

**TEACHER RETENTION IN MALAWI SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE
STUDY OF ZOMBA DISTRICT**

M.Ed (POLICY, PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP) THESIS

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UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

AUGUST, 2017

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Submitted to the Department of Education Foundation Studies, School of Education
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Education (Policy,
Planning and Leadership)

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August, 2017

DECLARATION

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

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

With great love and appreciation, I dedicate this thesis to my Father, Henry Mkalira and Mother, Linly Msyali, my brothers, my sisters and my husband Mphatso Mwamvani.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this task was not an easy one. It was a result of combined efforts and commitment of many people to whom I whole-heartedly indebt to thank. First and foremost, I thank God Almighty for giving me the strength to carry out this study.

I am proud to acknowledge with sincere appreciation, my academic supervisors: Dr R. Nyirongo and Dr B. Chulu for spending their time through providing me valuable and thoughtful comments, advice, guidance, positive criticism, and encouragement throughout this study.

I am also grateful to all the lecturers in the school of Education at Chancellor College for giving me the necessary skills and guidance throughout the study period.

Gratitude is also expressed to all secondary school teachers in Zomba who were involved in this study.

A very special appreciation to all my relatives and friends for their encouragement to pursue this programme, and also for the emotional and financial assistance they rendered to me during the period of the study.

TO GOD BE ALL THE GLORY

ABSTRACT

This study attempted to establish the nature of factors that compel some teachers to remain in the teaching profession despite the relatively difficult working conditions associated with it at secondary school level in Malawi. The study was motivated by the fact that the greater part of education research focuses on reasons teachers leave the profession rather than reasons some teachers decide to remain in the education system despite the hardships associated with it. This study therefore sought to fill this gap by employing a balanced approach to issues surrounding motivation in the teaching profession. The study used the qualitative case study design in order to get an in-depth understanding from experienced teachers. For the interviews, the participants comprised 16 purposively selected teachers from 4 participating secondary schools in Zomba District. Two of these 4 secondary schools were from the urban proper, and the other two from the rural area. On the other hand, focus group discussions comprised 4 teachers from urban secondary schools, and the other 4 from the rural secondary schools. Content analysis method was used to analyse the data collected. Analysis of the data indicates that teachers remain in the profession largely because they are intrinsically motivated by mostly job-related factors (motivators) such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and feedback. The implications for such findings could include employing a multi-dimensional approach by the education stakeholders and authorities where these motivators and hygiene factors are both given due consideration. And logically, higher priority and weight should be given to the job-related factors as opposed to the (contextual factors) hygiene factors in order to achieve more retention of teachers in the system.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EMIS :	Education Management Information System
VSO :	Voluntary Service Overseas
FGD :	Focus group discussion
INSET:	In-service training

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter overview

This chapter briefly provides background to the study. It then presents the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions and significance of the study. It later proffers definitions of operational terms and the structure of the thesis. Chapter summary appears at the end.

1.1 Background to the study

Retaining adequate number of teachers is a major challenge facing the education sector the world over (Ingersoll, 2001). The problem is evident in the large number of teachers leaving the profession worldwide. For instance, in 2010, the USA had attrition rate of 8.4%, and in the same period, Tanzania and Kenya had attrition rate of 7% (Mulei, et al, 2016). Earlier reports on teacher turnover in countries such as South Africa, Zambia and New Guinea indicated that the problem had almost reached catastrophic levels (Xaba, 2003).

In Malawi, retaining teachers in public secondary schools has also become a mind-blowing problem mostly because it hampers the country's efforts towards achieving quality education in its educational system. The Education Management Information System (EMIS, 2012, 2013) statistics reveal that the teaching profession loses thousands of dedicated members each year. For example, in the academic year

2012/2013 attrition rate was at 13% whilst during 2013/2014 academic year the attrition rate rose to 15.7% (EMIS, 2012, 2013).

Policy researchers on education in Malawi, for example, Kayuni and Tambulasi (2007) and Kadzamira (2006) point to poor working conditions as the main reason teachers leave the profession. Such conditions include low pay levels that is not adequate to meet minimum basic needs for food, housing, clothing, education for family and transport. At the same time, the career path for teachers within the profession is too narrow and restrictive with very few opportunities for advancement. This has led to graduate secondary teachers leave for better paying jobs in the private sector or join other government departments where promotion prospects are perceived to be better. This migration retards the achievement of quality education in Malawi (Kadzamira, 2006). The situation is grave in rural areas where there is a chronic teacher shortage with large classes, heavy workloads, inadequate teaching and learning materials, and harsh living conditions.

Several different programmes have been proposed to motivate and retain teachers in public schools in Malawi; for instance, the education sector plan as well as the national education conference proposed the following among others: giving priority to rural areas in the construction of teacher houses, consideration of hardship allowances for teachers working in the remote hard-to-reach rural schools in deprived areas, the introduction of a new professional career path for teachers with transparent promotion criteria based on performance, new deployment policies that would ensure that rural schools are not disadvantaged, increased provision of instructional materials and better support and supervisory services (Kadzamira, 2006).

The Ministry of Education has started putting in place the proposed strategies in order to retain teachers and other members of staff in the educational sector. For instance, according to Kayuni, and Tambulasi (2007), the Ministry has done the following: decentralising education management especially at primary school level so as to monitor teachers effectively; introducing distance learning for unqualified teachers; increasing budget allocation to the education sector; encouraging programmes that strengthen the link between teachers and communities around them; and lobbying for more non-governmental organisation as well as donor community involvement in the provision of teaching facilities and teacher development; and also introducing hardship allowances to those teachers in rural areas. It is important to note that despite the introduction of these interventions by the Government of Malawi, attrition rates have continued to grow.

It should be noted that while the issue of teacher turnover is critical for reasons observed above, there are teachers that continue to serve the profession. Most studies have focused on finding reasons teachers leave the profession, and what is not clear and not studied to a greater measure are the views of these teachers who remain in the system. It is not clear what keeps them going, believing that teaching is the career that can offer them the satisfaction.

1.2 Statement of the problem

There is growing evidence that the teaching profession is facing a number of challenges which include poor working conditions, poor housing, poor school infrastructure, low salaries, frequent changes in the syllabus and lack of administrative support system (Kayuni and Tambulasi, 2007). These challenges have

been a major cause for teacher turnover in the education sector. Most of the teachers who leave the public teaching service end up joining private schools, and for others a complete change of the profession altogether (Moleni and Ndalama, 2004). Despite that, quite a significant number of teachers remain in the profession and do so to retirement. Unfortunately, little is known about the factors that compel such teachers to remain in the profession despite the relatively difficult working conditions associated with the profession. This study attempted to establish these factors at secondary school level.

1.3 Purpose of the study

This study aimed at exploring factors that motivate teachers to remain in the teaching profession.

1.4 Research questions

The purpose of the study was addressed with the following research questions:

- What attracts people to the teaching profession?
- Why do some teachers remain in the teaching profession despite the hardships they face?

1.5 Significance of the study

In an era of increasing pressure and demands for teachers, the principle factors that determine teachers to remain in the profession could be worthy investigating. The surest way to arrive at these principle factors is to seek inputs from the experienced teachers themselves about their experiences. The finding from such research hopes to

help the authorities in the education sector to amplify those factors that keep teachers within the profession in order to retain more teachers.

Secondly, this study also intended to expand on the limited amount of educational literature on the topic especially on reasons others opt to stay in the profession when so many are opting out.

1.6 Definition of operational terms

Teacher attrition: The most prominent term used in research that refers to the rate at which teachers leave the profession

Teacher retention: A term that represents a method of maintaining teachers within the school or field of education

Teacher turnover: The collective term referring to teachers departing their current school

1.7 Structure of the thesis

The study has five chapters. Chapter one was the introduction which included chapter overview, background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, definition of operational terms, structure of the thesis and chapter summary. Chapter two focused on the reviewed related literature, identified information gap and theoretical framework that guided the study. Chapter 3 described research paradigm of the study, methodology, site selection, selection of informants, sample size, data generation procedure, data analysis, trustworthiness of the study, methodological assumptions, ethical considerations and limitations of the study. Results and discussions were captured in chapter four. The

study ends with a chapter on conclusion and implications of the study which includes the study summary, study implications and suggestions for further research.

1.8 Chapter summary

This chapter has briefly discussed retention and attrition both in general and in the Malawian context. It has also discussed the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the specific objectives, research questions and its significance. It has ended with definitions of operational terms. The next chapter looks at literature review on teacher retention.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents a review of the relevant literature on teacher retention. It begins by discussing the concept ‘turnover’ and its effects. The chapter later discusses ‘retention’ and its importance, before reviewing some of the study results on why teachers join and remain in the teaching profession. Based on the review of the earlier studies in Malawi, the chapter also indicates the gap that needs to be filled through research. The chapter then concludes by a discussion of the theoretical framework that guided the study.

2.1 Teacher Turnover

There is a plethora of definitions on the concept of turnover, the simplest being that by Price 1977 who defines it as the degree of individual movement across the membership boundary of a social system. This study, however, adopts the definition proffered by Macy and Mirvis(1976) because it reflects accurately the conceptual position of this thesis. This definition of turnover by Macy and Mirvis states that turnover is any departure beyond organisational boundaries; it excludes from considering those who transfer within the organisation.

2.1.1 Effects of teacher turnover

High rates of teacher turnover pose a number of challenges to the teaching profession.

The following are some such challenges:

2.1.1.1 Shortages in teacher supply

Xaba (2003) reports that teacher attrition results in shortages in teacher supply and this leads to a disparity in terms of pupil-teacher ratio. The argument is that oftentimes classes are overcrowded, as this shortage forces a teacher to attend to larger numbers of learners than are recommended (Xaba, 2003; MoEST, 2008a). This high pupil-teacher ratio compromises the quality of learning and it is a source of stress and burnout for teachers.

2.1.1.2 Poor student Achievement

Loeb, (2013) reports that teacher turnover negatively impacts student achievement. He argues that teacher effectiveness improves with experience during the early years of a teacher's career. These findings corroborates the research by Boyd et al (2006) where they modeled students' achievement as a function of teachers' experience, and found that first and second year teachers, on average, have students who gain significantly less in terms of both Mathematics and the English language scores during the year than do teachers with three or more years of experience. Based on this research, it can be concluded that student's achievement suffers when students are continually faced with more inexperienced teachers.

2.1.1.3 Lowering teacher quality

Cowan (2010) also reports on how attrition affects quality of teacher. This is because attrition forces the education system to recruit unqualified teachers to fill the gap created. In that scenario, entry standards into teaching are lowered and compromised (MoEST, 2008b). In the case of Malawi, shortage of teachers in community day secondary schools forced government to recruit qualified primary school teachers to fill the gap (Kadzamira, 2006). The Voluntary Service Overseas (2002a) noted that these unqualified teachers were teaching not only a lot of periods but also wider variety of subjects, many of which they had no mastery. As noted by MoEST (2008a), such arrangements lead to diminished student achievement and dwindling standards of education.

2.2 Teacher retention

Musaazi (1982) describes teacher retention as the ability of the school system to keep its staff in their jobs and make them want to stay.

2.2.1 Why teacher retention is important

There are a number of reasons teacher retention is important. Berliner (2009) argues that, typically, teachers gain a level of acceptable competence by the third year in the classroom and can achieve an “expert” level of performance around the fifth year of service. A competent teacher needs to remain in the profession long enough to experience variation and volume of circumstances and situations to allow competence or excellent teaching practice to emerge in any particular individual. Teachers need to be retained to create a profession of practitioners capable of teaching with a sufficient level of competence to allow students to excel in different situations. Secondly,

retention issues are important to successful teacher training, professional development, and induction. Retained teachers will develop the dispositions required for them to meet selection criteria as mentors or lead teachers (Cochran, Smith and Lytle, 1999). These knowledgeable, experienced guides will have the ability to implement programme purpose, and this experience can only be gained by uninterrupted participation in any endeavour.

Cochran et al. (1999), also report that the acquisition of pedagogical content knowledge is seen as an on-going process expected to continue throughout a teaching career. One can thus conclude that the longer one remains in the teaching profession, the more likely he or she will be able to have the chances to acquire pedagogical content knowledge of a higher quality.

Apart from that, retaining teachers is important to create a supply of practitioners who will provide the necessary insights and experience to perpetuate a system that fosters quality and reform-minded teaching (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1999). It is therefore reasonable to assume that the longer a teacher is retained, the more likely there will be an increase in the exposure to circumstances and situations that are necessary for reflection on and reformation of teaching practice for that individual.

2.3 Why teachers join the teaching profession

Findings of a study by Sharp and Benefield (2002) where they reviewed the literature on recruitment and retention to initial teacher training, found that people tend to be drawn to teaching because they want to work with children, search for intellectual fulfillment and also to fulfill their sense of contributing to society.

Brown (1992) points out that individuals reasons for choice might be, firstly, economic, in order to fulfill their basic needs and security. He further says that others choose teaching because of the feeling that the nature of work in the teaching profession borders of moral obligation. For such people, it is a responsibility they have to society to contribute as members, to do something that benefits humanity and to repay society for all that it has provided for them. He also argues that, still other reasons might be concerned with the need to enhance a person's identity, self-worth, personal growth and social contact.

Kyriacou and Coulthard, (2000) grouped the reasons teachers have for choosing teaching as a career into altruistic, intrinsic, and extrinsic. They argued that, first, teachers choose teaching as a career for reasons that relate to altruism. Altruistic reasons "deal with seeing teaching as a socially worthwhile and important job, a desire to help children succeed, and a desire to help society improve" (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000). The typical altruistic reasons from various research studies have been to serve the nation or society (Evans, 1993; Saban, 2003); to help children achieve (Bastick, 2000; Saban, 2003); to take the place of traditional teachers (Çermik et al., 2011; Sinclair, 2008); to influence the school systems which cause negative school experiences (DeLong, 1987); to enhance social equity (Richardson & Watt, 2007); to make a difference in the lives of children, and to serve as a role model.

Intrinsic reasons for joining the teaching profession "cover the aspects of the job activity itself, such as the activity of teaching children and (having) an interest in using their subject-matter knowledge and expertise" (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000, p. 117). Among the commonly known intrinsic reasons gleaned from the previous

studies are enjoying the subject that will be taught (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000), loving children, a match between the personality and the work (Çermik et al., 2011, Saban, 2003), the ambition to become a teacher (Bastick, 2000; Yong, 1995), opportunities for academic development, the desire to work with children and loving to teach (Çermik et al., 2011; Yong, 1995).

Lastly, they argued that teachers may choose teaching for extrinsic reasons, that is to say, “aspects of the job which are not inherent in the work itself” (Kyriacou and Coulthard, 2000, p. 117). Among these factors are pleasing salaries; a desire to have a steady income (Saban, 2003); long summer vacations; job security; the possibility of having extra time for family and kids (Watt & Richardson, 2007); the prestige of the teaching profession in society (Bastick, 2000); and the encouragement from other people such as parents, teachers, relatives, or friends (Sinclair, 2008).

In their study aiming at finding out the secondary school trainees perspectives for pursuing a teacher training course in Domasi College of Education in Malawi, Peter Mtika & Peter Gates (2010) found a range of perspectives. Most of the teachers reported that they joined the profession because of the failure to follow a desired career, that is to say, many did not make it to university to study other courses they had wished for and these teacher trainees had not considered teaching as a career option until they realised they had not been successful in gaining university places. This phenomenon is also evidenced in other countries such as Liberia where almost 75% of teacher candidate who had entered teaching education programme did so because they perceived no other option for a job (Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991). Apart from that, the research also found out that the teacher trainees in Malawi joined the

profession because teaching was used as a spring board or a means to get somewhere else in their career pursuit. In this case, they looked at teaching not as a long term career, but as a ladder for career advancement outside school (Mtika & Gates, 2010).

2.4 Why remain a teacher

Research suggests that a teacher's decision to remain in their schools and in teaching is influenced by a combination of the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that they receive in their work. Intrinsic rewards include the pleasure of being with children, the exhilaration of contributing to students' learning, the enjoyment of teaching subject matter one loves, or the chance to develop new skills and exercise expanded influence on the job, public recognition, responsibilities, among others. Extrinsic rewards would include salary, benefits, and bonuses and conditions of work (Moore, 2005).

However, Hao & Guzman (2007) argue that those committed to teaching are more likely to be motivated by intrinsic rewards while those that have never seriously considered teaching are likely to be motivated by extrinsic rewards. Handal, et al (2013) in their research also found that Mathematics and Science teachers are motivated to remain in teaching especially in rural areas to gain rural experience, seeking a permanent position and helping rural and remote communities. Further, they observed that provision of opportunities for professional growth helps retaining them.

Eberhard, et al (2000) also found the link between the successes of the students which is intrinsic, with retaining of teachers. Their research from South Texas demonstrated a direct link between teacher attrition rates and low student achievement. The increased tension to remain on top or constantly improve leads to undue stress for

teachers. Grant (2006) calls this self-efficacy. He describes it as a measure of success and that everyone needs to feel a sense of accomplishment in order to continue work in any given profession. Likewise, the teachers who feel as if they are failing are more likely to leave the profession.

Johnson & Birkeland (2003) also report that new teachers who find that they cannot achieve a “sense of success” with students are less likely to find teaching rewarding work and to remain in the classroom. They argue that through their positive feedback and compliance they enable teachers to reap the psychic rewards they seek.

In Malawi, no known research has been done to find out why teachers remain in the teaching profession hence the gap the researcher wants to fill. However, the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) carried out a research investigating factors that affect motivation of teachers in CDSS in 2002. It targeted the VSO volunteers who were teaching in these CDSSs, the head teachers and the other stakeholders. Some of the major motivators found were the introduction of the Cluster Initiative and the introduction of the housing allowance and the professional allowance. Despite the allowances the analysis of the research showed that the top three issues that affect teacher motivation were training, remuneration and workload. The teachers felt that their remuneration package did not reflect the job they did. Apart from that all the teachers, particularly primary school teachers working at CDSSs, wanted more training. They often taught a wide range of subjects and sometimes more periods. They also reported that there was limited involvement of teachers in decision making at all levels (VSO, 2002).

2.5 Identified information gap

Despite the available amount of literature that both identify and explain reasons Malawi secondary school teachers quit such as poor salaries, long working hours, large class sizes, inadequate support from administration, low prestige, lack of community support, and so on, less is known about the factors that influence teachers to stay. In other words, scanty teacher turnover research has focused specifically on why teachers decide to remain within the education system despite the hardship associated with the profession. Steel (2002) argues that reasons for one to stay are not necessarily the same as those for one to leave. This study therefore sought to fill this gap by identifying the nature of the factors that make the teachers remain in the system, notwithstanding the relatively difficult working conditions associated with the profession.

2.6 Theoretical framework

Shann (2001) asserts that job satisfaction helps to retain teachers and makes them committed to their job. In other words, job satisfaction contributes to teacher retention. Since the phenomenon of job satisfaction is closely related to motivation, theories of motivation are also regarded as theories of job satisfaction (Mbua, 2003). This section therefore describes theories of job satisfaction and their implication to teacher retention. There are many theories of motivation and job satisfaction but this study will be guided by Herzberg two-factor theory, for the reason that there is strong relationship between this theories and employee retention.

2.6.1 Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory)

According to Frederick Herzberg (1959), there are some job factors that result in satisfaction while there are other job factors that prevent dissatisfaction. He argues that the opposite of “Satisfaction” is “No satisfaction” and the opposite of “Dissatisfaction” is “No Dissatisfaction”. Herzberg classified these job factors into two categories: hygiene factors and motivation factors.

Table 1: Herzberg Two-Factor Theory

Motivation Factors (Satisfiers)	Hygiene Factors (Dissatisfiers)
Achievement	Company Policy & Administration
Recognition	Supervision- Technical
Work Itself	Salary
Responsibility	Interpersonal Relations/Supervision
Advancement	Working Conditions

Source: From Hertzberg, F. (1959)

2.6.1.1 Hygiene factors

These are those job factors which are essential for existence of motivation at workplace. They include pay, company and administrative policies, fringe benefits, physical working conditions, status, interpersonal relations, and job security. He explains that their existence creates an environment for doing work, but factors themselves cannot motivate people to work. Their absence can dissatisfy people but their presence per se cannot satisfy people. This means that these factors do not lead to positive satisfaction but if these factors are absent, then they lead to dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1959).

2.6.1.2 Motivation factors

Motivation factors are based on an individual's need for personal growth which consists of recognition, achievement, advancement, responsibility, and work itself. Herzberg refers to these antecedents as "satisfiers" or "motivators. He argues that these factors are associated to job satisfaction rather than job dissatisfaction. This

implies that an attempt to measure job satisfaction among employees has to include these job facets (Herzberg, 1959).

All in all, Hertzberg arguments imply that employees are not motivated by hygiene factors like salaries alone but by various other factors other than the salary which can satisfy and motivate employees.

2.6.1.3 Criticism of two factor theory

Like other theories, Hertzberg theory has been subjected to several criticisms from other scholars. The most comprehensive criticism appears in Malik and Naeem (2013). Malik and Naeem argue that the approach he employed to examine hygiene factors dictated the outcomes because individual differences were not greatly considered. Secondly, that the treatment of job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction facets as mutually exclusive aspects is questionable. This implies that what Herzberg and his colleagues refer to as “motivators” are both “satisfiers” and “dissatisfiers”. In other words, the factors that Herzberg regards as satisfiers can also be “dissatisfiers” in another context. Finally, the study did not concentrate on actual motivation, but job satisfaction among employees. (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004).

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented a review of the relevant literature on teacher attrition, its effects, and has also looked at retention which included definitions and its importance. The chapter also reviewed some of the studies that have been done on why teacher join and remain in the profession and the information gap. The chapter ended by discussing the theoretical framework that guided the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Chapter Overview

This study explored the nature of factors that motivate teachers to remain in the teaching profession in Malawi. This chapter therefore, describes methods of investigation and data analysis used in the study. The chapter is divided into the following sections: research design and data gathering, data analysis, trust worthiness of the data, methodological assumptions, limitations and delimitations of the study.

3.1 Research Paradigm

Quantitative and qualitative research methods involve different assumptions about how research should be conducted, the role of the researcher, and these assumptions/framework about the approaches constitute paradigms. In short, the term paradigm is used to determine how a researcher pursues the study of a phenomenon in the scientific and social arenas (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000).

This study draws on a qualitative methodology within an interpretative paradigm. The interpretative paradigm method focuses primarily on the kind of evidence that people tell the researcher and what they do, and this enables the researcher to understand the meaning of what is going on (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Therefore, interpretative paradigm is appropriate for the objective of exploring reasons why teachers remain in their profession.

Qualitative research has been chosen because, according to Denzin & Lincol (2000), it allows the researcher to gain a rich and complex understanding of a particular phenomenon. Johnson and Christensen (2008) add that qualitative research is crucial when little is known about a topic or phenomenon and when one wants to discover or learn more about it. Because this research on the reasons that make experienced secondary teachers remain in the profession has not been studied by education researchers in Malawi, it is important to explore and fully describe the details of the nature of the factors regarding this. In this way, qualitative methodology fits with the research objective.

3.2 Research Design

A research design is the overall plan by which any research is going to be administered. Hussey and Hussey (1997) describe it as the various means by which data is generated and analysed. This study employed a qualitative case study design.

Case study research method is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. In other words, a case study is a unique way of observing any natural phenomenon which exists in a set of data. By unique it is meant that only a very small geographical area or numbers of subjects of interest are examined in detail. Unlike quantitative analysis which observes patterns in data at the macro level on the basis of the frequency of occurrence of the phenomena being observed, case studies observe the data at the micro level. As a result, the researcher gains a sharpened understanding of why the instance happened as it did, and what might become important to look at

more extensively in future research (Yin, 2012). Therefore, in an attempt to have an in-depth understanding of the phenomena of why teachers stay in the profession, the researcher employed case study design where 4 secondary schools in Zomba District were regarded as cases for this study.

3.3 Site Selection and Selection of Informants

This study was carried out in two secondary schools in Zomba rural and two secondary schools in Zomba urban. This district was chosen because of convenience. These schools were chosen because they have characteristics that may qualify as representative of a public school or public schools in Zomba.

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants for the study. Creswell (2005) says that in qualitative research, participants who can best help the researcher understand the research questions should be purposively selected.

In both settings, the researcher focused on secondary school teachers with 5 or more years of experience in the classroom, a somewhat arbitrary cut-off point at which it could be assumed that most teachers had established themselves as experienced teachers.

Rural and urban schools were chosen because the researcher wanted to understand whether the rural-urban dichotomy in teacher attrition is also applied in why teacher remain in teaching.

3.4 Sample Size

This study consisted of 16 experienced teachers; 2 males and 2 females from each of the 4 participating schools in the district. Litchman (2010) says the goal of the qualitative research is to describe and understand rather than generalise; as a result, there is no specific number of participants to be studied and the majority of qualitative research studies use small number of participants.

Apart from the 16 teachers interviewed, other 8 teachers were engaged in a focus group discussion where one FGD consisted of 4 teachers from one urban school and the other group from a rural school.

3.5 Data Generation Procedure

3.5.1 Interviews

The method of data collection used in this study was interviews. According to Best and Kahn (1998), interviewing techniques are regarded by many researchers as superior to other qualitative data gathering methods. An interview is a purposeful conversation used to produce rich, descriptive data about how participants interpret their world. In this study, therefore, interviews helped the researcher to probe more from the participants on why they remain in the teaching profession.

Permission for conducting this study at the school was sought from the head teacher few days before the actual day of interviews. The head teacher provided the names of those who qualified for the research. Then the researcher contacted individual teachers face-to-face to provide information about the study and seek their participation. Selected participants were interviewed face-to-face in a private office

setting of their choice at their respective places of work. The interviews were audio-recorded. The participants were allowed to ask any questions before the recording commenced, and were reminded that they could ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time.

3.5.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

The researcher also used focus group discussion to exploit group dynamics of the reasons teachers stay in the profession. Mohammed, Anker, Patel and Barge (1991) demonstrate a number of situations where the group setting is believed to be beneficial. For example, they argue that an informal, supportive group of people with similar backgrounds can often put people at ease, and encourage them to express their views freely and frankly. They also argue that such a setting enables participants to elaborate on ideas, since the group interaction can stimulate memories and feelings. They also notes that the fact that each participant is relating to a group of people with similar backgrounds reduces the likelihood of participants giving answers they think will please the interviewer (a common problem of surveys). In addition, they observe that owing to a healthy interaction during focus-group discussion, the moderator is presented with a chance to clarify the questions, which entails less likelihood of questions being misunderstood.

Rubin and Rubin (1995) expound by observing that in focus groups, the goal is to let people spark off one another, suggesting dimensions and nuances of the original problem that any one individual might not have thought of. Sometimes these group interviews provided information or illuminated perspectives that had not surfaced in one-on-one interviews with school participants.

In this research, the process of choosing the focus group discussion interview participants and the interview process was the same as that employed on individual interview. Each FGD comprised 4 experienced teachers: 2males and 2 females.

During both individual and focus groups interviews the researcher used semi-structured interview guide using open-ended questions to direct the conversations. Woods (2006) observes that semi-structured interviews provide much more detailed information than through other data collection methods, such as surveys. He argues that semi-structured interviews provide a more relaxed atmosphere in which to collect information—people may feel more comfortable having a conversation with you as opposed to filling out a survey. In other words, a semi-structured interview guide makes use of predetermined key themes and questions to provide a sense of order, however, does not prevent the researcher from asking additional questions and probing deeper into a particular experience. Open ended questions were used to allow the participants to provide meaningful responses which may be unanticipated by the researcher.

In this study, this approach encouraged participants to provide detailed and elaborated information about their experiences. In addition, the researcher was able to ask follow-up questions to gain greater clarity or more details about the responses initially provided. The interviews were audio recorded for later transcription and analysis. The audio records helped the researcher not to miss any information from the participants.

3.6 Data Analysis

The semi-structured interviews that were audio-taped were later transcribed and analysed together with the handwritten data. The researcher followed the four data analysis steps recommended by Gay and Airasian, (2003):

- Reading and mining: Becoming familiar with the data and of the main themes reflected in it;
- Describing: providing detailed description of the setting, participants, and activities;
- Classifying: coding pieces of data, categorising them, and grouping them by themes; and
- Interpreting: making sense of the data in order to derive general understandings and conclusions.

Although these steps guided the researcher on data analysis, they steps were not followed lavishly. As Gay and Airasian (2003) indicate, the data analysis steps are not fixed sinceas the researcher begins to put everything into context and think around the data, the initial ordered sequences loses its structure and becomes less predictable.

Reading and mining was an ongoing process throughout the data gathering and analysis periods. In other words, the researcher tried to familiarise with the data and any general themes that seemed to be emerging by reading and re-reading the transcriptions (or narrative summaries) of the interviews conducted. This process also helped the researcher to remove unimportant data and also to evaluate the strategies she was using for generating the data.

The coding phase was next and began when approximately two-thirds of the data had been gathered. The process involved going through the data line by line, closely examining the data phrase by phrase—looking for recurring vocabulary and major ideas. These ideas included conversation topics, vocabulary, activities, meanings, feelings and so on. The researcher jotted the recurring vocabulary or ideas in the margins or on separate cards when going through the notes. Through the “constant comparison method” the researcher was able to eventually recognise some distinctive characteristics in the data. These distinctive characteristics facilitated the creation of broader categories. Comparing the categories derived from the earlier data with the new data, elicited in order to confirm or disconfirm the salience of these categories, the researcher was able to identify general patterns that started to make sense of the data.

3.7 Trustworthiness of the study

To ensure trustworthiness of data of this research, and the themes derived from it, the researcher enacted the following procedures:

3.7.1 Pilot testing

A pilot study can be described as a specific pre-testing of research instruments, including questionnaires or interview schedules. The pilot study involved interviewing 4 experienced teachers; 1 male and 1 female from each of the 2 selected participating schools in Zomba. The piloting helped the study in clearing out some questions which were not relevant to the study. It also helped the researcher to determine time each interview would take and it also helped to find out if what the researcher was getting inform of responses was what the researcher was expecting.

3.7.2 Triangulation

In order to increase the validity of the study's findings, the researcher employed the method of triangulation. Mathison (1988) describes triangulation as typically a strategy (test) for improving the validity and reliability of research or evaluation of findings. He elaborates this by observing that triangulation has put forth an important methodological issue in naturalistic and qualitative approaches to evaluation (in order to) control bias and establishing validity.

Therefore triangulation helped the researcher look for regularities in the data by comparing data derived from face-to-face individual interviews with different participants, and from the focus group discussions. In other words, by triangulating the sources of data in this study, the researcher was able to compare the emerging themes and thus corroborate their significance.

3.8 Methodological assumptions

This investigation is based on several assumptions.

- First, the study assumes that teachers in a school do not act in isolation of their context. Rather, they make sense of their lives, experiences, and the structures of the world collectively in the community in which they live. Therefore in attempt to produce a rich understanding of the question, all of the information collected was treated as part of a broader picture of the teacher's context.
- The study also rests on the assumption that activities can best be understood in the actual settings in which they occur because human behaviour is greatly influenced by the setting in which they take place.

3.9 Ethical considerations

To ensure that individual rights were not infringed upon and to promote fairness in the interpretation of data, the researcher adhered the following principles as highlighted by Cohen et al. (2000). Firstly, the researcher obtained an informed consent, that is, the participants were never forced to participate in the study. For the sake of confidentiality and anonymity, no names of participants were taken or recorded. Prior to tape-recording an interview, the participant's permission was sought to have the interview recorded. The participants were also assured that the information generated would not be discussed whether in a group or in a publication in a way which the participants might find harmful or which actually disadvantaged them. These assurances helped the participants trust the researcher and feel confident enough to offer candid descriptions of their experiences.

3.10 Limitations of the study

Some participants had reservations in the use of audio recording despite explaining to them that the information would solely be used for the study. In order to deal with this problem, the researcher decided to be more meticulous with the written details. In addition, the researcher had to make follow ups where information was not clear during the data analysis process. There were others that were just not initially interested in participating in the study, claiming fatigue from the same and similar visits from researchers in the school. These were however convinced after some lengthy negotiations.

3.11 Chapter summary

This chapter has provided the details about the methods that were employed in the study. The chapter began by explaining the overall methodology and the research design used in the study. It then described the population (participants) and the sampling technique employed before giving a description of the instruments used in the data collection. Data generation procedure and data analysis techniques immediately followed. Later the chapter looked at methodological assumptions and specifics on research ethics. The chapter concluded with study limitations. The next chapter presents the findings and discussions.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Chapter overview

This chapter presents the findings and discussions of this study. The presentation of the results will be guided by relating teacher responses to two research questions:

1. What attracts people to the teaching profession?
2. Why do some teachers remain in the teaching profession despite the obvious hardships they face?

4.1 Research Question 1

Results on what attracts people to the teaching profession

Research question one asked why the participants chose teaching as a profession. The following section discusses the analysis of the findings from the one-on-one interview and focus group discussions.

4.1.1 Helping younger generations and contributing to society

Helping younger generation was the second most common reason mentioned by 12 of the 16 participants that were interviewed. Teachers were keen to share their knowledge to build more confident generation who will contribute to their country's development. They saw themselves as important agents in society's development. P1 explains:

“I became a teacher because I wanted to make a positive difference in the lives of children and constructively contribute to the society. I want to do something with my life that would forever leave a positive mark on the world, so I thought of becoming a teacher.”

Another teacher considered the teaching role as offering an opportunity where he is able to help students to contribute to education in Malawi. He observed:

“I think that by becoming a secondary school teacher, I have the opportunity to meet and transfer knowledge to students and also help the society. I feel that social development is mainly through education. If the education is poor, social development would not exist” (P3).

4.1.2 Lack of alternative

Only 2% of the participants reported that they chose teaching because it was the only available profession to them. One had the following to say on this:

“I did not want this profession at all, only that I had nowhere to go, and this profession was readily available hence I joined it. Teaching profession was a refuge, we tried other avenues but we failed, so I joined it”.

On the same, one of the respondents said he was just redirected to study education as it was not among his choices during University of Malawi Entrance Examinations. He said, “I was just offered this programme otherwise during my entrance examinations, education was not one of my choices, and they just put me there.”

4.1.3 Marriage

Marriage was the other reason mentioned for choosing the teaching profession. Fifty percent (50%) of the female participants said they chose the teaching profession influenced by a desire for them to get married easily. They reported that they were advised at school that teaching was a ‘good job for a woman’ and men opt to marry

teachers because it is compatible with other interests such as family life. One participant observed:

“Most men go for female teachers when they look for marriage partners, so for the fear of remaining single for the rest of my life, I thought of becoming a teacher.”

When asked why men opt for female teachers rather than women in other professions, one respondent from the focus group discussions reported that teaching is compatible with other interests such as family life. She stressed that the profession offers them ample time to take care of their families hence a reason for them to join and remain in the teaching profession. P5 of the FGD explained:

“People usually encouraged me that in teaching profession you have all the time to do other things. By 12 O’clock you will be at home. So I was encouraged that I will have enough time when I get married, I will provide all the care and affection for my husband and my children and this really motivated me to join the profession and I am still here because of that.”

4.1.4 Role models

Twenty percent (20%) of the participants said they were initially inspired to become teachers because they remembered a particular teacher who had made a positive impression on them when they were students.

“I admired my teachers and I worked hard to be like them. I want my students also to admire me, and they too will work hard in class” P8.

Among those from whom the inspiration had come were mothers, sisters, or other relatives who had lived a successful career of a teacher. They pointed out that they grew up admiring these people for their hard work, dedication, and a positive

impression and influence they had had on them and so many other children. The sentiments are summarized in the following observations by one participant:

“My older sister was a primary school teacher working in a school in a rural area. I was often going to her home and staying there for a while. Staying with her was almost like a practicum for me. We were talking about education, students, schools ... Eventually I started thinking that I could be a teacher, just like her...”

4.1.5 Personal interest in teaching

Sixty percent (60%) of the interviewed participants chose teaching as their goal. Participants had an interest in teaching and wanted to teach as a career choice. The following two participants proffer reasons:

“Actually, it was my natural interest, I just like teaching. I have this interest in chatting and mentoring children”P4.

“Teaching was my choice, because when I teach someone and he learns, I am happy. When I explain something and he understands, I am extremely glad” P1.

FGD data also showed that personal interest was also a primary reason for the participants choosing the teaching profession. Five out of the eight participants mentioned that they had an interest in teaching which influenced them to take up the teaching profession. P2 responded:

“Teaching was always what I wanted to do, I just love teaching and being around young children, teaching them, looking after them—for me, that is it; I mean that’s what I want to do and this connection brings meaning to my work” FGD P6.

On the same issue, another participant had this to say:

“I feel good interacting with my students and it was a personal choice, and when am on holiday, I miss my students, even during working days if am out, they seem to feel my absence, so we are like a team, we like each other.”

4.1.6 Opportunities to upgrade

Upgrading opportunities in teaching came out as a dominant factor that made teachers join the profession. Eighty percent (80%) of the participants from both individual interviews and the focus group discussion reported that teaching profession offers them the chance to upgrade compared to other professions where such opportunities are minimal. As P8 of FGD observes:

“In education, there is room for improvement compared to other sectors for example; in the health sector. When nurses want to go for upgrading, they have to sit/rewrite the Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE examinations), and most of them attend our open schools, they are fighting for upgrading, they have to sit for MSCE examinations again but as for teachers, even if you have a diploma, you are allowed to go and upgrade to a degree level. So I knew that if I want to have a higher qualification, I should join teaching and I joined it. Here I am, and I have achieved my goal of upgrading.”

On the same issue of upgrading, P2 adds:

“More especially when they don’t have physical science biology, they have to rewrite whilst in education there is at least a wider choice, for example if someone has fared in Humanities subjects, you have that chance to upgrade in humanities, in sciences, you can also still go and upgrade in science subjects. Education courses are offered in many colleges in Malawi hence there is a wider choice”.

4.2 Research Question 2

Results on why some teachers remain despite relatively difficult working conditions

Research question two asked why some teachers remain in the teaching profession despite the relatively difficult working conditions associated with the profession. The following section discusses the analysis of the findings from the one-on-one interview and focus group discussions.

4.2.1 Upgrading opportunities

“Upgrading opportunities” was the dominant response from 80% of the participants from both individual interviews and the focus group discussion on their reasons for choosing to remain in the teaching profession. P6 explains:

“Teaching profession has given me a chance to upgrade. In teaching, if you want to pursue other businesses etc., chances are there because you are less busy. For instance, I was a primary school teacher, I upgraded to diploma level and now I have a degree. Had it been I was a soldier or other profession, it would have been very difficult because there are always some difficulties to provide you with the leave, but, you always have that chance in teaching and this makes me love this profession and remain there.”

Even though “upgrading opportunities” was pointed out as the main reason for their choice to remain in the system, the respondents noted that there are serious issues related to it. The first challenge they meet is the delays in promoting them after they come back from upgrading. As stated by one teacher,

“Teachers are always looked down upon whether by the society and the government itself, you know as an employee of government, I went

to college, I have a bachelor's degree but I have 4 years now without promotion. I am here solely because I love teaching."

Another teacher concurred with him,

"I am a degree holder; I also went for UCE, but up to now, I'm not considered for promotion. I upgraded for diploma in 2010, but up to now no promotion, or even no arrears. I am still regarded as a PT3 teacher instead of grade one. Nothing is being done up to now, no promotion up to now, this is so demotivating."

Another challenge relating to upgrading the respondents noted is that there are no establishments for other levels of qualifications. The case in point is when a teacher upgrades to a masters level qualification. On this, one of the participants had this to say:

"Even the masters you are studying is not recognised in the education sector, there is no grade for that level. Even if you finish your studies, you will still be recognized as a degree holder like me. So what do you think a person with that qualification can do? Leaving the profession is the only option and join the profession that can recognise his or her paper" P1.

Having made these sentiments, the respondents proposed that the government should consider those trained to a masters level so that they are motivated to remain in the profession. One participants made the following sentiments, representative of their views:

"The government should consider those who go for further training to masters level. It should create a grade for them in the same teaching profession to prevent losing them" P2.

The participants also proposed that the government should provide soft loans and scholarships to these teachers so that more teachers should be able to apply for upgrading and remain in the system. One of the respondents stressed:

“If the government provides soft loans to those teachers that are willing to upgrade will be a great motivator, not only for those teachers who are already in the system but also those that have not considered joining the profession. Scholarships can also help to motivate these teachers because fees to cater for upgrading are a major challenge”P17.

One respondent of the focus group discussion added:

“If salary advances, subsidised fees and paid study leave are offered; many teachers will be motivated and remain in the system” P 11.

The respondents also suggested that the government should consider promoting on time those who upgraded so that they should not be thinking of leaving the profession because as one attains relevant qualifications in the work place, he or she is expecting to advance in terms of the position held. One participant emphasized:

“The government should promote those who have upgraded as soon as possible so that they should not run away from the system for greener pastures. There are so many teachers who have upgraded but they are not promoted for so many years. This is so demotivating and they think of quitting. If it wants to retain these teachers, promote them, full stop!”

When asked if these challenges affect their motivation to remain in the profession, the respondents said that upgrading is not only about promotions, because you also become a better teacher and more comfortable, and also you feel equally qualified with others in the profession.

According to the participants, this makes employees become efficient and effective. They argued that individual efficiency and effectiveness contributes to group and organisational effectiveness since the whole is the sum of its parts. Therefore, upgrading brings satisfaction and it helps one achieve self-actualisation need and improves self-esteem.

4.2.2 In-service Training

In-service training was the second most common motivating factor mentioned by both Focus Group Discussion members and one-on-one interviews. They reported that insets help them to address their knowledge gaps and they end up improving their capabilities in lesson delivery. One participant explained:

“Sometimes we are called to attend an inset to improve our knowledge. The insets involve how to write schemes and records of work, how to formulate examinations among others. I remember last year we went to Masuku Lodge for 2days. This year, there is also a departmental inset where we will be discussing issues related to the departments that we have at the school. These insets not only broadens our knowledge but rather also comes with allowances that help us go along well in the month” P15.

Although insets were mentioned as one of the motivators for teachers to remain in the system, the participants noted that there is also a challenge related to them. P 10 explained:

“It’s only the head teacher and the management who gets the allowances that are associated with insets in our school and sometimes they do not conduct them.”

One member of the focus group discussion crushed her point by saying,

“The government clearly has allocations for these insets to be done at school level. It is just unfortunate that we have greedy head teachers in our secondary schools. The money should be utilised wisely. The head teachers should allow school-based insets. These could be departmental insets, staff meetings, and these meetings can also be done far away from the school and it will be a motivator on its own hence remain in the system” P7.

On related issue, 4 participants reported that teaching provides them a chance for continually improve themselves. For instance, P3 reported that she learned a lot through teaching. She had acquired extensive knowledge that she had never expected to acquire. Being in teaching profession pushed her to grow and master new knowledge. P9 described his experiences as follows:

“In my opinion, being a teacher, we learn every day. Even if we don’t have a class tonight, we still need to think of what we are going to teach tomorrow.”

4.2.3 Achievement

Ten participants indicated that students’ achievement motivated them to remain in the profession. Teachers highlighted the importance and value they placed in hearing, and to some extent, taking stock of former students’ accomplishments. The following sentiments affirm to this:

“The outcome of the job itself satisfies me. This is what keeps me going in my teaching profession... I feel very happy when I see my students excelling in education... I feel I have taken a part in someone’s life...”
P12.

Other participants also noted how rewarding it is to hear about the accomplishments of their former students: One teacher noted:

“I enjoy teaching and watching the students grow both academically and socially. Then, in years down the road, when a parent comes up to you and tells you that their child who had been in your class has a good job, it makes you feel good and that all your effort was worth it. Also, sometimes the students come back to visit and fill you in on their lives.”

On the same, P3 had the following to say:

“Personally as a teacher I feel happy when my students pass the national examinations with credits and distinctions, I become very happy and so proud, and imagine during the last JCE, I had 100% pass rate and this is CDSS. If you compare students from a CDSS and those that are from Schools like St Marys, you will find that most of them are dull, and with the poor resources it’s worse. So, from this poor background, and you manage to help them and pass well, it’s something that makes me proud and motivates me to remain in the teaching services.

“Teaching has given me much self-satisfaction. I have learned so much from my students about life in general. I have also kept in touch with former students throughout the years, and it’s exciting to hear how successful they are as adults, some have become ministers, doctors and I become happy and proud to know that I may have had a small influence in their lives and education. I am proud to be a teacher and I don’t regret at all.”

One teacher argued that for him it is not enough for students to get distinctions in class or during examinations, but equally and probably more important, is the students’ moral uprightness. He observed:

“I want to make good citizens of Malawi. If you have a healthy society, then things will be okay with us. The A’s, B’s cannot make somebody morally upright but I would like kids who go out there, who are morally upright, well mannered, kids who are honest and respected,

who are embraced with the virtues that the society needs... that's why I stay in this profession"

4.2.4 Responsibilities

Participants from both focus group discussions and individual interviews mentioned that the responsibilities that are given at the school level also make them remain in the teaching profession. They reported that more participation and involvement of employees in decision making is very important, because allowing employees to participate in the decision-making process can be one of the non-financial incentives that are highly motivating. They argued that the ability to have a say in what happens in the organisation, particularly as it affects the employees taking part in the decision, can help people to feel respected and included, and that it may show that the organisation values their contribution. One participant observed:

"When I am given these different responsibilities I feel happy and have a feeling that I am part of the school as an organisation. I am given the power to make decisions in my department, which also motivates me a lot".

Most of the teachers reported that they were being sent by the school authorities to participate in meetings at the DEM's office or at the Education Division offices. Being accorded this opportunity through delegation shows that they are valued, a confirmation for self-worth. The process also helps them gain the much-needed experience necessary for their work. P4 says:

"One reason that has made me stay in the teaching profession is because of the responsibilities that the head teacher assigns to me. He sometimes sends me to meetings where I share platforms with other head teachers from other schools, DEM's and EDM's, this makes me

love my job because it shows that people have confidence in you as well as enabling myself to demonstrate what I am capable of doing.”

4.2.5 Lack of alternatives

Almost 2% of the respondents from the individual interviews reported that they remained in the teaching profession because they had nowhere to go, and that the chances for greener pastures were not there yet. These teachers said that once they would get an opening for another job, they would not hesitate moving out of the teaching profession. As P5 explains:

“To be honest madam, I still remain here because I have not yet found greener pasture out there. My friends having the same qualifications as mine in the Non-Governmental Organisation, they are very far much better in terms of money. As I am speaking they have bought very expensive cars within a short period of time. I am only remaining here because I have not yet found a good job, not necessarily that I like this job. If the chance arises, I will gladly grab it and go!”

Another respondent similarly lamented:

“Madam, I have nowhere to go and I am just waiting for my retiring age now, I am tired of applying for different jobs but I am not picked. But once I get the chance of greener pasture, I will definitely go!” P14.

4.2.6 Role model

Five percent of the participants reported that they remain a teacher because they wanted to be role models to their students. They argued that since it was due to influence from other role models that they joined the teaching profession, it is only reasonable and fair that they too do the same to their students. This makes them proud. P13 explains:

“I admired my mathematics teacher so much, the way he imparted knowledge to us and made us understand things had a huge impact. From him I wished to become a teacher and remain a teacher so that others benefit from me as well.”

Another added:

“My brother was a primary school teacher and he was talking about his experiences with his students. I started thinking that I could become a teacher, here I am now” P10.

4.2.7 Challenging work

10% of the participants reported that they have remained in the system because of the challenging work they encounter. They reported that they are experiencing very bad working conditions such as very large classes, and shortage of teachers in some subjects among other problems. Because of the shortage of teachers, most of them reported that they teach what they did not specialise in and this is quite a challenging experience. When the students pass during national examinations, this challenging work turns out to be motivating hence makes them remain in the teaching profession.

This is what one of the respondents said:

“I learn a lot in teaching through lesson preparations and deliverance. I teach subjects that I have not been trained in college. For example, I teach Agriculture but I am an expert in History this is because of the shortage of teachers. However, students perform well in the national examination and this is what motivates me to remain in the teaching profession” P 12.

4.2.8 Recognition

Recognition was also mentioned as a contributing factor for teachers to remain in the teaching profession. 50% of the participants reported that the recognition they get from the school leadership after making their students pass well in national

examination makes them more motivated to remain in the profession. As one of the participants explains:

“Recognition from the administration and the PTA motivates us and also makes us work hard. As the students pass, we become proud of the achievement and recognition furthers this motivation hence remain in the teaching profession. And right now because of what they did last year, and a lot of teachers are about to finish their syllabus in preparation of their students so that by the end of this academic year they have to be recognised” P11.

However, 50% of the participants seemed to be unsatisfied in regards to recognition of their work. Many of them believed that their work is not fairly recognised. The following sentiments by P2 represent this stance:

“At least the management should consider recognition in the teaching profession. We understand that most government schools do not have enough money to be spending on this compared to other private schools such as St Mary’s of which they give huge amounts of rewards in form of money to the best teachers. For me, I don’t want that huge amounts of money, a mere recognition will motivate me for the good work I have done. It can be in form of a certificate or introducing employee of the year in each of the department will perform wonders, after all it’s in the nature of human being to be acknowledged when he or she has done something great and he or she is expected to perform that task again.”

4.3 Identified themes

The final step involved subjecting the data to comparative thematic analysis where common themes emerging from the findings were arrived at. A critical look at the findings from the 2 research questions revealed that they were interrelated. This interrelationship meant that the emerging themes were also interlaced. Four connected

themes across the gathered qualitative data were established, and these are: (i) Career Progression (ii) Role model, (iii) Responsibility, (iv) Achievement/Feedback (v) Lack of alternative employment opportunities (vi) Recognition. Table 2 presents a general framework for the themes.

Table 2: Reasons for Joining and Remaining in the Teaching Profession

Theme	Theme Description
Career Progression	➤ Upgrading Opportunities ➤ In service Training
Role model	➤ Teachers ➤ Relatives
Responsibility	➤ Leadership position ➤ Helping younger generations ➤ Delegation ➤ Positive contribution to society
Achievement/ Feedback	➤ High pass rates in national examinations ➤ Morally Upright children ➤ Noble profession (self-actualisation needs) ➤ Challenging work (feel sense of achievement when they teach what they did not specialise on and make their students pass)
Lack of alternative employment opportunities	➤ Nowhere to go
Recognition	➤ Recognition

4.4 Discussion

This section discusses themes that emerged from the findings from the 2 research questions presented in table 2 above.

4.4.1 Career progression

This is the most dominant theme that all participants mentioned as the reason they joined and remained in the system. Career progression is at the core of every profession as it improves employees 'skills and competencies'. As noted from the study, it plays a determining role for teachers either to leave or remain in the teaching profession. This concurs with observations by Hall (1996), that if employees cannot advance inside the organisation, they will move to another one, since many employees seek out employers who provide training and development activities that facilitate career advancement.

From the study, it has been noted that, career progression in education is offered through upgrading opportunities and in-service training as discussed below.

4.4.1.1 Upgrading Opportunities

The general perception of all the participants from both individual interviews and the focus group discussion was that they joined and remain in the teaching profession because it offers them the chance to upgrade compared to other professions where such opportunities are minimal.

This finding differs with Kadzamira and Chibwana (2000) who observed through a tracer survey of university graduates that education graduates have had fewer opportunities for further education and training than graduates from other disciplines.

4.4.1.2 In-service Training

Teachers also mentioned that in their respective schools they are offered In-service training (Insets) especially in the areas of the teaching subjects. These insets address

the knowledge gaps in them which later improve lesson delivery and students achievements. This therefore plays a role in motivating them to remain in the system. This finding corroborates The EFA Global Monitoring Report on Malawi produced by UNESCO (2014) which suggests that teacher's skills need to be improved through ongoing education. It further reports that regular supervision and ongoing training have the potential to address knowledge gaps and upgrade and reinforce acquired skills hence are among the strategies to make teachers stay in teaching.

In summary, presence of on-the-job training and continuous professional development helps teachers to cope with the changes in the syllabus. This concurs with observations by Komba & Nkumbi (2008) who argue that continuous teacher professional development provides teachers with the opportunities to explore new instructional techniques and strategies, and these help them to improve their practice and broaden themselves as educators and individuals. These new instructional techniques also make the teaching a success and make the teacher deliver a lesson well hence improve learners' achievement which is also a great motivator. This, therefore, confirms Hertzberg assumptions that continuous professional development is a motivator to an employee.

4.4.2 Role Model

Teachers reported that they remain in the teaching profession because they want to be role models to their students. They argued that since they joined the teaching profession because of their role models, they too want to do the same to their students. This, according to them, makes them proud since they feel that they have contributed to the society through their profession.

This agrees with (Saban, 2003) who reports that good teachers play an important role in pre-service teachers' career choice decisions. In this context, *role models* are the people who through their distinctive and exemplary qualities (*e.g.*, worldview, attitudes toward students, human relations, approach towards teaching), influence participants to develop an interest in a teaching career. Such role models are often relatives or teachers with a unique perspective and attitude and therefore influenced some of the participants in such a way that they then aimed to become teachers themselves. The explanation that others join or remain in the teaching profession because they want to contribute to the society is in tandem with some previously done educational research, for instance, Saban (2003) who reports that most teachers joined the profession because they wanted to serve their nation or society.

4.4.3 Responsibility

Responsibility was one of the themes that emerged from the findings as the reason most teachers joined the teaching profession as well as why they are still there. A number of meanings can be derived from the theme "responsibility". In one sense, it is construed as generating a parental feeling and in another sense it is seen as deriving from accounting for allocated tasks and positions and also delegated authority as discussed below.

4.4.3.1 Helping younger generations

Teachers explicitly reported that they made a conscious decision to teach and remain in the profession because they feel good when they help the younger generation through interactions; mentoring them and watching them grow into responsible adults. They argued that a teacher, like a parent, is responsible for fellow human being and it

is this human characteristic that enables them to define their success. The belief that they are helping younger generations creates a sense of meaningful work and feeling of achievement among these teachers, categorising this factor as a motivator, according to Herzberg's two factor theory. This finding is comparable to some empirical studies such as of Sharp and Benefield (2002) where they reviewed the literature on recruitment and retention to initial teacher training. Those studies established that people tend to be drawn and remain in teaching because they want to interact and work with children, search for intellectual fulfillment, and want to satisfy their sense of contributing to society.

Participants also mentioned that the responsibilities that are given at the school level also make them remain in the teaching profession. This means that more participation and involvement of teachers in decision making is very important, because allowing teachers to participate in decision-making process can be one of the non-financial incentives that are highly motivating. This can also help teachers feel respected and included, and develop a feeling that the school management values their input.

4.4.3.2 Leadership positions

Throughout the research, teachers mentioned that they get motivated and remain in the system because of the responsibilities that are given to them. In all the schools, it was observed that almost every teacher has one or two responsibilities allocated to him or her. Some responsibilities included sports director, chairperson of sanitation, discipline, and patrons of various school clubs and associations.

The impact of decision making autonomy affirms the observation by Mulkeen, et al (2007) that when teachers are empowered to the extent that they make autonomous decisions, it enhances their professional growth as well as their job satisfaction which are critical in promoting teacher retention. But a lack thereof enhances dissatisfaction and leads to attrition.

4.4.3.3 Delegation

Oxford Dictionary defines delegation as the act of authorising someone to act as a representative. Most of the teachers reported that they were being sent by the school authorities to meetings to the District Education Manager's office or Education Division Office. This delegation, according to them, shows that they are valued, and is a confirmation for self-worth. It also enabled them to gain the needed experience necessary for their work.

This study finding therefore confirms literature that involvement in decision making, autonomy in decision making and delegation are necessary for professional growth and therefore promote job satisfaction. This in turn raises commitment to organisation, and intent to stay. But a lack thereof can trigger dissatisfaction and lead to rebellion and consequently attrition. The finding is also in agreement with Herzberg's two factor theory that looks at responsibility as a source of satisfaction.

4.4.4 Achievement

Another dominating theme that came out from the findings on reasons teachers join and remain in the education system is students' achievement. Seeing students grow academically, developing from basic to proficient, is worthy celebrating to many of

the teachers interviewed. This gives them a sense of accomplishment and motivates them to remain in their job. This, according to Maslow, is self-actualisation whereby a person looks to achieve self-fulfillment and personal growth. By successfully teaching these children, teachers may be meeting their own needs of self-actualisation (Maslow, 1970).

Other participants said observing poor behaviour changing into respectful behavior by the end of the year brought their job great joy. This seems to be extremely rewarding to the teachers and thus giving them deep satisfaction. P8 explains:

“Seeing my students with bad manners changing into well behaved children because of my counseling and support is something worth celebrating...this.. to me is extremely gives me a deep satisfaction.”

These findings show that there is a link between the successes of the students and teacher retention, demonstrating a clear conformity with observations in the various literature discussed. For instance, Eberhard et al (2000) research from South Texas demonstrates a direct link between teacher attrition rates and low student achievement. The increased tension to remain on top or constantly improve leads to undue stress for teachers. Grant (2006) calls this self-efficacy. He describes it as a measure of success, necessary since everyone needs to feel a sense of accomplishment in order to continue work in any given profession. Likewise, the teachers who feel as if they are failing are more likely to leave the profession.

It is also in tandem with Johnson and Birkeland (2003) who also report that new teachers who find that they cannot achieve a “sense of success” with students are less likely to find teaching rewarding work and to remain in the classroom. They observe

that through their positive feedback and compliance they enable the teachers to reap the psychic rewards they seek.

The theme of achievement also includes teachers who reported that they have remained in the system because of the challenging work they encounter. Some teachers mentioned that they experience very bad working conditions such as very large classes, and shortage of teachers in some subjects among other problems. This confirms what was contained in the report by Kadzamira (2006) regarding existence of bad working conditions in Malawi secondary school education. This challenging work, according to them, turns out as very much rewarding because students pass in both end of term and national examinations and this in turn, motivates them to remain in the teaching profession.

This finding corroborates observations by Woodruff (2005) that besides a strong need to deliver excellent results, employees also want to take on difficult challenges that are relevant for the organisation. He however warned that where their work mainly consists of the routine-based performance of tasks, the likelihood of de-motivation and turnover is relatively high. It also confirms Herzberg assumptions that challenging work is also a motivator.

4.4.5 Lack of alternative employment opportunities

The second theme that emerged from the findings is lack of alternative employment opportunities. Very few participants mentioned this as the reason they joined the profession and are still there. This includes teachers who saw teaching as the only available profession to them then. On the same, one of the participants said he was just redirected to study education as it was not among his choices during entrance examinations.

This agrees with a study of student teachers at Domasi College by Peter Mtika and Peter Gates (2010) which revealed that some students had selected teaching as a last resort, i.e. because of the failure to follow a desired career. They reported that they did not make it to university to study other courses they had wished for and these teacher trainees had not considered teaching as a career option at all until they realised they had not been successful in gaining university places. This phenomenon is also evidenced in some other countries such as Liberia where almost 75% of teacher candidates who had entered teaching education programme did so because they saw no other option for a job opportunity (Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991). It should be noted that even though some teachers joined the profession because of lack of choices, once they did join the profession it was apparent that they developed a liking for it and started enjoying it.

It should also be noted that this theme also emerged as the reason other teachers remain in the teaching profession. Almost 2% of the respondents reported that they remain in the teaching profession because the chances for greener pastures are not yet there.

The above assertion supports Kayuni and Tambulasi (2007) who contend that teacher turnover in Malawi has increased over the years and they noted that teachers who get greener pastures often quit the profession.

4.4.6 Recognition

According to the findings, teachers consider recognition as a potential motivational factor which helps them perform their best effort and remain there. Teachers reported that the recognition they get from the school leadership after making their students pass well in national examinations makes them feel so motivated and they remain in the profession. Thus, if teachers see their effort put into teaching being rewarded and recognised, they demonstrate an increase in their performance, get motivated and remain in teaching. Teachers need to be valued, and this calls for recognition of good work done. One of the participants recommended that even if the school does not have enough funds, a verbal praise can also play a role as a way of offering recognition to the teacher.

This agrees with (Yazinski, 2009) who observes that providing skill recognition of personal job accomplishments is an effective retention strategy for employees at any age. On the same issue, Redington, (2007) states that organisational benefits of personal recognition are priceless, even this could merely be in a form of verbal praise. Such recognition can enhance company loyalty, motivation, and perseverance at no extra charge. Thus, individual skill recognition motivates positive behaviour, ethics, teamwork, confidence, and growth in all employees. This theme is also in tandem with Herzberg (1968) who listed recognition as a strong motivator.

4.5 Chapter Summary

From the foregoing discussion, it can be noted that very few participants mentioned external factors: lack of alternative employment opportunity, and the will to get married as the reasons they joined and remain in the profession. However, most teachers dominantly, joined and remain in the system because they are intrinsically motivated and the motivators mentioned include achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and feedback. According to Maund, (2001, p 453), intrinsic Motivators are sources of need satisfaction, that derive from the individual's relation to the job itself and it involves job factors which reward the needs of the individual to reach his or her aspirations. These findings are in line with some of the findings from the previous research which consistently point out that intrinsic factors play an important role in the career preference of those who choose the teaching profession. It is also in tandem with the Hertzberg 2 factor theory which says that it is the motivators (intrinsic factors) that bring or induce satisfaction and not the hygiene factors (extrinsic factors).

Hertzberg (1959) says that the logical relationship between hygiene factors and motivators is one where the two sides are complementary to each other. This is where during the implementation process, the hygiene factors are treated as the first stage of supplicating the employees to avoid dissatisfaction; and once that is achieved the consideration is then given to the motivators, whose result is satisfaction among the employees.

In this context therefore, one may say that hygiene factors, while important, on their own, may not bring satisfaction and may not be enough to get teachers to remain in the profession. However, findings in this study show that availability of motivators are in most instances adequate (even without the inclusion of hygiene factors) to influence teachers to remain in the profession.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.0 Chapter Overview

This concluding chapter presents the study summary and study implications. It later concludes by providing suggestions for further research.

5.1 Study Summary

This study attempted to explore reasons why teachers remain in the teaching profession despite the relatively difficult working conditions associated with it. The study employed a qualitative case study to get an in-depth understanding from the experienced teachers. Individual face-to-face interviews and 2 focus group discussions (FGDs) were also used to collect data from the 4 secondary schools in Zomba District.

Despite the limitations encountered in the course of carrying out this study as showed section 3.10, a number of interesting findings have been noted and documented. According to the analysis of the findings, it is observed that intrinsic factors such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and feedback are the dominant factors which sustain teacher's motivation in teaching. This can be explained by the fact that intrinsic motivations are imposed internally and thus have a deep and long-term effect on the teachers. Moreover, the intrinsic motivators found in this study act

as motivators, which, according to Herzberg theory (1959), have a long-term positive influence.

5.2 Conclusions and Implications

These findings are timely as the government and employing authorities are working hard to improve teacher retention in Malawi.

As discussed under the section on literature review, the Ministry of Education has tried several strategies to retain teachers in secondary schools, however, the majority of the factors it has employed can be qualified or categorised as hygiene factors according to Herzberg. For instance, government has raised salaries for the teachers; has established rural hardship allowances, built good schools in some areas, improved supply of teaching and learning materials, but still, more and more teachers are leaving the profession. This implies that there must be some factors beyond hygiene factors that should motivate the teachers to remain in the profession. It is important to note that this research has established that these teachers remain in the profession because they are intrinsically motivated regardless of whether they are from urban schools or rural school. Maybe it is high time the Ministry of Education employed a comprehensive approach where both the hygiene and motivators are given due consideration. This study opines that, logically, higher priority and weight should be given to the job-related factors as opposed to the (contextual factors) hygiene factors in order to achieve more retention of teachers in the system. The following are some of the propositions that education stakeholders would wish to employ in order to retain more teachers:

5.2.1 To enhance recognition

1. Schools should hold ceremonies in conjunction with parent-teacher associations (PTAs) to offer recognition to “the best teacher/s”. In some cases, it would even make more sense to consider presents for such teachers;
2. Specific contributory behaviours by teachers such as leadership roles and ability to work in teams should be recognised and rewarded at the school level; and
3. Managers at the schools should take time to understand teachers ambitions and, aspirations and use the same to design work-related activities including professional development initiatives.

5.2.2 To enhance responsibility

1. Teachers should be trained in strategic management so that they should play a greater role in decision making at the school level; and
2. Schools should also encourage active participation and involvement of teachers and head teachers in decision making with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

5.2.3 To enhance personal and professional achievement

Teachers should be provided with the following:

1. In-service training and continuous professional development programmes to update and upgrade themselves;

2. Frequent teacher appraisal and debriefing through departmental insets and staff meetings. Sometimes arrange to hold these meetings away from the school (retreat) as another way of motivating them;
3. Access to workshops, seminars, short courses and further studies without unnecessary bureaucratic inhibitions after their deployment;
4. Opportunities to upgrade their qualifications within the education system, since avenues outside the system may increase absenteeism and decrease motivation;
5. Diversified and attractive career structures with regular and transparent promotion would be necessary;
6. Salary advances, scholarships, soft loans, subsidised fees and paid study leave which should be considered for them to remain in the system;
7. Promotion of those who upgraded should be done on time so that they should not be thinking of leaving the profession; and
8. Appropriate grades within the profession for those with masters should be considered.

5.2.4 Achievement and feedback

1. There should be a deliberate attempt for provision of adequate teaching and learning materials including laboratories which should be equally distributed in schools;
2. Presence of the resources will help the students produce good results, consequently, motivating teachers to remain in the system as the study has found.

If these recommendations would be taken into consideration, it would be easier to retain teachers in the education sector. However, if government cannot invest enough in education, in particular for teachers to solve their problems, the future may continue to look bleak.

5.3 Suggestions for further research

This research may not adequately present answers to a number of questions considering that it is a qualitative study, however it is still a stepping stone to further studies where some of these issues may be established. Therefore, more research is needed across the country in order to create a broader picture of the factors that compel some teachers to remain in the profession despite the relatively difficult working conditions associated with it. One such study would be to quantify the relative importance of the motivation factors with the aim of establishing the significance of the differences in the reasons some teachers remain in the teaching profession. Such an approach if complemented with findings from this and other related studies would more accurately inform policy on teachers and issues of motivation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter of Introduction



CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

Principal: Richard Tambulasi,
B.A. (Pub Admin), BPA (Hon), MPA, Ph.D

P. O. Box 280, Zomba, MALAWI
Tel: (265) 01 524 222
Telex: 44742 CHANCOL MI
Fax: (265) 01 524 046

Our Ref.: EDF/s/19
Your Ref.:

19th June, 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

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

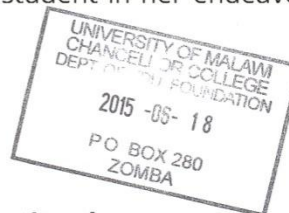
Ms Mwayi Blessings Mkalira is a student of Education in the Department of Education Foundations at Chancellor College, University of Malawi.

Ms Mkalira is working on her thesis ***"Teacher Retention in Malawi Secondary Schools: A Case Study of Zomba District"***. This is meant to be a request to your institution or organization to assist our student in her endeavor to collect data

Thank You

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "S. Chiziwa".

Symon E. Chiziwa, PhD
Head, Education Foundations Department



Appendix 2: Interview guide

Instruction

Please answer all questions:

1. The interview guide is made up of open ended questions.
2. All information given will remain confidential.

Personal Details:

Name of the institution

Name of the interviewee.....

Age:.....Gender.....

Marital Status.....

Qualification.....

Area of Specialization.....

Contact information.....

Years of experience in teaching.....

When did you begin teaching?

1. How did you get interested in teaching?(What attracted you to the teaching profession)
2. What has influenced your decision to continue as a classroom teacher for all these years?
3. Tell me what you think about the working conditions (salary, housing, etc) in teaching profession and the effect they have on your retention decision.
4. Have there been times, during your years as a teacher, when you considered leaving the classroom? (what have been you most difficult times and good times)
5. What were your thoughts at the time and what made you change your mind?

6. What are the principal things you are trying to accomplish as a teacher?
7. Do you see any importance of staying within the teaching profession?
8. How do you perceive teaching profession to other professions?
9. Are there any other comments or observations you would like to make about your work as a teacher?