

**EXPLORING THE USE OF STUDY CIRCLES IN THE TEACHING OF
SOCIAL STUDIES IN SELECTED COMMUNITY DAY SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN BLANTYRE URBAN**

**MASTER OF EDUCATION IN CURRICULUM AND TEACHING
STUDIES (SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION) THESIS**

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UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

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By

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Submitted to the department of Curriculum and Teaching Studies, School of
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DECLARATION

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

Full Legal Name

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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

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DEDICATION

To my lovely late mother, Mary Eleanor Makhuna Zibophe who despite the pain she was going through and needed my presence most, still encouraged me to continue with my studies. Mama, I am here to report that I have finally made it. Continue resting in peace till we meet again.

To my late loving father, my hero, my mentor, my encourager Simon Claimy Zibophe, I could have loved if you waited a little longer to see me graduating and enjoy the fruits of the education and carrier path you advised me to take. Continue resting well till we meet again.

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To God Our Father, You have been my comforter and helper throughout, Psalms 121 and Jeremiah 29:11. Your name be glorified.

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the use of Study Circles in the teaching of Social studies in Malawi's community day secondary schools especially in Blantyre Urban. The study used a qualitative research design powered by a case study in which data was generated through in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussions, document analysis and observations. Ryan's (1963), Teacher behaviour theory was used as the theoretical framework. The theory was used in the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the findings. The study engaged thirty participants. One of the main findings of the study indicates that participatory pedagogies are employed when using Study Circles. These pedagogies are: discussion, question and answer, presentations, explanation and role-play. The study further revealed various assessment techniques that are used in order to determine the functionality of Study Circles. The techniques include presentations, question and answer, observations and role-play. Apart from helping in improving students' academic performance in exercises, tests and national examinations, the study has also established that SCs help in skill acquisition and social behaviour change. Finally, the study found that teachers face different challenges when using Study Circles. These include shortage of teaching and learning resources, lack of dedication towards Study Circles among the students and unfriendly weather. Among the many implications of the study is that teachers and schools should be free to make some modifications to the Study Circles innovation to fit their needs and environment for its effectiveness and sustainability.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CAMFED	:	Campaign for Female Education
CDSS	:	Community Day Secondary School
COVID 19	:	Corona Virus-19
EDM	:	Education Division Manager
FGD	:	Focus Group Discussion
FSCs	:	Farmers Study Circles
IFWEA	:	International Federation of Workers' Education Association
MANEB	:	Malawi National Examinations Board
MoE	:	Ministry of Education
MoEST	:	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MSCE	:	Malawi School Certificate Examination
MUSCCO	:	Malawi Union of Savings and Credit Cooperatives
NCSALL	:	National Centre for the Study of Adult and Literacy
ODL	:	Open and Distance Learning
OSS	:	Open Secondary School
PPE	:	Personal Protective Equipment
PSLCE	:	Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations
PTA	:	Parent-Teachers' Association
SCs	:	Study Circles
SEED	:	South East Education Division
SOPs	:	Standing Operating Procedures
SQAO	:	Senior Quality Assurance Officer
SWED	:	South West Education Division
UNIMAREC	:	University of Malawi Research and Ethics Committee
USA	:	United States of America

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Chapter overview

This chapter introduces the study on exploring the use of Study Circles (SCs) in the teaching of Social Studies. First, it provides the background information of the study, followed by statement of the problem and purpose of the study. This is followed by: the research questions that guided the study, the rationale, significance of the study and limitations of the study.

1.2 Background

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), (2015) specifically defines Study Circle as a small group of students who meet several times a week for academic purposes to discuss education topics learnt at school to widen their knowledge. SCs started in New York (USA) in the 1870s by Unions as a democratic and an emancipatory way for learning, mainly among adults (Bjerkekar, 2003). However, the idea of Study circles was carried to Sweden in the early 20th Century, especially in 1902 by the Temperance Movement and the Social Democratic Party, for educating their followers. Oscar Olsson is said to be the father and founder of study circles in Sweden (Bjerkekar, 2003). Oscar Olsson was an educator, politician and an active member of the International Order of Good Templars (IOGT) whose main agenda included liberating and supporting communities and societies of the world (Gustavsson, 1994). He came up with SCs upon realizing that people in Sweden, which by then was undeveloped, needed knowledge outside the school context, which could help them deal with the country's underdevelopment, and social and economic inequalities. Olsson had observed that a major obstacle to their development was ignorance, hence the need for strengthening education and devising a learning methodology that was cheap, and could reach many people (Banda, 2010). Upon much scrutiny, they discovered that the best way of achieving this goal was by conducting adult education using convenient and

highly participatory and democratic format through the use of SCs (Banda, 2010). It was because of the positive results in addressing the Swedish needs that saw the SCs concept spreading to other countries in Europe, Asia and Africa where it was effected in different fields basing on a country's needs.

In Malawi, SCs have been functional mainly in the Agricultural sector under the auspices of Danish Agricultural Advisory Service, Knowledge Centre for Agriculture (Gfras, 2018). Their target was different categories of farmers in rural areas, especially small-scale farmers. Farmer organisations use Farmers Study Circles (FSCs) to promote democracy, skills development, education, and access to information (Gfras, 2018). In order to achieve this, Farmer organisations use FSCs leaders to anchor the SC activities. Participants choose topics of their choice to be discussed. The FSCs use discussions; whereby the farmers discuss, share information through experience sharing, hands on practice, demonstrations, visits, common field activities and field days (Gfras, 2018). Further to that, the Farmers Organisations provide FSCs with materials like booklets, radios or video as learning materials. Mostly the participants also have access to community radio programmes as a way of acquiring information on farming activities. The FSCs leaders encourage active participation in discussions and other related activities on SCs. 'We Effect' is another organisation which also took a bold step in helping local Malawians develop different skills which could help them in their day to day lives through Study circles. 'We Effect' which was previously known as Swedish Cooperative Centre started its project in 2002 and worked with MUSCCO on how to grow cooperatives membership through education, using SCs. Later SCs became a capacity building tool for the agriculture sector, marketing, financial services, and organizational development (Banda, 2010), through the projects that were introduced for example, the Malawi Lake Basin Programme. Through SCs, a group of 7-15 participants was meeting one hour weekly to address a critical public issue in a democratic and collaborative way. Using participatory approaches, discussions, explanations, demonstrations, complex issues were broken down into manageable subdivisions and controversial topics were dealt with.

In the education sector, the government of Malawi, through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), rolled out SCs in all public secondary schools in 2016 as a means of improving the quality of education in the secondary school subsector

(MoEST, 2015). This was in response to the poor performance of students in secondary schools, which needed a deliberate and user-friendly intervention that could help improve candidates' performance (MoEST, 2015). It was also to help in reducing cheating practices, which mostly happen due to candidates' unpreparedness (Malekezo et al, 2020). Before MoEST adopted SCs, the Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) introduced the concept at a Community Day Secondary School (CDSS) in Zomba Rural in 2013. The Head teacher of the school, upon observing the high failure rates among the students, placed the students in groups of mixed ability where they were discussing their notes and past papers. There was a great improvement in the 2013-2014 pass rate of the students at the school in almost all the subjects both at Junior Certificate and Malawi School Certificate of Education levels (CAMFED, 2015). This impressed CAMFED so much that it introduced the concept in other partner schools in the district and districts beyond, for example Nkhotakota and Neno (CAMFED, 2015). The Community Development Committee (CDC) in Zomba headed by the Education Division Manager (EDM) for the South East Education Division (SEED) wrote a report on the same, which compelled the Ministry of Education to introduce SCs in all public secondary schools throughout the country.

According to the Malawi government, the SCs concept was adopted as it was anticipated as an answer to the issue of quality education for every child. The concept resonates well with government policies such as the National Education Sector Plan; Education Sector Implementation Plan II and National Educational Standards, which highlight improved quality of education through maximization of learning time (Chimombo & Kadzamira, 2002, MoEST, 2015). Apart from that, the government had the intention of improving the reading culture among students which in the end would improve students' performance, gain skills that would also be used in other circles (MoEST, 2015). Some of the skills that SC participants gain include discussing, negotiation, cooperation, arguing, accepting defeat and share responsibility, which are important to their daily lives (Bjerkaker, 2003; Larsson & Nordvall, 2010; Arts & Newman, 1990; Jaworski, 1995). All these are enhanced by the use of learner-centered pedagogies including discussions, debates, and group work all of which promote active learning and encourage learning by sharing. Furthermore, Brooks and Brooks (2001) state that through SCs students have an opportunity to internalize, reshape and transform new information which initially help in improving their retention of

information thereby bringing positive change in their performance and encourage ownership of ideas (Riel, 2002) as each student belongs to a group in which interactions are made. It is in line with this that the Malawi government through Social Studies aims at producing effective citizens who are able to make decisions for both personal and public good as well as participate actively and intelligibly in daily life activities in the democratic society and interdependent world (MoEST, 2001). However, this can be achieved through the use of participatory /learner centered approaches in which the concept of SC falls.

The introduction of SCs in Malawi's secondary schools subsector enables students to discuss topics based on their needs. SCs are used in all subjects that are taught in secondary schools in Malawi. In South West Education Division (SWED), SCs are incorporated on the master timetable. They are conducted two days a week for one and a half hours before classes or after classes basing on the schedule the school has. Each subject is allocated a day and time for the SCs (SWED Head teachers' Management meeting report, 2016). Subject teachers coordinate the SCs. They give SC assignments to the students, marking their work and giving them feedback, ensuring that the SCs assignments are doable, instructions are adequate and clear, identifying resources for SC activities, encouraging students on good study habits, being available to assist students in SCs wherever necessary (MoEST, 2015). Though SCs are usually done outside classroom time as an extra-curricular activity, teachers are not limited to use them in their teaching and learning activities to improve results and students' performance. Social Studies as one of the subjects offered in secondary school also benefits from the use of SCs. Social Studies are one of the Social Science subjects whose goal is to enable the individual to understand and cope with the complexities, which involve man's behaviour as a society entity (Kastner, 2015 p. 203). In Malawi, Social Studies was introduced as a separate subject in the junior and senior secondary school classes in 2000 and 2002 respectively (Zuka, 2007). It was aimed at incorporating emerging issues and imparting in the learners the knowledge, skills, competencies, attitudes and values that would enable them to become responsible citizens (Mombe-Seyama, 2015; Zuka, 2007). However, since the official roll out of SCs in Malawi, not much is known on how Social Studies teachers use SCs in the teaching of the subject because this area has not been researched. It is against this

background that this study aims at exploring the use of SCs in the teaching of Social Studies in selected CDSSs in Blantyre urban.

1.3 Statement of the problem

SCs have been functional in Malawi in different sectors such as Agriculture and Education. A report in the education sector (primary) by Link Education (2020) in Mchinji, shows that SCs were used to ensure that the teaching and learning process was not exposing learners to the COVID-19 pandemic and that learners were able to benefit from the facilitator. Students acquired necessary skills of literacy and numeracy on core subjects and life skills like sexual and reproductive health rights through SCs (Link Education, 2020). Looking at the concept of SCs, one would compare them to cooperative learning in Social Studies where students are required to work in groups or teams to accomplish a common goal. SCs also use teamwork to complement the teaching and learning process. Since its inception, there have been claims from different stakeholders of an improvement in the performance of students in the different subjects offered in the sciences, humanities and languages departments (Sani, 2020; Shaba, 2020). SCs have been officially operational in the Malawi's education sector since 2016, and different researches have been made on the concept. It is an important area that has proved its contribution to improving learning in other subjects but in Social Studies it has not yet been explored. Being a Social Studies teacher for quite some time, I was interested in exploring the use of Study Circles in the teaching of Social Studies in selected CDSSs in Blantyre urban.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore the use of SCs in the teaching of social studies in selected CDSSs in Blantyre urban.

1.5 Research questions

The study was guided by a main research question and sub-research questions.

The main research question is: How are SCs used in the teaching of Social Studies?

Specifically, the study was guided by the following sub-research questions:

1. What strategies do Social Studies teachers employ when using Study Circles?
2. What assessment techniques do Social Studies teachers use to check if SCs are functional when teaching Social Studies?

3. How do SCs influence students' performance in Social Studies?
4. What challenges do Social Studies teachers face when implementing SCs in the teaching of Social Studies?

1.6 Rationale and motivation of the study

An improvement in students' performance in the 2017 Malawi School Certificate of Education Examinations (MSCE) results at the school I was teaching surprised many: the students, teachers as well as parents. It was the first of its kind that many students passed, and with good grades. Some attributed the positive change in performance to the students' own hardworking spirit and others to the untiring efforts by the teachers. However, among the many maturation factors, the success story was largely accredited to SCs, which the government had rolled out in all her public schools in 2016. This improvement in students' performance motivated me to explore how teachers use SCs in their teaching to yield such impressive results. However, as a Social Studies teacher, my interest is on Social Studies teachers in community day secondary schools in Blantyre urban with the aim of finding out what actually happens on the ground for these teachers to register good results in the subject with SCs.

1.7 Significance of the study

The study is significant to the education sector and the Malawi nation at large, as its findings have added to the existing body of knowledge on SCs and Social Studies teaching and learning. Through the research findings, the study is an eye opener to those in the teaching profession and stakeholders on the use of SCs in the teaching of Social Studies as a way of improving teaching and learning hence producing good results from examinations. The research findings will help improve the use of SCs, as new SCs practices will be adopted. The study has also exposed the challenges that affect the use of SCs that usually affect the quality of teaching. In this case, the findings are a stepping-stone in decision-making as far as follow-ups are concerned.

1.8 Limitations of the study

Exposure to Covid 19 and Standing Operation Procedures (SOPs) imposed on schools limited the study. This was because the study was carried out during the time the government was just easing/abolishing some of the measures it had put in place in order to contain the pandemic. Some of the students took advantage of this to abscond the

SCs sessions despite the ease by the MoE. Though some of the students absconded, the majority of the students and the required number of participants were available. However, use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and following other Covid 19 prevention measures and rules such as physical distancing were used and encouraged during the study. In addition, in some study records (documents) bearing assignments or work that was given to students for SC activities which was to be used for document analysis were not available. The researcher had to check students' exercise books in which SCs assignments were written, and asked the research participants (Social Studies teachers) to explain the type of work that they gave to their students. Despite all these, the researcher was able to generate the required data as planned.

1.9 Definition of terms

Audit trail: a transparent description of the research steps taken from the start of a research project to the development and reporting of findings.

Co-educational school: having male and female students being taught together in the same school or college rather than separately.

Critical thinking: the ability underlying rational discussions and inquiry to assess and evaluate analytically particular assertions or concepts in the light of either evidence or under contexts.

Government policy: a set of decisions by governments and other political actors to influence, change, or frame a problem or issue that has been recognized as in the political realm by policy makers and/or the wider public.

Innovation: a practical system of establishing successful ideas to create new value

Learner-centred pedagogies: are teaching methods that places students at the centre of the teaching-learning process

Maturation factors: influences/aspects that lead to changes in thinking, sense of responsibility, and better ability to adjust to meet successfully the daily issues.

Mixed ability class: students in the same class who have different academic or intellectual abilities

Problem-solving skills: Is the ability to identify problems, brainstorm and analyze answers, and implement the best solutions.

Skill development: refers to identifying the skill gap in a person and ensuring that he or she develops these skills. Skills determine the ability to achieve goals and execute better plans

Study Circles: Study Circle as a small group of students who meet several times a week for academic purposes to discuss education topics learnt at school to widen their knowledge

User-friendly: something that is well designed and easy to use

1.10 Chapter summary

This chapter has introduced the study on exploring the use of SCs in the teaching of Social Studies in selected CDSSs in Blantyre urban. This has been attained by providing the background to the study, where the origin of SCs internationally, regionally and lastly Malawi has been outlined . It has also looked at the gap that exist in Malawian context to warrant this study. Purpose and research questions that guided the study, rationale and motivation of the study, significance of the study and limitations of the study have also been handled. The next chapter presents the literature review. Literature by different scholars on SCs globally, regionally and locally will be scrutinized. The literature on evolution of SCs ways employed when using SCs, assessment techniques used to determine students' performance in SCs and challenges teacher s face when using SCs

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter overview

This chapter reviews related literature on various aspects of SCs pertaining to the study. It firstly outlines the evolution of SCs in order to give the reader an understanding of the development of study circles from the Western world to Malawi. Then the chapter discusses strategies employed when using SCs, assessment techniques used to detect students' performance, influence of SCs on students' performance, and challenges teachers face when using SCs.

2.2 Evolution of Study Circles

The meaning of the term SCs is actually complicated. It is usually defined basing on the reason for its formation and situation (Larsson & Nordvall, 2010). Fidel and Retimi (2014) define SC as a small but diverse democratic group of individuals with common interest, who meet regularly over a specified period to harness their different perspectives into a common understanding of an issue or problem and develop new practices. For example, education institutions, farm associations, literacy projects, community groups, churches and neighborhoods use them. As noted earlier, in Malawi, MoEST (2015) specifically defines study circle as a small group of students who meet several times every week for academic purposes to discuss education topics learnt at school to widen their knowledge. These definitions show that SCs are formed to help people have a common understanding of an issue or problem, share knowledge, ideas, goals, practices and experiences, learn new information and test new approaches (Pokrzywnicka, 2006) as a way of widening their knowledge. Thus, SCs are used throughout the world to help achieve intended goals which organisations may have (Gunersson, 2002).

Though SCs are an imported phenomenon from the USA, many countries have benefited and Sweden is one of them. Through SCs, the country's illiteracy level dropped. Citizens acquired knowledge outside the school context that helped to deal with the country's underdevelopment and economic inequalities (Swedish National Council of Adult Education, 2011; Bjerkaker, 2003). Sweden observed that SC was the best adult education, participatory, democratic and cheap methodology that could help fight the cause. In Sweden, SCs were in the hands of democratically run organisations rather than state controlled. Around ten people could gather and discuss a broad range of topics ranging from content-related to the movements' interests, general knowledge such as economy or mathematics. Apart from targeting workers, farmers and lower middle-class people, who had only attended elementary school, school drop outs were also incorporated (Larson & Nordvall, 2010). The Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) which constituted popular movements mobilized them to join the SCs. Participants were to be meeting at least twice a week for three hours and the activities of a group were supported by a facilitator who was a representative of an institution. It was through SCs that the peoples' needs for the upskilling of organizational skill and culture were solved, and knowledge gained which could change their thinking and participation in community activities. To date in Sweden SCs are formally linked to all kinds of organisations to help sort out issues that people face in their communities. For example, institutions use them for activities aimed at improving of key competencies: language, mathematical, social and civic as well as business organisation and education. The positivity in addressing the Swedish needs has seen the SC concept spreading to other countries in Europe, Asia and Africa where it was applied in different fields basing on a country's needs. As of now, countries are implementing SCs in different sectors as participants acquire knowledge and skills, which are important in solving their societal needs (Pokrzywnicka, 2006; Larsson & Nordvall, 2010). However, to yield better results, countries need to monitor how the SCs are used. For example, in Malawi SCs are used in the education sector as a deliberate and user-friendly intervention to help improve the quality of education in the secondary school subsector (MoEST, 2015).

2.3 Strategies employed when using Study Circles

SC is often called a self-study group, learning by sharing, learning circles, education for life (Kaplan, 2007; Pokrzywnicka, 2006; Bjerkaker, 2003; Andrews, 1996; British

Council, 2019). It is a new, innovative method of adult learning method on the educational market. It helps participants to have an advanced understanding, gain new knowledge and skills in a particular field or solve problems for their betterment. For the participants to acquire the stated knowledge and skills, Facilitators had to devise ways of meeting the needs of their participants. This study has reviewed literature on studies done in western countries: Sweden, Canada, United Kingdom and United States of America (USA). In Africa, studies done in South Africa and Nigeria have been examined. Lastly, literature on Malawi has also be reviewed.

A study by Larsson and Nordvall (2010) on SCs in Sweden, revealed that in Sweden and other Scandinavian countries, the method that was mostly being used was discussion, which demanded dialogue between the participants (members) and rarely depending on a teacher or an expert for assistance. It was through the discussions that members could open up and share information, argue, show empathy and accept defeat. Participants could also develop a sense of common unity and identity, hence the pedagogical idea being summarized as ‘learning by sharing’ (Bjerkekar, 2003). This was because SCs operations relied on each member’s experience and effort.

A study done in Canada in the Appalachian Mountains by Katwyk, et al (2014) on SC as a method of higher education on critical pedagogy, indicates that teachers and learners are engaged in a dialectical process in order to achieve results that are expected when SCs are being used. The teacher employs action oriented, critical self-reflection for teaching and learning to enable learning to take place concurrently for each individual. They use a dialogue which is democratically structured, inclusive, equitable and non-hierarchical (Katwyk et al., 2014). The dialectical dialogue was achieved by incorporating traditional methods that are used in the area; Aboriginal talking or sharing with an aim of acquiring more knowledge that can be considered by many. Aboriginal sharing is a structure of a dialogue where an object is passed clockwise from one participant to the other and it is only the one holding the object that is allowed to talk while others are listening (Katwyk, 2014). This method is mainly used when a participant is sharing personal experiences. During the process, the teacher assumes the role of a facilitator and coordinates the SC activity. Furthermore, the facilitator asks questions on the concepts from the readings that were given to the participants. It is through this that a discussion is opened where participants exchange ideas. Lastly, the

facilitator summarizes all key concepts, reflections as well as shared experiences. The study shows that techniques are employed in Study Circles as a way of helping the learners or participants acquire knowledge as well as skills.

A study in the United Kingdom by the National Centre for the Study of Adult and Literacy (NCSALL), (2003) on SC titled Learner Persistence in Adult Basic Education discloses that facilitators or teachers mostly use discussion, brainstorming, snowball consensus, and learner-centred interviews in order to achieve the intended goal. Discussion may be used according to the facilitator's intentions. A whole group, classroom or small group discussion may be employed and each group is given a topic, which is to be discussed, and later a report on the discussion has to be given.

In addition to that, a study conducted in USA by Fanselow (2007) on Making Schools work for everyone: SCs in Montgomery Country, Maryland, shows that SCs with the help of trained facilitators, use different methods to help end discrimination on racial and ethnic barriers to students' achievement and parent involvement. Small groups of about fifteen participants; parents, teachers, students from different backgrounds engage in a discussion, where everyone is given a chance to talk, converse, share personal experiences, look at a problem from different points of view and explore possible solutions (Fanselow, 2007). It is through the discussions that the participants are involved in, that new ideas, new understanding and new hope, new connections are being forged, and new friendships are being made, make the participants feel empowered to end discrimination in their schools as well as communities (Leighninger, et al., 1998; Fanselow, 2007). Thus, through the different methods employed in SCs problems are solved.

In Africa, SCs have also taken root. One of the studies on SCs was done in Cape Town, South Africa, between 2013 and 2014 by The International Federation of Workers' Education Associations (IFWEA) in collaboration with Labour Research Service. The study revealed that SCs were used as a way of fighting exploitation and oppressive system by the apartheid government. Formal and informal education strategies were used (Patel, in Kotze & Walters, 2017). Trade Unions, Shop owners and grassroots leaders used SCs in the community, the youths, and student organisations to share their experiences on politics. The strategies used when passing on information to the

participants included formal ways such as structured seminars, workshops and training programmes. Informal ways included mass transportation of workers as a rolling classroom, a range of cultural and mass media forms such as writing and production of plays, poetry readings, songs, choirs, community based and trade union letters (Kotze & Walters, 2017). The strategies that were employed through SCs helped in passing on information that brought the desired, and profound, results on the participants. Thus, SCs brought solidarity within the communities. Nigeria is also among the African countries where SCs are used by different institutions in the education sector. According to Fidel and Retimi (2014) in Nigerian schools, SCs are used to help learners have a common understanding of an issue or problem or to share knowledge, ideas, goals, practices and experiences and learn new information and test new approaches. The study shows that SCs are mostly used in Open and Distance Learning (ODL). Participants in Open and Distance Learning sorely rely on collaborative learning, which encourages discussions, demonstrations and presentations of reports on readings. Thus, whatever information and readings they may have, are shared among members of the SC. It is through SCs that the ODL students employ, that help them to make progress in their studies.

As stated earlier, in Malawi, SCs in the education sector were intended to cultivate a reading culture amongst students, which in the end, could improve their performance. However, SCs have not enjoyed research publicity as evidenced by lack of literature on this topic. The scanty literature available shows that a recommended SC group that is used in Malawi's secondary schools comprises of seven to eleven members of the same class. The students are of mixed ability and mixed sex in the case of co-education Secondary Schools (MoEST, 2015 p. 2). The participants are all students who meet within the school boundaries at least twice a week after or before classes depending on the school schedule. The students meet for a minimum of one hour and thirty minutes. A study by Shaba (2020) on the effectiveness of SCs in academic performance in CDSSs reveals that discussions are used during SCs. However, Malawi does not have much literature on how Social Studies teachers employ SCs to enhance students' performance and development of skills in their subject. SCs are one of the learner-centered approaches that fall under cooperative learning and follow some of its principles. Felder and Brent (2003) define Cooperative learning as an instruction that involves students working in teams to accomplish a common goal. Since SCs falls

under cooperative learning methods, it also uses teamwork to accomplish its goals. Though SCs are conducted outside the classroom situations, Social Studies teachers can use them to enhance students' performance and develop skills in their subject. The skills include leadership, communication, interpersonal skills, problem solving and creativity (Adeyemi, 2000). Subject teachers have the chance of using the time allocated to SCs per subject to assign relevant tasks to the students (MoEST, 2015 p.5). Thus, Social Studies content can be assigned to the students during SCs and the teacher will be supervising and monitoring. However, much is not known on how Social Studies teachers use SCs to help strengthen students' understanding of content, for example, the methods employed so as to ensure good performance and skill acquisition among Social Studies students. This study therefore aims at exploring the use of SCs in the teaching of Social Studies in selected secondary schools in Blantyre urban.

2.4 Assessment techniques used to determine students' performance in Study

Circles

Ellis (2004) defines assessment as the process by which teachers analyse students' learning. It is an essential part of the education process, as it continually provides both feedback and feed forward about one's 'teaching and students' learning (p.53). A study conducted in the United States of America by NCSALL (2003) indicates that question and answer method is one of the ways used during SCs in order to detect if the group or class has grasped what has been discussed. The teacher/facilitator ask questions to the presenters on the work they have presented, or each member is given a chance to comment on what they have presented or comment on the most important idea or concept. In addition, teachers may ask students to write a short statement in response to the question the teacher may ask, give a brief summary on the activity read and discussed (NSCALL, 2003). Through the activities assigned to the students, skills are also acquired which may be of use in their societies as well as their day-to-day interactions with their peers and the environment (MoEST, 2015; Banda, 2010). The different skills acquired are assessed through observations on what they have done and completing a task with a partner and change of behaviour when interacting with their peers (NSCALL, 2003; Kidd & Czerniawski, 2010). For example, students are able to get a deeper understanding of their own and other students' perspectives, leadership, tolerance, decision making, problem solving (Chapin & Messick, 2002). This is in line with democratic ways of assessment as advanced by Dewey (1916) in Kucey and

Parsons(2017): Quay (2016) that through observations, critical analysis, inquiry and problem based learning, experimentation, discussion and experience, teachers are able to evaluate the acquisition of different skills by students throughout teaching and learning even in other school related activities like SCs sessions as well as SCs lesson consolidation. All these fall under the teaching and learning process, which emphasises participation, experience and social interaction. These help the teachers to evaluate students' performance, skill development or acquisition and make decisions to improve the recognised weaknesses, gaps deficiencies encountered in the SCs tasks.

A study by British Council (2019) on Learning Circles reveals that, in Britain, English teachers require their students to answer questions or complete a task with a partner, produce a magazine article and create a task for each other. Thus, through these activities, the teacher is able to assess the students.

In other African settings, studies on the same were conducted. A study conducted in Nigeria by Fidel and Retimi (2014) on strategies for ensuring quality in SCs among students of Open and Distance Learning reveals that assessment of SCs activities on ODL students is done. This is achieved through discussions, demonstrations and presentations of reports on readings and observations. Thus, students display the different skills they have acquired through SCs activities.

In Malawi, a study by Shaba (2020) on the effectiveness of SCs on academic performance in CDSS in Mvera cluster revealed that through SCs there was a positive change on students' performance. It further states that through discussions, the students were able to speak out, communicate more clearly with confidence and become active in class. However, only discussion was stated as a method of assessment, which may make it hard for all the issues pertaining to assessment to be looked into. As noted earlier, the main reason for the implementation of SCs in the education sector is to act as a tool in helping students improve their performance and this has to be proven through assessment. Since in education circles, performance is measured through assessment, this study was therefore, to establish the assessment techniques which SCs use, to determine students' performance on SCs activities as well as classwork. Among the Malawian studies on SCs, none has reflected much on assessment. And it is through

exploring the use of SCs in the teaching of Social Studies in selected CDSSs in Blantyre urban, that this has been be exposed.

2.5 Influence of Study Circles on students' performance

Students' performance has been a major focus of every education institution (Ampofo & Osel-Owuse, 2015). Hijazi and Nagvi (2006) define academic performance as a multi-dimensional construct composed of skills, attitudes and behaviours of a learner that contribute to academic success in the classroom and beyond. The need for academic excellence in countries has seen the adoption of different innovations in countries' education systems, one of them being SCs. Among the different fields where SCs were introduced, the education sector was chosen upon countries' realization that learners are the heart of the education process and a vehicle for change. This is because whatever information or skills learnt in schools is passed on to the communities thereby bringing change to a country. In Malawi, SCs were introduced in public schools as a drive to instill a reading culture as well as improve students' performance in general (MoEST, 2015).

Studies done in western countries as well as other African countries show that there has been an improvement in students' performance due to the SCs innovation (Pan & Mutcher, 2000; Mc Cathy, 2009; Fidel & Retimi, 2014; Sani, 2020; Shaba. 2020). A study conducted in USA by Pan and Mutcher (2000), *Calling the roll: SCs for better schools*, revealed that engagement in SCs resulted in changes that ranged from individual learning to small group action, organisational change and community wide initiative. Thus, SCs done in different fields for different purposes such as education, agriculture and social development, bring change to individuals and societies. A study by Mc Cathy (2009) done in Australia on the role of SCs on the students' performance revealed that SCs positively affected the learning outcomes of students. The students were able to speak out, communicate more clearly with confidence and became active in class. However, the improvement was minimal as SCs were least supported by teachers as they felt that the SCs were too involving. In addition, a study conducted by Whittingham (2014) at a university of Central Arkansas on enhancing a reading culture through Literature Circles, revealed that there was an improvement as students were able to accomplish the assignments that were given to them. SCs were introduced at the university when the lecturers realized that the students were reluctant to complete

independent reading assignments that were assigned to them. Basing on these results, it can be argued that SCs triggered the improvement in students' performance as the latter were motivated to read and contribute in SCs' discussions. This concurs with the aim of the formation of SCs in Malawi's education sector that is to cultivate a reading culture among students as well as improving students' academic performance (MoEST, 2015).

Other studies on SCs have also been conducted. A study by Fidel and Retimi (2014) conducted in Nigeria on distance learners (ODL) showed that through SCs, students developed different skills and competencies individually as well as in groups through the work they were able to accomplish. Students shared ideas on a topic, taught each other and developed group study skills through the cooperative work portrayed through SCs, developed constructive criticisms and shared experiences. This shows that there was an improvement not only in classroom work but also at individual as well as societal activities.

In Malawi, SCs were taken as a new strategy to improve performance in Public Secondary Schools (MoEST, 2015; Sani, 2020). A study by Sani (2020) on tracing the History of the implementation of SCs in public schools in Machinga District, in Mbenjere cluster from 2010-2019, revealed that there was an improvement on the performance of students due to SCs. In addition, a study by Shaba (2020) on the effectiveness of SCs on academic performance on students in CDSS indicated that SCs had improved students' participation. However, both studies have not shown the roles played by both teachers and students to bring about this change in students' performance. Further to that, the studies focused much on general academic performance based on the Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB) results not specifically to Social Studies as a subject and not on other issues like skills that are acquired through SCs. Furthermore, the results are applicable only to areas where the studies were conducted. It is against this background that this study aims at exploring the use of SCs in the teaching of Social Studies in some sampled CDSSs in Blantyre urban.

2.6 Challenges teachers face when using Study Circles

Studies conducted globally, regionally and locally indicate that there are many factors that hinder teachers' effectiveness in the use of SCs in their subjects. A study by Kaplan et al., (2007) on self-direction in SCs, cites lack of sense of ownership over the process of SCs by participants as one of the challenges. Though teachers may place students of different abilities and backgrounds in the same group, instead of sharing the burden of the activity, others may take it lightly, participate reluctantly and others have the perception that only certain people's opinions or experiences are the ones that matter (Oliver, 2002; Suda, 2001). In true sense, they fail to perceive that it is mainly through SCs that they can talk, feel that they have a sense of belonging, equality and connected as well as encouraging personal growth and social responsibility. Kaplan et al (2007) citing Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) further claim that students mostly think that SCs are for the school and teachers as they fail to take responsibility for their learning. Thus, derailing as well as undermining the fact that supervised SCs give them the opportunity to process information, ask questions, solve problems, learn from friends and make decisions through interaction with their peers, resulting into having a wider coverage and deeper understanding of the subjects they have covered in class (Feldman, 2009).

The other challenge that teachers face when using SCs is inadequate study materials that can cater for all students in the SCs activities (Sani, 2020). Teachers argue that lack of materials like books, magazines, newspaper articles hinder teachers to make Study Circles functional. Most of the studies done in the countries of Europe show that materials are not a problem. However, studies conducted in some parts of Europe show that the problem is not only in underdeveloped countries. A study conducted in Scandinavia by Bjerkaker (2014) on changing communities reveals that in some Scandinavian countries appropriate study materials were rare. This hindered the active involvement of members of the SCs in the learning process. The study conducted in Britain by British Council (2019) on learning circles reveals that teachers complain of difficulties in finding a range of materials to suit their students' needs and tastes, making it hard for proper functionality of SCs. This is in line with a study conducted in Ghana by Boahene (2004) on the Prospects and problems of African Social Studies teachers as action researchers. The study states that having good resources, especially textbooks and good libraries to augment teaching has a positive influence on teacher practice. This is because apart from the many factors that may contribute to the success

of SCs, teaching and learning materials are paramount. They help the students understand the subject matter easily, make the process of teaching and learning interesting, realistic, meaningful (Byers & Zembeni, 2003).

The study done in Malawi by Sani (2020) on tracing the history of the implementation of SCs in public secondary schools in Machinga District reveals that lack of teaching and learning materials such as textbooks in different subjects hinder the smooth running of SCs activities. Aintinyeni and Hoeskma (2021) in a study conducted in Malawi on Improving Education Quality through Active Learning confirm this observation. The study claims that inadequate materials and textbooks in schools hinder teachers from organizing diverse activities for the students as five or more students share a book. This then defeats the purpose of SCs where students are supposed to interact with the resources so that they can do well in their SCs demands. Thus, inadequate resources frustrate teachers' efforts in helping the students acquire the necessary knowledge and skills hence making the use of SCs in the teaching of Social Studies a setback. In addition, the same study by Sani (2020) cites lack of seriousness amongst students', especially slow learners, when supervisors are away. This makes some gifted students unwilling to work with slow learners as they see it as a waste of time. This ultimately defeats the aim of SCs thus learning by sharing.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

Teacher behaviour theory guides this study (Ryan, 1963). Teacher behaviour theory was developed by David Ryan, and is one of the theories of teaching that falls under normative theories. Kumar (2012) states that normative theories of teaching set the norms of teaching-learning conditions best suited for achieving the desired teaching-learning objectives. The use of teacher behaviour theory in this study helped the researcher to understand how secondary school teachers use SCs in the teaching of Social Studies.

Ryan's theory of teacher behaviour is based upon two assumptions: teacher behaviour is social in nature and teacher's behaviour is relative (Chaudhary, 2013). The theory proposes that information processing on the part of the teacher system culminates in a given teaching situation in certain obvious and directly observable "information forwarding" responses which are directed at the teachers or pupils (Ryan, 1963). He

further reflects on the teacher's behaviour as an information processing system and the teacher as an information system that functions for aiding the pupil in acquiring an appropriate range of behaviour. Ryan further defines teacher behaviour as a set of hypothetical constructs which have their focus in teacher decision making condition (Ryan, 1963). In this case, the teacher as an information processing system is there to aid the pupils to understand the different concepts by employing different teaching and assessment methods so as to measure if indeed students have grabbed the concepts they are and have learnt. Thus, the teacher's actions whether verbal or non-verbal, have an impact on pupil's academic and non-academic behaviour. It starts from planning, organisation and control of the teaching tasks or teacher behaviours and handles all the involved variables so as to comprehend the specified educational goals successfully. Teachers are expected to interact with students in classroom situations, classroom related activities as well as mediate between the conditions that have an impact or bearing on the teacher and the observable responses emanating from any teaching situation. Kumar (2012) citing Smith et al., (2003) describe teacher-behaviour as consisting of those acts that the teacher performs typically in the classroom and other teaching-learning forums in order to induce learning. However, this does not side-line other programmed teaching-learning activities which an education institution or the ministry of education may introduce, for example SCs. A teacher who has gone through formal training will know what to do, when and how. Smith, et.al (2003) also states that a teacher who is not theoretically trained will interpret events and objects in terms of communications concepts that have come from the experience of the race permeated without model ideas about human behaviour. This shows that a teacher has an important role in the teaching and learning process of the students as their activities are central to the acquisition of knowledge and skills by the students. The activities done in class and other class related sessions like SCs for example, discussions, questions and answers, debates, quiz should help the students understand the concepts being learnt, learn from friends and at the same time apply the concepts, skills learnt when need arises.

A theory of teaching answers three questions: how do teachers behave, why they behave in that way as they perform and with what effect. This applies for all teachers, all students and for all situations in which teaching and learning occurs (Chaudhary, 2013). In this stance, the teacher behaviour theory enabled the researcher to observe what teachers actually do in relation to the type of activities given, whether participatory as

well as their mode of transmitting the activity (pedagogy) to the students during SCs sessions. This concurs with Kumar (2012) that whenever a teacher teaches something, the teaching activity intends to produce learning or bringing relatively permanent changes in the behaviour of the students (p.8) which is identified and measured through assessment. This fulfils one of Ryan's theories of teacher behaviour assumptions or principle: teacher behaviour is social in nature. Thus, the teacher's social behaviour is portrayed in the teaching (Chaudhary, 2013; Kumar, 2012) and assessment activities.

The teacher supervises and interacts with students through the tasks which are given to the students whether to be done in pairs, groups or any other strategy of teaching, whether in class or other class related sessions. As Chaudhary (2013); Kumar (2012) point out that teacher behaviour is relative; this assumes that teacher's interactions both within and outside the classroom and activities given to the students do play a greater role on student's performance based upon social situations. This implies that the teacher is free to use different assessment methods like question and answer to help measure students' acquisition of the desired goals for the activity given. All these help the teacher to achieve a set of objectives. The element of measurement incorporated into SCs activities which comes out as assessment may compel students to take each and every activity seriously with an understanding that measurement is not only done in classroom activities, hence having a positive impact on their performance. Therefore, teacher's behaviour is the product of social conditions that are related to the cultural settings in which teacher performs the teaching task. In this vein, under the guidance of the theory, the researcher will also look at the availability of learning resources provided to the students during SCs. For example, books which can enhance interaction, transmission of the desired knowledge, skill as well as understanding of the activity students are to do and in the course affecting their performance.

The researcher has opted for the theory to guide the research activity because, if followed and well adhered to, it will influence teaching and learning as it is able to show the relationship between teaching and learning and identifies the common factors they share, gives the knowledge of the expectations of teaching activities that provide guidelines for organised teaching. Furthermore, TBT as one of the normative theories of teaching is applicable to all teaching and learning situations, whether in the classroom or outside classroom. As all activities are aimed at improving students'

academic or non- academic behaviour and other related behaviour, however, organisation is paramount. If teaching and learning activities for both teachers and students are not well organised, they cannot yield the intended learning outcomes. Therefore, it is a must that teachers must plan work that is to be given to students either be during classroom activities or learning through other forums/sessions for example SCs. This helps the teacher to develop instructional designs beforehand and eases the burden of struggling in thinking of the activities befitting a particular lesson or activity. If not well adhered to it usually leads to a mismatch that affects students' performance negatively.

In addition, Kumar(2012); Chaudhary (2013) state that teacher behaviour theory influences teaching and learning as it provides the scientific basis for planning, organizing, leading and evaluation of the teaching. However, in SCs, planning is different from the usual lesson plan whereby a teacher always refer to schemes of work in order to come up with a lesson to be taught and when . In SCs, planning is spontaneous as the teacher plans immediately after identifying a learning problem among students. This enhances studying and understanding classroom teaching problems as well as help teachers to develop teaching skills and competency. All these are achievable if teaching is planned thoroughly, well organised and evaluation of the teaching and activities are done accordingly. Thus it is through the learning that takes place through the different activities that the teacher may employ in the course of teaching; dialogue between the teacher and students, student and fellow student or between text and reader (Yang & Wilson, 2006), that facilitate understanding among students on different levels of concepts. Furthermore, measurement or evaluating students' work done during SCs sessions is important. The use of different assessment techniques, the teacher may deem appropriate assist in knowing if the appropriate behaviour as well as goals that were put in place for that particular activity have been achieved, This means that by the end of the academic interactions that may happen in class, outside class and class related sessions, students will have acquired knowledge and improve on skills which in the end are reflected in students' performance during weekly, end of term and end of cycle test results. This is in agreement with the teacher behavior theory that will be used to explore the use of Study Circles in the teaching of Social Studies in selected community day secondary schools in Blantyre urban.

However, the teacher behaviour theory has weaknesses which may affect teacher activities as well as the performance of the students. Since the theory stresses much on objective achievement, it may influence the teacher's way of handling the activities given to the students as well as the students. Focus may be on fast learners to see the objectives achieved, leaving behind slow and average learners. However, it is the teacher's own passion that can set a pace to cater for all groups of learners while achieving the objectives. In addition, Chaudhary (2013) explains that the theory of teacher behaviour increase the understanding, prediction and control of teaching. This may not be applicable in all situations, as the environment may have influence on students' pace of understanding. These challenges may be dealt with if teachers are encouraged to take the student as the central point of their teaching activities and objective achievement to come second. Teachers with the help of the school administration are to create a conducive environment for all the students as some of the hindrances may be beyond the teacher's control. Basing on these assumptions it shows that it is the teacher's activities which encompass the teaching tasks, methods, and how they are used in teaching and learning that have a bearing on how learning takes place. It is against this background that the researcher intends to explore the use of Study Circles in the teaching of Social Studies. The researcher will therefore be interested to know what the teacher actually does during Study Circles to induce learning. In addition, what methods are used as a mode of assessment to improve the performance of the students using Study Circles and the challenges secondary school teachers face when using study circles when teaching Social Studies.

2.8 Chapter summary

This chapter has reviewed literature related to the use of SCs in western countries, Africa and Malawi. Through the literature reviewed, the following have been looked into: the evolution of SCs, strategies that other countries as well as Malawi employ during SCs. The strategies include; discussion, demonstration and dialectical dialogue. Malawi's literature has revealed discussion as the sole method used. Since SCs were introduced in 2016, it is not known if there are other ways used apart from discussion which is stipulated in MoEST(2015) SCs guidelines, hence creating a gap on strategies that are used that needs to be filled. The literature reviewed, has also shown that SCs influence students' performance in classroom work, examinations as well as skill acquisition. However, it is silent if the same is experienced in Social Studies. Further, the review

has established that there are different techniques that are used to determine students' performance in western countries, Africa and Malawi. These include; Question and answer, discussion and observation. In Malawi, none is known on assessment apart from showing that students do discussions. Challenges teachers face when using SCs in Western countries, Africa have also been unearthed through the reviewed literature. These include; inadequate materials for use during the SCs sessions, resentment by gifted learners to work with slow learners. There is sketchy Malawian literature on challenges Social Studies face when implementing SCs; hence, the need to find out if there are other challenges Social Studies teachers face. Through the literature reviewed, it shows that Malawi is falling short of the functionality of SCs in the teaching and learning of Social Studies in her school; hence the need for this study. The next chapter deals with the research design and methodology of this study and ethical issues.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter overview

This chapter describes and justifies the research design and methodology used in the study and how the data generated was analysed. Finally, the chapter concludes by presenting ethical issues that the study took into consideration to ensure trust from the participants.

3.2 Research Design

Welman and Kruger (2000) define a research design as a logical structure of the inquiry. Sileyew (2019) states that the purpose of a research design is to provide an appropriate framework for a study; that is, it guides the generation of data, making sure that the data collected help address the research problem effectively in a logical and unambiguous manner. The study used the qualitative research design. This research design helped the researcher in gradually making sense of a social phenomenon by contrasting, comparing, replicating, cataloguing and classifying the object of study (Miles & Hubberman, 1994). The design was chosen because it allowed the researcher to dig deep into the issue under study until no information was needed to address the research questions. In addition, qualitative research design is highly contextual, being collected by participants in a natural real life setting (Gray, 2014; Braun & Clarke, 2013). In this case the Social Studies' SCs sessions that were conducted in schools, offered the natural setting. Furthermore, the Teacher behavior theory by (Ryan, 1963) helped the researcher to fully understand, observe the teacher's role in SCs forums and Social Studies lessons to make SCs a success.

3.3 Research Methodology

Methodology refers to the framework within which research is conducted to produce valid knowledge about the psychological and social world (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p.

31). A research methodology consists of theories and practices on how research is going to be conducted, and acts as a guide for making decisions about one's research (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This study used a case study methodology in order to explore the use of SCs in the teaching of Social Studies in Blantyre urban CDSSs.

3.3.1 Case study

A case study is an integrated system that focuses on the in-depth, holistic and context of one or more cases that typically use multiple sources of data (Punch & Qancea 2014). An intrinsic case study was adopted for this study. An intrinsic case study approach is where a study is undertaken because the researcher wants a better understanding of a particular case in all its particularity and ordinariness (Punch & Qancea, 2014) in this case, exploring the use of SCs in the teaching of Social Studies. In this study, three community day secondary schools in Blantyre urban were used as a single case and sampled purposively. The case study methodology enables the researcher to build a general explanation that will fit the case under study (Yin, 2003). The use of the case study methodology allowed the researcher to use multiple sources and techniques of data generation to counteract any potential biases (Creswell, 2007). In addition, multiple sources enabled the researcher to include a number of different research methods as a research method appropriate for one question may be inappropriate for another (Gray, 2014). It also helped to unearth a lot of information that was of benefit to both the researcher and the empirical world. It also helped the researcher in discovering important features, developing an understanding and conceptualizing them for further study (Punch & Qancea, 2014).

3.4 Sampling methods

The process of selecting samples for a study is paramount in research. A sample is part of the total target population under study (Sarantakos, 2005). There are two types of population that are used in a research study namely, target and accessible or available populations. This study used accessible type of population comprising of CDSSs Social Studies teachers and students. The study sample was selected purposively. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique. Kumar (2014) defines Purposive sampling as a process whereby the sample is selected basing on who the researcher thinks would be a representative for the study. The study used purposive and convenience sampling to choose participants to the study. In this case, Social Studies

teachers who use SCs and students who participate in SCs were the participants. This is in line with Merriam's (1998) argument that purposive sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher wants to discover, understand and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learnt.

In addition, convenience sampling which Etikan, et al, (2016) defines as a type of non-probability sampling where members of the target population that meet a certain practical criteria are included for the purpose of the study was employed. In this study, the research site was arrived at basing on the fact that the research participants were within the proximity of the researcher, hence made it easy for the researcher to generate data from the research participants. The research was also cost effective since the schools were within reach of the researcher.

3.4.1 Study site

This study drew thirty research participants from three CDSSs in Blantyre Urban. Only those community day secondary schools where Study Circles are operational and Social Studies is taught were chosen. CDSSs belong to the third category of secondary schools in Malawi. The other two categories are; national, and district (MoEST, 2013). CDSSs get the third tier of students depending on Primary School Leaving Certificate (PSLCE) performances, they register the lowest Malawi School Certificate Examinations (MSCE) pass rates, and their students are rarely selected into public universities (Namphande, 2017). Further to that, CDSSs have a lot of disparities as compared to the other two categories of secondary schools; National and District secondary schools. The problems include substandard infrastructure, the work force in some cases is not well-qualified, teaching and learning resource mobilization, is a problem as the schools wait from the government for resources, which at other times are not provided or are provided late. Finances are also problem. CDSSs get less funding (grants) as compared to the other two categories of secondary schools. The other problem is location. Most of the CDSS are located in rural/remote areas, which are difficult to access. This makes it hard for the Senior Quality Assurance Officers (SQA) to inspect the schools and mostly, teachers are not ready to work in those areas thereby causing understaffing. Despite all these setbacks, CDSS are treated equally as far as policies and practices that the government of Malawi through the Ministry of Education may put in place. A good example is the use of SCs. Of late, there has been an improvement in the

performance of CDSSs students at MSCE in the different subjects offered at secondary school level, Social Studies being one of them. For example, the performance of Social Studies students in Blantyre urban CDSSs has shown some improvement as portrayed in table 1 below:

Table 1: MSCE Social Studies results for selected CDSSs in Blantyre Urban over six years

2017				2018			2019			2020			2021			2022		
Sch	No. Reg	No. Pass	Pas s %	No .Reg	No. Pass	Pass %	No. Reg	No Pass	Pass %	No. Reg.	No. Pass	Pass %	No. Reg.	No. Pass	Pass %	No. Reg.	No. Pass	Pass %
A	11	11	100	30	25	95	2	2	100	12	10	83	6	6	100	103	89	86
B	73	67	91	89	82	92	66	29	49	72	41	60	68	54	79	43	28	65
C	104	98	94	131	124	95	80	75	94	106	95	93	76	72	97	56	17	69

Source: MANEB Social studies Examinations result sheets for 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022.

3.4.2 Performance of the study sites over six years

The results in the table show improvement in the performance of students in the subject though the pass rate keeps on fluctuating over the period of six years since SCs were introduced in public Secondary schools in 2016. It is during this time (2017-2022) that Social Studies was purely examined as an entity before being merged with Life Skills as a single paper for MSCE examinations. The improvement in the results may be attributed to the many maturation factors, one of them being SCs. Hence, the need to explore how teachers actually use SCs in the teaching of Social studies so as to improve the performance of students in their subject.

3.4.3 Study participants and Sample size

The initial number of participants for the study was to be thirty in total. These included six Social Studies teachers and twenty-four students from three selected community day secondary schools who were purposively and conveniently drawn. From each school, two teachers were to be drawn; one teaching in junior classes and the second in senior classes. Six Social Studies teachers who had knowledge of the SCs and use them were sampled as participants. However, at one school, one teacher was the sole participant as he was the only one handling all classes this gave a total of five sampled teachers. As for the twenty-four students, eight were drawn from each of the three participating community day secondary schools of which four were girls and four boys from each school. Only those who participated in Social Studies SCs from both junior and senior classes were involved. The students were participants because they were key to the use of SCs.

3.5 Data Generation Methods

Data generation involved gathering information from the field in order to examine a particular topic. In this study in-depth interviews, observations, focus group discussion and document analysis were used.

3.5.1 In-depth Interviews

An interview is a conversation with a purpose between the researcher and one or more participants, in which meanings are elicited, articulated, explored or constructed (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). In this method, the researcher carries out a face-to-face conversation with participants one at a time (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the

researcher specifically used semi-structured interviews, which allowed probing respondents' views. This was done in order to give respondents room for expansion of their answers. The interviews were conducted with Social Studies teachers from the sampled schools. This was the case because Social studies teachers were the ones directly involved in the implementation of SCs sessions in their subject area. The use of Semi-structured interviews in qualitative research gives the researcher an opportunity to follow up on answers given by respondents in real time, thereby generating valuable conversation around a subject, giving the researcher a unique understanding of the subject in question (Sileyew, 2019). The interviews were framed in such a way that each informant was asked a set of similar questions. The researcher used an interview guide that acted like a reminder of the main areas that needed clarification (refer to interview guide, appendices 9 and 10). Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to seek for clarification of answers from the respondents where need arose (Creswell, 2002; Gray, 2014). This mode of asking questions also allowed the respondents to express themselves freely thereby helped the researcher to uncover participant's views and attitudes. In addition, giving chance to the researcher to gather more and a variety of information on the use of SCs in the teaching of Social Studies.

Furthermore, semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to generate rich data. Braun and Clarke (2013), describe rich data as those which offer a more thorough, thoughtful or unexpected commentary on the topic under study (p.34). In qualitative research, rich data is preferred because they uncover a lot and allow the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the topic of interest. Interview is the most logical research technique in cases where the study is exploratory in objective as it involves an examination of feelings and attitudes, opinions and values. In addition, the interviews allow the researcher to tap the respondents' level of knowledge and understanding of the issue since the questions that are asked do not suggest certain kinds of answers to the respondents (Bryman, 2003). The interviews were recorded besides the researcher taking down notes, which helped for reviewing purposes. However, interviews are problematic to a researcher who does not have good interviewing skills. The researcher conducted interviews on her own. In addition, she had to read and practice interviewing skills. Though interviews are time consuming to both the researcher and participants, the researcher was organised way before time for conducting the interviews. The researcher rehearsed on how to conduct interviews using the interview guide that was

designed for the study. The researcher also consulted researchers who had conducted interviews before, for guidance. In addition, participants were allowed to give whatever information they felt was important on the issue under study. That made them free and relaxed, eased boredom and the exercise was not time consuming.

3.5.2 Observations

Observations were employed in this study as a way of generating information. Social Studies SCs sessions were observed in both sections thus junior and senior classes. Marshall and Rossman (1999) define observation as a systematic noticing and recording of events, behaviours, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study (p. 107). Observational data assumes that behavior is purposeful and expressive of deeper values and beliefs that are primarily descriptive of settings, people, events and the meanings that participants ascribe to them (Marshall & Rossman 1999; Gray 2014). Observations were conducted in order to have an in depth understanding of how SCs are used in the teaching of Social Studies. This study observed teachers and students simultaneously. Teachers were observed since they are the implementers of SCs, students because they are the ones who are directly involved in SCs forum activities, and the implementation of SCs is done on them. The researcher was a non-participant observer as she stood aloof from the group activities (Cohen, 1986 p. 122) while gathering notes as the participants had full knowledge that they were being observed. Non-participant observation had been opted for because it was to help the researcher to maintain a position of detachment and independence from participants, keeping a physical and emotional distance from the group she is researching (Gray, 2014 p. 412).

Through observations, the researcher gathered the much needed data for the study through the use of SCs observation guide and lesson observation guide. (Refer to appendices 11, 12 and 17). These guided the researcher on what to look for in each activity. The projected number of observations to be made were four per sampled school; two per teacher: one during SCs sessions and the other during lessons where the teacher was to show how the work that is given during SC sessions is consolidated during classroom situations. Two classes were observed; one in junior and another in the senior section. In cases where the same teacher handled all classes, two observations were made as nothing new could come out in how the sessions were handled since they were all handled by one individual. However, the number of

observations made was determined by the number of activities that were being made for a complete SCs session per class and the unfolding of information the researcher wanted to generate till no more new information came out. This is saturation which Braun and Clarke (2013) defines as the point at which new data stop generating any substantially new ideas. The researcher was interested in observing teachers in SCs sessions. Since a Study Circle session runs for a period of one and half hours per session, a period of five hours per sampled school was required and one teacher from the junior section and another one from the senior section. The researcher as a non-participant observer (Gray, 2014) of the SCs sessions coded up everything by means of a structured set of observation categories (Cohen, 2007 p.123). The SC observation guide and Lesson observation guide enabled the researcher to discover behaviours and relationships that had recurring patterns through complex actions and interactions in their natural social settings (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Observations often give a researcher the opportunity to gather 'live' data from naturally occurring social situations as she has the chance of looking directly at what is taking place in the situation (Cohen, 2007 p. 415). In addition, observation provides the ground for checking as what people do may differ from what they say (Moyle 2002). It further enables a researcher to look afresh at every day's behavior that otherwise might be taken for granted and expected to go unnoticed (Cooper & Schindler, 2001 p. 374). This helped the researcher to understand the background and setting of the SCs activities and discover things which could have been ignored unconsciously and which they could have not shared during interviews. However, observations have challenges like subjectivity, intrusion and researcher expertise (Adler & Adler, 1998; Murray, 1986 in Namphande, 2017) which may result in biasness when interpreting results. The researcher dealt with the first two challenges by having several observations, which made the participants to get used and behave in the way, they always do. On expertise, the researcher read more books on observation to have a better understanding on the process, for example; the importance of keeping physical and emotional distance from the participants during the SCs sessions, have a sharp memory to capture and remember as much detail as possible of the activity being observed and careful record keeping of the data generated. This information helped the researcher to generate the much-needed data accordingly.

3.5.3 Focus group discussion

A focus group is essentially organized discussion among a selected group of individuals with the aim of eliciting information about their views (Gray, 2014). This method allows a researcher to generate data from multiple participants at the same time (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Focus group discussion aims at gaining a variety of perspectives about subjects and situations (Gray, 2014). In this study, focus group discussion as a (data generating method was used on Social Studies students from the three community day sampled secondary schools. The researcher used focus group discussion guide, focusing on exploring the use of Study Circles in the teaching of Social Studies (refer to appendices 14 and 15). The researcher did not just ask questions and expected answers or responses but probed more with the aim of influencing the participants to discuss in depth the issue under study. This provided a natural environment for the participants to interact with one another about the issue based on the research questions (Wilkinson, 2004). The discussions further resulted in elaborate accounts on the topic under discussion. This enabled the researcher to generate new knowledge on SCs as a wide range of views, perspectives or understanding on SCs were divulged.

Furthermore, the researcher had a chance to explore the feelings, attitudes, beliefs, prejudices, reactions and experiences that could not be accessible through other data generating methods (Gray, 2014). Though Focus groups can be difficult to manage, as participants may be excited and get off topic, and the discussions may take longer, the researcher controlled the activities that took place. The researcher informed the participants prior to the discussion of what was expected of them particularly on discipline. One focus group discussion was conducted per school, giving three FGDs for all the schools. Students from all the forms (1 to 4) were involved so as to have true information on the issue under research. Social Studies teachers helped in identifying students from each class to participate in the research. The participants (boys and girls), who met the following conditions were identified: those who had been learning at the school for a minimum of a term, had vast information and were well experienced on the issue under discussion, and those who always participate in Social Studies SCs. Those who met the above conditions were screened further to identify the participants. To make sure there was no biasness and to have representatives from both genders, boys and girls from each class, separately, were asked to pick small papers with numbers 1, 2 and some blank which were placed in a box. Those who picked papers

with numbers were the ones who were research participants for a school's Focus group discussion. The boys who picked number 2 and the girls who picked number 1 were the ones who became participants in the research.

3.5.4 Document analysis

Document analysis is another method of data generation that this study used. Frankel & Wallen (1996) explain that the method aid researchers to gain data objectively without the presence of key informants. Document analysis targets all kinds of written communication that may shed light on a phenomenon under study. The written data sources include published and unpublished documents, reports, memoranda, agendas, minutes, letters or circulars, e-mail messages, fax messages, newspaper articles and any other documents related to the study (Creswell, 2002).

The documents that this study reviewed were teachers' planned work (work plan) for SCs, progress sheets for SCs grades and SCs group exercise books. This information was generated using a document analysis guide (refer to appendix 13). The analysed documents provided data on what type of work thus assignments that were given to each other, thereby having reliable results. This is referred to as "triangulation" which Salkind (2010) defines as a practice of using multiple sources or methods to generate data on the same topic. Creswell (2013); Manion and Morrison (2000) argue that by combining multiple theories, methods and empirical materials, researchers can help to overcome weakness or intrinsic biases and the problems that come from single method. Thus, the use of observations, in-depth interviews, focus group discussion and document analysis as part of the triangulation students for the SCs sessions. Data generated from observations, interviews and document analysis complemented process helped the researcher to get richer information useful to the study.

3.6 Data analysis methods

Creswell (2014) defines data analysis as a process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming and modeling data with an aim of discovering useful information, arriving at conclusions and supporting decision-making process. This study used qualitative data analysis since it is explanatory. The data generated in this study was analyzed using thematic data analysis, which use codes and pattern themes. Qualitative data analysis is interpretative. It goes beyond descriptive analysis as it tries to gain a deeper

understanding of the data that has been gathered. It looks beneath the data generated and help one to understand how and why particular accounts were generated thereby provide a conceptual account of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Data analysis was done on data that was generated from observations, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. This enabled the researcher to identify consistencies and inconsistencies between the demands of the theory and what was on the ground.

Codes were used when analysing the generated data. Coding is a process of naming segments of a data with a label that simultaneously categorises, summarises and accounts for each piece of data (Creswell, 2014). That is, the responses with common ideas and patterns are given a code. In this study, the coded data was scrutinised based on the generated themes from the research questions in relation to the theoretical framework, which guided the study. Patterns and links between participants' responses were taken care of. The study followed the seven stages of coding that are used in thematic analysis as per Braun and Clarke (2013) in order to come up with quality and reliable results. The stages are: data transcription, reading and familiarisation and taking note of items of potential interest; coding which involves completing a cross entire dataset by first focusing on one data item; searching for themes within the data items; reviewing the themes which requires producing a map of provisional themes and subthemes and relationships that exist between them; defining and naming the themes and lastly writing the study's report (thesis) which involves identifying themes across the dataset(Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 202).

The themes were in line with how Social Studies teachers in community day secondary schools use SCs in the teaching of Social Studies. This characteristic made thematic analysis as well as data analysis flexible; hence, it is being adopted for data analysis for the study. The results were presented in a descriptive way as it helped to describe, show or summarise data points in a constructive way such that patterns that emerged fulfilled every condition of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Nassaji, 2015).

3.7 Ethical Issues

Ethical issues are the general right principles of what one ought to do when conducting a research or how the researcher relates with the respondents (Fraenkel & Wallen 2000).

Ethical issues were observed in this study. Firstly, the researcher had to seek clearance from the University of Malawi Research and Ethics Committee (UNIMAREC) to carry out the study and was given a clearance letter (refer to appendix 1). Secondly, using the letter of approval from UNIMAREC, the researcher had to seek permission from the Gate keeper; the Education Division Manager for South West Education Division to visit and conduct the study in selected CDSSs in the division (refer to appendix 2). Thirdly, an informed consent from head teachers as well as parents of the participants from the schools was sought. This was the case because the participants were minors. Later the participants themselves were asked of their willingness to participate in the study, and had to give an informed consent (Refer to appendices 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8).

The essential purpose of research ethics is to protect the welfare of research participants. The researcher assured the research participants that the information gathered was solely for the purposes of the study and would not be divulged to anybody as having come from them (Wassenar, 2006 p.61). This was ensured by providing enough detailed authentic information to the participants through the letter of introduction, which the Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Malawi had provided.

The researcher also concealed identities of the participants as a way of assuring confidentiality. This involved the researcher using codes as a way of concealing the identities of the research participants such as T1 up to T6. The codes S1, S2 S3, FGD1, FGD2, and FGD3 were used for the three Community day secondary schools from which the researcher generated data as a way of keeping them anonymous. The researcher also ensured that the report of the findings is accurate and truthful as research participants were given an opportunity to review and critique the generated data before the analysis was done in order to verify the authenticity of the notes. No risk emerged from the study.

3.8 Trustworthiness and Authenticity

Trustworthiness is important in research for quality when conducting and reporting research. Polit and Beck (2012) define the trustworthiness of a study as the degree of confidence in data interpretation, and the research methods used to ensure the quality of the study. A number of strategies were used to ensure the research trustworthiness. To ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the study, multiple data generation sources were

used. This also helped the researcher to have a true reflection of how teachers use study circles in the teaching of Social Studies in the selected secondary schools in Blantyre urban.

Furthermore, an audit trail which is a collection of materials and notes used in the research process that documents the researched decisions and assumptions was used to portray the trustworthiness of the study (Cope, 2014). An 'audit trail' allows any observer to trace the course of the research step-by-step using the decisions, document analysis reports were open for review to those interested like the participants.

In addition, dependability, which is the degree of consistency, reliability and stability of findings and interpretation throughout the research (Guba and Lincoln, 1982) was used to ensure trustworthiness of the study. The researcher established and maintained accuracy throughout the period of study by triangulating the different data sources that were used; interviews, focus group discussion, observation and document analysis.

Transferability as one of the pillars of trustworthy was also taken into consideration. Transferability aims at offering a detailed, comprehensive and intricate depiction of the study's environment, participants and procedures to enhance the potential applicability to other contexts (Ahmed, 2024). The researcher provided detailed comprehensive explanations to evaluate the applicability of the findings through the strategies that were used; purposive and convenience sampling techniques and saturation.

Additionally, conformability, which refers to the impartiality and objectivity of the findings, guaranteeing that they remain unaffected by biases or preferences of the researchers (Ahmed, 2024), was taken into consideration. Through in-depth interviews and focus group discussion, the study produced findings that objectively reflect information that was generated from participants. The participants were given an opportunity to verify and critique the generated data before the analysis was done in order to check the authenticity of the notes.

3.9 Chapter summary

This section has discussed the methodology that the study used, ways data was generated and analysed. It has further shown that qualitative research design and a case

study approach were used. Interviews, observations, Focus Group Discussion and document analysis were used for generating data from the sampled schools. It has also explained how ethical issues were dealt with and how trustworthiness of the study was ensured.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Chapter overview

This chapter presents the findings of the study on the use of SCs in the teaching of Social Studies in some selected community day secondary schools in Blantyre urban, Malawi. It also interprets the findings using the Teacher Behaviour Theory as discussed and justified in chapter two. The main research question for the study was: *How do Social Studies teachers make use of SCs as a strategy to improve learning?* The results are discussed and interpreted basing on the four sub-research questions as follows: What strategies do Social Studies teachers employ when using SCs? What assessment techniques do teachers use to determine the functionality of SCs when teaching Social Studies? How do SCs influence students' performance in Social Studies? What challenges do Social Studies teachers face when implementing SCs in the teaching of Social Studies? The presentation and discussion of the findings are based on the following themes:

- Strategies employed during SC sessions
- Assessment in Social Studies SCs
- Influence of SCs on Social Studies students' performance
- Challenges teachers face when using SCs

4.2 Strategies employed during Study Circle sessions

A number of strategies were noted as being employed by Social Studies teachers when using SCs both during the sessions and during consolidation. The study established that the following methods were used: discussion, question and answer and explanation. Almost all research participants through interviews and focus group discussion mentioned this. For example, one of the participants had this to say:

I usually use discussion method because it helps in accelerating teaching and learning. The syllabus is easily covered as some of the

planned work which I could have covered is done by the students, I just consolidate. In this way it reduces fatigue on my part as there is sharing of the work with the students
(Interview, T1/S1).

This was confirmed by the students themselves through focus group discussion in all the participating schools, and had this to say:

When we are given work to do, we discuss in our group. First, we read through the work each alone, then we start discussing and we give points or contribute towards the work and agree what the point is and the secretary writes and later handed in to the teacher (Student-FGD1/S1).

Through observations of SCs session activities, the researcher noted that participants were discussing on the work that they were assigned to. For example, at one school (S2), the students were discussing on a topic “Conflicts”.

Based on this data, it is clear that discussion method is used during SCs. This finding is consistent with the findings of a study by Larsson and Nordvall (2010) on SCs in Sweden and Scandinavian countries, which revealed that discussion was the method that was mostly used. Furthermore, the study has also shown that discussion enables the students to rely less on a teacher as it gives chances to the group members to open up, share ideas, to eagerly contribute towards the discussion and seek clarification where they did not understand. This concurs with Fanselow’s (2007) assertion that students from different backgrounds engage in a discussion where everyone is given a chance to talk, converse, share personal experiences, look at a problem from different points of view and explore possible solutions. Note that either the work that is done during group discussions is given to the students or the students choose the work they feel they did not understand. This portrays that the work done during SCs acts as remedial lessons to the students (MoEST, 2015) and later the teacher consolidates the learning during SCs lesson consolidation.

In this sense, Social Studies teachers use group discussion method when handling the SCs sessions in order to help the students process the information and acquire an

appropriate range of behavior as stated in Ryan's (1963) teacher behaviour theory. Through discussions, students are able to summarise, answer questions as well as acquire skills that are beneficial to them and their communities as will be expounded in Section 4.3 under Influence of SCs on students' performance. In agreement with this, Kumar (2013) argues that whenever a teacher plans and teaches something, the activity intends to produce learning or brings relatively permanent changes in the behaviour of the students. In this case, participation in class activities, answering questions, speaking to a crowd as students do during SCs presentation shows changes in students' behavior. This complements one of Ryan's (1963) Teacher behavior theory assumption, which states that teacher behaviour is social in nature. It is the teacher's creativity that brings in the pedagogy that encourages interaction amongst students that also help in skill development.

The study also established that Question and Answer was another strategy that was used most during Social Studies SCs sessions. Analysis of the interviews, FGDs as well as documents and SCs sessions observations indicated that Question and Answer was one of the strategies that was used to help students think critically as more challenging questions are assigned to them during the Social Studies SCs Sessions. One participant said:

I give questions to my students to work on during SC sessions. At other times, I allow my students to formulate their own questions to discuss during the Study Circle sessions and later we go through them together in class (Interview, T1/S1).

Similarly, students under focus group discussion expressed the same:

Our teacher gives us questions to find answers for, during SCs. The questions are usually on a topic which we have already learnt in a class or on a topic which we haven't learnt yet. (FGD2/S2).

Document analysis validated this. A review on documents that are used during SCs

sessions and exercise books found that marks were awarded on work (questions) that was given to the students for SCs sessions or which the students themselves were choosing to work on marks were awarded.

The finding shows that through SCs, students are at liberty to come up with work that they can do which shows that they do not solely rely on the teacher. This enhances students' understanding of the subject matter they did not understand in class. This agrees with the British Council's (2019) assertion that through SCs teachers also require their students to create a task for each other. In such a way students are encouraged to be responsible for their own learning. The above narratives concur with Katwy's (2014) findings in his study, SCs as a method of higher education on critical pedagogy that the facilitator (teacher) asks questions on the concepts, work or readings given. This study has further revealed that Social Studies teachers use the questioning method for both SCs sessions as well as SCs consolidation lessons to suit the caliber of students they have which corroborates Fanselow's (2007) and NCSALL's (2003) conclusion that facilitators use different methods in order to achieve their intended goal. Based on the SC session observations as well as SCs lesson consolidation sessions, the researcher established that some teachers gave challenging questions to the students as an activity for SCs sessions in order to encourage the students to read widely and think or reason deeply and critically. The question is later tackled in class during SC lesson consolidation to help the students understand the concepts better (Smith et al, 2003). This agrees with Ryan's (1963) Teacher behaviour theory which describes teacher behaviour as a set of hypothetical constructs which have their focus on teacher decision making conditions when employing question and answer method in their lessons and other teaching and learning forums (SCs sessions) in order to induce learning (Smith et.al, 2003; Ryan, 1963; Kumar, 2012).

In addition, through interviews, the study has revealed that teachers also use explanation (lecture) as a strategy of passing on information to the students on the day's task thus giving instructions. For instance, one participant said:

I use explanation method (lecture) when giving Social Studies SCs work to my students (Interview, T1/S1).

This was validated by SC Session observations where the researcher noted that the teacher had to explain to the students what they were expected to do on the work that was given. For example, at School 3 (S3), the teacher had to explain how the students were to handle the question that was given. The question was;

Discuss and role-play the three arms and functions of the government.

This helped the teacher to clarify the demands of the activity as well as simplify the concepts which might have been difficult to the students. This is in line with the Ryan's Teacher Behaviour Theory (1963), which reflects the teacher's behaviour as an information processing system, and the teacher as an information system that aids the student in acquiring an appropriate range of behavior. Through the instructions given using explanation, students understand and do the activity well thereby aiding in achieving the goal of SCs in improving students' performance. Based on the narratives on discussion as well as observations made on SCs group discussions and lesson consolidation, there is a clear indication that SCs use participatory pedagogies. The latter enhances understanding, creative thinking as well as skill development which the Ministry of Education encourages and is one of the principles of outcome based education (OBE).

4.3 Assessment in Social Studies Study Circles

There is a number of assessment methods Social Studies teachers use when assessing students in SCs. The study has established a number of methods that are used in assessing SCs activities on students' performance. The study showed that students' progress is assessed through presentations, question and answer and role-play, which are done during Social Studies SCs lesson consolidation. Through interviews, lesson observation and focus group discussion the study has revealed that presentations which is also known as reporting, is used during Social Studies SCs lesson consolidation as a way of having feedback from students on the work that was done during SCs sessions. All the respondents alluded to the use of presentations. One participant had this to say:

I use presentations when consolidating the work, I gave to students during SCs sessions. This is done to check students' understanding on the work given. Students present their findings on the work their group was assigned. Each group present their work in front of the

whole class and the other students listen and later ask questions for clarification on the areas they did not understand and I consolidate (Interview T2/S2).

The responses given by the students during focus group discussion on how the work discussed during SC sessions is dealt with, validated the findings. The participants stated that:

We give the exercise books to the teacher. The work is marked and the exercise books are given back to us. At other times we make presentations in class during which our classmates ask questions and as a group we answer. Then the teacher clarifies the explanations or answers given (Student-FDG3/S3).

During observation on SCs lesson consolidation, the researcher also saw students through their SCs groups making presentations on the work that was assigned to them and the other students reacting to the information given and the teacher commenting and consolidating where it was necessary. The assignment that was given to the students to discuss and make presentations was:

Discuss and prepare a presentation on the impact of population growth on development.

The above narratives concur with Fidel and Retimi (2014) who argue that for ensuring quality in SCs among students, assessment of SCs activities is done through presentations of reports on readings and observations. Thus, SCs group presentations done during lesson consolidation as evident in Appendix 16 enables the teacher to decide on how to handle the content to make students understand when it comes to real classroom situation and what to plan for in another SCs activity. Furthermore, misconceptions and issues that arose during SCs session's discussions are ironed out. It is through these interactions that the students develop different skills like communication, courage, argument, firmness and critical thinking.

In addition, the study has revealed that question and answer is another technique that is used when assessing students on SCs issues. This was expressed by almost all the participants. For example, one participant explained that:

I use Question and Answer as a way of assessing the work that I gave to my students during SCs sessions. At other times I ask the students to formulate questions from the readings given, or come up with their own questions to discuss and provide answers. Then during SCs lesson consolidation, all the questions are gathered and are asked to the whole class and the students are supposed to provide answers as a class and I chip in where necessary (Interview, T4/S3).

Observations from SCs lesson consolidation activity agreed with this. The students were required to give answers to questions that were assigned to them during SCs sessions or concepts from the readings that were given. Out of the answers given, the teacher is able to deduce if learning has taken place. The narrative is also in line with Katwyk's (2014) findings on a study on SC as a method of higher education on critical pedagogy that the facilitator asks questions on the concepts from the readings that were given to the participants as a way of assessing the students. For instance, T4/S3 gave the following questions to SCs groups to answer after reading:

1. What do you think are some of the cultural practices that promote gender bias?
2. How can you end gender bias in your community? Explain any two ways.

Question and answer method as a way of assessing students' progress helps to trigger students' thinking. This was revealed through document analysis and interviews that were conducted. The SCs group exercise books where students' work is written had questions and answers written and grades. On the other hand, through interviews it was revealed that teachers ask the students questions of whatever form they may wish which also include essay writing. The teacher marks and give feedback to each group in class and corrections are made. For instance, respondent T1/S1 gave the following essay question to his students during SCs sessions:

Explain the causes of conflicts in Malawi.

This is in line with NSCALL (2003) Centre guide on learner persistence in Adult Basic Education that teachers may ask students to write a short statement in response to the

question asked, give a brief summary on the passage or reading read and discussed. British Council (2019) agrees that as one way of assessing, teachers require their students to answer questions. The questions that are asked are from different levels of Bloom's taxonomy thus comprehension as well as application. It can then be argued that SCs do not limit teachers on the type of work and assessment form that they are to give to the students but they are at liberty to give what they see will help facilitate learning.

In addition, the study has further revealed that observations are used as another assessment technique used on SCs work. Assessment is not only done on class performance (academic work) but also on other issues like skill acquisition and behaviour change. This is done through observing what they have done or if they are able to complete a given task with a partner, in a group and change of behaviour when interacting with their peers (NSCALL, 2003; Kidd & Czerniawski, 2010). Almost all the research participants (teachers) expressed this. One participant stated that:

Through SCs, I have observed that there is change in students' behavior and skill acquisition. The number of discipline issues among students are few than before. Some students have learnt to interact, cooperate, tolerate, with their peers accordingly, respect and understand each other than before. I have also observed change in the use of skills, talents. For example, they are ready to take leadership roles, talking to a crowd, defending their work, clarifying concepts, and presenting their work with confidence (Interview, T3/S2).

This assertion concurs with Kidd and Czerniawski (2010) and NSCALL (2003) that different skills are assessed through observations on what the students have done, are doing or completing a task with a partner and change of behavior when interacting with their peers. This is in agreement with Shaba's (2020) findings in his study, the effectiveness of SCs on academic performance of students in CDSS: Mvera Cluster, which established that through SCs students were able to speak out, communicate more clearly, with confidence and they became active in class. In addition, Fidel and Retimi (2014) agrees that there is change in behavior, as students demonstrate and present reports on readings thus showcasing the different skills acquired through SCs. It needs one who has a critical eye and passion for the innovation to assess the students through

observation as this mode of assessment is mostly done in practical subjects not content as well as innovations like SCs.

Furthermore, the study has established role-play as another assessment technique used in checking students' performance on the work given. Through SCs, students are given a task where they are required to spontaneously act out a real-life situation. Some respondents expressed this and one stated that:

I use role-play as one of the ways for assessing students' work. I give them a topic to discuss during SCs and ask them to role play during lesson consolidation (Interview, T2/S3).

SCs lesson observation validated the information given by the teacher. The students were given a task during SCs session. They were to discuss and prepare a role-play, which was to be showcased during SCs lesson consolidation. The assignment was; *Discuss and role-play the three arms and functions of the government*. The students did as they were assigned.

The above is a new development on assessment techniques that teachers use in order to determine students' performance after being engaged in SCs sessions. This technique was not found among the literature that was reviewed and neither does it exist in the MoEST (2015) SCs guidelines. The teachers used their own initiatives to come up with a way of helping the students understand the concepts under study. Thus, the students were to first read the information on the topic, then discuss on the roles under the jurisdiction of each arm of the government. Then later they had to act out the roles. The way the students (acted) role-played helped the teacher assess if the students understood the topic. In this case, the teacher's behaviour acts as an information processing system and the teacher as an information system that functions for aiding the student in acquiring an appropriate change of behavior (Ryan, 1963). Thus, the teacher's actions, whether verbal or non-verbal, have an impact on a student's academic and non-academic behavior as it starts from planning, organization and control of the teaching tasks or teacher behaviors and handles all the involved variables to comprehend the specified goals successfully (Neha, 2013). In this case, the teachers have the mandate to use any technique they may think of, provided the goals that study circles are for, would be achieved. It can then be argued that the creativity as well as the passion that

the teachers have for the SCs drives them to do whatever they can to see the work done and objective achieved.

Contrary to the above, the study has also revealed that in some schools, assessment on SCs activities is not done separately. Work done during SCs sessions is embedded in the usual assessments that the schools make. The respondents claimed that this is because MoEST SCs guideline book is silent on this. Two respondents of the same school expressed this. The participants explained that:

We do not conduct special assessment for SCs only, assessment is inbuilt within other work given to the students like weekly tests, and end of term tests (Interview, T4/S3).

This shows that there are disparities in how assessment in SCs is handled in the schools despite the improvement in performance. The change in performance may not be of higher degree in other schools as students are not assessed on the work given during SCs sessions as the teachers rely on midterm and end of term tests only. However, frequent assessment has a positive impact on students' performance as it encourages the students to read frequently to prepare for any test that may be administered to them at any time.

Basing on the above narratives, it is clear that through presentations, question and answer, observations and role-play, work given during SCs sessions is assessed and role-play is a new development. This is because it does not appear in the literature that was reviewed as well as in the MoEST (2015) SCs guidelines. Looking at the assessment methods used, it can also be argued that mostly teachers import the same methods that they use when teaching usual classrooms to SCs sessions and lesson consolidation activities, provided the methods help realize the intended goals. This is in line with Ryan's (1963) TBT that reflects teacher's behaviour as an information processing system and the teacher as an information system that functions for aiding the pupil in acquiring an appropriate range of behaviour. In this case, the teacher used the different methods that helped in assessing the students in order to have the rightful feedback.

4.4 Influence of Study Circles on students' performance

SCs influence students' performance in a number of ways. The Study has revealed that the use of SCs has helped in improving students' academic performance in Social Studies, skill acquisition as well as social behaviour change. This was revealed through focus group discussions, SC session observations, SC lesson consolidation and interviews with the participants; students and teachers. All participants (teachers) expressed their views as stated below:

Since I started using SCs, I have observed an improvement in students' performance. I have been making this observation when assessing classroom work; during lessons, end of topic and even end of term tests. At first it was surprising to see an improvement in the students' participation and even a rise in the grades they got when given an exercise (Interview, T5/S3).

In the same vein, another respondent had this to say:

SCs help in improving students' performance. This has seen our school sending a good number of students to colleges as well as universities in the years 2017/2018, 2018/2019. That is a great achievement. All this is attributed to SCs since this was not there before SCs were introduced (Interview, T2/S2).

When students were asked through focus group discussion on the benefits of SCs on their education, they acknowledged many benefits among which were the following:

Our performance in class work has improved for the better. Study Circles help us to understand better on what we did not do well or understand in class as at other times it is difficult to seek for clarification when the teacher is teaching because some of us are shy (Students - FGD1/S1).

SCs help us to work hard in order to do well both in lessons and tests or examinations. This is because the work we are to do in SCs, one is forced to read or study so that we participate or contribute in the SCs discussions. No one is ready to be seen as a failure (kape) during SCs activity. This has instilled a hardworking spirit in us resulting in

improving our performance not only in Social Studies but also in other subjects (Students- FGD3/S3).

SCs help us acquire new knowledge through the discussions where we share knowledge on the topic we are working on. This is because at other times we are given topics to read, make summaries (make our own notes), discuss during SC sessions before the topic is covered in class. Furthermore, through SCs discussions, a lot of work is covered and we do not mind whether the work is not going to be taught in class, the most important thing to us is to finish the syllabus (Students - FGD2/S2).

An analysis on the documents (SCs group exercise books) showed that there was positive change in students learning behaviour. This was evidenced by the marks/grades that were awarded on the work, which had been assigned to them previously. Through the documents, it was observed that there were some changes (an increase) on marks being given. For example, during the first SCs sessions exercises, students could get 4 or 5 out of 10 but as time went, the marks awarded also improved; for example, 9 out of 10, 10 out of 10. This shows that SCs sessions exercises helped in improving students' performance. Through discussions and explanations at SCs group level, students' understanding and acquisition of knowledge are enhanced. This is because students devise their own ways of dealing or handling the content that was done in class but they did not understand, and some utilize that chance to ask for clarity from their peers where they did not understand, hence bringing a positive change on performance not only at SCs level but also at class level.

The narratives above indicate that SCs are playing a vital role in improving students' academic performance. The findings are consistent with assertions by Fidel and Retimi, 2014; Mc Cathy, 2009; Pan and Mutcher, 2014; Sani, 2020; Shaba, 2020; Whittingham, 2014; who argue that there have been improvements in students' performance due to the use of SCs. Basing on this, it can rightly be argued that, SCs help students develop a hard-working spirit, which translates into good academic performance that is enhanced through reading or studying in readiness for SCs sessions. This is because students know that they are to contribute towards the topic under discussion. This has

helped to instill a reading culture among the students. Thus, fulfilling MoEST (2015) aim for introducing SCs in public schools in Malawi; as Students are to read extensively and intensively for a subject or topic they are to discuss, thereby having a wider coverage as well as a deeper understanding of the content. These are outcomes of teachers' efforts in setting norms of teaching and learning that are best suited for achieving the desired teaching-learning objectives (Ryan, 1963). In this case, through the use of SCs, the relative permanent changes in the behavior of students are being portrayed (Kumar, 2012). It can therefore be argued that some of the changes in academic performance emanate from the activities the teacher introduces to SCs sessions in order to produce learning.

The study has also established that through SCs students develop different skills. Through observations done on SC sessions, lesson consolidation, interviews as well as focus group discussions, it was revealed that students also develop skills and social behaviour change through their participation in SCs. However, the skills are used not only in school but also individually as well as in their communities. All the participants under focus group discussion as well as interviews expressed this. Below are their comments:

Through SCs, most of us have developed skills, which we did not have before. We are now able to study for understanding, solve problems on our own (problem solving), interact with friends properly and cooperation among us (Students - FGD3/S3).

Because of SCs, we are able to communicate properly, think critically, build an argument, and have developed leadership skills. This is because one is to take a leadership position like chairperson, secretary to help run the SCs sessions. These leadership positions are rotational (Students- FGD2/S2).

When teachers were asked on skill development amongst Social Studies students since they started involving them in Social Studies SCs, they had similar sentiments. For example, one said:

There has been an improvement in the way students handle and perceive things. They have developed different skills that are useful to their learning and day-to-day experiences. The skills include

analytical skills, decision-making, research skills, public speaking, organizing skills among the many (Interview, T1/S1)

On the other hand, students commented on behavioral change amongst themselves since the commencement of Study Circles in their schools:

SCs are good. They have helped to minimize discipline cases in our classes and at this school. This is because most of the times we are busy, and we do not have more time to do evil things, which can harm our future (Students- FGD3/S3)

The narratives by all the respondents show the positive influence of SCs amongst students. Students develop different skills and there is change in behaviour as a result of their participation in SCs. As noted in 4.1, through SCs, students develop study skills which most of the students do not have and interpersonal relationship skills, which lack in most of the students. This concurs with Mc Cathy's (2009) findings on the role of SCs on students' performance, which indicated that SCs positively affected the learning outcomes of the students. The students were able to speak out, communicate more clearly and with confidence as well as being active in class. Fidel and Retimi (2014) supports the same through his study on Distance Learners that through SCs, students develop different skills and competencies individually as well as in groups as they share ideas on a topic and experiences, teach each other and develop group study skills through the cooperative work portrayed through Social studies SCs, and develop constructive criticisms.

Furthermore, students were able to organise points (categorising facts) and write them in a logical manner. They also portrayed the skill of critical thinking through the questions they asked and the responses they were giving. In addition, they were confident when presenting their work to the class. The students could argue where they felt the facts given were not clear and needed clarification. SCs sessions observations, SCs lesson consolidation observations, substantiated this.

The acquisition of skills by students through SCs sessions and activities is in line with Ryan's (1963) Teacher behavior theory assertion that teacher's actions whether verbal

or non-verbal, have an impact on pupil's academic and non-academic behavior thus the activities given are central to knowledge as well as skill development of the students. The minimization of discipline issues at classroom level and school level as explained in the narrative is a new finding, which does not exist in the literature that was reviewed. However, this finding is of great importance to schools as time wasters are minimised and much time is dedicated to academic work, which certainly leads to good results.

4.5 Challenges teachers face when using Study Circles

Social Studies teachers face a number of problems when using SCs. The Interviews revealed that teachers face a number of challenges that hinder their effectiveness in the use of SCs. The study revealed shortage of teaching and learning resources, lack of sense of commitment, lack of proper training on the facilitators, lack of monitoring and evaluation of the innovation by MoEST officials and unfriendly weather. All the participants raised the issue and one had this to say:

Inadequate teaching and learning resources to use when conducting SCs sessions is the major problem I face. The school does not have enough books that students may use as reference materials when conducting SCs. At other times, I am forced to photocopy the section, which the students are to use in their discussions. Students also lack exercise books where to write SCs session work. The school is supposed to provide this to the Study Circle groups (Interview, T1/S1).

Observations made during SCs sessions, validated the above assertion. A group of between seven and eleven students were seen crowding around a book trying to look for information on a given task.

Inadequate teaching and learning resources obstruct the smooth implementation of SCs hence hindering the achievement of the objective of the SCs innovation. The narrative above agrees with Sani's (2020) research findings on the history of the implementation of SCs in public schools in Machinga district. The findings cited lack of teaching and learning resources such as textbooks as a hindrance to the smooth running of SCs activities. In agreement, Bjerkaker's (2014) study conducted in Scandinavian countries on changing communities mentioned lack of appropriate study materials as a deterrence

in the active involvement of members of the SC in the learning process. It was evident from the findings that in such cases, teachers provide students with papers for writing the work given. At other times, students are compelled to find their own resources. This frustrates teachers' efforts of helping the students acquire the necessary skills and knowledge.

The study has also revealed lack of students' commitment on tasks given as another problem faced by Social Studies teachers when implementing SCs. The students shun away from SCs sessions. Some participants expressed their disappointment on the state of affairs as explained below:

Students do not consider SCs as something of benefit to them but a yoke. It is the teachers who show interest and know the benefits of SCs on students' education. This behavior makes us teachers force the students to work by giving them punishments either to re-do the work that their partners did or sweep or mop classes (Interview, T4/S3).

Students echoed the same during focus group discussions:

Some of our friends run away during SCs' time. This is because of the time the SCs are conducted. Since they are done after we knock off, most of us are hungry and exhausted. Group leaders take note of the names and report to the teacher who later gives punishment to the absconders (Student-FGD2/S2).

This finding shows that the students do not have the sense of ownership of the innovation. This is in line with Brocket and Hiemstra's (1991) claims that students fail to take responsibility of their own learning as they mostly think that SCs are for the school and teachers. This drain teachers' energy and even fellow students' interest since they take the activities lightly, leading to reluctant participation. This concurs with Kaplan et.al's (2007) findings in their study on Self-direction in SCs who cited lack of sense of ownership over the process of SCs by participants as a challenge. This is a setback as in the end some will emulate the absconders' habits, which will consequently lead to poor performance of the students and failure to acquire skills that are developed through one's participation in SCs sessions. Despite all this, teachers try to make SCs

sessions functional by encouraging the students to participate and giving them punishments when they miss SCs sessions for no apparent reasons.

The study has further revealed lack of proper training on the facilitators or implementers of SCs who are teachers as another challenge. These sentiments were aired out by one participant who explained as follows:

I as an implementer of SCs was not properly trained on how to go about handling SCs. The head teachers were the ones who got trained and later had to orient us. This is why most teachers shun from participating or supervising and giving work to students in SC activities. Lack of training has contributed to lack of uniformity in the way SCs sessions are handled from school to school. It could have been fair if training could have been offered to at least one teacher per department not only administrators who are busy with office work (Interview, T3/S2).

This finding shows that though SCs are in use in schools, teachers implement them unwillingly and out of passion. They feel that the procedures did not go on well since it was the head teachers who were trained who later trained the teachers. The sentiments above are in line with Sani (2020) findings on tracing the history of the implementation of SCs in public schools in Machinga district that some teachers were not oriented on SCs and the training was done on senior officers at the division, making the teachers to reluctantly implement SCs. In this case it shows that some officers who were trained to train the teachers did not do a good job. Further to that, teachers feel that they are sidelined when it is money issues (allowances), yet they are the ones on the helm of the implementation. Though the cascade model of professional development is used for its effectiveness and easy follow-ups, to a certain extent it poses problems as there is reluctance from the implementers since they are not involved at the onset. In this case, at least a teacher from the schools was to be trained alongside senior quality assurance officers (SQAS) and head teachers, to help in the implementation. This could ease the tensions and reluctance from the teachers.

Another new development that the study has revealed is lack of monitoring of the innovation by MoEST officials since its inception in all public secondary schools in 2016. Almost all the participants stated this. One of the respondents said:

Since SCs rolled out in schools in 2016, no any official from Ministry of Education came to monitor the progress of SCs. To us teachers, it is a message that SCs are not important at all. This is why in some schools, SCs have died a natural death (Interview, T1/S1).

The finding shows that though head teachers were trained, not all did and are doing a good job due to their busy schedules. In addition, though head teachers may monitor SCs, there is need for external monitoring by SQAS. This may energize the teachers to do their work better. Bearing in mind that education is the hub of every country's development, monitoring the innovations that are propagated is necessary. This helps in evaluating the progress as well as mapping the way forward.

Unfriendly weather is another problem that the study has revealed. Through interviews and focus group discussion, it has transpired that SCs sessions are mostly conducted at an open space (not in classrooms) due to limited space. This means that the students are exposed to too much sun, rain, and windy conditions, which hinder the smooth participation of students during the sessions. Participants in focus group discussion had this to say:

During the rainy season, SC sessions are disturbed or not done due to lack of space as they are done outside. This is because our classes are occupied by Open school students (Students- FGD2/S2).

Basing on the findings, it shows that adverse weather conditions affect proper implementation of SCs. Since Open secondary schools (OSS) contribute towards the running costs of the host school in terms of payment of bills, maintenance of infrastructure, security and cost of development projects (MCDE, 2017), it could be fair if part of the money could be used for the construction of shelters which may be used for different purposes, one of which being SCs sessions. The new developments to the study substantiate that there are more challenges that the implementers of SCs face which were not thought of, are a revelation to all, and need to be addressed.

4.6 Chapter summary

The chapter has presented and discussed the findings of the study on the use of Study Circles in the teaching of Social Studies in CDSSs in Blantyre urban in relation to Ryan's (1963) Teacher behaviour theory and literature review. The study has revealed a number of interesting findings as summarised in this section. The research has established different strategies that Social Studies teachers employ when using SCs, namely, discussion, question and answer, presentations, role-plays and explanation. It has also found out that teachers use a number of methods to assess students' progress, which are presentations, role-plays and question and answer. Furthermore, the study has revealed that the use of SCs had a positive impact on learners, namely, improvement in students' performance in Social Studies, acquisition of other skills and change in their social behaviour. Finally, the study has revealed the challenges that Social Studies teachers face when using SCs. The challenges include shortage of teaching and learning materials, lack of students' commitment on tasks given, of the innovation (SCs) by the students, lack of training for the teachers on how to implement SCs as well as lack of monitoring of SCs by MoEST officials and unfriendly weather conditions. A critical analysis of these findings in relation to the reviewed literature indicated that not all the results are unique to Malawi except for the unfriendly weather conditions, behaviour change at class level and school level. The most unique finding is that teachers devise their own ways of implementing the SCs innovation and handling assessment despite the guidelines that the MoEST's had put in place, so as to meet their own and school's goals. The rest corroborate with those from other countries in both Africa and other continents. The next chapter concludes the study and highlights its implications and areas for further study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Chapter overview

This chapter presents conclusions and implications based on the findings of the study on the use of SCs in the teaching of Social Studies in Malawi's CDSSs under Teacher Behaviour Theory. The sections in this chapter present conclusions of the study, implications and areas for further study or research. The main research question for the study was: how do Social Studies teachers make use of SCs as a strategy to improve learning? This question was explored through four sub-research questions that were: What strategies do Social Studies teachers employ when using SCs? How do SCs influence students' performance in Social Studies? What assessment techniques do teachers use to determine the functionality of SCs when teaching Social studies? What challenges do Social Studies teachers face when implementing SCs in the teaching of Social Studies? The following section presents conclusions of the study with regards to these questions.

5.2 Conclusions

On strategies that Social Studies teachers employ when using SCs, it can be concluded that participatory pedagogies were used. These were discussion, question and answer, presentations, explanation and role-play. Thus the usual teaching and learning methods were used to help the students understand the concepts under study since they are of different backgrounds, to help the students to be creative, self-reliant, gain confidence and to achieve their own goals as well as those of the schools. This is in line with Ryan's (1963) teacher behaviour theory and Kumar's (2013) argument that a teacher's actions are done with the intention to produce learning or bring relatively permanent changes in the behavior as well as assessment of students.

On the question of assessment techniques teachers use to determine the functionality of SCs when teaching Social Studies, it can be concluded that presentations, question and answer, observations and role play are used. They are used during SCs lesson consolidation. These assessment methods help the students to acquire different skills both in academic and human development. The research has noted that this is a teacher's own initiative as it does not appear in MoEST's (2016) guidelines. This resonates well with Ryan's (1963) Teacher behaviour theory, which states that a teacher acts as an information processing system in aiding the students to acquire an appropriate change of behaviour since they use any technique they feel will bring the required change to students' learning.

On the influence of SCs on students' performance in Social studies, it can be concluded that the use of SCs has helped in improving students' academic performance in Social Studies, skill acquisition and social behaviour change. The changes were observed in answering questions not only in SCs lesson consolidation activities but also in classroom work, during lessons, end of topic and end of term tests. Students have also developed skills that are used not only in school but also in their homes and communities. These include critical thinking, creative thinking, decision-making, public speaking, organising, analytical and a reading culture.

The study further revealed that SCs help in students' behavioral change as evidenced in the reduction of discipline issues at classroom level. This finding concurs with Fidel and Retimi's (2014) argument that through SCs, students develop different skills and competencies. This is because of teachers' actions whether verbal or non-verbal (Ryan, 1963) that tend to have a positive impact on students' academic and non-academic behaviour. The activities influence knowledge acquisition, skill development and behavioral change.

On challenges faced by teachers when using SCs, the study has concluded that there are a number of challenges. The challenges include shortage of teaching and learning resources, lack of sense of ownership of SCs by students, lack of proper training and unfriendly weather. The study found that the innovations that the government puts in place through the Ministry of Education, for example, SCs may have a great impact on the education system and development of the nation. This is because it is those who are

well educated and have the necessary skills who may contribute positively towards their own living and the development of a country.

5.3 Overall conclusion

The study has shown that teachers employ different strategies to enhance learning and understanding of the concepts that students had worked on during SCs sessions. Work done during SCs sessions is assessed during SCs lesson consolidation. However, there are many challenges that teachers encounter when using SCs which hamper the smooth running of the innovation. Despite the challenges, SCs help in improving students' performance in Social Studies, skill acquisition and positive behavioral change among students.

5.4 Implications of the study

From the conclusions drawn from the findings of this study, the following are the implications that can be noted about the functionality of SCs in Secondary schools in Malawi:

- The introduction of SCs in Malawi's public secondary schools to help in improving the quality of education was an important intervention.
- SCs help in enhancing the reading culture among the students and development of different skills that are essential not only in their education but also in personal development.
- The Ministry of Education should help in monitoring of innovations (SCs). This is important because it will help in the sustainability of the innovations and achieving the goal the innovation was introduced for.
- Continuous Professional Development (CPDs) are important and should be conducted often to help teachers share, boost their knowledge, skills and refresh their minds.
- Teachers should be encouraged to come up with their own ways or modes of achieving schools' goals.
- Schools as implementers of different innovations should be encouraged to modify innovations to fit their needs.
- Students must be encouraged to be responsible for their learning, as this will help them to succeed in their education.

5.5 Areas for further study

This study suggests the following areas for further research:

- A study on the impact of open secondary schools on SCs activities of the main school.
- A study on the use of SCs in open and distance learning in higher Educational institutions.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter of approval from UNIMAREC



VICE-CHANCELLOR
Prof. Samson M.I. Sajidu, BSc MEd, MPhil Cantab, PhD MEd.

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
P.O. Box 280, Zomba, Malawi

Our Ref: 04/22/137
Your Ref:

Telephone: (265) 1 526 622
Fax: (265) 1 524 031
E-mail: vc@unima.ac.mw

25th July, 2022

Ms. Rosemary Zibophe
MA in Curriculum Studies
C/O CATS Department
University of Malawi
P.O. Box 280
Zomba

Dear Ms. Zibophe

**RESEARCH ETHICS AND REGULATORY APPROVAL AND PERMIT FOR
PROTOCOL NO. P.04/22/137: EXPLORING THE USE OF STUDY CIRCLES IN
THE TEACHING OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN SELECTED COMMUNITY DAY
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BLANTYRE URBAN**

Having satisfied all the relevant ethical and regulatory requirements, I am pleased to inform you that the above referred research protocol has officially been approved. You are now permitted to proceed with its implementation. Should there be any amendments to the approved protocol in the course of implementing it, you shall be required to seek approval of such amendments before implementation of the same.

This approval is valid for one year from the date of issuance of this approval. If the study goes beyond one year, an annual approval for continuation shall be required to be sought from the University of Malawi Research Ethics Committee (UNIMAREC) in a format that is available at the Secretariat.

Once the study is completed, you are required to furnish the Committee and the Principal with a final report of the study. The Committee reserves the right to carry out compliance

inspection of this approved protocol at any time as may be deemed by it. As such, you are expected to properly maintain all study documents including consent forms.

Wishing you a successful implementation of your study.

Yours Sincerely,



Prof. Alister Munthali
CHAIRPERSON OF UNIMAREC



CC: Vice Chancellor
Deputy Vice Chancellor
Acting University Registrar
• College Finance Officer
Dean of Research
Compliance Officer

Appendix 2: Letter of Approval from the EDM of SWED

Telephone: (265) 01 912 437/870 677
Fax: (265) 01 870 821
E-mail: swed@sndp.org.mw

All correspondences should be addressed to:
The Education Division Manager



In reply please quote: Ref. No. SWED/1/41

SOUTH WEST EDUCATION DIVISION
PRIVATE BAG 386
CHICHIRI
BLANTYRE 3
MALAWI

1st August 2022

To : All Headteacher,
South West Education Division

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

Reference should be made to your letter dated 25th July 2022.

Please be informed that permission has been granted to **Rosemary T. Zibophe** to carry out the above activity. By copy of this letter, concerned headteachers are requested to provide necessary assistance while making sure that the exercise does not interfere with normal school activities.

It is expected that individual consent shall be sought from the participants and all research ethics shall be observed.

Yours faithfully,



Rita Mkomaathu
Quality Assurance Officer
For: THE EDUCATION DIVISION MANAGER (SWED)

**EDUCATION DIVISION MANAGER
SOUTH WEST EDUCATION DIVISION
DIAS SECTION
01 AUG 2022
PRIVATE BAG 386
CHICHIRI, BLANTYRE 3**

Appendix 3: Social Studies Teacher's Consent Form

TO: Social studies teacher

FROM: Rosemary T. Zibophe

C/O Domasi College of Education

P.O Box 49

Domasi

Date: _____

EXPLORING THE USE OF STUDY CIRCLES IN THE TEACHING OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN SELECTED COMMUNITY DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BLANTYRE URBAN

I am Rosemary T. Zibophe, studying for a Master of Education in Curriculum and Teaching Studies (Social Studies) at the University of Malawi. I am requesting your participation in my research study.

The aim of the study is to explore the Use of Study Circles in the teaching of Social Studies in selected schools in Blantyre Urban. This study therefore is to explore what Social Studies teachers actually do during Study Circle sessions as well as lessons (classrooms) in order to improve students' performance. It is expected that the Ministry of Education will benefit from the study through its findings and recommendations, which will provide feedback on how Study circles are being used in the teaching and learning process, and the challenges teachers face when implementing Study circles. In addition, the information will help the teachers to emulate good practices (if any) done by their fellow teachers. It will further enable the MoE to find ways of enhancing or supporting the policies put in place for the benefit of the schools, teachers, students as well as the community.

You are therefore asked to participate because you are a Social Studies teacher who is directly involved in the implementation of SCs. You will be interviewed, observed during lessons and SCs sessions.

Your participation is voluntary, you may decide to take part or not. In addition, you will be asked to sign a consent form if you may decide to participate.

As a way of ensuring that accurate information is generated from you, the interviews will be tape recorded and later be destroyed after use. This is to ensure that the information generated is used solely for the purpose of this study. The information generated will be treated as confidential as no part of it will be shared. It will only be for the purpose of this study. The school's identity as well as your identity will be concealed. This will be ensured through the use of codes.

If you may require more information in regards of the study you may contact the Chairperson of University of Malawi Research Ethics Committee (UNIMAREC) on the following contact details

: Professor Alister Munthali, UNIMAREC Chairperson, P.O Box 280, Zomba,
Phone: 0 888 822 004. E-mail unimarec@unima.ac.mw

Rosemary T. Zibophe

Research student

University of Malawi

zibopher@gmail.com

0888 555 253/0999 327 843

Appendix 4: Kalata ya Chivomerezo ya Aphunzitsi

KUPITA KWA: Aphunzitsi a Social studies

KUCHOKERA KWA: Rosemary T. Zibophe

C/O Domasi College of Education

P.O Box 49

Domasi

Date:_____

**KUFUFUZA MOMWE MA STUDY CIRCLES AMAGWIRITSIDWIRA
NTCHITO POPHUNZITSA PHUNZIRO LA SOCIAL STUDIES
MMASUKULU ENA A COMMUNITY DAY SECONDARY A
MUMZINDA WA BLANTYRE**

Ndine Rosemary Zibophe, amene ndikuphunzira maphunziro adigiri ya pamwamba pa sukulu ya university of Malawi. Ndikukupemphani kuti mutengeko mbali pakafukufuku amene ndikupanga.

Cholinga cha kafukufukuyu ndi kufufuza momwe ma Study circles amagwiritsidwira ntchito pophunzitsa phunziro la Social studies mmasukulu ena a CDSS a mumzinda wa Blantyre. Kudzera mukafukufuku uyu ndikufuna kudziwa zomwe aphunzitsi amachita panthawi ya mastudy circles komanso zomwe amakachita mkalasi panthawi yomwe akuphunzitsa Social studies pokhudza ntchito yomwe ophunzira anachita nthawi ya

Study circles zomwe zimathandizira ophunzirawa kuchita bwino pa maphunziro awo. Pali chiyembekezo choti kudzera muzotsatira zakafukufuku ameneyu, Unduna wa maphunziro ukhala ndimwayi odziwa bwinobwino momwe ma study circles akugwilitsiridwa ntchito pophunzitsa komanso kuphunzira komanso mavuto omwe aphunzitsi amakumana nawo pogwiritsa ntchito ma Study circles. Kuonjezera apo zotsatirazo zidzathandiza aphunzitsi ena kutsatira

njira zabwino zomwe anza akutsatira. zotsatirazo zidzathandizanso a undunawu kupeza njira zolimbikitsira ndondomeko za boma (policies) zokhudza maphunziro zomwe limakhazikitsa kuti aphunzitsi, ophunzira,anthu ena komanso madera apindule.

Mukupemphedwa kutenga mbali mukafukufuku ameneyu chifukwa mumaphunzitsa Social studies komanso mumatenga mbali pothandizira kuti mastudy circles okhudza phunziroli atheke. Muyembekezere kufunsidwa mafunso, kuonerera momwe ma study circles amachitikira komanso momwe ophunzira amatengera mbali pa nthawi, momwe mumachitira pofuna kulumikiza zomwe ophunzira achita pa mastudy circles ndi pomwe mukuphunzitsa Social studies. Kutenga mbali mukafukufuku ameneyu nkosakakamiza. Mukavomera kutenga mbali mudzapemphedwa kusayina kalata yachivomerezo).

Ngati njira imodzi yoonetsetsa kuti ndikutenga mfundo molondora kuchokera kwainu, Mtolamau(tepirikoda) idzagwiritsidwa ntchito potola komanso kusunga zomwe takambirana. Kafukufukuyu akadzatha, zomwe zinasungidwa mu mtolamawu zidzafufutidwa pofuna kuonetsetsa kuti zisagwiritsidwe ntchito ndi anthu ena. Mfundo zomwe ndidzatolere panthawi ya SCs komanso nthawi yomwe mukuphunzitsa zidzagwiritsidwa ntchito pa kafukufuku uyu yekha ndipo sizidzapatsidwa kwa munthu wina aliyense chifukwa ndi zachinsinsi. Dzina la sukulu yanu silidzatchulidwa komanso dzina lanu lidzabisidwa.

Ngati mungafune kudziwa zambiri zokhudza kafukufukuyu mukhoza mukhoza kuyankhulana ndi Wapampando woona ndondomeko za kapangidwe ka kafukufuku ku sukulu ua ukachenjede ya Malawi pogwiritsa ntchito keyala iyi: Professor Alister Munthali, UNIMAREC Chairperson, P.O Box 280, Zomba, Phone: 0 888 822 004. E-mail unimarec@unima.ac.mw

Rosemary T. Zibophe

Research student

University of Malawi

zibopher@gmail.com

08 88 555 253/0999 327 843

Appendix 5: Social Studies Student's Consent Form

TO: Social studies Student

FROM: Rosemary T. Zibophe

C/O Domasi College of Education

P.O Box 49

Domasi

Date:_____

EXPLORING THE USE OF STUDY CIRCLES IN THE TEACHING OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN SELECTED COMMUNITY DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BLANTYRE URBAN

I am Rosemary T. Zibophe, studying for a Master of Education in Curriculum and Teaching Studies (Social Studies) at the University of Malawi. I am requesting your participation in my research study.

The aim of the study is to explore the Use of Study Circles in the teaching of Social Studies in selected schools in Blantyre Urban. This study therefore is to explore what Social Studies teachers actually do during Study Circle sessions as well as classrooms in order to improve students' performance. Your participation in the study will be during Study circle sessions and lessons. It is expected that the Ministry of Education will benefit from the study through its findings and recommendations. These will provide feedback on how Study circles are being used in the teaching and learning process, and the challenges teachers face when implementing Study circles. It will further enable the MoE to find ways of enhancing or supporting the policies put in place for the benefit of the schools, teachers, students as well as the community.

You are therefore asked to participate because you are a Social Studies student who participate in Study circles sessions and lessons. You will be observed during lessons and SCs sessions.

Your participation is voluntary, you may decide to take part or not. In addition, you will be asked to sign a consent form if you may decide to participate.

The information generated from observations will be used solely for the purpose of this study and will be treated as confidential as no part of it will be shared. The school's identity as well as your identity will be concealed. This will be ensured through the use of codes.

If you may require more information in regards of the study you may contact my supervisors on the following contact details: Professor Alister Munthali, UNIMAREC Chairperson, P.O Box 280 Zomba, Cell: 0 888 822 004, E-mail unimarec@unima.ac.mw

Rosemary T. Zibophe
Research student
University of Malawi
zibopher@gmail.com
0888 555 253/0999 327 843



Appendix 6: Kalata ya Chivomerezo ya Ophunzira

KUPITA KWA: Ophunzira a phunziro la Social studies

KUCHOKERA KWA: Rosemary T. Zibophe

C/O Domasi College of Education

P.O Box 49

Domasi

TSIKU:_____

**KUFUFUZA MOMWE MA STUDY CIRCLES AMAGWIRITSIDWIRA
NTCHITO POPHUNZITSA PHUNZIRO LA SOCIAL STUDIES
MMASUKULU ENA A COMMUNITY DAY SECONDARY A
MUMZINDA WA BLANTYRE**

Ndine Rosemary Zibophe, amene ndikuphunzira maphunziro adigiri ya pamwamba pa sukulu ya ukachenjede (university of Malawi). Ndikukupemphani kuti mutengeko mbali pakafukufuku amene ndikupanga.

Cholinga cha kafukufukuyu ndi kufufuza momwe ma Study circles amagwiritsidwira ntchito pophunzitsa phunziro la Social studies mmasukulu ena a CDSS a mumzinda wa Blantyre. Kudzera mukafukufuku uyu ndikufuna kudziwa zomwe aphunzitsi amachita panthawi ya mastudy circles komanso zomwe amakachita mkalasi panthawi yomwe akuphunzitsa Social studies pokhudza ntchito yomwe ophunzira anapanga nthawi ya Study circles zomwe zimathandizira ophunzirawa kuchita bwino pa maphunziro awo. kutenga mbali kwanu kudzafunika nthawi yomwe mudzakhale mukupanga ma study circles a phunziro la social studies komanso nthawi yomwe mukuphunzira nkalasi pa zomwe munapanga nthawi ya Study circles. Pali chiyembekezo choti kudzera muzotsatira zakafukufuku ameneyu, Unduna wa maphunziro udzakhala ndimwayi odziwa bwinobwino momwe ma study circles akugwilitsiridwa ntchito pophunzitsa komanso kuphunzira, komanso mavuto omwe aphunzitsi amakumana nawo pogwiritsa ntchito ma Study circles. zotsatirazo zidzathandizanso a undunawu kupeza njira zolimbikitsira ndondomeko za boma

(policies) zokhudza maphunziro zomwe limakhazikitsa kuti aphunzitsi, ophunzira, anthu ena komanso madera apindule).

Mukupemphedwa kutenga mbali mukafukufuku ameneyu chifukwa mumaphunzira Social studies komanso mumatenga mbali mu mastudy circles okhudza phunziroli).

Kutenga mbali mukafukufuku ameneyu nkosakakamiza. Mukavomera kutenga mbali mukupemphedwa kusayina kalata yachivomerezo.

Mfundo zomwe ndingatolere omwe panthawi ya SCs komanso nthawi yomwe mukuphunzira zidzagwiritsidwa ntchito pa kafukufuku uyu yekha ndipo sizidzapatsidwa kwa munthu wina aliyense chifukwa ndi zachinsinsi. Dzina la sukulu yanu silidzatchulidwa komanso dzina lanu lidzabisidwa.

Ngati mungafune kudziwa zambiri zokhudza kafukufukuyu mukhoza mukhoza kuyankhulana ndi Wapampando woona ndondomeko za kapangidwe ka kafukufuku ku sukulu ua ukachenjede ya Malawi pogwiritsa ntchito keyala iyi: Professor Alister Munthali, UNIMAREC Chairperson, P.O Box 280 Zomba, Cell: 0 888 822 004, E-mail unimarec@unima.ac.mw

Rosemary T. Zibophe
Research student
University of Malawi
zibopher@gmail.com
0888 555 253/0999 327 843



Appendix 7: General Consent Form

PROJECT TITLE: EXPLORING THE USE OF STUDY CIRCLES IN THE TEACHING OF SOCIAL STUDENTS IN SELECTED COMMUNITY DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BLANTYRE IN URBAN.

- I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study
and have asked and received answers for the questions I raised.
[]
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any
time without giving reasons and my rights will not be affected in anyway. []
- I understand that the information and data collected by the researcher will be handled confidentially and my identity will be concealed.
[]
- I agree to take part in the study. []

If you may require more information in regards of the study you may contact Unimarec Chairperson on the following contact details: Professor Alister Munthali, UNIMAREC Chairperson, P.O Box 280 Zomba, Cell: 0 888 822 004, E-mail unimarec@unima.ac.mw

-----	-----	-----
Name of the person taking consent	Signature	Date
-----	-----	-----
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date

Appendix 8: General Consent Form (Kalata ya Chivomerezo)

**MUTU WA KAFUKUFUKU: KUFUFUZA MOMWE MA STUDY CIRCLES
AMAGWIRITSIDWIRA NTCHITO POPHUNZITSA PHUNZIRO LA SOCIAL
ST UDIES MMASUKULU ENA A COMMUNITY DAY SECONDARY A
MUMZINDA WA BLANTYRE.**

- Ndikutsimikiza kuti ndawerenga ndipo ndamvetsetsa zokhudza kafukufuku uyu komanso mafunso omwe ndinali nawo okhudza kafukufukuyu ndayankhidwa. []
- Ndatsimikiziridwa kuti kutenga mbali mukafukufuku ameneyu nkosakakamiza ndipo ndili ndi ufulu kusatenga nawo mbali ndipo ufulu wanga kutero udzalemekezedwa. []
- Ndamvetsetsa kuti mfundo zonse zomwe zingapezeke pakafukufuku uyu komanso dzina laopereka mfundozo zidzasungidwa mwachinsinsi. []
- Ndavomereza kutenga mbali mukafukufukuyu). []

Ngati mungafune kudziwa zambiri zokhudza kafukufukuyu mukhoza mukhoza kuyankhulana ndi Wapampando woona ndondomeko za kapangidwe ka kafukufuku ku sukulu ua ukachenjede ya Malawi pogwiritsa ntchito keyala iyi: Professor Alister Munthali, UNIMAREC Chairperson, P.O Box 280 Zomba, Cell: 0 888 822 004, E-mail unimarec@unima.ac.mw

-----	-----	-----
Dzina la otenga mbali pakafukufuku	Sayini	Tsiku
-----	-----	-----
ochita kafukufuku	Sayini	Tsiku
		-----Dzina la

Appendix 9: Interview Guide for Social Studies Teachers

Teacher's name/Code.....

Sex.....

Name/School code.....

Date.....

EXPLORING THE USE OF STUDY CIRCLES IN THE TEACHING OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN SELECTED COMMUNITY DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BLANTYRE URBAN

Bio data

Name/code	School	
Professional qualification	Diploma	Degree

1. Knowledge and attitudes of teachers regarding Study Circles

- As a teacher, what knowledge do you have on Study circles?
- How do you use Study circles in the teaching of Social Studies?
- How beneficial are SCs to the teaching of Social Studies?

2. Methods employed in Study Circles to complement the teaching of Social Studies.

- What method/ techniques do you use during study circles?
- How do you use the techniques?
- Why do you use the techniques you have mentioned above?

3. Assessment methods/techniques used when using SCs

- What methods/ techniques do you use when assessing work covered through SCs?
- How do you use the techniques?
- Why do you use the techniques you have mentioned above?
- When do you assess the students?

4. Challenges faced when using SCs

- a. What challenges if any do you face in using SCs?
- b. How do you deal with the challenges?
- c. Do you have anything you may wish to add on the use of SCs in the teaching of Social Studies?

Thank you so much for taking your time to respond to these questions.



Appendix 10: Namulondola wa Mafunso a Aphunzitsi

Dzina la mphunzitsi/Nambala yachinsinsi ya
Mphunzitsi.....
Dzina/Nambala yachinsinsi ya sukulu.....
Mamuna/Mkazi
Tsiku.....

**KUFUFUZA MOMWE MASTUDY CIRCLE AMAGWIRITSIDWIRA
NTCHITO POPHUNZITSA PHUNZIRO LA SOCIAL STUDIES
MMASUKULU ENA A COMMUNITY DAY SECONDARY A
MUMZINDA WA BLANTYRE.**

Bio data

Name/code	School	
Professional qualification	Diploma	Degree

1. Zomwe aphunzitsi akudziwa komanso maganizo awo pa Study circles.
 - a. Inu ngati mphunzitsi mukudziwapo chani za SCs?
 - b. Kodi mumagwiritsa ntchito bwanji SCs paphunziro la Social Studies?
 - c. Kodi ma Study circles ndiofunika bwanji pophunzitsa Social studies?
2. Njira zomwe Study circles imagwiritsa ntchito pothandizira kuphunzitsa Social studies.
 - a. Ndinjira ziti zomwe mumagwiritsa ntchito pothandizira kuphunzitsa Social studies?
 - b. Fotokozani momwe mumagwiritsira ntchito njirazo.
 - c. Chifukwa chiyani mumagwiritsa ntchito njira zomwe mwatchulazo?
3. Njira zomwe zimagwiritsidwa ntchito pofuna kudziwa ngati ophunzira amvetsa zomwe amapanga nthawi ya Study circles.

- a. Ndinjira ziti zomwe mumagwiritsa ntchito pofuna kudziwa momwe ophunzira akuchitira
pantchito yomwe anachita nthawi ya Study circles?
- b. Kodi njirazo mumazigwiritsa ntchito bwanji?
- c. Nchifukwa chiyani mumagwiritsa ntchito njira zimenezo?
- d. Kodi ophunzirawa mumawayesa nthawi yanji?

4. Mavuto omwe aphunzitsi amakumana nawo pogwiritsa ntchito Stydy circles.

- a. Fotokozani zovuta zomwe mumakumana nazo pomwe mukugwiritsa ntchito ma study
circles?
- b. Mumathana nawo bwanji mavutowo?
- c. Pali china chili chonse chomwe mungafune kunena/ kufotokoza zokhudza ma Study circles

Zikomo potenga mbali mukafukufuku uyu.



Appendix 11: Study Circle Observation Guide for Teachers

What should be observed
Role played by teacher in SCs
Role played by students
Teaching and learning methods used during Study Circles
How the methods are used
Type of activities/tasks given to the students
Students' response/reaction to the work
Resources used during Study circles sessions
Assessment on students
Challenges faced by the teacher/supervisor during study circles sessions
Challenges faced by students during Study circles sessions

END OF OBSERVATION SCHEDULE



Appendix 12: Lesson Observation Guide

Area of focus	Comments
Strategies/methods Social studies teachers use in class when handling assignments/work that was/is assigned to students during SCs forums. - -	
Assessment techniques teachers use in class to determine/ check the knowledge and skills the students acquire during study circle activities. - -	
Skills students develop when handling SC activities in class. - - -	
Students 'participation/engagement during the lesson - -	

General comments.....

.....

Appendix 13: Document Analysis Guide

Area of focus	Comments
Preparation of study circle activities	
Methods to be used during the Study circle activities	
Assessment activities	
Grades	

Appendix 14: FGD Guide for Social Studies Students

Student's name/Code.....

Sex.....

Name/School code.....

Date.....

EXPLORING THE USE OF STUDY CIRCLES IN THE TEACHING F SOCIAL STUDIES IN SELECTED COMMUNITY DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BLANTYRE URBAN

1. Do you conduct SCs at your school? (Probe)
2. How often do you meet for SCs?
3. How long is each Study circle session?
4. Explain how SCs are conducted at your school?
5. What do you think are the benefits of SCs to you as a student?
6. What skills have you acquired through participating in SCs?
7. What problems do you encounter during SCs sessions?
8. How do you deal with the problems you encounter during SCs sessions?

Thank you so much for taking your time to respond to these questions.

**Appendix 15: Namulondola wa Mafunso a Ophunzira
Dzina la Ophunzira/Nambala yachinsinsi ya
Ophunzira.....**

Dzina/Nambala yachinsinsi ya sukulu.....

Mamuna/Mkazi

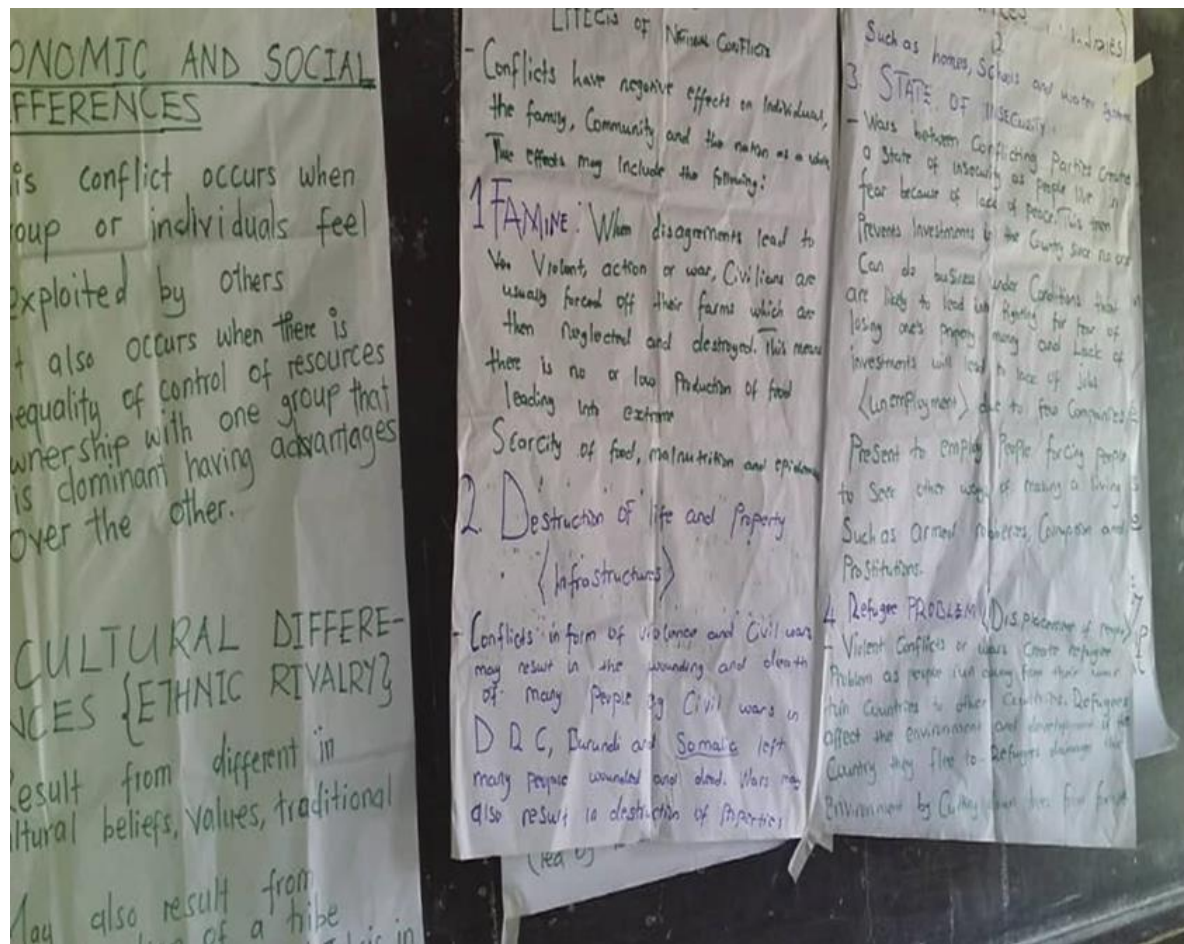
Fomu/Kalasi.....

Tsiku.....

**KUFUFUZA MOMWE MASTUDY CIRCLE AMAGWIRITSIDWIRA
NTCHITO POPHUNZITSA PHUNZIRO LA SOCIAL STUDIES
MMASUKULU ENA A COMMUNITY DAY SECONDARY A
MUMZINDA WA BLANTYRE.**

1. Kodi mumapanga ma Study circle pa sukulu yanu?
2. Kodi mumakumana kangati pa mulungu mmagulu a SCs?
3. Kodi ndinthawi yayitali bwanji yomwe mumakhala mukukambirana mumagulu a SCs?
4. Fotokozani momwe mumapangira ma SCs pasukulu yanu?
5. Kodi ndiubwino wANJI omwe mumaupenza kudzera mu mastudy circle inu ngati
ophunzira?
6. Kodi ndi luso lanji lomwe mwapeza kudzera pakutenga nawo mbali mumastudy circle?
7. Ndimavuto ANJI omwe mumakumana nawo panthawi yomwe mukupanga ma study circle?
8. Kodi mumathana nawo bwanji mavuto omwe mwatchulawo?

Appendix 16: Picture on Study Circle Lesson Consolidation



Appendix 17: SCs observation guide for both teachers and students during SCs lesson consolidation

Research participant	Activities/Role playing	Mark if done or not	Other behaviour/activities observed
Teacher	-giving instructions -asking questions to SCs groups during presentations -probing -explaining -clarifying -consolidating		
SCs group members (students)	-making presentations -answering questions -making clarifications -explaining - listening		
Students (audience)	-listening -Seeking clarification -asking questions -writing down points		