fully prepared. No, they have to grow like a tree. As for me, I should mention that I need assistance in using new technologies, especially computers, LCD projectors. I very much want someone to help me in using these technologies.

At his school B.T.2 was an asset. When there was uncontrolled noise in a neighbouring class, he went out of his class and stopped it. In his diary he reported:

I was disturbed by noise from Form 1 B as I was teaching in Form 1 A. There was no teacher in Form 1 B and students were playing and shouting at the top of their voices. This forced me to provide English notes for them to copy. This helped me to have my lesson in Form 1 A undisturbed.

When a new member of staff arrived at his school, B.T.2 assisted the new member of staff in writing his scheme of work. He reports:

I assisted a new member of staff on how to draft schemes of work. The new teacher mentioned that he had no experience as he had just come from college.

In addition to assisting the new member of staff described in the excerpt above, B.T.2 held various responsibilities in the school. He was the examinations officer and the girls' football coach. He was assigned the responsibility of buying a heavy duty photocopier for the school and he trained other members of staff on how to use the photocopier after it had been purchased. B.T.2 emerged as a very resourceful teacher.

B.T.2 was simply an exceptional person. He had qualities of leadership that his colleagues and some veteran teachers in the school admired. His success at the school reminded me of the idea of individuality of teachers. Some beginning teachers do not need to undergo all the aspects of an induction programme on completing pre-service training. Some such teachers are fully prepared to take up a full teaching job, and B.T.2 was a case in point.

4.3 Emergent themes, sub-themes and categories

I followed Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step phenomenological method in analysing data for this study. As recommended by Colaizzi's method, I read several times the interview and focus group transcripts and contents of the diaries. Significant statements that were relevant to the lived experiences of beginning RE teachers were identified.

There were one hundred and fifty one different significant statements altogether which were in turn reduced to fifty five statements after removing repetitions of the same participant. Further analysis generated fourteen themes from the fifty five statements. The process of identifying significant statements and categorising them is called inductive analysis. Rudsestam and Newton (1992) define inductive analysis as a process of unitising and categorising. Unitising is identifying significant statements pertaining to a phenomenon while categorising is putting related significant statements arising from unitising process in related groups called categories. The fourteen themes that were realised in this study were further collapsed into three categories, namely, school related themes; pre-service training related themes, and individual person related themes. These themes are grouped and categorised in Table 4.

Table 4: Themes and categories

Themes	Categories
• Undervaluing RE and its teachers • Being neglected • Being disturbed • Teaching out of the field of specialisation • Being assigned difficult classes • Being unnecessarily probed for misbehaviour • Being seen as a threat by colleagues • Attending professional workshops within the school	School related themes
• Not being prepared for teaching • Doubting the effectiveness of one's own teaching • Not knowing	Pre-service training related themes
• Feeling shy • Feeling accepted • Accepting responsibility	Individual related themes

What follows in the next section is a presentation of school related themes.

4.4 School related themes

The concept of a school in the conceptualisation of this category consisted of the head teacher, heads of department; teachers, students and the support staff. Experiences that the beginning RE teachers had in connection with these elements of the school were classified as school-related themes. Unlike in previous studies, in this study the beginning RE teachers stated experiences that would promote their professional development as teachers as well as experiences that retarded their development.. The presentation below includes both positive and negative experiences. There are eight themes in this category : Undervaluing RE and its teachers; being neglected; being disturbed; teaching outside their field of specialisation; being assigned difficult classes; being unnecessarily probed for misbehaviour; being perceived as a threat to colleagues; and, attending professional development workshops organised by the school. These themes are presented one after another as follows.

4.4.1 Undervaluing Religious Education and its teachers

A unique finding of this study is that in some schools Religious Education does not enjoy the same status as other subjects. For instance, in one school, RE is always the last subject on the time table every school day. B.T.5 in her diary wrote:

RE classes are always last periods on the time table such that the classes are always victims of postponement during meetings.

The time-table at B.T.5's school was such that RE was the last subject on each day. B.T. 5 complained further that:

Time allocated for RE classes was being used as time for caucus meetings and sometimes other teachers used the time for their makeup lessons because their subjects had higher enrollment.

Reflecting on her experience of seeing RE being undervalued and neglected at her school, B.T.5 in her diary, wrote:

It is frustrating and I feel not respected as such. It requires one to use his or her abilities to convince fellow teachers, administrators as well as learners, which is very challenging. Therefore enrollment of pupils studying and registering for the subject (BK) is low. There is need to involve several stakeholders after thorough consultation and conditions that may promote teaching and learning.

In this situation this type of work becomes boring and uninteresting. Unless the school administrators provide us (BK teachers) with supplementary books for BK, the situation may not improve for the better because currently we only use the Bible. Sometimes the environment is used but it depends on the capability and creativity of the teacher.

When B.T.5 in the excerpt above writes about convincing fellow teachers and administration, she is referring to the fact that RE is undervalued in her school. This undervaluing of RE as a subject is also expressed by B.T.1. When B.T.1 was asked about the advice he would give to the head teacher regarding assistance to beginning teachers, he responded:

At one time BK was removed from the time-table. BK is not regarded as a subject of equal standing to other subjects. It would help matters if the head teacher would consider BK to be a subject like other subjects in the curriculum.

Undervaluing of BK is sometimes extended to the people who teach it, as B.T.5 indicates in the following response:

I feel that is being unkind and sometimes I feel my job is a waste of time which promotes creation of enmity among fellow teachers because one tends to force others what they do not want to do or what they did not plan to do. Sometimes most RE teachers are not involved in planning sessions. But when faced with problems they are brought in.

Deliberate efforts were made to increase the number of pupils studying RE and equip teachers with skills that may improve the teaching and learning of RE including the improvement and learning resources through the formation of Forum of Humanity teachers, but did not succeed due to lack of funding from the administration.

The foregoing excerpt suggests that RE teachers in some schools are not involved in decision-making. But when there is trouble in the school, they are involved or consulted. This is why B.T.5 in the excerpt above, writes about most RE teachers not being involved in planning sessions.

B.T. 4 writes about another dimension of undervaluing beginning RE teachers. According to B.T.4, one of the major challenges that a beginning RE teacher faces is

Being taken as one to be used in Form One.

B.T. 4 said that school management usually takes beginning teachers to be teachers of Form One. In his own words, he says:

When you are new at a school, the management wants you to teach Form One

This sub-theme of undervaluing Religious Education and its teachers is also mentioned by B.T.7 who was asked to state recommendations she would give to head

teachers about handling beginning teachers in schools. Her advice was that head teachers should:

Love beginning teachers. Head teachers must always take themselves to be fathers or mothers and must not sideline beginning teachers. I feel I was sidelined because I do not come from the same region or denomination.

Undervaluing beginning teachers goes to the extent of wasting teachers' time by some members of the school management. For instance, in his diary B.T.2 reported:

The deputy head teacher came into my Form Four class, to make an announcement about MANEB officials who would visit the school to screen students with impairment in preparation for examinations. This disturbed my class because instead of going straight to the point, he went about beating around the bush. This consumed a lot of time

The quotation above suggests that beginning teachers' time is sometimes undervalued. The veteran teacher who went to B.T.2's class to make announcements appears to be unconcerned about the need to avoid wasting beginning teachers' and students' time, by beating about the bush, when making announcements to students during classes. Continuous loss of RE periods due to caucus meetings and makeup lessons appear to be regretted only by the RE teacher. It is regrettable to note that some RE teachers do undergo the experiences outlined in the quotations above. The next section presents the theme of being neglected.

4.4.2 Being neglected

The theme of being neglected refers to all occasions when beginning RE teachers were not attended to or assisted whenever they asked for assistance. The following sub-themes constituted the theme of being neglected: Not being listened to; not being

introduced to academic or support staff; having difficulties in accessing teaching and learning materials; and, not being shown round the school campus. These sub-themes are explained and illustrated one after another below.

Not being listened to

There were instances in which the beginning RE teachers were not listened to. This sub-theme includes situations in which the beginning RE teachers were not given what they asked for. For instance, B.T.1 stated that:

When I asked for copies of the prescribed Good News Bible version for teaching in my classes, I was given copies of King James Version of the Bible.

King James Version of the Bible is not a prescribed text for use in teaching Bible Knowledge at secondary school level. It is written in olden English. It uses words like *thou, thy, thee or art*, which may be hard and confusing to students who are not used to olden English. B.T.1 had adequate reasons for complaining about being given this version of the Bible. When he complained about this version of the Bible, however, he was told in a sarcastic manner, in a local language to simply go and pray with the children, as indicated previously.

B.T.1 adds that the head teacher at his school was resisting to offer assistance to him.

B.T.1 wrote:

The head teacher was supportive at times. I could feel that I was giving them pressure. The head teacher could sometimes squash me out resisting to offer assistance.

Similarly, B.T. 5 found that veteran teachers did not listen to her during staff meetings. She stated:

At this school, beginning teachers are rarely listened to during meetings. When it comes to soliciting information from staff members, if a point is suggested by a beginning teacher, it is often not seriously taken.

It is not unusual for head teachers and members of staff to turn a deaf ear to what a new teacher says. Failure of head teachers to respond to genuine requests for teaching materials is, however surprising.

Not being introduced to students and support staff

The experience of not being introduced to students and support staff, was reported by two beginning RE teachers. B.T.7 had this to say:

Some of the learners that are not members of my class thought that I was one of the cleaners or any other support staff because I have never been introduced at the school assemblies.

Similarly, B.T. 8 said:

As I was not introduced to students during assemblies that were held every once a week on Mondays, I heard students that were not in my class asking one another if I had come to the school as a student or a support staff. This made me feel very unhappy”.

The sub-theme of not being introduced sometimes takes the form of not being shown around the school. B.T.7 experienced this:

I wanted the head teacher to show me around the school and to introduce me to the previous teacher from whom I had taken over the classes

Reasons for failure to introduce new members of staff to students and support staff are not known. My speculation, as a researcher, is that the head teacher in the school concerned may just have forgotten to introduce the beginning teacher to support staff and students. I did not ask the head teacher to explain reasons for his behaviour because I am aware that most head teachers do not really know what to do with beginning teachers. Asking the head teacher why he did this could have destroyed the good working relationship I cultivated with him in the course of the study. I avoided assuming an inspectorial stance in the schools.

At one school, however, I asked the head teacher whom I had known for a long time; what he does to welcome beginning teachers at his school. His answer was that he does not do anything towards welcoming beginning teachers but he would have loved to do something to assist them.

Having difficulties in accessing teaching and learning materials

Another aspect that indicates being neglected at the school is not being given access to teaching and learning materials especially relevant books. In this connection, B.T.1 had this to say:

In my class I had twenty students but only five Bibles which were also irrelevant. In addition to this problem of having difficulties in accessing teaching and learning materials, my school is a double shift and our teaching period's duration for all lessons last for 30 minutes only. Although RE is equally important, it doesn't have a syllabus at the whole double shift school". In addition, New International Bible Version [which is not a recommended Bible version] was the only

available Bible version. I had to visit others schools to ask for assistance.

After complaining to his head teacher about copies of the olden English version of the Bible, B.T.1 was given yet another inappropriate version; the New International Bible Version, which is not a recommended version of the Bible for teaching BK in the country.

In her diary B.T. 5 contributed to the sub-theme of lack of teaching and learning materials when she wrote:

Lesson preparation becomes tiresome and takes long due to lack of resources, thinking of methodologies that may work well without resources but could help achieve the objectives.

Similarly, B.T.3 stated:

When I arrived at this school I became very resourceful. For example, I visited other schools to source materials. Colleagues from other schools helped me a lot.

B.T.4 added that when he had problems concerning materials in teaching BK, he often sought assistance from teachers from other schools. He wrote:

Very often I visited my friends in other schools who really helped me. Together we formed a forum for humanities which could focus on particular subjects such as BK and Social Studies meeting at least monthly.

B.T.1 further stated:

Since I had only five books I often used group work [as a teaching method]. Because of my Christian background I could not differentiate

between teaching and preaching and therefore needed someone to help me.

The problem of having difficulties to access teaching and learning materials was also recorded by B.T.4 who was placed at a community day secondary school. B.T.4 had this to say:

[In order for me] to have access to relevant teaching and learning materials, I had to visit friends in other schools who really helped me”

The feeling of being neglected was also experienced by the beginning teachers when they were not given handover notes by the teacher from whom they had taken over his or her class. B.T.8 reported that:

The previous teacher from whom I had taken over the teaching of RE, did not show me where he had stopped teaching. I had to ask students to tell me the topics they had already covered and the ones not yet covered.

It is surprising that syllabi, schemes and records of work, as well as prescribed books were not made available to some beginning teachers. This may imply that the school did not have these utilities.

Not being shown around the school campus

Not being shown around the school campus is also considered to be a form of being neglected. This was reported by one beginning RE teacher (B.T.7) who had this to say:

When I arrived at the school, I was not shown around the school campus. I could have been shown around so that I master my surrounding, being shown the geographical position of the school.

It is not clear why the head teacher at B.T.7's school was unable to take B.T.7 around the school as is normally done. It could be that the head teacher was too busy to do this and failed to ask some other teacher to take the beginning teacher around the school. However, one needs to bear in mind the fact that, as previously indicated, the head teachers have had no training to enable them to do their work properly. Most of the head teachers in the community secondary schools were primary school teachers who had been upgraded to teach in secondary schools. In many primary schools in Malawi, there may be no need for taking a member of staff around the school because the schools may consist of few buildings. However, in reality, this does not nullify the need, even in primary schools to introduce the new teacher to other members of staff and students.

4.4.3 Being disturbed

In this study, being disturbed refers to situations in which teaching or learning of pupils in classrooms and teachers' work in staff rooms were disturbed by unwelcomed events or activities.

Being disturbed in the staffroom.

Regarding being disturbed in the staffroom, B.T.3 had this to say during an in-depth interview:

When I just arrived at this school, I used to get disturbed with noise coming from some members of staff who used to play an indoor game popularly known as bawo in vernacular language. Colleagues who were waiting for their turn to go and teach used to play bawo or cards. The noise from them could disturb me since I could very often fail to

prepare myself for teaching. As a beginner I needed to remind myself of how I could teach without wasting learners' time in class.

Bawo is an African game that is played with stones or marbles. The stones or marbles and the players make a lot of noise when plying the game. The game uses a grooved wooden board. This is why B.T.3 in the excerpt above claims to have been disturbed by the staff members who were playing this game in the staff room.

Similarly, in his diary B.T.1 recorded an incident in which he failed to complete marking students' work because of noise in the staff room. He writes:

I had to come again because I did not finish the marking. The noise in the staff room disturbed me and this made me take long before finishing. Next time I have to use a different venue

Disturbances were not only occurring during marking in the staff room as suggested in the excerpts above, they were also present in classrooms during lessons.

Being disturbed from outside the classroom

Another source of disturbance, according to B.T.4, often came from the youth from surrounding communities who were sometimes playing football at the school ground within the school campus while classes were in session as reported by B.T.4:

Whenever a particular team had scored, the noise from the rejoicing team could be heard in my class disturbing lessons.

Disturbance in teaching and learning did not only come from outside the classrooms. It also came from neighbouring classrooms as captured in the following excerpt from B.T.2 who reports:

I was disturbed by noise in Form 1B as I was teaching in Form 1A. There was no teacher in Form 1B and the students were playing and speaking at the top of their voices. This forced me to provide English notes for them to copy. This helped to have my lesson in Form 1A undisturbed.

In his reflection over this incident in the diary, B.T. 2, argued that:

Absenteeism can be the main cause of noise. Teachers ought to give work to students once they fail to turn up

The disturbance most frequently reported by the participating teachers was that which came from inside the classroom, which I discuss in the next paragraphs.

Being disturbed by noise from inside the classroom

In his diary, B.T.2 reports that he found pupils making noise in his presence as a teacher. B.T.2 felt that this was strange:

I punished noise makers in Form 1A before break time. Noise makers were asked to clean the surroundings of Form 1 classroom block. I observed that noise making is mainly caused by students who occupy the back seats. These are mainly boys. This means that the presence of a teacher in a class does not mean that students will be quiet. Noise making also takes place in the learning process.

In addition, B.T. 2 in his diary indicates that noise making continued even in the presence of himself as a teacher. His lesson was disturbed by noise made by his pupils as he was delivering it. He reports:

I was teaching English Literature which I had just introduced to the form one class. Students were very eager to learn elements such as character / Characterisation, plot, setting, types of literature, and how literature is used in our daily life e.g. for education, entertainment and bringing a sense of morality. Noise makers who were identified disturbing my class were punished. Noise making in the learning process disturbed both the teacher and the students. Noise making should not be tolerated in the learning process as it reduces learners' uptake.

An incident similar to the one reported by B.T.2 above, occurred in B.T.4's class whereby the cause of the disturbance was lack of interest in the subject B.T.4 was teaching. According to B.T.4:

The presentation was good apart from the fact that some few students were playful. They were stopped from being playful right away. The class has some students who are not interested in taking Chichewa as a subject. They were warned to change their attitude because Chichewa is not an elective subject.

The reference to Chichewa in excerpt above comes about because although B.T.4 has RE as his subject of specialisation, he was assigned to teach Chichewa in his school, and unlike RE, Chichewa is a compulsory subject.

Other forms of behaviour that contributed to disturbance of teaching and learning in class were students reporting late for classes and students absconding classes,

especially in the afternoon. In connection with reporting late for classes, B.T.5 in her diary reported:

Many students at this school do not come for classes in good time. As a day school they often come late partly because some of them come from very far away from the school.

B.T. 4, in his diary indicated that reporting late for morning classes was a problem in his school. He writes:

I went around the school and classes checking on late comers. Late comers were asked to pick litter before entering the classrooms as they were waiting to enter classrooms after the first period.

In his reflection on this incident B.T.4 said that:

Some students came late, they were just outside classrooms as teachers did not allow them in class to avoid disturbance. To stop them from making noise I hence gave them work to pick up litter around their classes.

B.T. 3 reported incidences of absconding classes in the afternoon. He writes:

It seems because of heat some students stay away from school after lunch break. During the second half of the day lessons do not take place just because some students leave for their homes without attending the afternoon lessons.

The foregoing discussion suggests that teaching and learning in some schools is frequently disturbed by events inside and outside the classroom. Beginning teachers in the schools have to cope with these events and behaviours. The next section explored the challenge of teaching outside one's field of specialisation.

4.4.4 Teaching outside the field of specialisation

The theme included all situations in which the beginning RE teachers found themselves teaching at least one subject that was outside their field of specialisation. As indicated previously, B.T.4 and B.T.2 were teaching Chichewa and English Literature respectively. It seems that in some schools, BK is a regrettable subject to be associated with. B.T.5 reported that some BK teachers willingly opt to teach subjects other than BK. She writes:

Some BK teachers prefer to teach other subjects even those they did not study in college.

In general, however, teachers were unhappy when they were asked to teach subjects outside their field of specialisation. B.T.8, for instance, was assigned to teach Agriculture instead of BK. She wrote:

I teach Agriculture instead of BK so this is another challenge of being given another subject rather than what I majored in at college. This means that I have to spend more time in preparing for the lessons I teach

Being given a subject I never specialised is a major challenge. I have taught several subjects including English, Agriculture and Life Skills although I specialised in RE.

Similarly, B.T.5 complained that:

Teachers are being forced to teach subjects that they did not study in college, without proper support or training

Out of the eight participating beginning RE teachers three, namely; B.T.2, B.T.3 and B.T. 8 were not teaching BK at all. Although some RE teachers as indicated above, opted to teach subjects other than RE, teaching subjects outside one's field of

specialisation is a big challenge to most beginning RE teachers in their initial years of teaching. This was especially the case when the teachers were not supported through provision of training or teaching and learning materials as reported by B.T.5 above.

4.4.5 Being assigned difficult classes

Difficult classes fall into three categories: Examination classes; classes in which misbehaviour is the norm rather than exception; and classes of slow learners. Classes that are destined to take national examinations at the end of a particular year; are generally considered to be difficult classes. They are considered to be difficult because massive failure of students in national examinations is usually a matter of great concern to the school and the public. Thus, many beginning teachers do not like to be assigned the examination classes because of fear of being judged by their colleagues and learners in the school, in the event of poor results. B.T.4, for instance, was assigned an examination class and when asked whether he had any fears, when he heard that he had been assigned an examination class, his response was in the affirmative:

Yes I feared that my class might not do well in the examinations because I was not given a chance to observe the veteran teachers.

The fear of students' failure in national examinations in classes taken by beginning RE teachers was also expressed by B.T. 8 in the excerpt below:

The knowledge that I got from college was not enough and at the same time irrelevant especially in the content area because I learnt something else in college and I was given form four class whose content is very different. The content that I teach in form four is what I remember from my own form four studentship days because what I learnt in college is different from what I teach.

A closer examination of the diaries and in-depth interview transcripts indicates that 5 of the eight beginning RE teachers were at the time of the study teaching examination classes. Three of them (B.T.2, B.T.3 & B.T.6) were so confident about their teaching that they did not complain about being assigned examination classes. This is not strange because in one school where beginning teachers were not allowed to teach examination classes by the management of the school, the beginning teachers objected to the arrangement. B.T.3 wrote about this matter:

Only older and experienced teachers should be handling form four classes for students to pass well. The concerned teachers argued that they are trained and eager even to handle form fours. They felt that the system was discriminatory towards newly recruited teachers.

The foregoing excerpt suggests that while some beginning teachers fear handling classes destined to take national examinations in a given year, other beginning teachers eagerly look forward to being assigned such classes. This situation reflects the idea of multiple realities constructed by individuals depending on their previous experiences and their perspectives of teaching and learning.

Another dimension of difficult classes was mentioned by B.T.8 who described learners in her community day secondary school as slow.

Coverage of syllabus is another challenge because our student take time to understand what we are teaching them. Planned work is not completed as planned because the students learn slowly.

B.T.8's argument was that the best students in the country are offered places in national secondary schools. What she said was confirmed by B.T.6 who was teaching at a national secondary school. Regarding ability of students in his school, B.T.6 said:

The level of intelligence of students in the school is high, as a result, teachers are supposed to be well prepared.

There is probably some truth in what B.T.8 claimed about the quality of learners in the community day secondary schools compared to learners in government or government assisted secondary schools. Community secondary school learners are expected to be slow in learning.

Apart from individual students who challenged authority of teachers such as those who made noise during Chichewa classes as reported by B.T.3 and the student who challenged B.T.3's school on discipline, no reports emerged about classes in which misbehaviour was the norm.

4.4.6 Being unnecessarily probed for misbehaviour

This theme covers situations in which beginning RE teachers were accused of behaving immorally with student-members of the opposite sex. B.T. 2 reports an incident in which he was invited to a male teachers' only meeting convened by the head teacher. B.T. 2 wrote:

I attended a meeting convened by the head teacher for male teachers only. The head teacher informed us that there were some members of staff who were involved in love relationships with female students. He highlighted the consequences of such behaviour and warned us that he will not back any teacher caught in such immoral behaviours. The

head teacher promised to work hard to ensure that the right to education for the girl child is protected.

The beginning RE teachers were asked to report what happened and afterwards write their reflection on what had happened. In connection with the meeting of male teachers only, B.T.2 wrote:

It is indeed unfortunate to learn that some teachers including those who are married are involved in relationships with female students. It is hoped that the head teacher's warning will go a long way in curbing such behaviours.

Similarly, B.T.6 expressed the need for beginning RE teachers to be consistent in keeping appropriate social distance in their relationships with students. It seems that from time to time, when a male teacher misbehaves with a female student, the head teacher concerned convenes a meeting during which he or she warns all the male teachers without particularly naming the one who was involved in the misbehaviour. The male teachers that were not involved in the said behaviour were unhappy with the culprit's bad behaviour as indicated by B.T.2 in the excerpt above.

4.4.7 Being seen as a threat

During the data collection period there were two levels of teachers in the secondary schools; degree holders and diploma holders. Some diploma holders had taught for a long time and had risen to positions of responsibility in their schools. When a graduate teacher was posted to a school whose head teacher was a holder of a diploma in education, sometimes the head teacher somehow felt uncomfortable, suspecting

that the graduate teacher would eventually take over his or her position in the school.

B.T.4 reported experiencing being perceived as a threat. He states:

However, the other members of staff took me as a threat because I was the only graduate in the school. But as of now there are three of us who have degrees so the tension is at least minimised.

The presence of these two types of qualifications in the school was, as indicated in the excerpt above, sometimes a source of suspicion and tension among teachers in some schools.

4.4.8 Being given an opportunity to attend professional courses

This theme relates to in-service training organised by the school where a particular beginning teacher was employed. It does not include in-service programmes organised by the Ministry of Education or by the Division Officers. In relation to theme one of the entries, B.T.3's diary reads:

By chance when I arrived, the school had organised an in-service training workshop which helped me a lot.

B.T.3 was a beginning RE teacher who was assigned to teach Chichewa at his school, hence he attended an in-service training workshop for Chichewa teachers. Apart from B.T.6 who reported occurrence of regular in-service workshops at his school, the rest of the teachers stated that such workshops were not taking place in their schools. The following section presents pre-service related themes.

4.5 Pre-service training related themes

This theme refers to all those situations where the beginning RE teachers felt that they were not able to do their job because of the inadequacy of the pre-service programmes

they went through. For instance, some beginning teachers felt that teaching RE was difficult because their pre-service programmes had no courses covering the content they were teaching. There are three themes under this category. The themes are as follows: Not being prepared for teaching; doubting the effectiveness of one's own teaching; and, not knowing what to teach. These themes are presented below seriatim.

4.5.1 Not being prepared for teaching RE in secondary schools

This theme refers to all situations in which the beginning RE teachers stated that due to their lack of familiarity with content as specified in the RE syllabus and due to lack of mastery of appropriate teaching and learning methods, they felt incapacitated in teaching RE. Teachers who were teaching other subjects other than RE were not interviewed on this theme. This theme affected only those teachers who were teaching RE at the time of the study. Teachers who were not teaching RE were excluded from interviews concerning this theme because they were teaching subjects that they had not been prepared for during their pre-service training.

The main complaint of the RE teachers was that they were not familiar with the content that they were supposed to teach in secondary schools. B.T. 8 succinctly related her experiences as follows:

The knowledge that I got in college was irrelevant, especially the content, because I learnt something else in college and I was given Form 4 classes. I was not familiar with the content of the Malawi School Certificate of Education course.

Similarly, B.T.4 who was teaching Forms Two and Four complained that:

It could be better, if in the colleges, student teachers were given contents of the subjects that they are supposed to teach in secondary schools.

B.T.1's experience was different from that of B.T.4 in the excerpt above, in that B.T.1's problem was that he did not know how to present a lesson. He writes:

I need help on how to present a lesson because I sometimes preach instead of teaching taking a class to be a podium of conversion.

The difference between teaching and preaching that B.T.1 refers to in the excerpt above, is not a small matter in RE. In 1963, in the *Schempp/Muray* decisions, the Supreme Court of the United States distinguished between teaching about Religion and teaching of Religion. The Court considered teaching of Religion unacceptable in public schools (Bartkowiak, 2019, p.2). Teaching of Religion is preaching in this sense. In recent years, teaching about Religion has tended to take the form of multifaith RE where learners are taught about the various religions.

What came up under this theme was that the beginning RE teachers lacked knowledge of the content they were supposed to teach in secondary schools. There were also some beginning RE teachers who indicated that they would have liked to be shown how to teach RE effectively. The next theme to be discussed is doubting the effectiveness of one's own teaching.

4.5.2 Doubting the effectiveness of one's own teaching

This theme applied wherever the beginning RE teachers doubted the effectiveness of their teaching. B.T.8 expressed self-doubt about the effectiveness of her teaching in the following words:

I was confronted with several questions from learners. I was wondering whether I was teaching the right thing. Several questions regarding the teaching confused me so much that I was wondering whether I was teaching the right thing.

In addition, when B.T.4 was asked whether he felt adequately equipped to teach RE in Form four, he responded:

Not really, I was not sure of myself. Confidence in my teaching developed later after teaching for at least one year.

Furthermore, B.T.1 in the following excerpt expresses the same experience as stated by B.T.4 and as follows:

Sometimes I could pose a question and no response ha ha ha ha ha! I used to ask myself if I had not prepared myself for that lesson.

In the same vein, B.T.8 remarked:

I was wondering whether I was teaching the right thing since several questions were often posed by the students.

It was clear that most of the beginning RE teachers expressed self-doubt about the effectiveness of their teaching.

Doubting the effectiveness of one's teaching sometimes took the form of doubting one's own mastery of the content they were teaching. B.T.5, for example, said:

Although I am well qualified to teach RE I find 28 periods per week too demanding especially that I do not have ready prepared notes for my classes. Every day I spend a lot of time pre-teaching myself and researching on what I am supposed to teach the next day.

Three of the eight beginning RE teachers had so much confidence in teaching of RE and other subjects to the extent that they provided assistance to other beginning teachers, especially those who had not gone through pre-service education training. B.T. 2 had no problems in teaching English Literature although he had been trained to teach RE. In his second year of teaching he became chair of the examination committee of his school. In the excerpt below, B.T.2 relates his experience as an examination officer:

I chaired the examination committee meeting as an examination officer. I communicated to the head teacher and the deputy head teacher in writing the resolutions made. Written resolutions are very important than oral reporting. This helps as a reminder to the administration. The next step is to remind the administration about the resolutions.

At another occasion, B.T.2 attended a departmental meeting for languages department. In his diary, B.T 2 further wrote:

[In a departmental meeting for languages I] suggested to offer a presentation on how to mark English literature essays at the forthcoming in-service training for the department. It is necessary to share the knowledge about how English Literature is scored and the requirements and guidelines that can assist students score high marks in essay writing at Malawi School Certificate of Examination.

Although, as stated above, B.T.2 was a beginning teacher in his second year of teaching, he acquired sufficient knowledge and skills that enabled him to assist other beginning teachers. He never complained about being assigned a subject he never specialised in at college. I present the theme of not knowing in the next sub-section.

4.5.3 Not knowing

Not knowing, in the sense of this study, refers to all those instances in which the beginning RE teachers admitted ignorance of knowledge or skills that are necessary for effective teaching. The teachers expressed lack of knowledge of teaching / learning techniques and content to teach. Specifically, this included lack of knowledge and techniques of teaching and learning, and not knowing content to be taught.

Lack of knowledge and techniques of teaching and learning

The beginning RE teachers complained that they lacked knowledge of what they presumed to be effective teaching and learning skills. B.T.7 illustrates how she realised that she did not know how to teach her subject. She writes:

As soon as I started teaching I felt unpreparedness for the classroom, lack of focus and support, isolation, shame and burn out as the five major themes I did not expect for my experience as a beginning teacher.

From the excerpt, it seems that B.T.7 once considered herself to be an ideal teacher who would not experience any of the five things she has listed. In her first class, however, the reality of teaching dawned upon her. She found herself unprepared, unfocused, isolated, lacking support and felt ashamed of herself. Unpreparedness for teaching classes was also expressed by B.T.6. In answering the question: “What help would you like to have to improve your teaching as a beginning teacher” He responded:

I would like the veteran teachers to conduct a refresher course. I need help in conducting lessons more efficiently.

B.T.2 refers to time management as an aspect of teaching in which he needed assistance. He states:

Time management is another challenge at this double shift school. I wish veteran teachers could help me with these but sometimes there are teachers who do not keep time.

B.T.8 pointed to syllabus coverage skills as one area of the teaching and learning in which she experienced challenges. She felt the need for assistance from veteran teachers in this area. She wrote:

Coverage of the syllabus is another challenge because our students take time to get what we are teaching them.

Other aspects of teaching and learning in which the teachers expressed lack of knowledge or skills included examination item setting techniques, effective teaching and learning skills and what they called proper teaching methods.

4.5.4 Not knowing content to be taught

Not knowing content refers to those instances where the beginning RE teachers indicated explicitly that they did not know the content to teach. For instance, B.T.4 said:

It could be better, if in the colleges students were given the content of the subject that is taught in secondary schools.

B.T.8 was even more explicit in stating the importance of providing students on pre-service programmes with the content they are supposed to teach:

The knowledge I got in college, was irrelevant, especially the content because I learnt something else in college and I was given classes in

which I was expected to teach content that was different from what I learnt in college.

B.T.8 further stated that:

I was wondering whether I was teaching the right thing. I visited another school to seek assistance.

B.T.1, in this connection, writes:

I did not have much information in class. I could pose a question and no response from learners ha ha ha. Sometimes I could ask myself if I had not prepared myself.

When asked a question and you as a teacher are not able to respond, the learners realise that you had not prepared for the lesson and laugh at you.

When B.T.1 in the excerpt above says he could ask himself if he had not prepared himself, he is referring to the fact that he ran out of the content to teach. This lack of ability to extend the teaching when an appropriate situation arises,; suggests lack of knowledge of content that needed to be covered at that time.

Reading the excerpts above, it seems that the pre-service training course that B.T.8 and B.T.1 followed did not include introduction to the content they were expected to teach after qualifying as teachers. It seems that the beginning RE teachers were not introduced to the courses they were going to teach in secondary schools. In other departments, in the University of Malawi, courses such as Biology for teachers and Physics for teachers are provided to pre-service teachers in these disciplines to ensure their firm grasp of the content they will be expected to teach when they start teaching. No similar courses are provided to students of RE in their pre-service programmes. I

visited the colleges concerned and confirmed that lecturers of RE do not offer content courses to their teacher trainees.

4.6 Individual-person related themes

Individual person related themes refer to those individual characteristics of the beginning RE teachers which may either positively or adversely affect their socialisation in a school community. These characteristics are feeling shy, feeling inferior, feeling accepted and lacking confidence in oneself. The characteristics are described one after another as follows.

4.6.1 Feeling shy

Some beginning RE teachers were not adequately assisted by their veteran colleagues because they were feeling shy and did not ask for assistance. In responding to a question about beginning teachers being shy in his school, B.T.6 stated that:

Beginning teachers at my school are not shy because veteran teachers are so helpful and open to one another so much that the timidity or shyness of beginning teachers gets removed completely in short time. Teachers are always willing to help the beginning teachers who may need to be assisted.

The sub-theme of feeling shy sometimes took the form of being afraid to ask for assistance. The conversation between myself as a researcher (R) and B.T.1 which follows indicates this form of shyness more clearly:

R: *How often were you supported by the head teacher?*

B.T.1: *They were supportive but sometimes I could feel that I was giving them pressure. The head teacher could sometimes ignore me. He was unwilling to assist me in my work.*

R: *Did you have the courage to ask the head teacher and others for assistance?*

B.T.1: *I was not really afraid but then their response could inculcate some fear in me. I thought I was giving them too much pressure.*

R: *Have you ever asked some other colleagues from other schools for assistance?*

B.T.1: *Yes I find those of other schools more helpful. My own colleagues did not help me.*

According to the conversation, B.T.1 appears to be too shy to ask for assistance in his school. This is probably so because B.T.2 who appears to be a very successful beginning teacher was working at the same school as B.T.1 and reported very positively about the assistance received in the school as a beginning teacher. B.T.1's perceptions of the management of the school may have to do with his own background or history. This is a case of multiple realities that I have mentioned in the theoretical framework of this study.

In a conversation with the researcher, B.T.4 suggested that lack of courage to ask for assistance was one of the challenges of beginning teachers. The following is part of the conversation concerned:

R: According to you what are the major challenges of beginning teachers?

B.T.4: Lacking courage to ask for assistance.

According to the conversation, shyness leads to failure to ask for assistance when one needs assistance. Failure to ask for assistance is an aspect of living in isolation which leads to poor professional development.

4.6.2 *Feeling inferior*

Feeling inferior occurred in those instances in which the beginning RE teachers felt that because he or she had just come from college, they could not do any work that appeared to be a challenge to them. Examples of such works are: Teaching any subject effectively; observing veteran teachers; and, teaching classes expected to take national examinations that year.

Failing to teach any subject effectively

Some of the beginning RE teachers expressed the view that because they were newly qualified, they could not teach effectively. B.T.7, for instance, when asked about the major challenges she has had, responded as follows:

*A beginner is a beginner. To work like veteran teachers is a challenge.
Even learners can tell that this one is a beginner.*

What is strange with the above excerpt is that the teacher feels that students would know from her teaching that she is a beginning teacher. One of my experiences as a teacher trainer, is that at times I train teachers who appear to be even better teachers than myself. It would have been more helpful if beginning teachers aimed at teaching in such a way that students could not know that they were beginning teachers. When a teacher prepares for a lesson adequately, he or she teaches it with so much confidence

that the students can hardly think that they are being taught by a beginning teacher. In this way, beginning teachers can hide their state of being novices.

Observing veteran teachers

B.T. 2 expressed a similar inferiority complex when he was asked whether he sought permission from some veteran teachers at his school to observe their lessons. He responded that:

As for me I observed a veteran teacher only once. What is normal is that veteran teachers observe beginning teachers and not vice versa. It is impolite for beginning teacher to observe a veteran teacher.

The position in the excerpt above is that beginning teachers should not observe veteran teachers. This thinking springs from a culture that respects elders in the community and the thinking of B.T.2 is that it would have been impolite for him as a beginning teacher to express the wish to observe a veteran teacher. Observing veteran teachers seems to be equated to criticising veteran teachers which would certainly be impolite in the Malawian culture. Obviously B.T.2, misunderstood the role of observing veteran teachers in his professional development.

Teaching examination classes

Feeling inferior also had to do with handling examination classes. In her diary, B.T. 5 wrote:

Sometimes one is given examination classes to teach despite being a beginning teacher.

What B.T.5 is saying in the excerpt above is that beginning teachers should not be given examination classes simply because they are beginning teachers. The position of B.T.5 contradicts that of beginning teachers in B.T.3's school. In B.T.3's school, when the head teacher announced that he was going to assign the teaching of all subjects in all examination classes to veteran teachers only, beginning teachers in the school considered the policy at the school to be discriminatory to them, consequently they asked the head teacher to withdraw it. In other words, there was no uniformity of opinion regarding this issue among beginning teachers.

4.6.3 Accepting responsibility

Accepting responsibility occurred where a beginning RE teacher was given responsibility by the school management or by colleagues. The responsibilities ranged from acting as head teacher to being appointed patron of girls' football club. It was noted during the study, that in some schools the process of socialisation of beginning teachers was deliberately promoted by assigning responsibilities to beginning teachers in the school. B.T. 3 was surprised when his head teacher told him that he would act as head teacher in the absence of the head teacher himself and the deputy head teacher. In his diary he writes:

I was informed by the head teacher that I would be in their office during our shifts because the head teacher and the deputies would not be in the office during those days as they were going out on duty.

Furthermore, under weekly reflections, B.T.3 wrote:

The high point for me during this week was managing the deputy head's office. It has been a quite good experience.

It is clear from these excerpts that B.T.3 felt pleased with the experience of acting as head teacher for his school.

Similarly, B.T. 2 was assigned a number of responsibilities, namely: examinations committee chair, patron of the girls' football club and was assigned the responsibility of buying a new photocopier machine on behalf of the school from Gestetner in Blantyre. In his diary, regarding his being appointed examinations officer, B.T.2 wrote:

I chaired the examinations committee meeting as an examinations officer. I also communicated through writing the resolutions made at the meeting to the head teacher as well as to the deputy heads.

Under reflections in the diary, B.T.2 wrote:

Written resolutions are more important than oral reporting. This helps as a reminder to the administration. The next step is to remind the administration about the resolutions.

B.T.2's diary entries are quoted at length above, to suggest that giving responsibilities to beginning teachers helps in getting them settled in the school and in the teaching profession. Giving responsibilities to beginning teachers takes different forms. B.T.6 for instance, reports the practice in his school whereby the head teacher was giving her teachers the responsibility of making announcements in turns during assembly. The aim of the practice was to give beginning teachers and veteran teachers opportunities of speaking in public.

4.6.4 Feeling accepted

Feeling accepted and settling down occurred when the beginning RE teachers felt that they had been warmly welcomed and were provided with what they required to work efficiently in the school. Feeling accepted is an aspect of personal characteristics because it was observed that in the same school one beginning RE teacher could feel accepted while another could not. The beginning teacher who felt accepted in the school was given many responsibilities. The teacher who had not settled down at his school, referred to his request for assistance as an act of giving pressure to the management of the school. The unsettled teacher appeared to have had no niche in the school. B.T.6 is one of the teachers who was warmly received at his school. He wrote:

When I came to the school, I was greatly supported. Experienced teachers that I found here helped me in different areas like how to teach BK, how to deal with discipline cases, how to make students to pay more attention during a lesson.

B.T.6 further wrote:

Colleague of the same department with me helped me a lot. For example, we discussed performance of students and shared how we can improve the teaching and learning of students.

Similarly, B.T.2 explained:

I was warmly received when I came here. Immediately after being received I was provided with materials like schemes of work as well as books. In addition, I was shown where the previous teacher from whom I had taken over the teaching had stopped.

Feeling accepted leads to getting settled in the particular school. Teachers who did not feel accepted by their schools behaved as if they were not part of the school. B.T.1 is a typical example of a teacher who acted like he was an outsider. As indicated previously, B.T.1 is a teacher who wrote about fearing that he was giving a lot of pressure to the head teacher and other teachers.

The following three sections of this chapter, present answers to the study's research questions. Section 5.7 begins with a presentation of answers on professional development opportunities. This is followed by a section on answers to the research question about challenges encountered by the beginning RE teachers. Section 5.9 provides a synthesis and interpretation of the lived experiences of the beginning RE teachers.

4.7 Professional development opportunities

Professional development of teachers involves increasing the teachers' practical knowledge and skills by promoting their ability to; lead students and create an organised learning environment, create powerful learning environments in which students can develop skills and obtain the required knowledge, and, sustain the social emotional and moral development of students while helping them to become responsible persons (Kessels, 2010). Hinds and Berger (2010, p.49) recommend professional development activities that focus on subject content and pedagogical strategies that prompt beginning teachers to make changes in their instructional practices. In the same vein, Hassel (1999, p.1) considers professional development to be a process of improving staff skills and competencies needed to produce outstanding educational results for students. From the foregoing definitions, the

ultimate purpose of professional development is improvement of teachers' knowledge and skills for the benefit of students. In this connection, Gathara (2010, p.1) cites Darling-Hammond who says each dollar that is spent in improving teachers' qualifications creates greater gains in student learning than any other use of an educational dollar. It was hence important to find out the professional development opportunities that were provided to the beginning RE teachers as well as the professional development challenges that the beginning RE teachers encountered in the course of their stay in their schools. The professional development opportunities can be summarised as assistance in teaching. Four forms of assistance were identified. These included in-service training workshops, appointment of mentors, assistance in handling discipline cases, and prompt provision of required materials. The forms of assistance that were provided in some schools to the participating teachers are presented and discussed as follows.

4.7.1 In-service training workshops

Teaching assistance, in this connection, refers to activities organised by a particular school with the aim of assisting beginning teachers in teaching their respective subjects. The most common activity that was reported by the beginning RE teachers was in-service training workshops.

In-service training workshops were reported to have taken place in three of the eight participating schools. These workshops were organised by the schools themselves. About the workshop at his school, B.T.2 had this to say:

By chance when I arrived, the school had organised an in-service training workshop which helped me a lot.

B.T.2 stated further that at his school in-service training workshops were organised at least two times a year, and that “*new teachers benefit a lot whenever there is an inset*”. The in-service training workshops at B.T.2’s school provided him with an opportunity to make a presentation on the marking of English Literature essays. In his diary, B.T.2 wrote:

I attended a departmental meeting for languages. At the meeting the forthcoming in-service training workshop was discussed. I offered to make a presentation on how to mark English Literature essays.

In his reflection, B.T.2 wrote that:

It is necessary to share knowledge about how English Literature is scored and the requirements and guidelines that can assist students to score high marks in essay writing and in Malawi School Certificate of Examinations (MSCE).

In-service training workshops were continuously held at B.T.6’s school and they included actual teaching of the beginning teachers by veteran teachers. The veteran teachers also assisted the beginning teachers in setting tests and examinations. One workshop was held at B.T.3’s school but no workshops were held in the remaining five participating schools.

4.7.2 Appointment of mentors

B.T.6’s school has had a tradition of appointing mentors for all beginning teachers. The school emerged as unique in that none of the other schools had this tradition. In responding to a question about mentors, B.T.6 responded as follows:

Yes, here at this school there is a tradition of assigning a beginning teacher to a veteran teacher even when a beginning teacher does not ask for that arrangement.

B.T. 6 went further to say that one of the traditions at his school entailed *[assigning] a “beginning teacher to a veteran teacher of any subject”*. In all the other schools, there were no officially appointed mentors for the beginning RE teachers but the beginning teachers reported being assisted informally by the veteran teachers. What appeared strange, however, was that some of the beginning RE teachers reported that they got more assistance from teachers of other schools than from teachers of their own schools. In some schools, the beginning teacher was the only specialised teacher of Religious Education, consequently when they wanted professional assistance, they had no option but to go and get it from another school that had RE teachers. There were, however, schools where the veteran teachers appeared less helpful in assisting the beginning teachers. In response to a question on whether he has ever asked colleagues from other schools for help, B.T.1 responded as follows:

Yes, I met [..... (name of an RE teacher)] a [... (name of a school at which the named teacher was working)]. Comparing my colleagues to those from other schools, I find those of other schools more helpful. My own colleagues could tell me that “I should just go to pray with children” and should not bother them.

The practice of veteran teachers giving assistance to beginning teachers was rare in some schools. B.T.2 explains why veteran teachers do not give assistance to beginning teachers:

At this school, we have veteran teachers but they do not provide any assistance to beginning teachers. The beginning teachers that joined do not ask for such assistance. The assumption is that they know everything. The veteran teachers also do not see the need to help beginning teachers because no assistance was given to them when they joined the school.

The impression being created here is that in some schools there was a tendency to hide information that would catalyse the success of a beginning teacher. Veteran teachers in some of the schools that participated in this study appear to have been in competition with beginning teachers. This is probably why beginning teachers find better assistance in other schools as indicated by B.T.1 above.

4.7.3 Assistance in handling discipline cases

Kessels' (2010) definition of professional development includes promotion of psychological and moral development of students to ensure that they become responsible persons. In B.T.3's class, a student who had a funny haircut with an aim of generating laughter and noise in his class was sent out of the class. The student claimed that the rules and regulations of the school were not clear on haircuts. The student, nevertheless, was called by veteran teachers to the staff room for counselling and this was a great relief to B.T.3 because it represented support to him from other members of staff on the decision he had taken concerning this particular student. In relating this incident B.T.3 wrote:

The student I had sent out because of a funny haircut was called to the staff room for counselling by colleagues. The student was however, adamant even when other teachers intervened to help him understand the position of the school on this matter.

This is a situation in which the other teachers joined the beginning teacher to help the student understand the rules and regulations of the school. At other times, the beginning teachers themselves gave assistance in handling discipline cases. B.T.2, for example, wrote the following:

I was disturbed by noise from Form 1B as I was teaching in Form 1A. There was no teacher in Form 1B and students were playing and

speaking on top of their voices. This forced me to provide English notes for them to copy. This helped to have my lesson in Form 1A undisturbed.

In his reflection on this incident, B.T.2 remarked that:

Absenteeism of a teacher can be the main cause of noise in a classroom. Teachers ought to give work to students when they fail to turn up for their classes.

The two foregoing excerpts show that the beginning teachers were not only receiving assistance from veteran teachers and school management in handling discipline cases, but were also assisting in controlling students' behaviour in the school, including in classes that they were not teaching at that time.

4.7.4 Prompt provision of materials

Prompt provision of materials refers to those instances where the necessary teaching and learning materials for the beginning teachers were made available to them immediately after their arrival at the school. B.T.2 is a typical example of a teacher who on arrival at the school was given all that he needed for teaching his subject. He reported that:

In fact, immediately after being received, I was provided with materials like schemes of work, as well as books. In addition to that I was shown where the previous teacher had stopped teaching in the syllabus. The teacher whose work I had taken over was available and discussed with me what needed to be done to continue the work smoothly.

The experiences of B.T.2 indicated in the excerpt above contrast sharply with those of B.T.1 who was teaching at the same school as B.T.2. As indicated earlier on, B.T.1 had to seek assistance from teachers of other schools other than teachers at his own school.

Although B.T.1 and B.T.2 were both beginning RE teachers, B.T.2 was assigned to teach English Literature while B.T.1 was assigned to teach Bible Knowledge. It cannot be ruled out that the different experiences of these two teachers were related to both the subjects they were teaching and to their individual characteristics as human beings.

4.8 Professional development challenges

Challenges are difficulties that beginning teachers encounter in the performance of their work. These challenges prevent beginning teachers from achieving their prescribed goals (Melnick & Meister, 2008). The challenges are: Lack of assistance in teaching and learning; inadequate knowledge of the content to be taught; preaching versus teaching; lack of mentors; non responsive students; and, misuse of class time by school management, discussed in the following sub sections.

4.8.1 Lack of assistance in teaching and learning

Lack of assistance in teaching and learning refers to those situations in which the beginning RE teachers found that they lacked assistance in carrying out their duties as teachers. B.T.6 who worked in a very good school in the sense that the school had its own school induction programme and attached mentors to teachers, considered his most serious problems to be: Work coverage; procedures for handling discipline cases in the school; and, lesson preparation. B.T.6 felt that he needed veteran teachers to

teach him techniques of covering the RE syllabus within the prescribed time. In his own words, he said:

Work coverage is a serious problem

B.T. 6 claimed that some of the veteran teachers who had institutional accommodation within the school used to work with the students in the evenings to cover their work. This was not possible for him because he lived far from the school and could not be available at the school in the evenings to take up classes. He said:

I stay outside the school, so I fail to organise extra classes meant to cover the syllabus as teachers who stay in the school do. It is not safe for me to come to school at night.

Similarly, B.T.8 stated:

I stay away from school, and it is hard for me to come to this school for extra classes. I fail to cover the syllabus

Lack of assistance in teaching and learning also occurred in those situations where teachers found no syllabi and teachers' guides in their schools and the head teachers made no effort to source these for the beginning teachers. B.T.1 went to a school where there were no syllabi and no teaching guides for teaching RE and the head teacher made no effort to make these available to him. He had to go around schools at his expense to obtain copies of the syllabus. He explained that:

RE is not for a particular doctrine. It is just like any other subject in the school. Syllabi are not available, the head teacher should make them available to me.

There were also situations in which the teachers stated that they did not know how to teach their subjects and they felt that they needed assistance in identifying teaching strategies that could make learners pass examinations.

4.8.2 Lack of knowledge of content to be taught

The importance of content in teaching has been emphasised by Hinds and Berger (2010, p.49). In their opinion, professional development of teachers should focus on subject content, pedagogical structures and prompts that would encourage teachers to make changes in their instructional practices.

As indicated in Section 5.5 on pre-service training related themes, the beginning RE teachers frequently expressed lack of knowledge of content to be taught as a concern. The lack of knowledge of content of their teaching subjects was worsened by absence of appropriate text books, syllabuses, and suggested schemes of work in their schools. In this connection, B.T.4 wished that the colleges should be mounting “*courses focusing on the content areas of the teaching subjects at secondary school level.*” Similarly, B.T. 8 stated that the knowledge she got at secondary school education was what she was imparting to the students. In other words, what she learnt in college, as previously stated, was irrelevant to the teaching of RE to the Form 4 students in her school.

4.8.3 Preaching versus teaching

One of the surprising findings of this study was that some of the trained beginning RE teachers expressed ignorance of the difference between preaching and teaching RE.

In response to a question on her needs as a beginning teacher at her school B.T.8 wrote:

I needed to be taught how to handle the teaching of Bible Knowledge.

B.T.1 was even more explicit about his lack of knowledge concerning the difference between preaching and teaching:

I needed help on how to present a lesson in RE because I could sometimes preach instead of teach, taking a class as a podium for conversion.

B.T.1 further stated that:

I need someone to show me how to present a lesson in RE

When asked whether he was preaching in class, B.T.1 responded “yes”. It is important to note that when B.T.1 complained to his colleagues about lack of resources for teaching RE, his colleagues responded by asking him to simply “*go and pray with the children and do not bother us*” which suggest that many teachers equate the teaching of RE to praying with students. As indicated previously, the difference between preaching and teaching has been a subject of continuous debate in RE. The question that needs to be answered is, whether it is possible to teach mono-faith RE without advocating what is being taught. This question is important because RE in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi serves the purpose of providing moral education to learners. This matter is discussed further in chapter six.

4.8.4 Lack of mentors

According to Hinds and Berger (2010), mentoring is an aspect of induction. Except for B.T.6 all the other beginning RE teachers had no officially appointed mentors.

During in-depth interviews with them, the beginning RE teachers made this fact no secret. In the following conversation between B.T.5 and me, unwillingness of veteran teachers to be observed by beginning teachers is portrayed.

R: Did you have the desire to see an experienced teacher at work?

B.T.5: Yes, I asked someone to allow me to observe her lesson

R: Did she allow you?

B.T.5: No, she made a lot of excuses for not allowing me to observe her lesson.

Furthermore, B.T.5 continued:

However, many teachers here wanted to observe me teaching. It is my belief that one day, things will change. There is need to give chance to beginning teachers to observe veteran teachers in action.

Similarly, B.T.7 indicated her need for a mentor when she said:

The previous teacher should have shown me how she had been teaching. I wanted to observe her.

As previously indicated, only B.T.6 had an officially appointed mentor to assist him as a beginning RE teacher. All the other beginning teachers indicated that they wished they had mentors appointed to assist them in their work.

4.8.5 None responsive students

The research participants reported that the students they were teaching were sometimes not responding to questions posed during RE lessons. B.T.2 who consistently emerged as an exceptional teacher, in the following discussion narrated his experience in this connection that:

Sometimes students did not respond to questions despite the fact that I believe that I presented the lesson very well.

Students' non-responsiveness to questions during a lesson was also reported by B.T.

8. She suggests that lack of response among students was caused by the fact that:

Most learners in Community Day Secondary Schools are slow learners. They take time to understand things.

This slowness in learning subsequently led to failure to cover the RE syllabus in the given time. In B.T.8's own words:

Coverage of the syllabus is another challenge because our students take long time to get what we are teaching them. Finishing what we have planned is also a problem for the same reason.

The experiences of B.T. 2 and B.T.8 under this theme contrasts sharply with what B.T.6 said concerning his school. In his diary, B.T.6 wrote that:

It has been noticed that most students who are studying in national Secondary Schools compared with those learning in Community Days Secondary Schools are more motivated and active during lessons to the extent that a teacher teaching students in the national secondary schools needs to prepare himself or herself adequately to avoid disappointing students.

For some unknown reasons, some teachers find it difficult to get responses from students during lesson times. The thoughts of some of the participating teachers suggest that this lack of response can be ascribed to students' slowness in learning. However, once a slow learner understands a lesson perfectly, he or she is as good as a fast learner. Slowness in learning is an issue when the learner is not aware of his or

her slowness. Whenever slow learners become aware of their slowness in learning, they take appropriate steps to compensate for it.

4.8.6 Misuse of class time by school management.

This is perhaps the most serious challenge that was reported by the participants. It was reported that the school management used periods allocated to RE for carrying out administrative functions with the teachers or students in the school. In lamenting about this situation in her school, B.T.5 wrote:

The relationship with co-workers, colleagues and administration varies from helpful to frustrating. Some Bible Knowledge teachers prefer to teach subjects other than BK. They prefer to teach even those subjects that they did not take at college.

In addition, B.T.1 reported that his subject (RE) was “*almost taken out of the time table*” when he was at the school.

It is not clear why management of a school could have behaved in the manner reported by these teachers. One can justifiably suspect that RE, as a subject, is considered by the management of the schools concerned to be of less educational value compared to other subjects.

4.9 Synthesis and interpretation of the lived experiences

This section synthesises and interprets findings about the lived experiences of the beginning RE teachers. According to Van Manen (1997), human beings exist in the world in relation to time, space, body and relationship with other humans. Van Manen calls time, body and relationships with other human existentials. As previously

indicated, these existentials are referred to as temporality, spatiality, corporeality and relationality. In the rest of this section, I discuss the findings of the present study in terms of these four fundamental thematic structures suggested by Van Manen. The discussion is divided into four parts: Beginning RE teachers' experience of lived space (spatiality); their experience of lived time (temporality); their experience in relation to lived body (corporeality); and, their experience in relation to lived others (relationality).

4.9.1 Beginning teachers' experience of lived space (spatiality)

Lived space is one of the categories for finding out the ways we experience day to day existence. The landscape in which the beginning teachers moved and found themselves at home is their felt space. This felt space for the beginning RE teachers included the school, the classrooms, staff rooms, play grounds and education division office. As Tembo (2016) says, the mood in which people encounter the lived space can influence the way they experience and interpret that felt space. I have discussed experiences in these spaces in some of the fourteen sub-themes that I have presented above.

4.9.2 Beginning teachers experiences of lived time (temporality)

Lived time is subjective. It is one's experience of how time is passing (Duran, 2017). Lived time consists of habits and patterns of time used, experiences from the past, and plans and hopes for the future. It is the time that seems to speed up when one is enjoying himself or herself or slow down when one is bored. Van Manen (1997, p.104) maintains that lived time is our temporal way of being in the world.

We know people by learning what constitutes their past, present and future (Tembo, 2016). Lived time appeared to slow down for the majority of the beginning teachers, in the sense that they had many obstacles to overcome before they could enjoy the job of teaching. They had to teach themselves the content they were expected to teach because in their pre-service training programmes they did not learn it. They also complained that they were not able to teach effectively. They spent a long time pre-teaching themselves. They appeared anxious and restless at times. Those who were teaching in double shift schools wondered whether a lesson could be effectively taught in thirty minutes. In schools of this kind, the class period is thirty minutes long as opposed to forty five minutes in non-shift secondary schools. The teachers generally experienced slow living time.

4.9.3 Beginning teachers' experiences of lived body (corporeality)

Felt space is experienced through the lived body. Wilson (2014, p.13) following Merleau-Ponty describes the lived body as our “*vehicle for being in the world*”. We do not only have a body but we essentially exist in and with the body. It is in the body that we meet other people through their bodies (Tembo, 2016). Teachers in this study experienced tiredness, anxiety and stress because they had to learn what they were going to teach when preparing their lessons. Male teachers reported that they were being excessively scrutinised for possible misbehaviour with female pupils.

4.9.4 Beginning teachers' experiences of relationships (relationality)

Duran (2017, p.144) in his study about learners experiences of silence, defines relationality as “*the lived relation we maintain with others in the interpersonal space that we share with them*”. Concerning the beginning RE teachers, the relationships

they made with veteran teachers and school management were generally poor. B.T.6 was exceptional because his head teacher made arrangements to ensure that beginning teachers were properly assisted and well cared for in her school. The rest of the participants reported that they were unsupported, isolated, and not valued. B.T.5 wrote:

The relationship with coworkers, colleagues, and administrators varies from helpful to frustrating.

The relationship appeared to be very poor because of school management's failure to care for the teaching of RE in some of the participating schools.

Part two: Discussion of findings

The discussion begins with findings that support the reviewed literature in section 5.10. This is followed by discussion of findings that extend the literature, which contain elements that are in agreement with the literature reviewed and elements that add new dimensions to the literature reviewed. There are also findings that were peculiar to the participants and schools involved in this study. These findings were unusual in the sense that, to the best of my knowledge, they have so far not been reported in the international literature. The findings that are peculiar to the beginning RE teachers and their schools are presented and discussed in section 5.12. Professional development opportunities offered to the beginning RE teachers and professional development challenges that the beginning RE teachers encountered are presented and discussed in sections 5.13 and 5.14 respectively. Section 5.15 presents reasons why beginning RE teachers experience the professional development challenges outlined in section 5.14. The last but one section discusses Kessel' (2010)

concept of professional well-being of beginning teachers. The chapter ends in section 5.17 with a summary.

4.10 Findings that support the reviewed literature

The findings that are in support of the literature reviewed include lack of professional support, unclear expectations, swim or sink mentality, not knowing, being neglected, not being prepared for teaching and doubting the effectiveness of one's teaching.

4.10.1 Lack of professional support

Lack of professional support has been considerably reported in the existing literature (Tillman, 2005; Blaise & Blaise, 1999; Varah et al., 1986; Gaede, 1978; Veenman, 1984; Corcoran, 1981; Lortie, 1975). The foregoing authors generally indicate that first year teachers need a lot of support, however, the support that they receive from school management and veteran teachers is, usually inadequate (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017, p.269). Some beginning RE teachers in the present study indicated that they were not supported by their colleagues and by their school management. B.T.2, for example, stated that:

The teachers that join the school do not ask for assistance. The assumption is that they know everything. The veteran teachers also do not see the need to help the beginning teachers because no assistance was given to them when they joined the school.

The excerpt above indicates that beginning teachers are hardly given any professional assistance when they join their schools. Ewing and Smith (2003, p.30) writing about New South Wales in Australia, note that “*The majority of beginning teachers (70%) are left to find informal support*”. This means that most beginning teachers are not

provided formal professional support as is the case with seven of the eight beginning teachers who participated in this study. Similarly, writing about the situation in the USA, Dias-Lacy and Guirguis (2017, p.265) observe that:

First year teachers leave the field of education due to lack of administrative support, inability to manage personal and professional expectations, limited teaching resources, lack of professional development, and difficulty in handling behaviour problems in the classroom.

Thus, it can rightly be concluded that in many countries around the world beginning teachers lack professional support.

Some of the beginning teachers in the study found themselves in the schools that had no syllabi, no curriculum and no appropriate recommended texts for teaching and learning RE. For instance, B.T.1 found no syllabi, no curriculum and no appropriate text books for teaching. When he asked his colleagues and the management for assistance about the situation, he was mockingly told to go to class and pray with the learners. He consequently had to find materials for teaching RE in other schools. Schools with low funding like the one where B.T.1 was posted to, constitute an additional problem to beginning teachers. This is, usually, the case in those schools where the management takes it to be the responsibility of the beginning teachers to source teaching and learning materials for use in the school. In the US, schools that are situated in the poor communities and schools of minority groups are hard to staff. Teaching and learning materials are frequently not available. Consequently, teachers do not like to apply for posts in such schools (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017).

In the present, although school management and veteran teachers did not support the majority of the beginning teachers who participated in the study, there was one beginning teacher, (B.T.6), who was fully supported by management and veteran teachers of his school.

4.10.2 Unclear expectations

Many scholars (Podsen & Denmark, 2007; Feinman Nemser, 2003; Kauffman et al. 2002; Kurtz, 1983; Corcoran, 1981) have reported the problem of unclear expectations. Generally, these scholars hold the view that informal routines and customs that make up the school culture constitute the sources of unclear expectations. In the present study, unclear expectations originated from school management's failure to carry out its responsibilities. For instance, when B.T.1 arrived at his school, he found no syllabus, no curriculum and no appropriate texts for teaching RE. Although it is the responsibility of the school to make teaching and learning materials available in the school, B.T.1 was compelled by circumstances to go about looking for teaching and learning materials in various schools around his school. In his response to the question, "What would you advise the head teacher to do when welcoming beginning teachers at this school? B.T.1 responded:

*RE is not for a particular doctrine. It is just like any other subject.
Syllabi should always be made available to the teachers concerned.*

Another cause of unclear expectations is failure of management and veteran teachers to provide sufficient information to beginning teachers about expectations at the school site. Because of failure of administrators and veteran teachers to explain formal and informal rules, procedures, routines, and customs for doing things in the school, beginning teachers do not know what is expected of them. Some of the

beginning teachers in the present study did not know the curriculum they were expected to teach or where to begin teaching the students using the curriculum. B.T.7, for instance, wrote the following:

I wanted the head teacher to show me the books I was going to use. I also wanted the previous teacher to show me how she was teaching and where she had stopped.

The need for beginning teachers to have concrete curricular guidance has been emphasised by Johnson (2004) in their study about new teachers' early experiences in high income and low income schools. In this study, absence of appropriate curriculum materials was common in the participating schools. B.T.1 for instance, complained about non-availability of teaching and learning materials for his subject. In the absence of curriculum materials for teaching a particular subject in the school, it is hard to know what a beginning teacher is supposed to do in such circumstances.

B.T.5 was posted to a school where periods allocated to RE were being used by management and other teachers for other events than teaching RE. This caused B.T.5 not to know what was expected of her in the circumstances. In her diary, she wrote:

It is frustrating and I feel not respected as such. It requires me to use my abilities to convince fellow teachers, administrators as well as learners about the importance of RE. To increase the enrollment of pupils registering for RE as a subject I need to involve several stake holders. I consulted thoroughly about how I can go about improving the teaching and learning of RE.

B.T.5's experience was rather strange because it was the management itself that created the situation of unclear expectation. B.T.7 had a similar experience. She reported to her school in time. The management, however, did not introduce her to

students during assembly. She did not know what to do about this. She refrained from reminding the head teacher to introduce her to students for fear that she might offend him. She assumed the head teacher was for some unknown reasons unwilling to introduce her to learners in the school. It is arguable that failure of management and veteran teachers to socialise the beginning teachers into school culture as soon as they arrived at the school and failure of management to perform its duties and carry out its responsibilities, were the major causes of unclear expectations among beginning teachers.

4.10.3 Swim or sink mentality

In many schools in Malawi, veteran teachers have had to survive their first year of teaching without any assistance as indicated by the case of B.T.2 above. Consequently, these teachers consider their survival to be a rite of passage. They expect all beginning teachers to survive their first year in the same manner as they did. Schools in which veteran teachers consider first year of teaching to be a swim or sink experience have been reported in the literature (Tillman, 2005; Gilbert, 2005; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Weiss & Weiss, 1999; Pigge & Marso, 1992; Gaede, 1978; Brandt, 2005). Goldrick (2016, p.1) advances the view that historically, many beginning teachers were left to sink and swim during their initial days in the classroom.

In the present study B.T.1 found himself in a swim or sink situation when he arrived at his school. He was assigned to teach RE with no syllabus, no curriculum and no text books. He had to go to other schools to make photocopies of materials he needed to use as a teacher in his school. The other teachers; except B.T.6 experienced less

serious forms of swim and sink situations than that of B.T.1. B.T.5 found that very few students took RE and her effort to increase the number of students taking RE was in vein. In reflecting on her experiences she wrote:

Deliberate efforts were made to increase the number of pupils studying RE and to equip teachers with skills that may improve teaching and learning of RE. These efforts were also meant to improve the availability of teaching and learning resources for RE. This improvement was to be achieved through the formation of a Forum for Humanity teachers but it did not succeed due to lack of funding. The relationship situation is undesirable.

It seems from the excerpt above that when new teachers arrive at a school, they are required to sort out issues about popularity of their subject in the school and to source materials for teaching their subject. The Zambian experience reported by Banja, Kasonde-Ng'andu, and Akakandelwa (2016, p.77) is reflected in the attitudes of most veteran teachers and some managers of the schools in Malawi. The three authors lamented that:

It is therefore unfortunate that veteran teachers who were expected to help the newly qualified teachers were perceived not to be interested in doing so, hoping instead to see them fail in their work.

The significance of Banja et al.'s (2016) lament is underscored in the present study by the fact that veteran teachers in all the seven schools except one did not allow the beginning RE teachers to observe them when teaching, and the beginning teachers got better assistance from teachers of other schools than teachers of their own schools as B.T.1 explained:

I find colleagues from other schools more supportive than those of my own school. Teachers in my school often trivialize my needs.

Sourcing materials for teaching a particular subject is, nevertheless, the responsibility of the management of the school. As Watkins (2016, p.4) explains:

“a principal’s role is to identify, maximise and coordinate all the available resources to run a school”.

Complaints by the beginning RE teachers suggest that many head teachers do not know or ignore their roles in their schools. In the imagination of most head teachers, beginning teachers are presumably expected to solve their problems.

The most common challenge that created swim or sink situations for beginning RE teachers was lack of teaching and learning materials such as commentaries and some recommended text books. The beginning RE teachers often moved from school to school in search of these materials. In the final analysis, it has to be remembered that the job of beginning teachers in schools is: *“too important in children’s lives and futures to let them to simply sink or swim without guidance and support”* (Goldrick, 2016, p. i). The purpose for guiding and supporting beginning RE teachers is to promote efficient teaching and to improve students’ learning outcomes.

4.10.4 Not knowing

Lortie (1975), as cited in Veenman (1984), argues that the teaching profession has no codified body of knowledge and skills and that: ‘way has been found to record and crystallise teaching for the benefit of beginners’ p.58.

Lortie implies that experience derived from learning while teaching is the most important means of acquiring knowledge and skills about teaching. The Alberta Teachers Association (2017, p.19) concurs with Lortie (1975) when it stipulates that:

Because teaching is a new experience every time you walk into a classroom, good teachers build a repertoire of strategies and tools that they can use when they need them.

This suggests that good teaching practice develops over the years as one gathers up knowledge and learns appropriate teaching practices. To the participating beginning RE teachers in this study, one of their greatest problems was their lack of knowledge about the content they were expected to teach. For instance, B.T.8 was not sure if what she was teaching was right. She particularly stated that she felt the need *to be taught how to handle the teaching of RE*, without spending a lot of time in preparing for lessons in the subject. This underscored the fact the teachers needed to master the content to be taught before teaching it.

On his part, during in-depth interviews B.T.1 stated that he needed someone to help him in teaching RE. In his own words, he explained that:

I needed someone to help me teaching RE because I was only preaching. At present I think what I do is closer to preaching than teaching RE.

As argued earlier on, teaching is different from preaching. While teaching aims at promoting educational development of the learners, preaching aims at converting learners to a particular religion and is not allowed in public schools. As indicated in the first part of this chapter, preaching and teaching religion were distinguished as teaching about religion and teaching of religion respectively, by the Supreme Court of the United States of America in the *Scampp / Murray* decisions of 1963 (Bartkowiak, 2019,p.4). In a similar vein, Hirst (1970, p.33) suggested that:

If several religions are part of the syllabus, and then it will be possible to teach about religion rather than teaching to be religious.

Phillips (1970, p.67) concurred with Hirst (1970) in the excerpt above when he stated that “*Religion should be elucidated and not advocated*” in schools. Some of the schools in Malawi are, however, missionary schools and not public schools. One of the legitimate functions of the Christian schools is to advocate Christianity. Consequently, it has proved difficult for countries like Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe to introduce multifaith RE at secondary school level. It may be difficult to teach RE in form of BK in Christian missionary schools without appearing to be advocating Christian values. This is especially so in those countries where the purpose for teaching RE is to promote moral values.

4.10.5 Being neglected

Gold (1996), Tillman, (2005) and Worthy (2005) have written about the theme of being neglected. According to Betts (2006), being neglected occurs when beginning teachers work in isolation, are not listened to, and are not supported or are undervalued. Ewing and Smith (2003) report an incident in which a beginning teacher was told that he was expected to ask for ideas and not to give ideas. In Ewing and Smith’s own words: New teachers are usually expected to ask for, not to give ideas (Ewing & Smith, 2003, p.19).

Consistent with the excerpt above, B.T.5 was not listened to by other teachers. She wrote:

Other teachers could not listen to me because I was new to the school.

Similarly, B.T.1's needs for syllabus, curriculum and prescribed text books for teaching RE were neglected by the management of his school to the extent that he had no option but to go to nearby schools to obtain copies of the materials he needed. B.T.1's experiences, in this connection, appear to be strange, because ordinarily, one would have expected his school's management to assist him in sourcing teaching and learning materials. Being undervalued is another form of neglect. In general, beginning teachers are generally undervalued as teachers who can only teach lower classes such as Form One. B.T.4 relates his experience of being perceived as someone suitable to teach Form Ones only. He lamented that:

The second challenge is that when you are a beginning teacher and are new to the school the management usually wants you to teach in form one. You are taken to be a teacher to be used in form one.

Later, this chapter discusses differences in beginning teachers' perceptions of their roles in the schools. As indicated previously, some beginning teachers feel offended when they are not allowed to teach senior classes.

The beginning RE teachers were also neglected when they were not introduced to students and support staff. In this connection, B.T.7 and B.T.8 reported that their respective head teachers did not introduce them to the students and support staff. B.T.8 further reported that she was not taken around the school. As previously explained, failure of the head teachers in B.T.7 and B.T.8's schools to introduce them to support staff and students, and to take them around the school may be an instance of ignorance or forgetfulness on the part of the head teachers. It may be a consequence of ignorance because when one of the teachers was asked by this researcher to explain what he does in welcoming beginning teachers when they arrive

at the school, he responded that he does not do anything and that perhaps he should have been doing something to help them.

4.10.6 Not being prepared for teaching

Ewing and Smith (2003, p.22) state that: It is not uncommon for teachers to criticise strongly their pre-service preparation.

Regarding this, Hudson (2012, p.81) explains that:

It would be unrealistic to expect pre-service teachers to graduate with these experiences that require contextually- specific knowledge and skills without further assistance and guidance from the schools.

While the importance of the contextually specific knowledge and skills cannot be disputed, there is need, however, to also appreciate the fact that there are certain things that one expects beginning teachers to know by the time they join their school. One of these is the content that the beginning teachers are expected to teach. The participating teachers in this study criticised their pre-service preparation programmes for lack of coverage of content that the teachers were expected to teach in schools as indicated previously

B.T.8 expressed this clearly:

The knowledge that I got in college was irrelevant, especially the content. I learnt something else in college, and was assigned to teach form four whose content was very different from what I learnt in college.

This excerpt concurs with Banja et al.'s (2016) observation in Zambia that beginning teachers in their study did not understand the subjects they were teaching and they had

difficulties when it came to organising knowledge content and using it to achieve purposes of education.

B.T.6 explained that he learnt from veteran teachers much of the content he was expected to teach in the school. It is disputable that pre-service training programmes for RE teachers in Malawi lack coverage of content that is taught in RE lessons in secondary schools. This was confirmed when the researcher visited different colleges to ascertain this finding.

4.10.7 Doubting the effectiveness of one's own teaching

According to Stenhouse (1975.p.144), professionalism in education involves commitment to systematic questioning of one's teaching as a basis for development. Self-doubt leads to reflection-on-action and reflection about action (Day, 1999, p.28). In the same vein, Stansbury and Zimmerman (2000, p.4) argue that the role of mentors in the professional development of beginning teachers is to help the beginning teacher to develop capacity for critical self-reflection on their teaching practice. Similarly, Darling Hammond, Hyler and Gardener (2017) advance the view that mentoring enables teachers to reflect on their practice and question their own teaching process. The foregoing discussion suggests that development of self-doubt and self-reflection are important stages in the professional development of a teacher.

When a beginning teacher doubts the effectiveness of his or her teaching, he or she is on the verge of beginning to reflect on his or her teaching, and in turn, to improve their teaching practices. The participating teachers in this study doubted the effectiveness of their own teaching mainly because of their perceived lack of ability to teach RE effectively. In this connection, B.T.1 stated:

I did not have enough information in class. I could pose a question and no response ha ha ha. Sometimes I could ask myself if I had not prepared myself.

Similarly, after B.T.8 was confronted with several questions from learners, she wondered whether she was teaching the appropriate content:

I was wondering whether I was teaching the right thing. The students asked several questions regarding the teaching that confused me. I was wondering if I was teaching the right thing.

B.T.8 explained that the content she learnt in her student days was what she taught her students. She, hence wondered whether what she was teaching was what she was supposed to teach according to the current syllabus. In this connection, She said that:

The content that I taught is exactly what I remembered from my Form Four student days. What I learnt in college is different from what I teach. Since I did my Form Four long time ago, many things have changed. I was not sure if I was right in what I was teaching.

As pointed out earlier on, self-doubt is a good thing if it leads to finding out the truth about one's teaching or one's condition. What is of concern to this study, however, is that as revealed by the foregoing excerpts, much of the self-doubt expressed by the beginning RE teachers did not lead to any remedial or corrective action by the teachers.

4.11 Findings that extend the reviewed literature

This section reports findings that both agree with the reviewed literature and add new dimensions to it. These findings are; undervaluing RE teachers, teaching out of the field of specialisation, being assigned difficult classes and accepting responsibility.

Some dimensions of the findings of the foregoing sub-themes have never been reported before.

4.11.1 Undervaluing RE teachers

In some of the participating schools it was not only the subject (RE) that was undervalued, its teachers were also undervalued. The undervaluing of RE teachers was articulated by B.T.5 when she wrote:

Most RE teachers are not involved in planning sessions in the school but when faced with problems they are brought in to suggest solutions.

The manner in which B.T.1 was received at his school suggests that he was undervalued compared to his colleague (B.T.2). B.T.1 was not given anything to use in teaching RE at the school, while B.T.2 who was an RE teacher but assigned to teach English Literature, was on arrival presented with everything that he needed to teach English Literature. Head teachers are expected to value all teachers posted to their schools.

In responding to a question about the advice she would give to the head teacher of her school, B.T.7 writes:

To love our beginning teachers the head teacher must always take himself as a father who must not sideline the beginning teachers.

In contrast, Kearney (2017, p. 791) quotes an administrator of a school in Australia as saying:

We value teachers at this school whether new to the profession, new to the school, or whether they have been here for 10 to 20 years, they are

all important to us. We need to ensure that we take care of them, to get the best out of them and subsequently our students.

The findings of this study suggest that most head teachers in the participating schools could not get the best out of every beginning teacher. More significantly, these findings may be a reflection of the state of development of the education system in the country. The findings suggest that there are management problems in the participating secondary schools. Most school managers are yet to start appreciating the value of nurturing the people they work with.

Another dimension of the practice of undervaluing beginning RE teachers that emerged from the study is the tendency to assign the beginning teachers the lowest class in secondary schools. B.T.4 reports that one of the major challenges that beginning RE teachers face was that they were: *“Being taken as ones {teachers} to be used in Form One”*.

Betts (2006) reported about un-valuing of part time beginning teachers employed in New Brunswick Canada. Betts’ (2006, p.88) report of being unvalued is different from undervaluing beginning teachers presented in this study. In Betts’ case, the teachers felt that the management undervalued the work they had been doing in their schools. In the present case, of beginning RE teachers, the head teachers and senior veteran teachers undervalued the teaching abilities of the beginning RE teachers when they assigned them to teach junior classes only.

The undervaluing of beginning teachers manifested itself in the practice of disallowing the beginning teachers to teach classes that were destined to take national examinations in that year, as reported by B.T.3 in his diary. The beginning teachers

in B.T.3's school felt that the decision made by the head teacher to exclude beginning teachers from teaching examination classes was unfair and discriminatory towards the beginning teachers themselves. Melnick and Meister (2008, p.55) studied concerns of beginning and experienced teachers and reported curriculum areas in which beginning teachers felt more confident to teach than veteran teachers. Similarly, the authors report areas in which veteran teachers appeared more confident in teaching than the beginning teachers. In other words, just as beginning teachers have things to learn from veteran teachers, veteran teachers too have things to learn from beginning teachers.

4.11.2 Teaching out of field of specialisation

Many scholars (Veenman, 1984; Darling Hammond, 1997; Ingersoll 2001c; Caldis, 2017) offer an enlightening discussion of the theme of teaching outside one's field of specialisation. Ingersoll 2001c found that new teachers are more often assigned classes outside their field of specialisation than veteran teachers. Du Pleissis (2013) observes that teachers who teach outside their field of specialisation lack pedagogical content knowledge. This may have adverse effects on students' learning if it is not remedied. In general, teachers find teaching outside their field of specialisation more difficult than teaching in their field of specialisation. Some of the views held by teachers who were sampled by this study support the international literature about difficulties encountered when teaching outside one's field of specialisation. In this regard, one of B.T.5 diary entries reads:

RE teachers are being forced to teach subjects that they did not study in college without proper support or training.

Similarly, when B.T.8 was asked to name the challenges she was facing in the school, she replied that:

I teach Agriculture instead of Bible Knowledge only. This is a challenge to me because I majored in RE but I am also assigned to teach Agriculture which is a different subject.

It has to be explained, however, that not all beginning RE teachers considered teaching subjects outside their field of specialisation a problem, some beginning RE teachers actually looked forward to teaching subjects that they did not specialise in college. This point was succinctly presented by B.T.5 when she wrote the following:

Some RE teachers prefer to teach other subjects even those they did not study in college.

The excerpt above suggests that for some unknown reasons some RE teachers prefer to teach other subjects. It seems that they develop negative attitudes towards the teaching of RE in schools as soon as they start teaching it.

4.11.3 Teaching difficult classes

Some classes are considered to be difficult to teach. Such classes include large classes, classes in which misbehaviour is the norm, classes that are destined to take national examinations that year and classes with students with special needs. Among the participating schools there were no classes in which misbehaviour was the norm. In general, students appeared to be reasonably well behaved. As such, difficult classes were limited to classes destined to take national examinations in that year and classes of slow learners. B.T.6 wrote:

When I was given an examination class I got worried fearing that academic performance of my students would be low in my class since I did

not know the techniques for making students pass examinations. But when Malawi National Examination Board (MANEB) released results of Malawi School Certificate of Education Examinations, academic performance of my students became comparable with classes of more experienced teachers, I became so happy and motivated in my profession.

B.T.4 expressed similar fear when he was assigned to teach an examination class. When asked what he felt when he learnt that he had been assigned to teach an examination class, he responded:

I still had some fear because I was not given chance to observe the veteran teachers

Similarly, B.T. 3 expressed these sentiments when describing his needs on arrival at his school. In his own words he stated:

I needed to be oriented before being given a class for example, I was given examination classes but was never given a chance to observe a veteran teacher.

These excerpts show that some beginning teachers consider teaching examination classes a difficult task while others look forward to being assigned examination classes. As previously indicated, when the head teacher in B.T.3's school, decided to assign the teaching of classes that were destined to take examinations that year to veteran teachers only, some beginning teachers were not happy with such a decision. The decision appeared to undervalue beginning teachers' abilities to teach senior classes. In narrating this incident B.T.3 wrote:

In-service training was held at Thondwe Catholic Pastoral Center. Some teachers objected to the fact that a decision that only old and experienced teachers would be allowed to teach form four classes. This decision was made to enable more students to do well in their

examinations. A group of beginning teachers who were concerned about this decision argued that they were trained and were eager to teach examination classes. They felt that the decision was discriminatory towards newly recruited teachers. They requested the head teacher to withdraw it.

B.T.3's view contradicts the international literature that beginning teachers should not be assigned difficult classes (Keengwe & Adjei-Boateng, 2012; Betts, 2006). Another dimension of teaching difficult classes is teaching the least interesting or most difficult courses (Betts, 2006; Clement et al. 2000; Pigge & Marso, 1992). The literature recommends that beginning teachers should not be given difficult work assignments to enable them to have sufficient time to learn how to teach their subjects.

It is significant to note that by accepting that teaching a class that is destined to take national examinations that year is a difficult work assignment, then the beginning teachers in B.T.3's school considered themselves to have attained the status of fully qualified professional teachers capable of teaching any class in secondary schools. This is not what is expected of beginning teachers in the international literature.

4.11.4 Accepting responsibility

Like other teachers, beginning RE teachers were assigned various responsibilities in addition to teaching loads or workloads. This is not surprising because, as Kearney (2017, p. 787) observes:

That neophyte teachers are often given extra duties and more difficulties classes, even at a time when they are still getting accustomed to the nuances of their new career.

The excerpt above implies that beginning teachers should not be given extra duties to enable them to focus on learning how to teach as expert teachers. A number of authors (Kearney, 2017; Algozzine et al., 2007, p.142; Kessels, 2010, p.107) have recommended that beginning teachers should be given release time to enable them to work with their mentors. In the present study, however, it was found that responses of beginning teachers to extra-curricular activities were different. Some beginning RE teachers seemed to enjoy performing extra duties assigned to them while others showed reluctance in accepting extra-curricular activities. In B.T.6's school, however, some responsibilities given to the beginning teachers were meant to prepare them for leadership and managerial roles in future. For instance, teachers at the school took turns to make announcements to students during assemblies. The purpose for doing this was solely to develop the teachers' ability to speak in public. The concerned beginning teachers apparently enjoyed doing this. Similarly, B.T.2 seemed to enjoy carrying out his duties as a patron of girls' football, chair of examinations committee, and the responsibility he was given to purchase on behalf of the school, a new photocopier. After buying the photocopier he taught other teachers how to use it.

The foregoing discussion reveals that the duties assigned to the beginning RE teachers by their school's management or their colleagues had potential to help a beginning teacher to find a niche in their school, hence this study's conclusion that it does not appear prudent to recommend that beginning teachers should be excused from all extra-curricular activities.

4.12 Findings that were peculiar to the beginning RE teachers

There were four findings that were peculiar to the beginning RE teachers in Malawi. As previously indicated, these findings have so far not been reported in the international literature. These findings were: Non-caring attitudes towards Religious Education as a subject; perceiving the beginning RE teacher as a threat; being unnecessarily probed for misbehaviour; and undervaluing RE teachers. These findings are briefly discussed below.

4.12.1 Non-caring attitudes to RE as a subject

In B.T.5's school, RE classes were placed as last periods on the time table. In writing about this, B.T.5 stated:

RE classes are always the last periods on the time table such that the classes are always victims of postponement due to meetings.

B.T.5 further indicated that:

RE classes are being used as time for caucus meetings. Sometimes other teachers use the time allocated for RE classes for their make-up lessons. They do this because their subjects have higher enrollment than RE.

These experiences of B.T.5 are regrettable, considering that Slabbert and Hattingh (2006, p.704) suggest that an essential component of education is caring. According to these authors: *"There could be little that is more fundamental than caring in education"*.

What was happening at B.T.5's school suggests that the head teacher was not caring for RE as a subject. The school therefore became an organisation that was fighting

some of its parts, hence its likelihood not to succeed. Similar experiences occurred to B.T.1 whose head teacher did not care for RE as a subject. At this school, B.T.2, the English Literature teacher, was given everything that he needed to start teaching his subject, but B.T.1 an RE teacher was given nothing. B.T.1 had to go to other schools to source text books, syllabi, and curricula. When asked by this study to state the advice he would give his head teacher regarding RE, B.T.1 responded:

I can tell him that RE is a subject like any other subject. It needs to be accommodated in the time table. At one time they almost removed it from the time table.

The behaviour of the head teacher in B.T.1's school suggests lack of care for RE as a subject. Such uncaring attitudes to a subject offered at a school is unlikely to lead to effective teaching of the subject. It is rather strange that the head teacher, the person who was expected to care most for the teaching and learning of all subjects in the school, appears not to care at all for RE.

4.12.2 Being seen as a threat

The challenge of a beginning RE teacher being perceived as a threat was reported by B.T.4 alone. Teachers in secondary schools in the country may have a Degree or Diploma in Education qualification. Those with degrees in Education when posted to schools whose head teachers have diplomas in Education are perceived as teachers who would eventually succeed the head teachers with diploma qualifications. This idea probably came about when people felt that head teachers of secondary schools should be holders of degrees in education. This idea was, however, not effected and diploma teachers are legible to being appointed head teachers provided they pass

appropriate Public Service promotion interviews. At present, however, prevalence of this attitude among degree and diploma teachers is unknown.

4.12.3 Being unnecessarily probed for misbehaving

The findings of this study indicate that head teachers of some participating schools probed all male teachers whenever a male teacher misbehaved with a female student. As earlier on reported by B.T.2, the head teacher of his school convened a meeting of all male teachers to warn them on the dire consequences of such behaviour when it occurred in his school. Reflecting on the said male teachers' only meeting, B.T.2 complained that:

It was indeed unfortunate to learn that some teachers including those who are married are involved in relationships with female students. It is my hope that the head teacher's warning shall go a long way in curbing such wrong behaviour.

The practice of appearing to accuse all male teachers when only one male teacher has misbehaved appears to be annoying to some beginning teachers. B.T.6 also reported of being warned to keep social distance with female students. Some of the beginning RE teachers perceived a tendency on the part of the head teachers and veteran teachers, of suspecting them of behaving immorally with students of the opposite sex. A similar finding was reported by Betts (2006, p.108). In Betts study, beginning teachers in New Brunswick who had not signed employment contracts, felt that they were watched more closely than necessary. In other words, in the teaching profession, beginning teachers tend to attract unnecessarily a lot of attention from head teacher and veteran teachers.

4.12.4 Undervaluing RE teachers

This issue has been presented and discussed in section 5.11.1. Suffice to say that some of the beginning RE teachers in this study were undervalued in the sense that they were regarded to be teachers who could not contribute anything to discussions on school management as reported by B.T.5. They were also undervalued in that they were considered to be teachers who could teach Form One or junior classes only as reported by B.T.4 and B.T.3.

4.13 The professional development opportunities of beginning RE teachers

Professional development is a process of increasing teachers' practical knowledge and skills in the areas of classroom management, pedagogy, and psychological and moral development of students (Kessels, 2010, p.32). Before dwelling on the findings that this study has made, this section discusses, the three aspects of professional development suggested by Kessels (2010).

4.13.1 Classroom management

Classroom management is the ability to lead students and create a quiet, clear, and organised learning environment. Apart from one of the teachers (B.T.6), all the other teachers have had no organised professional development opportunities concerning classroom management. The exceptional teacher, however, went through lessons on classroom management presented by veteran teachers at his school.

4.13.2 Pedagogy

As defined earlier on, pedagogy is understood as the ability to create a powerful learning environment in which students can develop skills and obtain the required

knowledge. In this study, only one teacher was able to deliver teaching lessons without problems while the rest had limited opportunities in their professional development in this dimension. The one exceptional teacher developed his teaching and behaviour controlling strategies by working together with veteran teachers.

4.13.3 Psychological and moral development of students

Psychological and moral development of students refers to teachers' ability to create a safe learning environment, sustain the social-emotional and moral development of students, and help students to become responsible persons (Kessels, 2010). It is only B.T.6 who was assisted in his efforts to bring about psychological and moral development of students. In his diary B.T.6 wrote:

I have learnt that students in secondary schools are adolescents especially those in forms two, three and four. Adolescence is the transitional period from childhood to adulthood. This transitional period makes the students to develop physical and emotional changes. They develop rebellious attitudes, independence, and social curiosity among other physical and emotional changes. Therefore, teachers in secondary schools need some skills to be employed in order to handle adolescent students. These can help the students to meet some of the challenges they may be encountering during this stage of development.

All the other teachers have had no opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills concerning psychological and moral development of their students. Only three of the eight beginning RE teachers reported in-service workshops held at their schools or some chosen place outside their schools. The workshops were mainly concerned with teaching content and record keeping. In general, therefore, it can be said that there was very little effort on the part of the school management to promote understanding of psychological and moral development of students among beginning teachers.

4.14 Professional development challenges of beginning RE teachers

Several challenges related to professional development of RE teachers emerged from the study as follows: Some head teachers' attitudes towards RE as a subject; other teachers' attitudes towards RE as a subject;; students' attitudes to RE as a subject and lack of initiative on the part of the school management and veteran teachers to promote professional development among teachers, more especially, beginning teachers.

4.14.1 School related challenges

In general, as previously indicated, the environment in some schools is characterised by lack of care for RE as a subject. This may be one of the factors that may be causing beginning teachers of RE to prefer to teach subjects other than RE. B.T.5 explained that:

Some of the RE teachers prefer to teach other subjects even those subjects that they did not study in college.

The excerpt above, shows a situation in which some RE teachers consider teaching subjects other than RE, a better job. This is probably because of the uncaring attitudes to RE as a subject. Apart from challenges originating from the management of the school, as indicated above, the study found student related challenges, one of which is student discipline. This challenge was articulated by B.T.2:

I punished noise makers in Form 1A before break time. The noise makers were asked to clean the surroundings of Form 1 class block. I observed that noise making is mainly caused by students who occupy the back seats. These are mainly boys. This means that the presence

of a teacher does not mean that students will be quiet. Noise making also takes part in the learning process.

B.T.3 reported a more serious discipline case:

I identified a student with a funny hair style in class. I asked the student to have his hair cut properly. The student was uncooperative. I took the student to the staff room for counselling and the student was adamant in his disobedience. Even when other teachers intervened to help him understand the position of the school, the student claimed that the rules and regulations of the school are not clear on haircut styles. I sent the student back home to have his hair cut properly and asked him not to come back to school unless he has a proper haircut because he was uncooperative we had no choice but to send him back.

Under weekly reflections regarding this matter, B.T.3 wrote:

When the child with fancy haircut challenged the rules and regulations of the school he managed to expose the weakness and lack of clarity of the rules and regulations of the school. This gave us food for thought discovering that the rules overlook some issues.

On summing up his experiences on this matter B.T.3 lamented:

A student challenging the rules and regulations of the school?

The incidences of students discipline in the excerpts above indicate that the beginning RE teachers wasted time and energy in addressing discipline issues instead of promoting teaching and learning in the school. Handling of disciplinary issues can affect professional development of the teacher as indicated in the international literature (Veenman, 1984, p. 153; Ewing & Smith, 2003, p17).

4.14.2 Some veteran teachers' attitudes towards RE

In some schools, veteran teachers demonstrated uncaring attitudes towards RE as a subject. When B.T.1, for instance, complained to his colleagues about the absence of text books, syllabi and curriculum for teaching RE in his school, he was simply told to go and pray with children and not to bother them with his concerns. Similarly, other teachers used RE periods to conduct make up classes for themselves. These uncaring attitudes prompted B.T.5 to write in her diary:

The relationship with coworkers, colleagues and administrators varies from helpful to frustrating. I feel that it is being unkind and sometimes I feel my job is a waste of time. It promotes creation of enmity among fellow teachers.

The uncaring attitudes that some veteran teachers had towards beginning RE teachers may be one of the causes of the high turnover of beginning RE teachers in these schools.

4.14.3 Students' attitudes towards RE as a subject

Considering that RE was during the study period being taught as Bible Knowledge, students of other faiths other than Christianity thought the purpose of RE was to convert them to Christianity. This explains why RE usually has low enrollment in Muslim dominated areas. In most of Malawi's public universities, a strong pass in RE is not considered a criterion for admission into courses offered. Low RE enrollments are a concern for beginning RE teachers. B.T.5 for instance, reported that:

Deliberate efforts were made to increase the number of students studying RE and equip teachers with skills that may improve the teaching and learning of RE. This included the improvement of teaching and learning resources. This was to be done through a

formation of a Forum for Humanity teachers. This initiative did not succeed due lack of funding from the administration.

The low enrollment in RE classes is thus a professional setback to RE teachers, as indicated in the excerpt above.

4.14.4 Lack of initiative to promote professional development

Apart from the head teacher and veteran teachers at B.T.6's school, all head teachers and veteran teachers in the remaining seven schools were not aware of the need to provide a conducive environment for professional development of beginning teachers in their schools. It seems that the schools have too many issues to sort out, to the extent that there is no time to think about the professional development of beginning teachers. This is especially so in schools that have a large number of unqualified teachers. The unqualified teachers pose a more serious problem for head teachers and veteran teachers than beginning qualified teachers. It has to be borne in mind that professional development of beginning teachers is a new concept in the educational system in the country. Many teachers think that once a teacher completes training in a teacher training institution, he or she is qualified to teach any class. It is not surprising that the idea of professional development is not popular among head teachers and veteran teachers in the participating schools. The idea of professional development of teachers is an outgrowth of studies that were initiated by scholars like Lortie (1975; Veenman, 1984; Corcoran, 1981; Huberman, 1989 and Rosenholtz, 1989). One of the earliest doctoral studies on beginning teachers was completed by Amar in 1952 (Kessels, 2010, p.11). These studies, however, have had until recently little effect on the teaching profession. At the time that I did my teacher training course, the concept of professional development of teachers had not yet been

introduced in the country. It is in recent years that teachers in Africa are beginning to accept the fact that beginning teachers need to be assisted to develop professionally. It is hence no wonder that the idea of professional development is not popular among head teachers and veteran teachers in the participating schools.

Considering the foregoing conclusions, it seems appropriate to state that recommendations made in certain studies such as Keengwe and Adgei-Boateng, (2012), Wachira and Waiganjo (2014) that propose the setting up of country wide induction programmes as a remedy for the high turnover of beginning RE teachers, that are unlikely to succeed. In Malawi's situation, there is need to work on promoting good management of the schools and to introduce ideas about teacher professional development among veteran and beginning teachers. Studies suggest that even in the developed countries, the country-wide or state-wide induction programmes have been the least popular elements of teacher induction programmes (Algozzine et al. 2007). It is also clear from this study that teachers are individual persons with different aptitudes, attitudes and abilities. Their historical trajectories make them respond differently to various situations or challenges in the school environment. This means that, to succeed, an induction programme in Malawi will have to be tailored to individual needs of the teachers concerned. This, certainly can best be done in the schools themselves.

4.15 Reasons for experiencing professional development challenges

There are five sets of reasons why beginning teachers in Malawi experience professional development challenges outlined above. These sets of reasons have to do with: RE as a subject taught in schools; management of the schools; management of the school curriculum; communities around the school; and, the character of the

beginning teachers themselves. I discuss these sets of reasons one after another below.

4.15.1 RE as a subject taught in schools

The value of RE as a subject offered in schools has varied from time to time. As previously indicated, in 1995 the National Symposium for Secondary Education stated that the purpose for teaching RE is to promote ethical and moral values. RE, however, is still being taught the way it was in the years before 1995. This means that RE is being taught for other purposes than the one stated by the National Symposium. This calls into question the justification for teaching RE, in its present form in secondary schools in the country. The growing secularisation being experienced by Malawi, compounds the problem of justifying RE as a public school subject. Because of this reason, some public officers in schools appear less sympathetic to RE as a subject. This transpired at B.T.5's school, where RE was the last subject on the time table and at B.T.1's school where no funds were available for buying Bibles or RE teachers' guide. All this happened because the head teachers concerned, considered RE to be a subject of less educational value than subjects like English, Mathematics, History etc.

4.15.2 Management of schools

Like many secondary school heads in Sub-Saharan Africa, many head teachers in Malawi have not gone through any management courses to prepare them for their management positions. The result of this situation is that many head teachers sometimes show dismal ignorance of their responsibilities. This is exemplified by the scenario of B.T.5's school head teacher who allowed RE periods to be used for caucus

meetings and failed to stop other teachers from using RE periods for makeup classes. Similarly, B.T.7 advised head teachers to take themselves as “*fathers or mothers*” who must not sideline any teacher. This means that B.T.7 felt that her head teacher was sidelining her because she was an RE teacher. It seems that sometimes the beginning teachers know better about what head teachers are supposed to do than the head teachers themselves. For instance, B.T.7 understood that head teachers have to act as impartial fathers or mothers to their teachers.

4.15.3 Management of the school curriculum

The school curriculum in Malawi has recently suffered big changes. As pointed out earlier on, a secondary school student is supposed to take five compulsory subjects. The compulsory subjects are; English, Mathematics, Agriculture, Biology and Chichewa. Students who opt to take the science route, are expected to take Physics and Chemistry in addition to the compulsory subjects. Those who opt to take the humanities route are required to take History and Geography in addition to the compulsory subjects. In the MSCE examinations, the majority of students take eight subjects. RE as a subject has to compete with Home Economics, Woodwork, Metal Work, Technical Drawing, Social Studies, Life Skills, Business Studies, Additional Mathematics, Latin, Computer Studies and French for a place as the eighth subject. During the study period, the number of students who took RE as a subject decreased considerably. Teaching a small number of students at secondary school gives a lot problems because other teachers begin to ignore the subject altogether. This is why B.T.5 complained about the use of her periods for caucus meetings and makeup classes by head teachers and veteran teachers respectively.

As earlier indicated, the value of RE as a secondary school subject has been very unstable in recent years. Following the recommendations by the National Secondary School Curriculum Review Symposium (1995), Religious and Moral Education (RME) was introduced in junior secondary schools. The Christian missionary schools opposed introduction of RME because it is multifaith. They reasoned that they constructed their schools for the purpose of propagating the Christian faith. The government decided to allow the Christian mission schools to continue teaching Bible Knowledge in their schools. Schools belonging to organisations of other faiths were also allowed to continue teaching RME in their schools. The problem, however, with RME is that it is not examinable by the Malawi National Examinations Board at Malawi School Certificate Examinations level due to scarcity of candidates. These changes imply that teacher training institutions have to prepare RE teachers to teach two different subjects namely BK and RME. Beginning teachers who specialise in one subject may find themselves handicapped when they are asked to teach a form of RE that they did not learn in college.

4.15.4 Community around the school

Most day secondary schools in Malawi are community secondary schools such that they draw their students from communities around the school. Non-Christian communities often resist the teaching of RE in the form of Bible Knowledge in schools located in their communities. They do this because they fear that their children would, in the process of learning RE, be converted to Christianity. This also leads to reduction in the numbers of students taking RE, and consequently to marginalisation of RE as a teaching subject. Such marginalisation has brought about loss of interest in teaching the subject.

4.15.5 Character of the beginning RE teachers themselves

As previously indicated in this chapter, the character of the beginning RE teacher was itself considered a source of challenges to himself or herself, or to the school. For example, B.T.1 seemed to regard himself as someone outside the institution in which he was working.

In responding to a question about whether he had courage to ask the head teacher for assistance, B.T.1 answered:

I was not really afraid but then their response could inculcate some fear in me. I thought I was giving them much pressure.

The fact that B.T.1 and B.T.2 worked in the same school but B.T. 1 experienced more problems than B.T.2, suggests that B.T.1 never saw himself as a member of his school. This is why he always talked about giving pressure to the head teacher and all the other teachers in his school.

4.16 Extension of the concept of professional well-being

The study used Kessels (2010) concept of professional well-being of beginning teachers as an instrument for comprehending the lived experiences of beginning RE teachers in the selected secondary schools in Malawi. Kessels' (2010) concept of professional well-being of beginning teachers has been found in this study to be inadequate as an instrument for understanding professional well-being of teachers in the country. For instance, her concept of well-being does not take into account effects on professional well-being of beginning teachers caused by delays in paying salaries as indicated by Keengwe and Adjei-Boateng (2012). Similarly, the use of RE periods

for caucus meetings and make up classes did arguably affect the professional well-being of the beginning RE teachers concerned. Kessels' (2010) concept of professional well-being of beginning teachers assumed the presence of informed and competent management in the schools. Findings of this study suggest that there are managerial problems in the sampled schools, hence, the need to revisit Kessels' (2010) concept of professional well-being of beginning teachers.

As indicated previously, the management of some schools leaves much to be desired. One of the things that can improve the professional well-being of beginning teachers is sensitisation of school managers regarding the need to care about all subjects in the curriculum and to accept all teachers that are posted to their schools. Caring is a key value in education (Slabbert & Hattingh, 2006, p.705). The concept of professional well-being of beginning teachers in developing countries has to include internal and external management of schools, as one of its elements.

The living and working conditions on site can also affect the professional well-being of beginning teachers. In this study, B.T.6 complained that because he was living far away from the school, he was not able to conduct evening classes as veteran teachers who lived on campus. It was therefore difficult for him to cover the content he was supposed to teach. A similar complaint was made by B.T. 8 as previously reported in this study.

Other aspects of living conditions on site such as free time, provision of meals for teachers who stay away from school, extra-curricular responsibilities and availability of necessities for life may also affect the professional well-being of teachers.

Another factor that can affect the professional well-being of beginning teachers is the school climate. School climate is defined as the quality and character of school life. Factors affecting school climate fall into four categories, namely; Safety, teaching and learning (academic climate), relationship (community climate), and, environment. A school with a positive school climate is likely to experience higher academic performance, better mental health and less bullying as well as reduced disruptive behaviours. The school climate can therefore affect the professional well-being of beginning teachers. With these observations in mind, the study has revisited Kessels (2010) concept of professional well-being of beginning teachers and has ended up with an expanded concept of professional well-being portrayed in the diagram in figure 5.

The limitations of this concept arise from the author's failure to include issues of internal and external management, living and working conditions in the school and the general climate of the school concerned. This means that the concept has to be extended to include elements mentioned above to make it more useful in Sub-Saharan African countries and other developing countries.

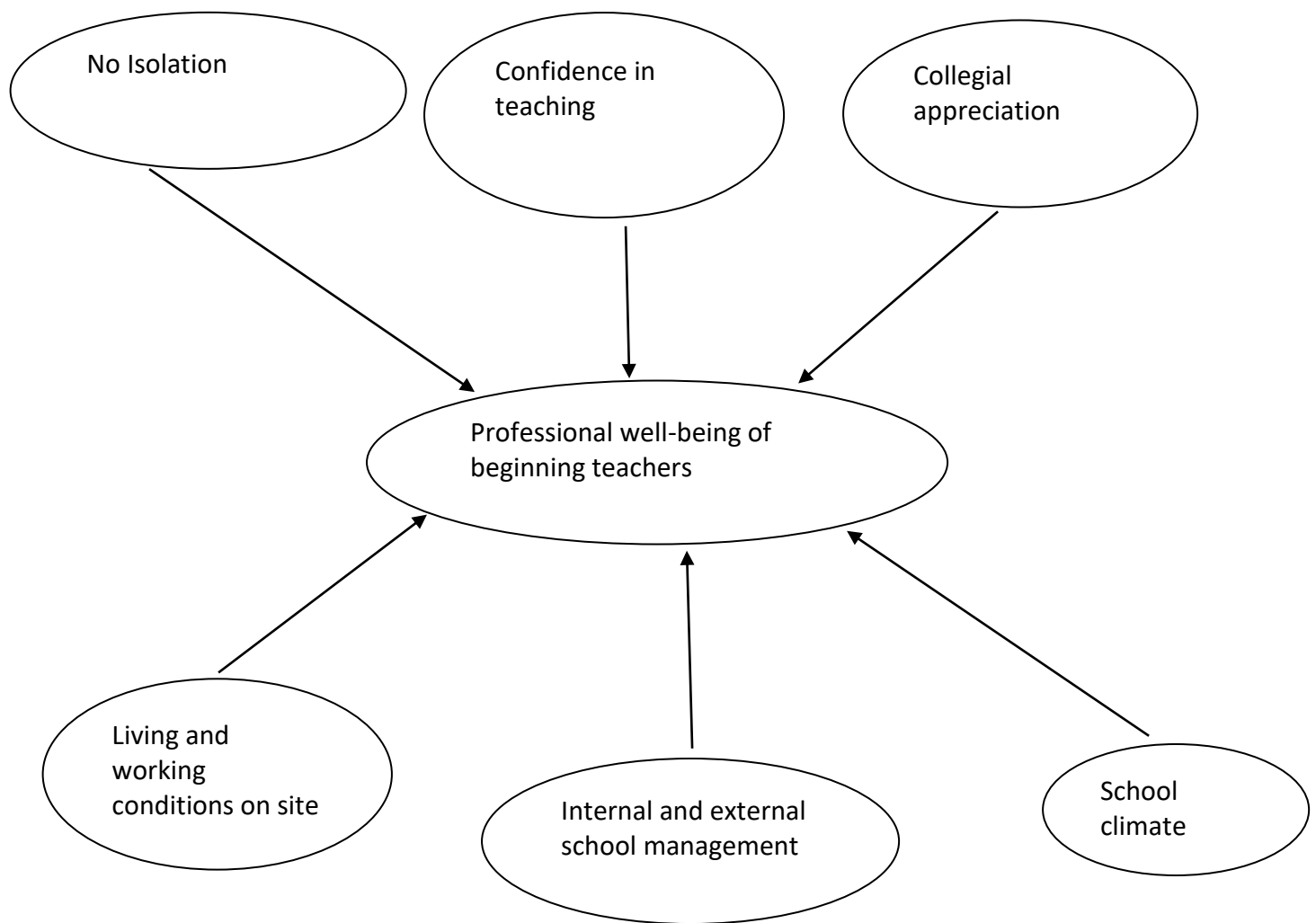


Figure 5: Extended Kessels' (2010) professional well-being

In figure 5, Kessels (2010) elements of the professional well-being of beginning teachers are portrayed. The central oval figure is portraying the professional well-being of beginning teachers. Elements of professional well-being that the study has suggested for inclusion in this concept are presented below the central oval figure. These elements include; living and working conditions on site, internal and external school management, and school climate.

4.17 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented and discussed the findings of the study concerning lived experiences that RE teachers go through in their early years of work. The chapter begins with a presentation of the research participants and a brief account of B.T.6's school which appeared to be the school of best practice in inducting beginning teachers. The chapter has also presented a brief account of B.T.2 who appeared to be the most resourceful beginning teacher among the participants of this study.

Section three presents the themes that emerged from inductive analysis of the data realised from protocol writing, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The themes were grouped into three categories: School related themes, pre-service related themes, and individual person related themes. These themes and categories are presented and discussed in the chapter. Professional development opportunities and professional development challenges that the beginning RE teachers reported are presented in section 5.7 and 5.8 respectively. Section 5.9 presents a synthesis and interpretation of the lived experiences beginning teachers suggested; by Van Maanen (1997). The remaining sections have discussed research findings that: Support the reviewed literature; extend the existing literature; and, research findings that are peculiar to the participants of this study. Section 5.15 presents and discusses reasons why the beginning RE teachers experienced the problems they reported. The chapter ends with a chapter summary in section 5.16.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The point of departure of this study is the observation of high turnover among Religious Education teachers as indicated in Chapter One. The main purpose of this study was to determine the status of professional well-being of beginning RE teachers. Other purposes of the study were: To find out why beginning RE teachers experience the problems established by the study; to use the knowledge gained from the study and from international literature to suggest the way forward for Malawi; and, to determine other factors other than those suggested by Kessels (2010) that affect the professional well-being of beginning RE teachers in Malawi.

This qualitative study employed the hermeneutical phenomenological method of educational research and its data was generated through protocol writing, in-depth interviews, and, focus group discussions. The study assumed social constructivist and post-industrial perspectives for its theoretical framework. Colaizzi's (1978) seven step descriptive phenomenological method for analysing data was used to analyse the data generated. This method involved reading the participants accounts several times for the researcher to familiarise with the data and to identify significant statements pertaining to the professional well-being of the beginning RE teachers. The significant statements identified were closely examined to determine their meanings and in turn these statements were clustered into themes. In the process, the researcher's ideas and

beliefs were bracketed with full understanding of Colaizzi's (1978) observation that complete bracketing is never possible.

The themes were collapsed into three categories: School related themes; pre-service training related themes; and, individual person related themes. These themes have been extensively presented and discussed in chapter five.

The purpose of this chapter is to present answers to the research questions and discuss conclusions that were drawn in the course of the study. Implications and recommendations for practice and further research are also presented. The chapter opens with presentation and discussion of conclusions pertaining to the research questions in section 5.2. The implications of the study for educational practice are presented and discussed in section 5.3. Suggestions for further research are presented in section 5.4. Limitations and strengths of the study are subjects of section 5.5. The last section presents my closing thoughts.

5.2 Conclusions pertaining to the research questions

The conclusions presented in this section are essentially answers to the research questions that were pursued by the study. The research questions examined the following: Professional well-being related lived experiences of beginning RE teachers; the professional development opportunities offered to beginning RE teachers; professional development challenges encountered by the beginning RE teachers. Reasons why beginning RE teachers experienced the challenges they reported were investigated. Conclusions drawn from these aspects of the research questions are presented and discussed below.

5.2.1 Professional well-being of beginning RE teachers

The lived experiences of the beginning RE teachers can be compared and contrasted with those of beginning teachers reported in the international literature. The differences, in particular, appear to be a reflection of the state of development of Malawi and its educational system.

The beginning teachers in seven of the participating schools in this study, like beginning teachers in the international literature, experienced isolation within their schools. All the beginning RE teachers who were teaching RE were unable to teach RE with confidence because their pre-service programmes did not cover the content they were supposed to teach. Although most teacher preparation programmes emphasise the importance of subject matter mastery, the programmes that the participating teachers went through, omitted discussions of the content that the beginning teachers were expected to teach in their schools. Teachers are supposed to know what they are expected to teach, otherwise they end up spending a long time teaching themselves the content to be taught. No wonder four of the beginning RE teachers recommended that subject matter content should be covered in teacher preparation programmes for RE teachers. This recommendation is peculiar to RE because in all teacher training institutions, all the other disciplines taught in secondary schools have courses aimed at ensuring beginning teachers' grasp content which they will teach in schools.

As far as the need for veteran teachers to appreciate beginning RE teachers' work is concerned, only two of the beginning RE teachers experienced appreciation of their

work by veteran colleagues in their schools. The other six beginning RE teachers did not report instances of appreciation of their work by their veteran colleagues.

School leadership is arguably the main source of problems concerning the professional well-being of beginning RE teachers found by this study. It appeared head teachers were not oriented to the execution of their duties. In three schools, head teachers acted in a manner that would only serve to frustrate the beginning teachers. This includes always allocating RE the last period on the time table every day, and using RE periods for caucus meetings and for make-up classes.

At one of the participating schools, there were virtually no teaching and learning materials for the beginning RE teacher to use and the head teacher did nothing about this. At B.T.1's school, the beginning RE teacher had to move from school to school in search of teaching and learning materials. The fact that when this particular teacher complained about this situation, he was mockingly told to simply go and pray with the children, suggests that veteran teachers in the school looked at B.T.1's problems from a different perspective. Situations like these come about because of head teachers' failure to carry out their duties. It seems therefore that one of the most important factors that affect beginning teachers' professional well-being is the leadership of their schools. From the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that the professional well-being of the beginning RE teachers who participated in this study was generally poor. The factors that affected the professional well-being of these teachers were internal and external administration, isolation within the school, lack of appreciation by colleagues, lack of ability to teach RE with confidence, living and working conditions on site, and school climate.

5.2.2 Opportunities of professional development offered to RE teachers

In the case of the eight beginning RE teachers who participated in the study, only B.T.6 in the exceptional school had a continuous series of opportunities for professional development offered to him during the year. Two participating teachers reported one in-service workshop offered to them during the year under study. The rest of the other teachers were not offered any opportunities for professional development. It is, hence, clear that apart from the head teacher of the exceptional school, the other head teachers did not seem to consider beginning teachers as their responsibility. The head teachers appeared to be ignorant of the fact that they were co-responsible for the professional development of the beginning teachers. The head teachers' attitudes to beginning teachers are not surprising. It is only in recent years that scholars have realised that:

Even a very comprehensive teacher education programme; cannot prepare teachers for their job completely (Kessels, 2010, p.10, quoting Britton, Paine, Pimm & Raisen, 2003).

There is no teacher education programme that can prepare teachers completely for the job of teaching because some of the skills are developed while teaching. Thus, it has been generally realised that the initial teacher pre-service programme needs to be sustained by the induction programmes that involve mentoring. This study has found that professional development opportunities that were offered to seven of the eight sampled teachers excluded mentoring and induction programmes. In two of the seven schools, in-service training workshops were conducted only once in a year.

5.2.3 Challenges encountered by the beginning RE teachers

Many professional development challenges were encountered by the beginning RE teachers. Among these were: Some head teachers' negative attitudes towards RE as a subject and towards its teachers; veteran teachers' attitudes towards RE as a subject; students' attitudes towards RE as a subject; and lack of initiative by the school management and veteran teachers to promote professional development of beginning teachers.

In general, as previously indicated, the environment in the schools was characterised by low value being ascribed to RE as a subject and sometimes to its teachers. This may be one of the factors that is causing beginning RE teachers to opt to teach subjects other than RE. Some veteran teachers also demonstrated uncaring attitudes towards RE and its teachers. Such attitudes towards RE and its teachers by head teachers and veteran teachers are some of the causes of the high turnover of beginning RE teachers.

Students' attitudes towards RE constitute another challenge to beginning RE teachers. Students who belong to other religions other than Christianity think that BK seeks to convert them to Christianity. As previously indicated, low enrollments and the fact that public universities in the country do not take RE as a criterion for admission into various courses constitute challenges to beginning RE teachers. The head teachers in the schools appear to be in the un-Socratic state of not knowing their ignorance about their role in assisting beginning teachers. It seems that the schools have too many issues to sort out to the extent that there is no time to think about the professional development of beginning teachers. Apart from the teacher who worked at the

exceptional school, all the other beginning RE teachers had many challenges that could be alleviated only by sensitising head teachers and veteran teachers to the problems that the beginning teachers encountered in their school.

5.2.4 Reasons for experiencing professional development challenges

The reasons for experiencing professional development challenges have been presented and discussed in Section 4.15 of this thesis. Suffice it to say that leadership of the schools, attitudes of head teachers, veteran teachers and learners to RE as a subject, and recent changes in the RE curriculum, are some of the sources of the challenges that beginning RE teachers experienced in the schools.

5.3 Implications of the study for educational practice

This study has a number of implications. These include implications relevant to: The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; head teachers; and, veteran teachers.

5.3.1 Ministerial implications

Ministerial implications are implications to do with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. As indicated in the literature review, Alliance For Excellent Education (2008, p.6) argues that the combination of induction programmes and exposure to mentors and other teachers' experiences shortens the time it takes for a beginning teacher to perform at the same level as an expert teacher from seven to three years. This means that when beginning teachers are offered induction programmes that involve trained mentors and other experienced teachers in the schools, they become expert teachers after three years of teaching. Teachers who are not assisted in this manner take seven years to become expert teachers. This implies

that, as a country, Malawi has to move towards establishing country wide induction programmes that involve trained mentors and other veteran teachers.

When inducting beginning teachers, it is necessary to adopt a whole school approach in which the head teacher, veteran teachers and support staff would take it to be their responsibility to ensure that the beginning teachers take the shortest time possible to learn teaching and learning skills that would enable them to change their teaching practices, and improve students' learning outcomes. It seems that in the past, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology was fully conversant with the importance of induction of beginning teachers. In recent years, however, there has been little activity in this connection. It appears necessary to have a desk officer for beginning teachers in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to plan and coordinate programmes of beginning teachers in the country. Such an officer will have to work closely with University of Malawi and other teacher training institutions.

Zonal or district induction programmes of beginning teachers may have to be conducted jointly with the teacher training institutions. One additional advantage of induction programmes supported by strong mentoring activities is that they increase beginning teacher retention (Alliance For Excellent Education 2008, p.6).

At B.T.6's school, the teachers who played the mentorship roles or those who, from time to time, assisted the beginning teachers in their work were not paid any extra remuneration. They were appointed by their head teacher who explained to them their role in inducting beginning teachers. The teachers at the school shared a vision of

producing excellent results for their school, and it is this vision that sustains the induction activities in the school. The implication here is that, only determination to propagate the good practice of the exceptional school is required of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, because no extra funds are implied. The quality of headship of the schools, as previously stated, emerged as the most important factor affecting the professional well-being of beginning RE teachers in this study. This is attributable to the fact that many of the educational administrators charged with the responsibility of monitoring the quality of education at all levels of the system have had no training to enable them to do their work efficiently. Bush and Thurlow (2003, p.vii) indicate that in South Africa, “*most principals and senior staff have received no specific preparation for their management roles*”. In addition, Banja et al. (2016), Wachira & Waijango (2014) and Keengwe & Adjei-Boteng, (2012) have reported poor management of schools in Zambia, Kenya and Ghana respectively. This suggests that in many countries in the Sub-Saharan Region, principals and heads of departments are hardly prepared for their management roles and this in turn affects the way they perceive and interact with beginning teachers including those whose specialisation is RE.

In this study, except for the head teacher of the exceptional school, the way beginning teachers were treated by head teachers left a lot to be desired. It is important to improve the quality of headship of schools if the professional development of beginning teachers is to be accelerated.

5.3.2 Implications to do with head teachers and veteran teachers

Head teachers should be pedagogical heads of their schools. They should work out with other members of staff and practise a shared vision of teaching and learning in their schools. Beginning teachers should be seen as additional personnel that would enable the school to achieve its shared vision. In some schools, head teachers and veteran teachers appeared ignorant of the importance of RE as a school subject. In such schools, teachers did not work as a team due to lack of a common purpose. In the worse scenario of these schools, teachers competed with each other instead of cooperating among themselves. Banja et al. (2016, p.77) observed that in schools of this kind, veteran teachers are actually happy when beginning teachers fail in their work. It is important for the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to train head teachers, deputy head teachers, and heads of departments in ways that can enable them to adopt the perspective of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology on important issues in the school. After adopting the perspectives of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, teachers are unlikely to devalue any subject that is offered in Malawi's schools. More importantly, such teachers would not be pleased when beginning teachers fail to teach effectively.

5.3.3 Implications to do with teacher training institutions

As indicated earlier on, preparation programmes for pre-service teachers have in the past emphasised subject matter mastery in addition to providing many opportunities for teaching practice. The preparation programmes that all the eight participating teachers went through had no courses on subject matter content. It was, hence, difficult for the beginning teachers in this study to teach their subject with confidence. Since preparation programmes in other disciplines do have content related courses,

RE programmes should introduce a content course for RE. Such a course should be named, RE for teachers. This would ensure that beginning RE teachers have a firm grasp of the content they are expected to teach in schools. As indicated previously, most disciplines in the University of Malawi and in teacher training colleges have similar courses that enable beginning teachers to understand the content to be taught. These courses are usually pitched at a higher level than the School Certificate Level.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

The present qualitative study is a small study covering eight schools and eight beginning RE teachers within the neighbourhood of Chancellor College in Zomba. The findings of the study are informative of the schools and teachers who participated in the study. The extent to which the findings of the study reflect the situation of beginning RE teachers in the country is not known. There is need for a country-wide survey that could determine the extent to which findings of this study apply to schools and teachers in the whole country. It is especially necessary to find out the proportion of head teachers who demonstrate uncaring attitudes towards RE as a school subject in Malawi. It is similarly necessary to find out the commonality of instances in which teachers with degrees posted to schools where the head teachers are diploma holders are perceived as threats to incumbent head teachers.

Another possible area for further study is to determine what students and teachers consider to be the educational value of RE. This is very important because the students seem to think that RE involves memorisation of stories, hence its educational value is probably not known by them. As indicated previously, however, the value of RE to the nation is that it is a carrier of moral values to learners. It is important to

know the extent to which RE is in the minds of teachers and learners associated with promotion of moral values. It is also important to determine whether the teachers and students consider the moral values to be worth pursuing in the schools in modern times.

5.5 Limitations and strengths of the study

As pointed out earlier, this small qualitative study was limited only to eight beginning RE teachers and eight schools within the neighbourhood of Zomba, consequently the extent to which its findings characterise the state of beginning RE teachers in the country is not known. Nevertheless, the fact that only one out of eight schools had organised arrangements for handling beginning teachers suggests that many schools do not offer assistance to beginning teachers. Many secondary schools in the country need to be informed about the necessity of promoting a smooth and quick transition of beginning teachers, from the pre-service training phase to autonomous teacher development phase, through induction programmes that involve trained mentors.

The thesis has made deliberate effort to portray the situation of beginning RE teachers as perceived by the teachers themselves through the many thick descriptions that have been presented. The hope is that these descriptions will enable readers to get a feel of what the beginning RE teachers experienced.

The strength of this study lies in its use of protocol writing as a means of generating data of the lived experiences of the beginning RE teachers. The teachers were instructed to write the experiences that in their opinion were related to their status as beginning RE teachers. The beginning RE teachers wrote down experiences that were

good for their professional development as teachers and those that were not good for their professional development. This is why, unlike other studies on lived experiences of beginning RE teachers, this study reported good and bad experiences that the sampled teachers went through.

5.6 Closing thoughts

In this section I present lessons that I have learnt from doing the study. These lessons fall into three categories: Induction programs; nature of successful induction programmes; and, whole school approach to assisting beginning teachers.

5.6.1 Induction programmes

Induction programmes are arguably a necessity in promoting quality of education in a country in line with views of Alliance For Excellent Education (2008, p.6), comprehensive induction programmes can shorten the time it takes for beginning teachers to perform at the same level as expert teachers from seven to three years. This means on average, it takes seven years for teachers working without induction programmes and learning by trial and error, to start using the strategies that work in teaching. Such teachers, however, do not understand why the strategies work, and what they could do to make the strategies work better (Lortie, 1975). It is widely accepted that the induction period has great influence on the kind of teacher that one becomes (Gold, 1996). It is also considered important to sustain beginning teachers' professional development with induction programmes that involve mentors and other veteran teachers (Britton et al, 2003; Betts, 2006). The importance is so great that the country should work towards introducing comprehensive induction programmes for beginning teachers that are supported by trained mentors and trained head teachers.

5.6.2 Nature of successful induction programmes

Kessels (2010, p.87) presents five characteristics of a comprehensive induction programme that is likely to succeed in promoting the professional development of beginning teachers. The characteristics are: Close contact of a beginning teacher with a mentor who is a more experienced teacher; group meetings for beginning teachers which allow them to interact; cooperate and solve problems within a safe environment; reflecting on, inquiring after, and researching one's own teaching practice and that of others; observation of other teachers and being observed; and, good timing and sequencing of learning opportunities. Hudson (2012, p.72) advises that understanding how to support beginning teachers must include beginning teachers' views on how they experience support within their schools. Beginning teachers' views may help to devise strategies for supporting them in their early careers. In Malawi, it could be better to conduct induction programmes at zonal or district level to allow beginning teachers from different schools to meet and exchange views and experiences. The beginning teachers should, nevertheless, participate in the preparation of the induction programmes prepared for them.

5.6.3 The whole school approach to induction of beginning teachers

It may take some time for Malawi to introduce country wide mentor-supported induction programmes. Such programmes may have to be conducted in various school zones or districts of the country. What can be done immediately, however, is to adopt a whole school approach to beginning teacher induction. In this approach, all teachers and support staff, are informed about the need to assist beginning teachers in their work. This is the approach that was used at B.T.6's school. The teachers at this

school considered it to be their duty to assist beginning teachers that are posted to their school. The veteran teachers observe beginning teachers' lessons, and in turn the veteran teacher invite the beginning teachers to observe veteran teachers' lessons. They also assist them in setting up tests and examinations. It can be argued that the whole school approach can be implemented immediately as it involves no extra funds.

ADDENDUM

As requested by the examiner, I have reviewed the book entitled “*Managing Human Resources in South African Schools*” edited by Lumby, Middlewood and Kaabwe (2003). The following is the review of the book.

Lumby, Middlewood and Kaabwe (2003)

Before 1994, South Africa had an educational system which was based on racial inequality and segregation. In 1994, a national system of schools was set up to redress past injustices in education provision; improve the quality of education, develop all people’s talents and capabilities, and, advance democratic transformation of the South African society. The National Department of Education has since set up, through legislation and relevant policies, a vision for the transformation of old education system. The education system at present is, however, still influenced by systems, practices and procedures inherited from the apartheid past. It is realised that while improvement of infrastructure of schools may take some time, improvement in the management of schools can be effected, presently by providing principals and teachers with knowledge of relevant legislations, policies, and management skills. Lumby et al.’s book is supposed to be essentially a teach yourself manual, for principals and teachers, who would like to start managing their schools in accordance with the legislations and policies that have been introduced by the Department of Education.

This review discusses each of the thirteen chapters one after another; before presenting my overall assessment of the book. Unless indicated otherwise, page numbers in this review refer to numbers in the book.

Chapter One provides an overview, not of the book, but of the “*issues that constitute a changing context for education management in South Africa*”, (p.4). The issues identified as challenges are: Education management; self-managed schools; democratic approach to education management; new legislations and regulatory framework; and, performance and managing people. Although aspects of gender and culture have been presented in the book as changing contexts of education management, they are not mentioned in the first chapter.

The author states on page 5 that:

Information systems have broken down and the necessary management competencies for professional growth, incentives and assessment are virtually non-existent.

In addition to the absence of incentives and assessment that the author mentions in the excerpt above, he has also reported about the “*collapse of teaching and learning*” (p.5) in some schools in the country. The present situation, hence, requires extraordinary effort to: Restore vibrant teaching and learning in the schools in which it has broken down; and, inform principals and teachers about policies and legislations that can assist them in their transition to the “new” South Africa.

Chapter Two compares personnel and human resource management approaches to school management. The problem in this chapter is that the author does not seem to distinguish between writing as a scholar and writing to merely convey popular thinking in the South African context to readers. For instance, on page 21 the author writes:

The previous bureaucratic and oppressive system has come to be identified with personnel management approaches and as the antithesis of human resource

management (HRM) which appears to offer the possibility of achieving the attitudes and processes necessary for reconciliation.

Similarly, on page 23 she explains that:

The past - and anticipated future – failure of personnel management to deal with complexities of the 21st century, and dissatisfaction with constraints of centrally controlled systems, has led to the evolution of a new approach: human resource management (HRM).

On page 26, however, after critiquing the work of Westhuizen and Theron (1994) for presenting the two approaches as alternatives, she writes: *It may be more productive to look for and use what is useful in each.* This last quotation cannot be reconciled with the two excerpts above. It seems that the author was writing as a scholar when she wrote the last quotation. Each approach has both weaknesses and strengths. School managers should use the strengths of each approach and avoid their weaknesses.

Chapter Three discusses the use of performance standards and performance indicators in assessing individuals' and organisations' achievements. This is a rather unusual chapter because the title of the chapter on page 33, is also the title of a section of the chapter on page 43. On first reading of the case example on page 48, I suspected foul play. The author indicates that the editors of the book carried out a small scale survey but does not tell us the number of subjects involved in the survey. I suspected that the number was so small that the author was uncomfortable to disclose it. My suspicion was confirmed later when I read on page 166 that:

The sample of 20 is extremely small and no generalisations can be made based on the answers from such a number.

While the author of Chapter Nine warns us, in the excerpt above, about the smallness of the sample they used, the author of Chapter Three converted the scores to percentages without telling us the size of his sample. This is regrettable.

Nevertheless, the author emphasises the need to balance aspirations of the individual against the needs of the organisation in managing schools. He also advises that management of staff should be consistent with the values of the institution. The main point that the author makes in the chapter is that South Africa's new education policy emphasises democratisation at all levels of the education system. Managers of education institutions should work through consultation and consensus. The chapter would have been more useful if it had samples of instruments that are recommended for use in evaluating performance of teachers and schools in South Africa.

Chapter Four is about recruitment and selection of teachers in schools. The process begins with schools notifying the Department of Education of existing vacancies in the schools. The schools also provide basic specifications of the posts. The Department of Education advertises all the vacant posts in a gazette, bulletin or secular. Aspiring applicants apply directly to the department. The advertising department selects applicants who qualify for a particular job and submits their applications to the schools where final selections are carried out. The schools conduct the interviews to select the best applicant who gets appointed by the schools. The chapter discusses various aspects of the recruitment and selection process. The author emphasises the need for rationality, equity, efficiency and effectiveness in recruiting and selecting staff. He also emphasises the need for selection committees to constantly review their practices to ensure continuous improvement.

Chapter Five is about induction of newly appointed staff. The role of induction is twofold: To ensure that beginner teachers get the best possible start; and to ascertain that such teachers take least possible time to start working as expert teachers. The author also mentions the importance of proper induction in the development of professional skills and attitudes in a teacher's career. For beginning teachers to learn while teaching they are usually given reduced workloads and trained mentors to assist them in their professional development. Although the teaching load of beginner teachers is mentioned on page 86, it is not indicated how much work beginner teachers are required to do in South Africa. As indicated previously, in the case of England and Scotland beginner teachers are assigned 90 % and 70 % of an average qualified teachers' workload, respectively. The author does not indicate how mentors are compensated and rewarded for their work. He, nevertheless, on page 92, mentions theoretical benefits that may accrue to mentors through the process of mentoring beginner teachers. It appears that the author does not know of the current practices in caring for beginning teachers; and, compensating or rewarding mentors in South Africa.

The author is unclear about the relationship between induction and mentoring. For instance, on page 93 he writes:

The school manager needs to recognise that no single process such as induction or mentoring -or even both- offers all the answers.

The author seemingly thinks that mentoring is different from induction, and yet mentoring is only an aspect of induction. One of the things that can be done in

inducting new beginning teacher in a school is mentoring. In other words, in terms of logic, mentoring is a subset of induction.

In his conclusion, the author emphasises that in South Africa, education is at a heart of democratisation. He further states that the management of education should acknowledge the intrinsic worth of the individuals in the school. The individual, in this sense, is either a teacher or a learner.

Chapter Six tackles matters concerning industrial relations and professionalism. The chapter observes that an interplay of technological, socio-economic or political factors has at times weakened or strengthened industrial relations practice among teachers. In both cases the tendency has been to move towards professional unionism. This means that teachers in South Africa have characteristics of professional officers as well as industrial workers. They can go on strike but they have to adhere to a code of ethics for educators. It is suggested that the successful principal in this scenario will be the one who empowers his or her teachers and allows them meaningful participation in the management of their school. According to the author, it is important that all stakeholders in education should be willing to take learning and teaching in schools as most important.

Chapter Seven is about management of teacher performance and its appraisal. The author advances the view that teacher appraisal can be used to support or judge teacher performance. The experiences of teachers during the apartheid era, have generated negative attitudes towards teacher appraisal. What is required is to produce an environment of trust and understanding to enable teachers to appreciate

the value of individual and organisation appraisal. The chapter would have been more effective if sample tools for individual and organisational appraisal had been included.

Chapter Eight is about development needs. The chapter states that a teaching career may span forty years. Furthermore, it observes that during such a long time, teaching and learning methods of a particular subject may change. It is, hence, important to organise refresher courses periodically in the course of such a long career. School principals may also decide to organise professional development programmes for their staff to meet perceived needs. Both the refresher courses and staff development programmes have to be evaluated and the evaluation has to determine the actual change in job behaviour resulting from the course or programme and its impact on the effectiveness of the school. Although the author suggests that staff development should be for all staff (p.151) she does not indicate what form such staff development would take for clerks, cooks, secretaries and cleaners.

Chapter Nine is about managing motivation. Motivation is defined as the impetus to *“take action; and, the direction and persistence of the action”* p.157. Theories of motivation, beginning with Maslow’s theory and ending with the equity or exchange theory which suggests that people are motivated by sense of fair play are presented and discussed in the chapter. It is argued that motivation levels of teachers can be high even in adverse teaching and learning situations. The author argues that it is up to the principal of every school to understand the factors that are likely to motivate each member of staff and neutralise or control effects of such extrinsic factors as poor pay, poor job security, and poor physical environment. The author of the first chapter

on page 5, refers to a “*crisis*” in schools happen due to lack of proper management and “*the collapse of teaching and learning*”. In such a situation, one would expect the authors to suggest how principals and teachers can be motivated to move from a situation characterised by collapse of learning and teaching to one of the vibrant teaching and learning.

Chapter Ten begins by warning readers that operating through teams is not a remedy for all school problems. The importance of team work lies in its ability to improve communication between people, bring together a range of talents and abilities, and offer individuals opportunities for personal and professional development (p.172). Just like in Chapter Nine, there is no indication as to how principals and teachers can move, with regard to team work, from their present situation to the aspired situation in the “new” South Africa.

Chapter Eleven is about conflict management. The author tells us that although conflicts cannot be entirely eliminated in an education institution, their frequency of occurrence can be controlled through relevant purposeful actions. When a conflict occurs in the school, it has to be resolved in a manner that benefits the school. The chapter discusses conflict management styles such as: Competitiveness; avoiding behaviour; compromising; accommodating; collaborating; and, problem solving. Principals are asked to be on the alert to spot real and potential conflict situations and resolve them promptly.

Chapter Twelve is about gender issues in education and management. The chapter particularly suggests how South Africa can increase the number of female principals

and female teachers at secondary school level. The author rightly states that there is a need to increase the number of women who get educated to the level of admission into secondary school teacher training colleges or universities. She also highlights the importance of school management responding favourably to requests for leave for child-care purposes. She, however, does not mention the need to set up goals in terms of the proportion of female principals to be achieved in specified times in the future. Other authors, writing from the perspective of Sub-Saharan Africa, have suggested measures such as providing counselling to girls in teachers' colleges to ensure their success; recruiting an appropriate proportion of female faculty in colleges of teacher education and in universities; assisting female teachers in finding and appropriating housing; and, developing strong mentoring programmes for female teachers (Mulkeen, Chapman, DeJaeghere & Leur, 2007).

In her conclusion, the author emphasises on page 217 that *boys and girls and men and women may never be equal in all respects*. Inequalities based on gender, however, should be reduced or eliminated. According to the author, it is equality between men and women in work places and marriages that facilitates functioning of modern societies (p.217).

Chapter Thirteen is about managing multicultural contexts and as expected it defines the concept of culture. On page 225, the author compares what she describes as African and European cultures. The source of this work is Levy-Bruhl's book entitled "*How natives think*", written in 1910 but published in 1926 (Dzama and Osborne, 1999, p.389). In his book, Levy-Bruhl describes mental abilities of what he calls primitive man, who in his view perceives nothing as Europeans do and dispenses with

principles of contradiction and causality. The thinking of primitive man, according to Levy-Bruhl, is pre-logical in the sense that it is a matter of indifference whether the law of contradiction holds or not (Lowie, 1937, p.218). Levy-Bruhl was, however, his own revisionist. In papers that were published after his death, he indicated that he was prepared to give up the term pre-logical and to question the specificity of characteristics he had attributed to primitive man (Cazeneuve, 1968, p.265). Thus, Levy-Bruhl argues that the structure of the human mind is fundamentally “*the same everywhere*” (Cazeneuve, 1968, p.265). The characteristics that Levy-Bruhl attributed to primitive man are the characteristics that the author attributes to Africans on page 225. Spiritualism which is the first characteristic of Africans was a universal mode of thought prior to the dawn of the scientific era (Simons, 1957). The scientific era did not begin long time ago. The word “scientist” as presently understood entered the vocabulary in about 1840 (Ram & Krishnamurthi, 1981). Dzama and Osborne (1999, p. 394) pointed out that there is no evidence that the people of Europe or America have always been mechanistic or dualistic thinkers. Levy-Bruhl argues that the characteristics he described were common to civilised and uncivilised mentalities (Dougall, 1932). Levy-Bruhl held, for example, that logical mentality however much it may progress, will not entirely supplant mystical and pre-logical mentality. This means that the features that are portrayed on page 225, as European or African characteristics are universal human characteristics. It does not make sense to suggest that Africans are not capable of reasoning as Table 11 on page 225 suggests. Dzama and Osborne (1999) went to the extent of collecting African traditional stories to demonstrate reasoning among Africans. As Dzama and Osborne (1999, p.401) argue:

In the domain of religion, Africans may be monistic and anthropomorphic. In day to day life, however, flushes of pluralistic and mechanistic thinking colour their lives.

In the excerpt above, the authors are arguing that such characteristics as separateness (pluralism) and mechanistic metaphor (mechanistic thinking) are found among Africans as well as Europeans and are not a prerogative of any one culture. These features may, however, be more pronounced in some groups of people since they are learnt from one's environment. It is strange that an African scholar in 2003 can present original Levy-Bruhl's work without acknowledging the revision he carried out. Horton (1971) argued, in this connection, that:

African Religious beliefs demonstrate a grasp among Africans of significant causal connections which lie beyond the range of common sense.

What Horton means in the excerpt is that the religious beliefs indicate that Africans have understanding of things that goes beyond common sense. Horton (1971, p. 229) identified a Western lay culture which in his view was completely unscientific.

Despite these weaknesses, the author is to be applauded for indicating clearly what could be done to avoid cultural or racial clashes in schools in the "new" South Africa.

For instance, on page 228 the author says:

Job advertisement should consist of: Culture specification, to identify the schools' values, practices, visions, beliefs, and achievements.

Furthermore, she also advises that recruitment and selection of staff should reflect the institution's philosophy to ensure that the staff recruited would work together without destructive cultural clashes. In her conclusion, she states that multicultural contexts

should be managed in a way that enhances cultural esteem while promoting excellent teaching.

The chapters in the book seem to have been written for different purposes. Although the editors claim that case examples and activities related to South African schools are provided throughout the book, Chapters One and Two have neither case examples nor activities. It seems that the authors abandoned their task of indicating to school principals and teachers in South Africa how they can move from their present status in school management to the aspired status in the “new” South Africa. If there has been a breakdown of teaching and learning culture (p.6), the task of the authors was to show how through management of schools, the teaching and learning culture can be reestablished. The authors do not do this. What they do is to give the reader a lot of information that we already know through Psychology and Sociology courses that we, as teachers, took during training.

An examination of the years of publications of the references cited in the book, generated results are presented in Table 5 below. Although there are 5 sources cited in the book which were published in 2003, the year in which the book was published, and 3 sources published in 2002, there are no sources published in 2001 cited in the book. The forward to the book was written in January, 2003 (p.viii). It appears quiet unusual that the authors were able to cite five sources published in January, 2003. In addition, the authors cited 9, 1, 0 and 3 sources in 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002 respectively. Furthermore, an examination of the ten sources cited from 2000 to 2003 indicated that they were all sources written by the authors, either single handedly or in collaboration with other members of the project team. Table 5 shows 212 sources

and their years of publication. There were 97 sources that were cited in the book published from 1993 to 2003 and are cited in the book.

**Table 5: Part of the sources cited in the book and their years of publication
(N = 212)**

YEAR	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
NO.OF CITATIONS	29	39	36	32	31	27	9	1	0	3	5

As a researcher, I suspected that the chapters of the book were written at different times and an examination of the sources cited in each chapter confirmed my suspicion. When I examined the latest sources in each chapter, I found that the latest sources cited in Chapter Eleven were published in 1996. The latest sources in chapters Five, Six, Seven, Nine and Ten were published in 1998 while the latest source in Chapter Eight was published in 1997. The latest sources in Chapters One, Two, Three, Twelve and Thirteen were published in 2003, and the latest source in Chapter Four was published in 1999. It cannot be ruled out that the authors collected papers that they had written previously, for other purposes, than enabling principals and teachers to improve management of their schools, and submitted them for publication as a book.

In conclusion, the book can be used as an occasional source of materials for teaching pre-service teachers and training principals and teachers in workshops. It explains various things such as gender issues, industrial relations, theories of motivation, and Levy-Bruhl's unrevised theory of the primitive man. However, in many chapters the

book fails to indicate how principals and teachers can successfully navigate between the present situation and the desired situation in the “new” South Africa.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Initial interview guide used during pilot study

- Discuss your induction experiences.
- Describe your major difficulties that you faced at the school you were sent
- Explain the assistance that was given to you.
- Examine your real needs now.
- Elucidate the mitigation measures you took to overcome the challenges

Appendix 2: Resulting interview guide for beginning RE teachers

- 1) What is your view of the support that you received as a beginning RE teacher?
- 2) What induction opportunities did you encounter as a beginning RE teacher?
- 3) What induction challenges did you experience as a beginning RE teacher?
- 4) What should be done to improve induction experiences of beginning RE teachers?
- 5) What induction needs do you still have?
- 6) Which aspects would you have liked to form part of your induction at your school?
- 7) What examples of induction do you remember to have participated?
- 8) In what induction activities were you involved as a beginning RE teacher?

Appendix 3: Introductory letter from the Head of Department

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI



Chancellor College

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND TEACHING STUDIES

To: Whom It May Concern

From: Head of Curriculum and Teaching Studies Department, Chancellor College,
University of Malawi.

Date: 9th July, 2013

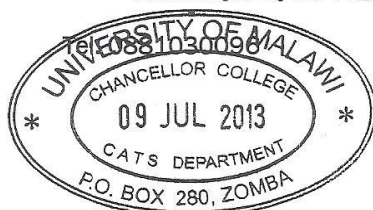
Letter of Introduction for Mr Mastone Mbewe (PhD Student)

This is a letter of introduction for **Mr Mastone Mbewe** as our PhD student in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching Studies, Faculty of Education, Chancellor College. He is doing research for his PhD thesis. He will need assistance to access and collect information for his study. Please assist him accordingly.

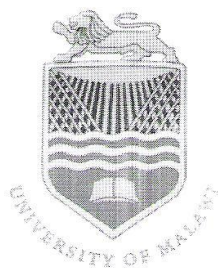
For further information, please contact the undersigned.

Many thanks

Macloud Frank Salanjira (PhD)
Head of Curriculum and Teaching Studies Department
Chancellor College
BOX 280 Zomba
Email: mfsalanjira@yahoo.com or msalanjira@cc.ac.mw.



Appendix 4: My application to conduct research



CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

PRINCIPAL

Richard Tambulasi, B.A (Pub Admin), BPA (Hons), MPA, Ph.D

P.O. Box 280, Zomba, Malawi

Telephone: (265) 524 222

Fax: (265) 524 046

E-mail: principal@cc.ac.mw

Faculty of Education

Department of Curriculum and Teaching Studies

P.O. Box 280

ZOMBA

20th July, 2013

Ministry of Education Science and Technology
Directorate of Education Methods Advisory Services
Private Bag 328
Capital City
Lilongwe 3

Dear Sir / Madam,

RE: Request to conduct research on induction experiences in secondary schools in Malawi

As above, I write to seek for permission to conduct research in various secondary schools in Malawi. I am a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Education, University of Malawi, Chancellor College. My research project is on induction experiences of beginning teachers in various secondary schools in Malawi.

I shall be very grateful if my request meets your favourable consideration.

Yours faithfully,


Mastone L.K. Mbewe

Appendix 5: Permission to conduct research from the Ministry

Telegrams: MINED, Lilongwe
Telephone: (265) 01 789 422/ 01 789404
Telex: 44636
Fascimile: (265) 01 788 064



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
PRIVATE BAG 328
CAPITAL CITY
LILONGWE 3
MALAWI

Ref. No.C1/31/1/1

9th August, 2013

Mastone L.K. Mbewe
Chancellor College
P.O. Box 280
Zomba

Dear Sir

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MALAWI

Reference is hereby made to your letter dated 20th August, 2013 in which you requested the Ministry of Education to grant you permission to conduct research on induction experiences of beginning teachers in various secondary schools in Malawi for your Ph.D thesis in the Faculty of Education; Department of Curriculum and Teaching Studies.

I am pleased to inform you that approval for you to conduct the said research has been granted. May I also take this opportunity to wish you all the best as you endeavour to contribute towards the improvement of education in our secondary schools.


Yours Faithfully,

Macphail Magwira Ph.D
SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Appendix 6: Consent form for research participants

I, _____, hereby agree to take part in the research project on induction experiences of beginning teachers in Malawi.

I understand that I will have to be available for interviews whenever a need arises, either at the beginning of the term, at the middle and the last one at or towards the end of the term. I also understand that this will be done by appointment and that the interviews will be recorded by means of an electronic recording device.

I understand that I:

- will not be asked personal questions and may at any time decide not to answer questions if I so wish.
- shall stay anonymous in the study
- at any time may ask for access to the dissertation or part thereof

Teacher's name: _____

Signature: _____

Researcher' name: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix 7: Sample copy of transcribed interview

Researcher: What support did you receive as a beginning RE teacher?

B.T.6: Yaaaah as a novice teacher, the support that I got here was very positive. Experienced teachers that I found here helped me in different areas like how to teach Bible Knowledge, discipline cases, how I can make students to be more attentive.

Researcher: Did you ask them that they should assist you?

B.T.6: Yaaaah, here at this school, there is a tradition of assigning a beginning teacher to a veteran teacher even without asking for that.

Researcher: When you just came did you feel the need to observe the veteran teacher on duty?

B.T.6: No, at first, I did not have that perception because I did my teaching practice here and I thought I could not be asked to observe the veteran teacher. But on the contrary, I was given one whole work to work and observe lessons of a veteran teacher. I was only trusted to start teaching on my own after being assisted by my mentor. Veteran teachers at this school are very willing to assist the novice teachers.

Researcher: What professional tips did you learn from your mentor?

B.T.6: I learnt a lot of things including how to impart knowledge to the learners especially how to effectively use participatory methods such as group work.

Researcher: Was this new for you, that you never learnt that during training at college?

B.T.6: No it was not new but I found it very helpful especially when using participatory method

Researcher: So what can you say is your experience of teaching at this school?

B.T.6: Yaah, the first one is level of intelligence which I find to be very high and as a result teachers are supposed to be well prepared when coming to teach.

Other tips that I learnt here include:

- Handling adolescence with care
- Developing team spirit
- Promoting mutual understanding
- The need to have courage to ask for assistance from colleagues when not comfortable with a topic

Researcher: Sometimes teachers are timid and shy to ask for assistance from colleagues. What is your experience in this connection at this school?

B.T.6: No, teachers at this school are very helpful and open to one another so much that timidity and shyness is removed completely. Teachers are always willing to help the beginning teacher or any other teacher who may feel the need to be assisted.

Researcher: What exactly can you say are the challenges that you experienced as a beginning teacher?

B.T.6: Effective lesson preparation is one of the major challenges that I experienced. Students that are selected to this school are often more intelligent. To meet their expectation, teachers are supposed to be well prepared to avoid running out of points as one teaches. In addition, this is a girls' institution, as a teacher I need to be well-disciplined because students are very anxious with beginning teachers, so if not very careful, you can easily be in a relationship with some of them. I have therefore learnt to always be in control of oneself when relating with them. The head teachers always remind us that discipline at this school means doing the right thing, at the right time, the right place and with the right person.

Other challenges include:

- Facilitation skills
- Teaching and learning materials preparation
- Getting appropriate teaching and learning resources especially books
- Formulating appropriate questioning techniques in connection with the blooms taxonomy
- Effective use of teaching and learning strategies
- Developing appropriate classroom management skills
- Managing classroom resources
- Storage of resources
- Accessibility of resources to students

Researcher: What can you say are the needs of a beginning teacher at this school?

B.T.6: Some of the needs that I needed to master as a beginning teacher include:

- How to effectively teach so that learner pass their national examinations
- How to manage time so that everything is done timely
- How to develop coordination and team spirit which promotes courage to ask for assistance when in need
- How to manage social distance with girls so that you don't abuse them

Researcher: You mentioned coordination and team spirit, what is your view of teachers' willingness to assist beginning teachers?

B.T.6: Teachers at this school are 100 % willing to assist beginning teachers because of the administration that promotes that spirit among all members of staff. Veteran teachers are always ready to assist beginning teachers that join the school. Even expatriate teachers from abroad remarked that that there is a spirit of team work and coordination at this school. During staff meetings, the head teacher constantly reminds us of to seriously consider the spirit of team work and cooperation. In this connection, as a personal experience, colleagues of the same department with me, helped me a lot. For example, we discussed performance of students and shared tips of how to improve academic performance of our students in the department. Several teaching tips were shared.

The head teacher often assign a mentor to a beginning teacher for assistance. The head teacher often choose a senior marker of national

examination to be a mentor of a beginning teacher. The mentors advise the beginning teachers in several areas including on the quality of examination items that must be administered to the learners.

Researcher: In your view what does the administration look for when choosing a mentor for a beginning teacher?

B.T.6: Although I have never inquired on this particular issue, but sharing from a personal experience, I can say that the head teacher looks for someone who has been marking national examination and not necessarily subject specialisation. For example, my mentor is not a subject specialist of RE but of Geography. Whenever I set a examination my mentor sends it to an RE specialist for moderation. The specialist writes a report about my examination which is given to me. The head teacher organizes a meeting between the subject specialist from another school and myself so that I interact with the subject specialist myself.

Researcher: How often were you personally supported by the head teacher at this school?

B.T.6: Aaah very often, I can say whenever I have whatever problem I go to the head teacher and ask for assistance.

Students at this school are encouraged to lodge complaints to the head teacher if there is need for a particular teacher to be talked to over an issue in relation to teaching and learning. When the students complain to the head teacher, the head teacher calls a particular concerned

teacher for a discussion over the issue. From time to time, the head teacher reminds and encourage students to always to the head teacher any shortfall of a particular teacher veteran or beginning teacher. The head teacher probes for change for any undesirable behaviour.

Researcher: What would you have liked done for you so that you improve your teaching skills further?

B.T.6: As a beginning teacher, I would have liked to be engaged in refresher courses on effective lesson preparation

Researcher: What can you say are your major challenges as a beginning teacher here?

B.T.6: As a beginning teacher, I have many challenges but the most appealing one for me is **work coverage**: RE as a subject has many topics to be covered if students are to do well in national examination. For example, a teacher is supposed to organise extra lessons if he or she is to cover the whole syllabus. Since I do not stay within the school premises, it is not easy for me to organise extra evening classes like my colleagues who stay within campus. I stay in a location far away from school, and I cannot travel at night to go back to school because it is dangerous. It has been noted that the work coverage for Bible Knowledge at Junior Certificate Level, is very wide. For example, Bible Knowledge at JCE level starts from Genesis to Malach, thus Old Testament while the New Testament covers books like Matthews, Marks and the twelve chapters of Acts.

Researcher: What can you say are the professional development opportunities that are offered to beginning teachers at this school?

B.T.6: There are many professional development opportunities that are offered to beginning teachers at this school. First and foremost the school has a formal induction programme for all the beginning teachers that join the school. A beginning teacher is assigned a mentor who assist him or her in various capacities. A mentor demonstrate to a beginning teacher on how to effectively use participatory methods such as group work and class discussion. In the process of teaching and learning teachers are more encouraged to be facilitators. Participatory methods help in inculcating knowledge of students to be done more effectively and efficiently.

It has been noted that students and teachers whose performance is best in terms of academic performance, are awarded money yearly. For example every distinction is worth K1 500.00 (about 2 US dollars). Any credit is bought at K750.00 (about 1 US dollar).

The motivation scheme was introduced by a Parents / Teachers Association (PTA). The major reason for introducing this motivation scheme is to instil hard working spirit among students and teachers

Appendix 8: Fifty five significant statements

1. Feeling being undermined by colleagues
2. Feeling that beginning teachers cannot observe lessons of veteran teachers
3. Lacking confidence
4. Feeling shy to ask for assistance
5. Being probed for charge of undesirable behaviour
6. Observing that beginning teachers are assigned form one classes only
7. Doubting one's own teaching
8. Not being taught techniques of item setting
9. Being in need of effective content delivery
10. Being in need of syllabus coverage skills
11. Having irrelevant knowledge from college
12. Feeling uncomfortable with learners' questions
13. Not being introduced to support staff
14. Being ignored by colleagues
15. Not being assigned to a mentor
16. Not being given institutional accommodation
17. Not being given adequate books
18. Not having enough time for lessons
19. Being in need of school orientation
20. Being in need of classroom observation
21. Not being observed by veteran teacher
22. Being given irrelevant Bibles
23. Being assigned difficult classes
24. Being given out of field subjects

25. Being in need of a forum for humanities in the manner of teachers of science
26. Being in need of other reference books
27. Being seen as a threat by colleagues
28. Not being listened to for being a novice
29. Feeling the need to participate in an in-service training
30. Not being shown school campus
31. Having overcrowded classes
32. Undervaluing BK as a subject
33. Seeing students dropping BK
34. Teaching from one's own secondary school experience
35. Being in need of effective lesson preparation seminars
36. Spending more time pre-teaching
37. Seeing BK classes put as last periods on the school time table
38. BK periods being used for caucus meetings
39. BK periods being used for makeup classes of other subjects
40. Being underrated by colleagues
41. Being told that junior teachers cannot teach senior classes
42. Getting assistance from teachers of other schools
43. Late arrival of students during the first period
44. Lack of resources
45. Lack of funds to purchase materials
46. Frustrating relationships with colleagues
47. Being well received
48. Being given a mentor
49. Being given the opportunity to observe lessons of veteran teachers

- 50. Being assigned responsibilities at the school level
- 51. Being given one week for observing classes of veteran teacher
- 52. Being appointed a member of examination committee
- 53. Being given the opportunity of working in the head teacher's office
- 54. Being sent on errands to buy a photocopier on behalf of the school
- 55. Being appointed patron of girls' football