THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE 50/50 FORM ONE SELECTION POLICY ACHIEVES GENDER PARITY AT MALAWI SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS COMPLETION: A CASE STUDY OF SOUTH EAST EDUCATION DIVISION

M.Ed. (POLICY PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP) THESIS

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UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

DECEMBER, 2017

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DECLARATION

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

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my husband, daughter Maclina and my two sons Paul and Grevazio who endured lonely times in my absence and my parents Mr and Mrs S. Banda who encouraged me to like education.

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I would like to acknowledge the assistance that a number of people rendered to me during the development of my thesis.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore whether the 50/50 form one selection policy in District Day Secondary School (DDSS) and Community Day Secondary School (CDSS) achieves gender parity in secondary school completion rates. Specifically, this study compared MSCE completion rates in DDSS and CDSS by gender, gender and school type (DDSS / CDSS) and by gender and school location (urban / rural). The study was conducted in view of the need for Malawi to check her stand on elimination of gender inequalities in education in respect of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) number 3 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number 4 and 5. SDG number 4 obliges member countries to achieve quality education by 2030. This study used quantitative data obtained from 2009 form one selection lists of sampled schools. The results show that gender parity was not attained at form one selection in sampled DDSS. The results also show that gender parity in secondary school completion was not attained in the 2009 cohort at 2012 MSCE in South East Education Division (SEED). Boys' mean secondary school completion rate of all sampled schools (66.3%) was higher than that of girls (58.4%) in the same schools. This study also found that mean MSCE completion gender disparity was very narrow in urban schools (2.5%) compared to that of rural schools (12.1%). The findings indicate a need for more qualitative strategies to support the implementation of the 50/50 form one selection policy to ensure gender parity at MSCE completion.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CDSS	Community Day Secondary school
DDSS	District Day secondary school
EDM	Education Division Manager
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FAWEMA	Forum for Association of Women Educators in Malawi
FPE	Free Primary Education
GABLE	Girls Basic Literacy Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
JCE	Junior Certificate Examination
MANEB	Malawi National Examinations Board
MSCE	Malawi School Certificate Examination
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PSLCE	Primary School Leaving certificate Examinations
SEED	South East Education Division
SDGS	Sustainable Development Goals

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a background to the study. The chapter discusses the importance of education and provides a back ground of the 50/50 selection policy. The chapter also provides statement of problem, purpose, objectives and significance of the study.

1.1 Importance of Education

Education is widely regarded as the route to economic prosperity, the key to scientific and technological advancement, the means to combat unemployment, the foundation of social equity and the means for the spread of political socialization and cultural vitality (Chimombo, 1999). The education system of Malawi is an 8-4-4system. At the age of six years a child is allowed to start standard one at primary school. Learners undergo primary education for eight years and sits for Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations (PSLCE) at the end of the eighth year. From primary school, learners are selected to secondary school where they undergo secondary education for four years. Until 2016, at the end of the second year, learners were sitting for Junior Certificate Examinations. At the end of the fourth year, learners sit for Malawi School Certificate Examinations. From secondary school, learners are selected to university where they undergo tertiary education for a minimum of four years and obtain a degree. Those who are not selected to university are trained in other tertiary institutions.

Article 26 of the1948 United Nations Universal Declaration on human rights states that human beings have a right to education and that education shall be free and compulsory. If education is viewed as a human right, then both boys and girls should have equal opportunities to education since they are all human beings. The same article continues to say that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. This statement calls for no discrimination of any type including gender in education and that this type of education will be directed towards the full development of human personalities in men and women, boys and girls.

Worldwide, people agree that there are many positive effects of female education on measures of individual family health and wellbeing. According to Save the Children in state of the world's Mothers (2005) educated girls and women marry later, have lower maternal and infant mortality rates, have fewer and healthier children, have greater earning capacity, are more likely to participate in political activities, are less likely to be HIV positive and are more likely to send their children to school. One additional year of education reduces child bearing by 0.3 to 0.5 children per woman furthermore educated women are half as likely to have a child that dies before the age of five. In fact, educating girls quite possibly yields a higher rate of return than any other investment available in the developing world (Equate, 2008). Girls' education is an investment that serves as a way to achieve education for all (EFA) (Maluwa- Banda and Kholowa, 2002). Apart from the acquisition of knowledge and values conducive for social evolution, education also enables development of mind, and training in logical and analytical thinking. It allows an individual to acquire organizational, managerial, and administrative skills. Moreover, girls' education enhances self-esteem and improves social and financial status within a community (Equate, 2008)

However, research has shown that there are gender inequalities in school enrolment, retention, completion and achievement in Malawi as well as in other developing countries in the world (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2005 and Chimombo, 1999).In 1990, the government of Malawi signed the EFA (Education for All) declaration (Kendall, 2006). In so doing, it provided impetus and rationale for understanding activities with international donors to improve gender parity in education **(**Kendall, 2006). The MDG3 obliged member countries to reduce, and later on, eliminate gender inequalities in secondary school enrolment, retention and completion among other obligations (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2005). Therefore one can conclude that both the MDG 3 and the EFA declaration aimed at achieving gender parity and later on equality in education. The MDG 3 has been extended in goals for sustainable development which have gender equality as their pillar. Though the MDGs are out dated, countries cannot neglect the MDG 3 since its requirement in gender equality in education is an ongoing requirement in sustainable development goals up to 2030. The 50/50 selection policy can be seen as an imported policy since it originated from international declarations. The government of Malawi introduced 50/50 selection policy in district and community day secondary schools with an aim of reducing gender inequalities in secondary school enrolment, retention and completion.

Gender parity in education reflects sameness of men and women in terms of access to and participation in education (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2008) Achieving parity in enrolment and increasing access to education is necessary but not sufficient for achieving gender equality in education (Subramanian,2000). However it is a “first stage” measure of progress towards gender equality in education. It is true that Parity in enrolment cannot result in parity in completion in a situation where parity has not been accompanied by good quality education

(Equate, 2008). According to Equate (2008), research has shown that girls seem to be more sensitive to school quality issues than boys, and that the quality of teachers has a greater impact on girl's education than for boys' education. However, for gender equality in education to be attained in Malawi, there is need to first address the issue of number of girls that have access to education.

1.2 The 50 /50 selection policy

In 1972, Ministry of Education (MOE) introduced a quota system for the selection of girls into secondary schools. At least one third of the places in co-education government assisted schools were reserved for girls. Kadzamira (1996) noted that gender disparities in enrolment rates were very pronounced at secondary school level in Malawi (Kadzamira 1996). However girls have consistently scored lower marks on the PSLCE which greatly reduced the chances over the years of getting their share of secondary school education (Kadzamira, 1996). Kadzamira (1996) made the following observations about girls in Malawi; throughout the 1980s, girls constituted about a third of the total secondary school enrolment. Due to the quota system which was introduced in 1972, many mixed sex boarding secondary schools were, designed using the same criterion. Even if there was an improvement in girls' performance on the PSLCE, increase in their enrolment would be hampered by the quota system for the selection of girls into secondary schools which was introduced by MOE in 1972.

In the academic year 1980/81, 5,248 girls against 12,758 boys were selected to secondary schools in Malawi. This was 29.2% girls' enrollment. In 1994/95 academic year, girls' enrollment rate was 39.1%. In mixed sex secondary schools of which some were DDSS, a third of the places were reserved for girls. It was against this back ground that the 50/50

form one selection policy was introduced. This policy allows equal number of boys and girls to be selected to DDSS and CDSS.

Free Primary Education (FPE) which Malawi government introduced in 1994 addressed the issue of access at primary level. The increased enrolment and retention at the primary school level inevitably increased demand for the secondary school level (Malawi National Commission for UNESCO, 2008). Secondary education had to open up. This was done by introducing Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS). Apart from addressing the issue of access, the Ministry of Education (MOE) introduced the 50/50 form one selection policy in District Day Secondary School (DDSS) and CDSS to address the issue of gender parity in secondary school access. The DDSS are different from CDSS in some aspects. DDSS receive higher funding than CDSS. They also have better teachers and are associated with better school infrastructure than CDSS. In addition, DDSS enroll pupils who performed better at PSLCE than those who are being enrolled in CDSS. Basing on these aspects, DDSS are considered to be better schools than CDSS.

The 50/50 form one selection policy was introduced in Malawi in 1999 as a response to the national sector plan on access and equity. This policy is imbedded in the National Education Sector Plan; therefore a specific circular was not issued on its onset but only a statement to implement access and equity was made. The national education sector plan incorporated the theme of ***access and equity*** to address the requirement of the MDG 3 on the elimination of the gender inequalities in education in all levels of education by the year 2015. The 50/50 form one selection policy is also being used when selecting boys and girls to start form one in newly built district boarding secondary schools as the boarding is providing equal boarding facilities for boys and girls. Mangochi district boarding secondary

school is an example of a boarding secondary school where this policy is being implemented.

1.3 Statement of problem

Malawi government is a signatory of the Millennium Development Goals (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2005). Millennium Development Goal number three obliged member countries to reduce later on eliminate gender inequalities in school enrolment, retention completion and achievement in all levels by 2015 among other obligations (Aikman and Unterhalter,2005).The MDG 3 has been extended in Sustainable Development Goals number 4 and 5.This means that though the period set to implement the MDGs is over, countries need to work had to attain gender equality in education as a requirement for sustainable development goals number 4 and 5 which are to attain quality education and to attain gender equality by 2030 respectively. According to EMIS 2014/15, there have been gender inequalities in secondary school access, retention, completion and achievement in Malawi. Malawi government through the Ministry of Education introduced the 50/50 form one selection policy in DDSS and CDSS in 1999 as a response to the MDG 3.

The 50/50form one selection policy gives boys and girls equal access to secondary school education. This policy is a step towards gender equality in education. As such, the 50/50 form one selection policy can be linked with sustainable development since countries have identified gender equality as a pillar of sustainable development. The 50/50 form one selection policy has been used in the education system in Malawi from 1999 up to date in DDSS and CDSS. However there has been no assessment of the policy results on secondary school completion of boys and girls in DDSS and CDSS. No study has yet been conducted in Malawi DDSS and CDSS to explore how the policy has affected girls' access to

secondary school education and its impact on completion rates of boys and girls in secondary schools where it is implemented. It is important to explore the extent to which the 50/50 form one selection policy achieves gender parity at MSCE completion. This is important because this policy is one of the significant gender policies in education and yet no feedback on its effect on secondary school completion by gender has been drawn, over 13 years since its implementation.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which the 50/50 form one selection policy achieves gender parity at secondary school completion.

1.5 Main research question of the study

To what extent does the 50/50 form one selection policy achieves gender parity at secondary school completion?

Specific research questions

The specific research questions are:

- How do the secondary school completion rates of boys and girls who are selected to DDSS and CDSS using the 50/50 form one selection policy compare by gender?
- How do secondary school completion rates of boys and girls compare in urban and rural DDSS and CDSS?
- What is the impact of the 50/50 form one selection policy on secondary school completion rates in DDSS and CDSS by gender?

1.6 Significance of the study

According to EMIS 2014/15, Malawi is one of the countries with high gender inequalities in secondary school access. The 50/50 form one selection policy is one of the policies in Malawi that are aimed at eliminating gender disparities in secondary school access, participation and completion. The results of this study is hoped to give feedback of the situation on the ground concerning gender parity in access, participation and secondary school completion.

The 50/50 form one selection policy is a response to the EFA, MDGS, and SDGS. The results of this study is hoped to contribute to the body of literature on gender parity in Malawi. Specifically, it is hoped to provide feedback on how the 50/50 form one selection policy is being implemented and contributing towards attainment of gender parity in MSCE completion rates of male and female students. This information is useful for ensuring attainment of the aim of the policy and for making necessary amendments to the policy.

1.7 Chapter summary

This chapter has provided a back ground to the study. Importance of girls' education and the back ground to the formulation of the 50/50 form one selection policy has been discussed. The statement of problem, significance and purpose of the study has been explained. The research questions of the study have also been outlined. The next chapter reviews the literature related to the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature related to the study. The literature review analyses literature on education policy analysis and challenges of girl child education in Sub Saharan Africa. The right to education for both girls and boys is explored from a human rights perspective. Finally, the chapter discusses the theoretical framework which was used to guide the study.

2.1 Parity and equity

Being female exacerbates an already difficult situation (Equate, 2008), more especially in developing countries like Malawi. Girls are exposed to many factors that prevent them from enrolling, remaining, completing and achieving in education compared to boys. Therefore for gender parity to be achieved in secondary school education, equity is important. Equity is the process of treating girls and boys fairly. To ensure fairness, measures must be available to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent girls and boys from operating on a level playing field (Equate, 2008).

In most developing countries, girls are less likely than boys to enrol in school, stay in school or have their educational needs met through non-formal means (Equate, 2008). This is true with Malawi being a developing country. Parity and equity are the building blocks of equality in education (Equate, 2008). Gender equity in school processes has been noticed to have a positive effect on parity in school retention. Equity mechanisms such as scholarships have been used to achieve gender parity in enrolment in Egypt (Equate, 2008). Research has noted that Equity tools are also employed in the learning process. Additional equity tools such as mathematics and science camps for girls have been implemented to increase achievement and encourage retention of girls in school in some countries in Africa. These science camps motivate girls to stay in school as they give them first opportunity to conduct experiments using laboratory equipment (Equate, 2008). Equity should be perceived as an example of affirmative action. It is a human right issue and according to the laws of Malawi, it is not regarded as discrimination. Since research indicates that girls are underrepresented in school access, retention, completion and achievement in secondary school education in Malawi, (Chimombo, 1999; Kadzamila, 1996). The type of affirmative action policy which this study is concerned with is pro female. This study wanted to find out if gender parity was attained in secondary school completion as a result of the gender parity policy in the sampled schools.

2.2 Meaning of gender parity in education

Gender parity in education is when the same proportion of boys and girls relative to their respective age groups enter the education system, achieve educational goals and advance through the different education cycles (UNESCO, 2003, cited in Equate, 2008. Equality of access by gender in education means that girls and boys are offered equitable opportunities to gain admission to formal education. For gender parity in enrolment to be achieved in

education, equal access needs to be achieved. Research indicated that reaching parity in enrolment is necessary, but not sufficient for achieving equality in education and should be considered as a" first stage" measure of progress towards gender equality in education (Subrahmanian, 2005).

2.3 Gender Parity policy in Rwanda

The government of Rwanda introduced an affirmative action policy which provided boys and girls with equal access to education in all levels (Huggins and Randell, 2007). A research was conducted by Huggins and Randell to find out the effects of this type of affirmative action towards the attainment of parity in enrolment, retention and completion. This research revealed that gender parity in secondary school access did not yield gender parity at secondary school completion in Rwanda. Despite the provision of equal access to education, girls continued to lag behind in terms of retention and completion. This was due to number of social and institutional barriers which impaired girl's performance in school and prevent them from completing secondary school in equal numbers with boys. This research revealed that the history of education in Rwanda played a role in the stated status of girl child education in that country.

According to Huggins and Randell (2007), Rwandan girls and women have historically been marginalized from the educational system and from participation in public life more broadly. Girls' schools were introduced 40 years after boys' schools. Initially, girls' education focused on developing skills which reinforced their socialized roles, such as secretarial skills, home economics and general hygiene, while boys were prepared to become co-partners in administrative activities and other development fields. Though

policies have been revised to promote equal access to education in all levels, people's attitudes have evolved more slowly, and socialized stereotypes continue to prioritize boys' education and access to employment (Huggins and Randell, 2007). This situation exposes a girl child to many challenges as far as formal education is concerned.

2.4 Challenges of girl child education in sub Saharan Africa

Education of girls in sub-Saharan Africa is faced by a multitude of challenges. Chimombo (1999) noted that the survival or non-survival of girls in the education system is influenced by a complex interplay between macro-level policy and micro- level practices, beliefs and attitudes. Together they determine whether households feel it profitable to educate their daughters and whether sending girls to school is a wise or poor investment for the future.

One of these challenges is the cost of sending children to school. Secondary school education costs have been cited to be three to five times higher than primary school costs (Iversen, 2012). This has a particular impact on girls' education since parents still have inclination towards favouring boys' education than girls' education because boys' education is associated with more financial return (Chimombo et al., 2000). According to EMIS 2015, 2466 girls dropped out of secondary school education due to lack of school fees. Wide ranges of recent international experiences point to break through that have facilitated girls' access and retention in school. Such initiatives often involve reducing school costs (Aikman and Utherlhater, 2005).

Another challenge that prevents girls from advancing in education is that most girls in rural areas in the sub Saharan Africa do not expect to be educated beyond primary school

especially since they hope to marry and often believe men did not want educated wives. This belief discourages girls from progressing with education. According to Wolf and Kainja (1999) this situation is true in the rural settings of Malawi. Parents with this belief can also be discouraged from paying school fees for their daughters at secondary school since parents would want their daughters to marry. The Evaluation of the UNICEF Accelerated Girls Education Initiatives [AGEI], (2008), observed that girls in some parts of Malawi experience pressure from their families and society to drop out of primary school and marry.

The age at which girls start secondary education is also a challenge. Secondary School education comes at a particularly vulnerable age for girls, as they are in an age perceived suitable for work both inside and outside the home. Such being the case, some poor families encourage their daughters to seek jobs as domestic workers. According to EMIS 2014/ 2015, a total of 103 girls dropped out of secondary school in the 2014/15 academic year in Malawi due to employment. EMIS 2015 has also reported that 546 girls dropped out of school in 2014/15 academic year in Malawi due to family responsibility. Research has noted that household chores are a factor which prevents girls from doing well in class. At home, girls have been reported that they do more household chores than boys. These chores prevent girls from having study time (AGEI, 2008). Some girls report to school already tired due to household chores which they do early in the morning (Chimombo et al., 2000).

Apart from that, many girls have been noted to have been absent from school due to house hold chores and parents are the ones who demand that their daughters should be absent from school (AGEI, 2008; Chimombo et al., 2009). This absenteeism results in failure of

examination in some girls and repetition. As such, the chances of girls' retention in school are reduced since some girls become tired of repeating same classes. According to AGEI (2008), girls also do a lot of house hold chores back home when they return from school. Majority of girls go to bed very late at night due to household chores to the extent that they fail to have eight hours of sleep at night (AGEI, 2008). This means that many girls wake up weak due to shortage of time for sleeping. These girls cannot be expected to participate in class effectively

Pregnancy is another challenge affecting girls' education. Research has shown that pregnancy is one of the factors which force girls in Malawi to drop out of school in large numbers (Dr Maluwa-Banda, 2003). In 2014/15 academic year, 2456 girls dropped out of secondary school due to pregnancy (EMIS, 2014/ 2015). Chimombo et al, (2000) noted that some girls' dropout of school due to pregnancy which result from school related gender based violence which occurs in form of rape in some parts of Malawi.

Negative attitude of teachers and parents towards education of the girl child is another challenge affecting girls' education. Research in Malawi has shown that girls are more likely than boys to drop out of school because of negative attitudes and discrimination at school as well as at home towards girl child education. (Chimombo et al., 2000). Spender argued that some communication behaviours of teachers devalue female students. For example, teachers ask more challenging questions to male students and also call on male students more often. Teachers also extend and pursue comments by male students more than those of female students. Teachers are more willing to make time and to devote longer periods of time to confer with male students than female students. In the same relation, Calvanese (2007) stated that the most obvious way in which teachers' 'communication

expresses the view that males are more important than females is in the sheer amount of attention given to male students. From preschool to tertiary education, teachers' pay more attention to male students. Research has further indicated that teachers actually give male students more individualized instructions and time than they devote to female students (Calvanese, 2007). Chimombo et al. (2000) observed that where a school doesn't have enough furniture for students, the available furniture is used by male students rather than female students. It was observed that this arrangement make boys to feel that they are superior to girls. It was also noted that this arrangement give boys the much needed confidence in the classroom. This means that negative attitude towards girls performance in class discourages girls while positive attitude of people towards girls education encourage them to work hard in class. These observations call for a change in the mind set of people towards girls' education in order to help them have confidence in themselves and obtain education.

School related gender based violence is also a challenge to girl child education in Malawi (Bisika, Ntata and Konyani, 2009). According to Bisika et al. (2009), School Related Gender Based Violence in Malawi takes the form of beatings, verbal abuse sexual assault and rape, inappropriate touching and discriminatory classroom practices. These practices against girls make girls to be uncomfortable at school. Some girls may absent themselves from school for fear of being beaten when they go to school. Eventually, these girls may end up failing examinations due to absenteeism and later on drop out of school. Research has indicated that many girls have dropped out of school due to school related gender based violence. Chimombo et al. (2000) stated that harassment of girls at school has a negative impact on their schooling as the behaviour make them assume a subordinate status which lead to poor classroom participation, failure and school dropout. According to EMIS 2014 /

2015, 45 girls dropped out of secondary school in 2014/15 academic year due to school related gender based violence.

Education of poor quality is another challenge affecting girls' education. This is the type of education which is associated with inappropriate methodology, communication, language problems and teacher fatigue. According to Chimombo et al. (2000), although poor quality education affect both boys and girls, its impact on girls has been noted to be more significant that it result to low classroom participation, high absenteeism and school dropout by girls. Poor education quality is also associated with unqualified teachers, unavailability of good teaching and learning materials, poor teacher student ratio, and shortage of recommended text book, inadequate classroom and many more factors. Such type of education quality prevents girls more than boys from obtaining education (Chimombo, et al., 2000). As such, more girls repeat classes and eventually they drop out of school when they are tired of repeating same classes.

Unavailability of basic facilities at school has also been noted as a challenge affecting girl child education. Lack of good toilets, safe water, good classrooms and furniture in school discourages girls more than boys from completing school (Equate, 2008). Since girls need privacy more than boys, the absence of good toilets force girls to drop out of school. AGEI (2008) noted that one of the most important factors affecting the retention of adolescent girls is inappropriate toilet facilities in some schools in Malawi. These toilets had no doors, did not offer privacy and safety. These toilets also did not have water to wash hands. Studies have also noted that lack of furniture in secondary schools discourage girls more than boys from going to school. According to these studies, girls feel more uncomfortable

than boys when they sit on the floor in class. In this situation, girls find difficult to stand up when they want to answer questions due to their mode of dressing.

Another challenge which has been noted to affect girl child education is distance to school. Burchfield (1996) noted that many girls also drop out of school due to long distance to school. According to Tickle (2005), the other challenge girls face is the distance they travel to school in the country side. Many girls travel the distances which make them risk being raped (Tickle, 2005). This problem is common more especially in the rural areas in Malawi where secondary schools are very far from each other. In most cases, there is no public transport which students can use when travelling from their homes to secondary schools. This means that students travel about 10 kilometres to and from school every school day. This is a challenge to both boys and girls but its impact is significant on girls since research has observed that girls start household chores early in the morning before going to school (Kadzamira, 1996). This situation makes more girls than boys to drop out of school. EMIS, 2015 has noted that 614 girls dropped out of secondary school in 2014/15 academic year in Malawi due to long distance to school.

Lack of role models at school is another factor which affects girls' education. Chimombo et al. (2000) observed that many schools in the rural areas in Malawi have no or very few female teachers. This situation is not good to girls since it makes them think that females are less intelligent therefore there are few or no female teachers. This situation discourages girls from participating in class thinking that education is associated with male. Sometimes these girls have nowhere to report problems which they experience at school. Lack of role models for girls at school discourages girls from participating in class and then they fail and drop out of school in large numbers.

2.5 Gender roles and girl child education

Research has noted that Girl child education is also affected by gender roles in sub Saharan Africa. Anderson observed that since education is often thought to be most useful in the formal sector and because girls seem to have less access to this sector than boys, parents decide that schooling is not relevant for the economic roles of their daughters (as cited in Chimombo, 1999). Parents who believe that a woman's place is at home are most likely to make fewer human capital investments in their daughters than parents who do not believe so. In turn, this affects their daughters' adult economic opportunities (Johnston, 2012. Farre and Vella (2007) found that Japanese men whose mothers worked when they were 15 years old were more likely to have working wives and also that they are more likely to develop modern views about gender roles. These men are also more likely to make more human capital investment in their daughters.

There is a strong positive and roughly linear relationship between a mother's non-traditional gender role attitude and her daughter's probability of attaining education. Mothers with traditional views are more likely to expect their daughters to live school when they are 16 years old and less. It is unlikely to expect that their daughters will attend tertiary education (Johnston, 2012). A girl child's labour for domestic chores are on a higher demand in poor families than that of a boy child. This makes the opportunity cost for sending girls to school to be higher than that of boys. Thus poor families will chose to have their adolescent girls to stay at home to do domestic chores, child minding etc while the parent go for field work or in search for temporally work (Kadzamira,1996)

2.6 Gender equality in education and sustainable development

Education for sustainable development is one that fosters peace, fights against global warming, reduces north / south inequalities, fights against poverty and the marginalization of women and girls and helps people to have a better vision of the world (UNESCO, 2014). This type of education is the one that helps people to develop a will to improve every ones' quality of life including that of future generations, by reconciling economic growth, social development and environmental protection. According to UNESCO (2014) education in all its forms and at all levels is one of the most powerful instruments for bringing about the changes required to achieve sustainable development. Since research has noted that gender equality is the pillar of sustainable development, one can tell that gender equality in education do reinforce sustainable development. Kabeer and Natali (2013) indicated that certain aspects of gender equality, such as female education and women's share of employment can have a positive impact on economic growth. It is therefore important to take note that sustainable development cannot be achieved if women and girls are left behind in education and empowerment. These call for a need to encourage equal access to education that will make both boys and girls to remain in school and complete their education.

2.7 Education as a human right

Article eleven of the African Charter stipulates that every child shall have the right to an education. This means that both boys and girls have the right to education. Education helps people to develop their talents and interest. Education is also seen as a torch which guides and illuminates people's lives. Such being the case, it is the responsibility of all governments to ensure that every child is given a chance to benefit from education. Human capital theory rests on the assumption that formal education is highly instrumental and even

necessary to improve the production capacity of a population (Oxfam, 2005). Schooling raises earnings and productivity by providing knowledge, skills and ways of analysing problems. It is worth noting that, human beings can only reach their full potential in productive services after being empowered with education (Oxfam, 2005). Education and training are the most important investments in human capital formulation (Oxfam, 2005). This implies that if one is to live a fulfilling life, he or she needs some education and training.

The owner of human capital is totally tied to his or her investment (Oxfam, 2005). This shows that once one is equipped with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes through education, he or she is well armed to live a self-sufficient and sustainable life. The skills acquired will eventually be put to use for a better living. According to Oxfam (2005), the most valuable of all capital is invested in a human being. Human capital is important because it uses the brain and is able to put to use the physical capital. Education plays a pivotal role in developing human capital in any society. Education has become a universal human right all around the globe and it helps people to realize other human rights (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2005). Examples of other human rights which are realized when one is educated are a right to good food, good water, good clothes and good accommodation. All these human rights are necessary for one to have human dignity. Since both boys and girls or men and women need to have human dignity, it is very important for all the governments to make sure that both boys and girls obtain education.

2.8 Policies on girls' education in Malawi

Several policies have been developed in Malawi to promote girls education. Some of the policies on girl child education are: The 50/50 form one selection policy, Re-admission policy and the policy which provide for the construction of girls hostels in DDSS and CDSS. These policies were made to solve specific problems in girl child education in Malawi. The 50/50 form one selection policy was made to provide boys and girls with equal access to secondary school education in DDSS and CDSS. This is also done to reduce enrolment gap by gender at secondary school level. On the other hand, re-admission policy gives permission to a school going pregnant girl to come back to school after giving birth to her child and also finding custody of her baby. This happens once. The re-admission policy is meant to give young mothers a chance to go back to school. Hostel construction policy is meant to ask the government or well-wishers to construct girls' hostels in DDSS and CDSS. The aim behind hostel construction policy is to help girls to stay far from their households so that they can concentrate on their studies other than doing household chores. Girls are also given a chance to stay very close to their school. Such being the case, they are not required to travel long distances to and from school. DDSS and CDSS which are targeted for hostel construction are the ones with records of high rate of girls' dropout.

2.9 Theoretical framework

This study is guided by the Gender Equality in Education Framework. This framework is a tool founded on results of assessments of USAID supported education activities. This framework was developed and introduced by the Equate project with support from the USAID Office of Women in Development (WID) in consultation with USAID education staff implementing partners and other stakeholders in 2004.

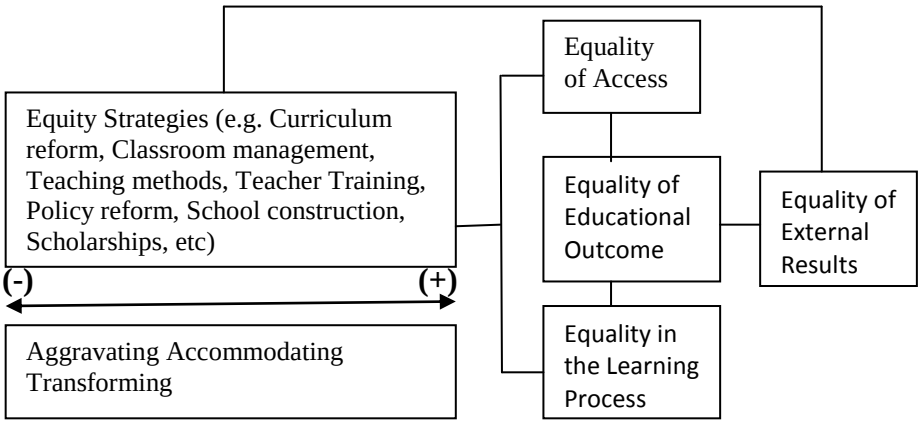

Figure 1: Gender equality framework

Source: Gender equality framework by Equate for USAID

According to the gender equality framework, curriculum reform which does not discriminates between boys and girls but provides necessary knowledge among boys and girls is important in the process of achieving gender equality in education. Classroom management and teaching methods need to be friendly to both boys and girls so that all should benefit equally. The training of teachers is also supposed to be done in the way that the teachers should be part and parcel of the process of achieving gender equality in education. This should be done by treating boys and girls fairly.

Being a retrospective study, issues of curriculum reform, classroom management, teacher training, school construction, scholarship, etc were not checked. This is because the 2009 cohort had already completed secondary school.

Education policies need to provide equal chance to both boys and girls to enrol, retain, complete and achieve in education. School construction need to be done in the way that it should provide a good environment for the learning process to be achieved among both

boys and girls. The gender equality frame work also notes that scholarships provide fees to learners who could have not managed to have fees for their education so that both boys and girls should have a chance to obtain education. This situation will result in gender equality in educational outcome which will also result in gender equality among men and women at work, business politics etc.

The gender equality in education framework is relevant in this study as the 50/50 form one selection policy represents a relevant policy reform in the frame work. The 50/50 form one selection policy reform provides boys and girls with equal access to education. Just like the gender equality frame work, retention and school completion is emphasised. Equate views parity, equity and equality as distinct concepts which are interrelated. While parity signifies proportional representation of boys and girls in the education system, equity entails provision of fair and equal opportunities of strategies and processes for all to pursue and benefit from opportunities in education. This means that equality builds on parity and equity to warrant equal rights, freedom, conditions and opportunities for realizing their full potential.

Fundamental principles of the gender equality framework are parity, equity and equality. These are distinct concepts which are interrelated. Access, quality, continuity, relevance, and learning outcomes are concerns which are reinforced by the gender equality frame work in education. The gender equality theoretical framework is relevant for this study as it is concerned with providing equal access to basic education for both boys and girls. Both this study and the gender equality framework view parity as a first step towards gender equality in education. This study as well as the gender equality theoretical framework has the view that equity plus parity in education can result to gender equality in education.

Gender equality frame work focuses on retention of girls and boys in school among other concepts. The concept of retention of boys and girls in school was also focused in this study. This was done by establishing JEC completion rates of boys and girls in the targeted schools. This gender equality framework in education has the view that equal access to education by gender need to be accompanied by good quality education to attain gender parity in education retention. In view of the concept of good quality education, this study established JCE as well as MSCE completion rates by gender and by school type. This was done to check if better schools (DDSS) had higher completion rates than (CDSS). Just like the gender equality framework, this study established gender disparities in school completion both at JCE and MSCE by gender.

Limitation of using the gender equality framework in this study is that while this study focused on secondary school completion rates, the gender equality frame work extends to quality of results (education outcome). The other limitation of using the gender equality framework in this study is that while the study is exploring gender parity in secondary school completion rates, the gender equality theoretical framework is interested in equality of external results. That is after equality in educational achievement is attained, the framework checks if men and women have equal opportunities at work, business, politics etc. The gender equality framework has been used in this study in many ways. Provision of equal access to secondary school education to boys and girls is one of the concepts that have been used in this study. As a requirement in gender equality framework, this study sought to establish issues of access to secondary education by boys and girls. This study explored issues of equity in the implementation of the 50/50 form one selection policy. Gender parity is a key concept in the gender equality framework. According to gender equality framework, gender parity is a proportional representation of boys and girls in an

education system relative to the population per age group. This is the key definition that has guided the development and analysis of data in this study.

2.10 Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed, gender parity in education, the relationship between parity and equity. Ways in which gender roles affect girl child education have been explained. The relationship between gender equality in education and sustainable development has been explored. Education as a human right and the theoretical frame work guarding the study has been presented. The next chapter outlines the research design and methodology that were used in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter details the research design and research methodology that was engaged in the study. A description of the population and the sampling technique that was employed are explained in detail. The chapter later provides a description of the instruments that were used in the data collection. Data collection procedure and data analysis technique are also presented. This chapter concludes by indicating the limitation of the study, the research ethics that were followed and an explanation on the strategies employed to ensure the validity and reliability of the study results.

3.1 Research design

This section describes the overall plan by which this research was administered. This study used a retrospective longitudinal design. A retrospective study is a study that looks back in time. In this study, a cohort was treated as a group of pupils who enrolled for secondary school education in the same year. This means that this study focused on the secondary school cohort which had already written the Malawi School Certificate Examinations (MSCE). Being retrospective, this study tracked a secondary school cohort and studied it without manipulating it as it was already out of secondary school system. This study is said to be longitudinal in nature since the targeted cohort was studied from form one to form four. Parity issues are numerical in nature; therefore the study design was quantitative in

nature. This study opted for a retrospective longitudinal design since the research questions required observation of the cohort in terms of retention and dropout of pupils throughout the secondary school cycle to get answers to the research questions.

3.2 Research methodology

Research methodology refers to the overall approach to the research process from the theoretical foundation to the collection and analysis of data (Hussey and hussy, 1997). In this study, a quantitative methodology was adopted. A quantitative methodology is objective in nature and concentrates on measuring phenomena. It involves the collection and analysing of numerical data and application of statistical tests (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). As a quantitative researcher, reality is conceptualised as variables which are measured to find out how the variables are distributed, and especially how they are related to each other and why (Punch, 2003). Quantitative approach is best for this study because it intended to establish secondary school completion rates of boys and girls who were selected using the 50/50 selection policy into secondary school.

Study Population

A population is defined as any precisely defined set of people or collection of items about which you want to draw conclusions (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). The population for this study was all pupils who were selected into DDSS and CDSS using the 50/50 form one selection policy in 2009 in South East Education Division (SEED). The 50/50 selection policy is implemented in the selection of pupils into all the DDSS and CDSS in Malawi. However this study only focused on SEED. The researcher opted to conduct her study in SEED on accessibility grounds since during her time of research, she was working in

Zomba. The total population of pupils who were selected under the 50/50 form one selection policy in SEED was 2666 boys and 2505 girls.

3.3 Sampling

A sample is a relatively small subset of a population that is selected to represent or stand in for the population (Heiman, 1999). The sample for this study was selected from 2009 cohort in DDSS and CDSS in (SEED). This study used a stratified random cluster sampling technique to constitute the study sample. The study stratified schools in SEED according to their locality (rural and urban) on one hand and according to their type (DDSS and CDSS) on the other. The study randomly selected schools from each stratum. This was done to make sure that each stratum was represented in the study. These strata included DDSS and CDSS in urban areas, DDSS and CDSS in rural areas.

3.3.1 Sample size

The total sample for this study was 20 schools which represent 22.2 percent of the total number of DDSS and CDSS in SEED. The 22.2 percent was opted for since it was manageable. This sample was enough to generalise the findings of the study since this study used a cluster method of selecting participants. All pupils in the 2009 cohort who were selected to form one using the 50/50 form one selection policy in sampled schools became part of the sample since cluster method was used. The population of this study had 94 DDSS and CDSS all together. Out of 20 schools selected, there were ten district day secondary schools and ten community day secondary schools. Out of these, eleven (11) schools were from rural area and nine from urban setting. This study involved numbers of boys and girls who were selected for form one in 2009 in SEED and those who completed secondary school education in 2012. In other words, numbers were used to explore the

extent to which 50/50 form one selection policy achieved parity at secondary school completion in DDSS and CDSS in South East Education Division in 2009 cohort. This study used a retrospective cohort method. This method is the one which follows a cohort which existed in the past. In line with the opted design, this study drew a study sample of boys and girls who enrolled in form one in 2009 and wrote Malawi School Certificate Examinations in 2012 from sampled DDSS and CDSS in SEED. A unit of analysis for this study was an individual secondary school learner. A unit of analysis is a case to which the variables under study and the research problem refer, and about which data is collected (Hussey and Hussey 1997.

3.3.2 Sampled schools

In this study, a total of 20 secondary schools were sampled in the five education districts of SEED namely Balaka, Machinga, Mangochi, Zomba Rural and Zomba Urban. Ten schools were DDSS and the other ten were CDSS, giving an equal distribution of the two types of secondary schools. Details of the sampled schools are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Details of sampled schools in the study

Education District	DDSS		CDSS		Total schools per District
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	
Balaka			Toleza	Mmanga	
			Phalula	St Louis Montfort	4
Zomba Urban		Likangala		Zomba |Urban	
		Malindi		Sacred Heart	4
Mangochi	Majuni		Namkumba	Mpondas	3
Zomba Rural	Chingale		Namitembo		
	Chimwalira				
	Domasi Demon				4
Machinga	Puteya	Liwonde		Machinga	
	Mbenjere				
	Mpiri				5
Total	**7**	**3**	**4**	**6**	**20**

Table 1 indicates that 40% of the CDSS in the sample were from Balaka Education District, 20% from Mangochi Education District and Zomba Urban Education District respectively while Machinga and Zomba Rural Education District contributed 10% each. Balaka had a high representation of CDSS since it was not represented at DDSS. This is because there were no DDSS in Balaka district during the time of data collection. Consequently, 10%, 20%, 30% and 40% of the DDSS were sampled from Mangochi, Zomba Urban, Zomba Rural and Machinga Education Districts respectively. Out of the 20 schools that were sampled, nine of them were from an urban setting, which is 45% of the total number of schools, while eleven schools representing 55% of the schools were from a rural setting. This was done in order to make the number of form one pupils selected to rural schools close to that of urban schools since most of the urban schools had higher intake than rural

schools. For example, a sampled school in urban setting which received the highest intake in the 2009 cohort received 240 pupils while that in the rural setting received 120 pupils

3.3.3 Sampled pupils

The cluster method of selecting participants was used. Once a school was sampled, all pupils who were selected there using the 50/50 selection policy became part of the sample. Those pupils who were selected at second or any other selection by the office of the Education Division Manager were not included since their selection was not based on the 50/50 selection policy. The targeted pupils who transferred from sampled schools to other schools were followed. Those pupils who did not register at the respective schools they were selected to but went straight to other schools were also followed as they remained in the secondary school system of Malawi. Based on this, pupils who were selected to sampled schools under the 50/50 form one selection policy but did not register in form one in 2009 at any school were treated as dropout.

3.3.4 2009 Form one selection lists of all sampled schools

The 2009 Form one selection lists were used to trace the 2009 secondary school students in their respective schools to establish if they wrote JCE in 2010 and MSCE in 2012. Pupils who were transferred to other schools were noted on these lists and names of schools where they were transferred to were written against the respective names. Completed list of names were used to triangulate the data with MANED data.

3.3.5 Form ones selection in CDSS by gender (Sampling frame).

In 2009, a total of 1,620 pupils were selected to start form one in the sampled secondary schools. A total of 440 pupils were selected to CDSS while 1180 pupils were selected to DDSS. There were equal numbers of boys and girls who were selected to CDSS. (Table 2)

Table 2:50/50 form one selection in CDSS

District	School	Boys	Girls
Balaka	Toleza CDSS	25	25
	St Louis Montfort CDSS	17	17
	Mmanga CDSS	17	17
	Phalula CDSS	17	17
Machinga	Machinga CDSS	17	17
Mangochi	Nankumba CDSS	25	25
	Mpondas CDSS	17	17
Zomba Rural	Namitembo CDSS	35	35
Zomba Urban	Sacred Heart CDSS	25	25
	Zomba urban CDSS	25	25
TOTAL	**10 CDSS**	**220**	**220**

Table 2 indicates that parity was attained at selection level in CDSS. This means that all sampled CDSS had the same number of boys and girls at the form one intake. This table also indicates differences in form one intake among the sampled schools. A total of five CDSS got 34 pupils each and four CDSS got 50 pupils each and only one CDSS got 70 pupils.

3.3.6 Form one selection lists in sampled DDSS (Sampling frame)

Unlike in the CDSS, there was a minimal difference between the number of boys and girls who were selected to DDSS. There were 598 boys representing 50.7% and 582 girls

representing 49.3% of the total number of form one pupils who were selected to DDSS. The disparity in selection figures by gender occurred due to failure to attain parity at selection level in DDSS. Just like the CDSSs, DDSSs had different intake. One school received 80 pupils, five schools received 100 pupils each, three DDSSs received 120 pupils each and one DDSS received 240 pupils. Table 3 shows number of boys and girls selected to start form one in the sampled DDSS in 2009.

Table 3: 50/50 Form one selection in DDSS

District	School	Boys	Girls
Balaka		-	-
Machinga	Liwonde DDSS	50	50
	Puteya DDSS	50	50
	Mbenjele DDSS	60	60
	Mpiri DDSS	66	54
Mangochi	Majuni DDSS	52	48
Zomba Rural	Chingale DDSS	50	50
	Chimwalira DDSS	50	50
	Domasi Demonstration DDSS	40	40
Zomba Urban	Likangala DDSS	60	60
	Malindi DDSS	120	120
TOTAL	**10 DDSS**	**598**	**582**

3.4 Data collection

Prior to the commencement of data collection, an introduction letter was collected from Chancellor College. Refer to appendix D. Using this letter; permission was sought, in writing from responsible offices, to conduct the study in their organisations. These included

the office of Education Division Manager (EDM)) of South East Education Division (SEED) and the offices of head teachers in sampled schools. Refer to appendix A. The researcher also obtained 2009 form one selection lists of sampled DDSS and CDSS from the office of the EDM (SEED). Using the introduction letter from Chancellor College, permission was also sought from the office of the Executive Director of Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB) to use 2010 JCE and 2012 MSCE results in this study. Refer to appendix B.

3.5 Research instruments

The instruments which were used in this study were: 2009 form one selection lists of sampled schools, 2010 JCE results, 2012 MSCE results, class attendance registers for 2009 cohort in specific schools and a questionnaire which is in appendix **C**.

3.5.1 2009 form one selection lists of sampled schools

The 2009 form one selection lists of sampled schools were sent to head teachers of sampled schools together with a questionnaire two weeks before the researcher visited the sampled school. The researcher traced pupils using the selection list in their respective schools to establish if they wrote JCE in 2010 and MSCE in 2012. The findings of each pupil were recorded against his or her name on the selection list. Pupils who dropped out of school were noted including the stage at which they dropped out. Pupils who were transferred to other schools were also noted and schools they were transferred to were indicated against their names on the selection lists. The transferred pupils were followed. The aim was to establish if they wrote JCE in 2010 and MSCE in 2012 or not. This study noted that eighteen pupils were transferred however eight of these had a cross transfer between

sampled schools in the same locality. This means that only ten pupils were transferred to schools which were not sampled in this study.

3.5.2 MANEB data base of 2010 JCE and 2012 MSCE

The MANEB data base used in this study is the official results of 2010 JCE and 2012 MSCE examinations. To be provided with the data, a researcher used a letter from the executive director of MANEB. These results were used to triangulate the study findings as they were indicated on the 2009 form one selection lists of sampled schools.

3.6 Data collection process

After searching permission from head teachers of sampled schools, the researcher phoned them about the data collection and the type of data the researcher was intending to collect. Selection lists of the targeted cohort plus a letter from the office of the EDM in SEED and a questionnaire were sent to respective sampled schools two weeks before the day of data collection. On the day of data collection, the researcher ticked names of all pupils who were established by the head teacher of the respective school to have written MSCE in 2012 on the 2009 selection list. Those pupils who were confirmed to have been transferred to other schools before they wrote MSCE were noted by the researcher and names of schools they were transferred to were written against their names on the respective selection list. All pupils who were established by school authority to have not written MSCE in 2012 were noted by the researcher by indicating an **X** against their names.

Only those pupils who were noted to have not written MSCE in 2012 were followed at JCE level. Pupils who were established to have written JCE in 2010 were checked if they succeeded in the examinations or not. Those who passed 2010 JCE were labelled **P**. This

means that they had an **X** followed by P against their name. Those pupils who were established by school authorities to have written JCE in 2010 but failed the examinations were labelled **F**. This means that this group of pupils had **X** followed by **F** against their names. Pupils who were established by the school authorities to have dropped out of school before writing JCE in 2010 were noted by the researcher by indicating an **X** against their names. These pupils had two **Xs** against their names. This data collection was guided by a questionnaire. Refer to appendix **C**. Pupils who were noted to have been transferred to other schools were followed in their respective schools they were transferred to. The same procedure that was used to follow pupils in schools they were selected to was followed in this case. The only difference was that in this case only those pupils who were transferred from sampled schools were followed.

3.6.1 Data Triangulation

The secondary school completion was the first to be triangulated. This was done using 2012 MSCE results and completed 2009 form one selection lists of sampled schools. All pupils who were proven to have written MSCE in 2012 were ticked **right** on the selection lists. This means that this group of pupils had a tick against their names. Pupils who were proven to have not written MSCE in 2012 were labelled **X**. This means that this pupils had **X** against their names.

JCE level completion was also triangulated. Completed 2009 form one selection lists and 2010 JCE results were used to triangulate the JC level completion. Only those pupils who had **X** against their names were triangulated at JC level. Pupils who were proven to have written JCE in 2010 were checked if they passed or not. Those who passed 2010 JCE were labelled **P**. This means that they had an **X** followed by **P** against their name. Those pupils

who were proven to have written JCE in 2010 but failed the examinations were labelled **F**. This means that this group of pupils had **X** followed by **F** against their names. Those pupils who were proven to have not written JCE in 2010 were labelled **X**. This means that this group of pupils had an **X** followed by another **X** against their names. The same process was done to pupils on the 2009 form one selection lists of sampled schools who transferred to other secondary schools. The only difference was that apart from having the labels as shown above, pupils also had names of schools where they transferred to against their names.

In summary, the data that was collected was for those pupils who were selected to sampled schools using the 50/50 selection policy in 2009 and included:

- Form one selection lists of boys and girls who were selected to sampled schools using the 50/50 form one selection policy in 2009 cohort.
- Number of boys and girls who were selected to sampled schools for form one in 2009 using the 50/50 selection policy.
- Numbers of boys and girls who wrote JCE in 2010 among those on the selection list in respective sampled schools.
- Numbers of boys and girls who dropped out of school among those on the selection list in the sampled schools before writing JCE.
- Numbers of boys and girls who failed JCE in 2010 among those on the selection list in respective sampled schools.
- Numbers of boys and girls who wrote MSCE in 2012 among those on the selection list in respective sampled schools.

- Numbers of boys and girls who passed JCE in 2010 but did not write MSCE in 2012.

3.6.2 Data analysis

Analysis of data was done using descriptive analysis. Descriptive analysis involved the conversion of number of boys and girls who completed JCE and MSCE into percentages to yield JCE and MSCE completion rates at school level. Then means were calculated from the JCE and MSCE completion rates.

- Mean JCE and MSCE completion rates of all sampled schools were calculated by gender.
- Mean JCE and MSCE completion rates were calculated according to school type (DDSS and CDSS) and gender.
- Mean JCE and MSCE completion rates in DDSS were calculated according to school location (urban DDSS and rural DDSS) and gender.
- Mean JCE and MSCE completion rates in all sampled schools were calculated according to school location (urban schools and rural schools) and gender.

3.7 Ethical issues

Ethical issues were highly regarded in this study. Informed consent was obtained from participants before collecting any data. The aim and research questions of the study were explained. Informed consent was sought from all head teachers in the sampled schools and those schools where pupils of the targeted cohort transferred to from the sampled schools. To ensure privacy and confidentiality, only completion rates by gender of pupils in the sampled schools were used. However names of the sampled schools were indicated. In

other words, no names either of pupils or any other participants are disclosed in this study except those of sampled schools. Thus the study observed the confidentiality and anonymity of all study participants.

3.8 Validity of the study

Validity is all about accuracy. When a study has been done accurately, it becomes valid. Validity was strong in this study since the instruments which were used in the study were valid 2009 form one selection lists obtained from the office of the Education Division Manager in SEED. The other instrument was official MANEB data. In respective schools, head teachers followed these pupils using classroom attendance registers.

Reliability of the study

Reliability of the study is the capacity for the study to yield the same results once it is replicated. Reliability was strong in this study since the researcher conducted the study using official original and authentic documents from MANEB, EDM's office in SEED and official records in sampled schools.

3.9 Limitations of the study

The generalisation of the results is limited to South East Education Division (SEED) where the study was conducted although 50/50 selection policy is being implemented across the country.

3.10 Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed the research design and research methodology that was engaged in the study. The study population and the sampling technique that was employed have been described. Instruments that were used in data collection, data collection procedure and data analysis technique have been presented. Ethical issues, validity, reliability and limitations of the study have been explained. The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the study findings and discussion based on the research questions of the study. It starts by presenting the 2009 cohort from selection to MSCE completion by gender. Then the mean JCE and MSCE completion rates by gender in all sampled schools have been presented by type of school and by rural urban location. The mean JCE and MSCE completion rates have been presented to check if specific groups of schools achieved gender parity at JCE and MSCE completion. The results are discussed in relation to the research questions and goals of the 50/50 form one selection policy.

4.1 2009 cohort from selection to MSCE completion in the sampled schools

This study was based on a cohort of boys and girls who were selected to secondary school using the 50/50 form one selection policy in 2009. Table 4 is a summary of the 2009 cohort from form one selection to MSCE completion in the sampled schools in SEED. Table 4 provides details of number of boys and girls who were selected in form one in sampled schools in 2009 using the 50/50 selection policy, dropped out of school before they wrote JCE, number of boys and girls who completed JCE, number of boys and girls who did not proceed to MSCE because they failed JCE in 2010, number of boys and girls who did not write MSCE in 2012 because they dropped out of school at MSCE level and number of boys and girls who wrote MSCE in 2012.

Table 4: Targeted 2009 cohort in secondary school system

Schools	Boys intake	Girls intake	JCE Dropouts boys	JCE Dropouts Girls	JCE completion boys	JCE Completion girls	JCE failure boys	JCE Failure girls	MSCE Dropouts boys	MSCE dropouts girls	MSCE completion boys	MSCE Completion girls
Toleza	25	25	6	11	19	14	0	3	5	2	14	9
St Louis Montfort	17	17	3	0	14	17	0	1	1	2	13	14
Sacred Heart	25	25	4	6	21	19	0	0	1	1	20	18
Namkumba	25	25	8	10	17	15	0	3	2	3	15	9
Mpondas	17	17	5	7	`12	10	1	0	0	2	11	8
Phalula	17	17	5	3	12	14	0	0	2	3	10	11
Zomba urban	25	25	4	3	21	22	0	0	0	5	21	17
Namitembo	35	35	14	19	21	16	4	6	8	1	9	9
Machinga	17	17	2	5	15	12	1	0	2	2	12	10
Mmanga	17	17	4	2	13	15	0	0	2	1	11	14
Chingale	50	50	8	10	42	40	0	2	4	5	38	33
Chimwalira	50	50	9	6	41	44	1	6	2	6	37	32
Domasi Demonst	40	40	3	6	37	34	0	0	1	2	36	32
Liwonde	50	50	9	7	41	43	0	0	4	7	37	36
Likangala	60	60	10	5	50	55	0	0	6	3	44	52
Mbenjele	60	60	13	18	47	42	1	5	2	5	44	32
Puteya	50	50	8	15	42	35	0	10	8	5	34	20
Malindi	120	120	13	11	107	109	0	0	6	13	101	96
Majuni	52	48	28	22	24	26	1	4	0	4	23	18
Mpiri	66	54	33	28	33	26	1	11	14	6	18	9
TOTAL	**818**	**802**	**189**	**194**	**629**	**608**	**10**	**51**	**70**	**78**	**549**	**479**

According to table 4 in the previous page, 818 boys and 802 girls were selected to start form one in 2009 in the sampled secondary schools. This table shows that 189 boys who represented 23.1% of the total number of boys selected for form one in the sampled schools did not write JCE in 2010. This table also shows that 194 girls who represent 24.2% of the total number of girls did not write JCE in 2010. Therefore, only 629 boys and 608 girls wrote JCE in 2010. In this cohort, 10 boys and 51 girls failed 2010 JCE in the sampled schools and therefore failed to complete secondary school education in 2012.

Table 4 further shows that while only 1.2% of the total number of boys failed JCE, 6.4% of the total number of girls failed JCE in the sampled schools in 2010. Thus, out of the 818 boys who were selected to the sampled schools in 2009, six hundred and nineteen boys (75.7%) proceeded to MSCE level in 2011. Out of 802 girls who were selected for form one in the sampled schools, only 557girls (69.5%) proceeded to MSCE level in 2011. Due to various reasons, 70 boys (8.6%) of 818 and 78 girls (9.7%) of 802 dropped out of school before they sat for MSCE. Consequently, only 549 boys (67.1%) and 479 girls (59.7%) wrote MSCE in 2012. These were the ones who completed secondary school education in this cohort.

4.2 JCE and MSCE completion rates by gender

This study explored the extent to which equal access to secondary school education by gender achieved gender parity at MSCE completion in DDSS and CDSS in SEED. However, before establishing the mean completion rates at MSCE, this study established the mean completion rates at JCE. This was done because JCE was on the way to achieve the study research questions. Completion rates at JCE contributed in

one way or another to the nature of completion rates at MSCE. The JCE completion rates were also included for continuity sake in order to tell what happened on the way to MSCE completion. Therefore, JCE and MSCE completion rates by gender at school level were calculated separately using the number of boys and girls who completed JCE and MSCE at school level respectively. This was done to have uniform rating since different schools had different intakes in form one in this cohort. JCE and MSCE completion rates by gender in all sampled schools were calculated to check if gender parity was achieved or not at the completion of each level.

JCE and MSCE completion rates by gender in all sampled schools

All sampled secondary school completion rates by gender at JCE and MSCE were separately added and totals were divided by the number of sampled schools to come up with mean completion rates by gender. The mean completion rates by gender were used to find out if gender parity at JCE as well as MSCE was attained. The results are summarized in Table 5

Table 5: Mean JCE and MSCE completion rates by gender

	JCE		MSCE	
Schools	**Boys**	**girls**	**Boys**	**girls**
Toleza CDSS	76	56	56	36
St Louis Montfort	82.3	100	76.5	82.7
Mmanga CDSS	76.5	88.2	64.7	82.4
Phalula CDSS	70.6	82.4	58.8	64.7
Machinga CDSS	68	70.6	70.6	58.8
Namkumba CDSS	68	60	60	36
Mpondas CDSS	70.6	58.8	64.7	47.1
Namitembo CDSS	60	45.7	25.7	25.7
Sacred Heart CDSS	84	76	80	72
Zomba Urban CDSS	84	88	84	68
Liwonde DDSS	82	86	74	72
Puteya DDSS	84	70	68	40
Mbenjele DDSS	78	70	73.	53.
Mpiri DDSS	50	48	27.3	16.7
Majuni DDSS	48	52	44.2	37.5
Chingale DDSS	84	80	76	66
Chimwalira DDSS	82	88	74	64
Domasi Dem DDSS	92.2	85	90	80
Likangala DDSS	83.3	91.7	73	86.7
Malindi DDSS	89	90.8	84	80
Totals	**1513.4**	**1487.2**	**1325.3**	**1169.3**
Mean completion rates	**75.6**	**74.3**	**66.3**	**58.4**

Table 5 shows that the mean JCE completion rate of boys in all sampled schools was 75.6% while that of girls was 74.3%. This means that there was JCE level mean completion gender disparity of 1.3%. Mean JCE completion rates of all the sampled schools show that gender parity at JCE completion was almost achieved. Boys had a slightly higher mean completion rate at 75.6% while girls had a mean completion rate of 74.3%. Despite this observation, it is encouraging to note that ten of the sampled schools had higher JCE completion rates of girls than boys. Out of these ten, it is encouraging to note that one CDSS had a 100% completion rate for girls (See Table5).

Apart from showing JCE mean completion rates, table 5 also shows mean MSCE completion rates. Table 5 shows that parity at MSCE completion rate by gender was not attained in this cohort. Boys mean MSCE completion rate was higher than that of girls**.** The mean MSCE completion rates in this cohort were 66.3**%** for boys and 58.4% for girls. Despite this observation, it is encouraging to note that girls MSCE completion rates were higher than that of boys in four schools namely St Louis Montfort, Phalula, Mmanga and Likangala. Table 5 also indicates that only Namitembo CDSS attained parity at MSCE completion at school level. However, much as this school attained parity, it was the school that registered second highest dropout rate in the study. One cannot celebrate the gender parity which was obtained at Namitembo CDSS since Majority of both boys and girls dropped out of school in the 2009 cohort. According to mean MSCE completion rates by gender, it seems like much of the challenges which forced pupils out of sampled schools affected girls more than boys in this cohort.

Although gender parity was almost attained at JCE completion in this cohort, this study found out that there was 7.9% gender disparity at MSCE completion. This shows that more girls than boys dropped out of school in this cohort at MSCE level than JCE level.

4.3 JCE and MSCE Completion rates by gender and school type

After establishing that there were disparities at JCE and MSCE mean completion rates by gender of all sampled schools, this study explored if gender parity was attained at JCE and MSCE in DDSS and CDSS separately using mean completion rates by gender in both types of schools (DDSS and CDSS). See table 6. These two types of

schools are different in the type of teachers and amount of funding they were receiving from the government. DDSS were associated with highly qualified teachers while CDSS were associated with less qualified teachers. (See table 6)

Table 6: JCE and MSCE completion rates by gender and school type

CDSS					**DDSS**				
	JCE		**MSCE**			**JCE**		**MSCE**	
Schools	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Schools*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Boys*	*Girls*
Toleza	76	56	56	36	Liwonde	82	86	74	72
St Louis Mont	82.3	100	76.5	82.4	Puteya	84	70	68	40
Mmanga	76.5	88.2	64.7	82.4	Mbenjere	78.3	70	73.3	53.3
Phalula	70.6	82.3	58.8	64.7	Mpiri	50	48.1	27.3	16.7
Machinga	68	70.6	70.6	58.8	Chingale	84	80	76	66
Namkumba	68	60	60	36	Chimwalira	82	88	74	64
Mpondas	70.6	58.8	64.7	47.1	Domasi	92.5	85	90	80
Namitembo	60	45.7	25.7	25.7	Likangala	83.3	91.7	73.3	86.7
Sacred Heart	84	76	80	72	Malindi	89.2	90.8	84.2	82
Zomba Urban	84	88	84	68	Majuni	48	52	44.2	37.5
Totals	739.9	725.6	641	573	Totals	772.	761.	684.	596.
Mean completion rates	**73.9**	**72.6**	**64.1**	**57.3**	**Mean completion rates**	**77.3**	**76.1**	**68.4**	**59.6**

Table 6 shows that JCE mean completion rates of boys and girls in ten CDSS were 73.9% and 72.6% respectively. Therefore, gender parity at JCE completion in sampled CDSS was almost attained with boys being on the higher side by 1.3%. Table 6 also shows that girls JCE mean completion rate in all sampled DDSS was 76.1% while that of boys was 77.3%. This indicates that there was a disparity of 1.2% by gender in mean JCE completion rate in DDSS with boys on the higher side. These results show that gender parity at JCE completion in both CDSS and DDSS was missed by a small margin.

At MSCE level, table 6 indicates that the mean completion rates by gender were higher in DDSS (68.4 % boys and 59.6% girls) than in CDSS (64.1% for boys and 57.3% for girls). Table 6 also indicates that there was MSCE mean completion gender disparity of 8.8% in DDSS and 6.8% in CDSS. Parity at MSCE completion by gender in both DDSS and CDSS was not attained. Though better MSCE completion rates were attained in DDSS compared to those in CDSS, the mean completion disparity by gender in both types of schools were similarly wide (8.8%, 6.8%) respectively.

4.4 JCE and MSCE completion rates in urban and rural DDSS

This study explored the completion rates of students by rural and urban DDSS. The JCE and MSCE completion rates by gender of sampled DDSS in urban and rural location were calculated. Table 7 shows the results.

Table 7: JCE and MSCE completion rates in urban and rural DDSS

Urban DDSS					**Rural DDSS**				
	JCE		**MSCE**			**JCE**		**MSCE**	
Schools	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Schools*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Boys*	*Girls*
Liwonde	82	86	74	72	Puteya	84	70	68	40
Likangala	83.3	91.7	73.3	86.7	Mbenjere	78.3	70	56	53.3
Malindi	89.1	90.8	84.2	80	Mpiri	50	48.1	27.3	16.7
					Majuni	48	52	44.2	37.5
					Chingale	84	80	76	66
					Chimwalira	82	88	74	64
					Domasi	92.5	85	90	80
Totals	254.	269.9	452	357.	Totals	518.	493.1	452.	357.
Mean completion rates	**85**	**90**	**77.2**	**80**	**Mean completion rates**	**74.1**	**70.4**	**65**	**51**

Table 7 shows JCE and MSCE completion rates in urban and rural DDSS. In the urban DDSS, JCE mean completion for girls was 90% while that of boys in the same schools was 85%. JCE mean completion disparity by gender was 5% in the urban DDSS. It is encouraging to note that this disparity was in favour of girls since girls' JCE mean completion rate was higher than that of boys. In the rural DDSS, the opposite was true, as boys' JCE mean completion rate exceeded that of girls (boys being 74.1% and girls being 70.4%). Table 7 shows that there was a JCE mean completion rate gender disparity of 3.7% in the rural DDSS in favour of boys.

In the case of MSCE level, table 7 shows that DDSS in the urban areas had higher MSCE mean completion rates than those in the rural areas. (Urban DDSS had 80% for girls and 77.2% for boys while rural DDSS had 65% for boys and 51% for girls). Table 7 also shows that girls in urban DDSS had a higher mean MSCE completion rate than that of boys in the same type and location of schools. The disparity in MSCE mean completion rate by gender in urban DDSS was 2.8% in favour of girls while that

in rural DDSS was 14% in favour of boys. While the MSCE mean completion disparity was narrow in urban DDSS, it was wide in rural DDSS. Parity in MSCE completion was not attained both in urban and rural DDSS.

4.5 JCE and MSCE completion rates by gender in rural and urban CDSS

This study wanted to establish JCE and MSCE mean completion rates in urban and rural CDSS. The aim was to establish if parity in completion was attained in the mentioned schools.

Table 8: JCE and MSCE completion rates in urban and rural CDSS

Urban CDSS					**Rural CDSS**				
	JCE		**MSCE**			**JCE**		**MSCE**	
Schools	*boys*	*girls*	*Boys*	*girls*	*Schools*	*boys*	*Girls*	*boys*	*Girls*
St Louis Mont	82.3	100	76.5	82.4	Toleza	76	56	56	36
Mmanga	76.5	88.2	64	82.4	Phalula	70.6	82.4	58.8	64.7
Machinga	68	70.6	70.6	58.8	Nankum	68	60	60	36
Mpondas	70.6	58.8	64.7	47.1	Namitem	60	45.7	25.7	25.7
Sacred Hear	84	76	80	72					
Zomba Ur	84	88	84	68					
Totals	465.	481.	439.	410.	Totals	274.	244	200.	162.
Mean completion rates	**78**	**80.3**	**73.3**	**68.4**	**Mean completion rates**	**69**	**61**	**50.1**	**41**

Table 8 shows JCE and MSCE mean completion rates in urban and rural CDSS. According to Table 8 mean JCE completion rates in the urban CDSS for boys and girls were 78% and 80% respectively. In rural CDSS, mean JCE completion rates for boys and girls were 69% and 61% respectively. The JCE statistics in table 8 shows

that boys and girls mean completion rates were higher than those of boys and girls in the rural CDSS. While girls' JCE mean completion rate in the urban CDSS was higher than that of boys in the same schools, boys JCE mean completion rate in the rural CDSS was higher than that of girls in the same schools. JCE mean completion rate disparity by gender was wide in the rural CDSS than urban CDSS, (8% and 2.3% respectively. This shows that parity at JCE completion was about to be attained in urban CDSS and not in rural CDSS.

Mean MSCE completion rates statistics in table 8 show that boys and girls in urban CDSS had higher MSCE mean completion rates than boys and girls in rural CDSS. Boys registered a mean completion rate of 73.3% while girls registered a mean completion rate of 69% in urban CDSS. In the rural CDSS, boys registered a mean completion rate of 50.1% while girls registered 41%. This means that gender parity at secondary school completion was not attained both in urban and rural CDSS. Rural CDSS registered a wider MSCE mean completion rate disparity compared to urban CDSS. Rural CDSS being 9.1% and urban CDSS was 4.3%. MSCE mean completion rates in the rural CDSS were the lowest in this study. This means that dropout rates for both boys and girls in rural CDSS were the highest in this study compared to other groups of schools.

4.6 JCE and MSCE Completion rates by gender and school location

Mean JCE and MSCE completion rates by gender and school location were calculated. The aim was to check if parity at JCE and MSCE completion was attained in urban as well as rural schools. Table 9 shows JCE and MSCE completion rates by gender in urban and rural schools.

Table 9: JCE and MSCE completion rates in rural and urban schools

Urban schools					**Rural schools**				
	JCE		**MSCE**			**JCE**		**MSCE**	
Schools	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Schools*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Boys*	*Girls*
Sacred Hear	84	76	80	72	Toleza	76	56	56	36
Mpondas	70.5	58.8	64.7	47.1	Namkumba	68	60	60	36
Zomba Urban	84	88	84	68	Phalula	70.5	82.4	58.8	64.7
Machinga	68	70.5	70.6	58.8	Namitembo	60	45.7	25.7	25.7
Mmanga	76.5	88.2	64.7	82.4	Chingale	84	80	76	66
Liwonde	82	86	74	72	Chimwalira	82	88	74	64
Likangala	83.3	91.6	73.3	86.7	Domasi	92.2	85	90	80
Malindi	89.1	90.8	84.2	80	Mbenjere	78.3	70	73.3	53.3
St Louis	82.3	100	76.5	82.4	Puteya	84	70	68	40
					Majuni	46.1	54.1	44.2	37.5
					Mpiri	50	48.1	27.3	16.7
Totals	719.	750	672	649.	Totals	789.	724.	653.	519.
Mean completion rates	**80**	**83.3**	**74.7**	**72.2**	**Mean completion rates**	**72.1**	**67**	**59.4**	**47.3**

According to table 9, girls mean JCE completion rate in urban schools was higher than that of boys in the same schools (girls being 83.3% and boys being 80%). It is interesting to note that girls JCE mean completion rate exceeded that of boys by 3.3%. Table 9 shows that boys mean JCE completion rate in rural schools, was higher than that of girls in the same schools (boys being 72.1% and girls being 67%). Boys JCE mean completion rate exceeded that of girls by 5.1% in rural schools. Although boys

JCE mean completion rate in the rural setting was higher than that of girls in the same schools, it was lower than that of girls in the urban setting by 11.2%. This study found out that the JCE mean completion rate gender disparity in the rural setting (5.1%) was wider than that in the urban setting (3.3%). In the urban setting, the JCE mean completion disparity was reversed since girls' mean completion rate exceeded that of boys. In the rural setting, the mean completion disparity was like that of the developing countries because boys' completion exceeded that of girls. While schools in the rural setting had a wider JCE mean completion disparity by gender, schools in the urban setting had narrow JCE mean completion disparity.

Although girls' MSCE mean completion rate in the urban schools was lower than that of boys in the same schools, it was 12.8% higher than that of boys in the rural schools. It seems like the factors which forced pupils out of school in this cohort had greater impact in rural areas than in urban areas. These factors seemed to have affected both boys and girls seriously in the rural schools as they both registered high dropout rates at MSCE completion. This study found out that 40.6% of boys and 52.7% of girls in the sampled schools in rural areas in this cohort dropped out of school. Though both boys and girls were seriously affected in terms of dropout rates, girls were affected more than boys in the rural schools. Table 9 shows that while gender parity at MSCE completion rate was almost attained in urban schools, the mean MSCE completion rate disparity by gender was wide in rural schools. In urban schools, mean MSCE completion rate disparity by gender was 2.5% while in the rural schools, it was 12.1%. When compared by rural and urban location, MSCE mean completion rates in urban secondary schools by gender were higher (74.7% boys 72.2% girls,) than those of schools in the rural settings (59.4% boys and 47.3% girls). See Table 9.

4.7 Summary of MSCE completion rates in sampled schools

This study focused on analysing the MSCE completion rates of boys and girls by type and location of school. The schools analysed are Rural CDSS, urban CDSS, rural DDSS, urban DDSS, all rural schools, all urban schools, all CDSS, all DDSS and all sampled schools.

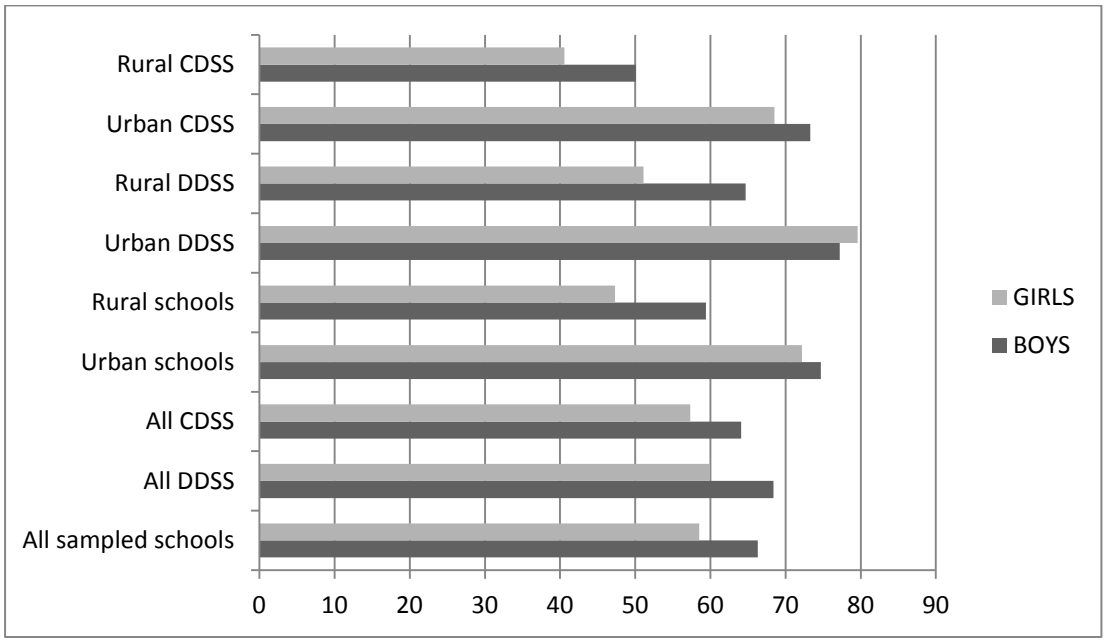

Figure 2: Summary of MSCE completion rates by gender in sampled schools

Figure 2: shows that girls in urban DDSS had the highest MSCE mean completion rate and girls in rural CDSS had the lowest MSCE mean completion rate. These findings are in line with the gender equality frame work which stresses that equal access to education need to be accompanied with good quality education for girls to remain in school. Figure 2 also shows that MSCE mean completion rates of both boys and girls in urban DDSS as well as urban CDSS were higher 77.2%, 80% and 73.3%,

68.4% respectively than those of boys and girls in rural DDSS as well as rural CDSS 65%, 51% and 50.1%, 41% respectively. The MSCE mean completion gender disparities in rural DDSS (14%) as well as rural CDSS (9.1%) were wider than those in the urban DDSS (2.8%) as well as urban CDSS (4.9%). This indicates that parity in MSCE completion rate by gender was about to be attained in urban DDSS and CDSS and not in rural DDSS and CDSS.

4.8 Access to secondary school

This study explored the extent to which the 50/50 form one selection policy achieved parity at MSCE completion. The policy in question provides boys and girls with equal access to secondary school education. Using the 2009 form one selection lists of sampled schools, the study established the way the policy was implemented. Table 3 on page 36 indicates that parity at form one selection was not attained in two out of twenty sampled secondary schools. The number of boys was slightly higher than that of girls in the two schools where gender parity was not attained at selection level. Both of these schools were in rural areas. Gender parity was not attained in these two schools because the feeder primary schools did not have the required number of girls who were qualified for form one selection.

The strategy was therefore to select more boys to fill the gap in the required numbers of the schools. This is in line with what Wolf (1999) found out that sometimes there are changes in the way policy is implemented compared to the policy implementation plan. These results indicate that the parity policy alone was not sufficient to attain equity at form one selection. According to EMIS (2014/15), standard 8 completion rates in 2014/15 academic year show that 35% of boys enrolment and 29% of girls

enrolment completed standard eight in 2014/15 academic year suggesting that there are still enrolment problems for girls. This is in agreement with study findings done by Chimombo et al (2000) who observed that in Malawi girls face more challenges than boys which force them to drop out of school in large numbers than boys. According to Chimombo et al (2000), some parents demand their daughters to be absent from school in order to help them in house hold chores. Besides this, Chimombo et al (2000) observed that heavy work load of girls relative to that of boys deprive girl's time for study. This affects girls' performance at school.

Similar findings were made in a study by Kadzamira (1996) who stated that girls consistently scored lower marks on the PSLC examinations which greatly reduced their chances over the years of getting their fair share of secondary school education. Research has also noted that in Malawi, some girls experience pressure from their families to drop out of school and marry (AGE, 2008). As a result, more boys than girls sit for PSLCE and make it difficult for the 50/50 form one selection policy to be achieved at selection level.

4.8.1 MSCE completion rates

Gender parity at overall mean MSCE completion was not attained. Boys' mean completion (66.3%) was higher than that of girls (58.4%). Mean MSCE completion gender disparity was 7.9%. These results are in agreement with the study findings made by Kadzamira (1996) who found out that girls faced lot of challenges than boys to remain in school in Malawi. These results are also in agreement with MANEB data on 2012 MSCE completion which indicates that more boys wrote 2012 MSCE than girls. Early marriage and pregnancy have been cited as problems which have strong

influence on the gendered pattern of school participation, retention and completion in Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Malawi and other countries (Sutherland-Addy, 2001). Davison and Kanyuka (1990) reported that parents showed a preference to educate boys. According to Davison (1993), parents believed that boys were likely to succeed in school than girls.

JCE failure is another factor which has led to large mean MSCE completion gender disparity. According to table 4, ten boys and fifty one girls failed JCE in the sampled schools in this cohort and therefore failed to complete MSCE in 2012. These findings can be associated with what Chimombo et al (2000) observed that girls rarely find time to study due to house hold chores. It was observed that girls wake up early and go to bed very late due to house hold chores. Since pupils in the sampled DDSS and CDSS are commuters, it is possible that the house hold chores prevented girls from studying and therefore lead to more girls failing examinations than boys.

4.8.2 MSCE completion rates by gender and school type

MSCE completion rates in DDSS (68.4% boys and 59.6%girls) were higher than those in CDSS (64.1% for boys and 57.3% for girls). This study has established a higher girls' completion rate in DDSS than in CDSS.These findings are in line with what Kane (2004) observed that better schools are expected to encourage girls to stay in school while poor schools are expected to discourage girls from staying in school.

4.8.3 MSCE completion rates in urban and rural DDSS by gender

Completion rates in Urban DDSS were higher than those in the rural DDSS. Urban DDSS had 80% for girls and 77.2% for boys while rural DDSS had 65% for boys and

51% for girls). Girls in urban DDSS had a higher mean MSCE completion rate than that of boys. This suggests that the urban conditions have a supportive environment for girls' education.

The disparity in mean MSCE completion rate by gender in urban DDSS was 2.8% while that in rural DDSS was 14%. While the MSCE mean completion disparity was narrow in urban DDSS, it was wide in rural DDSS. While parity in MSCE completion was about to be attained in urban DDSS, it was far from being attained in rural DDSS. It seems like DDSS which are said to be better schools were overwhelmed by the location in rural areas in terms of secondary school completion. Disparity in mean MSCE completion among girls in the same type (DDSS) of school but in different location was 29%. Location of schools seemed to have played a big impact in secondary school completion in this study.

These findings are in line with what Maluwa-Banda and Kholowa (2002) observed that urban schools in Malawi are better than rural schools in terms of quality of teachers and infrastructure. It seems like girls in urban DDSS faced few challenges that forced few of them to drop out of school while girls in rural DDSS faced many challenges that forced many of them to drop out of school. These findings can be associated with many factors in urban setting. Some of these factors are as follows: urban schools enjoy large resource allocation like books and other teaching materials which help girls to like school. Urban schools are less likely to experience stuff shortages and in most cases have high proportion of qualified teachers. Other urban factors include presence of public transport to schools. Public transport makes travel to school and back easy and safe more especially for girls. Research has observed that

modern mothers encourage their daughters to complete secondary school education. Majority of these modern mothers are found in urban areas in Malawi. Many of these modern mothers also act as role models to their daughters.

4.8.4 MSCE completion rates in urban and rural CDSS by gender

CDSS in the urban areas had higher mean MSCE completion rates than those in rural areas. Boys registered a mean completion rate of 73.3% while girls registered a mean completion rate of 69% in urban CDSS. In the rural CDSS, boys registered a mean completion rate of 50.1% while girls registered 41%. Rural CDSS registered a wider mean MSCE completion rate disparity compared to urban CDSS. Rural CDSS being 9.1% and urban CDSS was 4.3%. Mean MSCE completion rates in the rural CDSS were the lowest in this study. This study has also found that girls in rural CDSS had the lowest mean completion rate seconded by boys in the same schools among all groups of schools presented in this study.

The positive impact of urban location can still be observed in mean MSCE completion rates of boys and girls in urban CDSS. The opposite is true in the rural CDSS. These results are in line with what Macjessie - Mbewe (2004) observed. Macjessie- Mbewe (2004) noted that CDSS in rural areas in Malawi had many unqualified teachers and that these schools had no teaching and learning materials as such the education obtained in these schools was of poor quality. High dropout rate of boys and girls in rural CDSS at MSCE level can be associated with poor quality education in these schools. Just like what the gender equality frame work stipulates, the poor quality education seemed to have affected girls more than boys in the sense

that more girls (59%) than boys (49.9%) dropped out of school in rural CDSS. Consequently it seems poor quality education in rural CDSS affected even boys.

4.8.5 MSCE completion rates in urban and rural DDSS and CDSS by gender

Mean MSCE completion rates in Table 8 shows that while gender parity at MSCE completion rate was almost attained in urban schools, the mean MSCE completion rate disparity by gender was wide in rural schools. In urban schools, MSCE completion rate disparity by gender was 2.5% while in the rural schools it was 12.1%. When compared by rural and urban location, mean MSCE completion rates in urban secondary schools by gender were higher (74.7% boys and 72.2% girls,) than those of schools in the rural settings (59.4% boys and 47.3% girls.

These findings are in line with what Maluwa-Banda and Kholowa (2002) observed that urban schools in Malawi are better than rural schools in terms of quality of teachers and infrastructure. Such being the case, few girls dropout of school in urban schools since good quality education encourage girls to remain in school (Kane, 2004). Urban settings seem to have positive impact on secondary school completion for both boys and girls compared to rural settings. These findings are in line with what Lewis and Lockheed (2006) found out in Tunisia. According to Lewis and Lockheed (2006), rural students in Tunisia were systematically disadvantaged in four ways. They were less likely to attend preschool, less likely to receive private or supplemental lessons, less likely to read books other than text books and less likely to receive academic help from their parents. The situation experienced by rural students

may create an environment for rural student not to enjoy formal education hence increase their chances of dropping out of school.

Findings of this study are also in line with the gender equality frame work which stresses that gender parity in school access need to be accompanied with good quality education for it to achieve parity in school completion. Hence small mean MSCE completion rate disparity in urban school noted that urban schools (DDSS/ CDSS) were better than rural schools in Malawi. According to these findings, it seems like locality of schools had a big impact on the secondary school completion rates. While urban location had positive impact on school retention and completion, rural settings had negative impact on school retention and completion more especially that of girls.

4.8.6 Chapter summary

The study found that the 50/50 form one selection policy has improved girl's access to secondary education; however selection parity was not achieved in the 2009 cohort. This is because gender parity at selection failed with eight girls. The 50/50 form one selection policy made it possible for girls who could not have been selected to secondary school to be selected. According to the findings of this study, the selected girls are staying in school and sitting for JCE almost in same numbers as those of boys. Gender parity at MSCE completion was not attained in 2009 cohort in SEED since girls MSCE completion rate was lower than that of boys. Despite the failure to attain gender parity at MSCE completion, this study found that more girls than boys completed secondary school education in urban DDSS. This is encouraging and it suggests that girls are capable of benefiting from the 50/50 form one selection policy

more especially in the urban school conditions. One can suggest that there are positive factors in the urban environment that promote girls education.

The number of girls who completed MSCE in this cohort was 479 and that of boys was 549. One cannot deny the contribution of the 50/50 form one selection policy at MSCE completion in this cohort. The previous form one selection policy in DDSS recommended that half of the total number of boys to be selected for form one should be girls. In this case, 479 girls are more than half of 549 boys. This means that the 50/50 form one selection policy made it possible for girls who could not have had a chance of being selected to secondary school to access and complete secondary school. This chapter has presented the research findings of the study. The next chapter presents the conclusions, challenges of the 50/50 selection policy and implications of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study. The chapter also highlights challenges to the implementation of the 50/50 form one selection policy. Finally, the chapter makes suggestions for further research.

5.1 Study conclusion

This chapter concludes the findings based on the research questions guiding the study. The main aim of this study was to establish the extent to which the 50/50 form one selection policy achieves gender parity at MSCE completion. The overall MSCE mean completion rate by gender was 66.3% for boys and 58.5% for girls. This shows that parity at MSCE mean completion by gender was not attained in this cohort in SEED. The MSCE mean completion rate disparity by gender in this cohort was 6.9%. This means that the equal access which was granted to boys and girls in DDSS and CDSS in 2009 cohort did not yield parity at MSCE completion in 2012 in SEED. This is an indication that apart from access, there were other factors which prevented girls from obtaining and completing secondary school education. Therefore, after addressing the issue of access through the introduction of 50/50 form one selection policy, the ministry of education should find ways of eliminating factors which prevent girls from completing secondary school education.

MSCE mean completion rates by gender in sampled DDSS and CDSS were calculated separately and the results were 68.4% boys and 59.6% girls in the DDSS, and 64.1% boys and 57.3% girls in the CDSS. This also meant that parity in MSCE mean completion rate by gender in DDSS and CDSS separately was not attained in this cohort. MSCE mean completion rate gender disparity in DDSS was 8.8% while in CDSS it was 6.8%. This means that just like in the DDSS, parity at MSCE completion was far from being attained in CDSS in this cohort.

MSCE mean completion rates by gender in all urban and rural sampled schools were calculated separately. The results were 74.7% boys and 72.2% girls in urban schools, and 59.4% boys and 47.3% girls in rural schools. These results show that gender parity in MSCE mean completion rates in sampled urban and rural schools separately was not attained in this cohort. MSCE mean completion rate gender disparity in urban sampled schools was 2.5% while in rural schools was 12.1%. This shows that while gender parity was about to be attained in urban schools, it was far from being attained in rural schools.

The major contribution of the study is that it has established that equal access to secondary school education was not attained in SEED in this cohort despite the existence of the 50/50 form one selection policy. The other contribution is that this study has established that though gender parity failed to be attained by 1.96% at selection level, gender parity failed to be attained by 8.8% at secondary school completion level. The results in this study show that there are other factors in addition to access to secondary school education which prevent girls from completing secondary education in the same numbers like those of boys.

5.2 Challenges to policy implementation and attainment of gender parity

Three main factors that have been identified in this study namely; Failure to attain parity at selection, school drop outs and JCE failure are factors which prevent the 50/50 selection policy from achieving its goal which is the attainment of gender parity at secondary school completion.

The form one selection lists of 2009 cohort in sampled schools indicated that two schools failed to attain parity at selection level due to limited number of qualified girls to take up their places in secondary schools. This shortage is indicative of problems from the feeder primary schools. There is therefore need to provide strategies that will ensure that primary school completion rates of girls are improved.

Secondary school dropout has been identified as a problem that continues to challenge the attainment of high secondary school completion rates and gender parity. In 2010, there were 189 boys and 194 girls who dropped out of schools before sitting for the JCE exams. This means that 5 more girls than boys dropped out of school before writing JCE). Some boys and girls failed to write MSCE in 2012 due to the fact that they failed 2010 JCE. In this cohort, 10 boys and 51 girls failed 2010 JCE in sampled schools. More girls continue to be lost from the school system due to poor performance. This finding supports the views that emphasize on the need to provide quality support to girls to ensure that they perform well in school. Some pupils dropped out of school before writing MSCE though they passed JCE in 2010. There were 70 boys and 78girls who dropped out of school before writing MSCE though they passed 2010 JCE. More girls dropped out of sampled school in the 2009 cohort

than boys. There were 169 boys and 323 girls who dropped out of the sampled schools in 2009 cohort.

5.3 Policy implications of this study

The findings of this study have established that to effectively implement the 50/50 form one selection policy, there is need to:

i. Support more girls to effectively complete primary education by providing good quality primary education since this study has found out that gender parity at form one selection failed in two secondary schools due to inadequate number of girls who qualified for secondary school education in the feeder schools of those two secondary schools.

ii. Support boys and girls in secondary schools to reduce dropout rate due to JCE failure by giving them good quality education since this study has found out that some boys and girls failed to complete secondary education in 2012 because they failed JCE in 2010.

5.4 Suggestion for further research

In order to answer some related questions on gender parity issues in secondary school completion rates and to contribute more knowledge to the topic, it is recommended that a study be conducted to find out factors which make girls to stay in school and complete secondary education in large numbers in urban DDSS and CDSS. Such a study is important in order to find out strategies for improving girl's MSCE completion rates in rural DDSS and CDSS.

It is also recommending that a study should be conducted in rural setting in SEED to find out from students, teachers and parents ways of reducing girls' dropout rate in DDSS and CDSS in order to improve girl's MSCE mean completion rates in rural DDSS and CDSS.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter from EDM (SEED) to collect data in Schools under SEED

AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS ON THESIS OF EXPLORING HOW FAR THE 50/50 SELECTION POLICY HAS GONE IN ACHIEVING PARITY AT SECONDARY SCHOOL COMPLETION : A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SEED.

I write to kindly request your office to allow Mrs Bernadette Banda Kaminga, currently a post graduate student at Chancellor College the University of Malawi – to carry out a research related activity for her thesis of exploring how far the 50/50 selection policy has gone in achieving parity at Secondary School completion in South East Education Division.

I will be most grateful if Mrs. B. Kaminga is given all the necessary support and guidance so that her data collection exercise is carried out successfully.

I look forward to your usual support and hoping at the same time that you will accord this request all the attention and urgency that it deserves.

EDUCATION DIVISION MANAGER
SOUTH EAST EDUCATION DIVISION
2014 -10- 01
PRIVATE BAG 48, ZOMBA

M.S.D. ALUFANDIKA

EDUCATION DIVISION MANAGER

Appendix B: Letter of Authority to collect data from MANEB

THE MALAWI NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS BOARD

INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

To:	Ag EXECTIVE DIRECTOR	**Ref:** C/1/3/5	
Through:	DIRECTOR EXAMINATIONS		
From :	MRS BERNADETTE KAMINGA	**Date** 14/02/14	
Subject:	REQUEST FOR DATA FROM CSD		

Sir,

I would like to request for data from computer services department. I would like to have 2010 JCE AND 2012 MSCE results. These are to be used as some of research instruments for my thesis.

Thank you sir,

Bkaminga

Mrs B kaminga

II Dir (CSD)

Arrange to provide the requested data.

for Ag. ED

14/02/16

Appendix C: Questionnaire

- Researcher: Amongst all the students who were selected using the 50/50 selection policy in 2009 at your school, which ones wrote MSCE in 2012?
- Head teacher
- Amongst the students who were selected to your school in 2009 using the 50/50 form one selection policy and did not write MSCE in 2012, which ones were transferred to other schools and which were the schools for specific students?
- Head teacher:
- Which students among the ones who did not write MSCE in 2012 but were selected to your school in 2009 using the 50/50 form one selection policy wrote JCE in 2010?
- Head teacher:
- Identify students who passed JCE among the ones who were selected to your school in 2009 using the 50/50 form one selection policy and wrote JCE in 2010?
- Head teacher:
- Identify students who failed JCE among the ones who were selected to your school in 2009 using the 50/50 selection policy and wrote JCE in 2010?
- Head teacher:
- Amongst the students who were selected to your school in 2009 using the 50/50 form one selection policy and did not write JCE in 2010, which ones dropped out of school?
- Head teacher:

Appendix D: An introduction letter from Chancellor College

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

Principal: Christopher Kamlongera,
B.A., Dip TEO., M.A., Ph.D

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

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

10th January, 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

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

Mrs Bernadette Banda Kaminga is a student of Education in the Department of Educational Foundations at Chancellor College, University of Malawi.

Mrs B. Kaminga is working on her thesis, *Exploring how far the 50/50 selection Policy has gone in achieving parity at Secondary School completion in SEED : A Case of South East Education Division.* This is meant to be a request to your institution or organization to assist our student in her endeavor to collect data.

Thank you

University of Malawi
10 JAN 2014
Dept. of Educ. Foundations
P.O. Box 280, Zomba

Dr R. Nyirongo.
HEAD, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS.