

**THE WORKING OF TEACHER DEPLOYMENT POLICY: PARTIALLY
CONTRIBUTING TO THE WIDENING GAP BETWEEN THE RICH AND
THE POOR IN MALAWI.**

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

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University of Malawi

December, 2023



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

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University of Malawi

December, 2023

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.

Full legal Name

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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

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Co- Supervisor

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all people engaged in making the world a fairer place, especially in the field of education. May their efforts bear abundant fruit.

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In the first place, great thanks should go to my Creator and Ultimate Provider for seeing me through the study amidst the corona virus pandemic and serious financial difficulties. I would not have finished my study if His blessings were not showered upon me. In this vein, let me express my special gratitude and thanks to all people at Cannon Collins who rescued me when I faced serious financial difficulties. Your financial support was key to the completion of the study as it came at a time when dropping out of school was almost certain. **THANKYOU CANNON COLLINS.**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis uses a theoretical framework comprising *Education Equity Theory* and *Socio-reproduction Theory* to analyse teacher deployment policy in relation to providing equal access to quality secondary school education with the aim of bridging the gap between the rich and the poor. Using qualitatively-driven mixed methods approach, the study was conducted in selected Conventional Secondary Schools (CSSs) and Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs) in four districts of Shire Highlands Education Division (SHED) of Malawi. Data was collected from questioners, interviews, ministry and school documents. Data was analysed to find out how teacher deployment policy is performing in allocating teachers in CDSSs and CSSs with regard to four key factors; academic qualifications, experience, motivation and work commitment of teachers/head-teachers. With regard to the four key factors, the study finds teacher deployment to be biased in favour of CSSs. Consequently, CSS students (majorly rich) are getting high quality education and go on to get university degrees with higher chances of securing lucrative jobs while CDSS students (majorly poor) get less quality education and fail to go on to get university degrees and have little chances of securing lucrative jobs. Hence, the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen. Therefore, the study concludes that the working of the teacher deployment policy, at least in SHED, is partially contributing to the widening gap between the rich and the poor in Malawi.

Key words: Deployment policy, Educational outcomes, and Socio-economic inequality.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CDSS	Community Day Secondary School
CSS	Conventional Secondary School
DEC	Distance Education Centre
DEM	District Education Manager
DSTV	Digital Satellite Television
ECD	Early Childhood Education
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FPE	Free Primary Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
MANEB	Malawi National Examination Board
MCDE	Malawi College of Distance Education
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MGDS II	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II
MIM	Malawi Institute of Management
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter overview.

This chapter discusses the background to the problem, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study and definitions of operational terms.

1.1 Background to the study.

Researchers such as Alvaredo, Chancel, Piketty, Saez, & Zucman (2017) show that in many countries the gap between the rich and the poor is reaching new extremes due to significant increases in inequality concerning both income and wealth. In this regard, De Gregorio and Lee (2003) say that education can play a facilitating role in terms of social mobility (income, jobs, skills, mobility) and thus ensure that economic growth is more broadly shared. In this vein, Gould & Hijzen (2017) argue that with sound education policies and practices, education has unparalleled power to level the playing field, to help close the growing divides, and, in turn, bring people closer together. In Malawi, the government's quest for an education system that equalises society can be traced back to the 1960s. In 1964, Malawi Government contacted the American Council of Education to conduct a survey whose main objective was to determine Malawi's education needs for social and economic progress. Since then, subsequent educational plans have always had the objective to equalise society (MoEST, 2008).

Against this backdrop, the Malawi government has had, in its government regulations, a teacher deployment policy that is said to be aimed at equitable deployment of qualified teachers to all public schools. To ensure equitable deployment of qualified teachers to all public schools, in 1998 the ministry of education (MoE) issued a circular on teacher deployment policy, which is still applicable now. The circular states that “teachers should be posted to schools where vacancies of their grades exist” and “teachers should be posted away from urban and semi-urban to rural areas whether married or not” (cited in Milner & MacJessie-Mbewe, 2010, p, 38). However, some scholars still observed a number of weaknesses related teacher deployment policy.

Firstly, Kadzamira (2006) noted that poor living conditions of teachers especially in rural schools discouraged some teachers to accept rural postings. Along this line, Mulkeen (2006) indicates that lack of incentives for teachers living in the rural areas was a threat to the achievement of teacher deployment. Thirdly, Milner and MacJessie-Mbewe (2010) found that despite the existence of the deployment policy in government regulations, the Ministry of Education lacked a deployment strategy. In addition to this, some senior MoE officials and some political leaders were interfering with teacher postings when their friends and relatives were posted to rural schools. On account of these reasons, Milner et al. (2001) and Milner & MacJessie-Mbewe (2010) observed that, despite the existence of the teacher deployment policy, CSSs attracted more qualified teachers unlike CDSSs.

Consequently, MacJessie-Mbewe and Kholowa (2010) argued that disparity in qualified teachers between CDSSs and CSSs led to unequal education opportunities and, ultimately, reproduced socio-economic inequalities. This is because, on one

hand, CDSSs are for the poor since the majority of the CDSSs are in rural areas where the majority of the poor live and students who go to CDSSs are taken from the surrounding primary schools. It follows therefore that the majority of the children who go to CDSSs are from rural areas and from poor families. On the other hand, CSSs are mainly for the urban rich. This is because the urban or township areas where the rich live, have very good primary schools with adequate and well trained teachers unlike primary schools in rural areas.

This leads to urban primary school children to get a higher quality education and perform better than their rural counterparts. In this vein, MacJessie-Mbewe and Kholowa argued;

“Since the education system in Malawi is so competitive, only those who get very high grades in primary school leaving certificate examinations (PSLCE) are selected to CSSs while those whose performance is lower are selected to CDSSs. So, children (mostly from higher socio-economic families) who attend good primary schools find themselves in CSSs while children (mostly from poor families) who attend poor schools find themselves in CDSSs” (MacJessie-Mbewe & Kholowa, 2010, p, 67).

Further, MacJessie-Mbewe & Kholowa (2010) argued that since the quality of teachers determine the quality of education offered, inequitable distribution of qualified teachers between CSSs for the urban rich and CDSSs for the rural poor was contributing to unequal education opportunities between the two school categories. Consequently, poor children were not performing well like their rich counterparts in national examinations. Due to the competitiveness of the education system in Malawi, a negligible number of students in CDSSs managed to make it to university while a

significant number of students in CSSs did. This implied that a significant number of children from CSSs (mostly from higher socio-economic family) were getting university degrees and had a higher probability of getting a job than had the children from CDSSs (mostly from low socio-economic family). This was resulting in reproduction of socioeconomic inequalities against governments objective of equalising society as pointed out earlier on.

1.2. Statement of the problem.

From the above background, MacJessie-Mbewe and Kholowa (2010, p, 72) recommended careful scrutiny and improvement of a number of issues related to teacher deployment policy to help in governments aim of equalising society. Accordingly, in the past decade, the government of Malawi put in place strategies and interventions to improve the teacher deployment policy in order to ensure equitable deployment of qualified teachers to all public schools in pursuit of equalising education opportunities so as to reduce socioeconomic inequalities. According to World Bank [WB] (2018), the strategies and interventions have been mainly along three areas. The first area is improving the production of qualified secondary school teachers. This is based on the fact that no matter how good the deployment policy might be, deployment of a significant number of qualified teachers to all public schools cannot be achieved if the qualified teachers are in short supply. The second is increasing recruitment of qualified teachers and positing them to needy rural schools. The last one is motivating and management of qualified teachers deployed to rural schools.

With regard to improving the production of qualified secondary school teachers, the government has been undertaking the following measures: increasing intake of regular pre-service training for secondary school teachers at university level; sending serving teachers with just general diplomas and degrees for a nine-month university certificate of education (UCE) to equip them with teaching methods. Thirdly, having a four-year secondary teacher training program targeting underqualified teachers in the secondary system (World Bank, 2018). Three strategies were put in place to make these measures possible.

The first strategy entailed government increasing the number of public universities and colleges training secondary school teachers. For example, it established Nalikule College of Education in Lilongwe and expanded Domasi College of Education in Zomba, both of which are solely for the training of secondary school teachers (MoEST, 2017). Similarly, the ministry expanded physical infrastructure to increase enrolment of education students in existing public universities such as University of Malawi and Mzuzu University (MoEST, 2019). Secondly, government introduced distance and parallel modes of training teachers in public universities and colleges. This has led to increased enrolment of student teachers in public universities and colleges (MoE, 2020). Thirdly, the government encourages the establishment of private universities and allowed them to train secondary school teachers (MoEST, 2015). When this research was being conducted, Malawi had 15 private universities registered and accredited by the National Council for Higher Education [NCHE] (MoE, 2020).

Concerning the need to increase recruitment of academically qualified teachers and posting them to needy rural schools, the government has focused on doing the following during the past decade; equitable deployment of qualified teachers, mainly in needy schools, and increasing availability of mathematics and science teachers in all schools (MoEST, 2008). Therefore, government has been recruiting teachers graduating from various secondary school teacher training institutions. These new teachers are deployed to division offices for them to be further allocated to different schools depending on schools' teacher needs. However, this strategy of deploying new teachers to the neediest schools was found to be ineffective because of persistent significant imbalances in qualified teachers' allocation to CSSs and remote rural CDSSs (Nkhokwe et al., 2017).

That explains why, in 2017 the government introduced a new categorisation of schools based on remoteness and prioritising the deployment of newly qualified teachers to the most remote CDSSs (MoEST, 2017). Further, the government introduced control measures targeted at teachers who refuse to be deployed to rural CDSSs. Firstly, newly recruited teachers can only be introduced on the payroll upon accepting posting to the schools they are deployed to. Secondly, self-upgrading teachers can only be promoted upon accepting posting to rural CDSSs. Thirdly, serving teachers who refuse posting to rural CDSSs have their salaries withheld until they take up their appointments at their new duty stations (cf. MoEST, 2019). Conversely, there has been tight controls on transfers away from rural schools to the extent that even those with a legitimate need to work closer to urban areas e.g. on medical grounds do not always succeed in obtaining transfers (Asim, 2019).

With regard to motivating and managing qualified teachers deployed to rural schools, the government has focused on the following strategies during the past decade. Firstly, one of the objectives of NESP 2008 – 2017 was the introduction of appropriate incentives to teachers working in rural schools. To this end, in 2010 the government introduced a K10,000.00 (equivalent to 80 US dollars at that time) rural hardship allowance (MoEST, 2018). Secondly, NESP 2008 – 2017 aimed at strengthening PTAs and management boards to aid the development of schools. Thirdly, another objective of NESP 2008 – 2017 proposed the provision of houses to at least 75% of teachers working in needy rural areas to make qualified teachers to accept postings in rural areas (MoEST, 2019).

However, despite government interventions in the past decade, there has not been tangible improvements with regard to disparity in academic performance between rich children in CSSs and poor children in CDSSs. For example, figure 1 below, shows 2019 Malawi School Certificate Examination [MSCE] pass rates where CSSs (government day, and government boarding schools) are the best performing schools, while CDSSs (CDSS not approved, and CDSS approved) are the least performing.

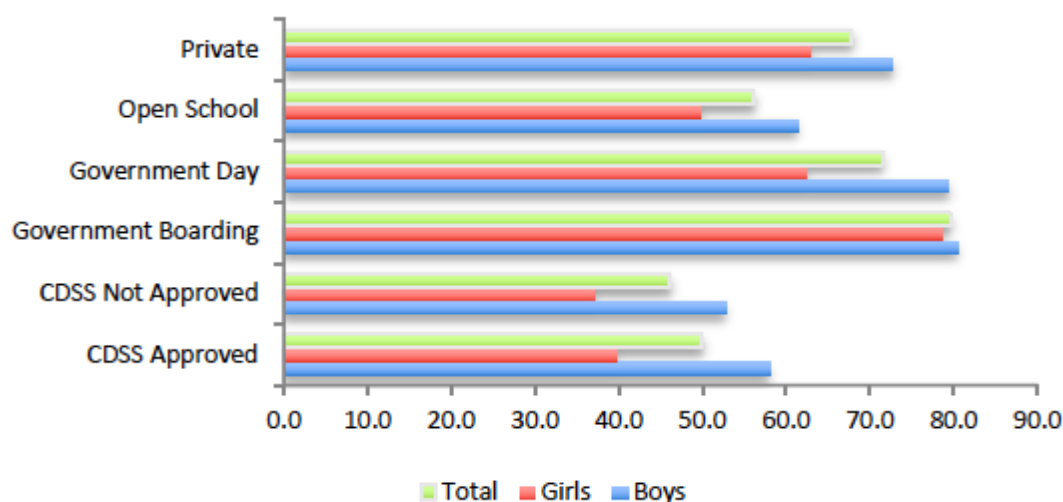


Figure 1: MSCE Pass Rates by School Type 2019. Source: MoEST (2019)

This disparity in academic performance between rich children in CSSs and poor children in CDSSs also translates into disparity in university selection between rich children and poor children. Since Malawi's education system continues to be competitive (MoE, 2022), SHED 2022 university selection statistics show that CDSSs continue to perform far worse than CSSs. On the one hand, out of 9488 candidates that sat for MSCE from CDSSs (MoE, 2022), only 133 were selected into public universities (SHED, 2022) representing 1.4% selection rate. On the other hand, out of 1544 candidates from CSSs that sat for MSCE (MoE, 2022), 415 were selected into public universities (SHED, 2022) representing 27% selection rate.

These statistics have to be seen against the background that CSSs and CDSSs continue to be schools for the rich and the poor respectively (Altiyelken and Hoeksman, 2021). This implies that a significant number of children from CSSs (mostly from higher socio-economic family) continue to get university degrees and have a higher probability of getting a job than have the children from CDSSs (mostly from low socio-economic family). Therefore, these statistics appear to testify that Malawi's education system continues to catalyse the widening gap between the rich and the poor as MacJessie-Mbewe and Kholowa (2010) argued. This is contrary to the NESIP 2020-2030 concepts of not leaving any one behind (MoE, 2020). Nonetheless, this scenario cannot be attributed to exactly the same reasons stated by MacJessie-Mbewe and Kholowa (2010) in relation to teacher deployment. This is on account that the two scholars did not in any way say that they offered an exhaustive explanation on how teacher deployment was contributing to inequality in quality of education offered between CDSSs and CSSs.

However, it would also be unrealistic to argue that the significant difference in performance of CDSS students and CSS students and consequential reproduction of socio-economic inequalities can be attributed exclusively to reasons unrelated to the teacher deployment policy. This is because it cannot be argued with absolute certainty that government interventions with regard to teacher deployment have been so perfect to ensure quality education in both CDSSs and CSSs. Thus, before assuming that factors unrelated to teacher deployment are currently behind the persistent difference in performance of CDSS students and CSS students and consequential reproduction of socio-economic inequalities, it is important to ask whether anything more concerning teacher deployment needs to be done to make Malawi's education system an instrument for fighting inequality to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. Here in lies the knowledge gap that this thesis seeks to address.

1.3. Purpose of the study.

The purpose of this study was to analyse the working of teacher and head-teacher deployment to CDSSs and CSSs in line with provision of quality secondary school education for all in order for education to act as an equalizer, and to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor.

1.4. Research questions.

The main research question of the study was;

How is the teacher deployment policy working in relation to providing equal access to quality secondary school education for all, with the aim of bridging the gap between the rich and the poor?

To answer this main question, the study was guided by the following five specific questions.

- i. What is Malawi's socio-economic status?
- ii. What is the role of education in bridging the gap between the rich and the poor?
- iii. What are the critical factors necessary for the implementation of the deployment policy to offer quality education in both CDSSs and CSSs?
- iv. How is the teacher deployment policy performing in allocating teachers in both CDSSs and CSSs?
- v. What is the effect of the performance of teacher deployment policy on bridging the gap between the rich and the poor?

1.5. Significance of the study.

The study is significant in three main areas; body of knowledge, policy and practice. First and most importantly, with regard to body of knowledge, the study may make significant contributions to available literature on both the subject of teacher deployment policy and the subject of socio-economic inequalities in Malawi. Secondly, with regard to policy, the study may attract attention of policy makers and so may be used to determine if the operation of the teacher deployment policy is in line with government's concepts of not leaving any one behind in getting quality education. As such, the study may therefore contribute to changes in teacher deployment policy to help Malawi's education system on its journey of equalizing society. Finally, in terms of practice, the study may help policy implementers to understand shortcomings in their implementation of the policy. This may help them to

improve on the way teachers are deployed to CSSs and CDSSs so as to ensure educational equity necessary for bridging the gap between the rich and the poor.

1.6. Limitations and delimitations of the study.

The main objective of this study was to analyse Malawi's teacher deployment policy in relation to providing equal access to quality secondary school education for all, with the aim of bridging the gap between the rich and the poor. Due to lack of space and time, the research work was not conducted countrywide, and it did not involve all schools or selected schools in all the subsectors (primary, secondary and tertiary) of the education sector. The research work was confined to some selected secondary schools categorized as Conventional Secondary Schools and Community Day Secondary Schools in the Shire Highlands Education Division of Malawi.

1.7. Definition of key terms of the study.

Socio-economic inequality: This refers to the unequal distribution of income and opportunity between different groups in society (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2018).

Social reproduction: This refers to reproduction of social structures and systems, mainly on the basis of particular preconditions in demographics, education and inheritance of material property or legal titles (Althusser, 2016)

Equal educational opportunity: It is based on the notion that all children should have an equal chance to succeed and that there should be no difference in educational success based on student characteristics or place of residence or level of financial resources (Great Lakes Equity Centre, 2013).

Teacher deployment policy: This is the policy followed in allocating teachers in all public secondary schools in Malawi (MoE, 2021).

Community Day Secondary Schools: These are day secondary schools whose students are drawn from primary schools within the local catchment area not exceeding 10 kilometres (MoEST, 2019).

Conventional Secondary Schools: These are either national secondary schools or district secondary schools with boarding facilities enrolling first tier students countrywide and second tier students within the district respectively (MoEST, 2019).

1.8. Chapter summary.

The chapter started by explaining the background to the study showing that the teacher deployment policy in Malawi had weaknesses which resulted in inequitable distribution of qualified teachers between CSSs for the urban rich and CDSSs for the rural poor. This was found to be contributing to unequal education opportunities between the two categories of schools and so aiding the reproduction of socio-inequalities. Secondly, the chapter has given the statement of the problem that; in the last decade, government made interventions to improve equitable deployment of qualified teachers to all public schools. However, unequal education opportunities between CDSSs and CSSs still continue. This perpetuates social inequalities and so the need for further investigation on the working of teacher deployment policy in this regard. This has been shown to be the purpose of the study which is said to be significant in the field of knowledge, policy and practice. The limitations and delimitations, as well as definitions of key terms of the study have also been given in this chapter. The next chapter discusses the related literature review and conceptual framework guiding this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Chapter overview.

As a way of situating this study in ongoing academic discourse, this chapter reviews some of the literature concerning the working of teacher deployment policy in bridging the gap between the rich and the poor. This is done through four subsections. Firstly, it provides the theoretical framework guiding this study. Secondly, it looks at literature on Malawi's socio-economic status, bearing the situation of the gap between the rich and the poor. Further, it looks at literature concerning the role of education in bridging the gap between the rich and the poor. Finally, in terms of policy, it reviews literature on factors that must be considered in teacher deployment policy to ensure quality education in both CSSs and CDSSs so as to help education to play a facilitating role in terms of social mobility (income, jobs, skills, mobility).

2.1. Theoretical framework guiding the study.

Explicit identification and inclusion of a theoretical framework is a necessity of sound research. The theoretical framework serves as the structure and support for the rationale of the study, the problem statement, the purpose, the significance, and the research questions. The theoretical framework is the anchor for the literature review, and most importantly, the methods and analysis. A theoretical framework is derived from an existing theory (or theories) in the literature that has already been tested and validated by others and is considered a generally acceptable theory in the scholarly

literature (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). The theoretical framework of this study comprises two theories; *Educational Equity Theory* and *Social Reproduction Theory*.

The core of *Social Reproduction Theory* is the reproduction of social inequalities throughout generations. The idea of social reproduction originated in Marx's context of bourgeois economics to indicate the processes by which a social system reproduces itself. But according to Althusser (2016), explicit application of Marx's ideas of social reproduction in schooling was initiated by French philosopher Étienne Balibar in his contribution to *Reading Capital*. Social reproduction theory in education emerged out of a concern with education's relationship to capitalist inequalities. Now, education is considered as one of the main factors for social reproduction in society.

In this regard, Emile Durkheim made the basic pitch for social reproduction theory's central claim about education that schools, for the most part, maintain society rather than make it better. In Durkheim's second major sociological work, *Suicide*, written in 1897, took issue with the notion that schooling can change society as he wrote;

"It is to ascribe to education a power it lacks. It is only the image and reflection of society. It imitates and reproduces [reproduit] the latter in abbreviated form; it does not create it. Education is healthy when peoples themselves are in a healthy state; but it becomes corrupt with them, being unable to modify itself... Education, therefore, can be reformed only if society itself is reformed. To do that, the evil from which it suffers must be attacked at its sources" (Durkheim, 2005: 340).

This central claim of social reproduction theory about education can either be confirmed or rejected with the application of yet another theory which is *Educational Equity Theory*. This theory differentiates between equality and equity in education. While equality means that everyone has exactly the same rights, opportunities, and resources, equity provides students with resources that fit their circumstances. The fundamental belief driving the pursuit of educational equity is that all students can succeed under the right conditions (Fraser, 2008). Thus, the theory proposes that educational policies, practices, interactions, and resources, must be representative of, constructed by, and responsive to all people such that each individual has access to, can meaningfully participate, and make progress in high-quality learning experiences that empowers them towards self-determination and reduces disparities in outcomes regardless of individual characteristics (Great Lakes Equity Centre, 2013).

In this regard, the 2018 report of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on *Equity in Education* opens its report as follows:

“Equity in education means that all schools and education systems provide equal learning opportunities to all students. As a result, students of different socio-economic status, ... achieve similar levels of academic performance in key cognitive domains, ... Equity does not mean that all students obtain equal education outcomes, but rather that differences in students’ outcomes are unrelated to their background or to economic and social circumstances over which the students have no control. Equity in education also demands that students from different backgrounds are equally likely to earn desirable post-secondary education credentials, such as university degrees, that will make it easier for them to succeed in

the labour market and to realise their goals as adult members of society”
(OECD, 2018).

This research study, therefore, must be perceived along the lens that education is valuable in its own right, but is also “enabling” in the sense that it serves (however imperfectly) as the gateway for obtaining other societal goods, such as desirable employment, adequate income, and political power (Castelli, Ragazzi, & Crescentini, 2012). Thus, in line with *Educational Equity Theory*, this study analysed how the teacher deployment policy is performing in selected Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs) and Conventional Secondary Schools (CSSs) in Shire Highlands Education Division (SHED) of Malawi to ensure educational equity that is crucial in the fight against *Social Reproduction Theory’s* claim on education.

2.2. Malawi’s socio-economic status.

There have been instances when Malawi has experienced a strong economic growth. For example, a report by World Bank (2018) shows that Malawi economy grew at an average annual rate of 6.2% between 2004 and 2007, and marginally decelerated to an average growth of 6.1% between 2008 and 2014. However, poverty statistics indicated that the high economic growth rates only translated into marginal poverty reduction. For instance, official figures showed that the percentage of poor people in Malawi was 52.4% in 2004, and declined slightly to 50.7% in 2011 (Benin et al. 2012). Further, this national picture hides the contrasting pattern in rural-urban poverty trends. The poverty headcount in rural areas minimally increased from 55.9% to 56.6% while urban poverty declined from 25.4% to 17.3%. Over the same period, the poverty gap and intensity worsened in rural areas, but it improved in urban areas (Mussa, 2017).

Mussa & Masanjala (2015) also observe that economic inequality is growing significantly. The authors explain that, between 2004 and 2011, the gap between the richest (10% of Malawians) and the poorest (40%) increased by almost a third. Inequality between the richest and the rest in Malawi has continued to rise markedly, with poverty remaining extreme and endemic. Similarly, the 2017 household survey pointed out worsening food insecurity, with 73% of the population not having enough food in 12 months (National Statistical Office [NSO], 2017). This explains why Mussa (2017, p. 3) describes Malawi's economic growth as "ruthless" since it is a growth that only benefits the rich, leaving the poor in their poverty.

The ruthlessness of Malawi's economic growth came to the fore when looking at worsening consumption inequality between the richest 10% of the population and the poorest 40% of the population over the period between 2004-2011.:

“Nationally, in 2004/5, the richest 10% of the population accounted for 46% of total consumption while the bottom 40% accounted for 15% of total consumption. The share of consumption attributable to the top 10% increased to 53% in 2011, and that for the bottom 40% declined to 13%. This means that over the period 2004-2011, the consumption of the top 10% rose from being about three times higher to being about four times higher than that of the poorest 40%. ... Furthermore, a comparison of the richest and the poorest 10% of the population indicates that the consumption of the richest 10% was about twenty-two times higher than that of the bottom 10% in 2004. This number jumped to thirty-four times in 2011” (Mussa, 2017, p. 4).

However, this national picture of consumption inequality concealed a lot of spatial inequalities when a staggering difference between the share of total consumption taken by the richest 10% in urban and rural areas was considered.

“Looking at 2011 for example, the share of consumption of the top 10% in urban areas, was about 960 times higher than that of the bottom 10%. In contrast, the share of consumption of the richest 10% in rural areas was only about 12 times higher than that of the poorest 10%” (Mussa, 2017, p. 5).

The situation became more worrisome when a re-examination using the consumption aggregates developed by Pauw et al. (2016) showed that official inequality statistics grossly underestimated consumption inequality. “In 2011 for instance, official inequality figures underestimated rural inequality by 10.5%, in contrast, urban inequality was understated by 5.8%” (Mussa, 2017, pp, 4 - 5).

Further, using the Gini coefficient as an alternative measure of inequality, the magnitude of the dis-equalising effect of growth varied with location. It was more pronounced in rural areas which saw the Gini coefficient increase from 0.34 in 2004 to 0.38 in 2011 while the urban Gini coefficient rose from 0.48 to 0.49 over the same period. This showed that many people did not benefit from the high economic growth registered by Malawi; suggesting that growth was not inclusive. Here, “rural households compared to their urban counterparts were the most excluded from the benefits of the high economic growth” (Mussa, 2017, p, 4).

Currently, according to the Human Development Index (a multidimensional measure of human development), Malawi ranks 174 out of 189 countries and territories in the world, therefore, it is one of the poorest countries on the globe according to the

UNDP (2020) report. Gross national income per capita is just U.S. \$380 and nearly 51 percent of the population resides below the national poverty line (World Bank [WB], 2020). An estimated 12 percent of the population is classified as ultra-poor (NSO, 2021). Almost half (47%) of Malawians are food-energy deficient, meaning that their regular diet fails to provide them with the minimum dietary energy requirement per day to lead an active and healthy life. Reliance on subsistence agriculture traps many families in a cycle of poverty (World Food program [WFP], 2021). All in all, this shows that there is a worrisome gap between the rich and the poor in Malawi.

However, Lawson and Martin (2018) say that inequality is not inevitable and concrete steps can be taken to reduce inequality. In this regard, Walker, Pearce, Boe, & Lawson (2019) say that public education has the potential of being ‘the Great Equalizer’ because of its transformative power for individuals and society. Therefore, public education in Malawi can facilitate a decrease in the gap between the rich and the poor and be a powerful engine for greater equality. However, the role of education in equalizing society has to be appreciated in its proper perspective.

2.3. Role of education in bridging the gap between the rich and the poor.

Depending on how it is handled, education is actually a double-edged sword as far as the work of bridging the gap between the rich and the poor is concerned. On the one hand, education can be liberating for individuals, and it can act as a leveller and equalizer within society. In this regard, Nelson Mandela forcefully said:

“Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mine worker can become the head of the mine, that a child of

farmworkers can become the President of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another” (cited in Walker, Pearce, Boe, & Lawson, 2019, p, 14).

Thus, increased equal access to education and well-paying jobs is key in disrupting persistent and growing inequality by supporting the growth of more decent work and raising incomes for the poorest people (Alvaredo, Chancel, Piketty, Saez, & Zucman, 2017).

On the other hand, education has potential to enhance the widening gap between the rich and the poor. A highly unequal education system has the potential of increasing the gap between the rich and the poor (Walker, Pearce, Boe, & Lawson, 2019). In the case of Malawi, MacJessie-Mbewe & Kholowa (2010) compared the quality of education offered in CDSSs, largely attended by poor children, and CSSs, largely attended by rich children. This was based on the qualifications of teachers in the two school categories. In Malawi, underqualified secondary school teachers are particularly those trained to teach in primary school, but find themselves teaching in secondary schools. In contrast, qualified secondary school teachers are those that possess either a diploma / degree in education or a general diploma / degree in subjects related to secondary school education and a University Certificate of Education [UCE] (MoE, 2021).

In this regard, MacJessie-Mbewe and Kholowa found that most of the teachers in CDSSs were academically under-qualified while most of the teachers in CSSs were academically qualified. This indicated that CSSs and CDSSs were offering higher

quality of education and lower quality education respectively, since the quality of teachers determine the quality of education offered. Therefore, the majority of students from CSSs performed better than those from CDSSs in Malawi School Certificate Examinations [MSCE]. Considering that, in Malawi, entry into public tertiary institutions especially universities is highly competitive, it is only those who pass well that secure places in tertiary institutions. Consequently, the majority of those that enter tertiary institutions are those from CSSs, more particularly children of the rich. Since most well-paying jobs require graduates from tertiary institutions, it is these children of the rich that have higher probability of securing these jobs, hence the conclusion that the education system in Malawi was reproducing social inequalities (MacJessie-Mbewe & Kholowa, 2010).

Now, three points are worthy pointing out here. Firstly, section 1.2 has shown that there have not been significant improvements as regards educational opportunities offered in the two categories of schools if the most recent MSCE results and selection into public universities are to go by. Secondly, as has been stated in the same section 1.2, CSSs and CDSSs continue to be schools for the rich and the poor respectively (Altiyelken & Hoeksman, 2021). Lastly, section 2.1 has shown evidence of the widening gap between the rich and the poor in recent times. If one is to argue along the lines of *Social Reproduction Theory*, then one can be justified to say that the education system in Malawi continues to reproduce social inequalities as MacJessie-Mbewe and Kholowa (2010) concluded. However, it must be noted that this scenario cannot entirely be attributed to education.

Nonetheless, as has been discussed in section 1.2, the present scenario cannot be attributed to exactly the same reasons stated by MacJessie-Mbewe and Kholowa (2010) in relation to teacher deployment. This is considering the fact that, in the last decade, government brought in some strategies and interventions to aid equitable teacher deployment to ensure quality education in both CDSSs and CSSs. However, as stated in section 1.2 also, it would also be unrealistic to argue that the significant difference in performance of CDSS students and CSS students and consequential reproduction of socio-economic inequalities in present times can be attributed exclusively to reasons unrelated to the teacher deployment policy.

This is because it cannot be argued with absolute certainty that government interventions with regard to teacher deployment have been so perfect to ensure quality education in both CDSSs and CSSs. Therefore, this study investigates whether anything more concerning teacher deployment needs to be done to make Malawi's education system an instrument for fighting inequality to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. In this regard, the present study pays special attention to teacher/head-teacher qualities (factors) that significantly affect students' performance, which, therefore, must carefully be considered in teacher deployment to ensure equal education opportunities in both CDSSs and CSSs necessary for equalizing society. The next section discusses these factors.

2.4. Description of key factors for a successful teacher deployment policy.

Scholars such as: Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain (2005), Kane et al. (2008) and Dobbie (2011) identify four teacher/head-teacher qualities/characteristics that largely determine the quality of education offered and significantly affect students' performance. These qualities/characteristics are; academic qualifications, experience,

motivation and work commitment. Below is a presentation of both the theoretical and empirical evidence, local and international, of the effect that these factors have on student's performance.

Teachers' and head-teachers' academic qualifications: Locally and internationally, various research, has shown that suitable academic qualifications are necessary for teachers and head-teachers to effectively discharge their duties and contribute to the provision of quality education in schools. As far as teacher academic qualifications are concerned, apart from the teaching practice, generally a teacher's training is classified into two; subject knowledge, and pedagogical and didactic studies.

A number of researches done outside Africa have shown that good teachers' qualifications positively influenced students' performance. For example, studies by Kansanem (2005) and Sahlberg (2010) in Finland show that teachers' effectiveness is related to teachers' qualifications in both content knowledge and pedagogical skill. Similarly, in Pakistan, Shamim, Rashid, and Rashid (2013) observed a positive correlation between content knowledge and students' achievement. Further, knowledge of pedagogical skills enables teachers to harmonise the minds and emotions of their students in class and result into higher academic achievement. While outside Africa research has shown that teacher qualifications greatly determined students' performance, Beytekin and Chipala (2015) observed that many African countries, including Malawi, had been reducing their investments in teacher training and recruiting nonprofessional teachers both as a cost-cutting measure and as a quick - fix solution to teacher shortage. This, prompted scholars to research on the impact of teacher qualifications on student performance in these African countries.

In Nigeria, Owolabi and Adedayo (2012) carried out a study on the effect of teacher's qualification on the performance of senior secondary school physics students using the descriptive research design. The sample for the study consisted of 100 Senior Secondary School Physics students in Ekiti State and the teachers that prepared and presented their students in each school for 2009/2010 West African School Certificate Examination. The year's result summary for each school was collated with the bio-data of their respective Physics teachers. Four hypotheses were postulated and tested at 0.05 significance level. The data collated were analysed using inferential statistics. The results revealed that students taught by teachers with higher qualifications performed better than those taught by teachers with lower qualifications. In physics, particularly, students performed better when taught by professional teachers.

Also in Nigeria, Haliru & Julius (2018) examined the effects of teachers' academic qualification and experience on students' achievement and interest in mathematics. The sample was made of two hundred and twenty (220) senior secondary students and fifty (10) mathematics teachers from two (2) secondary schools in Jega education zone of Kebbi State. One hundred and ten (110) students and five (5) mathematics teachers were selected from each school, using random sampling technique. The schools were Government Day Secondary School, Jega and Government Science College, Aliero. Two research hypotheses guided this study, and they were tested using regression analysis and ANOVA. Findings revealed that both teachers' academic qualification and experience when taken together made significant effects on students' achievement in mathematics.

In Malawi, research also shows that teacher qualifications are among the many factors that determine student achievement. Beytekin & Chipala (2015) assessed the impact of teachers' academic qualifications on secondary school performance in Malawi. The study was based on the premise that a well-qualified teacher can guide the learning process of children, making learning relevant and stimulating. The study was conducted in the Central East Education Division (CEED) in Malawi. Qualitative methods were used in order to get the in-depth perceptions from teachers because teachers play a crucial role in implementing the educational goals of any society. The results indicated that both the under-qualification of teachers and other social problems contribute to low performance in educational institutions in Malawi.

Further, with regard to the role of the teacher's pedagogical skills, Altinyelken & Hoeksma (2021) analysed how Active Teaching and Learning pedagogy (ATL) was implemented in secondary schools in Malawi to improve learning outcomes. Using interviews with teachers and head-teachers from five schools, Altinyelken and Hoeksma explored how ATL was understood and implemented, and what challenges were experienced from the perspectives of trained and untrained teachers. The findings reveal that ATL was positively viewed by all participants, as it was considered beneficial in improving students' academic performance and skills development. Thus, proper academic qualifications in the methodological skills (pedagogical skills) of delivering subject content to students is important for student's performance. The teachers need to fully comprehend the best procedures and skills required for the acquisition of the knowledge connected to the subject being taught.

Concerning school administration, Katozai (2005) pointed out that as countries seek to adapt their education systems to the needs of contemporary society, the roles and responsibilities of school leaders have expanded and intensified. Hence, there is need for head-teachers to be properly trained in school leadership in order to successfully fulfil headship roles and responsibilities. Similarly, an examination of the effects of head-teachers' academic qualification in school leadership affected students' achievement led to this conclusion:

“Our nation’s underperforming schools and children are unlikely to succeed until we get serious about leadership... Clearly, the quality of training before principals assume their positions and their continuing professional development...has a lot to do with whether school leaders can meet the increasingly tough expectations of these jobs” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 63).

Further, Nsubuga (2009) concluded that unless Principals are well equipped with knowledge and skills in management and leadership, they would not be able to improve school performance significantly. Similarly, Gil and Woodruff (2011) argues that leadership development programs are critical in helping head-teachers excel in their changing and complex roles while Tomlinson (2012) recommends that head-teachers be highly trained to provide reliable feedback for their teachers and model the teaching they want to see from their teachers. Underscoring conclusions made by the scholars above, in Malawi, Wamba (2015) made similar conclusions in his examination of the experiences of seven head-teachers in Luwinga ward in Mzuzu in the Northern Education Division (NED).

Wamba's findings showed that head-teachers required the following skills and competencies to improve student performance in schools:

“1). Staff management skills: Ability to work with teachers to promote team work... 2). Financial management skills: Ability to keep records, to balance books, to judiciously use the petty cash. 3). Decision-making: Fairness, integrity, honesty when making decisions. 4). School and community: Ability to work with people in the community. 5). School overcrowding: Ability to understand school overcrowding and its implications. 6). Resourcefulness: Ability to seek external development funds and ability to address shortage of teacher. 7). Strategic Planning: Ability to develop a school vision and a plan to meet that vision”
(Wamba, 2015, p, 126).

In view of the above skills and competences required by head-teachers, it just becomes necessary for head-teachers to have formal training and qualifications in school leadership in order to improve student performance in schools (Wamba, 2015).

The above findings are a clear testimony to the value of proper qualifications for teachers and head-teachers in improving student performance. With regard to academic and professional qualifications for teachers, the Malawi government requires secondary school teachers to possess either a diploma/degree in education or a general diploma/degree in subjects related to secondary school education plus University Certificate of Education (UCE) (MoEST, 2019). As this study was being conducted, there was a draft document that stated that a qualified secondary school teacher will be required to have either a degree in education or a general degree in subjects related to secondary school education plus UCE (cf. MoE, 2021).

Teachers' and head-teachers' experience: Several theoretical and empirical studies show that a teacher's years of experience are one of significant determinants of students' academic performance. Theoretically, it is argued that, as time goes by, teachers gain more self-confidence and classroom management skills which make them teach better and produce students with higher achievement. In this vein, literature review by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) found that more experienced teachers have a greater sense of efficacy for classroom management than novice teachers. Further, Klassen and Chiu (2010) found that self-efficacy in classroom management increased from the onset of the career. Thus, with time, teachers teach better and produce students with higher achievement. There is a positive relationship between teachers' effectiveness and their years of experience (Agharuwhe, 2013)

Some empirical studies have also proved the above theoretical arguments. In United States of America, Dial (2008) used descriptive statistics and factorial ANOVA to examine if years of teaching experience have an effect on overall achievement of students on the communication arts and mathematics sections of the Missouri Assessment Program. The results indicated that years of experience, as well as the interaction between years of experience and degree level, had an effect on student achievement in both communication arts and mathematics. In another study, Wolff, van den Bogert, Jarodzka, and Boshuizen (2014) found that experienced teachers (i.e., teachers with at least 10 years of teaching experience) were significantly more effective at predicting classroom management events than novice teachers and adapted their classroom management practices accordingly.

Similarly, Ewetan and Ewetan (2015) investigated the influence of teachers' teaching experience on the academic performance of public secondary school students in Mathematics and English Language in Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive research design. Study population comprised 31 Senior Secondary Schools in the selected two local government areas. A sample of 20 Schools was drawn from the population through simple random sampling technique. Regression analysis and t-test were used to test hypotheses generated for the study at 0.05 alpha levels. The study's findings revealed that teachers' teaching experience had significantly influenced students' academic performance in Mathematics and English Language as measured by their performance in the SSC examinations and as perceived by the respondents. Schools having more teachers with teaching experience above 10 years achieved better results than schools having more teachers with teaching experience below 10 years.

A study by Haliru and Julius (2018) which has been referred to in the section on the effect of teacher qualifications on student performance reveals that teachers' academic qualification and experience when taken together make significant effects on students' achievement in mathematics. Thus, a teacher's years of experience are a significant determinant of students' academic performance. Inexperienced teachers are often less efficient than experienced teachers. There is a positive relationship between teachers' effectiveness and their number of years of experience, and that efficient teachers positively influence students' academic achievement.

Concerning leadership in general, besides professional and academic knowledge, it is a common belief that age and experience may play a very important role in leadership success. In many cultures, there is a myth that as people get older they become wiser

due to more exposure and experience. In African culture, experience is considered as a function of age and, therefore, older people are given priority for leadership positions in various organisations. The underlying principle is that experience is the best teacher. Administrators tend to improve their skills and competencies with time. For example, Munger (2010) explains that it is important for administrators to speak with their human-resource officers on the need to balance work and family so as to get resolutions for problems to relieve internal tensions. In this regard, an experienced administrator knows when to involve human resources and when not to. Thus, experienced administrators are, generally, better placed to be more effective than inexperienced administrators.

Against this background, in the education sector, some qualitative and quantitative studies have revealed that there is a positive relationship between the school administrators' years of administrative experience and students' performance. For example, in the United States of America, a qualitative study by Fink and Brayman (2006) discovered that school principals took fewer risks as they gained experience and settled into a school. The experienced principal tended to be more practical and thoughtful in his or her actions. Fewer risks were taken because many administrators were delegating decision-making to their teachers as they gained experience. Thus, with time, school principals are more likely to learn that "truly having power means giving it away" (Hoerr, 2013, p. 86). Hence, experienced principals tend to be more effective than novice principals.

Further, in New York city, a quantitative study by Clark, Martorell and Rockoff (2013) revealed that there was a positive relationship between principals' experience and school performance. The experience profile was steep in the first few years for

principals. The researchers, in turn, concluded that the positive returns of principals' experience suggested that policies which caused principals to leave their posts early (e.g. early retirement or moving into district administration) was costly, and the tendency for less-advantaged schools to be run by less experienced principals could exacerbate educational inequality.

In the context of Malawi's education sector, Wamba (2015), in his studies among head-teachers in Mzuzu ward, Northern Education Division (NED), revealed that there are many skills and competencies that a head-teacher needs to have in order to effectively run a good quality school. These skills and competencies, cannot just be mastered overnight. "It takes a significant amount of time to develop the leadership and managerial skills necessary to be a good school leader" (Wamba, 2015, p, 126). This is not to argue that all new principals are destined for failure, but rather, that the more the years of experience in leadership, the more effective the school leader becomes, leading to higher student achievement. All in all, these findings point to the fact that number of years of teaching experience for teachers as well as years of experience in leadership for school administrators, are an important variable in improvement of education quality.

Teachers' and head-teachers' motivation: An organization's success lies in a motivated workforce. This is because highly motivated employees strive to produce at the highest possible level and exert greater effort than employees who are not motivated (Ikenyiri, & Ihua-Maduenyi, 2011). In the teaching profession, teacher motivation, also known as the "motivation to teach", refers to the reasons that arise from individuals' intrinsic will to teach and sustain teaching, and its intensity is

indicated by the effort devoted to this process of teaching (Han and Yin, 2016). Furthermore, teacher motivation is extremely influential as well as contagious since “it has the potential to infect the students and to generate in them the desire for learning”. This is because teachers, who hold the key position to shape classroom dynamics, are fundamental to the process of transforming a classroom into a motivating learning environment (Dörnyei, 2018, p, 2)

In agreement, Utomo (2018) carried out a literature review of several research findings aimed at deepening self-determination theory as one of the motivational theories that can be used to analyse the motivation of teachers based on both internal and external factors. In particular, Utomo explored the role of personal expectations, need satisfaction, and work climate in optimising teacher motivation to teach. The research found that when these factors are good, the teachers feel psychologically satisfied, which has a corresponding further impact on their motivation to teach and improves student performance. In Malawi, Kadzamira (2006) also found that motivated teachers have a positive influence on student performance while unmotivated teachers negatively affect student performance.

While motivation is important for school teachers, it is much more important for school leaders. Since the mission of school administrator is to carry out management affairs, the success of the school administrator implies the success of the education system. Therefore, the school administrators’ willingness to work brings success for the school, and hence, motivating head-teachers is key to the success of the school. On the one hand, increasing the motivation of head-teachers has positive effects on; administrator-employee relationship, peace in the work environment, leading to willingness of employees to work and hence boost productivity. On the other hand,

decreasing of motivation causes problems such as sour administrator-employee relationship and unjust treatment of subordinate staff which leads to unwillingness of employees to work and hence decreasing productivity (Cebeci & Çağanağa, 2019).

Thus, school administrators are the most strategic element of the school system since administrators are required to provide encouraging conditions both in working environment and social relationship, and giving right decisions on time for the harmonious performance of the school. Therefore, motivating administrators for their mission is important for both organizational success and productive working of employees. Thus, it is important to motivate school administrators to ensure that they are willing to work. In other words, head-teachers must be motivated enough to do their job for the sake of the success of the schools and the education system as a whole (Cebeci and Çağanağa, 2019). All in all, motivation is a very important factor in the professional development and change of school teachers and heads. As such, teacher and head-teacher motivation is crucial in improving school performance.

Teachers' and head-teachers' work commitment (passion and dedication)

Passion is defined as “a strong inclination or desire towards an activity that one likes and finds important and in which one invests time and energy” (Carbonneau et al., 2008, p, 978). Where passion and commitment is lacking, indiscipline is the order of the day as members of an organisation conduct themselves without respect to the rules and regulations governing employee behaviour (Osezua, Abah & Daniel, 2009). In workplaces, staff indiscipline is expressed in various ways such as absenteeism, lateness, lack of dedication to duty, drunkenness, just to mention a few (Dzimhiri, 2016).

In a school a passionate teacher is “someone in love with a field of knowledge, deeply stirred by issues and ideas that change our world, drawn to the dilemmas and potentials of the young people who come into class every day” (Fried, 2001, p, 44). Passionate and committed teachers are “those who feel the call to teach, who sense teaching is a profoundly meaningful part of their life” (Garrison, &Liston, 2004, p, 1). Passion leads to creativity; therefore, passionate teachers have the ability to think and produce new notions in an easy way. Passionate teachers understand that it is their role to encourage students to engage in active learning and they concern themselves with promoting students’ intellectual and moral development. They create an effective learning environment and increase learning potential of students. Furthermore, passionate teachers are distinguished by their commitment to achievement of their students. They work with enthusiasm, their dedication and commitment increase, and they believe in the importance of their job (Mart, 2013).

Both students “at risk” and high-ability students require committed teachers. In general, students are considered as being “at risk” when they require remediation, are at higher risk of dropping out of school, have low self-efficacy, or have substandard academic skills. These students need passionate and committed teachers because while they represent pressing instructional and behavioural problems for teachers, they are in most need of quality instruction to be successful and rise above their situation (Sagor & Cox, 2013). High-ability students are generally those having and exhibiting a high degree of one or more of the following qualities; general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking, leadership ability, visual or performing arts ability, and psychomotor ability. Such students need

passionate and committed teachers able to exhibit extensive depth and breadth of content knowledge (Siegle, Rubenstein, & Mitchell, 2014).

Thus, committed teachers are required to prepare all students to meet world-class standards, diminish achievement gaps and social inequality (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015). Teacher commitment is a motivational force that inspires teachers to invest more time and energy in student achievement. It is fundamental to understand the needs of students in education and hence the importance of teacher commitment as a factor that draws attention of teachers to the needs of students. The willingness to meet the needs of students inspires teachers to always seek high standards to perform teaching properly to allow students to reach their goals. Similarly, teachers with high level of commitment also know how to encourage students to participate in the learning process which gives students to stand a better chance to improve their achievement (Altun, M. (2017).

In general, students' achievement requires attention of teachers and teacher commitment provides teachers the love, desire and energy students need to perform better. Thus, teacher commitment is at the core of promoting teaching profession, work performance, and school and student achievement. Furthermore, the importance of teacher commitment is brought to the fore upon considering the complicated nature of teaching as both an art and a science (Marzano, 2017). As an artist often creates works of art that are spontaneous and improvised, committed teachers too must continually be spontaneous and should engage in improvisation in the classroom. As a scientist often follows an erudite set of procedures, committed teachers also need to

follow some erudite teaching practices in order to create the most positive learning experiences possible for their students (Stronge, 2018).

While work commitment for the teacher is indispensable for student achievement, the school administrator's commitment and passion to duty is much more vital to students' achievement. Ogunsaju (2006) defines leadership as a position of dominance and prestige accompanied by the ability to direct, motivate and to assist others in achieving a specified purpose. Thus, leadership is a process of influencing other people's behaviour, their attitude, actions and reactions toward organisational goal attainment. This, requires passion and commitment on the part of the leader (Akpan, 2011). With regard to school administration/leadership, Gürsel (2006) defines a school administrator as a person who; organises and instructs school staff, plans, coordinates and inspects work in order to achieve goals at school.

Thus, Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) and Wallace Foundation (2007) theoretically argue that the school administrator/leader's commitment and passion towards duty is indispensable because school administrators play critical roles in the development of high-quality schools. Further, EdSource (2008) states that leadership is critically important in a school because of its far-reaching effects on the accomplishment of school programmes, objectives and attainment of educational goals. This calls for head-teachers' passion and commitment to ensure successful student learning.

Mwangi (2011) explored the effect of school leadership on student achievement in Kenyan secondary schools. The study was conducted in two phases. During the first phase, data was obtained from 35 interviews and results revealed that principal's

commitment impacted student performance. In the second phase, data was obtained from 281 schools, with results indicating that school leadership had moderate but significant indirect effects on student achievement. Another study by Chepkuto, Sang and Chumba (2018) examined the influence of instructional supervision on curriculum implementation in selected North Rift County public secondary schools in Kenya. Statistical analysis of the findings revealed that content coverage supervision influenced student academic achievement. Wambui (2015) and Wambua (2018) found that school environment in Kenya is the same as that of other African countries (like Malawi) characterised by poor pay, no textbooks and accommodation.

All in all, just like with regard to academic qualifications, experience and motivation, teachers' and head-teachers' commitment is crucial to student achievement. Proper academic qualifications, experience, motivation and work commitment for teachers and head-teachers lead to better students' performance while low academic qualifications, experience, motivation and work commitment for teachers and head-teachers lead to poor students' performance. Thus, in accordance with *Education Equity Theory*, these are the key factors that must be considered carefully in teacher deployment to ensure quality education in both CDSSs and CSSs so as to help Malawi's education system on its journey of equalising society.

2.5. Chapter summary.

In summary, this chapter has four subsections reviewing some of the literature related to the role of teacher deployment policy aimed at bridging the gap between the rich and the poor. The first sub-section has provided the theoretical framework composed of; *Education Equity* and *Social Reproduction Theory*. The second one has discussed Malawi's socio-economic status revealing a widening gap between the rich and the

poor. The third section has shown the role of education in bridging the gap between the rich and the poor revealing Malawi's education to be enhancing the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Hence, the study investigates whether anything more needs to be done concerning teacher deployment so that the education system can fulfil its aim of equalising society. In this regard, the chapter has finally discussed four teacher/head-teacher characteristics that significantly affect students' performance which, therefore, must be considered in teacher deployment to all public schools for Malawi's education system to fulfil its aim of equalising society. The next chapter presents the research design and methodology of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0. Chapter overview.

This chapter outlines and describes the methodology that was used to investigate the working of teacher deployment policy in bridging the gap between the rich and the poor. The chapter discusses the relevant philosophical assumptions/paradigms, research design, and methodological choices of the study. In addition, it presents the sample of the study, sets the procedures used to collect, analyse and report data, including the timing, weighting and integrating decisions of the study. Besides, in order, to enhance the trustworthiness of the study, the approaches used to give rigour to the study are also explained in detail. Finally, the chapter describes ethical considerations made in the study.

3.1. Research paradigm, design and approach.

Any serious academic study must infuse these three aspect; research paradigm, research design and research approach (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, this sub-section describes how these three central aspects have been infused in this study.

3.1.1 Research Paradigm:

Bryman (2008) describes research paradigms/philosophical assumptions as a cluster of beliefs that dictates what should be studied, how research should be done and how the results should be interpreted. Creswell (2009) explains that a paradigm contains

the researcher's assumptions about the manner in which an investigation should be performed, i.e. (methodology), as well as his/her definition about truth and reality, i.e. ontology and how the investigator comes to know that truth or reality, i.e., epistemology. They are general orientations about the world the researcher holds. Therefore, the methodological choice of a researcher is determined by the philosophical assumptions about ontology, human nature and epistemology (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Positivism, constructionism and pragmatism, are the three philosophical assumptions that researchers, generally, use when carrying out research depending on the researcher's ontological and epistemological views (Creswell, 2009).

This study adopts a pragmatic paradigm. It follows a mixed outlook between the two extreme views of reality; positivism/objectivism and subjectivism/constructionism. This is with a belief that there exists a natural or physical world which, to some extent, can be investigated through structured ways with considerable roles of human beings as social actors to interpret and modify their surroundings (Collis & Hussey, 2003). On the one hand, considering that the main theme of the study was to establish a casual-relationship between the implementation of the teacher deployment policy and access to quality education, this ontologically entails having an objectivist orientation of the social world. Correspondingly, in terms of epistemology, the present researcher acknowledges that, as a construction, knowledge is based on the reality of the world where human beings experience and live (Johnson et al., 2007). Thus, the present study assumes that there are some realities which exist in the world that may affect the teacher deployment policy in providing equal or unequal access to quality education, thereby helping in equalising or un-equalising society. The study mainly

considered the quantitative nature of such factors as; teacher/head-teacher qualifications, experience, motivation and commitment.

In terms of ontology, the study recognizes the important contribution from the social actors more specifically of the people who are related to this phenomenon; head-teachers, teachers and students. Such a contribution from players in the phenomenon contributes to a better understanding of the realities in the outside world through their perception and interpretation of the relationship between teacher deployment policy and the provision of quality education to all. Correspondingly, concerning epistemology, the present researcher also acknowledges the need to search for meanings from different views of the participants. This is because, as Johnson et al. (2007) explains, the study was not only a hypothesis testing exercise but also one that sought to explain the ‘why’ aspect of the causal relationship and to recommend improvement. It, basically, sought to develop meaning from the established casual-relationship through in-depth analysis of the views of educationists.

3.1.2 Research Design

A research design is the “procedure for collecting, analysing, interpreting and reporting data in research studies” (Creswell & Plano Clark 2007, p, 58). It is the overall plan for connecting the conceptual research problems with the pertinent (and achievable) empirical research. In other words, the research design sets the procedure for collecting required data, methods for collecting and analysing this data, and how all of this is going to answer the research question (Grey, 2014). There are three possible forms of research design: descriptive, exploratory, and explanatory (Robson, 2002). This classification relies on the purpose of the research area as each design

serves a different purpose. For instance, the purpose of a descriptive study is to provide a picture of a situation, person or event or to show how things are related to each other and as it naturally occurs (Blumberg, Cooper, & Schindler, 2005).

Descriptive studies, however, cannot explain why an event occurs and it is much suitable for a relatively new or unexplored research area (Punch, 2005). Therefore, in situation of abundant descriptive information, alternative research designs such as exploratory or explanatory approaches are advisable. Exploratory research is conducted when some information is not known about a phenomenon and when a problem has not been clearly defined (Saunders et al., 2011). Therefore, its goal is to tackle new problems on which little or no previous research has been done (Brown, 2006). Even in an extreme case, exploratory research forms the basis for more conclusive research and determines the initial research design, sampling methodology and data collection method (Singh, 2007). An explanatory study can also set out to explain and account for descriptive information. As such, while descriptive researchers may ask ‘what’ kinds of questions, explanatory studies seek to ask ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions (Grey, 2014). Explanatory study builds on exploratory and descriptive research and goes on to identify actual reasons behind the occurrence of a phenomenon.

Explanatory research looks for causes and reasons and provides evidence to support or refute an explanation or prediction. It is conducted to discover and report some relationships among different aspects of the phenomenon under study. The emphasis of this research design is on studying a situation or a problem in order to explain how the problematic situation arises (Creswell, 2009). As defined in the previous section,

the main objective of this study is to analyse the performance of the teacher deployment policy as one of the causes behind unequal access to quality secondary school education and so leading to socio-economic inequalities. According to Saunders et. al, (2011), explanatory study appears to be the best option when conducting a casual research, among others. Therefore, the explanatory research design turned out to be for this study, particularly because it responds to both the ‘how’ and ‘why’ aspects of the fundamental research question.

3.1.3 Research Approach.

Broadly speaking, there are three approaches or methods to conducting research; qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). The quantitative approach is one in which the investigator uses methods from the natural sciences such as experiments and surveys and collects data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data to ensure objectivity, generalisability and reliability (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2008), is designed to understand a phenomenon by observing or interacting with the participants of the study. Thus, qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). A mixed method study involves the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study in which data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of the data at one or more stages in the research process (Creswell, 2009).

Considering that this study is guided by the pragmatism paradigm that involves collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data, a mixed methods

approach was implemented to address its research objectives. This is because neither qualitative nor quantitative methods are sufficient in themselves to capture the trends and details of the situation. When used in combination, qualitative and quantitative data complement each other and yield a more complete analysis (Creswell, Fetter & Ivankova, 2004). Thus, as Cohen et al. (2003) argue, social reality, such as the role of teacher deployment policy in bridging the gap between the rich and the poor, can be understood fully through a combination of both an external point of view and within levels of individual consciousness.

Further, Creswell (2007) says that knowledge is acquired by transactional means, which implies that knowledge can be acquired by interacting with its source in a bi-directional manner. On the one hand, this transactional view implies that knowledge can be created by personal experiences that result in individual cognition. Such experiences require a deeper qualitative approach in order to reveal the personal, subjective and unique nature of translated interactions and intra-actions. The benefits of qualitative inquiry are embedded in its emphasis on thick description, i.e. obtaining real, rich, deep data which illuminates everyday patterns of action and meaning from the perspective of those being studied (Creswell, 2009). In the present study, a qualitative approach was applied through the use of document analysis and participant interviews. On the other hand, this transactional view implies that knowledge can also be viewed as hard, objective and tangible, which prompted this study to employ quantitative methods for this study (Creswell, 2009). In this study, a quantitative approach was applied through the use of random selection of research participants from the study population in an unbiased manner, and using standardized questionnaires and office records.

3.2. Sampling strategy and population

Study samples are used when the whole group is too large to be studied. Thus, sampling is a technique of selecting individual members or a subset of the population to make statistical inferences from them and estimate characteristics of the larger population. A sample design has usually two components; location and sample size, and sampling schemes (Taherdoost, 2016).

3.2.1 Location and Sample size

This study took place in the Shire Highlands Education Division (SHED) of Malawi. This education division is comprised of four districts namely Chiradzulu, Mulanje, Phalombe and Thyolo. In total, the division has 92 public secondary schools; 12 CSSs and 80 CDSSs (MoE, 2021, p, 129). The study sample for this research comprised 12 public secondary schools (4 CSSs, 1 from each of the four districts in SHED, and 8 CDSSs, 2 from each of the four districts in SHED). This was done to balance the number of streams selected from each school category in every district because some CSSs have either double or triple streams while CDSSs have either single or double streams. Taherdoost (2016) explains that there are often variation concerning emphasis on sample size between qualitative and quantitative studies.

Concerning qualitative research, Taherdoost (2016) states that a common misconception about sampling in qualitative research is that numbers are unimportant in ensuring the adequacy of a sampling strategy. However, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) acknowledge the importance of numbers when sampling in qualitative research although they say the sample size is typically small; usually 30 or fewer cases. Thus, the qualitative component of the study involved interviewing 12 head teachers (1 head-teacher and/or deputy head-teacher from each school) and 32 teachers (4 from

each of the 4 selected CSSs and 2 from each of the 8 selected CDSSs). As Taherdoost (2016) says, the guiding principle was that the sample size should not be so small to the extent of making it difficult to achieve data saturation, theoretical saturation, or informational redundancy. At the same time, the sample should not be so large for one to undertake a deep, case-oriented analysis.

As regards quantitative research, in order to generalize from a random sample and avoid sampling errors or biases, a random sample needs to be of adequate size. However, Gill et al. (2010) warn that diminishing returns can quickly set in when samples get over a specific size which need to be balanced against the researcher's resources. In general, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) explain that, in quantitative research, the sample size should be large enough to establish representativeness, usually at least 50 units. This study, therefore, collected quantitative data from 102 participants (96 teachers and 8 head-teachers/deputy head-teachers) from each school category. Quantitative data on teacher qualifications, motivation and experience was collected from 96 teachers in each school category (24 from each of the 4 selected CSSs and 12 from each of the 8 selected CDSSs) since there was an equal total number of streams in the two school categories.

Further, quantitative data on teacher commitment to duty was collected from a total of 516 periods that were supposed to be taught within three weeks in each school category and 120 exercises were expected to be given within the three weeks. Class monitors were asked to duly fill in period registers, which is already one of their duties required by schools, to indicate lessons taught and not taught during the three weeks of study. The class monitor was also required to record every exercise, feedback and

remedial lessons given in either English or Mathematics during the three weeks. Quantitative data on head-teacher qualifications, motivation, work commitment, and experience was collected for 8 head-teachers in each school category (both the head-teacher and deputy head-teacher from each of the 4 selected CSSs and either head-teachers or deputy head-teachers from each of the 8 selected CDSSs). Quantitative data on head-teacher's commitment was complemented from a total of 96 teachers from each of the two school categories.

3.2.2 Sampling schemes

Researchers in the social sciences employ various sampling methods. There are two main types of sampling; probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling, also known as random sampling or representative sampling, means that every item in the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample (Zikmund, 2002). Probability or random sampling has the greatest freedom from bias but may be costly in terms of time and energy for a given level of sampling error. Probability sampling is most ideal for a quantitative research (Creswell 2009). Taherdoost (2016) describes five methods that are used for probability sampling; simple random sampling, systematic random sampling, stratified random sampling, cluster sampling, and multistage sampling.

In non-probability sampling, also known as judgment or non-random sampling, every unit of population does not get an equal chance of participation in the investigation. The selection of the sample is made on the basis of subjective judgment of the researcher. Non probability sampling is often associated with case study research design and qualitative research (Taherdoost, 2016). Yin (2003) states seven methods that are used for probability sampling; volunteer sampling, convenient sampling,

purposeful sampling, quota sampling (proportional and non-proportional), snowball sampling, matched sampling, and genealogy based sampling.

Any of the above sampling methods can be considered by both qualitative and quantitative researchers as appropriate to address their research questions. However, in mixed methods studies, sampling methods must be chosen for both the qualitative and quantitative components of the study (Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007). Since this study is a mixed-method one, it used both the qualitative and quantitative samples. The qualitative component of this study used purposeful or judgmental sampling method where information-rich samples were selected to have an in-depth view of the phenomena (Shaheen et al., 2016). In this regard, the study carefully collected data on teachers'/head-teachers' qualifications, experience, motivation and dedication from; information-rich document sources such as ministry documents and school documents, and information-rich human sources such as head-teachers, teachers and students (cf. appendices 5 to 7).

The quantitative component of this study used stratified random sampling method. Stratified sampling is where the population is divided into strata (or subgroups) and a random sample is taken from each subgroup. Stratified sampling is often used where there is a great deal of variation within a population (a heterogeneous population). Its purpose is to ensure that every stratum is adequately represented thereby ensuring a representative sample for a heterogeneous population (Shaheen et al., 2016). The present study used stratified random sampling in the following ways. Firstly, there was random selection of the actual schools, and the actual participants (head-teachers

or deputy head-teachers, teachers and students) from the schools to participate in the study.

The sampling was also stratified because the randomly selected schools were selected from two distinct categories (strata) of schools (the CSS category and the CDSS category). Furthermore, the researcher ensured that the selected schools presented a diverse setting. For CSSs, there were both national secondary schools and district secondary schools. For CDSSs, there were both rural CDSSs and semi-rural CDSSs. Similarly, the actual participants were selected from the two distinct categories of schools (the CSS category and the CDSS category). There was an equal number of participants from the two school categories. Each school category offered 8 administrators (both the head-teacher and deputy head-teacher from each of the 4 selected CSSs and either head-teachers or deputy head-teacher from each of the 8 selected CDSSs) and 96 teachers (24 from each of the 4 selected CSSs and 12 from each of the 8 selected CDSSs).

3.3. Data collection and analysis.

Considering that the present study was guided by a pragmatism paradigm and employed a mixed methods approach, it collected and analysed both qualitative and quantitative data. The rationale behind the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data was based on several aspects. Morse (2010) characterize qualitative inquiry as a research approach that is generally conducted in natural settings, utilising the researcher as the chief instrument in both data gathering and analysis. Thus, qualitative data was collected in order to get teachers' and head-teachers' stories about; qualifications, experience, motivation and work commitment of teachers and

head-teachers in CDSSs and CSS. According to Creswell (2009), quantitative data was collected with the aim of finding out any statistical differences, and magnitude of differences in the qualifications, motivation, work commitment, and experience of teachers and head-teachers in CDSSs and CSSs.

3.3.1 Data collection

With regard to qualitative data collection, Yin (2003) says that data for qualitative studies can be collected from different sources such as documents, archival records, interviews. In this study, the researcher used document reviews and structured interviews of participants. Qualitative data pertaining to teacher and head-teacher motivation and work commitment was collected from structured interviews of participants, from ministry documents (ministry circulars and EMIS data) and school documents (staff returns and school inventories), and from observations of the physical environment of the selected schools (see appendix 8 and 9 phase 2).

Concerning quantitative data collection, as Creswell (2009) argues, the investigator collected data on predetermined instruments that yielded statistical data. In this regard, the researcher used questionnaires and office records to collect mainly two types of quantitative data; numerical and ordinal data. Numerical data involves whole numbers or decimals. Ordinal data involves categories with a natural ordering (such as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree). This quantitative data was collected on two areas. Firstly, numerical data on teacher and head-teacher academic qualifications and experience in teaching and administration respectively was collected from the selected CSSs and CDSSs (see part A of appendices 5 and 6 phase 1). Secondly, ordinal data on teacher and head-teacher motivation and work

commitment was collected from the selected CSSs and CDSSs (see part B of appendix 5 phase 1, part B and C of appendix 6 phase 1 and appendix 7 phase 2).

However, regarding the timing of data collection, Creswell (2009) says that a researcher has to choose whether it will be in phases (sequentially) or gathered at the same time (concurrently). When the data are collected in phases, either the quantitative or the qualitative data can come first. When the data are collected concurrently, quantitative and qualitative data are gathered at the same time and the implementation is simultaneous. This study chose to collect data in two phases (sequentially). The first phase involved collection of quantitative data while the second phase, a month later, involved collection of qualitative data.

This was done mainly for two reasons. Firstly, the quantitative study enabled the researcher to obtain a representative qualitative sample, for the purpose of enhancing the qualitative findings. Conducting a quantitative demographic survey on a random sample of the target population enabled the researcher to select a qualitative subsample from this population that is representative of the target population (Hesse-Biber, 2010). Secondly, quantitative data was collected first in order to enhance the study's trustworthiness especially when, later, after the qualitative study, similar questions in both the quantitative and qualitative study yielded similar responses or when responses appeared to point same underlying issues (Morse, 2010).

On weight or priority given to quantitative or qualitative research in mixed studies, Creswell (2009, p, 206) points out that "in some studies, the weight might be equal; in other studies, it might emphasize one or the other". This study followed a

qualitatively-driven mixed method approach. An important dimension that characterizes this approach is that the qualitative approach takes a leading role while the quantitative approach takes a secondary role. The core method is always qualitative and is depicted in all caps (QUAL) and the quantitative component of the mixed methods project is depicted in lower case letters (quan). This was done to develop a more robust understanding of the qualitative results, particularly, by integrating quantitative findings to show the magnitude of the issues. Thus, according to Creswell (2009, p, 210), this is “a qualitatively-driven mixed-method sequential study with the quan coming before the QUAL” as Figure 2 below shows.

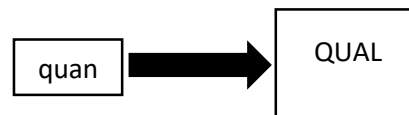


Figure 2: Representation of a qualitatively-driven mixed-method sequential study with the quan coming before the QUAL.

3.3.2 Data analysis

Khan (2014) defines data analysis as the process of reducing large amount of collected data to make sense of them. As previously stated, this study employed a qualitatively-driven mixed methods approach involving collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. As such it analysed both qualitative and quantitative data.

In terms of qualitative data analysis, Khan (2014) believes that observations and interviews are not sufficient for research to be qualitative; the researcher must interpret the beliefs and behaviours of the participants. Further, Jones (2002) highlights the importance of situating the researcher in qualitative analysis. She suggests that identifying themes is not sufficient for analysis. She advocates deriving

meaning from an inductive analytic process that includes an understanding of the exact words and behaviours of the participants using a number of analytic strategies. She explains that the strategies must produce findings that create a deep understanding of the phenomenon with the story emerging from the words and the behaviours of the participants and from the contexts in which they occur. These findings should then be combined with the insights, intuitive ideas, creativity and artistry of the researcher.

Therefore, the present study employed a step by step analysis of its qualitative data involving five steps; data logging, anecdotes, vignettes, data coding and thematic network as pointed out by Attride-Sterling, (2001) and Braun & Clarke (2006). The first step of **data logging** also known as data documentation (Khan, 2014; Easterby-Smith et al., 2008) involved recording in a record sheet all the raw data from either personal interview, focus grouped discussion and observation. Researchers' description, feelings, view and insights as well as assumptions and ongoing ideas about the subject matter were also recorded. This was mainly to document the responses from the interview and other forms of qualitative data. The writing of these responses was in form of logs that helped in preparing anecdotes.

After writing down the responses from the participants in form of logs, the researcher prepared a refined version of the logs in form of **anecdotes** written legibly for the purpose of record. This was the second step in the qualitative data analysis which, as Khan (2014) proposes, involved restructuring and streamlining of the data log to make comprehensive notion of the data collected. The researcher summarised the sequential structure of the narrative explanation given by the participants immediately

after the data collection to minimise twisting of information and wrote it in form of anecdotes. This guided the researcher to generate feelings and develop the themes.

Next to anecdotes the researcher used **vignettes** to represent in-depth description of collected information in form of a narrative story. Vignettes involved in-depth description of the setting, locations and circumstances of participants in the qualitative research. More importantly, as (Khan, 2014) points out, the development of vignettes allowed higher level of interpretation beyond mere description, higher sense of understanding about the phenomenon and allowed the capturing of themes. The use of vignettes was to provide as much detail as possible to enable readers to have better understanding and get convinced that the account is credible (Creswell and Miller, 2000) through which the readers can make decisions to apply the findings to other settings or similar situations.

After developing the vignettes, the researcher moved on to the step of **data coding**. Creswell (2012) defined coding as the procedure of fragmenting and classifying text to form explanations and comprehensive themes in the data. In this process the researcher gathered or ‘tagged’ content related to a specific theme or idea (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The aim was to reduce the data by sorting out the information transcript into manageable and meaningful transcript segments with the aid of coding framework. This meant assigning labels or codes to different sections of text that related with different problems. Coding involved examining discrete parts of data to find differences and similarities and helped in separating data into categories (nodes) or themes so that data from different sources was easily organized and compared (Miles et al., 2014). These were done to establish the common discourses among all the respondents.

Finally, qualitative analysis involved the development of a ***thematic network*** in three stages which included; basic, organising and global themes. The development of thematic network started from the basic themes and worked 'inwards' through the organising themes towards a global theme (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The development of basic themes involved exploring the quotations abstracted from the interview context to establish significant and common themes among the respondents. This was done by going through each node to bring out the coded text (quotation) and checking its support across all other sources (interviews). A total of 13 basic themes were developed. The basic principle in selecting themes at this stage of analysis was simply through 'data saturation' whereby majority of the respondents were saying the same points i.e. referring to the same theme on a particular issue.

The 13 basic implicit themes were assembled into unified and coherent structure of 4 organizing themes according to the fundamental story the basic themes were telling. The first organising theme was about the quality of education offered in relation to teachers' qualifications and the subjects they actually teach in the two categories of schools. The second organising theme was about the quality of education offered in relation to teacher's/head-teacher's work experience in the two school categories. The third organising theme was about the quality of education offered in relation to teacher/head-teacher motivation in the two school categories. The final organising theme was about the quality of education offered in relation to teacher's/head-teacher's work commitment in the two categories of schools. The 4 organising themes were subsequently re-organized into unifying statement (global theme) on the quality of education in the two categories of schools and the consequential effect on bridging the gap between the rich and the poor.

In terms of quantitative data analysis, this study merely analysed *descriptive statistics* (also known as exploratory data analysis) which do not involve any decision making. This being a qualitatively driven mixed-method research, descriptive statistics were required in support of qualitative analysis which allows for decision-making and guides the research. Consequently, both numerical data and ordinal data were analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientists), with summary data being presented in form of tables showing corresponding percentages of the scenarios in CDSSs and CSSs. This was to produce reliable and quantifiable data that can potentially be generalised to a larger population (Hesse-Biber, 2010).

3.4. Trustworthiness: Establishing rigor in the study.

Research is defined as the systematic application of scientific method to the problem under consideration (Creswell, 2009). This requires rigour without which the research becomes fiction and loses its worth (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). This being qualitatively-driven mixed method study, rigor had to be ensured in both the qualitative and quantitative components (Best, 2006).

Ensuring rigour in the qualitative approach: Alkhudhir (2019) lists four criteria for pursuing a trustworthy qualitative study, namely dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability. Corresponding to these criteria, the quantitative approach employs the following: internal validity (in preference to credibility); external validity/generalisability (in preference to transferability); reliability (in preference to dependability); and objectivity (in preference to confirmability). Thus, to ensure that the study is rigorous, the qualitative component of this study

systematically employed the four criteria; dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability.

According to Shenton (2004, p. 71), a researcher can establish dependability “if the work was repeated, in the same context, with the same methods and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained”. This study ensured dependability by employing; an audit trail (Bowen, 2009), code-recode strategy (Chilisa & Preece, 2005), and peer examination (Bitsch, 2005). Use of audit trail involved keeping raw data, interview and observation notes, documents and records collected from the field. This was done to allow crosschecking of the inquiry process as Alkhudhir (2019) recommends. Use of code-recode strategy involved coding the same data twice, giving one or two weeks’ gestation period between each coding. The two coding results were compared to see if there was agreement to enhance dependability of the qualitative inquiry (Chilisa & Preece, 2005).

On credibility, Alkhudhir (2019) states that a study is credible if its findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants’ original data and is a correct interpretation of the participants’ original views. In this regard, the study adopted the following credibility strategies: use of peer debriefing (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006), triangulation, member checking (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007, p, 239), and negative case analysis (Bitsch, 2005). Use of peer debriefing involved seeking scholarly guidance, as McMillan and Schumacher (2006) propose. This scholarly guidance was provided by two highly rated researchers in the faculty of education, who served as my supervisor and co-supervisor.

On triangulation, Denzin (2006) identified four basic types of Triangulation, namely data, investigator, theory and methodological/informant triangulation that utilises different informants to enhance the quality of the data from different source. Investigator triangulation involves multiple researchers in an investigation. Theory triangulation involves using more than one theoretical scheme in the interpretation of the phenomenon, while methodological triangulation involves using more than one method to gather data, such as interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documents. This study used data triangulation and methodological triangulation. The data triangulation was used by collecting data about one objective from different independent informants within the same school. Thus, data on administrator's commitment to duty was collected from teachers (see part C of appendix 6 phase 1), which was then counterchecked with data from head-teachers themselves (see appendix 8 phase 2). On teachers' work commitment, data was collected from students (see appendix 7 phase 2), which was then counterchecked by data generated from teachers themselves (see appendix 9 phase 2).

The study employed methodological triangulation by using a combination of methods such as interviews, observation, questionnaire, and document to gather data. As Bryman (2001) says, if the findings from a combination of methods were generally in agreement then the data was considered trustworthy and was, in turn, considered taken in the study. Thus, data on teacher and administrator academic qualifications and experience was collected through a questionnaire administered to individual teachers/administrator and from official documents at the schools. Data about teacher and administrator motivation was again collected through interviews and observation of the school physical environment. Data on teacher and administrator work

commitment was collected through use of interviews, questionnaires and official documents such as dully filled office files, schemes and records of work, and teachers' class period registers.

Concerning use of member-checks, McMillan & Schumacher (2006) observe that data and interpretations are continuously tested as they are derived from members of various audiences and groups from which data are solicited. Hence, this study included analysis and interpretation of the voices of respondents. As Schwandt et al., (2007) recommends, the analysed and interpreted data was sent back to the participants for them to evaluate the interpretation made by the inquirer and to suggest changes if they felt uncomfortable with it or because they had been misreported. Further, Bitsch (2005) says reporting negative cases improves the credibility of the study because the researcher accounts for the contradiction that emerges from the data, which could provide a plausible alternative explanation. Hence, this study has not just discarded negative instances (outliers), but rather reports, examines and explains them.

Bitsch (2005), and Tobin and Begley (2004) define transferability as the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other respondents; it is the interpretive equivalent of generalizability. To ensure transferability, the study employed two strategies; "thick description" and "purposeful sampling" (Bitsch, 2005, p. 85). 'Thick description' of the context, ensures transferability as it allows comparison of this context with other possible contexts to which transfer might be contemplated (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Hence, this study conceptualises its context as involving CSSs and CDSSs in four districts of

SHED. The CSSs are located mainly in urban areas with most social services and the CDSSs are located in rural and semi-rural areas with least social services. Regarding “purposeful sampling”, Schutt (2006) says that it helps the researcher focus on key informants, who are particularly knowledgeable of the issues under investigation. The present study purposely involved head-teachers, teachers and students as key informants on particular issues within their knowledge.

Koch (2006) defines confirmability as the degree to which the results of an inquiry could be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers. Confirmability is “concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are not figments of the inquirer’s imagination, but are clearly derived from the data” (Tobin & Begley, 2004, p. 392). To ensure confirmability, this study employed audit trail, reflexive journal and triangulation (Bowen, 2009). Regarding audit trail, as McMillan and Schumacher (2006) recommend, the researcher kept raw data, interview and observation notes, documents and records collected from the field, for crosschecking the inquiry process. Based on Tobin and Begley (2004) recommendation, the researcher kept a reflexive Journal containing all events that happened in the field and personal reflections in relation to the study such as the ‘ah’ phenomenon that arose during the investigation.

Ensuring rigour in the quantitative approach: Alkhudhir (2019) describes four criteria of ensuring rigour in quantitative approach, namely internal validity, external validity/generalisability, reliability, and objectivity. The quantitative component of this study ensured rigour using these four criteria.

The first is ensuring internal validity, which refers to the validity within the research study. In literature, three main approaches to internal validation are prevalent; content, criterion and construct validity with the possibility of including a fourth category, namely face validity (Oluwatayo, 2012). This study employed the use of content validity which looks at whether the instrument adequately covers all the content that it should with respect to the variable. Hence, in this study, the questionnaires about work commitment of head-teachers and teachers made deliberate effort to incorporate all the key aspects of work commitment by head-teachers and teachers (see appendices 6 and 7). Secondly, the study made deliberate effort to ensure external validity which concerns itself with the extent to which research results can be generalised to the population or to other research groups not studied. External validity embraces the concept of repeatability especially when referring to future repetition of the study in another context, target population or research field, which is also called reproducibility or generalisability (Sürücü & Maslakçı, 2020).

The researcher also made deliberate effort to ensure that the study achieves reliability, a concept that relates to the consistency of a measure. The three attributes of reliability are; homogeneity, stability, and equivalence. Homogeneity, also known as internal consistency, refers to the extent to which all the items on a scale measure one construct. Stability refers to the consistency of results using an instrument with repeated testing. Equivalence refers to the consistency among responses of multiple users of an instrument, or among alternate forms of an instrument (Bowling, 2014). This study ensured reliability along the lines of stability of data which was tested by the means of test-retest. In this regard, to gather data about level of motivation and work commitment questionnaires were administered to same participants twice after a

three week break under similar circumstances. A statistical comparison was made between participant's test scores for each of the times they completed it. Consistency of the results provided an indication of the reliability of the instrument and of the data collected.

The study also ensured that it achieves objectivity, which is conceptualised in the literature as 'freedom from bias'. In other words, it refers to reliable knowledge, checked and controlled, undistorted by personal bias and prejudice (Whiston, 2012). This definition implies that when good solid research is done, which has been systematically cross-checked and verified, the data gathered can be considered as objective. The qualitative alternative to objectivity is 'confirmability', which refers to the degree to which the findings are the product of the focus of the inquiry and not of the bias of the researcher (Bowen, 2009). This study ensured objectivity in two ways. Firstly, although quantitative data was selected from a stratified sample, there was random selection of the actual schools and participants within the strata. Secondly, quantitative data on teacher / head teacher qualifications and motivation in this study was cross-checked and verified by credible official records.

3.5. Ethical considerations.

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with the conduct of people and guides the norms or standards of behaviour of people and relationships with each other (Blumberg et al, 2005). It refers to an "ethos" or "way of life" meaning "social norms for conduct that distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour" (Shah, 2011, p, 205). With regard to research, Akaranga & Ongong'a (2013) says that research ethics are the common denominator for researchers' relations with

respondents and colleagues. To ensure adherence to ethical conduct during the study, the researcher obtained ethical clearance from the University of Malawi Research Ethics Committee (UNIMAREC) before undertaking the study (cf. Appendix 1). This study considers three basic guidelines of ensuring ethical conduct in research; obtaining permission to access institutions for research, informed consent from participants, and confidentiality of participant identity (Fouka & Mantzorou, 2011).

Obtaining permission to institutions to carry out research, involves seeking access to the institution or organisation where research is to be conducted (Fouka & Mantzorou, 2011). In order to be granted access to the selected CSSs and CDSSs in Shire Highlands Education Division (SHED), the researcher obtained permission from the Division manager. Permission was granted to the researcher, which acted as a proof of authorisation from the relevant ministry officials (cf. appendix 2). Phone conversations were made before paying visits to each secondary school between head-teachers and the researcher. Clear instructions were given to the head-teachers regarding who the respondents to the questionnaires as well as interviews would be.

Informed consent is the cornerstone of ethical research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The term consists of two important elements; 'informed', and 'consent' which, as Cohen et al. (2007) point out, must be addressed at the initial stage of the research project. Thus, firstly, participants must be fully informed of what will be asked of them, how the data will be used, and what (if any) consequences there could be. Secondly, the participants must provide explicit, active, signed consent to take part in the research which should include their understanding of their right to access the information and the right to withdraw at any point (Flemming, 2018).

In this regard, the present study undertook two steps to ensure informed consent of the participants before conducting the research. Each participant was given a letter of information with full details of the study such as; researcher's identity, what data will be collected, how data will be collected, level of commitment required from participants, and how data will be used and reported. Further, participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time, assurances of keeping participant's identity confidential, clarity of ownership of the data (participants own their raw data, researcher owns the analysis data), right to access to their data, and right to ask for more information (cf. Appendix 3). Participants were also given a form where they had to tick and sign at the bottom (cf. Appendix 4). The researcher retained one copy of the consent form signed by both the researcher and the participant. The participant was also given a copy of the consent form as a record of what they had signed up to.

In research, participants' safety is also of prime concern so that participants should not be exposed to unnecessary or disproportionate levels of risk (Fouka & Mantzourou, 2011). To avoid any form of harm to participants if they can be identified, confidentiality of the participants and data must be given due consideration. This means that the "identities and records of individuals should be maintained as confidential and great care should be taken when the researcher publishes the findings that the participants are not identified" (Bryman, 2008, p, 118). In line with this principle, the researcher promised to protect the information given in confidence by the respondent and that the study would not, in any way, reveal identities of the participants. As Mugenda (2011) advocates, this study kept confidential the identity of respondents by using codes instead of referring to them by their names or divulging any other sensitive information about a participant or the people they mention which could potentially have negative repercussions on their job.

3.6. Chapter summary.

In summary, this chapter has six sections outlining the methodology used to investigate the working of the teachers' deployment policy in bridging the gap between the rich and the poor. The first section shows that this study adopts a pragmatic paradigm, an explanatory research design and a mixed methods approach to address the objectives of this study. Secondly, the chapter has presented the sampling strategy and population. In this regard the section has given that the study was done in 4 CSS and 8 CDSS from four districts in SHED. The sample size of the qualitative component involved interviewing 12 head teachers and 32 teachers while quantitative data was collected from 102 participants from each school category. Further, the section shows that the qualitative component of this study used purposeful or judgmental sampling method while the quantitative component of this study used stratified random sampling method.

The third section has discussed data collection methods such as document reviews and structured interviews of participants for collecting qualitative data while questionnaires and office records for collecting quantitative data. Further the third section has discussed data analysis methods used in the study. Five steps; *data logging*, *Anecdotes*, *Vignettes*, *Data coding* and *Thematic network* are used in qualitative data analysis while quantitative data analysis involved merely analysing *descriptive statistics*. Another section presents four criteria; dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability used to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative study just as four criteria; internal validity, external validity/generalisability, reliability, and objectivity are for quantitative data. The last section discusses ways of ensuring ethical conduct such as; obtaining permission to access institutions for research, informed consent from participants, and confidentiality of participant identity.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0. Chapter overview.

The quality of education offered in schools is, to a great extent, determined by the quality of teachers deployed to those schools. Hence, exercising great care when conducting teacher deployment is key to the provision of equitable quality education (Milanowski, 2004 and Rockof, 2004). This chapter presents and discusses findings on how teacher deployment policy is working with regard to the provision of equitable quality secondary school education in pursuit of bridging the gap between the rich and the poor. This is done in two sections in accordance with the theoretical framework. Along the lines of *Educational Equity Theory*, the first section analyses how teacher deployment in SHED is working with regard to the four key factors that must be considered in teacher deployment policy to ensure quality education in both CDSSs and CSSs. The second one analyses, along the lines of *Social Reproduction Theory*, the effect of the working of teacher deployment policy in SHED on bridging the gap between the rich and the poor.

4.1. Analysis of the working of teacher deployment policy in selected CDSSs and CSSs in SHED.

The four factors discussed in section 2.4 above are critical in the operation of the deployment policy if the policy is to offer quality education in both CDSSs and CSSs. Thus, in relation to the four critical factors, this section presents findings and a

discussion on the current working of the deployment policy along the lines of *Educational Equity Theory*, to see how the policy is doing in ensuring quality education in the selected CSSs and CDSSs in SHED.

Academic qualifications of teachers and head-teachers deployed to CDSSs and CSSs. As already mentioned in section 3.3, on sample size, data on teachers' academic qualifications was collected for 96 teachers in each school category. The number of teachers was equal in both categories because, although the schools were of different sizes, but the total number of streams from the schools in the CSS category matched the total number of streams from schools in the CDSS category. Table 1a below shows the distribution of qualified teachers in the selected CDSSs and CSSs.

TABLE 1a: distribution of qualified teachers in the selected CDSSs and CSSs.

Teacher academic qualifications	School category			
	CSS		CDSS	
	No	%	No	%
Degree or diploma in education holders (teaching subjects of qualification)	93	96.875	34	35.41
Degree or diploma in education holders (not teaching subjects of qualification: humanities)	0	0	2	2.08
Degree or diploma in education holders (but not teaching subjects of qualification: languages)	0	0	3	3.1

Teacher academic qualifications	School category			
	CSS		CDSS	
	No	%	No	%
Degree or diploma in education holders (but not teaching subjects of qualification: sciences)	1	1.041	45	46.87
General degree or diploma holders (without UCE)	2	2.083	4	4.1
Underqualified teachers (with certificate in primary education)	0	0	8	8.3
Total	96	100	96	100

Table 1a above shows that, although CSSs continue to have more qualified teachers than CDSSs there has been a significant improvement in percentage of qualified teachers (with diplomas or degrees in education and those with general diplomas and degrees plus UCE) deployed to CDSSs. In 2011, before government interventions related to teacher deployment as noted in section 2.3, there were 528 qualified teachers, 168 unqualified teachers (those with general diplomas and degrees), and 563 underqualified teachers (those trained as primary school teachers) in SHED. CSS, had 83% qualified teachers and 17 unqualified teachers. CDSSs had 17% qualified teachers, 25 % unqualified teachers, and 58 % underqualified teachers (MoEST, 2011). However, the table above shows 98% qualified teachers in CSSs against 88% qualified teachers in CDSSs. Thus, CDSSs have more qualified teachers (with diplomas or degrees in education and those with general diplomas and degrees plus UCE) unlike was the case in 2011.

The measures and interventions that government has been putting in place in the past decade, as seen in section 2.3, appear to be improving teacher qualifications in CDSSs. Firstly, there has been a significant improvement in the production of secondary school teachers due to an increase in the number of tertiary institutions offering diplomas and degrees in education through a number of modes (MoEST, 2019). More youths are graduating from generic and open distance learning programs. Further, in search of promotions, many teachers trained as primary school teachers but deployed to secondary schools (CDSSs) or want to be deployed to secondary schools, are self-upgrading their academic qualifications to diplomas and degrees in education through mature entry and open distance learning programs. Secondly, government's punitive measures, against teachers who refuse deployment to rural CDSSs, are making qualified teachers to stay in rural CDSSs. Hence, as MoEST (2019) also observes, nationally, there has been an increase in the number of qualified teachers (with diplomas and degrees in education) deployed to CDSSs.

Although the above picture might indicate some improvements in pursuit of offering good quality education in both CSSs and CDSSs, the situation is still not healthy. A critical observation of the situation reveals a worrisome scenario. Table 1a shows that only 1 % of qualified teachers (with diplomas or degrees in education) in CSSs were found to be teaching a subject they were not qualified in, while a total of 52% of qualified teachers (with diplomas or degrees in education) in CDSSs were found to be teaching a subject they were not qualified in. Furthermore, Table 1a also shows that science subjects had the highest percentage (46.87%) of teachers who, although they possessed diplomas and degrees in education were not qualified to teach the particular science subjects they were teaching. However, only 3.1% and 2.08% were in languages and humanities respectively.

The foregoing observations show that teachers are deployed to CSSs specifically to teach the very subjects they are qualified in while qualified teachers are not always deployed to CDSSs to teach the very subjects they are qualified in. With regard to CSSs one teacher said; *“I find work relatively easier here because I am teaching subjects of my specialization to students of a higher IQ. It is unlike the time I was at a CDSS where I was required to teach subjects outside my specialization to students of generally a lower IQ” (Teacher A1)*. In tandem with this view, one CSS headmaster had this to say;

“While teachers are generally not enough in our schools but it rarely comes to a point of requiring a teacher to teach a subject outside his/her specialization. In case such a situation arises it is for a short period of time because it never takes long before the right teacher is deployed. Furthermore, with all the advantages at this school, many teachers would love to work here and so qualified teachers do not refuse postings to this school” (Head-teacher A1).

In the case of CDSSs, one Secondary School Methods Advisor (SEMA) said; *“with regard to CDSSs we are not so strict that the teacher teaches the subject he or she is qualified in” (SEMA, A1)*. In fact, even if teachers are sent to CDSSs with posting instructions to teach specific subjects of their specialization, practically they end up teaching other subjects. One teacher said:

“I was sent here with the posting instruction to teach Bible Knowledge and History. Upon arrival at this school the head-teacher told me that the school was not offering Bible Knowledge and there were enough History teachers. However, the head-teacher said there was dire need for physics and chemistry teachers. Hence, I was asked to teach Physics and

Chemistry where the need was much more pressing because these were also core subjects for the science route” (Teacher B1).

The above situation can be explained in the context of the fact that, nationally, “there is more supply of teachers in humanities subjects, relative to sciences and mathematics” (MoE, 2021, p, 179). It can be assumed that this is because it is more expensive to train a teacher in education (sciences) than it is to train a teacher in education (humanities) or education (languages). In the interest of increasing profits, as shown by; Catholic University of Malawi (2022), University of Livingstonia (2022), Malawi Assemblies of God University (2022), Malawi Adventist University (2022) and DMI university (2022), private universities concentrate on training humanities and language teachers since it is more expensive to train teachers in STEM subjects. In the end, it is only public universities that train teachers in all the three departments; sciences, humanities, and languages (National Council for Higher Education [NCHE], 2022).

This leads to a paradoxical situation. On the one hand there are more science subjects and with more periods per week; Agriculture, Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics which are core subjects in secondary schools and yet less science teachers are being trained. On the other hand, there are less humanities subjects and with less periods per week; Geography and History, and less language subjects; Chichewa and English which are core subjects in secondary schools (cf. MoEST, 2019) and yet more teachers are being trained in these fields. Since it is not a priority for CDSS teachers to teach subjects they are qualified in, the vast majority of these humanities and language teachers are deployed to CDSSs to teach whatever subject they might be required to teach.

Thus, the problem of deploying underqualified teachers, those who were particularly trained to teach at primary school, as a stop-gap measure to teach in secondary schools especially in CDSSs, as MoEST (2011) documented, has faded away. The main problem in the fore is the deployment of qualified secondary school teachers (having diplomas and degrees in education) to CDSSs to teach subjects outside their specialisation. The problem is no longer that of having CSS students being taught predominantly by qualified secondary school teachers while CDSS students being taught predominantly by underqualified teachers (those only trained as primary school teachers). On the contrary, the problem is having CSS students being taught predominantly by teachers with deep subject content knowledge while CDSS students are being taught predominantly by teachers with poor subject content knowledge and methodology of teaching particular subjects, especially in STEM subjects.

Section 2.4 has presented both local research (Beytekin & Chipala, 2015; and Altinyelken & Hoeksma, 2021) and international research conducted in Africa (Owolabi & Adedayo, 2012; and Haliru & Julius, 2018) and outside Africa (Kansanem, 2005; Sahlberg, 2010; and Shamim et al., 2013) showing the influence of teacher's subject content knowledge and subject teaching methodology on students' performance. The research has revealed that the teachers' deep subject content knowledge and subject teaching methodology, lead to better students' academic performance while the teacher's poor subject content knowledge and poor subject teaching methodology, leads to poor students' academic performance. From this point of view, it can be argued that good student performance in CSSs, presented in section 1.2, is partially a result of having most teachers with deep content knowledge and teaching methodology of the subjects they teach. On the other hand, poor student performance in CDSSs, presented in section 1.2, is partially a result of having most

teachers with poor content knowledge and teaching methodology of the subjects they teach, since most teachers in CDSSs are teaching subjects outside their specialisation.

In fact, along the lines of *Educational Equity Theory*, the paradox is greatly illuminated when considering the situation of CDSSs. In a situation where teaching and learning materials are hard to find, as it is in CDSSs, Teaching And Learning Using Locally Available Resources [TALULAR] becomes vitally important (Malawi Institute of Education [MIE], 2004). This raises questions, as one CDSS teacher posed, concerning how teachers with little subject content knowledge and subject teaching methodologies in subjects, can effectively envisage and use locally available teaching and learning resources. The teacher said;

“In college we learnt about TALULAR to be applied in situations like ours where teaching and learning materials are hard to find. But I find it really hard to envisage and use locally available teaching and learning resources in a subject that I have little subject content and little teaching methodologies” (Teacher C1).

Further, given the fact that CDSSs have the third tier of students, as Namphande (2018) also shows, one wonders how such “students at risk”, as Sagor & Cox (2013) calls them, would be assigned such teachers and yet expect students’ achievement to significantly improve. Along this line, one CDSS teacher wondered;

“The best students are sent to national secondary schools, then better ones are sent to district boarding schools while we receive the third-class students and most of them need special attention from teachers. However, how can we effectively offer this special attention when we are assigned subjects we have little subject content and teaching methodologies?” (Teacher D1).

Concerning head-teacher academic qualifications, data from 8 head-teachers and deputies was collected from four CSSs and also a total of 8 head-teachers from eight CDSSs in the sample. Table 1b below shows the distribution of head-teacher qualifications in the selected CDSSs and CSSs.

TABLE 1b: Distribution of administrators' qualifications in the selected CDSSs and CSSs.

Head-teacher / deputy head-teacher qualifications	School category			
	CSS (N = 8)		CDSS (N = 8)	
	No	%	No	%
Those with diplomas in education.	0	0	5	62.5
Those with degrees in education (without postgraduate qualifications in or related to leadership/management)	5	62.5	3	37.5
Those with degrees in education plus postgraduate qualifications in or related to leadership/management.	3	37.5	0	0
Total	8	100	8	100

First and foremost, it should be noted that in Malawi, learning for head-teachers happens as they do their job through trial and error method. This is because, formal training in headship is not a requirement for the appointment of head-teachers. Apart from having a diploma or degree in education just like any other teacher, head-teacher appointment is ad hoc often based on a successful record of teaching; prior experience of leadership in school or outside; religious affiliation; a college degree; nepotism or political affiliations (Wamba, 2015). However, in terms of academic qualifications, Table 1b still shows continued bias in favour of CSSs and against CDSSs in the deployment of head-teachers to the two school categories. On the one hand, 62.5% of

the CDSS head-teachers had the lowest qualification of a diploma in education, 37.5% had just a degree in education, and 0% had a degree in education plus a postgraduate qualification in or related to leadership/management. On the other hand, 0% of the CSS head-teachers had the lowest qualification of a diploma in education, 62.5% had just a degree in education, and 37.5% had a degree in education plus a postgraduate qualification in or related to leadership/management.

Thus, on the one hand, CDSSs are continuing to be headed by teachers with less academic qualifications from within the ranks of senior classroom teachers with little or no preparation for the onerous and complex task of school headship as Handy (cited in UNESCO, 2011) observed. On the other hand, CSSs are continuing to get head-teachers with more academic qualifications from within the ranks of senior classroom teachers especially those who, on their own, obtain qualifications in or related to school leadership. One CSS head-teacher said;

“Sir, getting higher qualifications pays. Previously, I started as an acting head-teacher at a CDSS with a Diploma of education from Domasi College of Education. It was not easy to head the school. I made a personal initiative to upgrade to a Bachelor’s degree in education at Chancellor College and then did a postgraduate certificate in Management at Malawi Institute of Management (MIM) in Blantyre. With these higher qualifications, school headship became relatively easier and I was also considered to head this CSS” (Head-teacher B1).

Section 2.4 has presented both local research (Wamba, 2015) and international research in Africa (Nsubuga, 2009) and outside Africa (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Gil & Woodruff, 2011; and Tomlinson, 2012) showing the impact of head-

teacher's qualifications on students' academic performance. These researches have shown that the head-teacher's high academic qualifications in or related to school leadership, lead to better students' academic performance. However, the head-teacher's less academic qualifications in school headship, lead to poor students' academic performance. From this point of view, it stands to reason that good student performance in CSSs, presented in Section 1.2, is partially a result of having most head-teachers with high academic qualifications in or related to school leadership. On the other hand, poor student performance in CDSSs, presented in Section 1.2, is partially a result of having most head-teachers with less academic qualifications in or related to school leadership.

Similarly, research reviewed in Section 2.4 revealed that less academic qualifications and little or no preparation for school headship negatively affects student performance even in well-resourced secondary schools. Now, along the lines of *Educational Equity Theory*, it becomes surprising, therefore, that CDSSs, known for their lack of resources (MoE, 2021) and having head-teachers with less academic qualifications and little or no preparation for school headship are expected to significantly improve students' performance. In this vein, one CDSS head-teacher wondered as follows;

“Some of these CDSSs have a smaller number of students than CSS but the task of heading a CDSS is even more complex than a CSS. A CDSS usually operates on little resources, both human and material. Our students are third tier and live in different locations at their homes or do self-boarding, most of which are not student friendly. No head-teacher is trained to handle this complexity and expecting improvement in student performance here is expecting a miracle” (Head-teacher C1).

In summary, from the angle of *Educational Equity Theory* and with regard to equitable deployment of qualified teachers in all public schools, the analysis has shown that the working of teacher deployment policy is falling short of providing educational equity.

Experience of teachers and head-teachers deployed to CDSSs and CSSs. For the sake of fair comparison, data on teachers' experience was randomly collected from equal numbers of subject teachers in the two categories of schools. This was because the total number of streams from the schools in the CSS category matched the total number of streams from schools in the CDSS category. Table 4a below shows the distribution of teachers' experience in the sampled CDSSs and CSSs.

TABLE 2a: Teachers' years of teaching experience in the selected CDSSs and CSSs.

Teachers' experience		School category			
		CSS		CDSS	
Subject	Total number of teachers	Total years of experience for all teachers	Average years of experience	Total years of experience for all teachers	Average years of experience
Agriculture	11	185	16.8	55	5
Biology	16	266	16.625	88	5.5
Chemistry	16	306	16.10	56	3.5
Chichewa	25	138	17.24	200	8

English	25	428	17.12	190	7.6
Geography	19	327	17.21	152	8
History	19	325	17	145	7.6
Mathematics	31	496	16	155	5
Physics	24	384	16	108	4.5
Total		2855	16.68	1149	6.1

Table 2a above shows that in the selected CSSs, the average years of experience for humanities teachers is 17.105, for language teachers is 17.18, and for science teachers is 16.3. The total average for teachers' years of experience is 16.68. In contrast, in the selected CDSSs, the average years of experience for humanities teachers is 7.8, for language teachers is 7.8, and 4.7 for science teachers. Thus, the total average for teachers' years of experience is 6.1. This comparative analysis shows that there is a wide difference in teaching experience between CDSSs teachers and CSSs teachers and the difference is widest between science teachers. This situation is not much surprising because, as Nkhokwe et al. (2017) shows, newly recruited teachers, especially those deployed in rural CDSSs, are leaving the profession early in their careers. One newly recruited teacher confirmed this point as he said; *"when I was in college, I never expected teaching to be this hard and unrewarding. Given any other job opportunity somewhere, I will jump on it instantly like a piece of iron to a magnet"* (Teacher E1).

This continually creates vacancies in CDSSs because the deployment policy stipulates that newly recruited teachers must be deployed to rural CDSSs, as such, these vacancies are filled by newly recruited teachers (Asim, 2019). This perpetually keeps

a significant number of inexperienced teachers in CDSSs as one head-teacher lamented;

“Most of my teachers are youthful and at times childish. Unfortunately, CDSSs will continue to be dominated by inexperienced teachers because there will always be vacancies for teachers in CDSSs since either the new recruits will later be posted away, usually to CSSs after some years of experience, or will leave the teaching profession after finding life at a CDSS unbearable” (Teacher F1).

This scenario means that more experienced teachers are being predominantly deployed to CSSs while less experienced teachers are predominantly deployed to CDSSs. This has an impact on the academic performance of students as evidenced in the studies of Agharuwhe (2013), Dial (2008), Wolff et al., (2014), Ewatan and Ewatan (2015) and Haliru and Julius (2018). These studies show a positive relationship between teachers’ years of experience and students’ academic performance. In other words, the studies suggest that more years of teacher’s teaching experience lead to better students’ academic performance, and less years of teacher’s teaching experience lead to poor students’ academic performance.

From this point of view, good students’ academic performance in CSSs is partially a result of predominantly having teachers with more teaching experience. Similarly, poor students’ academic performance in CDSSs is partially a result of predominantly having teachers with less teaching experience. In fact, from the lens of *Educational Equity Theory* it gets glaringly paradoxical given the situation in the two categories of schools, as discussed earlier on. It is hard to expect head-teachers in CDSSs to equally

improve students' performance like their counterparts in CSSs. This is because experienced teachers are deployed to CSS, where they teach with relatively enough teaching and learning materials, while inexperienced teachers are deployed to CDSSs with minimal teaching and learning materials as Namphande (2018) noted.

On head-teachers' years of experience in school leadership, the study obtained data from a total of 8 head-teachers and deputies from the four CSSs and also a total of 8 head-teachers from the eight CDSSs in the sample. Table 2b below shows the distribution of head-teachers' years of experience in the selected CDSSs and CSSs.

TABLE 2b: head-teachers' years of school leadership experience in the selected CDSSs and CSSs.

Teachers' experience	School category			
	CSS		CDSS	
Administrator	Total number of years of experience	Average years of experience	Total number of years of experience	Average years of experience
Head-teachers/Deputy head-teachers	98	12.25	53	6.625

Table 2b above shows that most head-teachers in CSSs have more years of school leadership experience while most head-teachers in CDSSs have less years of school

leadership experience. The table shows that the average number of years of school leadership experience for head-teachers in CSSs is 12.25 years while the average number of years of school leadership experience for head-teachers in CDSSs is 6.625. The occurrence of this scenario is understood in the following context. Like school records showed, on the one hand, head-teachers in CSSs are deployed in full capacity as head-teachers and are predominantly of higher ranks, P5 and P7 on the government scale, which usually implies more years of service while on the other, head-teachers in CDSSs are deployed on acting capacity and are predominantly of lower ranks, P8, grade I and grade J on the government scale, which usually implies less years of service.

This situation means that while CSSs are places for experienced head-teachers to work, CDSSs are, to some extent, used as training places for newly promoted head-teachers on acting capacity. In this vein, one CSS head-teacher said; *“I started as acting deputy head-teacher at a CDSS. Then went on to be acting head-teacher at another CDSS. This gave me some experience and as I rose to the rank of P5, I got posted to this CSS”* (Head-teacher D1). This has an impact on the academic performance of students as Fink and Brayman (2006), Hoerr (2013), Clark, Martorell and Rockoff (2013), and Wamba (2015) concluded. These researchers concluded that having a well-experienced head-teacher leads to better students’ academic performance, while having a less experienced head-teacher leads to poor students’ academic performance. Hence, it is appropriate to argue that good student performance in CSSs is partially a result of having well-experienced head-teachers while the poor student performance in CDSSs is partially a result of having less experienced head-teachers.

Actually, from the angle of *Educational Equity Theory*, the situation of CSSs and CDSSs is not in the spirit of educational equity. Experienced head-teachers are deployed to lead CSSs which, as MoEST (2019) shows, are relatively well-resourced and substantially supported by both government and PTA. With relatively enough resources, it gets easier to run such schools. However, inexperienced administrators are deployed to lead CDSSs which, as MoEST (2019) also shows, are poorly-resourced and poorly supported by the community through PTA. Thus, as Handy (cited in UNESCO, 2011) observed, it is not only really difficult to run such poorly-resourced schools but also improve students' performance in them. One, therefore, questions the logic of giving a less challenging job of running a CSS to an experienced head-teacher while a more challenging job of running a CDSS to an inexperienced head-teacher and yet expect to equalize students' performance in the two school categories.

Motivation of teachers and head-teachers deployed to CDSSs and CSSs. Data on teachers' levels of motivation was collected from 96 teachers from each of the two categories of schools having an equal number of streams. Table 3a below shows the distribution of teachers' levels of motivation in the selected CDSSs and CSSs.

TABLE 3a: Motivation levels for teachers in the sampled CDSSs and CSSs.

Teacher motivation levels	School category			
	CSS		CDSS	
Happily working and work not much challenging.	No	%	No	%
Strongly disagree	0	0	62	64.583

Disagree	3	3.125	25	26.04
Neither agree nor disagree	5	5.20	6	6.25
Agree	67	69.792	3	3.125
Strongly agree	21	21.875	0	0
Total	96	100	96	100

The results in Table 3a show how much teachers agreed or disagreed with the statement that they are happily working, and that work is not much challenging to them at their duty station. On the one hand, the table shows that a large majority of teachers in CSSs agreed with the statement (69.792% agreed and 21.875% strongly agreed). On the other hand, the table shows that a large majority of teachers in CDSSs disagreed with the statement (26.04% disagreed and 64.583% strongly disagreed). To begin with, these findings on the levels of teacher/head-teacher motivation must be explained from the background that although teachers may initially be intrinsically motivated but contextual factors also play a great role. Normally these factors are related to institutional demands and constraints of the workplace and the profession. Therefore, teacher motivation is highly fragile since teachers are constantly exposed to both positive and negative powerful influences (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011).

In this regard, Gunawan's (2011) says that the theory of justice relates to an individual's satisfaction with the justice or fairness of the reward received. For teachers, justice is defined as the ratio between the input (e.g., teacher education, teaching experience, number of hours taught, number of attempts put into school) and the output (e.g., wage or salary, awards, promotions) compared to other teachers in the same school or in other schools with the same level of inputs and outputs. A

teacher will be satisfied if the rewards received are balanced with the energy and personal costs incurred, and teachers who are satisfied with their work will have a positive attitude to the job and will be motivated to perform it to the best of their ability. That is why, in Malawi, Kayuni and Tambulasi (2007) found that a number of factors such as poor salary and poor working conditions were causing low motivation among teachers.

Further, Kreitner and Kinicki (2014) says that the work environment greatly affects employee motivation. If the work environment is very comfortable, employees will continue to be motivated to improve their performance for the company. However, as Han and Yin (2016) argue, undesirable work conditions negatively affect the performance of employees. Due to adverse circumstances and negative influences, some teachers may not be able to maintain their high motivation with time. Although they were initially intrinsically motivated to teach, as time passes by, some factors undermine their motivation, consequently, causing them to lose interest. Therefore, Limwado (2015) argues that, in Malawi, a combination of low salaries and poor working conditions cause the teaching profession to appear as a second-grade job. This makes teachers to have low self-worth and, in turn, put less effort in their work. From this background, the qualitative study on this section revealed important facts on two government strategies presented in Section 2.3 of rural hardship allowance, and community participation in school development, which were introduced to motivate teachers and aid teacher deployment.

Firstly, the strategy of providing hardship allowance involved the introduction of K10,000.00 (an equivalent of 80 US dollars then) hardship allowance meant to

motivate teachers to accept deployment to rural schools. This started in 2010. However, in this regard one teacher said;

“You are a fellow teacher. You know that we in rural CDSSs have been getting a K10,000.00 rural allowance since the year 2012. With all the inflation over the years what can K10,000.00 do now (2022)? It is not even enough to use for transport to go and access my little salary at the bank. They say it will be revised but we have heard this song for over five years now” (Teacher G1).

This means that since its introduction, this hardship allowance has never been adjusted upwards to match with inflation, and, at the time this research was being conducted, it had long ceased to be an attracting factor for teachers to accept postings to rural schools (cf. MoE, 2021).

Thus, deployment to rural schools is not necessarily facilitated by motivating teachers to accept such postings but basically facilitated by punitive measures for teachers who refuse postings to rural schools as presented in Section 2.3. In this regard one CDSS teacher said;

“My brother, when I received posting instructions to this school, I tried to negotiate with the authorities to send me to another and better school. I cited such factors as absence of electricity and no institutional house at the school. But the authorities were adamant. Five weeks passed before reporting for duty at this school. It was pretty much of a miscalculation. The authorities withheld my salary and I had no choice but to take up the posting” (Teacher H1).

However, in pursuit of providing good quality education, it is not enough to station qualified teachers at a school. These qualified teachers also need motivation to teach

and sustain teaching at a given school as Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) and Dörnyei (2018) have argued.

Towards this end of motivating teachers to teach and sustain teaching at a given school, the national strategy of community participation in school development projects (improving teachers' housing and improving teachers' work environment) gives contrasting scenarios. Concerning teachers' housing, most CSS teachers said they were happy to work at the duty stations because they were staying in well-built and affordable institutional houses which were constantly maintained by the PTA fund. One CSS teacher said;

“Work is not without challenges, but life here is more motivating than when I was at a rural CDSS. Here I stay in a relatively big institutional house and they deduct about K10,000.00 from my salary as house rent which is really fair. Where can I get a privately rented house of that size and quality at that price?” (Teacher I1).

The study observed that all of the 4 CSSs had most of their teachers accommodated in well-built and spacious houses at the school. In all the 4 CSSs, most of the houses were big and they had servant quarters. At two CSSs, one national and the other district, there were some vacant teachers' houses.

However, most CDSS teachers said they were not happy to work at the duty stations because there was very poor provision of accommodation for teachers, as one teacher said;

“Sir lets go and see my house, even my bedroom. It is dusty all over. I am also asthmatic and allergic to dust. But I have no choice, after all I am

considered lucky to be offered one of just two institution houses available at this school which were built by PTA and the community. Otherwise I would have to be renting a house very far away from this school where houses are not even of better quality” (Teacher J1).

Most teachers reported living in their own privately rented or owned properties, sometimes at considerable distance from the school. They travelled to school by foot, by bicycle or by formal public transport using their low salaries and often at the mercy of weather patterns as one teacher lamented;

“There are only three institutional houses at this school which are used by the head-teacher, the deputy head-teacher and one teacher. Houses for rent are available at the Boma. When it rains, and it often rains heavily here, this road you have used becomes impassable. Thus, most teachers often fail to report for duties during the rainy season” (Teacher K1).

It was further observed that most teachers’ houses, whether institutional or privately rented or owned, were of poor quality.

As far as the aspect of work environment is concerned, most CSS teachers said they found their work not much challenging because they work in good infrastructure with adequate provision of teaching and learning facilities. In all the four sampled CSSs, it was observed that they had spacious and well-furnished staff rooms with teachers’ work tables, chairs, and pigeon-holes enough for all teachers. All the four CSSs had provisions of daily newspapers, a refrigerator and DSTV in their staffrooms paid through the PTA fund. Teachers also reported to be handsomely rewarded by the PTA

when their students do well in national exams. One teacher acting as the staffroom manager at one CSS said;

“Teachers do not have much complaints here, we stay in good houses, we have a good staffroom with DSTV as you can see and we teach students of a better IQ since this is a national secondary school enrolling the best students in the country. The PTA fund pays for the DSTV subscription and also gives handsome meritorious awards to teachers whose students do well in national exams” (Teacher L1).

In contrast, most CDSS teachers said they find work much challenging because they work in poor infrastructures with little provision of teaching and learning facilities. In most of the sampled CDSSs, it was observed that there were tiny and poorly furnished staffrooms with only basic teachers’ work tables and chairs which were not enough for all the teachers. No staffroom in the sampled CDSSs had pigeon-holes for the teachers. No staffroom in the sampled CDSSs had the extra provisions of such things as daily newspapers, a refrigerator and DSTV.

One teacher expressed how demotivating the staffroom at his school was, as he lamented;

“How can one be motivated to prepare for work in this so-called staff room, dilapidated as it is? Actually this building was built by the community using local resources as a girls’ hostel for self-boarders during the Kamuzu era (around the 1970s). Over time, the building became so dilapidated that the girls abandoned it. In the absence of a staff room, teachers found refuge in the old building which has not seen

any proper maintenance. See, after all those years of hard work at school, can this room motivate any graduate in any profession?” (Teacher M1).

In all the CDSSs, the PTA either offered very little or no rewards to teachers when their students did well in national exams. One teacher lamented; *“We hear that, as a way of motivation, teachers in some schools, mostly CSSs get meritorious awards when their students do well in national exams” (Teacher N1).* Another teacher at another CDSS said;

“Of course the PTA here gives meritorious awards to teachers whose students do relatively well in national exams. But the amount is not really motivating given the huge sacrifices that a teacher has to make for a student at this school to do relatively well given our conditions. Of course, we understand, the PTA has limited collections from poor parents who even struggle to pay K15,000.00 (14 US dollars) per term for school fees” (Teacher O1).

These findings support the fact that CSSs are still schools for the rich and CDSSs are schools for the poor (MoEST, 2019). Thus, on the one hand, PTAs for CSSs manage to collect sizeable contributions from the rich parents.

Thus, from the angle of *Educational Equity Theory*, the situation is paradoxical, the parents give much to schools that, as Namphande et al. (2017) observed, are already characterised by good infrastructure, and teaching and learning facilities. In other words, CSSs have considerable resources for motivating teachers in various ways, including giving significant meritorious awards to teachers when their students perform well in national exams. In contrast, PTAs for CDSSs collect very little

contributions from parents because most of them are poor. Paradoxically, the funds seek to help schools whose main source of funding is the community itself, as government is only responsible for teachers' salaries (MoEST, 2019), and are characterised by poor infrastructure and teaching and learning facilities (Namphande, 2017). Hence, CDSSs have very little resources to create a motivating environment for teachers or to give them meritorious awards when their students perform well in national examinations.

A certain small percentage of CSS teachers, 5.20% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that they were happily working and work was not much challenging at their duty stations while 3.125 % disagreed with it. However, such teachers, in their explanations, raised the general concerns about the teaching profession such as low salaries and lack of promotions as one CSS teacher said; *"my brother there cannot be any motivation in this profession with these low salaries and lack of promotions. For example, I have been at Grade TI for over twelve years without promotion. Actually, I do not know how it feels to be promoted"* (Teacher P1). Hence, these were not applicable for comparing CDSS teachers with CSS teachers.

Similarly, a small percentage of CDSS teachers, 6.25 % neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that they were happily working and work was not much challenging at their duty stations while 3.125% agreed with it. However, in their explanations, the teachers pointed to outside-work undertakings such as farming and small scale businesses which they were able to do while working in these schools. For example, one teacher said; *"in my case I like combining work with doing farming or small scale business. Working at this rural school helps me to access land easily and*

do my farming” (Teacher Q1). Hence, these were not applicable for comparing CDSS teachers and CSS teachers.

In general, the above findings reveal that the introduction of the national strategy of community participation in school development projects has actually led to a dis-equalising effect on teacher motivation levels in CSSs and CDSSs. This is in agreement with literature reviews of psychological theories; theory of justice (Gunawan, 2011), and self-determination theory (Utomo, 2018) discussed above. On the one hand, the national strategy of community participation in school development projects is succeeding in motivating CSS teachers by improving teachers’ housing and work environment. Teachers deployed to CSSs continue to live and work under relatively fair conditions as such they are motivated to work. On the other hand, the national strategy of community participation in school development projects is failing to motivate CDSS teachers by improving teachers’ housing and work environment. Teachers deployed to CDSSs continue to live and work under considerably hard conditions, therefore, they have little or no motivation to teach and sustain teaching.

The problem of attracting qualified teachers to accept postings in rural CDSSs, as MoEST (2011) documented has, however, faded away. The punitive measures for teachers who refuse postings to rural schools, as presented in section 2.3 have succeeded in bringing academically qualified teachers to rural CDSSs. The main problem is that of ensuring teachers’ motivation to teach and sustain teaching in all public schools (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; and Dörnyei, 2018). Having academically qualified teachers at a particular school does not automatically translate to quality teaching as one CDSS teacher lamented; *“although I qualified to teach the subjects I am assigned, but with all the challenges both at home and at work, where can I get*

the zeal to teach?” (Teacher R1). The problem in pursuit of equalising quality education in all public secondary schools is as follows. On one hand, CSS students are taught by teachers who are both academically qualified and also relatively motivated to teach and sustain teaching. On the other hand, CDSS students are taught by teachers, who are academically qualified, but have little or no motivation to teach and sustain teaching.

Section 2.4 has reviewed research done in Malawi by Kadzamira (2006), Kayuni and Tambulasi (2007) and Limwado (2015) which shows a relationship between teacher motivation and student’s performance. The research has shown that having highly motivated teachers leads to better students’ academic performance while having unmotivated or demotivated teachers leads to poor students’ academic performance. From this point of view, it can also be argued that good student performance in CSSs, presented in Section 1.2, is partially a result of having most teachers that are qualified and are also relatively motivated to teach and sustain teaching. In contrast, poor students’ performance in CDSSs, presented in Section 1.2, is partially a result of having most teachers, who though may be academically qualified, are offered little or no motivation to teach and sustain teaching.

As far as the aspect of head-teachers’ levels of motivation is concerned, data from 8 head-teachers and deputies was collected from the four selected CSSs and 8 head-teachers from the eight selected CDSSs having an equal total number of streams. Table 3b below shows the distribution of head-teachers’ levels of motivation in the selected CDSSs and CSSs.

TABLE 3b: Motivation levels for administrators in the selected CDSSs and CSSs.

Head-teacher/deputy head-teacher motivation levels	School category			
	CSS (N = 8)		CDSS (N = 8)	
Happily working and work not much challenging.	No	%	No	%
Strongly disagree	0	0	3	37.5
Disagree	0	0	4	50
Neither agree nor disagree	2	25	1	12.5
Agree	5	62.5	0	0
Strongly agree	1	12.5	0	0
Total	8	100	8	100

The results in Table 3b show how much head-teachers agreed or disagreed with the statement that they are happily working and work is not much challenging at their duty station. On one hand, the table shows that a majority of head-teachers in CSSs agreed with the statement (62.5% agreed and 12.5% strongly agreed). On the other hand, the table shows that a majority of head-teachers in CDSSs disagreed with the statement (50% disagreed and 37.5% strongly disagreed). An analysis of head-teachers' explanations, official records, and observations revealed contrasting levels of motivation between CSS head-teachers and CDSS head-teachers. This contrast is attributed to having different ranks on the government scale and different physical environments of the school.

Firstly, with regard to ranking on the government scale, head-teachers' explanations and school records revealed contrasting ranks on the government scale between head-teachers in CSSs and those in CDSSs. Head-teachers' explanations revealed that all head-teachers in the selected CSS were P5, the highest rank for civil servants deployed to secondary schools and all deputies were P7, the second highest rank for civil servants deployed to secondary schools. Thus, CSS head-teachers are being paid the highest salary among all secondary school employees corresponding with their grade and post as one CSS expressed;

"I am P5 on the government scale. I am now a 'real' head-teacher not acting head-teacher. Attending this grade on government scale is a motivating factor in the teaching profession because you get some tangible reward, in terms of improved salary, for your hard work. It is unlike when I began as acting head-teacher at a rural CDSS. Amwene, bola pano (My brother, it is better now)" (Head-teacher E1).

In contrast, CDSS head-teachers' explanations revealed that CDSS head-teachers are predominantly deployed on acting capacity and are on lower grades; J, I, and P 8 and receive lower salaries not corresponding to the huge work set before them. One CDSS head-teacher said;

"I am on grade TI on the government scale and I am only an acting head-teacher. In terms of salary, this grade does not reward me corresponding to the huge work I have to do. To tell you the truth, tikungogwira ntchitoyi ngati maitanidwe basi koma kunkhani ya malipiro ndiye palibe zambiri zomwe tingakambe (we are only working as a vocation but in terms of salary, there is not much to say)" (Head-teacher F1).

Thus, most CDSS head-teachers do not receive a salary corresponding to ‘real’ head-teachers on government scale.

Secondly, regarding physical environment of the schools, head-teachers’ explanations and the researchers’ observations revealed contrasting levels in terms of housing and work environment for head-teachers in CSSs and head-teachers in CDSSs. Concerning housing, it has already been stated that unlike their CDSS counterparts, most CSS head-teachers expressed satisfaction with their houses. Most CDSS head-teachers complained of poor provision of accommodation for both teachers and the head-teacher. It was observed that all CDSS head-teacher’s houses had no servant quarters and were below the quality of CSS head-teacher’s houses. Most CSS head-teachers said they found work less challenging at their duty stations because they work in good infrastructure with adequate provision of office equipment. All the 4 sampled CSSs had spacious and well-furnished head-teacher’s offices with excellent office tables and chairs, shelves for all the school files, and lockable drawers for the custody of very sensitive information. All head-teacher’s offices had a refrigerator. All the sampled CSSs have offices for deputy head-teacher’s, heads of department and the bursar.

This is unlike the situation in CDSSs as most head-teachers explained that they found work much challenging due to poor infrastructure and poor office equipment. Most of the CDSSs had tiny and poorly furnished head-teacher’s offices with basic tables and chairs, a few shelves not enough for all the school files, and no lockable drawers to keep very sensitive information. Most head-teacher’s offices had no refrigerator. Most CDSSs have no offices for deputy head-teachers, heads of department and the bursar.

The quotation from one CSS head-teacher summarises the sentiments of most head-teachers in both CDSSs and CSSs as he said;

“I have headed both CDSSs and CSSs. Heading a CDSS can really be terrible. When you head a CSS is when you appreciate to be in the civil service. Apart from my improved salary corresponding to my P5 rank, deployment to a CSS is motivating because you stay in a good house and work in a good office with lots of privileges. You can even appreciate the grandeur of my house and office. You can’t compare with the situation in CDSSs” (Head-teacher G1).

Thus, from the context of *Educational Equity Theory*, while head-teachers deployed to CSSs are relatively motivated, head-teachers deployed to CDSSs are unmotivated. Now, section 2.4 has presented findings by Han and Yin (2016) and Cebeci & Çağanağa, (2019) which show that motivating head-teachers has an influence on students’ academic performance. These scholars show that, given the complex task of school headship, having a highly motivated head-teacher leads to better students’ academic performance, while having a less motivated head-teacher leads to poor students’ academic performance. It can also be successfully argued that the good student performance in CSSs is partially a result of having motivated head-teachers while the poor student performance in CDSSs is partially a result of having less motivated head-teachers.

In fact, the CDSS situation is paradoxical. In general, Wamba (2015) highlights that head-teachers have a huge workload to ensure good quality education at a particular school and this is true for CDSS head-teachers. With less and often poor resources,

the head-teacher has to look for ways for a CDSS to offer relatively good quality education. However, when it comes to reward for their work, most head-teachers in CDSSs are paid less than their counterparts in CSSs since most of them are deployed on acting capacity as one CDSS head-teacher said;

“We are assigned huge work but get little in return. My salary is little as I am only Grade TI. I have to rent a house at the trading centre you have passed by when coming here where most of my teachers also rent houses. There is no proper office and I have to make provisions. Many sacrifices have to be made but there is no source of motivation to accomplish this huge work of improving student achievement. My only hope is that one day I will be sent to a CSS where our friends in CSSs are enjoying life”
(Head-teacher H1).

Work commitment (passion and dedication) of teachers and head-teachers deployed to CDSSs and CSSs. Concerning teachers’ work commitment, data was collected for a three-week period pertaining to two main roles of teachers which are teaching and assessing student’s progress. This data was collected from 4 schools from each school category and from 1 stream of a form three class at each school. One stream from each of the four schools was used to equalise the number of periods to be taught and exercises to be given per week. Form three class was chosen because the class does not write any national exam at the end of the year and so teachers’ work commitment can genuinely be manifested when there are no fears of student failure in national exams at the end of the year.

Firstly, for a period of three weeks, data was collected for 9 subjects to find class periods which the teacher taught the class (either within prescribed time or as make up lessons) and those he/she did not. A total of 516 periods were supposed to be taught in the 4 selected schools of each category. Thus, 172 periods per week were supposed to be taught from each school category according to the required subject matrix of; Agriculture (4), biology (4), chemistry (4), Chichewa (5), English (7) Geography (4), History (4), Mathematics (7) and Physics (4). Secondly, for a period of three weeks again, data was collected on two subjects; English and Mathematics, to find how often students were assessed, given feedback, and where necessary remedial lessons were offered. Mathematics and English were chosen because they require the most frequent assessments at school. A minimum of 120 exercises were expected to be given in the 4 schools of each school category. Thus, 36 exercises per week were supposed to be given from each school category according to a minimum requirement of 4 exercises per week in each of the two subjects. Table 4a shows teachers' work commitment in the sampled CDSSs and CSSs.

TABLE 4a: Teachers' work commitment in the selected CDSSs and CSSs.

Teachers' commitment to duty		School category			
		CSS (N = 4)		CDSS (N = 4)	
1	Class periods in the 3 weeks of study	No	%	No	%
	Classes taught within prescribed time	438	84.9	411	79.7
	Classes taught as make-up lessons	69	13.4	27	5.2
	Classes never taught	9	1.7	78	15.1
	Total	516	100	516	100
		CSS (N = 4)		CDSS (N = 4)	

2	Assessment in the 3 weeks of study.	No	%	No	%
	Required minimum number of exercises	96		96	
	Exercises given after lessons	90	93.75	72	75.0
	Feedback given after exercises	81	90	59	81.9
	Remedial lessons given after exercises	31		20	

The findings in Table 4a above show that there was more teaching and assessment in CSSs than CDSSs during the three-week period of the study. With regard to teaching, the table shows that during the three-week period of study in the 4 selected CSSs, 84.9% of the periods were taught within prescribed time, 13.4% were taught as make-up lessons. Thus, 98.3% of the class periods were actually taught and only 1.7% were never taught. In contrast, during the three-week period of study in the selected CDSSs, 79.7% of the periods were taught within prescribed time, 5.2% were taught as make-up lessons. Thus, 84.9% of the class periods were actually taught and 15.1% were never taught. With regard to assessment in Mathematics and English subjects, the table shows that, on the one hand, during the three-week period of study in the selected CSSs, 93.75% of the required exercises were given, 90% of the exercises given received feedback and 31 remedial lessons were offered. On the other hand, during the three-week period of study in the selected CDSSs, 75% of the required exercises were given, 81.9% of the exercises given received feedback and 20 remedial lessons were offered.

With regard to head-teachers' work commitment, data was collected from 96 teachers showing their agreement or disagreement on the following indicators about their head-teachers: having vision for the school; supervision, monitoring, and evaluation

of curriculum and instructional program; monitoring students' learning time and acquiring vital resources for the school; and encouraging and supporting teachers' professional development. For the sake of trustworthiness, this data was corroborated with qualitative data from head-teachers and school documents. Table 4b below shows head-teacher's work commitment along the above mentioned indicators in the sampled CDSSs and CSSs.

TABLE 4b: head-teachers' work commitment in the selected CDSSs and CSSs.

a. Head-teacher has a clear vision for the school: Mark one response only						
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree	Agree	Total
CSS	3 (3.1%)	5 (5.2%)	13 (13.6%)	16 (16.6%)	59 (61.5%)	96
CDSS	14 (14.5%)	57 (59.3%)	18 (18.7%)	1 (1%)	6 (6.3%)	96
b. Head-teacher supervises, monitors, and evaluates the curriculum and instructional program: Mark one response only.						
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree	Agree	
CSS	5 (5.2%)	4 (4.2%)	14 (14.5%)	15 (15.6%)	58 (60.4%)	96
CDSS	19 (19.8%)	55 (57.3%)	14 (14.6%)	2 (2%)	6 (6.3%)	96
c. Our head-teacher monitors students' learning time and acquires vital resources for the school: Mark one response only.						
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree	Agree	

CSS	3 (3.1%)	5 (5.2%)	13 (13.6%)	16 (16.6%)	59 (61.5%)	96
CDSS	14 (14.5%)	58 (60.4%)	19 (19.8%)	1 (1%)	4 (4.2%)	96
d. Our head-teacher encourages and supports teachers' professional development:						
Mark one response only						
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree	Agree	
CSS	4 (4.2%)	5 (5.2%)	15 (15.6%)	12 (12.5%)	60 (62.5%)	96
CDSS	15 (15.6%)	56 (58.3%)	16 (16.6%)	4 (4.2%)	5 (5.2%)	96

The findings in Table 4b above show that there was more fulfilment of work requirements by head-teachers in CSSs than CDSSs during the three-week period of the study. The table shows that 78.1% of teachers perceived their head-teachers as having a clear vision. This was also corroborated with the presence of written visions on the boards in the head-teacher's offices and staffrooms. Similarly, the table shows that 76% of teachers saw their head-teachers frequently supervising, monitoring and evaluating the curriculum and instructional program and there were written documents to this testimony. Regarding monitoring students' learning time and acquiring vital resources for the school, 78.1% of the teachers answered in the affirmative and school files corroborated the responses. With regard to encouraging and supporting teachers' professional development, the table shows that 73% of teachers were in agreement and school documents also corroborated the findings.

On the other hand, the table shows that 73.8% of teachers perceived their head-teachers as not having a clear vision. This was also corroborated by the lack of written visions on the boards in the head-teacher's offices and staffrooms. The table further

shows that 77.1% of teachers saw their head-teachers as not often supervising, monitoring and evaluating the curriculum and instructional program. During the second data collection phase, documents were scarcely available to show whether head-teachers supervised, monitored and evaluated the curriculum and instructional program. As regards to monitoring students' learning time and acquiring vital resources for the school, 74.9% of the teachers were in disagreement, and lack of written documents corroborated teachers' perceptions. Concerning encouraging and supporting teachers' professional development, the table shows that 73.9% of teachers disagreed and similarly lack of written documents confirmed the findings.

The differences revealed by the findings in Tables 4a and 4b above, can be interpreted from two perspectives. Firstly, these findings might mean that teachers and head-teachers in CDSSs have less commitment to duty than their counterparts in CSSs. Secondly, they could be attributed to difference in context between the two types of schools. CSS offer boarding facilities to all students, hence a big chance of teachers organising make-up lessons for missed classes even in the evening during prep. In this vein, one teacher said; *"since the students stay at the school hostels here and I also stay here I usually have make-up lessons and remedial lessons in the evening"* (Teacher S1).

On the other hand, CDSS students commute long distances between home and school, and worse still, teachers do not stay within the school, thereby making possibilities of make-up lessons and remedial lessons nearly impossible. In this vein, one teacher said;

"In my case I try to organize make-up lessons and remedial lessons in the morning from 6 o'clock before the normal classes begin. But it is not easy

because I stay far away from the school and the students also stay far away from the school. Most students do not meet the starting agreed time and sometimes I get discouraged” (Teacher T1).

Some CDSS head-teachers who were not staying within the school could find it harder too to fulfil their work requirements. However, this scenario shows that CDSS teachers and head-teachers require a greater sense of commitment to fulfil their work requirements than is the case with CSS teachers.

One may ask whether the implementation of teacher deployment is conducted in such a way to enhance teacher and head-teacher commitment in both CSSs and CDSSs, and especially in CDSSs. Considering that the above scenario displays workplace deviance, Ivancevich et al., (2014) significantly established a positive relationship between employee dissatisfaction due to perceptions of unfair treatment and workplace deviance. They suggested that discontented employees are more likely to misbehave than satisfied employees. The present research found that most teachers and head-teachers in CSSs expressed feelings of satisfaction with their deployment to the duty station and considered it a fair treatment.

For example, one qualified and experienced teacher at one CSS said, *“I was happy with my posting to this school. You know, I am a hard worker, well qualified and experienced in this profession. I only deserve to be posted at a good school such as this” (Teacher U1).* Similar sentiments were expressed by head-teachers in CSSs as one head-teacher also said, *“you see, my brother, the principles of science apply in the civil service. ‘The higher you go, the cooler it becomes’. I am on rank P5 on the government scale. As such, I must work at a good school like this one and with considerable privileges as you can see” (Head-teacher I1).* Since there is a positive

relationship between employee satisfaction and employee's work commitment, as Ivancevich et al., (2014) pointed out, it is not surprising that cases of workplace deviance were minimal in CSSs.

On the other hand, most teachers and head-teachers in CDSSs expressed dissatisfaction with their deployment at their duty station and considered it unfair treatment for mainly two reasons. Firstly, some teachers (both new and old) considered the deployment to a rural CDSSs to be, in some instances, targeted as those without connections. For example, one newly recruited teacher said,

“With all the hardships at this school I tried to ask for deployment to a better school but I was told that my deployment to this rural CDSS was final. However, some of my fellow new recruits who are well-connected, managed to negotiate and were redeployed to better schools, often CSSs. I am not happy” (Teacher V1).

A similar situation was reported by teachers who have been in the system for some years. One of them said:

“Sir, I understand that we cannot all work in CSSs at the same time. But I am very displeased with what our bwanas [bosses] are doing. They are transferring well-connected teachers like [names withheld] from one CSS to another CSS while we, the un-connected ones, get transferred from one rural CDSS to another rural CDSS” (Teacher X1).

In agreement with the claims above, MoEST (2019) admits that the deployment policy does not clearly stipulate how long a teacher can serve in rural CDSSs and

CSSs during his teaching career. It is possible for a teacher to spend the whole of his teaching career in rural CDSSs and another teacher in CSSs.

Secondly, some teachers and even head-teachers in CDSSs considered deployment to rural CDSSs as being a way of punishing deviant personnel in some instance. One of the teachers said:

“During staff meetings, I used to ask the head-teacher at my previous school to explain how money was being spent at the school. A friend told me that the head-teacher was not happy with that and had reported to the authorities at the division that I was a troublemaker and had even asked them to transfer me to a very remote CDSS as a way of punishing me. Two months later, without the authorities hearing my side of the story, I was posted to this rural CDSS” (Teacher Y1).

Some head-teachers and deputy head-teachers also reported that they were deployed to rural CDSSs after some cases of misconduct were reported against them in their previous schools. For example, one teacher smilingly said;

“Of course, I used to come for work at my former school while drunk. But I was teaching bhobho (well). Ndiye atitumiza kumuzi kuno kuti tikhaule and mwinanso kuti titalikire malo abwino omwera (so they have sent me to this rural school as a punishment and perhaps in order to be far away from good drinking joints)” (Teacher Z1).

Thus, some teachers and head-teachers actually confessed to have improperly conducted themselves in their former schools and with or without hearing, they were

subsequently deployed to rural CDSSs, which was perceived as a way of punishing them.

The possibility of using deployment to rural CDSSs as punishment to deviant teachers and head-teachers, is appreciated upon analysing the disciplinary procedures in the civil service. With reference to the typology of staff indiscipline and how each type of misconduct is practically handled, Saundry, Jones and Antcliff (2011) and Salin (2008), have argued that absenteeism and poor employee performance are minor forms of indiscipline. As such, they are normally resolved informally, without entering the formal disciplinary case handling process. In this line, as MoEST (2019) also shows, deployment to rural schools, has been used as an informal way of dealing with teacher and administrator absenteeism and poor performance.

On this, one teacher at one national secondary school said; *“the education coordinator often threatens us, even during PTA meeting, that if we misbehave, he (the education coordinator) will tell our authorities to post us to rural CDSSs”* (Teacher A2). In corroboration, one well-connected head-teacher confessed having asked higher authorities to deploy some misbehaving teachers away from his school to rural CDSSs as a way of punishing them. He said;

“You see, there are these teachers ... (names withheld). They used to misbehave here and were really insubordinate. I asked the authorities to punish them by sending them to rural CDSSs where they are now. It was a lesson to the remaining teachers and I also warn them that if they perform below expectation, they will be sent to Liphio CDSS” (one of the remotest CDSSs in SHED)” (Head-teacher J1).

The foregoing situation has two implications. Firstly, it means that CDSSs are predominantly working places for teachers and administrators without connections. This creates a perception of unfair treatment among teachers and administrators thereby lowering their motivation. This explains, in one way, the low level of teachers' and administrator's work commitment in the selected CDSSs confirming the view that there is a positive relationship between employee dissatisfaction and employee deviance. This confirms the idea that perceptions of unfair treatment can contribute to workplace deviance (Ivancevich et al., 2014).

Secondly, the findings indicate that CDSSs are being used, in some instances, as penitentiaries and perhaps reformatories for unprofessional and undisciplined qualified teachers and administrators. If reform ever happens, then the CDSS students gain. However, if the reformation never happens, then the CDSS students suffer the consequences. In fact, many teachers in these rural CDSSs reported 'burnout' as one newly recruited teacher said; *"boss, our bwanas (bosses) favour their friends and relatives. There is no reason for working to impress. In my case, I just do the bare minimum to stay on the job while looking for a more rewarding job in town"* (Teacher B2).

A similar sentiment was expressed by an experienced teacher at another rural CDSS as he said; *"of course, having spent a lot of years on this job, I cannot just quit. I will continue doing the bare minimum while waiting for retirement to access my pension funds"* (Teacher C2). This means that some teachers in CDSSs have given up any efforts of working to impress and have resorted to doing the minimum work just to stay on the job until they get a more rewarding job or until retirement to access pension funds, as Nkhokwe et al. (2017) also points out. This explains, in another

way, the low level of teachers' and head-teachers' work commitment in the selected CDSSs.

All in all, from the angle of *Educational Equity Theory*, this means that while most teachers and head-teachers in CSSs are satisfied with their deployment to their schools and hence are committed to meet their work requirements, most teachers and head-teachers in CDSSs consider their deployment to their schools unfair and hence are less committed to meet their work requirements. Now, in section 2.4., this study has cited scholars such as: Sagor and Cox (2013); Siegle, Rubenstein and Mitchell (2014); Cochran-Smith and Villegas (2015); Altun (2017); Marzano (2017); and Stronger (2018) who show a positive connection between teacher's work commitment and student achievement. In the same 2.4 section, theoretical arguments by Darling-Hammond et al. (2007); Wallace Foundation (2007); and EdSource (2008) show the link between head-teachers' commitment to duty and student performance. Furthermore, empirical research by Mwangi (2011) and Chepkuto, Sang and Chumba (2018) have shown that, having committed head-teachers lead to better students' performance, while having less committed head-teachers lead to poor students' performance, academically.

Against this backdrop, although most teachers in CDSSs are qualified and the head-teacher may also be qualified, less work commitment is leading to poor student performance in the schools. The opposite is also true in that, in CSSs, more work commitment is leading to better students' performance in the schools. In pursuit of provision of good quality education, obviously solely deploying qualified teachers to schools, is not enough. Deployment of teachers and administrators to schools ought to be done in such a way that it enhances teacher's or administrator's commitment to

duty in all schools, especially in CDSSs. This is, as one teacher lamented; “*we are also human beings with feelings, the manner of our deployment also affects us and ultimately affects our work commitment*” (Teacher D2).

4.2. Effect of the working of teacher deployment policy on bridging the gap between the rich and the poor.

The previous section has analysed the working of teacher deployment policy along the lines of *Educational Equity Theory* with regard to the provision of educational equity in selected CDSSs and CSSs in SHED. This has been based on four key teacher/head-teacher characteristics that affect student performance. The analysis has shown that CSSs receive qualified, experienced, motivated and committed teachers and administrators while CDSSs receive teachers and head-teachers with generally less qualifications, experience, motivation and commitment. Consequently, CSS students are getting high quality education while CDSS students get less quality education. Thus, the analysis shows that the performance of teacher deployment is biased in favour of CSSs and thus falling short of providing education equity between CSSs and CDSSs. This section operates along the lens of *Social Reproduction Theory* to present an analysis of the effect that the performance of teacher deployment policy may have on bridging the gap between the rich and the poor.

In the first place, this analysis must be understood from the context of different socio-economic statuses of students in CSSs and CDSSs. Section 1.1 and 1.2 have presented arguments by MacJessie-Mbewe and Kholowa (2010) who found CSSs to be schools for the rich while rural CDSSs were schools for the poor. In this vein, a more recent study by Altiyelken and Hoeksman (2021) highlights the fact that CSSs and rural

CDSSs were persistently schools for the rich and schools for the poor respectively. More significantly, in section 4.1 with regard to the role of PTAs in school development, the present study shows different socio-economic statuses of students in CSSs and CDSSs. On the one hand, due to their high socio-economic status, parents of children in CSSs are able to contribute significant amounts into PTA fund for school improvement programs while, due to their low socio-economic status, parents of children in CDSSs contribute very little into PTA fund for school improvement programs. This confirms that CSSs continue to be schools for the rich while CDSSs continue to be schools for the poor.

Further, the analysis must be understood from the context that the education system in Malawi is highly competitive. MacJessie-Mbewe and Kholowa (2010: 70) point out that “not all students who pass the Malawi School Certificate of Education Examinations (MSCE), go to university but only those who pass very highly. The selection is based on merit and not on what type of secondary school one attended”. Galafa (2019) shows that this situation has not significantly improved. Access to higher education continues to be very critical in Malawi. Access to the public universities is very limited due to space availability. Thus, it is only the best performing students that find their way into public universities.

Now, the two contexts must be seen against continuing poor performance of CDSS students and good performance of CSS students, as seen in section 1.2, which is partly due to the performance of the deployment policy as discussed in section 4.1 above. Consequently, as SHED (2022) shows, CDSSs continue to send a small number of students to university because only a small number of CDSS students pass well

national examinations. While this is the case, CSSs continue to send the majority of students to university because the majority of those that pass national examinations well are those from CSSs. Since CSSs remain schools for the rich and CDSSs continue to be schools for the poor, as Altinyelken and Hoeksman (2021) just like section 4.1 of this study points out, this means that children of the rich continue to get university education in majority, while a negligible number of poor children are making it to university.

In this scenario, MacJessie-Mbewe and Kholowa (2010: 72) lament that the quality education divide between CSSs and CDSSs is so serious that it affects pupils' socio-economic status. The two authors argue that consequently, more children from high socio-economic status families who learn in CSSs have more chances of entering university and successfully graduate to occupy high status jobs just like their parents. In contrast, most children from low socio-economic families who learn in CDSSs fail to access university education and therefore drop out and occupy low status jobs like their parents. More importantly for this study, MacJessie-Mbewe and Kholowa (2010: 70) add that "consequently, children from poor families will remain poor like their parents and the children of the rich will remain rich like their parents".

However, the present study reveals that this scenario may even point to a more worrisome situation. According to the Global Education Monitoring Report (2016), since 1990, the global employment share of high-skilled workers grew by almost 40% and work is increasingly polarized between high- and low-skilled jobs, as advanced automation puts low- and medium-skilled jobs at risk. It is argued that the coming of automation puts many of the world's low-skilled jobs in danger, a situation which

might result in technology-induced unemployment. Thus, demand for high-skilled labour is steadily increasing while many low- and medium-skilled jobs become obsolete and it is estimated that half of the world's jobs are expected to disappear due to automation by 2030 (World Bank, 2018).

Thus, the present study reveals that the present scenario actually means that children of the rich, with university degrees, have a higher chance of getting even more lucrative jobs than those their parents did, while the children of the poor, without university education, have lower chances of getting even the low and medium skilled jobs that their poor parents did. Consequently, children of the rich have higher chances of not only becoming rich like their parents, but are actually becoming richer than their parents and children of the poor have higher chances of not just becoming poor like their parents but are actually becoming poorer than their parents. Ultimately, this could in a way explain the widening gap between the rich and the poor in Malawi, as described in Section 2. 1., and as one CDSS teacher lamented;

“Year after year, children of the rich in CSSs and private secondary schools are doing far much better than children of the poor in our CDSSs. With this, how can we expect to reduce poverty? The children of the rich will continue to get richer while children get poorer” (Teacher E2).

Thus, during the time of the research, the implementation of the deployment policy, at least in SHED, was partially contributing to the widening gap between the rich and the poor in Malawi. This is contrary to the spirit of “not leaving anyone behind” as NESIP 2020-2030 advances (MoE, 2020). Thus, to go back to our statement of the problem, more needs to be done concerning teacher deployment to make Malawi’s

education system an instrument for fighting inequality to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. In the spirit of not leaving anyone behind, there is need to equalise qualifications, experience, motivation and commitment of teachers and head-teachers in public schools.

In some instances, this will merely require mind-set change on the way deployment officers view CSSs and CDSSs. In other instances, it will require increased investment in the education sector, a requirement that is not easy to achieve as it is often argued that financial resources would not permit (MoEST, 2018). To some extent, this holds, but to a greater extent, the issue of corruption and misuse of resources is doing greater damage to the education sector. For example, in August 2006 the ACB investigated, prosecuted and managed to get convictions for four suspects involved in a MoEST financial scam in which about MK 187 million (US\$1.32 million) went missing through dubious contract tender awards (Banda, 2010).

During the last decade, perhaps the greatest abuse of public money was “cash-gate” which occurred in 2013 which allowed for the funnelling of around US\$250 million from government coffers into private bank accounts. This scandal led Malawi’s development partners to withhold US\$150 million in budgetary support (McCormick 2014). Malawi is, generally, regarded as a highly corrupt country. Sabola (2019, p. 3) reports that the chief secretary to the Office of the President and Cabinet acknowledged that corruption in the civil service in Malawi is institutionalized. Similarly, the National Crimes Agency (NCA) in UK arrested Zuneth Sattar who is alleged to have indulged in corrupt practices with senior Malawi government officials

from 2019 to 2021 (Nhlane, 2022). All these examples show failure by government to correctly use resources to alleviate the country's problems like those prevalent in the education sector. Proper use of the little resources available would have helped to improve the poor conditions of some CDSSs to which the poor child goes.

In conclusion, this section has argued that the current implementation of the deployment policy, at least in SHED, is ultimately contributing to the widening gap between the rich and the poor in Malawi. To close the gap between the rich and the poor, there is need for poor children to access good quality education so as to successfully compete with the privileged children of the rich. The poor child also needs to learn in schools led by qualified, experienced, motivated and committed head-teachers and taught by well qualified, experienced, motivated and committed teachers. A poor child's education must be treated with all seriousness just like the education of a rich child. It is in the spirit of equity for any meaningful government to give preferential treatment to the poor, to help the poor child to get quality education, improve his/her academic performance, attain higher qualifications and access the lucrative high-skilled jobs. It is only when this is done, that education, in Malawi, will actually achieve its role of bridging the gap between the rich and the poor.

4.3 Chapter summary

In summary, this chapter has presented and discussed findings on how teacher deployment policy is working with regard to the provision of equitable quality secondary school education in an effort to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. This has been done in two sections. The first section has analysed how teacher deployment in SHED is working and the findings show that the implementation of teacher deployment is biased against CDSS and it favours CSSs with regard to the

four teacher/head-teacher qualities that significantly affect student achievement. The second section has analysed how the working of teacher deployment policy in SHED affects the gap between the rich and the poor. The analysis has shown that the working of teacher deployment policy, at least in SHED, is partially contributing to the widening gap between the rich and the poor in Malawi.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY.

The present study sought to establish how Malawi's secondary school teacher deployment policy is working in relation to providing equal access to quality secondary school education for both the rich and the poor with the aim of bridging the gap between the rich and the poor. To do this, the study was guided by the following five sub-questions. **(i).** What is Malawi's socio-economic status? **(ii).** What is the role of education in bridging the gap between the rich and the poor? **(iii).** What are the critical factors necessary for the implementation of the deployment policy to offer quality education in both CDSSs and CSSs? **(iv).** How is the teacher deployment policy performing in allocating teachers in both CDSSs and CSSs? **(v).** What is the effect of the performance of teacher deployment policy on bridging the gap between the rich and the poor?

This investigation was guided by a theoretical framework comprising *Education Equity Theory* and *Social Reproduction Theory*. Along the lens of *Educational Equity Theory*, this study analysed how the teacher deployment policy is performing in selected CDSSs and CSSs in SHED with regard to provision of educational equity. The analysis has shown that CSSs receive qualified, motivated, committed and experienced teachers and administrators while CDSSs receive teachers and head-teachers with generally less qualifications, motivation, commitment and experience.

Consequently, CSS students are getting high quality education while CDSS students get less quality education. Thus, the analysis shows the teacher deployment to be biased in favour of CSSs and thus falling short of providing education equity between CSSs and CDSSs.

Along the lens of *Social Reproduction Theory* this study analysed the effect that the performance of teacher deployment policy has on bridging the gap between the rich and the poor. The study finds that due to lack of educational equity between CSSs and CDSSs, CSS students perform well in national examinations due to high quality education they get while CDSS students do poorly in national examinations due to the poor quality education they get. Since CSSs are schools for the rich, the majority of rich children go on to get university degrees, get lucrative jobs and become even richer than their parents. In contrast, since CDSSs are schools for the poor, the majority of poor children fail to get college qualifications, fail to find jobs and become even poorer than their parents. Hence, the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen. The study concludes that the working of the teacher deployment policy, at least in SHED, is contributing to the widening gap between the rich and the poor in Malawi. More needs to be done concerning teacher deployment in order to make Malawi's education system an instrument for fighting inequality to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor.

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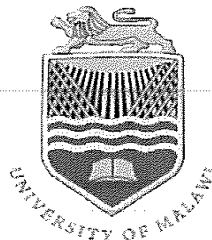
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APPENDICES.

Appendix 1: UNIMAREC APPROVAL AND PERMIT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



VICE-CHANCELLOR
Prof. Samson Sajidu, BSc Mlw, MPhil Cantab, PhD Mlw

Our Ref: P. 09/22/184

Your Ref:

CHANCELLOR COLLEGE
P.O. Box 280, Zomba, Malawi

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

21st October 2022

Mr Emmanuel Taulo
Department of Education Foundation
University of Malawi
P.O. Box 280
Zomba

Email: Emmanuel.taulo@yahoo.com

Dear Mr Taulo

RESEARCH ETHICS AND REGULATORY APPROVAL AND PERMIT FOR PROTOCOL NO. P.09/22/184. THE ROLE OF TEACHER DEPLOYMENT POLICY IN BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THE RICH AND THE POOR: THE CASE OF SELECTED CONVENTIONAL AND COMMUNITY DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE SHIRE HIGHLANDS EDUCATION DIVISION (SHED)

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

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

Once the study is finalized, you are required to furnish the Committee and the Vice Chancellor with a final report of the study. The committee reserves the right to carry out a compliance inspection of this approved protocol at any time as may be deemed by it. As such, you are expected to properly maintain all study documents including consent forms.

UNIMAREC wishes you a successful implementation of your study.

Yours Sincerely,



Prof Alister C. Munthali

CHAIRPERSON OF UNIMAREC



CC: Vice Chancellor
Acting Registrar
Acting Director of Finance and Investments
Dean of Research
Chairperson UNIMAREC
UNIMAREC Compliance Officer

**Appendix 2: SHED APPROVAL AND PERMIT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH
IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN THE DIVISION**

Telephone: +265 01 466 400

Fax: +265 01 466 379

Cell: +265 999 345 868/ +265 881 388 349

Email: evemjima@gmail.com/edmsshed@gmail.com

Communication should be addressed to:
The Education Division Manager



in reply quote
Ministry of Education
Shire Highlands Education Division
P/Bag 7
MULANJE
MALAWI

26th October, 2022

**THE HEAD TEACHERS
SHED SCHOOLS**

**PERMISSION TO ALLOW EMMANUEL FRANCISCO TAULO TO
COLLECT DATA FOR A MASTERS THESIS IN EDUCATION POLICY,
PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP.**

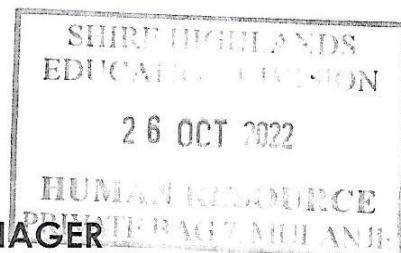
Mr. **Emmanuel Francisco Taulo** is a student in the department of Education Foundation at Chancellor College, University of Malawi .

Mr. Emmanuel Francisco Taulo is working on his thesis and would like to collect data at your institution as part of his studies.

He has been permitted to carry out the exercise in some selected schools of the Division.

May you please give him all the support as he carries out this exercise. Note that the results will **strictly** be used for academic purposes.

C. Khwepeya
For: EDUCATION DIVISION MANAGER



Appendix 3: PARTICIPANTS' INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESEARCH



Title of Research: Analysing the working of teacher deployment policy in bridging the gap between the rich and the poor: The case of selected conventional and community day secondary schools in the Shire Highlands Education Division of Malawi.

University of Malawi Research Ethics Committee's information:

Name: Prof. Alister Munthali.
Status: UNIMAREC Chairperson.
Contacts: Email. amunthali@unima.ac.mw
Cell. +265 888 822 004

Supervisors' information:

1. Name: Dr Chikumbutso Manthalu
Status: Main Supervisor.
Contact: Email. cmanthalu@unima.ac.mw
Cell. 0888 594 508

2. Name: Dr Peter Namphande.
Status: Co-supervisor.
Contact: Email. pnamphande@unima.ac.mw
Cell. 0995 363 224

Researcher information:

Name: Emmanuel Francisco Taulo.



Contacts: Email emmanuel.taulo@yahoo.com

Cell. 0999 661 298

1. Introduction and Purpose of the Study: The research study investigates the performance of teacher deployment policy in providing equal education opportunities in Malawi's secondary schools with the aim of bridging the gap between the rich and the poor. This is in partial fulfilment of the Master of Education degree in Policy, Planning and Leadership.

2. Description of the Research: Data collection in the study will be in two phases. The first phase will involve collection of quantitative data and participants will be required to fill one questionnaire and/or provide documents having quantitative data. The second phase will involve collection of qualitative data and participants will be required to answer structured interview questions. Participation in the study entails being engaged in one or both phases.

3. Required Participant's characteristics: Participants must be associated with ministry of education secondary schools in anyone of the following ways; (i) Teacher deploying officer, (ii) School administrator in a selected secondary school, (iii) School teacher in the selected secondary school, and (iv) Form three class monitor/monitress in the selected secondary school.

4. Potential Risks and Discomforts: There are "no known potential risks" by participating in this study apart from the risk of spreading Covid 19. Hence, the researcher and the participants will need to put on masks, sanitize and observe a 2-metre distance during the study. Further, before engaging the participants, any foreseeable adversities will have to be rectified. Unforeseeable adversities arising during engagement with participants will cause the engagement to be stopped until the adversity is arrested.



5. Potential Benefits: By participating in this study you will contribute to the improvements in the way teacher deployment policy works. Thus, participants will benefit indirectly.

6. Confidentiality: All information taken from the study will be coded to protect each subject's name. No names or other identifying information will be used when discussing or reporting data. Direct quotes from interviews will be given code names. The investigator(s) will safely keep all files and data collected in a secured locked cabinet of the researcher. A transcript of the participant's interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years from the date the university senate confirms the results of the thesis.

7. Compensation: Subjects will not be compensated for participation in this study.

8. Voluntary Participation and Authorization: Your decision to participate in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide not to participate in this study, the decision will not affect you in any way.

9. Withdrawal from the Study and/or Withdrawal of Authorization: If you decide to participate in this study, you may withdraw from it at any time or you may refuse to answer any question without being subjected to any penalty. You can withdraw permission to use data submitted to me within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

10. Cost: There is no cost for participating in this study.

11. Access to the information provided: If you participate in this study you will be entitled to access the information you provide at any time while it is in storage as specified above.



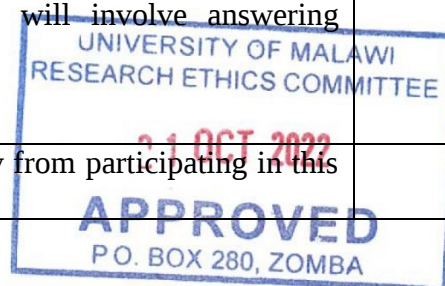
12. Right to seek clarifications: If you decide to participate in the study you will be free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.



Appendix 4:**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

Thesis Title: The role of teacher deployment policy in bridging the gap between the rich and the poor: The case of selected conventional and community day secondary schools in the Shire Highlands Education Division of Malawi.

No	Conditions for participation in the research	Consent (Tick)
1	I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.	
2	I understand that I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.	
3	I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data I submit within two weeks after time of actual participation, in which case the material will be deleted.	
4	I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	
5	I understand that participation involves answering questions in two phases. The first phase will involve filling a questionnaire on quantitative data and the second phase will involve answering structured interview questions.	
6	I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this	



	research.	
7	I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.	
8	I understand that in any report about the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.	
9	I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the master's thesis of the researcher.	
10	I understand that signed consent forms will be retained in a secured locked cabinet of the researcher until the university senate confirms the results of the thesis.	
11	I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years from the date the university senate confirms the results of the thesis.	
12	I understand that I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.	
13	I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.	

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Student researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____



WISHING YOU ALL THE BEST AS YOU CONSIDER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

**Appendix 5 (phase 1): HEAD-TEACHER/DEPUTY HEAD-TEACHER
QUESTIONNAIRE.**

SCHOOL NAME				
SCHOOL CATEGORY	CSS		CDSS	

1. What is your gender?	Male		Female	
2. What is your age?				

PART A: ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

3. What is the highest level of education?	Mark one response only			
Primary school teaching certificate				
General diploma				
General diploma plus University Certificate of Education (UCE)				
General degree				
General degree plus University Certificate of Education (UCE)				
Diploma in education				
Bachelor of education				
Master of education or Doctorate (specify)				
4. Apart from teaching qualifications, have you ever attended any administrative course?				
	Yes certificate	Yes, diploma	Yes, degree	No

Education-related leadership course				
General human resource management				
General administration				
5. Counting this school year, how many years have you been a school teacher?				
Part time	Full time	Total number of years		
6. Counting this school year, how many years have you been an administrator?				
As deputy head-teacher	As head-teacher	Total number of years		

PART B: WORK MOTIVATION

7. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.

a. I am happily working and work is not much challenging: Mark one response only				
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree	Agree

Date questionnaire was completed	Day	Month	Year

Signature: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

Appendix 6 (phase 1): TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE.

SCHOOL NAME				
SCHOOL CATEGORY	CSS		CDSS	

1. What is your gender?	Male		Female	
2. What is your age?				

PART A: ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

3. What is the highest level of education?	Mark one response only
Primary school teaching certificate	
General diploma	
General diploma plus University Certificate of Education (UCE)	
General degree	
General degree plus University Certificate of Education (UCE)	
Diploma in education	
Bachelor of education	
Master of education or Doctorate (specify)	

4. Do you teach this subject? (If yes, tick in the box next	Did you major or minor in the subject as part of your undergraduate or postgraduate	Number of years you have taught the subject
--	--	--

to the subject)		studies? Mark one on each row					
	Yes	Yes, major	Yes, minor	No	Part time	Full time	Total
Agriculture							
Biology							
Chemistry							
Chichewa							
English							
Geography							
History							
Mathematics							
Physics							

6. Counting this school year, how many years have you been a school teacher?		
Part time	Full time	Total number of years

PART B: WORK MOTIVATION

7. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.

a. I am happily working and work is not much challenging: Mark one response only				
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree	Agree

PART C: SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION

8. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.

a. Our head-teacher has a clear vision for the school: Mark one response only				
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree	Agree
b. Our head-teacher supervises, monitors, and evaluates the curriculum and instructional program: Mark one response only.				
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree	Agree
c. Our head-teacher monitors students' learning time and acquires vital resources for the school: Mark one response only.				
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree	Agree
d. Our head-teacher encourages and supports teachers' professional development: Mark one response only				
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree	Agree

Date questionnaire was completed	Day	Month	Year

Signature: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

Appendix 7 (Phase 2): CLASS MONITOR AND MONITRESS QUESTIONNAIRE.

SCHOOL NAME				
SCHOOL CATEGORY	CSS		CDSS	

1. Class / Form						
2. Number of participants	Monitor		Monitress		Total	

3. How much have you been taught in the past three weeks

Subject	Periods for 3 weeks	Periods learnt within prescribed time	Periods taught as make-up	Periods not taught
Agriculture				
Biology				
Chemistry				
Chichewa				
English				
Geography				
History				
Mathematics				
Physics				

4. How much have you been assessed in the past three weeks?

Subject	Exercises given in the past 3 weeks	Feedback given after exercises	Remedial lessons given after exercises
English			
Mathematics			

Date questionnaire was completed	Day	Month	Year

Signature: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

**Appendix 8 (phase 2): HEAD-TEACHER/DEPUTY HEAD-TEACHER
STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.**

SCHOOL NAME				
SCHOOL CATEGORY	CSS		CDSS	

1. What is your gender?	Male		Female	
2. What is your age?				

3. What is your present grade and for how long have you been on the present grade?			
Present grade		No of years on this grade	

4. Would you explain how your grade on the government scale is affecting your work as a school leader.

5. Would you explain how you felt when you received your posting to this school.

6. Would you explain how much easy or challenging it is to run this school.

7. Given your experience at this school, how would you explain your performance of the following activities;

(a). Giving a clear vision for the school.

(b). Supervising, monitoring, and evaluating curriculum and instructional program.

(c). Monitoring students' learning time and acquiring vital school resources.

(d). Encouraging and supporting teachers' professional development.

8. Are there documents in support of answers to questions 7a-7d?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

Appendix 9 (phase 2): TEACHER STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.

SCHOOL NAME				
SCHOOL CATEGORY	CSS		CDSS	

1. What is your gender?	Male		Female	
2. What is your age?				

3. What is your present grade and for how long have you been on the present grade?			
Present grade		Number of years on this grade	

4. Would you explain how your grade on the government scale is affecting your work as a school teacher.

5. Would you explain how you felt when you received your posting to this school.

6. Would you explain how much easy or challenging it is to teach at this school.

7. Given your experience at this school, how would you explain your performance of the following activities;

(a). Fulfilling your weekly teaching workload within prescribed time.

(b). Giving make-up lessons where lessons have been missed.

(c). Giving exercises to students after lessons (for English and Mathematics teachers).

(d). Giving feedback to students after exercises (for English and Mathematics teachers).

(e). Giving students remedial lessons after exercises (for English and Mathematics teachers).

8. Are there documents in support of answers to questions 7a-7e?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.



Varsity Research and Writing Services
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1/12/23

To Whom It May Concern

Dear Sir/Madam,

Proof of Thesis Copy Editing

This letter serves to certify that Emmanuel Francisco Taulo's thesis titled *The Working of Teacher Deployment Policy: Partially Contributing to the Widening Gap Between the Rich and the Poor in Malawi* has been edited by Dr Sydney Kankuzi of Varsity Research and Writing Services.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sydney Kankuzi

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Sydney Kankuzi', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Managing Consultant