

**THE ROLE OF THE DISCIPLINE POLICY IN COMBATING SCHOOL
RELATED GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN DISTRICT BOARDING
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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

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**UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE**

August, 2017

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By

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Submitted to the Department of Education Foundation Studies, Faculty of Education,
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education (Policy,
Planning and Leadership)

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August, 2017

DECLARATION

I the undersigned declare that the role of the discipline policy in combating school related gender based violence in district boarding secondary schools is my own original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Acknowledgements have been made where other people's work has been used.

Full Legal Name

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

This research study is dedicated to my daughter Lwato, she endured the mother's absence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to several people who supported and encouraged me untiringly. Special thanks go to my Supervisors Dr Amos Chauma and Dr Alnord Mwanza for the professional advice and support when I was compiling this thesis.

To all my Lecturers, Dr. R. Nyirongo, Associate Prof. Dixie Maluwa Banda, Dr K. Ndala, Mrs B. Malunga, Associate Prof. Mac Jessie Mbewe, Dr B. Chulu, Mr S. Winiko and Dr S. Chiziwa, thank you very much for taking us through the course work.

I am also indebted to the Education Division Manager of Central West Education Division, Head teachers, teachers and learners of all the schools I visited for allowing me to conduct my studies in their schools.

To my colleagues at the Malawi Universities Development Programme (MUDEP) Secretariat, I appreciate your support very much to the extent that my absence was not felt by stakeholders.

My sincere gratitude should go to my friend Malingose Madise who assisted me socially and psychologically during my entire period of study, Malingose, you are indeed a friend in deed and in need.

To my brother and sisters, thank you very much, you have always been supportive. To my maid, Mary Harry, thank you for taking good care of my daughter during my studies.

Thanks to my PPL 2014 colleagues who were always able and willing to share information and provide assistance; special thanks to David Mzura, Vitumbiko Phiri and Oscar Nyika for your support.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of the Secondary School Discipline Policy in combating School Related Gender Based Violence in selected district boarding secondary schools in Central West Education Division. The study used phenomenology as the main strategy and employed qualitative research method because the problem required in-depth understanding of the experiences of participants from their own perspective and in their natural setting. Purposive sampling was employed to select five district boarding schools. Participants included 54 learners, 10 prefects, 5 deputy head teachers, 10 boarding masters/mistresses, matrons and 10 teachers from the discipline committee. Data was generated through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. The study results indicated that participants had a good understanding of SRGBV and that forms of SRGBV varied from school to school and between male and female learners. The findings also revealed that the only structure to handle indiscipline cases was the discipline committee. The other finding was that cultural influences and lack of SRGBV discipline procedures among others caused challenges to handle SRGBV using the Secondary School Discipline policy. The study concluded that the discipline policy was not able to effectively combat SRGBV because it had no guidelines for handling School Related Gender Based Violence. Finally, the study suggested a similar study to be conducted in all the education divisions and a comparative study on the extent to which different forms of SRGBV affect victims.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CDSSs	Community Day Secondary Schools
CSSs	Conventional Secondary Schools
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CWED	Central West Education Division
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GBV	Gender Based Violence
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Cultural, and Social Rights
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MANA	Malawi News Agency
MoEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
MSCE	Malawi School Certificate of Education
NESP	National Education Sector Plan
SRGBV	School Related Gender Based Violence
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNESCO	United Nations Education and Scientific Cooperation
UNGEI	United Nations Girls Education Initiative
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organisation

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter Overview

Chapter one provides background information to the problem under study with a focus on contextual background which includes; the Malawi Education System, Secondary education, Public secondary schools in Malawi, the distribution of district boarding schools in Central West Education Division, the Malawi secondary school discipline policy and the state of school indiscipline in Malawi's secondary schools with respect to SRGBV. The chapter also presents the problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions and significance of the study. Definitions of key terms in this study and organisation of the thesis have also been highlighted.

1.1 Background to the study

Secondary education plays an important role in the overall development of Malawi as it prepares the academic basis of students for gainful employment in the informal, private and public sectors; it also prepares students for further education in keeping with their abilities and aptitudes (MoEST, 2008). As such, secondary education will lead to the fulfilment of Malawi government's national goal of poverty alleviation and address the vision 2020 national educational goals. To this effect, efforts to end or

reduce obstacles to the attainment of secondary education must be made. One of the hindrances to the attainment of quality education is School Related Gender Based Violence (SRGBV) (Leach and Humphreys, 2007). According to Kozai (2013), nations' failure to adequately address school related gender based violence contravenes their respective obligations under international treaties. Specifically, Articles 19(1), 28, 34, 2, and 39 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Articles 10 and 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Articles 24, 26, and 3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and Articles 13, 2, and 3 of the International Covenant on Economic, Cultural, and Social Rights (ICESCR). Realising that education institutions are primary vehicles for achieving equal opportunity, social mobility and a means of access into higher echelon jobs, Paris (as cited in Kunje and Chimombo, 1995) and considering that schools are supposed to be safe havens where education and learning can flourish (Khoza, 2002), it is important that there should be sanity in terms of discipline. The school discipline policy can assist in creating conducive learning environment through curbing behaviours and practices like SRGBV which are obstacles to education attainment. The fundamental question is; how does the secondary school discipline policy assist in combating SRGBV?

1.1.1 Malawi's Education System

Malawi's education system has three levels which consist of eight years of primary, four years of secondary and at least four years of tertiary education (De Hoop, 2010). Education is overseen by the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) which is decentralised into six education divisions namely: Northern

division which oversees all schools in the Northern region; Central East and Central West Divisions which look after all schools in the central region; while there are three divisions in the Southern region- South West, South East, and Shire Highlands which oversee all schools in the southern region. Each of these divisions has a number of educational districts within its jurisdiction. MoEST, through its divisions and district education offices, manages and monitors all the teaching and learning that takes place in schools.

The vision of the education sector in Malawi is to be a catalyst for socio-economic development, industrial growth and an instrument for empowering the poor, the weak and the voiceless (MoEST, 2013). Its mission is to provide quality and relevant education to Malawians (NESP, 2008-2017). As a catalyst for development of both the individual and the nation, education is there to equip learners with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to enable the learners perform their role effectively in an attempt to promote and sustain the socio-economic development of the nation (MoEST, 2013). Therefore, education is the vehicle through which every citizen can realize his or her potential and contribute to national development.

The National Education Sector Plan (NESP, 2008-2017) indicates that there are three main goals of education which are; to expand equitable access to education to enable all to benefit, to improve quality and relevance of education to reduce drop-out and repetition rate and promote effective learning as well as to improve governance and management of the system to enable more effective and efficient delivery of services. With SRGBV, these goals may not be realised as it will prevent some students especially the victims from accessing quality education. In support of this, UNESCO

and UNGEI (2013) state that, widespread gender-based violence in and around schools seriously undermines the achievement of quality, inclusive and equitable education for all children. Therefore, addressing SRGBV will reduce such inequalities thereby giving a chance to all students to equally access quality education that will in the end allow everyone to live the life they want.

1.1.2 Malawi Secondary education

According to MoEST (2008), the purpose of secondary education is to prepare students for wage and self-employment in both the formal and informal sector and to prepare some of these students for tertiary and higher education in various fields. UNESCO and UNGEI (2013) argue that, the experience, or even the threat, of SRGBV often results in poor performance, irregular attendance, dropout, truancy and low self-esteem. In addition, violence can also have serious health and psychological implications that can have long- lasting effects. SRGBV will deter some students from finishing secondary education which will prevent them from realising their potential and supporting themselves as independent adults because those who dropout would not be employed and would not proceed for further education. Further, those with low performance would score lower grades during the Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE), thus limiting their chance of getting good employment and getting enrolled into higher education.

1.1.3 Public secondary schools in Malawi

There are two main categories of Public secondary schools in Malawi: Conventional secondary schools (CSSs) and Community day secondary schools (CDSSs). The CSS category has further categories of National Secondary Schools which take students from all over the country and District Secondary Schools that are for the children in a

particular district. The CSSs, especially the District Secondary Schools, are either boarding or day. According to De Hoop (2011), the conventional schools can be subdivided into twenty four (24) national boarding schools, forty one (41) district boarding schools and fifty two (52) district day schools. Further, national boarding schools are considered to be the best conventional schools and serve pupils from the entire country, district boarding schools are considered to be the next best and serve only pupils attending primary schools in the same district while district day schools serve only pupils who live within commutable distance from the school.

Despite coverage of district boarding schools in all districts, World Bank (2010) found that there are geographical inequalities in terms of educational coverage. For instance, the secondary school completion rate (proxied by the access rate to form four) was very low, the northern region and southern region were at the same level of 12% and central region was lower at 9%. Dedza and Ntcheu, completion rate was between 5% and 10% while for Mchinji it was less than 5%, in Lilongwe the completion rate was between 10 and 20%. World Bank (2010) further found out that despite low secondary school completion rate, the central region had the highest transition rate for lower and upper Secondary school. Within the central region, Dedza, Ntcheu and Mchinji were amongst the schools with lowest Secondary completion rate. These districts fall within Central West Education Division hence the researcher's choice to carry out the study in the Central West Education Division with particular focus on District Boarding Schools because it is where both boys and girls stay full time without the protection of parents or guardians.

1.1.4 The distribution of district boarding schools in the CWED

The Central West Education Division covers four districts namely: Dedza, Lilongwe, Mchinji and Ntcheu. There are six (6) district boarding schools with full boarding facilities as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of district boarding secondary schools in CWED

District	Name of secondary school	Total
Ntcheu	Ntcheu	1
Dedza	Mayani	1
Mchinji	Mchinji	1
Lilongwe	Dzena Mitundu Namitete	3

Source: Central West Education Division, 2015

1.2 The Malawi Secondary School Discipline Policy

After observing that indiscipline in secondary schools was a major problem, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology developed policy guidelines on discipline in secondary schools. These were developed to outline guidelines on discipline and how discipline cases could be processed (MoEST, 2014). The guidelines were supposed to be followed by every head teacher so that the punishments given to students should be consistent and in line with offences. It was the Ministry's belief that if head teachers were to follow the guidelines, it would lose fewer cases if the students decided to take their cases before the Office of the Ombudsman or before any other court of law. The policy guidelines consist of six sections which stipulate the type of offence and the associated punishment.

In the first section, the guidelines outline offences that would require internal corrective measures which are counselling, warning, rustication for a maximum period of two weeks, withdrawal of privileges and imposition of tasks (punishment) to the advantage of the school. In the Second section, the MoEST outlines offences that require suspension like habitual committing of offences requiring internal corrective measures, use of obscene language, indecent behaviour and staying overnight without permission. The third section presents offences requiring exclusion from school but the head teachers are given authority to begin with suspending the student followed by a recommendation for exclusion which means that the mandate to exclude the students from school is in the hands of MoEST and not the head teacher. The fourth section outlines the policy on pregnant students. This section gives chance to pregnant girls and boys responsible for the pregnancy to be readmitted after being withdrawn for one academic year.

Having observed that some students become undisciplined during national examinations period, especially when they are writing the Malawi School Certificate of Education, the MoEST stops them from writing examinations based on section five of the policy guidelines which talks about discipline policy versus national examinations. The final section outlines the guidelines to be followed when processing student discipline cases. For instance, the section gives chance to the student to be heard. The section also states that cases warranting rustication from school for a maximum period of two weeks must be reported to Education Division offices while those warranting suspension for a maximum period of six weeks must be reported to Education Division offices but with copies to the MoEST. Any case

deserving exclusion from school must be reported to the MoEST with copies to the Education Division Office.

1.3 School indiscipline with respect to SRGBV

There is limited literature on SRGBV in secondary schools in Malawi. The available literature mostly talks about SRGBV in primary schools. Several reasons could explain such a situation. For example, Dunne and Humphreys (2003) contended that most often, gender based violence in schools is not considered differently from other forms of school violence. Further, identification of gender-based violence in schools as a barrier to increased educational participation, in particular of girls, in the poorer countries of the world, is recent and the understanding of its causes and consequences is not well developed. As a result, the appropriate gender-sensitive frameworks required to observe and to intervene do not exist. Consequently, these least desirable aspects of school life are either left unreported or unrecognised as gender violence.

Dunne et al. (2003) observed that studies directed at investigating a range of problems in education in developing countries hinted at the presence of SRGBV in schools. Further, problems such as underachievement, high pupil drop-out, poor quality of teaching and low levels of teacher professionalism could be reported differently and without reference to gender. Plan International (2013) revealed that studies conducted showed that 246 million boys and girls were suffering school-related violence every year. Fleming and Jacobsen (2010) revealed that much of the scale and scope of gender-based violence in schools remains hidden.

1.4 Problem statement

Studies by various scholars such as: Cornell and Mayer (2010), Mlamlelietal. (as cited in USAID, 2008), Mekonen, Kebede, Reta and Dejene(2010), Olweus; Dake; Boyle et.al. (as cited in Badri 2014) revealed that SRGBV negatively affects students physically and psychologically. This can in the long term cause health damages and contribute to further entrenchment of violent behaviour in adulthood life. Nevertheless, the occurrence of SRBGV still exists in schools particularly boarding secondary schools. Kozai and Coliver (2013) indicated that an estimation of at least two hundred and forty six (246) million boys and girls suffer from SRGBV every year. Bjåstad (2008), UNESCO (2014), Leach, Fiscian, Kadzamira, Lemani, and Machakanja (2003) and Badri (2014) contend that SRGBV is on the increase. Altun and Baker (2010) observed that violence was increasing in Turkey as well as throughout the world.

In Malawi, like in other countries, studies on SRGBV byBjåstad (2008),Leach, Dunne, and Salvi(2014), Kunje and Chimombo (1999),Swainson, Bendera, Gordon and Kadzamira(1998), Badri (2014) and Ejakait (2014) have put emphasis on the prevalence, causes, forms and victims in primary schools. Such studies have also pointed out on the interventions like the Safe Schools Programme which were put in place. However, these interventions tended to be effective during the project period as it is evidenced in the reports that SRGBV is still on the increase. Barasa, Wamue-Ngare, and Wanjama(2013) state that legal and policy changes such as school discipline policies provide the necessary framework for prosecuting perpetrators and help to raise awareness of the issue of gender based violence in schools. Despite the fact that schools have discipline policies to curb all the indiscipline including

SRGBV, reports by researchers like Kadzamira and Moleni (2007), Kunje and Chimombo (1999) show that SRGBV cases are on the increase in Malawi. This study will therefore unveil if the secondary school discipline policy provides the necessary guidelines to effectively address SRGBV in district boarding secondary schools. The study will also suggest some solutions to the problems related to secondary school discipline policy and school related gender based violence.

1.5 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore how the secondary school discipline policy combats SRGBV in district boarding secondary.

1.6 Research questions

The research questions guided the themes for the study. These consisted of the main research question and specific research questions.

1.6.1 Main research question

The main research question was: “How does the secondary school discipline policy assist in combating SRGBV?”

1.6.2 Specific research questions

The study was guided by the following specific questions:

- What is the understanding of SRGBV in district boarding schools?
- What are the forms of SRGBV in district boarding secondary schools in Malawi?
- How do the structures and processes of the school discipline policy assist in combating SRGBV in district boarding secondary schools in Malawi?
- What are the challenges experienced in the implementation of school discipline policy when handling SRGBV?

1.7 Significance of the study

The findings of the study were important for the following reasons: Firstly, the results could improve the practice of using the school discipline policy to combat SRGBV in boarding secondary schools by providing information to education policy makers and schools on areas of the discipline policy which need to be reviewed and improved upon. Secondly, the findings could help in creating better and conducive learning environment that would enhance equal access thereby facilitating the implementation of international, regional and national conventions on human rights for all citizens. Thirdly, the study could expand literature on knowledge base as regards SRGBV in boarding secondary schools and could provide base for further studies.

1.8 Definitions of key terms

The key terms defined in the study are as follows:

Secondary School discipline policy: This refers to a set of rules and guidelines which regulate the conduct and behaviour of learners in secondary schools and strategies that guide administrators in times of breach of the rules and regulations (Van Wyk & Pelser, 2014).

Gender: It refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of men and women (WHO, n.d).

School Related Gender Based Violence: It is defined as violent acts against someone based on gender that occurs in and around schools (UNESCO, 2015). This can result in physical, sexual or psychological harm.

Gender stereotypes: They are broad generalisations based on assumptions about how a person should act because of his or her sex and what society considers being masculine and feminine roles, attributes and characteristics (USAID, 2009).

Perpetrator: It is a person who commits or is responsible for something, usually something criminal or morally wrong (USAID, 2009).

1.9 Outline of the chapters

Chapter one has provided background information to the problem under study with a focus on contextual background. Chapter two is the review of related literature on school discipline policy and SRGBV. Chapter three is the description of the research design, methodologies and data generation procedures employed in the study.

Chapter four presents results and discussions of the findings of the study. Finally, chapter five presents conclusions and implications derived from the study. Suggestions on areas for further studies are also presented in the chapter.

1.10 Chapter Summary

Chapter one has provided background information to the problem under study with a focus on contextual background which included; the Malawi Education System, secondary education, public secondary schools in Malawi, the distribution of district boarding schools in the CWED, school indiscipline with respect to SRGBV in Malawi's secondary schools. The chapter has also discussed the problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, assumptions of the study and definitions of key terms. Finally, outline of the next chapters has been highlighted.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Chapter Overview

The review of the literature is on various pieces of information on school discipline policy and its impact on learners' behaviour. Literature on SRGBV and its aspects that have an effect on access and attainment of education by students was also reviewed. These were discussed by many scholars in books, journals, research reports and websites from both within and outside Malawi. Concentration is on what others had done regarding school discipline policies in relation to SRGBV and how others conducted similar studies. Finally, the study explains how different it is from others. Therefore, the review starts from conceptual definitions, moving on to theoretical aspects such as contextual causes and effects of SRGBV, to examination of empirical experiences.

2.1 Conceptual framework

As defined by Jabareen (2009), a conceptual framework is a network, or "a plane," of interlinked concepts that together provide a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon or phenomena. To understand the role of the secondary school discipline policy in combating SRGBV, the conceptual framework in this study constituted concepts related to SRGBV and the secondary school discipline policy. For instance, the study discussed causes, forms, victims, perpetrators, effects and interventions in

relation to SRGBV. In terms of the discipline policy, the study discussed concepts such as policies, discipline in schools and the secondary school discipline policy.

2.1.1 *School Related Gender Based Violence defined*

According to Plan International (2013), school related gender based violence refers to acts of sexual, physical or psychological violence inflicted on children in and around schools that are due to stereotypes and roles or norms attributed to or expected of them on the basis of their sex or gender identity. School Related Gender Based Violence can be a barrier to students accessing or remaining in school. Without addressing School Related Gender Based Violence, many countries will not only fall short of meeting their international human rights commitments, but will also compromise the international community's capacity to achieve the development goals (Plan International, 2013). School gender based behaviour may limit childrens' opportunities to attend school or complete their schooling and to succeed as individual during their school years as well as take advantage of their schooling throughout their lives (Jejeebhoy and Bott, as cited in USAID, 2008). One of the causes of school dropout is violence that takes place in schools. If there is violence in schools, some learners are reluctant to attend school because they are afraid of the physical and psychological torture that is associated with violence. In support, Chawani and Kadzamira (2004), pointed out that in Malawi, physical and psychological punishment, verbal abuse, bullying and sexual violence in schools were repeatedly reported as reasons for absenteeism, dropping-out and lack of motivation for academic achievement. UNESCO and USAID (2009) argued that violence that takes place in schools, on the school grounds, when students are going to and from school as well as in the school dormitories can affect the well being of students. This puts them at

greater risk of educational failure through absenteeism, dropping out of school and lack of motivation for academic achievement.

Although some researchers' focus have been on school related gender based violence, their definitions are general in nature. Badri (2014), Ejakait (2014) and Wilson (2011), provided a more general definition which meant that gender based violence (GBV) is the violence directed against a person on the basis of gender. Another general meaning which can be adopted in terms of gender based violence in schools is that of Bhuvandra and Holmes (2014) who defined Gender-based violence as an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will, and that is based on socially ascribed gender differences between males and females. Acts of gender based violence constitute violation of human rights (Dunne and Suvilaakso, 2012). If the violence happens in schools, it violates the victims' right to education because it can cause some learners to absent themselves from school while others may not participate in class as well as in extra-curricula activities. Once some learners' right to education is impinged upon, they may not contribute fully to the development of the country because education is key to creation of human capital which is essential for development.

UNESCO (2015) defines SRGBV as acts or threats of sexual, physical or psychological violence occurring in and around schools, perpetrated as a result of gender norms and stereotypes and enforced by unequal power dynamics. It continues to state that SRGBV is a global concern preventing children especially girls from exercising their right to a safe, inclusive and quality education. UNESCO's definition contends that in schools there are unequal powers, if not checked by rules and

regulations, these may lead to victimisation of some students whose power may be on the lower side. In this study, SRGBV is defined as acts or threats of sexual, physical or psychological violence occurring in and around schools which leads to inability to achieve one's educational goals.

2.1.2 *Forms of SRGBV*

School-related gender-based violence can be broadly clustered into two over-lapping Categories: explicit gender (sexual) violence, which includes sexual harassment, intimidation, abuse, assault and rape; implicit gender violence which includes corporal punishment, bullying, verbal and psychological abuse, teachers' unofficial use of students for free labour and other forms of aggressive or unauthorised behaviour that is violent (Akiba et.al. as cited in Wilson 2011). According to Fraser and Fancy (2014), in Malawi, SRGBV takes three forms. Firstly, physical abuse; teachers often use violence when a girl refuses sexual advances and harsh punishment for boys for no good reason. Secondly, sexual abuse; teachers exchange sex for grades, male students force girls into sex, married (sugar daddies) men give money and goods to girls in exchange for sex. Finally, psychological abuse which involves a systemic destruction of a person's self-esteem and/or sense of safety, often occurring in relationships where there are differences in power and control (Follingst & Dehart as cited in Doherty & Berglund 2008). For instance, considering girls as less bright than boys.

Mekonen et al. (2010) in their study on School Related Gender Based violence in Sierra Leone pointed out that there were various forms of gender based violence in schools such as psychological violence, including insults and name calling,

intimidation and threats. The study revealed that more than 60 % of both boys and girls encountered threats and intimidation in school. In addition, it was noted that girls were prone to psychological violence as teachers used it as a way of intimidating them to accept their sexual proposals.

In a study that took place in Malawi's Machinga district to examine school related gender based violence, Kadzamira and Moleni (2007) found that students emphasised general ill treatment, physical abuse, punishment or denial of rights without any specific mention of gender dynamics. Teachers and head teachers in particular, concentrated on physical or sexual violence, without recognising the different forms of psychological violence such as emotional or verbal abuse. The studies show that some forms of SRGBV are common in most countries although different schools in different countries experience different forms of violence.

2.1.3 Causes of SRGBV

Leach and Humphreys (2007) argued that recent recognition that schools can be violent places has tended to ignore the fact that many such acts originate in unequal and antagonistic gender relations, which are tolerated and 'normalised' by everyday school structures and processes. This means that one of the causes of SRGBV is failure of schools to recognise that some school activities and policies which are considered normal are causes of SRGBV. In addition, in the nexus of gender and age or authority relations, corporal punishment of female students has been rationalised by some girls as socialising them to become obedient mothers and wives, while the harsh beating of male students by male teachers is interpreted as the dominant male asserting authority over the younger male, and a

toughening up process of passage into male adulthood (Leach and Humphreys, 2007).

Wainaina (1999) contends that the greatest cause of violence against women is the low status accorded to females compared to males in most societies, the helplessness of women to fight back encourages men to fight. Plan International (2013) pointed out that in most societies, unequal power relations between adults and children, as well as deeply rooted gender stereotypes and roles, leave girls, especially vulnerable to sexual harassment, rape, coercion, exploitation and discrimination from teachers, staff and peers. Donahue, Ramsey, Rimer and Sun Lee(2004) stated that the demoralising psychological abuse which starts in the homes and reinforced in the community, continues in the classroom. It can therefore be concluded that gender based violence is caused by unequal power relations between adults and children, males and females.

Furthermore, lack of stiffer punishments given to the perpetrators of SRGBV may lead to the continued prevalence of SRGBV. For example, teachers that commit such abuses are usually not dismissed but merely transferred to another school or post if any action is taken at all. Bjåstad (2008) added that learners reporting gender-based violence have often been met with inadequate responses and sometimes even been discouraged or ridiculed for coming forward. Such incidences encourage the occurrence of SRGBV. According to Badri (2014), school teachers and the administration are in many countries not aware about the extent and the consequences of the problem and its implications on the health and education standard of students as

such many schools do not have clear system for the prevention and management of violent practices in and out of schools and this perpetrates gender based violence.

2.1.4 Victims of SRGBV

According to Leach et al. (2014), in educational settings where scrutiny and accountability are weak or where staff are poorly trained, paid and motivated, vulnerable students such as those who struggle to pay fees and other costs or who are 'different' in some way are more likely to experience violence. This shows that some students could be victims of SRGBV because of poverty and because they are disadvantaged.

Although both boys and girls are victims and perpetrators of gender based violence, female learners are affected more than male learners. For instance, UNESCO and USAID (2009) estimates indicated that almost half of all female students and a sizeable number of male students experience some form of sexual violence in the educational context.

In Kenya, Itegi and Njuguna (2012), in their comparative study on gender based violence in educational institutions and its impact on girls' education, revealed that girls are more victims than boys because the most common form of the gender based violence is the sexual abuse where sex is exchanged for grades and luxuries. In Sudan, Badri (2014) using a descriptive research through random sampling in schools for girls, found out that girls face many forms of violence as they are in young age, the main cause being due to socialisation and rigid treatment that girls face at home. It is observed that much as random sampling allows generalisation of results, it is not an appropriate method in descriptive research therefore, there would be need for further

research on causes. In addition, the study took place in girls' only schools, it could be possible that the researcher already had preconceived ideas as interviewing boys would offer different insights.

2.1.5 *Perpetrators of SRGBV*

Leach and Humphreys (2007) noted that most research focused on girls as victims of gender violence within a heterosexual context and ignores other forms such as homophobic and girl-on-girl violence. Pinheiro (as cited in USAID, 2015) revealed that boys are more commonly perpetrators of physical bullying while girls are more often more likely to use verbal or psychological forms. Furthermore, the findings by Badri (2014) from a study that was conducted in girls' schools in Sudan showed the prevalence of SRGBV in such schools. In Sierra Leone, Mekonen et al. (2010) found that teachers were the main perpetrators of sexual abuse and exploitation that took place within the school setting forcing and coercing girl pupils into sexual intercourse in exchange for better grades, gifts or money. In this regard, it can be argued that teachers and both boys and girls are perpetrators of SRGBV, the only difference is on the forms and the extent.

2.1.6 *Effects of SRGBV*

Bjåstad (2008) observed that not only can school-related gender-based violence lead to diminished development returns to education through lost educational opportunities, it can also cause long term health damages and can contribute to the further entrenchment of violent cultures. This has serious implications for a society like Malawi which is characterised by high levels of gender based violence. If gender based violence is not prevented in schools, it can be carried over to adulthood life which can be an obstacle to development. Research indicates that SRGBV also demoralises students, affecting their ability to achieve their educational goals (Olweus,

Dake, Boyle et. al. as cited in Badri, 2014). Repeated verbal abuse has also been shown to undermine self-esteem (Mlamleli et.al. as cited in USAID 2008). Mekonen et al. (2010) stated that SRGBV practices make the pupil feel ashamed and result in lack of confidence to participate in class activities and affect their learning and educational performance. Inability to achieve one's educational goals combined with low self esteem will prevent learners from realising their potential and supporting themselves as independent adults.

2.1.7 Some interventions available

Recognising that schools are primary vehicles for equal opportunity, social mobility, addressing causes of gender based violence can best start by addressing it in schools through several programmes. One of the common interventions was the introduction of the Safe Schools Programme whose purpose, according to Fancy and Fraser (2014) is to create a gender safe environment for all girls and boys that promote gender-equitable relationships and reduce SRGBV which can result in improved educational outcomes and reduced negative health outcomes. Dunne and Savilaakso (2012) argued that while many of these programmes and initiatives are based on best practice, prevention and response practices to address GBV, there has been an inadequate focus on developing rigorous and systematic monitoring systems to measure the results of this work.

Leach and Humphreys (2007) stated that the most common type of school-based initiative seeks to raise awareness and bring about behaviour change through the curriculum, usually in life skills or health promotion lessons. However, this can have drawbacks because learners may find the lessons boring, irrelevant, and consequently shun such lessons. King and Hill (as cited in Swainson et. al., 1998) pointed out that

most gender activities in education have been single interventions yet research evidence has shown that policy packages are likely to be more effective than single interventions. The piecemeal interventions therefore cannot produce the desired results.

According to USAID (2009), in Ghana and Malawi, surveys conducted at the beginning and end of the Safe schools program which aimed at making schools safe places, revealed statistically significant changes in student and teacher attitude and knowledge concerning SRGBV. Knowledge of SRGBV on its own may not prevent the occurrence of the issue. It is therefore important to beef up the interventions with rules and regulations that would prevent the acts of SRGBV and punish the perpetrators. These rules could be more enforceable if they clearly existed in the discipline policy.

In a survey by Concern Worldwide through different projects by Actionaid, USAID and Plan International conducted in Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Malawi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda, it was found out that it was difficult to measure the impact and outcomes of the interventions because there was unreliable and incomprehensive data which records the scale of the problems (Leach, Slade, and Dunne, 2013). In addition, most data was generated through self reporting and box ticking questionnaires with structured interviews which had a shortfall on recording of behaviour change and much data was generated for monitoring purposes.

Making schools safe places for learning, however, is not an overnight process; it is something that relies on the cooperation and participation of many partners (Mitchell

and Mothobi-Tapela, 2004). It can therefore be concluded that the interventions put in place must be accepted by the stakeholders and then be embedded in policies so that they are sustained even after the project period. Malawi Government has made efforts to create safe learning environment in secondary schools by putting in place the secondary school discipline policy which has outlined offences and associated punishments aimed at curbing indiscipline. However, it is not known if secondary schools are safe from acts of SRGBV. It is also not known if the offences and punishments are able to address SRGBV.

2.2 Policies

Haddad (1995) defines policy as an explicit or implicit single decision or a group of decisions, which may set out directions for guiding future decision, initiate or retard action or guide implementation of previous decision. When policies are developed, they are deemed to be guidelines which if followed will make those concerned to work towards the achievement of the goals for which the organisation was set up. Wolf et al. (as cited in USAID, 2008) state that many new policies have been issued as countries struggle to transform their societies through educational change, yet many or most of those policies that took so much effort to produce have never been implemented in a manner resembling what was envisioned. They continued to state that much of the research focuses on the process of policy formulation, or on the effects of policy change and not on the process of implementation, especially where it reaches the ground in the district offices, schools or communities.

In the context of several changes that are taking place in terms of education as stipulated in the Jomtien conference, Beijing conference, and the CEDAW, it is imperative that implementation of policies developed has to be closely monitored to

avoid contravening the conventions which the country is a party to. In schools, rules and regulations are set based on available policies from Government so that when punishment and other decisions are made, they are within the legal framework (Nakpodia, 2010).

In light of the changes in education, there is need to have appropriate and effective policies that address the challenges that students face in the course of their education in schools. Although some changes are in conflict with cultural beliefs and practices, they create a good and conducive learning environment that embraces the involvement and participation of both girls and boys in education thereby fulfilling the EFA goal and the convention for human rights which according to article 26 of the UDHR and articles 13 and 14 of the ICESCR stipulates that education is a fundamental right.

2.2.1 The School Discipline Policy

According to Australia's Department of Education and Children services (2007), the School Discipline Policy provides a framework for the development of safe and inclusive learning communities. Nakpodia (2010) states that in an attempt to achieve an organised and peaceful school environment and maintain law and order, school management specifies rules and regulations to guide the activities of members of the educational organisation. In addition, rules and regulations for the specific schools are developed based on the general policy while considering different needs and expectations of learners, families, staff members and the wider community. Likewise, all schools under study had their own rules and regulations which were signed by all the learners on the first day of arrival at school.

2.2.2 *Aims of school discipline policy*

In an attempt to control student behaviour and create a safe school environment, schools have relied on traditional punitive disciplinary practices like the Zero tolerance policies which advocate strict consequences for specific rule violations with no respect for the circumstances surrounding the offense (Institute for Advancing Unity, n.d). In addition, punishment and exclusion in the school setting are used to send a strong message to youth that certain behaviours will not be tolerated thereby assuring the school community and public at large that order and civility are being maintained and that schools are safe.

Simatwa, (2002) noted that the major aims of discipline both in the school and in the home should be to nurture young people who will be responsible citizens in future. The aim of school discipline should therefore be seen to help students cope well, be happy, safe and useful to the society they belong (Nakpodia, 2010). Brown (as cited in Yaghambe and Tshabangu, 2013), stated that lack of discipline may create an environment that becomes violent and unsafe within a school community resulting in lower achievement rates. It was also noted that disciplinary problems can be the main hindrance to effective teaching and learning. Therefore, disciplinary policies and procedures are put in place to prevent and resolve student discipline problems and ensure efficient functioning of the school.

2.2.3 *The situation in Secondary Schools after putting in place the Discipline Policy*

Despite the presence of the policy, there has been an increase in indiscipline in Malawi's Secondary schools which were reported in several media papers. For instance, Nyasa Times (2014) reported that Malosa Secondary School experienced

some incidences of indiscipline where some students stoned their teachers and set ablaze an archive of the school resulting in lots of damages to the classroom blocks. In addition, Ngwira (2013) reported that Bandawe Girls Secondary School indefinitely suspended all the Form four students from school for what the school authorities described as gross indiscipline which exceeded limits.

In Kenya, Karanja and Bowen (2012) state that learning institutions have been plagued with cases of students' unrest and indiscipline which resulted into destruction of property and loss of lives. Again, Mukiri (2014) contended that despite involvement of school prefects, indiscipline cases were on the increase and that amongst the causes were conflicting school rules and poor management.

In South Africa, Volschenk (2007) reported that learner behaviour problems were, for years, a major concern for teachers, administrators and parents where more than ever before, teachers were faced with critical problems in their classrooms, and were confronted (on a daily basis) with unacceptable learner behaviour and threatening situations.

Since the secondary school discipline policy was put in place to provide guidelines on discipline and how indiscipline cases could be processed, it is expected that the policy would be able to provide directions and guidelines on SRGBV as one of the obstacles to the attainment of secondary education. However, it is not known if the policy provides appropriate and effective guidelines that will enable school management to implement the policy in a manner that will address SRGBV and fulfil the purpose of secondary education in Malawi.

2.3 Theoretical framework

2.3.1 School Related Gender Based Violence theory of change and Skinner's Behaviourist theory

There are many theories which have been used in studying discipline issues in schools such as SRGBV theory of change, Skinner's behaviourist theory and others. The study by UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team (IATT) on Education and School Health (2015) used SRGBV theory of change. Their research conducted in Malawi and Ghana concluded that comprehensive, systematic and systemic efforts are needed at multiple levels to prevent and address SRGBV and yield better results for empowered school communities. Based on interviews with teachers and other education personnel, the following three overarching objectives for a comprehensive response to SRGBV were identified:

Lead: Ministry develops policy, guidelines and support.

Teach: Schools have access to curriculum, teaching resources and training.

Partner: Parents and community are engaged to build positive norms and practices.

According to UNESCO (2016), the Ministry of education has a responsibility to support the design, implementation and gender analysis of legislation, national and local action plans, and frameworks on SRGBV. It should also ensure that gender-sensitive budgets are put in place to raise awareness of and implement new policies and legislation. The Ministry of education should enforce and harmonize legislation and policies for SRGBV. The responsible Ministry should ensure that education staff, including teachers, school heads and others, are trained in and equipped to prevent and report SRGBV.

In view of this, the goal of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is that school administrators and teachers should have necessary conditions and mechanisms to prevent and respond effectively to school related gender based violence. As a leader, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology developed the School Discipline Policy to deal with all discipline issues in schools including SRGBV. The expectation of the Ministry is that the secondary school discipline policy will help in creating a safe and welcoming learning environment for both boys and girls.

The schools are also expected to create mechanisms and strengthen capacity for students to participate in the reduction of SRGBV, for example, through girls' and boys' clubs, and by training students as peer educators to detect violence, or as peer mediators. The other expectation is that schools should make referral to and/or provide guidance, counselling and support to victims/survivors of SRGBV.

Nevertheless, critics argue that some theories of change are too simplistic while others are too complex. UNICEF (2016) argues that some theories are too simplistic. They omit important elements thereby making it seem like an intervention will produce the intended impacts without the need for the support of a favorable implementation environment. UNICEF adds that some theories of change are too complex to the extent that it is impossible to get a coherent overview of the causal process. According to ActionAid (2012), other critics argue that change is not linear as theory of change puts it. In reality, the processes of change around SRGBV are complicated, multi-directional and highly context-specific. Therefore, the theory of change should be treated as an analytical framework that can be interrogated and adapted to the particular context rather than as a strictly prescriptive map.

With regard to the weaknesses of theory of change, the study added Skinner's (1968) behaviourist theory of rewards and reinforcements. In Skinner's theory, what motivates behaviour is that people respond to rewards and punishments in their environment. He asserts that behavioural change may be influenced when there is a response to a specific behaviour. According to the theory, students' inappropriate, dangerous and destructive behaviour can be effectively controlled through punishments (Chadsey & McVittie, 2006). In addition, Skinner believed that behaviour that is followed by reinforcement (positive or negative) has an increased probability of reoccurrence and behaviour followed by extinction or punishment has a decreased probability of re-occurrence.

Kounin (2013) agrees with Skinner that learners will adopt good behaviour and eliminate bad behaviour in an attempt to gain rewards and avoid punishment. However, he states that a key concept of his theory is not only the manner in which teachers address the misbehaviour of learners, but rather the way in which teachers prevent misbehaviour.

Some theorists such as Kohn (1993) criticised Skinner's behaviourist theory. Kohn stresses that the majority of experiments, studies, and practices contributing to Skinner's theory involved animals other than humans (Omomia & Omomia, 2014). In addition, he suggests that rewards and extrinsic motivation yield compliance, which is not, as Skinner suggests, a natural behaviour devoid of willful choice. Educational theorists such as Hanna and Michael also criticised Skinner's theory over its reliance upon laboratory experiments with animals (Omomia and Omomia, 2014).

Despite the criticisms levelled against Skinner's theory, the theory is still useful in studying discipline issues in schools. In this study the use of BF Skinner's theory is justified because the secondary school discipline policy laid down offences and associated punishments which have to be complied with, so that schools are safe environments for learning. This study assumes that punishments outlined in the discipline policy are expected to reduce or stop SRGBV as one of the misbehaviour that distracts teaching and learning. On the other hand, the SRGBV theory of change will be used to explore interventions the schools are using in the implementation of discipline policy to curb SRGBV.

2.4 Chapter summary

The literature review has demonstrated that SRGBV has negative effects on students but it is still rampant in schools because the perpetrators do not receive the punishment that would deter them from engaging in the acts again. The literature has also revealed that there are three main forms of SRGBV which are physical, psychological, and sexual harassment and that the intensity of these differs from school to school. Further, the literature has revealed that many acts of SRGBV are caused by unequal gender relations which are tolerated and 'normalised' by everyday school structures and processes. In other cases, it is caused by schools' failure to distinguish between general violence that takes place in schools from the violence that originates from gender stereotypes.

Generally, the literature has demonstrated that there is limited literature on SRGBV in boarding secondary schools. There is therefore need for a more critical analysis of how the discipline policy addresses SRGBV especially at secondary school level which has received little attention from many researchers on education in Malawi.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Chapter overview

The chapter describes the research methodology and data generation procedures employed in the study. Data generation methods and instruments and data processing techniques which were used are described. The Sample and sampling procedures including the choice of the study sites, subjects, including how research instruments were administered have also been described. The chapter has also explained how ethical considerations and trustworthiness of the study were dealt with.

3.1 The research approach

The study employed qualitative research because the problem required an in-depth understanding of the experiences of participants from their own perspective and in their natural setting. Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) states that in qualitative research the interest lies in the perspectives of the subjects of a study and the qualitative researcher wants to know what the participants in a study are thinking and why they think what they do. Further, qualitative research allows the researcher to gain some insight into the world of his or her participants. This study aimed to understand how the discipline policy assists in addressing SRGBV. The problem under study also required that data be generated from the participants' perspective which according to Bryman (2008) is a feature of qualitative research.

3.2 Phenomenology

This study used phenomenology as a methodology. According to Bryman (2008), phenomenology is a philosophy that is concerned with the question of how individuals make sense out of the world around them. Qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena, as it seeks to answer questions like why cultures and practices have developed in the way they have, using multiple sources of information (Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge, 2007). The study was also concerned with developing explanations of how the discipline policy assists in combating school related gender based violence using different sources of information such as interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis.

3.3 Sample and sampling procedures

Being a qualitative phenomenological research, the study used purposive sampling to access 'knowledgeable people', that is, those who have in-depth knowledge about particular issues, maybe by virtue of their professional role, power, access to networks, expertise or experience (Ball, 1990 as cited in Cohen, Manion and Keith, 2007). According to Patton (1990), the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth where one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research. Creswell (2013) states that in purposeful sampling, the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study. Creswell adds that, it is essential that all participants have experience in the phenomenon being studied or the participants represent people who have experienced the phenomenon. In addition, Cohen et al. (2007) state that although purposive samples may not be representative and generalisable, the primary concern is to acquire in-depth information from those who are in a position to give it.

Similarly, in this study, participants were those who could provide the information required because they were either able to articulate issues or were once involved in hearing discipline cases.

3.3.1 *The study site*

The research was conducted in five district boarding schools from Central West Education Division because studies revealed that most schools from this division had the highest transition rate from lower to upper secondary school and yet these schools had the lowest secondary school completion rate. For instance schools in Dedza and Ntcheu, completion rate was between 5% and 10% while for Mchinji it was less than 5%, in Lilongwe the completion rate was between 10 and 20%(World Bank, 2010). The Division also registered high rate of indiscipline cases in its schools since the dawn of political pluralism (MOE, 2006as cited in Chatambalala, 2010).The focus was on District Boarding Schools because it is where both boys and girls stay full time without the protection of parents or guardians. In addition, Chatambalala (2010) reported that coeducation secondary schools (with both boys and girls) have reported high rates of indiscipline cases over the past years in the division.

A list of all district boarding secondary schools was obtained from the Education Division from which schools with full boarding facilities in each district were selected. The division had a total of eight district boarding schools. Out of these, six schools had full boarding facilities, these are schools that admit both boys and girls. Out of the six, one school from Lilongwe district was used for pilot studies therefore the study was conducted in five district co- educational boarding schools. For purposes of confidentiality and ethical issues, the schools were named A, B, C, D and E. A list of learners according to class and sex was collected from the schools' head

teachers to verify if the interviewees indeed came from different classes as the study required that students from each class be sampled.

3.3.2 Participants

Participants in this study included, learners, prefects, Deputy Head teachers, Boarding Masters/Mistresses and teachers from the discipline Committee. From the five categories of participants, this study had a sample of 89 participants as explained in the next few sections.

3.3.2.1 Learners

Learners were chosen as individuals who have more information since they are the ones who are most affected by SRGBV. A total of 54 learners from all schools were involved in focus group discussions. The learners were purposively selected from each class based on their ability to articulate issues. These included one boy and one girl to get views from both sexes. Where schools had more than one stream, one additional learner was selected from each class. To balance the gender, if in additional class E, a boy was selected as an additional member, in Class D an additional member selected was a girl. This resulted in having different number of learners sampled in different schools. For example, from school A there were 12 learners, from school B, 11, from school C, 12, from school D, 10 and 9 learners from school E.

3.3.2.2 Prefects

Prefects hear some discipline cases and sometimes administer punishments on minor issues. Face to face interviews were conducted with ten prefects, two from each school. The prefects were selected upon recommendation from the Head teachers based on their ability to articulate issues as well as their involvement in hearing

discipline cases. Interviews with prefects provided more information to triangulate with the information generated from focus group discussions.

3.3.2.3 Deputy Head teachers

As chairpersons for the discipline committees, the deputy head teachers were interviewed to provide all the necessary information regarding discipline issues which were related to gender based violence. Five deputy head teachers were interviewed, one from each school.

3.3.2.4 Boarding mistresses, boarding Masters and Matrons

Being custodians of learners after classes and being part of the discipline committee, boarding mistresses or masters and matrons hear some disciplinary issues relating to gender based violence which happen in and around dormitories before they are referred to the discipline committee. These were interviewed to provide more information regarding the issue of gender based violence which could happen in and around dormitories. In each school, both the boarding master and boarding mistress were interviewed, bringing the sample of this category of participants to ten. Where the boarding master or mistress was not around, the matron was interviewed.

3.3.2.5 Teachers from the discipline committee

Being members of the discipline committee which hears all discipline cases and recommends action to be taken by the school, it was felt important to interview them. Two members who were purposively selected upon recommendation from the deputy head teacher were interviewed in each school, making a total of ten teachers interviewed.

3.4 Data Generation Methods and Instruments

Data was generated through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. The three methods were used to enrich the data generated and to

address the limitations each instrument could have. Triangulation in this study was therefore in terms of multiple data generation methods and multiple data sources used.

The interviewer had a list of questions or key points that were covered and worked through in a methodical manner. Similar questions were asked to interviewees from the same category while same questions were asked during focus group discussions. Follow up questions and prompts were asked to ensure that optimal responses were obtained from participants (Krueger, 2002). Notes were jotted down during focus group discussions and interviews. Verbatim quotes from participants were reported to ensure trustworthiness and credibility of the study.

3.4.1 In-depth Interviews (IDI)

Face to face in-depth interviews were conducted with Deputy Headteachers, prefects, boarding masters and boarding mistresses, matrons and teachers from the discipline committees. According to Bates, Droste, Cuba and Swingle (2008), face to face interviews provide greater detail and depth allowing insight into how individuals understand and narrate aspects of their lives. Furthermore, the interviewer and interviewee can directly react on what the other says or does, there is also no significant time delay between question and answer. Additionally, interviews can be tailored specifically to the knowledge and experience of the interviewee. Cohen et al. (2007), state that interviews enable participants whether interviewers or interviewees, to express how they regard situations from their own point of view. Moreover, interviews are a flexible tool for data generation which enable multi-sensory channels such as, verbal and non verbal to be used. In this study, the researcher prepared an interview guide (appendix 4, 5, 6 and 7) for each group of participants to generate

more comprehensive data on their perspectives about school related gender based violence and the discipline policy.

However, the challenges with face to face interviews were that; firstly, there was double attention where the interviewer had to both listen to the interviewee's responses to understand what he or she was trying to get at and at the same time the interviewer had to ensure that all the questions were answered within the fixed time at the level of depth and detail that the researcher required (Opdenakker, 2006). Secondly, the interviews were time consuming, open to interviewer bias and were inconvenient for some respondents (Cohen et al., 2007). Thirdly, interview flexibility in sequencing and wording questions resulted in substantially different responses from different perspectives (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2009). These disadvantages were reduced by asking clear, short, open-ended questions, using appropriate follow up questions and prompts, listening carefully, eliciting detailed responses to questions and asking questions which related to the topic. Further, to avoid inconveniences, the researcher made appointments before interviews.

3.4.2 Focus group discussions (FGDs)

According to Morgan (2013), focus groups are groups of people with similar interests or characteristics that are interviewed in a small group of 6-10 people with a facilitator (often the researcher) and an observer (often another researcher). Further, he states that focus groups are effective in eliciting data on the cultural norms of a group and in generating broad overviews of issues of concern to the cultural groups or subgroups presented. Focus group discussions were used to generate more and diverse data at once from students with different experiences thereby increasing the richness of the subject matter (Freitas, Oliveira, Jekins, and Popjoy, 1998). In this

study, the researcher prepared a focus group discussion guide in advance to make the discussions focused (appendix 3). Depending on the direction of the discussions, the researcher added some prompts and follow up questions.

The disadvantages with FDGs were that some learners were not articulate enough to express their opinions due to shyness and low proficiency in English. In addition, some learners would not express themselves fully for fear of reprisals once heard by staff members. In this case, the researcher allowed the use of both English and Chichewa during discussions. The researcher was also mentioning particular learners to contribute during discussions. This gave everyone a chance to speak. Further, the researcher facilitated and moderated the discussions carefully thereby controlling focus and direction. Furthermore, in all schools, the discussions took place in a venue that was away from other students as well as staff members to avoid disturbance and to make participants free to talk as they were sure that no one was hearing them apart from the moderator. The researcher took notes of the discussions.

3.4.3 Document analysis

Document analysis was used in each of the schools to complement the data generated. According to Creswell (2003), documents are important as they represent thoughtful data in that participants have already checked them when compiling and documents save the researcher's time and expenses that could have been incurred during the research. The study analysed documents on students discipline hearing reports, codes of conduct, rules and regulations of all schools and reports from the discipline committee which carried recommendations on actions that the head teachers had to take. The main purpose was to isolate discipline cases involving

GBV and relate them to the punishments which were administered. These documents were sought from both the head teachers and deputy head teachers.

The main challenge with document analysis was that the schools did not have records pertaining to SRGBV, the documents produced were general discipline records which were then sorted out by the researcher. As Creswell (2007) argues, the disadvantage of document analysis lies in locating the materials and obtaining permission to use the materials. In addition, the information required was considered confidential as such in some schools deputy head teachers were reluctant to produce documents. The researcher asked the head teachers for permission to use the documents, the head teachers in turn asked the deputy head teachers who are the chairpersons for discipline committee to locate the documents. The researcher also assured the institutions of confidentiality and requested that some documents be read and returned while the researcher was still at the schools.

3.5 Credibility and Trustworthiness of the study

Credibility is defined as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings (Holloway and Wheeler; Macnee and McCabe as cited in Anney, 2014). Credibility therefore means that the study should represent the true picture of the phenomenon studied. According to Shenton (2004), trustworthiness is where the study is satisfying credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. Trustworthiness can therefore be defined as where the study is considered true in that the results would be the same whether done on other respondents or repeated by other researchers and that those results would be confirmed or corroborated if other researchers conducted the same study (Anney, 2014). In this study, credibility and

trustworthiness were ensured through triangulation, use of verbatim quotations and a pilot study.

3.5.1 Triangulation

Cohen et al. (2007) defines triangulation as the use of two or more methods of data generation in the study of some aspect of human behaviour. Yeasmin and Rahman (2012) quoted the following from Jakob Alexander (2001):

“By combining multiple observers, theories, methods, and empirical materials, researchers can hope to overcome the weakness or intrinsic biases and the problems that come from single-method, single-observer, single-theory studies. Often the purpose of triangulation in specific contexts is to obtain confirmation of findings through convergence of different perspectives. The point at which the perspectives converge is seen to represent reality.”

From the citation, it is clear that triangulation involves the use of two or more methods which can complement each other to reduce biasness and allow the researcher to generate more comprehensive data. In support, Bryman (2010) refers triangulation to the use of more than one approach to the investigation of a research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings. Shenton (2004) adds that triangulation may involve the use of different methods, especially observations, focus group discussions and individual interviews, which form the major data collection strategies for much qualitative research. By using FGDs and in-depth face to face interviews, document analysis and by interviewing different types of participants, this research ensured that there was triangulation of both data generation methods and sources of information. Triangulation enriched data generated because more in-depth data was generated and perspectives and views from different participants were obtained.

3.5.2 Use of verbatim quotations

As stated by Corden and Sainsbury (2006), the use of verbatim quotations provided evidence for interpretations and claims that readers who see some of the original data could make their own judgements about the fairness and accuracy of the analysis. Further, verbatim quotations offer readers greater depth of understanding because people's spoken words sometimes show the strength of their views or the depth of feelings. Furthermore, verbatim quotations were used to explain how something happened so that readers should understand complex processes by which people made sense of their lives.

3.5.3 Pilot Study

The researcher conducted a pilot study at Dzenza Secondary school. As a co-education district boarding school and being in the CWED, Dzenza secondary school was appropriate for a pilot study because its participants had similar characteristics with the schools to be studied and it was not part of the selected schools. Oppenheim, Morrison, Wilson and Maclean (as cited in Cohen, 2007, p.47) stated that a pilot has several functions, principally to increase the reliability, validity, and practicability of the questions. In addition, Turner (2010) contends that pilot testing will assist the researcher in determining if there are flaws, limitations, or other weaknesses within the interview design. Furthermore, a pilot study will allow the researcher to make necessary revisions prior to the implementation of the study (Kvale, 2007).

In this study, the purpose of a pilot study was to check if the data generation instruments were clear, to check if the questions were well sequenced and to check if the questions were generating the kind of information needed. In addition, the pilot study was carried out to check for flaws and ambiguities in the research instruments

besides instilling confidence in the researcher. Participants from each category of the interviewees were interviewed and a focus group discussion was done with a group of eight learners, two from each class-a boy and a girl. From their responses some amendments were made to the focus group discussions guide and the interview guides. Some questions were rephrased, others deleted and some still added or moved to another interview guide. In addition, the pilot study helped to identify a research question which appeared to be irrelevant to the study and it was therefore removed making the study remain with four questions instead of five as initially planned. Documents were also called for to ensure that it would be possible to access them during the study.

3.6 Ethical considerations

To be allowed to conduct the study, the researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the Post graduate Coordinator in the Department of Education Foundations (appendix1). The introductory letter was used to obtain permission from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology through the Central West Education Division Manager who wrote to the Head teachers of the selected schools to allow the researcher conduct the study in their schools (appendix 2). The head teachers assisted by requesting the deputy headteachers, learners and all participants to provide all the information required and participate fully in the study. The researcher obtained verbal consent from all the participants. To maintain confidentiality, participants were assured that their identity was going to be protected. The researcher informed participants what participation entailed and re-assured them that declining to participate was not going to affect them in anyway. At the end of the study, the researcher sent letters (appendix8) to the head teachers thanking them for the assistance they provided.

3.7 Data analysis and interpretation

Data generated from in-depth face to face interviews, and FGDs was analysed following the procedure recommended by Creswell (2007). The researcher read and re-read the summaries and responses in order to familiarise herself with the data generated. The researcher thus jotted down all the responses provided during interviews and FGDs and read through them several times. Similar responses from different schools were grouped together to match the responses with the schools which provided them. The researcher also read the documents accessed several times and sorted out items which matched the questions which needed to be answered.

Data was then cleaned and organised into categories and themes based on the following research questions: What is the understanding of SRGBV in district boarding schools? What are the forms of SRGBV in district boarding secondary schools in Malawi? How do the structures and processes of the school discipline policy assist in combating SRGBV in district boarding secondary schools in Malawi? What are the challenges experienced in the implementation of the secondary school discipline policy when handling SRGBV?

From the first question which aimed at finding out the understanding of SRGBV in district boarding schools, there were five sub themes which helped to determine if SRGBV was understood. These themes were; meaning of SRGBV which determined if the participants understood what the researcher was talking about, perpetrators and victims of SRGBV which helped to find out the people involved, places where SRGBV took place if indeed it happened and causes of SRGBV which helped to

identify factors that needed attention to combat SRGBV. In addition, there were sub themes on causes of SRGBV.

Three sub themes were generated from the second question which aimed at finding out the forms of SRGBV in district boarding secondary schools in Malawi. Forms assisted in establishing the type of SRGBV offences which prevailed in schools. The sub themes identified were forms of SRGBV towards female learners, forms towards male learners and forms common to both male and female learners. Under the forms towards male and female learners, there were other sub themes identified.

On the third question which aimed at finding out how the structures and processes of the school discipline policy assisted in combating SRGBV, the following sub themes were identified; reporting procedures which focused on how the cases were reported, the discipline hearing structures that handled SRGBV cases, the procedures followed in handling the cases and the rules and regulations which were used in dealing with SRGBV. In addition, there was a sub theme on precautionary measures to prevent the occurrence of SRGBV and on action taken to perpetrators and victims to safeguard them from the acts.

Six subthemes were generated from the forth question which aimed at finding out the challenges experienced in the implementation of the secondary school discipline policy when handling SRGBV. Cultural influences, teachers' background and lack of SRGBV discipline procedures and offences in the discipline policy were the first three to be discussed. The rest were; lack of discipline guidelines for teachers and other

staff who engage in SRGBV, lack of training and lack of knowledge about what amounts to SRGBV.

The findings on the themes were then interpreted in relation to Skinners theoretical framework, theory of change and literature review. The results either concurred or argued with the assertions of the theoretical frameworks and the research findings of other researchers in the literature review.

In terms of challenges faced during data analysis, the first was on jotting down the responses as it required concentration. The researcher had to do the listening and writing at the same time but this was overcome by conducting both interviews and FGDs in quiet places. Where a point was missed, the researcher was asking the participants to repeat what was said. The second challenge was on identifying similar responses and matching them with schools which provided them. This was time consuming. The researcher overcame it by working up to mid night to make up for more time. The last challenge was on deciding the relevant sub themes to be considered. This challenge was dealt with by identifying consistent phrases, expressions and ideas that were common among the responses of research participants (Kvale, 2007).

3.8 Limitation of the study

The limitation for the study was that learners who were directly involved in SRGBV were difficult to be identified. Learners who once experienced SRGBV would have provided information rich data. Schools did not distinguish between general discipline issues from those caused by gender stereotypes. Again, selecting learners who were once involved in SRGBV would have required parental consent which would have been costly and time consuming. Selection of learners who were able to articulate

issues and use of follow up questions helped to generate as much information as required, therefore credibility and trustworthiness of the study were not affected.

3.9 Chapter summary

Chapter 3 discussed the research design and methodology of the study which included the choice of the study site and participants. The chapter also looked at data generation methods that included; face to face in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. Issues of ethical considerations and limitations of the study were also explained. Finally, the chapter described how data was analysed and interpreted.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Chapter Overview

Chapter four presents and discusses the findings of the study using theory of change and Skinner's behaviourist theory as its theoretical frameworks. Theory of change explains that the goal of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is to ensure that school administrators and teachers have necessary conditions and mechanisms to prevent and respond effectively to school related gender based violence. In addition, schools are expected to create mechanisms and strengthen capacity for students to participate in the reduction of SRGBV. It is also expected that schools should make referral to and/or provide guidance, counselling and support to victims/survivors of SRGBV.

Skinner's theory asserts that what motivates behaviour is that people respond to rewards and punishments in their environment and that behavioural change may be influenced when there is a response to a specific behaviour. According to the theory, students' inappropriate, dangerous and destructive behaviour can be effectively controlled through punishments (Chadsey & McVittie, 2006). In addition, Skinner believed that behaviour that is followed by reinforcement (positive or negative) has an increased probability of reoccurrence and that behaviour followed by extinction or punishment has a decreased probability of re-occurrence.

The study was conducted in five district boarding secondary schools in the CWED. These schools were identified as school A, B, C,D and E for purposes of confidentiality and ethical issues. The labelling does not mean order of superiority or preference of the schools by the researcher. The data generation tools used were document analysis, FGDs guide for learners and in depth interview guide for prefects, deputy head teachers, teachers in the discipline committee, boarding masters/mistresses and matrons. Learners who participated in FGDs were assigned letters A to L depending on the number. The teachers were assigned letters X and Y and prefects were assigned letters L and M. The discussion is presented by themes and sub themes in relation to each research question.

4.1 The understanding of SRGBV in district boarding schools

The first question investigated the understanding of SRGBV in district boarding secondary schools. The study wanted to find out if the learners, teachers and administrators understood what SRGBV meant. Understanding of SRGBV would help in identifying its related cases and determining appropriate punishments from the discipline policy. In relation to the first question, the study also wanted to find out who the victims and perpetrators of SRGBV were. In addition, places where SRGBV took place and causes of SRGBV were investigated.

4.1.1 *Meaning of SRGBV*

Knowledge of the meaning of SRGBV would help to determine if the participants understood what was being researched in the study. Results showed that in some schools, learners understood SRGBV as violence against female learners. In other schools, the understanding was that this violence on female learners was from male

teachers and male learners. For instance during FGDs, participant H from school D explained:

“It is violence on female students especially by male students and male teachers to female students.” “It is when girls are abused by boys and male teachers.” (18/1/2016)

The definition shows that SRGBV is defined as violence against women without consideration of male learners. In some instances instead of providing a definition, learners provided examples of incidences of SRGBV which showed that their understanding was that SRGBV was violence against male learners by teachers. Learners explained that when administering suspension, for the same offence, a girl would be suspended for six weeks while a boy would be suspended for eight weeks. Another example was that if learners were late for classes, when a boy came first, teachers would not allow him to enter but if later a girl comes to join him, the teachers would accept them to enter. During interviews prefect L from school B said:

“Ukachedwa kulowa mukalasi, akayambilira kufika pakhomo la kalasilo ndi munyamata, salowa, koma akabwerapo mtsikana akulowetsa, mukakhala anyamata okhaokha simulowa”(if boys are late for classes, they are not allowed to enter the classrooms but if girls join them, they are allowed). (13/10/2015)

The findings show that learners understood SRGBV as either violent acts towards one sex by people from the opposite sex or acts of discriminating learners of one sex while favouring the other sex. This shows that learners were aware that SRGBV were violent acts in schools but they did not know that it could affect both sexes.

However, research findings through interviews with Deputy Head teachers, boarding masters/mistresses, matrons and teachers from the discipline committee indicate that they were aware that SRGBV is any malpractice done to somebody on the basis of

sex and that it could happen to both sexes. The findings on the meaning concurred with the definition provided by Bhuvandra and Holmes (2014) who defined gender-based violence as an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will, and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females. In whichever way, GBV is something hurtful that would happen to someone whether at school or anywhere else.

4.1.2 Perpetrators and victims of SRGBV

On the subtheme of perpetrators and victims of SRGBV, results from FGDs with learners revealed that teachers, other school staff members, male learners and female learners were all perpetrators of SRGBV but girls were mostly victims. This can be seen from the following sentiments that came out from prefect M at school C during interviews:

“Magetsi akazima anyamata amathamangira kumagwiragwira atsikana mumalo mosayenera”. “Ndiye poti kumakhala mdima munthuyo sumamuwona komanso iweyo umakanika kuthawa”. (When power is off, boys rush to caress girls and because of darkness the girls fail to recognise the person and they also fail to run away). (3/11/2015).

Another example is a comment from participant L at school A during FGDs who said;

“Boys always make embarrassing comments towards girls like, timiyendo ngati toimbila ngóma (your legs are like sticks used for beating drums), if the girl is slim, and if the girl is a little plump the boys say, miyendo yayikulu ngati wanyamula ma logi” (your legs are big as if you have carried logs).

Further, during FGDs, participant I, from school E commented;

“Zimenezi zimakonda kuchitika mu makalasi ndi mukolido popita ku hositelo! Anyamatawa amakonda kugwiragwira atsikana.”(These happen in classes and in corridors when we are going to the hostels boys like caressing girls). (25/1/2016)

The sentiments show that female learners are the main victims of SRGBV in boarding schools in CWED. Furthermore, the following statement from one of the deputy head teachers provides evidence of teachers' involvement as perpetrators of SRGBV.

“The problem which we have is that some teachers and staff are part of those who engage in SRGBV right in the eyes of students and yet the discipline policy has no rules for these. (Deputy HeadTeacher at School A)

Teachers, deputy head teachers, boarding masters/mistresses and matrons mentioned boys as perpetrators while girls were mentioned as victims. Supporting the results, Itegi and Njuguna (2012) stated that girls are more victims of SRGBV than boys because the most common form of the gender based violence is the sexual abuse where sex is exchanged for grades and luxuries. From the results, although teachers, male learners and female learners are perpetrators of SRGBV, female learners experience it more than male learners.

4.1.3 Places where SRGBV took place

In terms of where SRGBV takes place, most participants mentioned hostels, cafeteria, along corridors, classrooms, sports ground as places where SRGBV took place. For instance, during FGDs, participant I, from school E commented:

“Zimenezi zimakonda kuchitika mu makalasi ndi mukolido popita ku hositelo! Anyamatawa amakonda kugwiragwira atsikana.”(These happen in classes and in corridors when we are going to the hostels boys like caressing girls). (25/1/2016)

Participant A from the same school added:

“Kwa anyamatafe makamaka mumahositelo ndi ku galawundi kumpira!”(For us boys especially in hostels and at football grounds)

The findings show that there are certain places where SRGBV happens more to female learners and in other places it happens more to male learners. The mentioned places being sites which are accessible to students in boarding secondary schools, it shows that SRGBV takes place in all places within and surrounding the schools. This means that there are no safe places at district boarding schools which are free from GBV. Victims of SRGBV would therefore under perform in both academic and non academic activities. Those who face SRGBV in classes will be more affected academically and those who face SRGBV in sports areas and other activities will be affected more in non academic activities.

4.1.4 Causes of SRGBV

On causes of SRGBV, it emerged from the findings that, cruelty, preconceived ideas, economic status, jealous, power black outs, stereotypic ideas and some education policies were among the causes.

4.1.4.1 Cruelty

The findings from all the schools revealed that some people are violent because that is how they were raised and it has become part of their behaviour. As commented during FGDs by participant D from school E:

“Nkhanza basi! Anthu ena anangobadwa ankhanza”(cruelty! Some people are naturally cruel). *“Samamva bwino ngati samupanga wina wakeza nkhanza”* (they do not feel good if they have not done something bad to someone). *“Anangozowera kwawoko khalidwe la nkhanza”* (they are used to cruel behaviour from their homes).(25/1/2016)

The results show that if one is brought up in a violent environment, to him/her such behaviour is normal and acceptable. If violent learners are exposed to an environment where it will be made known that violence is a punishable offence, such learners may change their behaviour.

4.1.4.2 *Preconceived ideas*

Results from interviews with teachers, deputy head teachers, boarding masters and mistresses revealed that SRGBV is caused by preconceived ideas that one has against boys or girls. These are stereotyped ideas that one should be treated in a particular way because of sex. During interviews at school D, the deputy head teacher said:

“Because of gender roles assigned to individuals, in some cases, people think that boys are more superior and intelligent than girls as such they need to be treated in a superior way than girls. Those who are treated as superiors carry along with that mentality to schools and start oppressing others of opposite sex. For instance, when a girl outperforms the boys during examinations, boys claim that the girl has been favoured but if it is a boy leading, they keep quite showing that it is normal for a boy to lead.”(21/1/2016)

With such mentality, even if a boy does something wrong to a girl, the boy would not be reprimanded. In other communities superiority treatment goes to the girls. These boys and girls carry along with them such ideas to schools and they start being violent towards others of opposite sex. However, if the discipline policy would be able to make such learners aware that preconceived ideas that lead to violence towards someone because of sex would end up into punishable offences, learners may gradually change their behaviour and thus reducing the occurrence of SRGBV.

4.1.4.3 *Economic status*

Research findings revealed that economic status was another cause of SRGBV in that those who come from poor families are less favoured than those who come from rich families. Related to this was background status where if teachers knew where you come from or if they knew your parents, you were sometimes treated with favours while in other times, teachers ill treated you because they knew that you came from a well known family and each time you do something perceived to be wrong, they said:

“chifukwa choti ndiwe mwana wa a uje?” (is it because you are a child of the well known parents). *“Iwe ndiwe ndani! Chuma ndi chamakolo ako osati iwe!”* (The riches belong to your parents and not you). *Palibenso pabwino, ukakhala osauka amati ndiwe ndani iwe, uli ndichani. Pena amatha kukunena kuti makolo ako ndindaninso.* (If you are from a poor family, they also insult you, they say who are you? What do you have? What are your parents?) (Prefect L from school B on 13/10/2015).

Much as economic status is said to be a cause for SRGBV, this could happen to anyone regardless of sex that is why whether a male or female learner, either could be favoured or treated badly because of economic status or background status.

4.1.4.4 Jealousy

Under the same sub theme of causes of SRGBV, research findings in all schools established that jealous from male teachers was another cause of SRGBV. This happened mainly where a male teacher discovered that the girl in whom he is interested, is in a relationship with another boy. The teacher would punish the particular boy unnecessarily as prefect L from school B during interviews stated:

“If a boy is in a relationship with a girl and the teacher is interested in the same girl, the teacher becomes jealousy and punishes the boy, most times without a genuine reason”. Amangofuna akuchititse manyazi pamaso pa bebiyako ndi anzako kuti uwoneke wofoila kuti bebi ija yikusiye. (All the teacher wants is to humiliate you in front of your girlfriend and fellow learners so that the girlfriend should call it quits) (13/10/2015)

Since it could be difficult for a teacher to confront the boy for fear of exposing his behaviour, the teacher would then punish the boy so that the relationship with the girl in question could be stopped. This would the teacher free to go out with the girl in question. Mostly it is difficult for a female learner to turn down the teacher’s proposal, therefore, the relationship between the teacher and the girl is entered into unwillingly on the part of the girl.

4.1.4.5 *Power black outs*

The research findings revealed power black outs as an additional sub theme on the sub theme of causes of SRGBV. In certain schools, it was established that during power black outs, male learners take advantage of the darkness and rush to caress female learners as lamented by prefect M during interviews at School C:

“Magetsi akazima anyamata amathamangira kumagwiragwira atsikana mumalo mosayenera”. “Ndiye poti kumakhala mdima munthuyo sumamuwona komanso iweyo umakanika kuthawa”. (When power is off, boys rush to caress girls and because of darkness the girls fail to recognise the person and they also fail to run away). (3/11/2015).

Behaviours like these would make female learners uncomfortable to participate in studies in the evenings when power black outs are common. This could result in low performance by female learners since they would have less study time than male learners.

4.1.4.6 *Some education policies and stereotypic ideas*

Some educational policies were revealed to be causes of SRGBV under the same sub theme. It was established that some educational policies fuelled the existence of SRGBV because they were making female learners to be in minority which consequently put them at a disadvantage in schools. For instance, in most boarding secondary schools, Government constructed more hostels for boys than girls and selection into these schools is based on bed space. This makes boys to be more in numbers than girls.

Related to educational policies, the study established that some teachers had stereotypic ideas which could make female learners to be ill treated. For instance, during interviews with teachers, teacher X from school D had this in response:

“SRGBV is normal, even our culture allows it. You can also tell from educational policies which in one way favour male learners than females, for example, selection policy into boarding secondary schools is based on accommodation yet these schools have more boys’ hostels than hostels for girls, already if you are a minority, you are suppressed!”“Look here madam, religiously, even the bible encourages some sort of gender based violence, in the book of Timothy, a lady should keep quiet in church, she should talk to the husband at home, a lady should not stand in church, even in Islamic beliefs ladies are restricted from participating, they are not allowed to be part of the group and women cannot lead prayers!” (20/1/2016).

Such teachers may not view SRGBV towards female learners as a wrong thing. Should cases of SRGBV be brought before them or should they be in a discipline committee, their judgement may not be objective. In addition, such teachers are not aware that SRGBV could also happen to male learners. According to Idu and Ojedapo (2011), indiscipline of students is as a result of parental influence, teachers’ attitude, government activities and peer-group influence and to curb indiscipline like SRGBV, among learners, attention must be given to parental influence, teachers’ attitude, government activities and peer group influence.

Generally, the results on the understanding of SRGBV in district boarding schools indicated that learners, teachers and other school staff understood what the study was looking for. All the respondents understood that SRGBV were acts of violence based on one’s sex. The only difference was on how it was defined. In some instances it was understood as harassment against one sex without considering that both sexes could be affected.

Although respondents showed understanding of SRGBV, discipline records which were seen did not show any case as related to GBV. This may mean that all cases were handled in general.

With regard to theory of change, by putting in place the discipline policy, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology provided school administrators and teachers the necessary mechanisms to prevent and respond effectively to all indiscipline cases including school related gender based violence. School administrators were therefore expected to use punishments stipulated in the discipline policy to prevent the occurrence of SRGBV. If records did not show that the issues that were handled by the discipline committee were related to SRGBV, it was difficult to determine if guidelines in the discipline policy were used to prevent SRGBV. Therefore, the policy would not prevent the occurrence of SRGBV.

Lack of records on SRGBV could also mean that even those entrusted to handle discipline matters did not have proper guidance from the discipline policy on how to deal with such cases. Consequently, there were no punishments given to those who engaged in acts of violence based on gender. According to Skinner's behaviourist theory, what motivates behaviour is that people respond to rewards and punishments in their environment. Cases of SRGBV would be minimised or stopped if perpetrators were punished.

4.2 Forms of SRGBV

The second question in the study explored the forms of SRGBV in district boarding secondary schools in Malawi. Under this theme, it was established that although there were common forms of SRGBV towards both male and female learners, other forms

were specific to sex. The study therefore discussed forms of SRGBV under three sub themes, thus, forms of SRGBV towards female learners, forms of SRGBV towards male learners and forms of SRGBV common to both female and male learners.

4.2.1 Forms of SRGBV towards female learners

From the analysis of in-depth interviews and FGDs, it was revealed that in all schools, female learners faced sexual, verbal harassment and psychological abuse as forms of SRGBV. However sexual abuse usually ended up into verbal harassment and psychological abuse. The two are discussed as follows:

4.2.1.1 Verbal Harassment

The research results showed that female learners were verbally harassed by almost everybody in all schools. Verbally, the results showed that male learners turn female learners into laughing stocks by making bad and embarrassing comments towards them in the presence of other learners. For instance, at school A, during FGDs participant L commented:

“Boys always make embarrassing comments towards girls like, *timiyendo ngati toimbila ngóma* (your legs are like sticks used for beating drums), if the girl is slim, and if the girl is a little plump the boys say, *miyendo yayikulu ngati wanyamula ma logi*” (your legs are big as if you have carried logs). “*Anyamataamathanso kumunena mtsikana kuti ulibe malukusi*” (boys can tell a girl that you are not beautiful) (5/10/2016).

Concurring with the results from FGDs with learners, interviews with deputy head teachers, teachers from discipline committee, boarding masters/mistresses and matrons revealed that there was verbal harassment of girls by boys through abusive language. In other circumstances, female teachers could unnecessarily shout at female learners. The findings show that female learners face verbal harassment because they were born females. Mlamleli et al. (as cited in USAID 2008) stated that repeated

verbal abuse has also been shown to undermine self-esteem. Therefore, verbal abuse can bring a lot of negative effects on the learners which can include dropping out of school. It is therefore important that the secondary school discipline policy be able to safeguard learners from verbal abuse to allow them complete secondary education to the best of their potential.

4.2.1.2 *Psychological abuse*

Research findings from all schools revealed that male learners did not want to be in the same group with female learners because the thinking was that females are not intelligent as such they would disturb the discussions. This was affecting female learners psychologically. To concur with the findings during FGDs, participant G from school C commented:

“madam zinazi ndi zoonza atsikana amangosokoneza gulu, sayankhulapo, amangokhala pagulu kumangomvetsera, ife timafuna anthu oti aziyankha!”(Some of these things are true, girls disturb the groups and they just listen without making contributions) (2/11/2015)

These findings were in line with Fraser and Fancy (2014) who found that in Malawi there was psychological abuse where girls were considered to be less bright than boys. The above response shows that indeed male learners are not willing to have female learners during group work. This could make female learners not to participate even if they are forced by teachers to join the groups.

Another form of psychological abuse as a sub theme of forms of SRGBV towards female learners was jealous amongst female learners themselves. The research findings revealed that girls demean each other because of jealous. Girls like to show that they are better off than their colleagues as a result they talk bad about others. Thus making the ones talked about look bad and feel ashamed which in turn would

affect their participation in both academic and non academic activities. For instance during FGDs, participant A from school D commented:

“Atsikana okhaokha amapangirana nsanje ndiye amanenana” (girls are jealousy of each other and they talk bad about each other)”.

Participant D from the same group concurred:

“Eya atsikanadi sitikondana. Timafuna kuti anthu adzitiona kuti ndife otsogola komanso apamwamba. Zimatheka kuti mzako akuchita bwino kaya mukalasi, kaya kumpira mmalo momuyamikila timamunenela zoyipa kuti awoneke wapansi basi.”(it is true, we girls do not love each other, instead of appreciating where our fellow girls are doing well, we talk bad about them to pull them down)(18/1/2016)

These responses reveal that female learners are harassed not only by their male counterparts but also by fellow girls. The results imply that girls are harassed by many players. It should be noted that because of jealous, other forms of harassment could also come in.

4.2.2 SRGBV towards boys

Under the sub theme of SRGBV towards boys, the research findings revealed physical harassment and favoritism towards female learners as forms of SRGBV affecting male learners. These are discussed in the following sections:

4.2.2.1 Physical harassment

The research findings in all schools revealed that male learners faced more of physical harassment than female learners and this was perpetrated by male learners themselves, teachers and other school staff members.

Interviews with teachers revealed that boys were given harder punishments than girls because teachers felt that boys had the ability to do harder work as teacher X from school C commented:

“Boys are given harder punishments because they have the ability to do the work”. “If we give them similar work like mopping, who would do the harder work?” “Or still if we ask the girls to dig pit latrines, will they manage?” “Definitely no! So it is fair to give punishments that suit the person”. (4/11/2016)

The results show that even if the punishments for some offences are outlined, teachers administer different punishments for similar offences depending on sex. This would leave the male learners tired and unable to concentrate in class, thus affecting their performance and education attainment in the end.

Research findings further revealed that in other cases a boy could be punished because he is in a relationship with a girl who has also attracted the interest of a teacher. Furthermore, results revealed that cooks were violent against male learners where they could shout at them unnecessarily, grab plates away from them and threaten that they would not give them food and sometimes beating up the boys as explained by participant C from school E:

“*Ku khefu ma khuki* (cooks) talk to us boys badly, beating and grabbing our plates, but when reported *amati*(they say) we will counsel them but the cooks don’t change. *Ife timawona ngati sawalangiza nchifukwa chake amapitiriza.*” (we feel they are not counselled thus why they don’t stop their behaviour) (25/1/2016)

The findings show that male learners do not enjoy the free environment which the school is supposed to provide. Mekonen et al. (2010) stated that SRGBV practices make the pupil feel ashamed and result in lack of confidence to participate in class activities and affect their learning and educational performance. In this case the

treatment which male learners receive would embarrass them and negatively affect their performance. In addition, their health may also be affected because they will be unwilling to go to the cafeteria and receive food.

4.2.2.2 *Favoritism towards female learners at the expense of male learners*

Further analysis of in-depth interviews and FGDs revealed a unique form of gender based violence in schools where teachers would favour female learners to the discouragement of male learners. For example, results from FDGs revealed that when giving out marks, girls would be favoured at the expense of boys by giving them higher marks than boys and yet their performance did not deserve such marks as shown in the statements captured from participant I during FGDs at school B:

“During marking teachers put more interest on girls, for the same answer *mtsikana amuchongera ndi kumukonzera koma munyamata amangomuthetha* (for the same answer a girl would be marked correct and if there was a mistake the teacher would just correct it while for a boy it is marked wrong). *Mongowonjezera* (just to add), for the same marks, a girl is given a prize and a boy nothing not even praises. *Tikafika kuzilango* (when it comes to punishments), for the same act, a boy would be suspended while a girl would remain in school”. (12/10/2016)

The response above is in line with the examples from school B which were provided during definition of SRGBV, it is clear that there was favouritism towards female learners. This kind of favouritism would discourage male participants who may think they are not doing well and if the behaviour continues, it may lead to performance drop down. Results further revealed that favouritism of girls was also exhibited when administering punishments by male prefects as they would punish male learners whenever there was an issue between a male and a female learner despite the fact that it is a female learner who provoked the male learner. Such violence would further go

to the administration in that if a male learner complains about the conduct of the prefects, teachers take it as rudeness.

4.2.3 *SRGBV common to both male and female learners*

On the sub theme of forms of SRGBV common to both male and female learners, research findings from both FGDs and interviews with prefects in all schools showed that both learners faced violence from teachers of similar sex. Thus female teachers were violent towards female learners while male teachers were violent towards male learners as evidenced by the statement from prefect L at school C who said the following during in-depth interviews:

“If it is a female teacher teaching and a girl fails to answer her question correctly, the teacher beats up the girl and if the lesson is for a male teacher and a boy fails to answer his question correctly, the teacher beats the boy up”.(3/11/2015).

Teachers may behave in such a manner in good faith but the acts were bringing embarrassment and shame to the concerned learners which deteriorated their performance further.

The discipline records in all schools indicated physical violence and verbal abuse as cases which were handled by the discipline committee. Offenders were indeed punished but it was difficult to determine as to whether the cases were related to GBV or not. The offences and associated punishments outlined in the discipline policy were categorised based on who can administer a particular type of punishment and not based on whether the offence was general in nature or related to GBV.

Since there was no distinction of cases in discipline records, the discipline policy would not have been said to have been used in preventing the different forms of

SRGBV from happening. Although indirectly, to some extent, some cases dealt with using the punishments outlined in the discipline policy may have been related to GBV.

In general, forms of SRGBV varied from school to school and between male and female learners although the schools were within the same division. Additionally, female learners faced all forms of violence from many quarters as compared to male learners.

4.3 Structures and processes of the school discipline policy to combat SRGBV in district boarding secondary schools in CWED

On the question of structures and processes of the school discipline policy to combat SRGBV in district boarding secondary schools in CWED, the study was interested in what structures and processes including reporting procedures did the schools have as ways of handling SRGBV cases. Further, the study questioned how SRGBV cases were resolved, rules in the school rules and regulations that dealt with SRGBV. In addition, the study questioned if there were amendments made when recommending action to be taken in terms of punishments associated with SRGBV. Furthermore, the study wanted to find out if there were precautionary measures to prevent the occurrence of SRGBV and if there was anything done to perpetrators as well as victims of SRGBV. The findings are discussed in the following sections as sub themes to the question:

4.3.1 Structures in place

The research findings from documents which were read indicated that it was only the discipline committee which was mandated to handle every case in schools. The decisions of the discipline committee were based on the school rules and regulations which were based on the school discipline policy. The committees then provided

recommendations to the head teachers who implemented the punishments as stated in the discipline policy as well as school rules and regulations. This shows that despite being policy holders at school level, the head teachers do not give chance to the involved parties to explain their sides. Instead they administer punishments as recommended by the discipline committee. Since the rules and regulations for the schools are already outlined with associated punishments, the head teacher may just relate the crime to the rules and regulations without necessarily analysing it further or treating it as a SRGBV case. Having one structure only to handle cases at school may sometimes have some biases. For example, during interviews, teacher Y from school A responded:

“The committee knows the behaviour of the students because it comprises of teachers who interact with these students on a daily basis than the head teacher. Infact some students are naturally difficult *kwawoko anawalekelera so ife timawapatsa thiritimenti yogwirizana nawo.*”(Some learners were spoilt at their homes, as teachers, we give them the appropriate treatment). (7/10/2015)

On the same, Teacher X from school C said:

“There is no time for the whole committee to sit down with the headteacher and a student, somehow it may also mean that the headteacher doesn’t trust the people he chose to be in the committee”.The students will also take advantage of the mistrust and they will start disrespecting the teachers. (7/10/2015)

Such comments are an indication that whatever the discipline committee decides should be implemented as it is. In addition, teachers believe that they know the learners best and their judgement is correct. Although teachers may claim to know learners best, as human beings, learners may change in behaviour depending on the situation. Meaning that what teachers may claim to know could not be true sometimes because the learner in question may have changed from bad to good behaviour and

vice versa. This implies that some learners are not fairly judged due to the preconceived ideas that the discipline committee members have about them. On the other hand, SRGBV perpetrators may be left scot free while victims may suffer because their cases may not be looked at objectively.

On the same sub theme of structures in place for handling SRGBV, the study wanted to find out if there was anywhere else the victims could refer their matter to if they were unsatisfied with the way their case was handled by the Discipline Committee. The responses clearly showed that since the culture was that SRGBV cases are minor, even if they were to be referred to the head teachers, they would be ignored as if nothing happened as a result learners preferred not to pursue the issues further. Learners felt that they would never or would not be assisted. Such feelings explain why most of the SRGBV went unreported as evidenced by participant K during FGDs at school B who said:

“Timangokhala(we do not do anything) because they hate you more atha kukuyankhula zosakhala bwino atha kungoipondereza” (they can talk to you badly and can just ignore your complaint).Nthawi zina amakuopseza kuti ngati sukuangalatsidwa ndi sukulu yino uchoke, ndiye powopa kuchotsedwa sukulu, zimangothera mumtima(Sometimes they threaten that they will suspend you if you are not satisfied with the school, therefore, to avoid being suspended, you just keep quiet)
(12/10/2015)

However, research findings from interviews with teachers revealed that the issues could further be reported to the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) should the learners want to but the discipline documents which the researcher saw did not contain any information showing that the PTA had ever handled a discipline case at any school. Besides, the school rules and regulations and even the policy have no provision for the PTA to handle discipline cases let alone cases of SRGBV.

In line with the learners and prefects responses, results from interviews with the deputy head teachers, boarding masters/mistresses, matrons and teachers were that since the discipline committee based its actions on the school rules and regulations, even if the learners would pursue the issues further, the action taken would be the same as teacher Y from school E commented:

“In fact we are the ones who know our students better and nobody else from outside can dictate to us on what to do to our learners.” “There is no where else the students can take the issues to because we use the rules and regulations from the ministry, so our decisions are binding”.
(27/1/2016)

Such statements show that in boarding secondary schools rules and regulations are rigid in terms of structures for appealing and because of this, aggrieved students end up going to the Ombudsman with cases which would have been otherwise solved at the institution level. In support, MoEST, (2014) indicates that the Ministry of Education Science and Technology had been losing cases at the Ombudsman. Thus, there was unfair judgement of cases and this unfairness would have been spotted out if within the school there were structures where learners who are not satisfied by the discipline committee’s judgement would have appealed to. The schools therefore need to put in place enough and appropriate structures to handle cases of different nature.

4.3.2 Reporting process

On the reporting process of SRGBV cases, the study was interested in how cases of SRGBV were reported, the research findings revealed that there was no prescribed process as to how SRGBV could be reported as a result when learners reported just like they do with other cases, they were intimidated and labelled as unruly candidates,

therefore most cases were not reported as participant D from school A explained during FGDs:

“Chimaopsa ukakanena amakuika pabulaki lisiti. kukuika ngati walakwa kwambiri kuti ukadzangolakwitsa china adzangokuchotsa sukulu.” (what scares us to report is that if you report, they put you on a warning list so that when you just do something wrong, you should be suspended)”.(5/10/2015)

The findings show that learners are willing to report SRGBV cases but there is no platform for that because teachers are not willing to hear about SRGBV. This could imply that since teachers are part of those who perpetrate SRGBV, they cannot handle the cases because it would look like they are shooting themselves. In line with the findings from FDGs were the research findings from interviews with prefects which revealed that it was difficult to report SRGBV involving teachers as quoted in the following statement by Prefect M from school E:

“Timangokhala, tikayankhulako amati ukudelera, aphunzitsi salakwitsa(we just leave the issues unreported because when we report, the teachers back each other and start blaming the reporter that he or she is unruly and defiant because teachers are never wrong)”.
(26/1/2016)

The results show that SRGBV perpetrated by teachers will remain unreported which in the end may increase the occurrence thereby continuing to negatively affect learners. Further, the findings indicate that even if learners could report the SRGBV to prefects, it would end at that level where the offenders would be given light punishments if it is a learner and if it is a teacher nothing would happen to him or her. This would give chance to the perpetrators to continue abusing the victims which may force them to drop out of school and limit the victims’ chance of getting employed or pursuing tertiary education.

Further, research findings revealed that in some schools, issues of SRGBV were not reported because both teachers and prefects talked about them in a manner that embarrassed victims. For instance when a girl complained that she was touched without permission, the prefects commented badly instead of investigating the issue. For instance during FGDs, participant J, from school D said that prefects say:

“Anzako bwanji satigwira! (why is it that they do not touch us) zikatero timangosiya kuwopa kuyankhidwa mwala.”(We don’t report because when we do, they can answer you rudely or just sit on your complaint as if nothing happened)”. (18/1/2016)

These findings show that teachers and prefects also contribute to the non-reporting culture because of their embarrassing comments and statements which prevents learners from taking action on SRGBV.

On the other hand, research findings from interviews with teachers revealed that such cases are reported depending on where and when the incidence took place, therefore learners report to; prefects, administration, boarding master and class teachers and then to the discipline committee which later makes recommendations to the head teachers. The interview results also revealed that female learners mostly report to female prefects while male learners report to male prefects. By reporting to administrators or prefects of the same sex, in a culture which has preference for one sex, there may be unfairness in handling the matter because the cases may be taken as a battle between the two sexes as commented by a boarding master from school E during interviews:

“Mapurifekiti achitsikanawa amakondera atsikana anzawo chifukwa choti ndi amodzi ndiye amangokhalira kuneneza anyamata” (Female prefects favour female learners because they are of the same sex and they just make reports against boys).(29/1/2016)

The results from both FGDs and interviews with teachers and prefects show that some SRGBV acts are reported in a similar way as other general indiscipline cases are reported. However, if the case is sensed to be a SRGBV one, the authorities tend to ignore it as if there is no case, the result is that no effort is made to preside over them and learners become discouraged to make further reports on SRGBV. In addition, the documents which were seen did not contain reporting guidelines that learners could follow. This may result in reporting to the prefects or teachers who had no passion for SRGBV thereby giving room for teachers, administrators and other school staff to abuse the learners more.

4.3.3 *How SRGBV cases were resolved*

On the sub theme of how SRGBV cases were resolved, analysis of the findings from both FGDs and in-depth interviews revealed that the process of resolving SRGBV cases is similar to the process for handling other general. Learners are summoned to the discipline committee as a final decision maker. In addition, research findings from in-depth interviews with prefects revealed that SRGBV cases rarely reached the discipline committee because they were handled at the prefects' level. It was found out that prefects could call the two parties involved to have their sides heard. After determining who is wrong, a light punishment of either sweeping or mopping if the case is less severe was administered. If the cases were considered more severe, prefects would refer them to the class teacher, boarding masters/mistresses or any teacher depending on the place and time the incidence occurred but at that level, the case is treated as a general indiscipline issue.

Furthermore, research findings from in-depth interviews with prefects revealed that although they were administering light punishments, most SRGBV cases deserved

harder punishments. It was revealed that prefects preferred to handle SRGBV cases because of the fact that when referred to the teachers the issues are treated casually to the extent that nothing happened to both perpetrators and victims. These findings indicate that there are no appropriate procedures for handling SRGBV cases as a result they remain unresolved making victims continue to suffer.

4.3.4 Rules that deal with SRGBV

On the sub theme of rules that deal with SRGBV, the study wanted to find out if there were specific rules in the school rules and regulations that were referred to when determining cases of SRGBV. The findings from document analysis showed that discipline cases had no special rules for SRGBV but the rules which were referred to were those for general indiscipline. Research findings from FGDs with learners and in-depth interviews with prefects revealed that the school had a lot of rules which were referred to when one does a wrong thing. During FGDs at school C, participant D said:

"Timasayina malamulo ambirimbi tikamayamba suku!" "koma pena timangosayina osadziwa kuti kaya zochimwa zake nzokhuzana ndi jenda" (We sign a lot of rules at the beginning of school but we don't know if the offences are related to gender). (2/11/2016)

The findings show there are rules that are referred to when handling discipline issues but learners do not know if the rules could also deal with SRGBV. When prefects were asked if they referred to any rule when determining punishments, the results showed that they did not refer to any rule because their mandate was to give light punishments. This being the case, SRGBV cases were treated lightly at the prefect's level which could not deter the would be offenders thereby perpetuating the acts.

Related to the sub theme of rules that deal with SRGBV cases, research findings from both FGDs and in-depth interviews revealed that there were no rules and regulations that talked about teachers and other staff who engaged in SRGBV with learners. For instance, during interviews with prefects, prefect M from school B said:

“Kapena malamulo alipo koma ife sitikuziwa koma aziphunzitsiwo timawawonabe asakusinha (may be the rules exist but we do not know, we just see the teachers continue their unbecoming behaviour)”
(13/10/2015)

The findings mean that although teachers and other staff members engage in SRGBV, there are no rules to punish them as is the case with learners. Further findings from interviews with teachers confirmed that there were no rules for teachers regarding SRGBV which means that nothing happens to the teachers. According to Skinners theory, behavioural change may be influenced when there is a response to a specific behaviour. Since the discipline policy does not stipulate punishments for teachers and others who engage in SRGBV and since SRGBV cases are treated casually, perpetrators will continue behaving in the way they do as a result, cases of SRGBV would continue to remain unresolved despite the presence of the discipline policy.

4.3.5 Amendments made when recommending action

On amendments made to the rules and regulations when recommending action to be taken by the head teacher against SRGBV perpetrators, research findings from in-depth interviews with the deputy head teachers and teachers in the discipline committee indicated that the discipline committee was not making any modifications to the rules and regulations for fear of falling outside the discipline framework and be sued.

Therefore, the punishments were just like punishments for other offences as the deputy head teacher from school E commented:

“Suspension is the biggest punishment that we give to offenders, but we also do counselling and guidance”. “SRGBV cases are not serious issues, they are minor things because *wina wangomukhudza pangóno* (may be the victim was touched just a little bit).” (28/1/2016)

The findings indicate that punishments are administered as they are written in the rules and regulations without modifications. If the offence is not indicated in the rules, it becomes difficult to administer appropriate punishments to the offenders. SRGBV are also seen as minor offences in that the seriousness of the offence is difficult to be measured. Agreeing with the statement during interviews teacher Y from school A said:

“It depends on the environment, in town it’s an offence while here it cannot be an offence to require punishment”. “For example, just touching someone in town, you find that students complain but here that is not an issue.” “There are no rules on which the teacher can base the punishment for such an offence.” (7/10/2015)

The results show that in rural schools SRGBV is not an offence to get someone punished but in urban schools it is an offence. The interpretation is that it is not necessary to prescribe punishments for SRGBV for rural schools because it is acceptable. Teachers in rural schools are not aware that SRGBV is an offence, therefore the policy need to clearly outline SRGBV offences to make the teachers know that it is punishable at any school.

4.3.7 Precautionary measures

In relation to the theme of structures and processes of the school discipline policy to combat SRGBV, the study investigated precautionary measures which aimed at finding out if there were any measures taken to prevent SRGBV from happening, the

research findings from interviews with deputy head teachers, boarding masters/mistresses and teachers revealed that schools relied on the general guidance and counselling and that teachers and administrators acted as role models in the way they spoke and handled the students.

In this case, teachers, deputy head teachers and boarding masters worked on assumption that their behaviour was good to be considered as role models but with learners from different backgrounds, such an assumption may not work because what they think is good to them may not be good to some of the learners. Again, since the study has revealed that some teachers are perpetrators of SRGBV, some learners could as well choose to emulate the behaviour of such teachers and perpetrate the act.

Further, the guidance and counselling may not be attended by everyone. It can therefore be stated that there are no precautionary measures taken against SRGBV in district boarding schools because some of the role models and those providing counselling are part of the perpetrators of the act. In addition, the counselling provided does not specifically aim at addressing issues of SRGBV as emphasis may be on other areas. This argues with the theory of change expects that the discipline policy would enable schools to create mechanisms and strengthen capacity for students to participate in the reduction of SRGBV. The theory also expects the policy to assist schools make referral to and/or provide guidance, counselling and support to victims/survivors of SRGBV.

4.3.8 What happens to the victims and the perpetrators of SRGBV

On what happens to the victims and perpetrators of SRGBV, research findings from the FGDs with learners and in-depth interviews with the prefects revealed that

nothing was happening to both the victims and perpetrators of SRGBV because when SRGBV cases are reported, they are treated as minor issues which do not warrant further action. However, findings from interviews with teachers, boarding masters/mistresses and deputy head teachers revealed that the perpetrator is punished by forcing him/her to apologise to the victim. The deputy head teacher from school D said this:

“It depends upon the severity of the case and the best is to have the involved learners say sorry to each other”. “Otherwise there is nothing else we can do.” Mostly these are not serious cases and there is no harm on the victims, so it will be unfair to give harsh punishment to the perpetrator.” (21/1/2016)

The discipline policy as well as school rules and regulations do not have “saying sorry” as a punishment for offenders this means that cases of SRGBV are outside the discipline offences and needed to be treated as minor issues which do not need the use of the punishments stipulated in the discipline policy.

The behaviourist theory asserts that what motivates behaviour is that people respond to rewards and punishments in their environment and that behavioural change may be influenced when there is a response to a specific behaviour. Forcing someone to say sorry shows that he/she does not realise that what he/she did was wrong. It would be easier to realise that what someone did was wrong if the consequences for such acts were known. If there is no recognition that what someone did was wrong, it is likely that the behaviour would be repeated.

4.4 Challenges experienced in the implementation of school discipline policy when handling SRGBV.

The fourth and last research question intended to find out the challenges experienced in the implementation of school discipline policy when handling SRGBV. Mainly, the question was asked to the deputy head teachers who responded that the challenges were; cultural influences, teachers' background, lack of SRGBV discipline procedures and offences in the discipline policy, lack of discipline guidelines for teachers and other staff who engage in SRGBV, lack of training and lack of knowledge by both teachers and learners about what amounts to SRGBV. The following sections will discuss the challenges.

4.4.1 Cultural influence

On the sub theme of cultural influences, the research findings revealed that it was difficult to use the discipline policy to address SRGBV because teachers culturally do not regard SRGBV as an offence. Therefore although the discipline policy could contain punishments which could be used on the SRGBV offenders, teachers would choose to ignore the issues. Teachers come from different cultures, some cultures prioritise boys more than girls while others prioritise girls more than boys. When a teacher comes from either of the cultures, if it happens that the victim is the one who is not prioritised in the teacher's cultural context, the teacher would not respect the concerned learners' rights. When the head teacher tries to come in, teachers become uncooperative and say:

“Zimenezo nchifukwa chake sukulu siyikuyenda bwino, a hedi mumangomvera za ana mmalo mopanga zokweza sukulu ino, anawatu simuwakwanitsa!”(the school is not functioning properly because the head teacher is concentrating on what learners tell them instead of making appropriate decisions to improve the school). (Deputy Head teacher from school D on 21/1/2016)

These results indicate that instead of sorting out the problem of SRGBV, teachers prefer concentrating on other issues and if the Deputy Head teacher shows willingness to have SRGBV cases dealt with, teachers would deliberately mix up issues to discourage the deputy head teacher. This means SRGBV cases are considered less important than other issues and yet it continues to affect learners negatively.

Further, the research findings show that in a culture that prioritises girls, there is no respect for boys and vice versa. Usually the unfavoured sex is violated against and that is normal to them. The findings also reveal that the community's cultural practices in which the school is situated also contributes to problems in using the discipline policy to combat SRGBV in that if the culture favours boys, there is no respect for girls therefore abuse of girls will be considered normal. Teachers would leave the cases unresolved and will not bother to refer to the discipline policy as nobody will question them.

4.4.2 Teachers' background

On teachers' background, research findings revealed that the implementation of the discipline policy in combating SRGBV had problems because the teacher's background was that they were not aware if SRGBV could be treated as offences.

Others were even embarrassed to talk about them and chose to ignore the issues.

“Madam, some teachers were brought up in the village, got secondary education from there and only came to town during university education, do you think such teachers can regard SRGBV as an issue?”

“Some teachers even feel embarrassed to talk about it and say; *tizikamba zimenezo pano, tangozisiyani a hedi* (we cannot be talking about that here, just leave the issue). (Deputy Head teacher from school B on 21/10/2015)

The findings show that because of the environment and how some teachers were brought up, they do not have regard for SRGBV and they take it as a normal thing to happen. In other cases they take it as a taboo to be talked about. This means that even if the discipline policy could have some punishments related to SRGBV offences, it will not be possible to use it on the offenders.

4.4.3 Lack of SRGBV discipline procedures and offences in the discipline policy

Regarding lack of discipline procedures and offences in the discipline policy, the research findings revealed that the discipline policy in itself was a problem because it did not outline offences and punishments related to SRGBV. In addition, the discipline policy did not outline the procedures for handling SRGBV cases as it did with other offences. This meant that learners had problems as to how and where the issues could be reported especially because of the embarrassing nature of the issues. Even when reported to any teacher, the teachers had problems in how to handle the cases and which punishments would be appropriate for the offences as a result teachers were handling it the way they thought. This could lead to unfair judgements.

4.4.4 Lack of discipline guidelines for teachers and other staff who engage in SRGBV

In terms of lack of guidelines for teachers and other staff who engage in SRGBV, the research findings from in-depth interviews with deputy head teachers revealed that there were some teachers and other staff who were perpetrators of SRGBV but the discipline policy did not prescribe punishments for such teachers and staff members. On the other hand, since the punishments in the discipline policy were supposed to be administered by some of these teachers, it was difficult for them to punish each other

because there was no policy giving the teachers the mandate to punish each other. The school administrators also did not have the mandate to punish such teachers. With these engaging in the acts and being left free, other teachers felt it was unfair to punish the learners only for similar offences as evidenced by the following statement from the deputy head teacher at school A during interviews:

“The problem which we have is that some teachers and staff are part of those who engage in SRGBV right in the eyes of students and yet the discipline policy has no rules for these. Of course we report them to the divisions, if we are lucky such people are transferred but in most cases there is no feedback. We may invite trouble if we continue punishing students who know that even teachers are into the same business.”
(8/10/2015)

The findings indicate that for a policy to be implemented effectively, it should be able to deal with all parties who engage in the unwanted behaviour like SRGBV. In this case, the discipline policy is only dealing with learners, thus leaving out teachers and other staff who are also perpetrators of SRGBV.

4.4.5 *Lack of training*

On the sub theme of lack of training, the research findings revealed that it was difficult for teachers to use the discipline policy in handling SRGBV because they had no knowledge of how to use it since they were never trained. According to Haddad (1995), policies are there to provide directions and guide implementation of decisions. Policies cannot outline each and every aspect of behavior therefore teachers need to know how the policy could be used even if the offence is not outlined. With lack of training and with no mention of SRGBV offences in the discipline policy, teachers were unable to relate punishments in the discipline policy to SRGBV cases. It is therefore important that once the policy is put in place, teachers should be trained so that they could use the same guidelines to handle SRGBV cases.

4.4.6 Lack of knowledge about what amounts to SRGBV

Analysis of research findings from in-depth interviews with deputy head teachers revealed that many teachers and learners did not know the offences that amounted to SRGBV. It was therefore difficult for teachers to identify SRGBV cases and administer punishments which could match the offences. On the other hand, it was also difficult for learners to know that the issues were GBV cases which needed to be treated with seriousness as evidenced by the following statement:

“I don’t think most teachers and learners know what constitutes SRGBV. With this, learners who are victims will not bother to report and teachers who are not knowledgeable will not take the issues seriously”. “I am also not sure if the teachers and the learners are aware about the existence of the discipline policy, all they know are the school rules and regulations.” (Deputy Head teacher from school A on 7/1/2016)

The findings show that without knowledge of the acts to be considered as SRGBV and without knowledge about the existence of the secondary school discipline policy, it will be difficult to implement the policy to address SRGBV.

4.5 Chapter summary

Chapter four presented and discussed the findings of the study on the role of the discipline policy in combating school related gender based violence. The study found out that SRGBV was well understood in all boarding secondary schools and it was perpetrated by teachers, male learners and female learners. The study also found out that female learners faced different forms of SRGBV from those faced by male learners. Some of the forms were common to all schools while other forms varied from school to school. The study further revealed that there were no special structures apart from the discipline committee which handled the cases just like any other case as a result SRGBV cases were not effectively addressed by the secondary school

discipline policy. Further, the study found out that there were challenges in using the discipline policy to handle SRGBV due to cultural influences and lack of guidelines for handling SRGBV offences in the policy.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.0 Chapter overview

This chapter presents the conclusions and implications drawn from the research findings in chapter 4. Suggestions for areas for further studies in line with the findings have also been outlined.

5.1 Conclusions and implications

The purpose of the study was to explore if the guidelines in the secondary school discipline policy were able to provide directions which could help to effectively address School Related Gender Based Violence and combat it in district boarding secondary schools. The main research question was: What is the role of the secondary school discipline policy in combating SRGBV? The study was guided by the following specific questions: What is the understanding of SRGBV in district boarding schools? What are the forms of SRGBV in district boarding secondary schools in Malawi? How do the structures and processes of the school discipline policy assist in combating SRGBV in district boarding secondary schools in Malawi? What are the challenges experienced in the implementation of school discipline policy when handling SRGBV?

In terms of the understanding of SRGBV in district boarding secondary schools, the study concludes that respondents had knowledge of school related gender based

violence (SRGBV). The only difference was that in the definitions there was no consideration that SRGBV could affect both sexes. This difference could be attributed to the fact that most victims of SRGBV were female learners with male learners and teachers as main perpetrators.

Since some teachers and other staff members who were supposed to provide protection to learners were identified as part of the perpetrators of SRGBV, it implies that the victims would continue to suffer the effects of SRGBV. This could be carried over to one's adulthood life and perpetuate GBV in society. In the end SRGBV could be carried back to schools. However, if the discipline policy could be used to punish all perpetrators of SRGBV, the acts of violence in schools could have been reduced or extinguished. This would be in agreement with Skinner's behaviourist theory which asserts that behaviour that is followed by reinforcement (positive or negative) has an increased probability of reoccurrence and that behaviour followed by extinction or punishment has a decreased probability of re-occurrence.

On the second question which intended to find out forms of SRGBV in district boarding secondary schools in Malawi, it was revealed that male learners experienced more of physical violence and less psychological violence while female learners experienced almost all forms of physical, psychological as well as sexual violence. This means that most complaints would come from female learners. This could be a result of the fact that male learners are in majority as compared to female learners who are in minority in the district boarding secondary schools. Therefore, it would be easier for female learners to be intimidated, remain silent and leave the issues unreported than would be for the male learners. The study therefore concludes that the

forms experienced by male learners are different from those experienced by female learners.

Regarding the third question which sought to find out how the structures and processes of the school discipline policy assisted in combating SRGBV, the study established that the only structure to handle all discipline cases including SRGBV was the discipline committee which provided recommendations to the head teacher who implemented the punishments which were recommended by the committee. The head teacher's role was to implement the recommendations otherwise if the head teacher did contrary to what the committee recommended, it would mean that he or she did not trust the committee.

It was also noted that learners were supposed to report to prefects and any teacher and yet some of the teachers were perpetrators of SRGBV and yet still, some of them could be in the discipline committee. Hence, the conclusion is that SRGBV remained unresolved because the secondary school discipline policy created rigid structures and inconsistent reporting procedures for handling SRGBV. The implication therefore is that even with the discipline policy in place, the committee is unable to implement it objectively.

With regard to the fourth question which intended to find out the challenges experienced in the implementation of school discipline policy when handling SRGBV, the study concludes that the implementation of the school discipline policy experiences challenges when handling SRGBV because of cultural influences which made teachers and learners not to be aware of what amounts to SRGBV. Despite the fact that teachers and learners know that what happens is offensive to the victims and require that the perpetrators be punished, there is no seriousness to have the issues

dealt with because people do not feel free to talk about them. Although the discipline policy has a potential to address SRGBV, the offences will continue to prevail and the victims would continue suffering.

5.2 Suggestions on areas for further studies

The researcher proposes the following areas for further research:

- Since the study was conducted in the Central West Education Division (CWED) and in full boarding facility secondary schools, there could be other types of schools which may produce different results. The researcher proposes a similar study to be conducted in all the education divisions.
- The study found that there are different forms of SRGBV, therefore a comparative study on the extent to which different forms affect victims needs to be conducted in order to determine the type of punishment to be administered for each form.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Introduction Letter


CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

Principal: Richard Tambulani,
B.A. (Pub Admin), BPA (Hons), MPA, Ph.D

Our Ref.: EDF/6/19
Your Ref.:

13th May 2015

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

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

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

Ms Fanny Mthuzi is a student of Education in the Department of Educational Foundations at Chancellor College, University of Malawi.

Ms Mthuzi is working on her thesis, "*An Exploration of how the Secondary School Discipline Policy Responds to School Related Gender based Violence: The Case of District Boarding Secondary Schools in Central West Education Division*". This is meant to be a request to your institution or organization to assist our student in her endeavor to collect data.

Thank you



Dr. E. Kamchedzera
POSTGRADUATE COORDINATOR

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE
DEPT OF EDU. FOUNDATION

2015 -05- 13

P.O BOX 280
ZOMBA

Appendix 2: Permission Letter

REF. NO. CWED. ADMIN 2/1

29th May, 2015

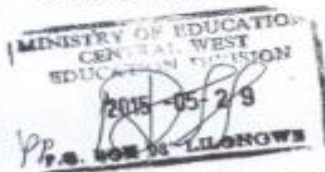
FROM: THE EDUCATION DIVISION MANAGER (CWED),
P.O. 98, LILONGWE

TO : THE HEADTEACHERS, DISTRICT BOARDING
SECONDARY SCHOOL

RE : PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA

I write to advise that **MS MTHUNZI** has been granted permission by Ministry of Education Science and Technology to collect data in *Exploration of how the Secondary School Discipline Policy Responds to Related Gender based Violence: The Case of District Boarding Secondary Schools in Central West Education Division*".

You are therefore requested to render to her any assistance she may require in the course of her data collection.



Joseph J. Nkhata
EDUCATION DIVISION MANAGER(CWED)

Appendix 3: Focus Group Discussion Guide (Instrument 1)

INTRODUCTION

My name is Fanny Mthuzi, a Masters' student in Education Policy, Planning and Leadership in the Faculty of Education, Chancellor College. I am currently doing a research on Discipline policy and its role in combating school related gender based violence. This study is aimed at establishing how the discipline policy assists in combating gender based violence in schools. For the study to be fully successful there is need to have focus group discussions with students in order to generate the much needed information on gender based violence in schools and its associated discipline rules and regulations. I, therefore, would like to seek your consent to participate in the discussions. Further, you are being assured of maximum confidentiality in that your identity shall not be included in the final write up and that it shall on no account be revealed to anyone after the study. I ask every one of you to participate and be open enough. The discussions shall take approximately 1 hour 45 minutes.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

FGD guide questions

1. What is your understanding of SRGBV?
2. Why do you think there is SRGBV/what are the causes?
3. What forms of violence take place in this school?
4. Who are the perpetrators of gender based violence at this school?
5. Who are the victims of GB violence at this school?
6. What would be the effects of GB violence?
7. When and how often is SRGBV observed at your school?
8. Where does it often take place?
9. How do you report cases of SRGBV?
10. What happens to the victims and perpetrators of SRGBV?
11. Who handles cases of GBV? Where else are they referred to?
12. Which school rules and regulations prevent the occurrence of GBV?

End of questions

Appendix 4: Face to Face Interview Guide for Deputy Head Teachers (Instrument 2)

Introduction

My name is Fanny Mthuzi, a Masters' student in Education Policy, Planning and Leadership in the Faculty of Education, Chancellor College. I am currently doing a research on Discipline policy and its role in combating school related gender based violence. This study is aimed at establishing how the discipline policy assists in combating gender based violence in district boarding schools. For the study to be fully successful there is need to have an in depth-interview with Deputy Head Teachers as Chairpersons of the Discipline Committees to generate the much needed information on discipline policy and its role on gender based violence in secondary schools. I therefore would like to seek your consent to participate in the interview. Further, you are being assured of maximum confidentiality in that your identity shall not be included in the final write up and that it shall on no account be revealed to anyone after the study. This interview shall take approximately 50 minutes.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

In-depth interview questions

1. What is your understanding of SRGBV?
2. Why do you think there is SRGBV/what are the causes
3. What forms of violence take place in this school?
4. Who are the perpetrators of gender based violence at this school?
5. Who are the victims of GB violence at this school?
6. What would be the effects of GB violence?
7. When and how often is SRGBV observed at this school?
8. Where does it often take place
9. What precautions are taken to prevent violence from happening in your schools?
10. How are the cases of SRGBV reported?
11. How do you treat the victims and perpetrators of SRGBV
12. When handling cases of SRGBV what challenges have so far been experienced?
13. How did you mitigate the challenges? Were the mitigations effective?
14. Which rules or regulations of the secondary school discipline policy do you follow when dealing with SRGBV? Were these rules specific to cases of GBV?
15. When recommending actions to be taken, what improvements are made in terms of relating SRGBV to offences in the discipline policy?
16. What are your suggestions on improvements that can be made to make the discipline policy more responsive to cases of GBV?
17. Why are there challenges in implementation of the secondary school discipline policy when handling SRGBV?

End of questions

Appendix 5: Face to Face Interview Guide for Prefects (Instrument 3)

INTRODUCTION

My name is Fanny Mthuzi, a Masters' student in Education Policy, Planning and Leadership in the Faculty of Education, Chancellor College. I am currently doing a research on Discipline policy and its role in combating school related gender based violence. This study is aimed at establishing how the discipline policy assists in combating gender based violence in schools. For the study to be fully successful there is need to have interviews with prefects to generate the much needed information on gender based violence in schools and its associated discipline rules and regulations. I, therefore, would like to seek your consent to participate in the interview. Further, you are being assured of maximum confidentiality in that your identity shall not be included in the final write up and that it shall on no account be revealed to anyone after the study. I ask you to be open enough. The discussions shall take approximately 45 minutes.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

In-depth Interview questions

1. What is your understanding of SRGBV?
2. Why do you think there is SRGBV/what are the causes?
3. What forms of violence take place in this school?
4. Who are the perpetrators of gender based violence at this school?
5. Who are the victims of GB violence at this school?
6. What would be the effects of GB violence?
7. When and how often is SRGBV observed at your school?
8. Where does it often take place?
9. As a prefect how often have you dealt with cases of GBV?
10. How was the incidence of GBV reported to you?
11. How were the cases resolved?
12. Which rules and regulations of the discipline policy were used in resolving the cases?
13. How were the victims and perpetrators of SRGBV treated at the end?
14. Where else are cases of GBV referred to?
15. How do school rules and regulations prevent the occurrence of GBV?

End of questions

Appendix 6: Face to Face Interview Guide for teachers in the Discipline Committee (Instrument 4)

Introduction

My name is Fanny Mthuzi, a Masters' student in Education Policy, Planning and Leadership in the Faculty of Education, Chancellor College. I am currently doing a research on Discipline policy and its role in combating school related gender based violence. This study is aimed at establishing how the discipline policy assists in combating gender based violence in district boarding schools. For the study to be fully successful, there is need to have an in depth-interview with teachers in the discipline committee to generate the much needed information on discipline policy and its role on gender based violence in secondary schools. I, therefore, would like to seek your consent to participate in the interview. Further, you are being assured of maximum confidentiality in that your identity shall not be included in the final write up and that it shall on no account be revealed to anyone after the study. This interview shall take approximately 30 minutes. Thank you in advance for your participation.

In-depth Interview guide questions for Teachers in the Discipline Committee

1. What is your understanding of SRGBV?
2. Why do you think there is SRGBV/what are the causes?
3. What forms of violence take place in this school?
4. Who are the perpetrators of gender based violence at this school?
5. Who are the victims of GB violence at this school?
6. What would be the effects of GB violence?
7. When and how often is SRGBV observed at your school?
8. Where does it often take place?
9. What precautions are taken to prevent violence from happening in your schools?
10. How do you report cases of SRGBV?
11. What happens to the victims and perpetrators of SRGBV?
12. Apart from school regulations, how else is SRGBV prevented?
13. What are your suggestions on improvements that can be made to make the discipline policy more responsive to cases of GBV?

End of interview guide questions

Appendix 7: Face to Face Interview Guide for Boarding Masters/Mistresses and Matrons (Instrument 5)

Introduction

My name is Fanny Mthuzi, a Masters' student in Education Policy, Planning and Leadership in the Faculty of Education, Chancellor College. I am currently doing a research on Discipline policy and its role in combating school related gender based violence. This study is aimed at establishing how the discipline policy assists in combating gender based violence in district boarding schools. For the study to be fully successful, there is need to have an in- depth interview with Boarding Masters/Mistresses as supervisors of learners after classes in order to generate the much needed information on discipline policy and its role on gender based violence in secondary schools. I, therefore, would like to seek your consent to participate in the interview. Further, you are being assured of maximum confidentiality in that your identity shall not be included in the final write up and that it shall on no account be revealed to anyone after the study. This interview shall take approximately 50 minutes.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

In-depth interview guide questions for Boarding Masters/Mistresses and Matrons/Patrons

1. What is your understanding of SRGBV?
2. Why do you think there is SRGBV/what are the causes?
3. What forms of violence take place in this school?
4. Who are the perpetrators of gender based violence at this school?
5. Who are the victims of GB violence at this school?
6. What would be the effects of GB violence?
7. When and how often is SRGBV observed at this school?
8. Where does it often take place?
9. What precautions are taken to prevent violence from happening in your schools?
10. How are the cases of SRGBV reported?
11. How do you treat the victims and perpetrators of SRGBV?
12. When handling cases of SRGBV what challenges have so far been experienced?
13. How did you mitigate the challenges? Were the mitigations effective?
14. Which rules or regulations of the secondary school discipline policy do you follow when dealing with SRGBV? Were these rules specific to cases of GBV?
15. When recommending actions to be taken, what improvements were made in terms of mitigating SRGBV?
16. Apart from school regulations, how else is SRGBV prevented?
17. What are your suggestions on improvements that can be made to make the discipline policy more responsive to cases of GBV?

End of Questions

Appendix 8: Thank You Letter

FANNY MTHUZI
Box 3303
Lilongwe
5th February 2016

To: **The Head Teacher**
Dzenza Secondary School

The Head Teacher
Ntcheu Secondary School

The Head Teacher
Mayani Secondary School

The Head Teacher
Mchinji Secondary School

The Head Teacher
Namitete Secondary School

The Head Teacher
Mitundu Secondary School

Through:

The Education Division Manager
Central West Education Division
P.O Box 98
Lilongwe

Dear Sir,

VOTE OF THANKS

I write to express my gratitude and appreciation for the assistance you provided during the time I was generating data for my Master of Education (Policy, Planning and Leadership) dissertation. The dissertation is a final requirement for me to graduate in the programme with University of Malawi- Chancellor College.

I hope you will do the same to other students who will require similar services.

Yours faithfully,



FANNY MTHUZI