



**THE ROLE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION ADVISORS IN PROMOTING
CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS-
POLICY VERSUS PRACTICE: THE CASE OF MACHINGA EDUCATION
DISTRICT.**

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

By

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DECLARATION

I the undersigned declare that an investigation of the role of Primary Education Advisors in continuous professional development of teachers: policy versus practice - the case of Machinga Education District is my original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Acknowledgements have been made where other people's work has been used.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my wife Patricia Lipenga and my mother Mama Elizabeth Andrea Likeke who supported me spiritually psychologically, and emotionally and our children Pius, Florence and Delphine who endured the father's absence throughout my study.

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Abstract

This qualitative study scrutinized the role of Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) in advancing the continuous professional development (CPD) of teachers in Machinga's Educational Zones. Enveloped within the interpretive paradigm, the research delved into the perceptions of teachers and PEAs concerning the latter's role in CPD, drawing comparisons with governmental policies. Contextual challenges impeding CPD implementation by PEAs were systematically explored. The study was guided by the systemic model of policy implementation by Van Meter and Van Horn. The study uncovered a discordance between PEAs' limited conceptualization of CPD and the more nuanced understanding held by teachers, headteachers, and the PEAs themselves. Additionally, CPD training by PEAs at the zone level was infrequent, and when conducted, teachers' involvement in the organisational process was minimal. The implementation of CPD policies by PEAs faced contextual challenges, including resource inadequacies, high workloads, the absence of PEAs' housing and purpose-built Teacher Development Centres (TDCs), and limited knowledge on CPD promotion. In response, the study proposes recommendations to bolster CPD program implementation, including organising trainings for PEAs, re-demarcating zones to alleviate PEAs' workloads, providing sufficient resources to advisory services, and initiating construction programs for TDCs and PEAs' housing. Furthermore, the study calls for a nationwide investigation encompassing PEAs, headteachers, and teachers from all education districts for a comprehensive understanding.

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Abbreviations

CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DQAS	Directorate of Quality Assurance Services
DTED	Department of Teacher Education and Development
EMIS	Education Management Information System
GoM	Government of Malawi
INSET	In-Service Education for Teachers
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NSTED	National Strategy for Teacher Education Development
PEA	Primary Education Advisors
PSLCE	Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education
SACMEQ	Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SIG	School Improvement Grant
TDC	Teacher Development Centre
UNIMAREC	University of Malawi Research Ethics Committee
ZIG	Zone Improvement Grant

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter is an introduction to the research study that investigated the role of PEAs in promoting continuous professional development of teachers at the school or zone level: policy versus practice in Machinga Education District. It presents the background information on continuous professional development, roles of primary education advisors, teacher development centres and an overview of policy and practice. It further presents the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the research questions and the outline of chapters.

1.2. Background of the study

The government of Malawi introduced the Free Primary Education (FPE) Policy in 1994. This policy brought so many challenges that included a critical shortage of teachers due to increased enrolment in primary schools. Immediately after the introduction of this FPE policy, there was an attempt to improve the management of the education system which saw districts being demarcated into educational zones (NSTED, 2007). The zones were declared to support the professional development of teachers. Each educational zone has a teacher development centre (TDC) and each TDC is managed by the Primary Education Advisor (PEA) (TDC Management Handbook, 2011). All this was done in recognizing the role of teachers in improving the quality of education which many countries globally thought of integrating teacher professional

development in their education reforms (UNESCO, 2003). TDCs in Malawi were, therefore, established as a strategy for professional development.

The role of Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) in continuous professional development is a crucial one in continuous professional learning. The study aimed to investigate the role of the PEAs in promoting the continuous professional development of teachers. From a policy perspective, PEAs are there to promote the teacher's continuous professional development which in turn improves teacher classroom practices and hence improves the quality of teaching and learning.

1.2.1 Continuous professional development

After teachers earn their formal qualifications in pre-service teacher education programs; they participate in ongoing in-service professional development programs throughout their careers. This ongoing professional development has different terminologies. Professional development is given different names in different institutions: lifelong education, staff development, in-service training, professional learning, continuing education and Continuing or Continuous Professional Development or CPD (Hayes, 2008; Mizell, 2010; Ashadi, 2010).

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is the term used to describe the learning activities professionals engage in to develop and enhance their abilities. AREB (2009:1) described CPD in the way that: 'continuous' refers to throughout the practitioner's life: 'professional' refers to maintaining the quality and relevance of professional service, and 'development' implies the progression in personal quality to the required knowledge and skill. Alexander (2009) defines CPD as a purposeful maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge, skill and personal qualities to perform professional activities throughout working life. A working

definition of CPD was given by Day (1999) that covers all behaviours which are intended to effect change in the classroom:

“Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school, which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purpose of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues throughout each phase of their teaching lives.” (Day, 1999:4)

This means that professional development covers all activities that cater to both the individual needs of teachers and the institutional needs of the whole school. Teachers in schools need to undergo CPD to improve their performance and learner achievement as it is the cornerstone of the teaching and learning process. That’s why Fullan (1991:123) wrote:

Continuous development of all teachers is the cornerstone for meaning, improvement and reform. Professional development and school development are inextricably linked.

In Malawi, Continuous Professional Development refers to the life-long process in teachers’ lives, which results in developing teachers’ professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, and aspirations, and a general understanding of their changing roles and tasks (National Strategy for Teacher Education Development (NSTED, 2007). It is an approach used by teachers, school leaders, and education professionals to ensure that throughout their careers as educators, they are participating in activities through which they gain knowledge and skills needed to improve their

job performance. In this study, CPD is conceptualized as an ongoing process that describes a wide range of learning activities that school professionals (teachers, headteachers, PEAs etc.) can engage in throughout their careers to increase their understanding, knowledge, skills, attitudes, expertise and professional integrity to keep up to date with new educational innovations and learning practices thereby improving their work performance.

Teacher lifelong learning, in the form of CPD, is increasingly regarded as an important means of contributing to the creation of more effective schools and as integral to learning organisations. The learning organisation may be defined as a place in which there is an infectious desire to learn, to build, to exchange good practice, to problem solve together, to question the most deeply held prejudices, to be open to change and new ideas, and to experiment and learn from mistakes (O'Brien & MacBeath, 1999:71). CPD for teachers, therefore, is the process by which teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purpose of teaching, and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues throughout each phase of their teaching lives. The professional development of these teachers is also likely to affect their attitudes and approaches and may, in the end, contribute to the improvement of the quality of the learning and teaching process (Day & Sachs, 2004:3).

CPD is widely acknowledged to be of great importance in the life of schools, contributing to professional and personal development for staff and to improvement in teaching and learning. The goals of CPD are, to enable workers to expand and fulfil their potential, to contribute to work-based and personal development to assess against competencies and organisational performance to develop activities that increase knowledge, experience and understanding, and to

improve performance by enabling lifelong learning (Day,1999). O’Sullivan (2011) points out the following reasons for schools to engage in CPD the need to keep abreast of new developments in terms of knowledge, skills and technology to ensure continuing competence in their current job, the need to enhance the teachers’ knowledge and skills to be able them to initiate and respond to changes in the working environment, to meet the additional roles that may be demanded of them and to develop the teacher’s personal and professional effectiveness as well as to increasing job satisfaction.

In addition, as argued by Mizell (2010) cited by Turner (2020:16), professional development in the educational field serves many purposes. It is not limited to improving student learning, helping to retain teachers, facilitating changes in classroom procedures, and supporting new teachers. Turner (2020) argues that professional development for teachers is a learning process that stretches throughout the career of an educator, providing opportunities and experiences that allow teachers to fine-tune their teaching to better meet the needs of the student. Professional development is the foundation that forms an individual’s professional identity; it is about much more than teaching. Professional development generates change, helps teachers become better teachers, improves student learning and is part of the lifelong learning process (Turner 2020:17). CPD chiefly serves two purposes, namely the empowerment of unqualified teachers helping them to survive in a profession for which they are not yet qualified, and the further development of qualified teachers within a specific content area (Steyl, 1998:114).

1.2.2 Roles of Primary Education Advisors

Primary Education Advisors are officers in the districts that are allocated to Teacher Development Centres to man the day-to-day functions of these Teacher Development Centres carrying out supervisory and advisory roles to teachers in the cluster of schools (Kadyoma,

2004:11). These are the ones who were once called District Inspector of Schools (DIS). Their roles have in recent years been recast to reflect a more supervisory and advisory function than what the DISs used to do (Kadyoma, 2004:11). Later the position of the Inspectors was re-introduced in 2016 to carry out the roles of inspection. PEAs are also Centre Coordinators reflecting their managerial roles at the TDC, while their assistants are known as Assistant Centre Coordinators (ACCOs) (Kadyoma, 2004:11). In the Ministry of Education organisation structure, PEAs are under the Directorate of Quality Assurance Services (DQAS) and the Directorate of Basic Education. In District Councils, they are also under the control of the Directorate of Education, Youth and Sports. Within the district, PEAs are placed in Education Zones which are clusters of schools that range from 8 to 20 Primary Schools.

The first cohort of PEAs in Malawi were picked on administrative arrangement, some were already at grade I and others at grade K or J. Those who were at lower grades were later promoted to grade I through interviews. The ones that were at grade I, were told to apply for transfer between posts, that is, from grade I as teacher to grade I as PEA. Since then, the teachers have been placed in a position of PEA on administrative arrangements at the district level without proper guidelines. Districts were just picking teachers with T2 teaching certificates, and those at grade J or grade K to act as PEAs. Recently, placement into a position of PEA has been through interviews conducted by the Local Authority Service Commission (LASCOM). Teachers with MSCE Certificates (T2), who have vast experience in teaching and are in grades J and K are eligible to attend the interviews. Those teachers who pass interviews are promoted to the position of a PEA (grade I). After the placement of these teachers into a position of PEA, no formal training is done by districts apart from just conducting one- or two-day orientations.

The work of these PEAs is guided by some policy frameworks developed by Malawi's Ministry of Education. The Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) (1999-2009) on Basic Education highlights four major areas, as targets for educational reform. These areas are access, equity, efficiency and quality. One of the strategies identified to help improve quality is the provision of professional development support services to teachers. The PIF states the main policy for enhancing quality education which is: "the improvement of the academic and professional qualifications of basic education teachers" (PIF, 2002:12). Strategies for achieving this objective include the following:

- "Zonal meetings for school staff will be scheduled and programmed systematically and cost-effectively",
- "The school support system will be further developed and enhanced",
- "School staff will receive at least 3 days of INSET per year. INSET activities will be developed at the zonal level" (PIF, 2002:12; Kadyoma,2004:25).

In the National Education Sector Plan (2008-2017), in its priority area 2 under quality and relevance, outlined the following that also guide PEAs work:

- Strengthen inspection and supervision of teacher education
- Institutionalize in-service training for primary and secondary school teachers (NESP, 2008:20)

The Government of Malawi National Educational Policy (2016), under its policy statement number 4: Quality assurance of teacher education is enhanced, points out the intended objective: enhance functional quality assurance and quality of teacher education. The strategic actions include:

- Develop a set of continuous professional development (CPD) programmes/courses
- Provide CPD to all instructional leaders (headteachers, teachers and mentors)

The National Education Sector Investment Plan (2020-2030) has outlined its General Objective under primary education, that is: To improve equitable access to quality learning for all children in Primary Education. Under this Strategic Objective 2 is to improve the quality and relevance of teaching and learning in primary education. The priority actions include:

- v. Develop, enforce, monitor and review quality assurance mechanisms;
- vi. Strengthen school supervision, advisory and inspection for improving learning outcomes;
- vii. Strengthen evidence-based decision-making in primary education;
- viii. All these given policy frameworks mention the need for PEAs and continuous professional development guiding the work of PEAs.

PEAs play several roles in their respective zones. In terms of teacher professional development, PEAs are professional development leaders. They have a significant influence on teacher professional development in the zones they serve. Four areas are significant for PEAs as CPD leaders. Firstly, who PEAs are, what they believe in and support, as well as what they do as leaders greatly affect teacher professional development in schools in their zones. Secondly, as educational leaders, PEAs are responsible for creating, nurturing, and maintaining a healthy and productive learning environment in their zones. Thirdly, PEAs can directly influence the design, delivery and content of CPD in their zones. Fourthly, PEAs, in collaboration with others, evaluate the outcomes of CPD conducted in their zones.

PEAs in zones offer leadership in continuous professional development. Their CPD leadership provides support to teachers who are under pressure by the increasing demands of their

profession. The CPD leadership mainly defines three key roles: coordinator, designer and facilitator.

PEAs, as CPD coordinators in teacher professional development, organise, champion, and plan for CPD activities. In other words, PEAs plan and organise the activities to be included in CPD. They decide who should attend the CPD, where to conduct it, and what to share during CPD.

As CPD designers, PEAs conceptualize and create CPD activities. In other words, they devise the content for CPD and the mode of delivery. They decide who should deliver the content effectively to the teachers and what other resources are needed during CPD.

PEAs can also facilitate during CPD. As facilitators, they deliver or present and interact with teachers during CPD. PEAs deliver face-to-face facilitation using different methods to keep and support teachers' learning. Facilitators of teacher professional development perform different functions that include mentoring, modelling, observing, co-learning and all within a single CPD activity (Cordingley et al, 2015). Effective facilitators see themselves as confident teachers, with excellent subject and pedagogical knowledge. They use their experience of teaching and draw on their beliefs about teaching in their facilitation (Perry and Bevins, 2019; Perry, 2020).

The role of the PEAs as CPD facilitators involves guiding discussions and linking arguments to the content of the CPD. The PEA as a facilitator provides tasks, questions and prompts to invite participants to take an inquiry stance to learning. During CPD the PEA elicits teachers' varying solutions to the problems and situations posed and invites them to question one another in a supportive learning environment (Loucks-Horsley, Stiles, Mundry, Love & Hewson, 2010). So, as a matter of government policy, the position of the PEA was instituted to promote the quality of teachers through continuous teacher profession development.

Continuous Professional Development aims to improve the performance of teachers in the classroom and raise student achievement. It is a career-long process of improving knowledge, skills and attitudes centred on the local context and, particularly, classroom practice (Desalegn, 2010). This aim can adequately be attained if PEAs know their roles and effectively perform as per the given policies by the Ministry of Education. The key advantage of CPD to teachers is the maintenance and expansion of knowledge, skills and updates of their profession. It keeps the qualifications of teachers up to date and helps learners acquire relevant skills on the job. PEAs, knowing their role in CPD and their creativity to organise the zonal activities in their respective TDCs promote teacher professional development (MOE's guidelines for Management of Education Functions Devolved to District Assemblies, 2008:10 on appendices).

1.2.3 Teacher Development Centres.

PEAs work at the Teacher Development Centre (TDC) as their centre where they operate and control every activity taking place at the centre that is related to the education and professional development of teachers. The concept of Teacher Development Centres is an idea that was inspired by work in other countries, both in and outside Africa. It specifically came from the Teacher Centres which started in Britain in the 1960s (Banda, 2012). Teacher Centres were established to support teacher professional development which was a worldwide strategy to improve quality education. They were developed as a result of “the idea that educational reform, or at least educational improvement, can occur through a change in teachers” (Banda 2012). These teacher centres aimed to alter the skills, knowledge and capacity of the individual teachers, thereby helping practising teachers deal with their own needs for growth, development and extension (Banda, 2012).

According to Adams (1975), as cited by Banda (2012:138-19), the functions of the Teacher Centres were: access to new materials and curricula, skill learning, renewal and rejuvenation, materials development, lateral diffusion of practice, elementary-secondary articulation, and reduction of alienation through social support, troubleshooting, personal development, professional development and strategic empowerment.

Newman (1981) as in Banda (2012:141), suggested three main functions of teacher centres as providers, facilitators and initiators of professional development. These functions were advantageous in the sense that they offer a chance for diagnosis and provision of professional development activities, a quick response to needs, a secure environment and professional esteem arising from a sense of involvement. Teacher Centres, therefore, as a place and a concept to break down teacher isolation, were bringing about teacher support and addressing the relevant needs of the teachers since they became accessible, acceptable, and neutral grounds without hierarchies, as is the case in other institutions (Banda, 2012).

In Malawi, the Teacher Development Centre has been in existence since 1997. A TDC consists of a multipurpose hall but it is mainly defined in terms of activities at the place other than the physical structure that supports the activity (Kadyoma, 2004:8). The TDCs manned by Primary Education Advisors, as a matter of policy in Malawi, were established aiming at making them local points for zonal-based professional development; where PEAs provide outreach to the cluster of schools; a base where PEAs can operate, visiting schools regularly to promote teacher professional development and school improvement; place where teachers can come together for in-centre activities and where they can share expertise (Guidelines for the Management of Education Functions devolved to District Assemblies, 2008:10 of Appendices). The idea of having a local centre (TDC) is that of providing for and meeting the different range of needs

teachers have. Teachers as individuals could choose to enable themselves to progress in their competence and education or pursue their careers. Examples include personal study and reading, developing their subject expertise, seeking support with particular aspects of classroom practice or learning to work with an unfamiliar age group.

TDCs are also centres where different school management teams (Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers, Section Heads) within the zone can share experiences and expertise on how to lead effective schools. Therefore, TDCs are also there to promote the development of Education management expertise.

TDC structures, in a nutshell, help the government to implement its intention of bringing Primary Education Advisory services closer to schools to assist teachers to develop professionally through regular school visits. The structure also supports the various kinds of professional development activities which teachers wish to undertake.

1.2.4 Policy versus Practice

Policy is defined as an explicit or implicit single decision or group of decisions which may set out directives for guiding future decisions, initiate or retard action, or guide implementation of previous decisions (Haddad, 1995: 15). It is a course setting action that provides the direction, the guide and the way to the achievement of certain goals. It is a major guideline for action (Ikelegbe, 1996:2-3). A policy further entails a broad statement of future goals and actions and expresses the means of attaining them. It is a framework of governmental intervention and covers a variety of activities (Khan and Khandaker, 2016: 538-539).

Public policy, on the other hand, is defined as a purposeful course of action that an actor or set of actors follows in dealing with a problem or matter of concern (Khan and Khandaker, 2016:538-

539). It is a series or pattern of government activities or decisions designed to remedy certain social problems. Dye (2013:3) defines public policy as whatever governments choose to do or not to do. It is a statement by the government of what it intends to do such as a law, regulation, ruling, decision, order, or a combination of these.

Policy formulation is a complex on going process that stretches over long periods and involves many interests and participants and may vary over time. Policies are influenced by context and are therefore embedded in national, economic, political, cultural, and social structures (Serban, 2015). Policy formulation and implementation process as given in the process model or linear model has several steps that generally include (1) Problem Identification which involves identification of policy problems through demand from individuals and groups for government action; (2) Agenda Setting which involves focusing the attention of the mass media and public officials on specific public problems to decide what will be decided; (3) Policy Formulation where there is development of policy proposals by interest groups, government officials and think tanks; (4) Policy Legitimation which involves the selection and enactment of policies; (5) Policy Implementation where the policy is now implemented through government bureaucracies, public expenditures, regulations, and other activities of executive agencies; (6) Policy Evaluation which involves the evaluation of policies by government agencies themselves, outside consultants, the media, and the general public (Dye, 2013:16, Jordan and Adelle, 2012)

A Policy Practice is the procedure on how the policy will be implemented. Implementation is an important stage in the policymaking process. Now policy implementation is one of the important key stages in policy making. Implementation refers to the execution of the law, in which various stakeholders and organisations work together with the use of procedures and techniques to put policies into effect to help attain goals. Policy implementation is further referred to as the

mechanisms, resources, and relationships that link policies to program action. To be specific, it means carrying out, accomplishing, fulfilling, producing, or completing a given task. The primary task in implementation is providing institutional resources for putting the program into effect or process under a given institution. It also involves money to be spent, laws to be enforced, employees to be hired, and action plans to be put in place.

The literature reveals a range of reasons preventing implementation from being effective. Among others, as outlined by Viennet and Pont (2017), a lack of focus on the implementation processes when defining policies at the system level; the lack of recognition that these change processes require engaging people at the core and the need to revise implementation frameworks to adapt to new complex governance (Viennet and Pont, 2017:6). They continue to argue that ‘challenges to implementing education policy include co-ordination issues, inadequacy of organisational resources, actors’ capacity or reactions against reforms.’ Makinde (2005) as cited by Seraw and Lu (2020) further points out barriers that obstruct policy implementation that are categorized into three: political (slow authorization, weak political support, bureaucratic opposition, and poor implementer incentives); analytical competence (vague or multiple missions, changing priorities, poor design, and uneven feasibility); and operational capacity (fund limitations, weak management structure or net coordination capacity, and lack of clarity in operational plans). Therefore, the secret of policy success or its opposite side lies in all of these factors: their presence or absence determines policy success or failure. Egonmwan (1984) as in Makinde (2005) also identified some other problems that affect policy implementation in developing countries which include an inadequate definition of goals; over-ambitious policy goals; and choice of inappropriate organisational structure in the implementation of policies. He points out that an inadequate definition of goals makes a policy lack clarity, internal consistency and

compatibility with other policy goals with the result that the successful implementation of such a policy becomes problematic. This is a problem of communication. Goal definition varies in developing countries because people disagree about the objectives of a given programme or because people do not care to define such objectives. After all, the objectives are not to their advantage (Egonmwan, 1984: 242 in Makinde, 2005). In some other instances, the policymakers assume that they know the needs of the target groups and therefore see no reason for clarity of goals. Egonmwan (2009) in his work identified four factors that affect policy implementation, these are policy content, program implementers, policy context, and environmental factors.

Towards successful policy implementation, it should be noted that for policies to be successful they should involve target groups and they should allow for the participatory system, whereby policymakers plan with the people rather than for the people in meeting their felt needs. Such participation will give the target groups a sense of belonging as well as get them committed to the successful implementation of the policy. Another cause of implementation failure is when the policymakers fail to take into consideration the social, political, economic and administrative variables when analysing for policy formulation.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The Government of Malawi acknowledges the critical role that Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) play in the continuous professional development (CPD) of teachers. To support this role, a national network of Teacher Development Centres (TDCs) managed by PEAs has been established, dedicated exclusively to CPD activities (NSTED, 2007). Despite the existence of these structures, research indicates that there has been no significant improvement in teachers' classroom practices (Centre for Educational Research and Training, 2009; NSTED, 2007; SACMEQ, 2005; Meke, 2012). Furthermore, teachers often avoid or are absent during PEAs'

supervisory visits, suggesting potential issues with the support provided by PEAs. This behaviour may indicate a lack of understanding of the PEAs' role in CPD and a gap between policy intentions and actual practices. Therefore, this study aims to investigate why teachers are rated below minimum standards and why they avoid PEA supervision. It will explore teachers' perceptions of the PEAs' roles in CPD at the school level and assess whether PEAs themselves are aware of their responsibilities as outlined in Malawian educational policies.

Additionally, the study will examine the contextual factors hindering PEAs from effectively performing their duties. Although some research has been conducted on teacher CPD, there is a need to delve deeper into the understanding and experiences of both teachers and PEAs regarding professional development. This research aims to address this gap, contributing to the body of knowledge on the vital role of PEAs in enhancing teacher CPD.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the role of Primary Education Advisors in promoting continuous professional development of teachers in schools and zones: Policy versus Practice; a case of Machinga Education District by focusing on the perception of teachers and PEAs on the role the PEAs in enhancing the continuous professional development of teachers and comparing them with what is outlined in the government policy. It also focused on the contextual challenges that PEAs face that negatively affect their role in promoting teachers' continuous professional development.

1.5 Main Question:

What is the role of PEAs in promoting the continuous professional development of teachers at school and zone levels?

The Sub-research Questions

The study will address the following **specific questions**:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers, head teachers and PEAs on the role of PEAs in Continuous Professional Development of teachers at school level or zone level?
2. How do PEAs locally organise continuous professional development training in the schools in their respective Zones?
3. What are the contextual factors that affect the role of PEAs in facilitating CPD for teachers at the school or zone level?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study findings is as follows: firstly, the findings could expand the literature on knowledge base as regards the role of PEAs in the continuous professional development of teachers at the school level or zone level. Secondly, the findings could be beneficial to the policymakers at the Ministry of Education -in that they will inform the process of formulating effective policies that would address challenges that affect negatively the operations of PEAs in the implementation of continuous professional development of teachers for improved quality teaching and learning. Thirdly, the findings could help officials like district education officers, headteachers, teachers and other school stakeholders to have an improved understanding of the role of PEAs in the promotion of continuous professional development of teachers. In addition, the study findings would also contribute to the development of a positive relationship between PEAs and teachers or headteachers within schools in the zones.

1.7 Outline of the Research Report

Chapter One has provided background information on the problem under the research study with a focus on contextual background. Chapter Two is the review of related literature on the role of PEAs in teachers' continuous professional development at the school level. Chapter Three is the description of the research paradigm, research design, methodologies and data generation procedures employed in the study. Chapter Four gives the findings and discussions of the findings of this research study. Finally, Chapter Five outlines the conclusions and implications derived from the study. Furthermore, suggestions on areas for further studies are also presented in chapter.

1.8 Chapter Summary

The discussion in this chapter is the introduction which includes the chapter overview and background information of the study. The background information covered the concept of continuous professional development and its importance; PEAs and their roles; TDC and their functions in the zone; and a brief overview of policy and practice. From the background information, PEAs have a key role in promoting the continuous professional development of teachers in schools. Thereafter, the discussion focused on the purpose of the study; statement of the problem; research questions for the study; the significance of the study and then an outline of the research report. To carry out the study, there was a need to review literature on the role of PEAs in promoting continuous professional development of teachers. The discussion in the next chapter focuses on the literature review which enabled the researcher to become acquainted with the roles of PEAs in teachers' continuous professional development.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides a literature review of studies done by different scholars related to the roles of PEAs in teacher CPDs. The chapter explains some concepts on the role of PEAs in teacher professional development, scholarly work done on roles of PEAs or supervisors in CPD for teachers, perceptions of Teachers and PEAs towards PEAs roles in teacher CPD and contextual challenges that affect PEAs as supervisors in their work. The chapter is structured based on themes from the research questions, analysed data and also guided by the theoretical framework at the end.

2.2 Continuous Professional Development for Teachers

CPD of the individual is an ongoing process that has been started after his/her initial training (Gray, 2005; Saleem, Gul and Dogar, 2021:56). This training is provided on the job to the individuals to become lifelong learners. CPD is a systematic and ongoing process and is provided according to the needs of society, organisation, and personnel (Saleem, Gul and Dogar, 2021: 56). It is a process of improving both the teacher's academic standing as well as an acquisition of greater competence and efficiency in discharging her/his professional obligations in and outside the classroom.

2.2.1 Functions and Importance of CPD

From the definitions of CPD, it can be noted that Continuing Professional Development is designed to contribute to the learning of teachers as they work in schools. It aims to bring about a change in teachers' attitudes, beliefs, values and practices about their profession, which consequently results in improved learner performance (Meke, 2012:3).

Desalegn (2010) points out that CPD is very important in the following ways: firstly, it promotes the application of active learning methods in the classroom thereby making learning student-centred. Secondly, it reinforces teaching skills such as self-evaluation, lesson planning, effective classroom management using a variety of teaching techniques, creating teachers' collaboration in teamwork, applying continuous assessment practices and considering gender issues. Thirdly, it raises the achievement of CPD in schools as well as higher education institutions by improving classroom practices and teacher professional competencies (Desalegn 2010). This resonates well with what Sachs (2003) argued. Sachs outlined that in a broad sense, the function of CPD can be seen to be one of the three imperatives: (i) CPD aligns teachers' practice with educational policies; (ii) it improves the learning outcomes of students by improving the performance of teachers; (iii) it enhances the status and profile of the teaching profession. Grundy and Robison as cited in Day and Sachs (2004:22) identify three interconnected purposes of CPD, these are (i) extension through introducing new knowledge or skills into teachers' repertoire; (ii) growth by the development of greater levels of expertise; and (iii) renewal achieved through transformation and change of knowledge and practice.

Day and Sachs (2004) further outlined the purposes of CPD in a broader view to align teachers' practice with educational policies; to improve the learning outcomes; and to enhance the status and profile of the teaching profession. As further outlined by Saleem, Gul and Dogar (2021),

CPD is conducted with so many purposes that include the following: 1) “It creates innovation skills among teachers; 2) It helps teachers to increase their confidence and motivates them to do their job more effectively in the classroom; 3) Teachers get knowledge about new teaching skills, technology, and how these are used in the classroom; 4) It develops scientific thinking among teachers. It motivates and helps teachers to perform their current duty in a better way; 5) It helps teachers to adopt new roles; 6) It provides opportunities to the teachers for their career progression; and 7) It is necessary for the future professional development of the teacher” (Purdon, 2003 as cited by Saleem, Gul and Dogar, 2021: 56).

CPD, therefore, chiefly serves two purposes, namely the empowerment of unqualified teachers helping them to survive in a profession for which they are not yet qualified, and the further development of qualified teachers within a specific content area (Steyl,1998:114). Teacher’s CPD is there to improve classroom practices and enhance students’ achievement through holistically improving teachers’ competence. It is there to enhance the work performance of teachers in the classroom and increase learners’ academic achievement.

2.2.2 Approaches to Teacher Continuous Professional Development or Forms of CPD

An approach, according to Banda (2012), is perceived as merely resource mobilization and use for a plan to be implemented. A better approach chosen should meet the needs of the CPD that has been organised. Choices of different approaches to CPD for teachers in different countries are dictated by contextual developments, such as changes in the economic situation, distribution of resources, and nature of the initial teacher training programmes, proper coordination and control of the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) programme (Banda, 2012). The approaches employed are classified depending on the concept, purpose, function, importance and

also activities involved in the TPD (Thiessen, 2001). They include classroom-based; school-based; school-focused; and radio/television.

The following approaches or models will be briefly outlined in this study: classroom-based TPD; school-based; cluster-based- based TPDs and the Cascade approach or model. The Cluster-based TPD and School-based TPD are the approaches where PEAs get involved.

2.2.2.1 Classroom-based teacher professional development

Thiessen (2001) argues that Classroom-based Teacher Professional Development takes place in the classroom usually by the teacher concerned. According to Thiessen (2001), there are three modes of classroom-based TPD, these are: teachers on their own, teachers with other teachers, and teachers and students. He further points out that for a larger part of the teaching profession, teachers work alone both inside and outside the classroom as they individually plan, implement and evaluate their work. They look for content and methods for delivering the content. This makes their life easy and at the same time enables them to interact with pupils (Banda, 2012).

2.2.2.2 School-based teacher professional development

School-based teacher professional development is most commonly known as a decentralized or school-based CPD model (where training takes place in the teacher's school (Gettly, 2002). This is the approach that is based on the notion that schools must meet to discuss problems facing them as individual schools. The meetings for CPD must take place at the school for every teacher to attend with ease since the schools have everything that can support CPD activities (Banda, 2012). According to Craft (2000:20), the school-based approach to CPD aims at achieving a better match of PD courses to the needs and culture of professionals at a school as well as at having a direct impact on practice.

The school-based CPD is advantageous in the sense that it is of low cost. It is also relevant to the needs and aspirations of the school and responsiveness to the problems (Guskey, 2000). According to Cordingley et al. (2015), school-based CPDs have several benefits that include: 1) shaping CPD to reflect the needs of the school context and culture; 2) enabling CPD to be focused on improving the learning outcomes of specific groups of learners and individuals within those groups; 3) enabling CPD to be sustained throughout the school calendar. Banda (2012) further points out that school-based CPD brings CPD directly under the responsibility of the school leadership who can relate it to the priorities of the school. That is to say, the school leadership is better placed to know the deficiencies of the teachers in the school which CPD requires to be targeted. However, Banda (2001) argues that school-based CPD may circulate ignorance. Schools must interact with the outside world to enrich their knowledge and skills to avoid the circulation of ignorance. Craft (2000) observed that the school-based approach to CPD can become limited, whether it is facilitated by someone within the school or from outside the school. Further, in implementing the school-based CPD model, aspects such as a lack of financial support and continuity may however be problematic because of a continuous change of personnel and new personnel needing regular training (Leckstein, 1994:41 as cited by Banda, 2012).

2.2.2.3 Cluster-based teacher professional development

The cluster-based teacher professional development approach was developed as an alternative to a school-based approach to reduce some of the problems that the school-based approach was facing (Banda, 2012:115). It is most commonly known as a *centralized* or *school-focused* Continuous Professional Development model (where training takes place at a central venue, like a TDC, for teachers from different schools). Cluster-based CPD was perceived as a viable

alternative to school-based CPD and became popular in developed countries like Britain (MacBride, 1989; Banda, 2012). Furthermore, Morant (1978) as cited by Banda (2012:116) suggested that cluster-based CPD should: 1) Serve the cluster's institutional needs and therefore educational needs; 2) Be intended for teachers serving at the cluster schools; 3) Be initiated, planned, led and executed by members of the school staff in the cluster; 4) Utilize the cluster school's physical resources and take place on the cluster school premises (Banda, 2012:116)

This is in line with the aim of primary schools' cluster system policy of schools in Malawi. MoE/DANIDA (2000:1) points out that the main objectives of the cluster system are to improve school management, teaching, learning, and student welfare practices in individual schools. Mchazime (2001:7) and PIF (2001: 27) state that the cluster system was also construed as the beginning of the decentralisation process that would lead to improved educational quality through the facilitation of a) communication among schools by holding regular cluster meetings, sharing of academic and administrative knowledge between good and poor-quality schools; b) sharing of teaching and learning resources;

Cluster-based CPD for teachers is a crucial one in the sense that it must be conducted per the cluster aims and philosophy, and that it must also meet the needs of the individual teachers and the aspirations of the cluster schools in which they teach (Bell, 1991; Banda, 2012). This is somehow challenging to some extent. In addition, this approach has other challenges. For instance, logistic problems, time constraints and a variety of other reasons could make it difficult to get teachers from various schools together at a central location for CPD like the Teacher Development Centre.

2.2.2.4 Cascade approach of CPD

This is a common CPD approach that is mainly employed by the Ministry of Education in Malawi. It is also widely used in teacher professional development interventions around the world. The cascade approach involves the delivery of training through layers of trainers until it reaches the final target group (Elder, 1996; Banda, 2012). That is to say, it typically involves taking a few selected teachers out of their school environment to a centralized location, which often is not a school (Craft, 1996:17 as cited by Banda, 2012). The selected teachers are trained together in a ‘training of trainers’ and then return to their schools. The trained teachers then conduct training with the remaining teachers in their schools. The cascade model is an effort to combine centralized CPD and school-based CPD approaches. It is a training programme, in which large numbers of teachers, from different schools, are trained during centralized CPD (Craft, 1996:17; Banda, 2012).

The cascade model is often used as it offers a way of reaching many teachers with standardized continuous professional development (CPD) within a short space of time and it is cost-effective. This approach differs from centralized CPD as the message is cascaded from top to bottom. This implies that the dissemination of a central message is built into the training (Gettly, 2002:33 as cited by Engelbrecht and Ankiewicz, 2016). However, it also has several flaws, the biggest one being the risk of dilution of quality. The model works on the assumption that the participants already have a foundational level of teaching competency on which to build; in many contexts, this is not the case. Often, the strongest teacher or a ‘favourite’ teacher is selected to attend the training of trainers, rather than the teachers who need the most support. It also provides little ongoing support (Banda, 2012)

The approaches or models outlined above indicate that each approach has its strengths and weaknesses. Factors that can affect the impact of training models include dependency on the master trainer, the need to travel (either master trainer or teachers), lack of consistency, lack of coaching and follow-up, and whether all teachers are included or not.

2.2.3 Principles of CPD

In light of the broad conceptualization of a continuous professional development system, this section outlines the principles of continuous professional development. The following major principles of continuous professional development for teachers are drawn from the works of Leu (2004), Giable and Burns (2005), Gray (2005), Hooker (n. d.) and Weiss (2010) as cited by Desalegn (2010):

- 1) The content of professional development focuses on what students are to learn and how to address the different problems students may have in learning the material.
- 2) Professional development should be based on analyses of the differences between (a) actual student performance and (b) goals and standards for student learning.
- 3) Professional development should involve teachers in identifying what they need to learn and in developing the learning experiences in which they will be involved.
- 4) Professional development should be primarily school-based and built into the day-to-day work of teaching.
- 5) Most professional development should be organised around collaborative problem-solving.
- 6) Professional development should be continuous and ongoing, involving follow-up and support for further learning – including support from sources external to the school that can provide necessary resources and new perspectives.
- 7) Professional development should incorporate evaluation by multiple sources of information on (a) outcomes for students and (b) the instruction and other processes involved in implementing lessons learned through professional development.

Furthermore, the core principles of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in education are as given: 1) Relevance and Needs: CPD should be appropriate to the learner's needs, role, and professional context, and should aim to support the improvement of knowledge, skills, and behaviours (Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, 2023). 2) Learning Effectiveness: The CPD should be effective in producing the desired outcomes. It is beneficial to consider what the evidence suggests is most likely to be effective for a specific group of educators (Cordingley et al, 2023). 3) Active Engagement: CPD should encourage active engagement and participation from the learners (Murray et al., 2023). 4) Reflect, Plan, Learn, Evaluate, Apply, Record/Review: The CPD process should include these steps to ensure effective learning (Murray et al., 2023). 5) Personalized and Collaborative: CPD should be tailored to the individual's needs and should provide opportunities for collaboration (Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, 2023) 6) Accessibility: CPD should be accessible and flexible, allowing learners to participate at times and in ways that suit their schedules (Murray et al., 2023). 7) Long-term Impact: The impact of CPD should be measured over time to ensure lasting changes in knowledge, skills, and behaviours (Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, 2023)

2.3 Roles of Primary Education Advisors

PEAs perform different roles in CPDs for teachers in schools within their respective zones. Their roles can be like that of Education Standard Officers, CPD facilitators, CPD Managers (CPD Leaders), CPD Coordinators and Teacher Mentor

2.3.1 Role of PEAs as Education Standard Officers

PEAs as Education Standards Officers (ESOs), alongside their supervision roles, have a responsibility to give a lead in curriculum implementation by their provision of professional advice to schools. They provide professional services to support, guide, monitor, and report on

the process of teaching and learning in schools and on the development and implementation of the curriculum (Mooya and Mulenga, 2021). Mooya and Mulenga continue to argue that ESOs also offer advice on the syllabi, pedagogy, resources, and necessary modes of assessment and on the administration of schools, the assurance and auditing of quality education and standard performance in schools. They further point out that, Education Standards Officers should create good and friendly relationships with teachers who implement the whole process of teaching and learning. Teachers are a hub for achieving universal access to high-quality and equitable education for all learners because they have first-hand knowledge of the learning environment, the learners and how the two relate. Kalabula (2007) equated standard officers to advisors of teachers. He further stated that “A standard officer is a person who by his or her attitude and approach can win the respect and confidence of teachers so that they are encouraged and stimulated to improve in their work” (Kalabula 2007: 10). Therefore, PEAs help these teachers professionally and that leads to improvement of the learner achievement in their respective zones. PEAs, as Education Standards Officers (ESOs), are therefore expected to provide a continuous checking, reviewing and assessing the achievements and progress of learners (Nkinyangi, 2006) as well as the progress of teachers to improve the standards of education.

2.3.2 Role of PEAs as Excellent Teachers

PEAs, by the nature of their work, are expected to be experts in pedagogical skills and can be likened to excellent teachers. In literature, the terms ‘expert teachers’ (Hattie, 2003), ‘excellent teachers’, ‘lead teachers’, and ‘master teachers’ (Ibrahim, Aziz and Nambiar, 2013; Bush et al. 2016) are used to describe these exemplary teachers and academic leaders, whose main task is to promote better teaching and learning practices in schools. According to Robbs and Broyles (2012), excellent teachers, compared to other teachers, focus more on professional development

and reflect on their practice as are seen as exemplary by others. Excellent Teachers are also viewed as effective teachers by example and those who are inspirational for ordinary teachers. Cheah (2007) points out that an excellent teacher is also exemplary in delivering consistently effective classroom management. Furthermore, according to Berliner (2001; 2004), expert teachers are more flexible in their teaching and learning approaches. Through mentoring and collaborative practices during CPDs, new teachers can learn to emulate and adapt such behaviours in their teaching and learning contexts.

Excellent teachers, according to Hutchings et al. (2009), are also expected to share their knowledge and skills with other teachers. In this case, therefore, they should be able to communicate effectively within, and across the school community and with other relevant parties. Turner and Bash (1999) argue that excellent teachers need to use a variety of sources and methods to help other teachers develop their talents and achieve greater expertise.

In a nutshell, according to Hutchings et al. (2009), excellent teachers are not only able to teach students and facilitate student learning but also share knowledge, skills and expertise with other teachers to sharpen their instructional skills.

PEAs are excellent or expert teachers as they share knowledge, skills and expertise during CPD for teachers in their respective zones and schools. As their role, they should demonstrate to teachers within their zone that they are experts in pedagogical skills and other avenues of their job.

2.3.3 Role of PEAs as School Leaders/Principals in CPD for Teachers

The PEA's role can be similar to that of a principal at a school since he/she is the overall head of Principals within the zone. The PEA, just like the school principal can have a major impact on

the effectiveness of CPD and its application in practice, being largely responsible for ensuring that all members of the schools within the zone can work and learn in a supportive environment. The principals, as argued by Somantri and Iskandar (2020:339) in their article '*The Impact of CPD in Teaching, and the Role of Principal in Promoting CPD: A Literature Review*,' have been seen to impact learning amongst teachers in four main ways: Firstly, *through instructional leadership and learning*: PEAs like Principals must take responsibility for facilitating change in a school through coaching, mentoring, support, modelling and sharing feedback. They must encourage positivity and enthusiasm about learning thereby helping teachers to cope with the difficulties associated with change and transformation. Secondly, *by building an institutional environment that supports learning*: To develop and improve teachers' professional practice continually, it is crucial to create a supportive environment. The PEA as well as the principal must provide effective communication, support of transformation and learning amongst teachers, and management tasks that frame a successful and sustainable learning environment, hard work and efficient management required. Thirdly, *by actively participating in the creation and distribution of CPD material and programmes*: The effectiveness of CPD activities is greatly supported by the active participation and involvement of teachers in creating their development opportunities and programmes, as this helps to ensure that the requirements of the teachers are met. As leaders of the zones in which teachers work, PEAs also play a major role in encouraging teachers to learn, develop and improve their practice proactively and independently through their school visits. Fourthly, *by effectively evaluating CPD outcomes*: PEAs like Principals would, firstly, ensure that teachers are frequently assessed to support them in gaining clarity on their personal and professional development goals (Somantri & Isakandar, 2020:339). Somantri and Isakandar (2020:340) further point out that the principal is there to encourage teachers to become

proactive learners; sharing their knowledge and guidance without encouraging over-dependence (Somantri & Isakandar, 2020:340). In the same manner, PEAs, as CPD leaders, should provide necessary leadership by encouraging teachers to be lifelong learners by imparting necessary knowledge to them and providing guidance for their professional growth.

PEAs are convenors or CPD leaders of Zonal level or School level teacher CPDs. To facilitate teacher CPDs, the convenor or the head of the CPD must be a good motivator who assists teachers in their learning and development. The PEAs are the ones who set the standard and navigate the team to achieve the set targets. In that way, a PEA needs to be a motivator, set realistic standards, assist in attaining high teaching and learning standards, have hands-on classroom observation and regularly patrol the school campuses to feel and assess the needs of CPD for the teachers.

Phorabatho and Mafora (2013) in their article, *'Constraints in the Management of Teachers' Continuing Professional Development for Curriculum Reform Implementation in South Africa*, point out that the management of teachers' CPD for curriculum change implementation is the responsibility of the relevant authorities at the different administrative levels of the education system (Prinsloo, 2008). It is the responsibility of curriculum coordinators and School Management Teams at the Area Office (AO) and school levels, respectively, who are the CPD managers or CPD leaders. In the Malawian context, PEAs are the ones mainly managing CPDs in their respective zones. The following are the key roles of CPD managers that Phorabatho and Mafora (2013) outlined:

- 1) **Generating a positive organisational climate for the implementation of teachers' CPD:** Phorabatho and Mafora (2013) argue that as leaders, CPD managers are responsible for

orchestrating an organisational climate that engenders, rather than militates against teachers' CPD for curriculum change implementation. Key features of such an environment would include, among others: facilitating change, promoting teamwork, decentralised power, effective resource utilization, cohesiveness, adaptation and sound morale. To create such an ideal organisational climate, CPD Managers should promote teachers' access to relevant CPD opportunities, and apply a participative management approach. This may lead to heightened teachers' morale, and ignite and sustain their senses of ownership, commitment and cooperation in a sustainable and accountable manner (Phorabatho and Mafora, 2013:618).

(2) **Providing sound planning:** Lourens (2012) as cited by Phorabatho and Mafora(2013) points out that planning entails forward thinking as it reflects where the organisation aspires to be in future. PEAs, as CPD managers, therefore must plan properly for the CPD to be effective and relevant to the teachers (Phorabatho and Mafora, 2013:618-619).

(3) **Organising CPD facilitating structures:** Organising involves creating organisational structures that enable people to work together effectively towards achieving the organisation's planned objectives through the best utilization of resources (Lourens, 2012; Smit et al., 2011; Lussier, 2009; Phorabatho & Mafora, 2013). Van Deventer (2008) and Steyn (1999) suggest that when organising, CPD managers should, among other critical aspects, form steering committees, establish a CPD-linked organisational structure, delegate certain functions and, coordinate relevant activities to effectively put the programme into action (Mafora and Phorabatho, 2013:619).

(4) **Leading the implementation process:** CPD managers should inspire, influence and motivate others to work together and willingly accomplish set goals and objectives. To elicit the

above behavioural responses from their subordinates, Prinsloo (2008) opines that CPD managers should be able to communicate and motivate their subordinates effectively (Mafora and Phorabatho, 2013:619).

(5) Controlling the implemented plans to determine organisational success: Controlling entails ascertaining the level of success in implementing a strategy by comparing the actual performance against the predetermined goals set during the planning phase Phorabatho and Mafora (2013:619). This enables CPD managers to determine what went well and what was less successful during or after the implementation of the plans (Tranter, 2006). Plans, in this case, are retained, adjusted, or revised (Mafora and Phorabatho, 2013:619).

Therefore, PEAs as CPD managers have the role to accomplish those tasks of organising, planning, leading and controlling CPD activities to effectively facilitate CPD for teachers in their respective zones.

2.3.4 Role of PEAs as mentors or role models for teachers in CPD

The term ‘mentor’ is used to describe a knowledgeable, experienced, and highly proficient teacher who works with and alongside a new teacher or less experienced colleague – quite closely at first but this gradually diminishes as the new teacher becomes more capable and confident (A Teacher’s Guide to Effective Mentoring, 2014:8). Mentors provide guidance, advice, feedback, and support to the mentee, serving variously as role model, counsellor, advisor, sponsor, advocate, and ally, depending on the specific goals and objectives. The role of a mentor is simply to provide guidance and support to a mentee to help them develop professional and personal skills.

In the field of education, mentoring is a complex and multi-dimensional process of guiding, teaching, influencing and supporting a beginning or new teacher. This term is used interchangeably with modelling and coaching. One of the functions of a mentor is to be a positive role model (Koki, 1997). In the context of teaching, coaching, frequently referred to as peer coaching, is the assistance that one teacher provides to another in the development of teaching skills, strategies, or techniques generally within a formal three-part structure: peer conference, lesson observation, and post-conference. Koki (1997) further argues that mentoring is the process of serving as a mentor, someone who facilitates and assists another's development. The process includes modelling because the mentor must be able to model the messages and suggestions being taught to the beginning teacher (Gay, 1995). That is, the mentor must be able to serve as a model of the teacher's role in education.

The literature suggests that mentoring, although complex is mutually beneficial for mentors and mentees (Hall, Draper, Smith & Bullough Jr, 2008; Heirdsfield, Walker, Walsh & Wilss, 2008, Ambrosetti, 2010). There are potentially many benefits of mentoring for both mentor and new teachers as well as benefits for the school, the system and the profession. Having opportunities to offer deep, practical knowledge, both pedagogical content and experience, can be a very rewarding and mutually beneficial aspect of effective mentoring. Other beneficial effects of mentoring include a) an increase in the rate of professional growth, self-reflection and problem-solving capacity for both mentor and new teacher; b) an increase in confidence, self-esteem, morale and sense of identity; c) opportunities for learning new skills, teaching strategies and communication techniques, including how to engage in rigorous evidence-informed conversations; d) a greater sense of inclusion or reduced feelings of isolation; e) opportunities for close collaboration, shared challenges and the sense of achievement that comes from

successfully working through such challenges. (A Teacher's Guide to Effective Mentoring, 2014:9)

A study conducted by Gilles and Wilson (2004) also concluded that mentoring is professional development with the possibility of mentors gaining insights into their teaching and mentoring roles and the complexities of an education system. It can also build leadership capacity. 'Mentoring is somewhat developmental; it must be learned by engaging in it and needs to be consistently supported' (p.87) and it 'gives these teachers leadership opportunities that build confidence and professional courage' (p.104).

PEAs in the zones being experienced in both knowledge and pedagogical skills work as mentor teachers helping teachers in the zones in their professional development. They conduct mentoring through both coaching and modelling.

2.3.5 Role of PEAs as Instructional Coaches for Teachers

Knight (2004) gives the definition of the instructional coach as an onsite staff developer who teaches educators how to use proven teaching methods by utilizing a variety of professional development procedures, thus fostering the widespread, high-quality implementation of interventions (Mason, 2007:74). Mason (2007) defines Coaching as a form of inquiry-based learning that provides teachers with on-the-spot, every day, professional learning (Mason, 2007:74). She further argues that instructional coaches do the following: conduct one-to-one or small group meetings with teachers to address concerns, guide teachers through instructional manuals and other materials. They also plan with teachers to identify interventions with students, prepare materials for teachers before instruction, model instructional practices in teachers' classrooms, observe teachers using the interventions, and provide feedback to those teachers (Mason, 2007:74). In so doing, Coaching is a form of collaborative CPD and can thus be a

strong dimension of teachers' professional learning in school. As such, it needs to be managed as part of a strategic approach to CPD. It is therefore a genuine alternative to what constitutes most teachers' CPD, which is rarely collaborative or informed by research, but instead tends to involve passive forms of learning, and is poorly and embedded in work contexts (Pedder *et al*, 2008).

Coaches are school supporters. As a classroom supporter, a coach is a co-planner, a co-teacher and a feedback provider. The role is varied, including co-planning units of study, participating in co/team teaching, modelling lessons, encouraging reflective practices, assisting with small group instruction, helping with assessments, co-creating classroom management techniques that support instruction and facilitating after-visitation discussions (Meyer et al, 2011d). They help facilitate discussions resulting in collaborative, reflective, accountable, self-evaluative and participative practices that support the teacher's professional development. In other words, a coach engages teachers in inquiry, collaborates with teachers to determine areas of need and together they design ways to address the issues of concern. In a coaching role, PEAs serve as technical supporters, motivators, instructional leaders and role models. As instructional coaches, the PEAs, therefore, enable teachers to improve the quality of their lessons and the quality of students' education. PEAs, in their coaching role, also help teachers stay fresh and use the latest techniques and technologies in their in their classrooms (<https://www.wgu.edu/career-guide/education/instructional-coach-career.html>).

2.3.6 Roles of PEAs as CPD Facilitators

The facilitator, as described by Brodie (2016) cited by Matanhire (2017:17) is a critical friend with dual roles to play, as a friend and a critic. On one hand, the facilitator was deemed a friend who supports, cares, tolerates weaknesses and celebrates strengths. On the other hand, the

facilitator was deemed a critic who challenges, identifies shortcomings and makes suggestions for improvement.

The role of the facilitator is crucial because the success of a group is dependent upon the leader's ability to plan, diagnose, implement and evaluate what was agreed upon by the group (Napier & Gershenfield, 1983; Matanhire, 2017). The facilitator is the leader focused on the vision and priorities of a group (Katz et al., 2009; Matanhire, 2017). CPD of teachers focuses on the transformation of teachers' knowledge, discussing individual situations, solving problems and discussing common concerns. In this case, the facilitator for CPD should assume various roles as leader, learner and teacher on the issues in the organised CPD for it to be effective. The facilitator in the CPD has organisational, motivational and professional roles within the CPD.

Brodie (2014), in her article '*Professional Learning Communities in South African Schools and Teacher Education Programmes*,' foregrounded three interrelated roles of facilitators as outlined: Firstly, facilitators need to create a culture of inquiry based on classroom data that focuses on both strengths and weaknesses of knowledge and practice in their schools. Such an inquiry informs the CPD facilitators of the alternative ways to address their challenges during the CPD. Secondly, the role of facilitators is to support teachers to focus on their learners' knowledge followed by the teachers' knowledge and teaching practice. Thirdly, Brodie (2014) further emphasized the importance of allowing external expertise into the community. As CPD facilitators, PEAs can allow some resource persons from outside to come to the zone to facilitate, for instance, a PEA from another Zone could come to the zone to facilitate. She added that external expertise avoids the recycling of current knowledge and practice and further brings in new ideas that teachers could learn from.

Matanhire (2017), in her article, '*The Facilitator's Role in Professional Learning Communities for Inclusive Education*', points out the planning, motivating and team-building roles of the facilitators. PEAs as CPD facilitators that promote teacher continuous professional development also perform these roles. PEA as CPD facilitator plan for CPDs for teachers. As an organiser or planner, the CPD facilitator plans and manages the activities of the CPD for teachers. During planning, the facilitator, as argued by Matanhire (2017), should make sure that the topics raised for the CPD ought to be of common interest to the participants to get full cooperation, enthusiastic participation and authentic dialogue from the group members (Wood, 2007; Matanhire, 2017). This will involve the facilitator to investigate the needs of the group so that issues of concern are tackled within the CPD programme.

On the motivating role, the CPD facilitator needs to work towards intrinsically motivating group members to ensure that members participate voluntarily instead of being pushed into participating by the facilitator by implementing a directive attitude (Matanhire 2017:38). In other words, the facilitator should have the skill in motivating the participants so that these participants should attend the CPD voluntarily without being forced. Members can be encouraged and motivated to participate by inspiring them to play a role (Katz et al, 2009). Facilitators are also urged to make use of spontaneous developments as they facilitate to keep the group members focused within the CPD (Hanraets et al, 2011).

In the team-building role of CPD facilitators, the facilitators engage, inquire and generate questions, confidence and trust of the participants (Rogers, 1971). As argued by Ebyy and Oettinger (2013), the CPD facilitator plans together with the teachers in useful ways that enable teachers to see value in student learning and at the same time provide a range of situations and strategies to analyse through questioning (Matanhire, 2017: 38). The facilitators, with their skills

in leading facilitation, have much to do in setting the initial climate of the group by being accepting, valuing all group members, understanding and focusing on group discussion.

PEAs in the zones facilitate during CPD trainings in their TDCs during Zone based CPDs or in schools during school based CPDs.

2.3.7 Role of PEAs as CPD Coordinators or Staff Development Coordinators

Coordinators in CPD are the ones that link different players in the CPD activities. Within the Zone, PEAs facilitate the coordination of CPD activities. As CPD coordinators or staff development coordinators, they play different roles.

In their article entitled, '*Coordinating staff development: the training and development of staff development coordinators*,' O'Brien and Macbeth (1999) pointed out the roles of staff development coordinators in CPD for teachers, these are: 1) to support more effective teaching and learning; 2) to ensure that CPD analysis is carried out; 3) to ensure that schools and individual teachers produce CPD plans as well as effectively implement them; 4) to conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of CPD activities; 5) to ensure that teachers participate in CPD activities; 6) to ensure that teachers and schools review the practices (O'Brien and Macbeth, 1999)

2.4 Perception of teachers and PEAs on the role of PEAs in continuous professional development for teachers.

Several scholars argue that perception is the way of understanding, based on previous experience and previous knowledge and expectation. In practice, teachers' beliefs and understandings have the potential to contribute to enhancing learning. As per the argument of Beard & Wilson (2006), perception is the way of understanding based on previous experience and previous knowledge

and expectation. It is further described, as a filter of any input based on one's belief is the root or foundation of one's way of thinking. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (9th edition, 2015) defines perception as an idea, a belief, or an image that one has as a result of how one sees or understands something.

The perception or attitude of teachers is dynamic and permeates all aspects of life. It is affected by variables such as experience, gender and frequency of interaction (Muchanje, 2020:236). Teachers can have different perceptions of the roles of PEAs in teacher CPD depending on the different responsibilities PEAs have on CPD programmes for their teachers. PEAs can be seen as CPD facilitators, CPD managers or supervisors, instructional coaches or mentors and so forth.

2.4.1 Perception of teachers on PEAs as facilitators

Understanding teachers' perceptions and views of CPD facilitators, like PEAs, may help facilitate and improve the CPD processes for teachers in Malawi and elsewhere.

PEAs can be viewed as CPD facilitators, CPD managers or supervisors, instructional coaches or mentors and so forth. PEAs as CPD facilitators, Mohamed, Ghoneim and Witte (2013) argue on teacher's views regarding the activities of these facilitators of CPD: most teachers were of the view that the facilitators of CPD sessions were knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and well organised. They were providing the collaborative, informal, and respectful learning climate of CPD activities and during training sessions, teachers were being given opportunities to share their ideas and experiences with peers, as well as to provide feedback on the CPD activities. On the other hand, as pointed out by Perry and Bevins (2019), facilitators for CPD see themselves as effective, confident teachers, with excellent subject and pedagogical knowledge. They use their experience of teaching, and draw on their beliefs about teaching, in their facilitation (Perry & Bevins, 2019).

2.4.2 Perception of teachers on PEAs as CPD supervisors

PEAs can be supervisors for CPD for teachers. They can also supervise the administrative actions of head teachers in their respective zones. As supervisors PEAs might have their perceptions and teachers may also have their perceptions towards these PEAs as supervisors in teacher professional development. The research done by Ogunsaju (1983) in his article: *Educational Supervision: Perspectives and Practices in Nigeria* argued that a supervisor was viewed as somebody who guides and coordinates the activities of teachers and other personnel towards the realization of educational objectives. He mediates between people and school programmes to ensure teaching and learning are improved. Ali (2010) did research on how supervisors in primary schools are perceived by themselves, by principals and teachers, and the findings indicate that supervisors perceive themselves as knowledgeable people, who help employees in education, and make their jobs easier while others think their job as control based on authorization and reporting. On the other hand, principals and teachers do not have a positive perception of their supervisors (Ali,2010:5032). Principals and teachers perceive supervisors as persons who constantly look for mistakes; don't see the good and nice behaviours; do not listen to other persons; expect their rights to be accepted by others; try to give punishments when a mistake is determined; incompetent; and affectless as they do not improve themselves; and as persons of whom they should be beware; who are not open to criticism; who believe that they know everything; strict; and who believe that their duty is follow up the implementation of the rules (Ali, 2010:5032). In this case, the reason for this negative perception may be that the employees abstain from the supervision thinking that the supervision may have negative results for their careers and having negative feelings towards supervisors (Acheson & Gall, 1997). The negative perceptions may make school principals and teachers very difficult to cooperate thereby

affecting negatively the teachers' professional development in the zone. The findings were in line with what Olivia and Pawlas (2001) found. According to Olivia and Pawlas (2001), supervisors, as per their perception, of their personal qualities, are people who are informed on teaching and education, have superior opinions compared to other employees, share their information with instructors and school managers, guide employees, assisting them on their duties and facilitating their jobs. With this perception, it can be said that they see themselves as "an ideal person" (Olivia and Pawlas, 2001; Ali, 2010:5032).

2.4.3 Perception of teachers on PEAs as instructional coaches

In a study done by Feldman and Rosann (2002) on the role of external facilitators in the whole school reform: teachers' perception of how coaches influence school change indicated that teachers and administrators saw coaches as playing an important role in effecting school change.

Teachers saw coaches effecting change in classroom practices, while administrators viewed coaches as critical friends who pushed their thinking about school-wide change. They also felt that changes in both school-wide and classroom practice would be sustained over time. Further, Teachers viewed the role of the coach as a guide at two levels, in school-wide comprehensive reform and the classroom. They perceive the coach to be a guiding force who works with school personnel rather than a person who tells people what to do. Furthermore, teachers spoke of the coach as a facilitator and someone who provides them with the tools, they need to be successful. Much like teachers, school administrators also see the coach as a guide, that is, who guides the school through the change process, keeping in mind the larger vision of reform.

In their article, Yirci, Ozdemir T.Y., Kartal S.E. and Kocabas I (2014), entitled *Teachers' Perceptions regarding School Principals' Coaching Skills*, where they investigated the teachers'

perceptions about school principals' coaching skills, found that teachers think that their principals are successful at some coaching skills such as being experienced and knowledgeable, being an effective listener and setting achievable targets. Principals fail to show empathy, communicate effectively, praise, give feedback, motivate and have effective inquiry coaching skills. They further argued that, according to teachers' opinions, being a role model showing empathy, praising, effectively communicating, and motivating are important skills that they expect if they were to sit in the principal chair.

In another study done by Westmoreland (2015) on teachers' perspectives of instructional coaches' impact on student achievement in middle school, the results support the notion that having an experienced teacher working as an instructional coach in the school is more effective than any one-day training ever could be. Teachers learn new skills and strategies, watch someone implement them, and then collaborate with peers for support. Being involved in school-based professional learning keeps goals and achievements fresh in the minds of teachers. Working together with the instructional coach has helped teachers provide better instruction for students; therefore, student achievement is rising. Westmoreland (2015:107) points out that prior research on this described the reluctance of teachers to trust instructional coaches. Teachers viewed instructional coaches as intruders or people who were hired to report any negative views to the administration (Lynch & Ferguson, 2010). The hardest teachers to win over were the more veteran teachers who had great student achievement in the past and did not want to change their antiquated teaching styles (Knight, 2011). Most of this confusion is caused because administrators often do not clearly explain the role of the instructional coach to the staff, maybe as a result of not understanding the role themselves (Steiner & Kowal, 2007). Furthermore, in Mason's research findings, in the article *"Teachers' Perceptions about Instructional Coaches,"*

the results indicated that 97% of the teachers who had been coached perceived coaching as beneficial and would choose to be coached again in the future. When asked about the benefits of being coached, the most prevalent answers were the opportunities to learn new strategies; the coach's modelling of lessons in the classroom; the immediate feedback given by the coach to the teacher; and the availability of resources from the coach.

PEAs, as instructional coaches in their respective zones, face obstacles with teachers and head teachers. As pointed out by Guiney (n.d), as cited by Mason (2007:76) teachers often think of coaches as evaluators who will be analysing their lessons. Though some teachers believe it is beneficial to watch a coach model instruction associated with learning strategies or classroom management procedures, many do not believe it would be beneficial to watch an instructional coach teach or model specific content because they do not think the coach is qualified (Mason, 2007:76).

2.4.4 Perception of teachers of PEAs as mentors

PEAs are viewed as mentors to teachers. According to Tomlinson (2019), in his article "*Mentor Teachers' Perceptions of Effective Mentoring Strategies*" mentors are there to promote school culture, are a source of information, build relationships, use data to drive discussion, provide opportunities for reflection, conduct observations, connect theory with practice, and model professional behaviour as effective strategies (Tomlinson, 2019). In other words, teachers perceive the mentoring process as inevitable for strengthening and retaining quality staff. Furthermore, Shields and Murry (2017), in their article, "*Beginning Teachers' Perceptions of Mentors and Access to Communities of Practice*", argue that beginning teachers perceive the most effective mentors as the ones who "go beyond" pedagogical support and are also able to offer emotional support as well as allow them the freedom to try new ideas. They continue to

point out that how mentors use their power to recognize (or not) the legitimacy of beginning teachers as being part of the school community influences the development of beginning teachers' professional identities. It is, therefore, within the mentor's control to ensure that the beginning teacher feels welcomed and supported and receives appropriate emotional and pedagogical support, as well as the space to trial their ideas within the school and the zone at large.

On the other hand, Munir and Amin (2020) in their article, *"Head Teachers' Perceptions about Mentoring Practices in Primary"*, their findings of the study revealed that most of the mentoring practices of the mentors were not up to the mark and needed improvement. The mentors' authoritative behaviour, weak content knowledge, and training without need assessment were explored as the key negative aspects of mentoring. In other words, the mentors were perceived to be authoritative, had inadequate knowledge and therefore required extra training (Munir & Amin, 2020:131).

2.4.5 Perception of teachers on PEAs as education standards officers

PEAs are further perceived as Education Standards Officers (ESOs). In a study conducted by Mooya and Mulenga (n.d.) on *Education Standards Officers Supervision Roles of Curriculum Implementation in Choma District in Zambia: What do Teachers Think?* the research findings indicate that teachers viewed Education Standards Officers as people who helped them improve their teaching skills and teaching document management through their supervision activities though the visits were not enough for them to make an impact. Mooya and Mulenga further point out that: 'however, some Education Standards Officers were still in the old school inspectors who behaved as superiors and who had nothing to learn from teachers. Some used bad language and concentrated on faulty findings on teachers which made teachers panic whenever Education

Standards Officers visited the schools (Mooya & Mulenga, n.d.). The findings also revealed that, at times, Education Standards Officers just concentrated on checking teaching files for teachers without the actual teacher observation in the classroom to get into the actual learning environment for them to be better placed to supervise teachers. Teachers had a negative perception of Education Standards Officers whom they perceived as outsiders instead of colleagues who visited with the view to working with teachers in improving the teaching and learning process. They further argue that some Education Standards Officers concentrated on the procedure which teachers were to follow when observing them rather than the actual content that should be delivered to the learners. This created a clear mismatch between what teachers expected from the ESOs in terms of teaching, supervision and quality assurance and what ESOs provided during their visits an indication that there was a need to bridge this expectation gap which is what the ESOs missed in their work.

2.4.6 Perception of teachers on PEAs as instructional leaders

PEAs are also viewed as instructional leaders. According to Bada, Tengku Ariffin, & Nordin, (2020), the purpose of instructional leadership in education deals with enhancing teaching and providing detailed supervision that would help teachers to develop and improve their professional knowledge, skills, and abilities. The PEAs' roles can be similar to those of schools' principals though they have many schools under their control. As principals or PEAs, they are instructional leaders. According to Banta (2010), as cited by Martin (2016:18), principals are expected to be change agents, improving test scores, providing leadership on curriculum, and promoting success for all teachers and students. Teachers may have the same perceptions they can show to their school principals. In a study conducted by Dahal (2020) on the Perception of Teachers towards School Principals as Instructional Leaders, he found that teachers had a

positive perception that school principals support creativity, innovation and the practice of new skills in the classroom. They also praised those teachers who use creativity in classrooms to enhance the learning of students. They held meetings with teachers to discuss the student's performance and solve the problems of teachers as instructional leaders (Dahal, 2020:86). In so doing they promote the professional growth of their teachers

Bada, Tengku Ariffin and Nordin (2020) also did a research study investigating teachers' perception of their school leaders, in particular, principals' instructional leadership practices, and tested whether teachers' perception varies across genders. The findings reveal a moderate level of teachers' perception of their principals' roles in instructional leadership practices. The result indicates that the principals are poorly rated when it comes to developing a positive learning climate. The poor rating of the principals in this aspect is more on the inability of the principals to provide incentives for teachers and promote professional development. For instance, most of the teachers rated their school principals low on questions related to "acknowledgement of teachers' outstanding performance by writing (letters of recommendations) to their files" and "setting aside time to discuss in-service programs during staff meetings". These pieces of evidence suggest that principals need to improve on providing incentives for teachers and promoting their professional development. This is because when teachers' performance is acknowledged and professional development encouraged by the principals, it would improve teachers' effectiveness, thereby enhancing students' learning. In this case, PEAs as instructional leaders in the zone may fall into this category like the principals. Do the teachers perceive PEAs as promoting professional development? The study would look into whether PEAs promote teacher professional development that improves teacher effectiveness thereby promoting students' academic achievement.

2.5 Challenges that PEAs face when trying to promote teacher CPDs.

PEAs as supervisors or advisors play a crucial role in supporting teachers' continuous professional development. However, designing and delivering effective professional development programs that address the diverse needs of teachers can be challenging. The following are some of the challenges from the literature:

2.5.1 Supporting Teacher Professional Development:

Ajibade and Rembe (2018) conducted a study on challenges experienced in implementing school-based continuing professional teacher development in the Fort Beaufort Education District in South Africa. This study employed an interpretive paradigm to investigate the challenges experienced by teachers in implementing school-based continuing professional teacher development in the Fort Beaufort education district in South Africa. Semi-structured interviews were administered to 40 participants from 10 different schools. The findings of the study revealed that most of the participants were unable to implement continuing professional teacher development programs for various reasons, such as inadequate training in the implementation process, a lack of resource materials, and insufficient time for professional development initiatives. These hindered their ability to provide adequate support to teachers for continuous professional development. Further, the study of Fitzgibbon (2004) was done which aimed at identifying the challenges standing in the face of developing the educational supervisors' professional efficiencies in a combined (mainstreamed) educational environment. The study results showed that one of the obstacles in the way of developing the supervisor's efficiencies was the lack of training programs that may cause them to acquire efficiency in the use of technological aids. In light of these results, the researcher suggested holding courses that may develop the supervisor's efficiencies in this area. Training to supervisors for teachers

improves their service delivery to teachers hence promoting continuous professional development.

2.5.2 Managing curriculum and instructional changes:

One of the challenges faced by PEAs as supervisors is managing curriculum and instructional changes. Alazzam and Mohammad (2022) carried out a study that sought to identify the challenges facing educational supervisors in the Saudi Ministry of Education, including financial, administrative, environmental, personal, and the challenges resulting from the teacher and principals. The results of this study indicated that personal challenges are among the biggest challenges facing educational supervisors, and the recommendation was made to the Ministry of Education to pay more attention to this aspect by holding more training courses and conferences to enable supervisors to provide guidance aimed at teachers to reach the highest levels of education.

The study done by Al-Kiyumi and Hammad (2020) explored how teacher supervisors perceived their preparation for the current reforms in the Sultanate of Oman. The study adopted a qualitative research design. The findings indicate that the supervisors considered their preparation to be inappropriate, reasoning that most of the training programs provided were short theoretical conferences or lectures with no or few opportunities for practice. The supervisors expressed their need for more adequate training to enable them to undertake their new supervisory roles. This research done by Al-Kiyumi and Hammad (2020), indicates that supervisors find challenges whenever curriculum and instruction change as the changes bring in or introduce new curricular and pedagogical changes.

2.5.3 Managing Time and Workload

PEAs as educational supervisors and advisors often have many responsibilities and a demanding workload. Balancing administrative tasks, instructional support and professional development can be challenging, and time management skills are crucial. Enaigbe (2019) identified the following factor: Inadequate Timing. One of the issues and challenges of educational supervision is that the precious time of the supervisors is exhausted on keeping records, filling in forms, and submitting returns and memoranda for the benefit of the top-level management in the educational industry especially when the supervisors involved in series of consecutive tours of teachers. This leaves the supervisors with inadequate time to do the real supervisory work that can promote teacher continuous professional development.

2.5.4 Limited resources

PEAs as educational supervisors may face challenges in securing adequate resources such as funding, time, and access to professional development opportunities for teachers. Limited resources can hinder the implementation of CPD programs and restrict the range of professional development activities available to teachers.

The study by Kokebe (2013) on practices and challenges of continuous professional development in primary schools was done in Metekel Zone. The findings of the study show that the school principals, professional development focal persons, head teachers, and zone supervisors were providing insufficient support for the teachers. The major challenges identified were lack of training manuals, irrelevance and unclarity of the available training manuals, lack of trained facilitators, insufficiency of supports provided for teachers' growth, insufficient allocation of budget, and school systems not in the way that can satisfy the training needs of teachers. So limited availability of resources to PEAs affects their role in promoting the teacher CPD.

Enaigbe (2019) further identified Inadequate Facilities in terms of: shortage of materials and resources for the effectiveness of the system to improve, lack of facilities and resources (vehicles) for supervisors in the educational sector and poor conditions of roads for the supervisors to function well and to carry their duties successfully.

2.5.5 Resistance to change by teachers

Teachers may resist being involved in CPD activities due to different reasons such as lack of perceived relevance, fear of evaluation, or a reluctance to step out of their comfort zones. In a study on change in teaching methodologies, Al-Ateeqi (2009:88) reached a similar conclusion. He indicated that not all teachers accept using "interactive teaching methodologies that promote creativity and innovation in teaching. Some teachers believe in traditional methods and old-fashioned teaching styles. This creates conflicts among educational administrators and policymakers on ... how ... children should be taught" (p. 88). Needless to say, such resistance to changes in the curriculum and teaching methodologies, in addition to other areas, will hinder the progress of the reform undertaken by ADEC. In this scenario, the resistance of teachers to supervisors' views or teachings during CPD affects negatively the teaching and learning process. Calabrese (2006) found that teachers seldom benefit from the training activities because of the limited time available for practice and the large amount of information they have to grasp. Therefore, the way professional development activities are planned and implemented affects the way teachers react to change.

2.5.6 Keeping up with changing practices and policies

Education is a dynamic field with new research, technologies and pedagogical approaches emerging constantly. PEAs as supervisors or advisors need to be abreast of these changes and ensure that CPD opportunities reflect current best practices. However, keeping up with the latest

developments and incorporating them into CPD programs can be demanding requiring ongoing professional learning for supervisors themselves. Enaigbe (2019) identified the following factor: Shortage of Skilled and Experience Personnel. The supervisors lack the required intellectual sharpness, authority and status to understand the dynamics of management and supervision in the system especially when the supervisor is posted for the first time without prior knowledge on the job, which will render him relatively unequal to the tasks assigned. In this scenario, the supervisor is left alone to experiment with his new position on a trial-and-error foundation.

Idrees (2002) conducted a study aimed at evaluating the directional practices in the Governorate of Irbid (Jordan) and identifying the difficulties facing the educational supervision process. The study sample comprised the supervisors of the education office, the teachers and principals of the core schools. The study made several findings: there is a shortcoming of the supervisors in their field performance, and in ignoring many of their supervisory practices; many of them do not possess sufficient supervisory efficiencies; the field visits of the supervisors are scarce; and there are no statistically significant differences attributed to the gender variable for the principals and teachers in evaluating the supervisory practices.

2.6 Theoretical Framework Linked to Teacher CPD

This study, which looked at the role of PEAs on the Continuous professionalism of teachers at the school and zone level comparing what is given in the policy and the actual practice or implementation on the ground (Policy versus Practice), was grounded in the systemic model of public policy implementation by Van Meter and Van Horn. This Model of Policy Implementation was formulated by Van Meter and Van Horn (1975). This model assumes that the implementation of the policy runs linearly from political decisions and the implementation of public policy performance. This model emphasizes the importance of the implementer's

participation in policy objectives formulation, and this model's approach includes a top-down approach (Hartawan, Kosasih and Rochmani, 2023:1351). Donald S. Van Meter and Carl E. Van Horn named their implementation model a “process model”. Wahab (2005:78) further argues that this model is an approach that links the wisdom issue with the implementation and the conceptual model that links wisdom with work performance.

Van Meter and Van Horn stated that there are six variables, these are: policy Standards and Objectives; resources; Characteristics of the implementing organisations; the attitude of the implementers; communication between relevant organisations and implementation activities; the social environment, economic and political conditions. Figure 1 below shows the diagrammatic representation of the model:

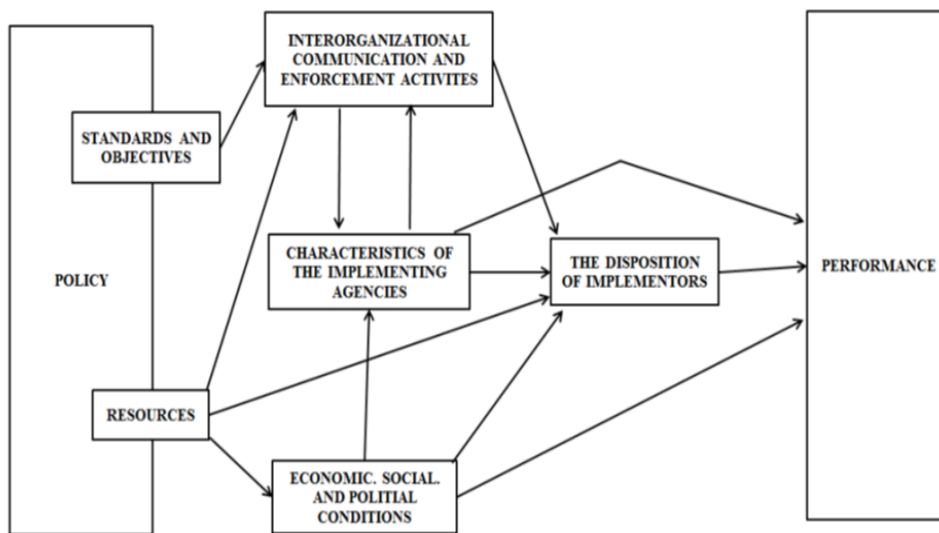


Figure 1. Van Meter & Van Horn's Model of the Policy Implementation Process (Meter and Horn, 1975:463 as cited by Yuan, 2016:13).

Given below is an explanation of each variable in Van Meter and Van Horn's model of the Policy Implementation Process:

2.6.1. Policy Standards and Objectives

Van Meter and Van Horn point out that successful implementation demands that there is a clear understanding of the policy standards and objectives by policy implementers (Van Meter and Van Horn 1975; Kanmiki and Bempah, 2017:4). A policy's objective and standards are crucial as understanding it is a starting point of policy implementation. A policy's objective refers to specific steps for carrying out the goal (Yuan, 2016:13). The key features of clear policy standards and objectives are the need to enhance the accuracy and consistency of the essential elements of the policy. There is also the need to articulate accurate and timely release of information. These will go a long way for implementers to understand what is expected of them (Van Meter and Van Horn 1975; Kanmiki and Bempah, 2017:4). In other words, unambiguous policy objectives and standards or policy content contribute effectively to the attainment of sound policy implementation. In the context of this study, the research found an understanding of PEAs and their role in promoting CPD in teachers. It will determine whether they know the criteria for facilitating the CPD for teachers in their school or their zone.

2.6.2. Resources:

The success of policy implementation depends on the ability to utilize available resources these are human, material and financial resources. Humans are the most important resource in determining the success of policy implementation. In addition to human resources, financial resources and time become an important calculation in the successful implementation of the

policy. Van Mater and Van Horn (in Widodo, 1974) point out that: “The policy resources are not as important as communication. Policy resources must also be available to speed up the implementation of a policy administration. These policy resources consist of funds or other incentives that can facilitate the implementation of a policy. Funds are one of the most common support and incentives” (Meter and Horn, 1975:465). Lack of or limited funds or other incentives in policy implementation is a major contributor to the failure of policy implementation. Funding, therefore, is the cutting edge of policy decisions. Gerston (2004) in Kanmiki and Bempah (2017) explains that adequate financial resources enhance long-term planning, making staff arrangements, operationalizing policies and completing objectives. He further argues that the adequacy, timely release of resources and efficient management are critical to the attainment of policy goals and objectives (Gerston 2004). PEAs in the zones require resources to effectively run their zone in promoting the continuous professional development of teachers. The research explored whether PEAs are provided adequate resources that can enhance the implementation of the policy of promoting teachers' continuous professional development.

2.6.3. Characteristics of the implementing organisations/ Executive or leadership Support:

The Characteristics of the implementing agencies include competency and staff size of an institution, the level of hierarchical control of sub-unit decisions and processes in implementing agencies, resources from political agencies (legislative and executive support), organisational vitality, level of communication openness in implementing organisations and with external parties also formal and informal relationships with policymakers or policy implementers (Kanmiki and Bempah, 2017:7).

This is very important because the performance of policy implementation is strongly influenced by the characteristics of the appropriate and compatible executing agencies, so there must be a focus on the executing agent which includes formal and informal organisations involved in policy implementation. Van Meter and Van Horn point out that the characteristics of the administrative agencies affect policy implementation outcomes (Van Meter and Van Horn 1975; (Kanmiki and Bempah, 2017:7). In Van Meter and Van Horn's view, the core variables that explain the characteristics of implementing agencies are: The competence and size of an agency's staff; The degree of hierarchical control of subunit decisions and processes within the implementing agencies; An agency's political resources; The vitality of an organisation; The degree of -open communications within an organisation; The agency's formal and informal linkages with the policy-making or policy-enforcing body (Kanmiki and Bempah, 2017:7).

2.6.4. Inter-Organisational Communications and Relationships

Mechanisms to ensure policy enforcement and compliance also need to be taken into account (Yuan, 2016:14). Thus, inter-organisational communication and enforcement activities are applied as one of the variables in this model. Inter-organisation communication and relationships are vital for the successful implementation of public policy. The policy standards and objectives need to be communicated effectively. This enhances the clarity and consistency of policy standards and objectives and further stimulates their enforcement (Van Meter and Van Horn 1975). In the transmission process of public policy to implementers, the policy standards and objectives are translated and interpreted at the various levels of organisational hierarchies, which come with inconsistencies and conflicting interpretations.

When a policy is implemented by a network of agencies, inter-organisational coordination is important for successful implementation. There must be a smooth working relationship among policy actors who must be guided by rules and standard operating procedures. It is for this reason that Van Meter and Van Horn demonstrate that inter-organisational communication and enforcement activities are critical variables that link policy to performance outcomes. In the public domain, implementation of public policy is conducted through a network of institutional settings (local, regional/federal, and national agencies, and cooperation with non-governmental organisations and groups of intended beneficiaries), thus necessitating the need for communication and coordination as an important element of inter-organisational relationship (Cheema and Rondinelli 1983). Inadequate information can lead to a misunderstanding on the part of the implementers who may be confused as to what exactly is required of them. In effect, implementation instructions that are not transmitted, that are distorted in transmission, that are vague, or that are inconsistent may cause serious obstacles to policy implementation. Two principal functions of communication are shown in the literature, which are the need to secure compliance and execution of specific policies and the quest to resolve all opposing conflicts detrimental to the policy's success. In this scenario, the research found the capacity of the PEAs for their job and the support they get from district education offices and the Ministry of Education.

2.6.5. Disposition or attitude of the implementers/The Disposition of Implementers

Policy implementation is affected by the perceptions of policy implementers at the point of its delivery. According to Van Meter and Van Horn, three principal attributes might affect the ability and willingness of implementers to ensure successful policy implementation. These are

cognitive maps of implementers, incentives and resources available (Van Meter and Van Horn 1975; Kanmiki and Bempah, 2017:9). Cognition represents the comprehension and understanding of the policy. It is important to state that the unawareness of policy implementers' adherence and compliance to the legal frameworks guiding a policy might invariably lead to unsuccessful implementation, that is, the understanding of the implementers on the policy. In this regard, the ultimate implementer's understanding of the general intent and specific standards and objectives of a policy is critical to successful implementation (Van Meter and Van Horn 1975; Kanmiki and Bempah, 2017:9).

Disposition or attitude is one of the key factors that affect policy implementation. It is the willingness, desire, attitude and tendency of policy actors to carry out policies seriously so that what is the goal of the policy can be realized (Hartawan, Kosasih and Rochmani, 2023). Most implementers can exercise considerable discretion in the implementation of policies because of either their independence from their nominal superiors who formulate the policies or as a result of the complexity of the policy itself. The way the implementers exercise their discretion depends, to a large extent, on their disposition toward the policy. Therefore, the level of success will depend on how the implementers see the policies as affecting their organisational and personal interests. When implementers bring their displeasing state into the arena of policy implementation, the result would be poor performance outcomes. Their participation in the formulation of the policy increases their understanding of the policy and then helps in its implementation. The key point is that the disposition of policy implementers affects the success of public policy implementation. In connection with the research, the study found out the perception of PEAs to their role of promoting the continuous professional development of

teachers. It also investigated the perception of teachers towards the role of PEAs in their continuous professional development.

2.6.6. The social environment, economic and political/ Economic Social and Political Conditions

This considers or focuses on the extent to which the external environment has promoted the success of public policy. The extent to which the social, political and economic issues are understood and used to shape the policy can facilitate or constraint effective implementation (Bhuyan, Jorgensen, and Sharma 2010; Kanmiki and Bempah, 2017:10). If the social environment, economy and politics are not conducive they become the source of the problem of failure of policy implementation performance. Politics is seen as an important component of decision-making. The posit is that the articulation and incorporation of socio-political and economic issues in policies, plans and budgeting formulation and implementation enhance sound implementation practices.

PEAs work in different local environments; some environments can favour them to implement the policy on teacher continuous professional development while others do not. The research will find out the contextual factors that affect PEA's job in promoting teacher continuous professional development.

According to Van Meter and Van Horn, these six variables are required to be set out clearly to produce an achievement of program implementation. According to this model, the implementation of public policies runs linearly between public policies, implementors and the performance of public policy implementers. It highlights the complex and dynamic nature of the

policy implementation process, emphasizing the importance of various actors, institutions and factors that can influence how policies are translated into real-world actions.

In this study, this framework provided a structured approach to understanding and analysing the process of implementing the policy of improving quality education through promotion of continuous professional development of teachers by PEAs. It helped the researcher to systematically analyse and evaluate the policy intervention aimed at improving teaching practices and enhancing professional growth of teachers.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a literature review from studies done by different scholars related to the roles of PEAs in teachers' continuous professional development in schools and zones. The chapter has explained some concepts on the role of PEAs in teacher professional development, scholarly work done on roles of PEAs or supervisors in CPD for teachers, perceptions of Teachers and PEAs towards PEAs roles in teacher CPD and contextual challenges that affect PEAs as supervisors in their work. In the review of the literature, it became clear that PEAs perform different roles in promoting teacher CPD. Standards officers or supervisors give a lead in curriculum implementation by their provision of professional advice to schools. As they discharge their duty, they face so many challenges including financial, administrative, environmental, and personal ones and these challenges affect the quality of their work. The chapter was structured based on themes from the research questions, analysed data and also guided by the theoretical framework at the end.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the research design and methodology that was employed in undertaking this research study. The research was focused on examining the role of Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) in promoting Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers, specifically at the school or zone level, with a particular emphasis on the comparison between policy and practice. The primary objective of the study was to gain insight into the subjective reality of this matter and to determine whether the stipulated roles of PEAs in promoting CPD for teachers, as outlined by the government in their guidelines, align with what is actually taking place in practice.

This chapter presents the research methodology, the sources of data, the study site and population, the sample size and sampling technique, the procedures of data collection, the data gathering tools, the methods of data analysis and Ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Paradigm

Research is an activity that lays claim to knowledge production and such claims raise ontological and epistemological issues and characterize debate and practice in research methodology.

Ontology is the philosophy that studies reality. In other words, ontology refers to what is assumed to be the nature of truth and/or reality. It mainly focuses on questions such as what

people believe about the nature of reality and raises debates concerning the possibility of singular, verifiable reality and truth versus the inevitability of socially constructed multiple realities (Patton, 2002;). It interrogates the nature of reality.

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that looks into the nature of knowledge and truth. It focuses on questions such as how we know, what we know and how that knowledge is produced. In other words, Epistemology is concerned with ways of knowing and learning about the social world and focuses on questions such as: how can we know about reality and what the basis of our knowledge is (Ritchie et al, 2013:6). Epistemology is basic beliefs about the nature of relationship between the knower (researcher) and what can be known. In epistemology, knowledge is derived from the participants and their everyday experiences in their work and learning. Over the years, researchers have produced different methodological positions based on their ontological and epistemological orientations. Van Rensburg (2001) points out that the different orientations have developed into several traditions that have characterized the research enterprise which has been referred to as paradigms.

This research study used a qualitative research strategy where the research approach implemented was that of the social constructivism (interpretivism) paradigm. Creswell (2014) defines a paradigm as a set of beliefs or philosophical assumptions that guide researchers when conducting a study. Research paradigms are important because they influence the choice of approaches to methodology for a particular study. In turn, methodology influences the choice of literature, research methods and data generation techniques as well as how knowledge is studied (McKenzie & Knipe, 2006 in Al Riyami, 2015).

Leavy (2017:13) argues that Constructivism (interpretivism) is a worldview that suggests that we are actively engaged in constructing and reconstructing meanings through our daily interactions (social construction of reality). In other words, we make and remake the social world through our patterns of interactions and interpretive processes by which we assign meaning to activities, situations, events, gestures and so forth (Leavy, 2017:13). In interpretivism, researchers attempt to observe ongoing processes to better understand individual behaviour and the spiritual nature of the world. It emphasizes social interactions as the foundation for knowledge. The researcher so far uses his/her skills as a social being to try to understand how others understand their world. Knowledge in this scenario is constructed by mutual negotiation and it is specific to the situation being investigated.

Furthermore, social constructivism or interpretivism has been chosen in this study because it is a paradigm that employs inductive, logical and qualitative research methods. Within this interpretive paradigm, the researcher seeks to describe how people make sense of their worlds, and how they make meaning of their particular actions since its purpose was to develop a greater understanding of how people make sense of the context in which they live and work (Robson, 2002). They develop subjective meanings of the experiences and meanings that are directed towards certain things and objects. As pointed out by Creswell (2007:21), the researcher intends to make sense of the meaning others have about the world. In this case therefore researchers value people's interpretation and understanding of their experiences and circumstances (Leavy, 2017:13).

In line with the research questions, this study is indeed framed within the interpretive paradigm. Within this paradigm, the research was undertaken from an ontological perspective based on the assumption that the perceptions of the participants are informed by their social reality and their

work setting. Crotty (1998), as cited by Qadhi (2017:99), defines this as “the study of being” Therefore, the study is not based on a social reality that is objective or external to participants' awareness; rather, it is based on a reality that is socially constructed. The epistemological assumptions underlying this study focus on teachers' prior experiences, the scope of their knowledge and the justification of their beliefs about how they perceive the role of PEAs in their continuous professional development.

This study sought to understand the role of PEAs that promoting Teacher Continuous Professional Development and the best practices they do to promote teacher professional development. It will try to understand if their practices are in line with the laid down government policies. It will further understand the perception of teachers and the PEAs themselves towards the roles of PEAs in teacher continuous professional development. This approach is therefore advantageous and appropriate, unlike the positivism paradigm which is not able to penetrate what is superficial to decipher the values, beliefs and assumptions held by individuals. However, the Interpretivist paradigm has two key criticisms levelled against it. Firstly, it is subjective since it does not start with a theory. Secondly, it is said to lack objectivity because the researcher is involved in the inquiry (McKenzie & Knipe, 2006; Mack, 2010).

3.2 Research Design

Designing a study is a process that involves making multiple decisions regarding data generation methods, and data analysis methods up to the final stage of ensuring that the final research report answers the research questions (Durrheim, 2006). Research designs are plans and procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009). It is an action plan that guides research from the questions to the conclusions and includes steps for collecting, analysing, and interpreting evidence according to

pre-established propositions, units of analyses, a logic for linking the data to the propositions, and application of set criteria for interpreting the findings (Yin, 2003). MacMillan and Schumacher (2001:166) further point out that research design is a plan for selecting subjects, research sites, and data collection procedures to answer research question(s). They continue to point out that the major goal of a sound research design is the provision of results that are said to be credible. It sets out the specific details of one's inquiry and it includes the study design per se as well as the logistical arrangements one proposes to undertake (Kumar, 2011:41). In a simpler way, a research design is a logical plan for getting from here to there, where here shall mean the initial set of questions to be answered and there is some set of conclusions (answers) about these questions (Yin, 2008:26).

This study, which aimed at finding out the role of PEAs in teacher CPD at the school level, used a qualitative research design. This was so because the study was interested in gaining an in-depth knowledge of teachers' understanding and experiences of the role of PEAs in teacher continuous professional development at the school level and also if the PEAs are aware of their role in teacher continuous professional development.

A qualitative research design is a systematic subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning. It involves detailed verbal descriptions of characteristics, cases, settings, people or systems obtained by interacting with and observing the subjects (Thomson, 2007). In line with this study, PEAs, headteachers and teachers outlined their perceptions of the roles of PEAs that promote teacher professional development. The main goals of this qualitative research design are to gain insight; and explore the depth, richness and complexity inherent in the phenomenon. In this scenario, using qualitative research design was

advantageous in the sense that, it provided more detailed information to explain complex issues, though to some extent it was difficult to analyse its data. Additionally, several studies have indicated that qualitative research design is convenient for researching issues concerning the roles of different positions in education and teacher perceptions of their roles.

McMillan and Schumacher (2011) propose that there are five interactive qualitative research designs, namely, ethnography; phenomenology; case study; grounded theory and critical studies. This study employed a descriptive case study research design.

3.2.1 Case Study Research Design

Case study research as described by Picciano (2004:42) is “descriptive research that involves describing and interpreting events, conditions, or situations that are occurring in the present.”

A well-known and used definition comes from Yin (2009: 14) who defines it as “an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident”. The definition by Yin usefully captures that case studies are intended to provide a level of detail and understanding. Creswell (2003:15), further, defines a case study as research in which “the researcher explores in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process or one or more individuals”. Lapan, Quartaroli and Reimer (2012) further point out that “case study research is an investigative approach used to thoroughly describe complex phenomena, such as recent events, important issues, or programmes, in ways to unearth new and deeper understanding of these phenomena” (Lapan, Quartaroli and Reimer, 2012:243). A case study is an in-depth study of one particular, where the case may be a person, a group of people, a school, a community, or an organisation.

In a nutshell, as argued by Kothari (2004:113), the case study method is a very popular form of qualitative analysis and involves a careful and complete observation of a social unit, be that unit a person, a family, an institution, a cultural group or even the entire community. It is a method of study in depth rather than breadth. The case study places more emphasis on the full analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their interrelations. It deals with the processes that take place and their interrelationship (Kothari, 2004:113).

There are several categories of case studies. Yin (2003) notes three categories, namely exploratory, descriptive and explanatory case studies. First, exploratory case studies are set to explore any phenomenon in the data which serves as a point of interest to the researcher. Second, descriptive case studies are set to describe the natural phenomena which occur within the data in question. The goal set by the researcher is to describe the data as they occur. Third, explanatory case studies examine the data closely both at a surface and deep level to explain the phenomena in the data.

Case study research design is advantageous in the sense that it can “close in” on real-life situations and test views directly about phenomena as they unfold in practice” (Flyvbjerg, 2006:235). Lindvall (2007) agrees and states that the most obvious advantage is that the case study provides a detailed analysis of the individual case. Flyvbjerg (2006) further argues that there are some disadvantages concerning case study research, these are: 1) One cannot generalize from a single case; 2) The case study is most useful for generating hypotheses, whereas other methods are more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory building; 3) It is often difficult to summarize specific case studies; 4) The case study contains a bias toward verification. Miles (1979) also critiques case research because collecting and analysing the data is a highly labour-

intensive activity, often causing much stress, even for skilled research staff. Furthermore, Merriam (2009) critiques the case study that although a rich, thick description and analysis of a phenomenon may be desired, a researcher may not have the time or money to devote to such an undertaking.

Despite having so many disadvantages, a case study method was used in this study as it allows the researchers the flexibility of focusing on a small group of subjects to draw data for the study (Kothari 2004: 116). The research approach will be based on a descriptive qualitative research study model and this will allow the researchers to collect and analyse data.

3.2.2 Qualitative Research Approach

The research study employed the qualitative research approach. The idea behind choosing the qualitative approach for this study is that this approach is flexible, therefore, the research questions may be changed at any time and it allows open open-ended and inductive style of questioning and observation which is interactive and humanistic.

Qualitative research is concerned with qualitative phenomena, that is, phenomena relating to or involving quality or kind. Qualitative research is further defined by Denzin and Lincoln (2005) as a situated activity which locates the observer in the world. It involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world, that is to say, qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research therefore implies the qualities of entities on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:10). Creswell and Creswell (2017: 27) point out that qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social

or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participants setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. In other words, the process of qualitative research is largely inductive, the inquirer generates meaning from the data collected in the field (Creswell and Creswell, 2017:33).

Qualitative research has some characteristics that are identified by most researchers and scholars as key to understanding its nature. The following are some of the characteristics of qualitative research: Firstly, the focus is on process, understanding and meaning. The overall purposes of qualitative research are to achieve an understanding of how people make sense of their lives; explain in detail the process of meaning-making and describe how people interpret what they experience. Secondly, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. This is in line with what Weinreich (2009) argued by indicating that the purpose of qualitative research is to provide research with the perspective of target audience members through immersion in a situation and direct interaction with the people under study (Clayton, 2010). This is advantageous in the sense that the researcher can expand his or her understanding through non-verbal and verbal communication, process data immediately, clarify and summarize material, check with respondents for accuracy of interpretation and explore unusual and unanticipated responses. However, this has some shortcomings and biases that might have an impact on the study (Merriam, 2009: 15). Results from this situation may differ to a certain extent depending upon the individual conducting the research. Thirdly, the process is inductive, that is, researchers gather data to build concepts, hypotheses, or theories rather than deductively testing the hypotheses (Merriam, 2009:15). Fourthly, it has multiple sources of data. That is to say, qualitative researchers generally choose to collect the required data from various sources

such as interviews, documentation, and observations, rather than relying on one source data (Creswell, 2013). Fifthly, the natural environment or natural setting. That is to say, the qualitative researchers collect data at the locations where participants experience the problem or issue to be studied. Qualitative researchers do not change the environmental settings and activities of the participants. Information is gathered by talking directly to people and seeing them act directly in a natural context (Creswell,2013)

The study investigated the roles of PEAs from the PEAs perspective that promote teacher continuous professional development, what they do to promote teacher professional development and also the perception of teachers on the roles of PEAs in teacher continuous professional development in the selected district of Machinga. It looked at the practices of PEAs and whether they are in line with the government policies that guide supervisory and advisory services in Malawi.

The reason why the Qualitative Research Approach was chosen was that it was convenient for researching issues about policy versus practice. Qualitative research methods are advantageous in the sense that they are more flexible, that is, they allow spontaneity and adaptation of the interaction between the researcher and the study participants. In addition, the relationship between the researcher and participants is less formal than in quantitative methods. Participants are free to respond more elaborately and in greater detail and in turn, the researchers have the opportunity to respond immediately to what participants say by tailoring subsequent questions to information the participants have provided.

3.3 Study Site, Population and Sampling Procedures

The study was conducted in all the 12 education zones in Machinga Education District except 2 zones that were on a public holiday when it was scheduled to meet them and the other 2 zones that were formed when a data collection schedule/plan was already made. The population comprised of the teachers, Headteachers, and PEAs within the district sampled. Kothari (2009) defines population (or universe) as a group in which the researcher is fascinated in acquiring information upon which generalization and conclusions can be drawn afterwards. In this sampled district all the zones were sampled and some selected schools (mainly those at the TDC) were sampled. It is not necessary to collect data from everyone in a community to get valid findings even if it were possible, hence having a sample. Ary et al (2010) define a sample as a subset of the population from which the researcher wants to generalize. In qualitative research, a sample which is a subset of the whole population is used for any given study. Sampling as defined by Kumar (2011) is “the process of selecting a few (a sample) from a bigger group (the sampling population) to become the basis of estimating or predicting the prevalence of an unknown piece of information, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group”. Kumar (2011) further argues that the underlying principle in sampling is that a relatively small number of units if selected in a manner that genuinely represents the sampling population, can provide - with a sufficiently high degree of probability- a fairly true reflection of the sampling population that is being studied (Kumar, 2011:166). He continues to point out that the basic objective of any sampling design is to minimize, within the limitation of cost, the gap between the values obtained from one’s sample and those prevalent in the study population (Kumar, 2011: 166).

Creswell and Poth (2018:157) give three principles when selecting a study sample, namely, the choice of who to select as participants for the study; the particular type of sampling technique

and the size of the sample to be selected. On the other hand, Leedy and Ormrod (2015:279) as well as Maree (2016:85) argue that the selection of the sample should be directed by the research questions.

In this research study, **Purposive Sampling** and **Accident (Convenient) Sampling** were used to collect data.

3.3.1 Purposive sampling

This is a technique of sampling where the researcher makes a judgment as to who can provide the best information to achieve the objectives of the study. The researcher goes to those who are likely to have the required information and are willing to share it (Kumar, 2011:167). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) point out that purposive sampling means that the study's participants are chosen based on the purpose of their involvement in the study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). So, it is used for the selection of participants. In this type of sampling technique, the participants were selected based on their experience, expertise, profession or position (Cohen et al, 2007). Du Plooy-Cilliers et al (2014:142) claim that purposive sampling identifies people with certain characteristics related to the answers that will address the research questions. Therefore, in this investigation, the researcher selected participants who are knowledgeable about PEAs. From the district identified, some PEAs, selected head teachers /deputy Headteachers and teachers were considered depending on the positions they hold in Education and the involvement and experience they possess in organising Teacher Profession Development (MOE,2007, MOE, 2008). Gender was another factor to consider so that there was enough female representation. The experience of teachers will also be considered. The teachers were selected from each class, that is, from standard 1 up to 8 making 8 teachers in a focus discussion group.

3.3.2 Convenient sampling.

Etikan et al. (2016:2) define convenient sampling (also known as Haphazard Sampling or Accidental Sampling) as a type of non-probability or non-random sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the study. Kumar (2011: 167) also argues that accidental sampling is based on convenience in accessing the sampling population. The subjects are selected just because they are easiest to recruit for the study and the researcher did not consider the subjects that are a representation of the entire population. Despite this method attracting bias in the selection, it is affordable and easy and the subjects are readily available (Etikan et al.: 2016).

In this study, the schools that were easily accessible, mainly centre schools located at the TDC were reached, thereby saving time and financial resources as well as making sure more time is given to each participant to respond. Below is the table indicating total number of participants involved in the study:

Table 1: Number of the participants

Category of participants	Number of Participants
PEAs	10
Headteachers	12
Teachers	96

3.4 Data Collection Methods

The expression data Collection has been defined by different researchers and scholars. Kabir (2016:202) defines data collection as the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses and evaluate outcomes. Kabir (2016) points out that the main

goal of data collection is to capture quality evidence that then translates to rich data analysis and allows the building of a convincing and credible answer to questions that have been passed. In other words, it captures quality evidence that allows analysis that will lead to the formulation of convincing and credible answers to the research questions that have been posed.

Data collection is further defined as the process of gathering the desirable information carefully, with the least possible distortion, so that the analysis may provide answers that are credible and stand to logic (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006). It is therefore a process of collecting information from all the relevant sources to find answers to the research problem, test the hypothesis and evaluate the outcomes.

3.4.1 Sources of data

Data collection is very important in statistical analysis. In research different methods are used to collect data and all of them fall into two categories or types, namely, Primary Data and Secondary Data (Douglas, 2015).

3.4.1.1 Primary Data

Primary data is the data gathered by the researcher first-hand, that is, the data has been collected from first-hand experience (Kabir, 2016:204). The researcher collects such data on purpose and can be collected using a range of methods or techniques like surveys, interviews, focus groups and many more. The primary data has not yet been published and is more reliable, authentic and objective. It is not altered by human beings and its validity is greater. In addition, primary data is factual, original, real-time and collected intending to find a solution to the problem (Ajayi, 2017). Goyal (2022) defines primary data collection as raw data collection collected from a source. It is a process of collecting original data collected by a researcher for a specific research

purpose. It can also be broken down into two parts; qualitative research and quantitative data collection methods (Goyal,2022:53).

3.4.1.2 Secondary Data

Secondary Data is the data that has been collected and compiled by someone and is more accessible to the public. This data is not pure as it has undergone many statistical treatments. It is the data used by the investigator from previous studies and other sources. Generally, secondary data includes books, records, biographies, newspapers, published censuses or other statistical data, data archives, internet articles, research articles or journal articles, databases, and websites (Kabir, 2017:205; Parveen and Showkat, 2017:3; Ajayi, 2017:5). Goyal (2022) argues that secondary data collection is the gathering of second-hand data collected by an individual who is not the original user. It is a process of collecting existing data, be it already published books, journals, and/or Internet sites. In terms of simplicity, it is much less expensive and easier to assemble (Goyal, 2022:54).

3.4.2 Data Collection Tools

Data collection tools are the devices or instruments used to collect data (Goyal,2022:55). Goyal further points out that it is important to determine the data collection tools because the research is done in different ways and for different purposes. The purpose of data collection is to capture quality evidence that allows analysis to lead to the creation of convincing and reliable answers to the questions asked (Goyal, 2022:55). Examples of data collection tools include checklists, questionnaires and interviews.

In this qualitative research study, guided by the research questions, the following three main data collecting techniques or methods were used to collect data: interviewing (face-to-face semi-

structured interviews), using available information (document analysis) and focus group discussion.

In this qualitative research study, guided by the research questions, the following three main data collecting techniques or methods were used to collect data: interviewing (face-to-face semi-structured interviews), using available information (document analysis) and focus group discussion.

3.4.3 Interviews

Interviewing is a technique that is primarily used to obtain an understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations for the attitudes, preferences or behaviour of people. An interview is a data-collection technique that involves oral questioning of respondents, either individually or as a group (Chaleunvong, 2009). Interviewing involves asking questions and getting answers from participants in a study (Kabir, 2017:12). An interview is a face-to-face conversation between two people for the sole purpose of gathering information that is relevant to the purpose of the research. So, any person-to-person interaction, either face-to-face or otherwise between two or more individuals with a specific purpose in mind is called an interview.

Interviewing is advantageous in the sense that: 1) it is suitable for use with both literate and illiterate; 2) it permits clarification of questions; and 3) it has a higher response rate than written questionnaires (Chaleunvong, 2009). It has also some constraints a) the presence of the interviewer can influence responses; b) reports of events may be less complete than information gained through observations (Chaleunvong, 2009). In this study, the type of study interviews used was the semi-structured face-to-face interview (**See Appendix A and Appendix C**).

A semi-structured interview is a qualitative research method that combines a pre-determined set of open questions (these are questions that prompt discussion) with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular themes or responses further (KnowHow- Semi-structured interviews: Learning Resources for the Knowfife Partnership Hub, 2018). It is an interview that is more open allowing the investigator or the respondent to divert if an idea is to be pursued in more detail. A list of issues to be discussed was prepared well in advance before the interview **(see Appendix A and Appendix B)**. This helps in probing for clarification and further discussion of important and relevant issues that will arise during the interview.

Burgess (1984) points out that semi-structured interview by referring to it as a “conversation with a purpose”. It has the following characteristics: (1) the interviewer and respondents engage in a formal interview; (2) The interviewer develops and uses an interview guide **(see Appendix A and Appendix B)**. This is a list of open-ended questions and topics that need to be covered during the conversation, usually in a particular order; (3) The open-ended nature of the question defines the topic under investigation but provides opportunities for both interviewer and interviewee to discuss some topics in more detail. It often includes prompts to help the interviewee to answer; (4) The interviewer follows the guide but can follow relevant lines of enquiry in the conversation that may stray from the guide when they feel this is appropriate (KnowHow- Semi-structured interviews: Learning Resources for the Knowfife Partnership Hub, 2018).

Face-to-face interviews were advantageous in the sense that the researcher was able to read the non-verbal communications and reactions from participants which was essential in data analysis. In other words, personal interviews are advantageous in the sense that they involve personal and direct contact between interviewers and interviewees, as well as eliminate non-response rates,

but interviewers need to have developed the necessary skills to successfully carry out an interview (Fisher, 2005; Wilson, 2003).

In this study, the interviews were audio-recorded using a sound recorder and then transcribed. Recording helped to pick the exact points pointed out by participants. The semi-structured interviews were conducted involving the following participants: PEAs, head teachers or deputy headteachers. This was used in trying to solicit answers to all research questions. A paper questionnaire was prepared. This paper questionnaire is a data collection tool that includes a series of questions or instructions to collect information from respondents (Goyal,2022:57)

3.4.4 Focus group discussion (FGD)

In this study, focus group discussion was conducted for some teachers in all selected schools in the district under study. This discussion was used to answer or meet research question number 1 which wanted to solicit perspectives and views or perceptions from teachers on the roles of PEAs in Continuous Professional Development for teachers.

The focus group is a simplified method of data collection and is built around a questionnaire (See Focus Group Discussion Schedule in Appendix C). The purpose of the meeting is to draw out the participants' detailed answers to these questions (Goyal, 2022:59). Focus group discussion is a qualitative data collection method, meaning that the data is descriptive and cannot be measured numerically. As argued by Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006:304), “A focus group is typically a group of people who share similar types of experiences, but a group that is not ‘naturally’ constituted as an existing social group”. Kumar (2011: 130) further points out that in a focus group one explores the perceptions, experiences, and understandings of a group of people who have some experience in common about a situation or event. The purpose of this discussion is to use the social dynamics of the group, with the help of a moderator/ facilitator, to stimulate

participants to reveal underlying opinions, attitudes, and reasons for their behaviour. In short, a well-facilitated group can help find out the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of human behaviour. In this study, the purpose of choosing this approach was to evaluate or assess respondents’ perception or perspective on the role of the PEAs in teacher continuous professional development.

The participants of a focus group were chosen keeping in mind certain common characteristics that relate them to the topic of discussion like teachers who are more conversant with PEAs and Teacher Development Centres. The environment in a focus group was open and interactive so that the participants felt free to express their ideas and opinions.

The focus group discussions are advantageous in the sense that they are quick and relatively easy to set up; the group dynamic can provide useful information that individual data collection does not provide; they are useful in gaining insight into a topic that may be more difficult to gather through other data collection methods. The other advantage is that in focus groups there is a greater ability to obtain broad and detailed qualitative data (Acocella, 2011). On the other hand, focus groups can have some disadvantages. For instance, there can be disagreements and irrelevant discussions which distract from the main focus. In some cases, they can be hard to control and manage. In addition, it can be difficult to encourage a range of people to participate (Acocella, 2011).

In this research study, the discussion was controlled by the researcher and the participants were encouraged to participate by outlining the rationale for taking part in the discussion and the significance of the research.

The interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed. Recording helped to pick the exact points pointed out by participants.

3.4.5 Document Analysis

Document analysis was also used as a supplementary method to get the background information of the study. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents that are printed or electronic (Chizya, 2018:36). Mbanjwa (2014:40) points out that documents are used to confirm the reliability of evidence acquired through interviews. Furthermore, Maree (2016:90) argues that documents help to corroborate the evidence from other sources. Documents to be analysed in qualitative research include reports (Creswell 2014:190; Maree 2016:88) and the minutes of meetings (Creswell 2014:190; Maree 2016:88). Furthermore, Maree (2016:88) identifies letters, e-mail messages and faxes.

In this research study, school improvement plans, supervision reports, and minutes for meetings were analysed to check if they figured out the activities that are related to continuous professional development for teachers at the school or zone level.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis is a process for obtaining raw data and converting it into information useful for decision-making by users. Gray (2009:493) defines data analysis as a rigorous and logical process through which the mass of collected data in a study is given order, structure and meaning. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:367), and White (2005:168), qualitative data analysis involves an inductive process of examining, selecting, categorizing, comparing, synthesizing and interpreting data for plausible explanations to address the principal aim of the study.

In this research study, the qualitative data analysis was done with the re-playing of the audio-recorded interviews of participants to ensure they were audible and complete. Therefore, before

analysing the interview transcripts, transcription of all audio recordings was done into text. To avoid or minimize data loss or errors, the transcriptions were verified by allowing peers to crosscheck for any omissions or additions during the transcriptions (Morrow, 2005). Later transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis. As argued by Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis involves the process of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes within data that interpret the various aspects of a research topic. This method of analysis by Clarke and Braun (2017) consists of six steps which are discussed below:

Step 1: Familiarizing yourself with the data

The first step in the thematic analysis process is becoming familiar with the entire data set, which entails repeated and active reading through the data (Braun and Clarke 2006). The first stage involves careful reading and re-reading all transcribed texts to be familiar with the content of the scripts, and the themes and to think through possible coding schemes that could emerge out of the data (Polit & Beck, 2004). Familiarizing oneself with the entirety of the data set first provides a valuable orientation to the raw data and is foundational for all subsequent steps. For audio data that need to be transcribed, the process of transcription can be time-consuming but also serves as an excellent way to become familiar with the data (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

Step 2: Generating initial codes

As the first truly analytic step in the process, coding helps to organise data at a granular, specific level. Coding is the process of analysing qualitative text data by taking them apart to see what they yield before putting the data back together in a meaningful way (Creswell, 2015:156). It aims at reducing the data by sorting out the information transcript into manageable and meaningful transcript segments with the aid of a coding framework.

After familiarization work in step 1, notes are taken on potential data items of interest, questions, connections between data items, and other preliminary ideas. This phase of work generates codes and not themes. Boyatzis (1998:63) defines a code as ‘the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon’. After getting a sense of the initial coding from the data obtained, a reflection on the data is done to develop some potential themes that could address the research questions. Once coding has been done for the entire data set, the data is collated by code in preparation for step 3 which involves searching for themes. Codes of respondents for the qualitative data for this study were as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Codes for Participants/Respondents

Data Collection Instrument	Participants	Codes
Interviews	10 Primary Education Advisors	PEA 1 – PEA 10 (Where PEA 1 denotes interview with Primary Education Advisor from zone number 1)
	Headteachers from 12 primary schools	HT 1 – HT 12 (Where HT 1 denotes interview with Head teacher from school number 1)
Focus Group Discussion	Teachers from 12 primary schools (8 teachers per focus group discussion)	FGD1 - FGD 12 (Where FGD 1 = focus group discussion with teachers from school number 1)

Step 3: Searching for themes

This third step involves the researcher of the study to examine the coded and collated data extracts to look for potential themes of broader significance (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Themes are the main ideas in the transcripts. The process of theme identification is fundamentally active and interpretive. Themes do not simply emerge from the data (Varpio et al., 2017); instead, themes are constructed by the researcher through analysing, combining, comparing, and even graphically mapping how codes relate to one another. In inductive analysis, researchers derive themes expressly from the coded data, so the themes identified will be more closely linked to the original data and reflective of the entire data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Step 4: Reviewing themes

Braun and Clarke (2006) described step 4 as a two-level analytical process. In the first level of analysis, the researcher for the study looked at coded data placed within each theme to ensure proper fit. Reviews of all relevant codes and data extracts under each theme were done. Data within each theme should have adequate commonality and coherence, and data between themes should be distinct enough to merit separation (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun and Clarke, 2006). At this point, data extracts were re-sorted and themes were modified to better reflect and capture coded data. In this case, themes were possibly added, combined, divided, or even discarded.

In the second level of analysis, the researcher decides if individual themes fit meaningfully within the data set and whether the thematic map accurately and adequately represents the entire body of data (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Re-reading and revising codes and themes are expected parts of the analytic process. While this iterative process could theoretically continue indefinitely, King (2004) and Braun and Clarke (2006) recommended that the revisions could cease once all data items that appear relevant to the

study question have been incorporated into the coding scheme, themes are coherent, and additional refinements are not yielding substantial changes.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes

At this stage, the researcher defined and narrated a description of each theme, including why it is important to the broader study question (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The names of themes to be included in the final report were reviewed to ensure they were brief and adequately descriptive (Braun and Clarke, 2006). As argued by Braun and Clarke (2012), this is a good time to select data extracts to be presented in the final report that illustrate key features of themes and to create narratives surrounding them that provide context to explain their importance to the broader story each theme tells (Kiger & Varpio, 2020)

Step 6: Producing the report/manuscript

This final step involved writing up the final analysis and description of the findings (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Elements of the writing process had already begun through the processes of note-taking, describing of themes, and selection of representative data extracts in prior steps. King (2004:267) describes the final step of presenting findings as a ‘continuation’ of the analysis and interpretation that has already happened as opposed to a ‘separate stage’. He continues to point out that the final report should move beyond mere descriptions of codes and themes (King 2004). It should weave a narrative that provides a clear, concise, and logical account of not only how a researcher interprets the data, but also why his or her selection of themes and interpretation of the data are important and accurate (Braun and Clarke 2006, 2012). The aim of this stage mainly was to tell an intricate story about data in a manner meaningful to readers with

the ability to convince them about the “merits and validity of the analysis” (Braun & Clarke, 2006:93).

3.5.1 Data Triangulation

Various scholars have defined triangulation as the use of multiple methods of data collection to enable these methods to complement each other and to confirm that the data present common answers (Kahn and Best, 2006; Creswell, 2014; Leedy and Omrod, 2005). That is, data triangulation is the use of a variety of data sources, including time, space and persons, in a study. Findings can be corroborated and any weaknesses in the data can be compensated for by the strengths of other data, thereby increasing the validity and reliability of the results. It is where the researcher uses two or more data sources for the verification of the findings and results. This is considered to improve the quality of the data used for analysis as it will present issues from different perspectives and provide the opportunity for certain findings to be corroborated. According to Guba (1981), the use of different methods in a study compensates for their limitations and exploits their respective benefits. De Vos (2005) as cited by Dambuzza (2015:50) points out that the four types of triangulations are data triangulation, investigator or observer triangulation, theory triangulation and methodological triangulation. De Vos (2005) further points out that, data triangulation occurs when the researcher uses more than one method of data collection to generate data.

This research study employed data triangulation because it addresses the issues of trustworthiness. It serves as a method to verify or refute information and claims that will be made by the participants thereby increasing the researcher’s confidence about the findings of the study (De Vos, 2005; Dambuzza, 2015). In this study, the researcher used different data collection

methods, which included face-to-face interviews, and focus group interviews to be administered to different participants.

3.6 Trustworthiness of the Study

Maree (2007:80) states that when qualitative researchers speak of research “validity and reliability” they are usually referring to research that is credible and trustworthy. La Blanca (2010) then defines the trustworthiness of qualitative research as a demonstration that evidence for results reported is sound when the argument made based on the result is strong. Trustworthiness as pointed out by Lincoln and Guba (1985) is the way the researcher persuades the reader that the findings of the study are worth paying attention to. This concept promotes values and norms such as scholarly rigour, transparency and professional ethics within the research society (Rule and John, 2011). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the measures that are normally taken to ensure the quality of the research and its highest level of trustworthiness are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

3.6.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the ability of the researcher to produce findings that are convincing and believable (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). This means that the inquiry is carried out in such a way that the findings should be a true reflection of the reality of the phenomenon under study (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). To address credibility the following were done: (i) Triangulation of processes and lengthy interview sessions (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). In this case, different data sources were used like document review and face-to-face semi-structured interviews; (ii) Provision of thick descriptions in all chapters of this study paper (Rule & John, 2011); (iii) Use of peer debriefing and member checking (Maree, 2007) by soliciting support from my fellow students and

colleagues to check my interpretation of the data (critical peer checks) (Rule & John, 2011); (iv) During the interview, there was restating of questions, questions repetition, or questions expansion (Krefting, 1991); (v) Requesting participants to verify the accuracy of what had been reported about them (Rule & John, 2011). Transcripts were sent to the participants to check that they agreed with their accuracy. Such a checking technique decreases the chances of misrepresentation and guarantees viewpoints were translated correctly into data (Krefting, 1991); (vi) Sharing and discussing research findings with experienced practitioners (that is the research supervisor) who have a professional interest in them.

3.6.2 Transferability

Transferability means the findings of the inquiry can be applied or transferred to other contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Research findings, according to Maree (2007), should also be transferable, meaning that, should the same study be conducted in a different context with similar characteristics the findings should show similarities. Lankshear and Knobel (2004) state that transferability is achieved through producing detailed and rich descriptions of the contexts. A clear and rich description of the context is provided. Research instruments like interview questions and document review schedules are attached so that the researchers who are interested in the topic can replicate the study and use it in other contexts (Rule & John, 2011)

3.6.3 Dependability

This is the assurance that the findings are a result of authentic research (Maree, 2007) meaning that the findings should easily be replicated or repeated in other situations or circumstances (Rule & John, 2011). To address the issue of dependability, member checking was done (Maree, 2007).

In addition, the “research process was disclosed including limitations, researcher’s positionality and ethical requirements” (Rule & John, 2011).

3.6.4 Confirmability

Lincoln and Guba (2000) state that confirmability refers to the practice by researchers to go back to the research to verify whether or not initial interpretations by the researchers are correct. Confirmability is about making sure that the findings as interpreted by the researcher are correct and as reported (Charmaz, Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Concerning this study, to address both dependability and confirmability, a competent peer reader (the supervisor) read through to do an independent audit of the transcripts and analysed data (Rule & John, 2011). In addition, triangulation of data sources was done to reduce the effect of investigator bias (Shenton, 2004).

3.7 Ethical Considerations

From the point of view of many people, ethics are rules that help them distinguish between what is right and wrong (Qadhi, 2017:117). Qadhi (2017) further argues that societies have legal rules and laws that control people's behaviour, and laws exist to force people to accept the moral standards of society (Qadhi, 2017:117). Miller, Birch, Mauthner and Jessop (2012:14) defined the concept of research ethics in the social sciences as ‘the moral deliberation, choice and accountability on the part of researchers throughout the research process’. In this sense, research ethics is not just about receiving permission to conduct research from an institute or organisation; rather, it is the researcher’s constant consideration of respecting research participants throughout the research.

Ethics in research are very important, as consideration of them determines how the research is done and who forms part of the participants and setting (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). This also ensures that the participants are protected. Flick (2007) states that ethics should play a role in the researcher's considerations of how to plan a study, who the researcher wants to work with, and how the researcher should act in the field. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) mention the key ethical aspects of the research that is protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy and honesty with professional colleagues that need to be adhered to when embarking on the study. In this case, no participant must form part of the research study without their awareness and consent.

In this study, the researcher got permission to conduct the research from UNIMA, Education Department. He also requested permission in writing from the District Education Offices of the sampled districts. Consent by participants was granted through the signing of the consent forms. Further, the participants were informed that the findings will hopefully contribute positively towards the work the PEAs do and assist them in the promotion of teacher professional development.

Another key ethical consideration is securing confidentiality. To ensure that participants' personal information is protected, data excerpts were identified by pseudonyms. The anonymity and confidentiality of the participants were preserved by not revealing their names and identities in the data collection, analysis and reporting of the study findings. Privacy and confidentiality of the interview environment were managed carefully during the interview sessions, data analysis and the dissemination of the findings. The researcher had discussions with the participants that should they, at any point, feel uncomfortable and decide to no longer be part of the research; they may withdraw without any consequences (Haverkamp, 2005; Ndhlovu, 2016). That is to say, an

explanation was given to all potential participants that they would have a right to withdraw from the study at any time even after the informed consent had been signed. Consent to record the interview was also asked of them. In addition to this, the participants were informed that the findings of the study would be presented in such a way that they do not negatively implicate the participants as well as the researcher (Haverkamp, 2005; Ndhlovu, 2016).

Furthermore, protecting and securing data collected from research participants is another important key responsibility. All data collected from research participants was stored on a password-protected laptop thereby preventing other people from accessing the information. The audio recordings collected from the interviews would later be deleted after extracting important information from participants. **(An outline of communication to participants on ethical considerations is shown in Appendix D)**

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the research design and methodology. The study used the interpretive paradigm because it provides an in-depth approach to exploring the role of the PEAs in the continuous professional development of teachers in schools and zones. A case study design was used because it gives richness and in-depth information that helped to understand the role of the PEAs in the continuous professional development of teachers, a descriptive case study was used because it describes a phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred. The chapter also looked at the data generation methods, which were face-to-face semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. Issues of ethical considerations have also been explained. Finally, the chapter described how data was analysed and interpreted.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents and analyses the qualitative data collected on the role of PEAs in the CPD of teachers in Machinga District, Malawi. The audio-recorded data was transcribed into texts to make it easier to work. Through the thematic analysis approach, the transcribed data was identified into meaningful segments or codes that represented major ideas. The themes were reviewed and refined to ensure that they accurately represent the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

According to the data that were generated, there were four issues which study focused on: (i) perception of PEAs and teachers/headteachers on the role of PEAs in continuous professional development of teachers; (ii) practice of the perceived roles by PEAs in schools and zones (iii) organisation of the CPD trainings in the schools and zones by PEAs; and (iii) contextual challenges that PEAs face in implementing the CPD of teachers in schools. These are in line with the research questions. Discussed below is the report of the findings with some supporting evidence and quotes from the audio data.

4.2 Perception of PEAs and teachers on the role of PEAs in promoting teacher continuous professional development.

Within this theme, the first question that was asked was geared to understand whether PEAs understand the concept of continuous professional development. This understanding of the concept had a bearing on the perception of their role in facilitating continuous professional development.

4.2.1 Understanding the Concept of Continuous Professional Development:

The concept of continuing professional development (CPD) in education is often ill-defined, with the separate notions of formal training and on-the-job learning serving to confuse the issue further.

Out of the 10 PEAs that were asked to give their understanding of the concept of Continuous Professional Development, 9 of them gave almost the same definition with slight differences in wording but having the same meaning. PEA 4 described the concept of CPD as given below:

"CPD simply means trainings happening in schools in order to help teachers with different skills so that teaching and learning is conducted effectively in these schools"

The same view was also shared by another PEA 7 who said:

"CPD is a process where teachers are imparted with knowledge so that their profession should go high"

One of the ten PEAs gave a description which was different from the rest. The PEA defined CPD as:

"CPD means teachers should be moving in their day today work, not staying stagnant in one place. By so doing they should be supervised, they should receive some CPDs so that they can move from one place to another."

Though the PEA had a view of growth in the profession in his mind where he says a teacher should move and not be stagnant, the description was not all that explicit in defining the concept of CPD.

The key point in many descriptions given by the PEAs is that CPD is the process of imparting knowledge and skills to teachers for them to grow in their teaching profession. The descriptions indicate that during CPD, teachers share knowledge and skills that help them in their teaching profession. CPD increases the ability and quality of teaching. In doing so their teaching profession improves and they do not stagnate thereby becoming outdated. One of the PEAs had this to say:

" CPD means teachers should be moving in their day today work, not staying stagnant in one place. By so doing they should be supervised, they should receive some CPDs so that they can move from one place to another, they can grow in their profession so that work is made easy, and they are able to achieve whatever they are teaching."

In this sense, CPD helps avoid stagnation in teachers but makes them stay up-to-date and equipped in their jobs. These descriptions are in line with what Padwad and Dixit (2011) point out CPD as applied in education should be considered as a planned activity that is incessant with a working lifetime focus that is used to empower teachers. To them, the goal of such empowerment is to develop the personal and professional abilities at a first level, and at a second level to expand their knowledge, skills and practice. Therefore, CPD can simply be described as a process of maintaining the existing level and broadening the horizon of knowledge, skills and qualities needed to work as a professional.

The understanding of PEAs on the concept of CPD led to asking the PEAs, Headteachers and teachers to get their view/perception on the role of PEAs in the teaching profession through continuous professional development.

4.2.2 Perception of PEAs, Headteacher and teachers on the roles of PEAs in Teacher continuous professional development

One aspect that was considered by the research study worth soliciting views and inputs from PEAs was the perception of PEAs themselves on their role in the continuous professional development of teachers. PEAs were asked to give their views and understanding of their role in the continuous professional development of teachers in schools of their zones.

1. The role of the PEA is to supervise and advise teachers in schools within the zone:

Eight of ten PEAs mentioned that the role of the PEA is to supervise teaching and learning in schools under their respective zones and advise these teachers where necessary. Below are remarks given by one of the PEAs as a comment about this role:

“In my zone we do have CPDs in those subject areas where teachers are finding difficulties. The other role is by supervising teachers in order to find their strengths and weaknesses. When there more weaknesses at a particular school, it’s when need comes in now to conduct CPDs. We do involve headteachers so that those headteachers should try to plan CPDs at school level.” (PEA 7)

The other view was also shared by another PEA who said

“As an advisor my main role is to supervise the teachers as they are delivering the lessons in classrooms. As I’m supervising the teachers there are some areas that they do better and some areas that they are not doing better, they have some challenges. So, in those areas that they are not doing better, I do assist them instantly after supervising them, but some areas that need to organise an in-service training, mainly if the challenges are being faced by many teachers in schools in the zone.” (PEA 10)

The headteachers and teachers have the same view that PEAs are there as supervisors who monitor activities taking place in schools. When PEAs observe some challenges during school

visits, they advise teachers and headteachers professionally. Eight out of twelve headteachers and all FGDs had this view. Below are the remarks given by some of the headteachers and one of the FGDs during the interview:

“The role of the PEA is to supervise and monitoring the teachers, and conducting CPDs at school or zone level.” (HT 2)

“I think the role of the PEA is to assess or supervise or advise the teachers on the teaching process and also teaching professional ethics as such.” (HT6)

“The role of the PEA is supervising and monitor teachers if they are working according to the Standards. The other role is to assist in the challenges of teachers by sometimes demonstrating how to teach, or how to deliver lessons or giving a piece of advice to the teachers on how they can deliver lessons.” (FGD 8)

PEAs supervise schools where they observe lesson delivery by teachers, check teaching and administrative records for teachers and headteachers respectively and monitor all school activities. In this way, they monitor educational activities happening in the schools. This role as stipulated by PEAs, headteachers and teachers is in line with the role given by the government through the TDC management handbook which states that the PEA has the role of visiting schools regularly to guide, advise, mediate and support the teacher in a spirit of encouragement. PEAs as standards officers, the role mentioned agree well with what Muzata et al. (2020:101) outlined Standards Officers play many roles that include monitoring and advising teachers on teaching and learning, conducting general inspections of schools as regards quality management of human resources, material and financial resources. This role of supervising by PEAs plays a key role in the improvement of learning through the enhancement of teachers’ professional development (Sergiovanni, 1984).

2. To organise teacher CPDs and facilitate during CPD

This was one of the roles that was pinpointed by the PEAs. Four of the ten PEAs that were interviewed had the view that PEAs are there to organise CPD training as well as facilitate during CPDs as per this remark given by one of them:

“The roles of the PEA in continuous professional development are: 1. To assist in facilitating CPDs some of the concepts which teachers find problems in the profession. 2. To monitor educational activities happening in schools.” (PEA 4)

As alluded to by one of the PEAs, the need to organise the CPDs comes when they go to schools and supervise. The PEA had this to say:

“In my zone we do have CPDs in those subject areas where teachers are finding difficulties. The other role is by supervising teachers in order to find their strengths and weaknesses. When there more weaknesses at a particular school, it’s when need comes in now to conduct CPDs. We do involve headteachers so that those headteachers should try to plan CPDs at school level.” (PEA 7)

Headteachers and teachers on their part have a similar view that PEAs are the ones that facilitate during zone level CPDs or INSETs as well as organising these INSETs for teachers. Eight of the 12 headteachers and 4 of the 12 FGDs had pointed out this role that they perceive the PEAs are supposed to do to promote continuous professional development in the zone. Below are the remarks given by one of the headteachers:

“The role of the PEA in CPD of teachers is to facilitate to teachers and mostly to advise or to help teachers mainly where they are finding problems when they are teaching in various schools. Sometimes during supervision, he or she can find problems in teachers as they are teaching and he or she can take those problems and organise CPD at zone level. And sometimes the PEA can show or can facilitate or can demonstrate other methods of teaching to teachers within the zone.” (HT 7)

The same view was also shared by another FGD which said:

“Conducting refresher courses to teachers who are finding some challenges in their teaching profession so that those teachers should be in line with their friends. Conducting CPDs at school level and facilitating during these CPDs” (FGD 10)

During school visits, PEAs identify some challenges or issues that make them think of organising CPDs for teachers at the school level. If the challenge has been observed in many schools, they organise zone-level CPD. The PEA does organise zone-level CPDs where some teachers from all schools come to get trained or oriented on specific areas where teachers face challenges. The PEAs can be facilitators or can choose other capable teachers to facilitate on their behalf.

This role given by PEAs, headteachers and teachers is in agreement with what is given by the government in the TDC management handbook which states that PEAs have a role in organising school-based training for Heads, teachers and stakeholders (TDC Management Handbook, 2011:73). The findings of the study by Meke (2012:212) pointed to PEAs as being the main organisers, followed by the NGOs. She further states that organising CPD activities for teachers is one of the terms of reference for PEAs. They are required to initiate as well as be involved in CPD activities taking place in their zones. However, the study noted that the number of CPDs that PEAs initiate is minimal compared to the number of CPDs they get involved in because the government or NGOs have asked for their service in the organisation of those CPDs. The reason behind this is that TDCs are not funded; therefore, it is difficult to conduct frequent training as CPDs have monetary implications. In addition, PEAs are viewed as facilitators of CPD mainly in zone-based CPDs. PEAs are better placed to be facilitators in In-service training meant for

primary school teachers because of their experience in the teaching profession and their level of promotion (Meke, 2012:219).

3. To mentor or coach teachers in schools they visit:

The findings have shown that PEAs have a role in conducting coaching or mentoring sessions in schools. Two of the ten PEAs mentioned this as their perceived role of PEAs in the zones

“As an advisor I monitor the teaching and learning in my schools. I conduct experience sharing meetings in teaching with different schools on different topics that they find difficulties. Another role of the PEA is conducting classroom observations by coaching or mentoring”. (PEA 5)

One of the headteachers supports this in the sense that PEAs can mentor the teachers by demonstrating the methods of teaching to teachers within their respective. This is what he said in his remark:

“And sometimes the PEA can show or can facilitate or can demonstrate other methods of teaching to teachers within the zone.” (HT 7)

In coaching, they do the pre-planning of lessons together with the teachers, observe the delivery of planned lessons by the teachers and then evaluate the lesson delivered together with the teachers at the end.

This finding is in line with the transitional model of understanding CPD (Kennedy 2005) where teachers (including PEAs as supervisors and experienced teachers) work together to support each other's professional growth through peer coaching and mentoring using experimentation, observation, reflection and exchange of ideas and shared problem solving (Showers and Robinson, 1991; Meke, 2012). Peer Coaching is the school system in which expert teachers or

supervisors closely assist less experienced teachers through systematically organised discussions on how to ease in-job challenges (Bell & Gilbert,1996). In this peer coaching process, skilful, knowledgeable, and committed teachers, these are the PEAs, are required to create a conducive school environment of stable interpersonal relationships, collegial atmosphere and collaboration.

4. To make sure that prescribed education standards are being followed by both teachers and headteachers:

The study found that PEAs make sure that education standards are being followed in schools.

“If PEAs are not visiting schools regularly, the schools can die in terms of standards.”
(PEA 2)

Teachers and headteachers had the same perception over the PEAs on promoting teacher continuous professional development that they are there to make sure that national educational standards are being followed in schools for quality education. Below are the remarks given by headteachers and teachers about PEAs role on teacher CPD:

“Another role is tracking how teachers are teaching following the curriculum. If they find that teachers are not following the syllabuses, they conduct the CPD on how this has to be done. As well as on continuous assessment, they make sure that all teachers in the zones are really doing their job in continuously assessing their learners and give feedback.” (HT 12)

“The PEA checks the progress of the education standards in the schools in his or her zone, he is there to assist teachers on how to impart knowledge to learners.” (FGD 9)

The PEAs are the quality assurance or standards officers. As quality assurance officers they make sure that MOE's National Educational Standards (NES) are followed by schools, that is, by both teachers and headteachers. The PEAs check whether the NES are being followed in schools to maintain the quality of education. They orient schools on the requirements in the NES.

This agrees well with what Ayeni (2012) contends that for instructional supervisors to be effective they need to perform their specialized roles effectively. He highlights some of the specialized roles of instructional supervisors as; checking and ensuring adequate preparation of lesson notes, checking and ensuring adequacy of scheme of work and record of work. So, PEAs are supposed to monitor how the curriculum is delivered in schools. Consequently, PEAs that have sufficient technical skills are most likely to detect any deficiencies in teachers' professional records and be in a position to promptly and humanely advise the concerned teachers. Through supervision, the advisor may become aware of weaknesses in the delivery of the curriculum in a particular school and address the issues by providing further training (DIAS Handbook for Inspectors and Advisors, 2015:45).

5. To act as a role model to teachers and headteachers:

The study has found that PEAs act as role models to teachers in their undertakings as per the remark given by one of the PEAs:

"My role is to serve as a role model first and then as a facilitator, whenever we are meeting them whether personally or as a group, whenever we have identified the challenges and then we have to call them at a forum and sit down with them, share the challenges and look at the way-forward so that those problems should be eliminated in order to improve the quality of education." (PEA 8)

This view was given by PEAs only who view themselves as ones that should be exemplary to teachers and headteachers when conducting day-to-day business. As role models, their conduct and words show good examples to teachers in terms of teaching methodologies, leadership and management of the zone and so forth. They are the mirror and therefore the teachers and the headteachers emulate their good example. According to Emilia et al. (2023:55), a role model is defined as someone who is known, has excellence, and is in a position that others aim to achieve or consider as an example. Manju (2018:1522) points out that a role model is a person who inspires and encourages us to strive for greatness, live to our fullest potential and see the best in ourselves. A role model is someone we admire and someone we aspire to be like. We learn through them, through their commitment to excellence and through their ability to make us realize our personal growth.

6. PEAs are innovators of new ways of the teaching profession:

PEAs are viewed by teachers as the ones that are innovative in the teaching profession. That is to say, the ones that can create new ways of teaching. The remark given by FGD 7 indicates this as per the comment below:

“To bring in new ideas and interventions how teachers can perform their work.” (FGD 7)

This is in line with what Serdyukov (2017) points out that education should not only be extensive, affordable, and excellent but should also be continually developing to address the demands of a quickly shifting and volatile globalized environment. The educational system needs to be designed to nurture creative and critical thinkers who focus on contributing knowledge to society. According to OECD (2010), problem-solving, knowledge building,

collaboration, expert engagement, self-regulation, and the application of technologies are the learning outcomes of 21st-century education. The evolution of the education system must be systemic, consistent, and able to be measured. OECD (2016) further emphasized that innovation in education is vital to bring improvement in education. Innovation will improve the nation's efficiency and also outcomes in learning quality and equity.

Most of the literature defines innovation as the implementation not just of new ideas, knowledge and practices but also of improved ideas, knowledge and practices (Kostoff, 2003; Mitchell, 2003). The most widely accepted definition of innovation comes from the Oslo Manual (OECD/Eurostat, 2005). This defines innovation as “the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service) or process, a new marketing method, or a new organisational method in business practices, workplace organisation or external relations”. According to the OECD (2016), innovation is defined as the execution of new and better ideas, practices, and bits of knowledge. Educational innovations can improve learning outcomes and the quality of education provision. For example, changes in the educational system or teaching methods can help customize the educational process (OECD, 2016:13). Therefore, PEAs are viewed as the ones that can execute new and better ideas or methods of teaching to improve teaching and learning in the zone.

7. To provide guidance and counselling to teachers and headteachers.

Another role that the study found as per the perception of teachers and headteachers was that PEAs provide guidance and counselling to teachers in their respective zones. Three of the twelve headteachers and four of the twelve FGDs gave this. Below is the comment given by one of the headteachers:

“The role of the PEA is to assist teachers or to give guidance and counselling to teachers who are not hardworking. Apart from that the role of the PEA is to supervise the schools in order to see the challenges of those schools and calling headteachers to address those challenges.” (HT 11)

The same view was also shared by these two FGDs who gave the remarks below:

“The role of the PEA is to give guidance where necessary to the teachers, for example, areas to improve and how to improve. In addition to that, he or she is also entitled to supervise what is to be done.” (FGD 5)

“Provide guidance and counselling to teachers so that they work effectively and in a conducive environment for teaching and learning.” (FGD 7)

PEAs who are the principals of the zone act as instructional leaders and then provide guidance support and accountability for the improvement of instruction leading to increases in learner achievement because they work tirelessly to ensure that quality teaching and learning takes place in their cluster (Jazzar, 2004). The Headteachers' and teachers' view shows that the duties of PEAs are to ensure that teachers in schools follow the relevant curriculum and to provide professional guidance and mentorship in the teaching profession of teachers. The views seem to support the fundamental responsibility of PEAs as given in the TDC Management Handbook (2011). This is also in line with what Adewale et al. (2014:75) indicated that supervision involves guidance, support and continuous assessment to develop teachers professionally and ultimately advance teaching and learning. Adewale et al. (2014:76) further argue that the performance of teachers and learners improves when instructional supervision combines with guidance. So, the supervisory role of PEAs in the zone is to provide guidance and counselling to

teachers on professional matters thereby promoting teacher continuous professional development.

In a nutshell, all the views given in this section indicate that the PEA has a role as a facilitator, a mentor/ coach, a role model and a supervisor/advisor over a teacher's continuous professional development. The views further indicate that the PEAs know their role in the continuous professional development of their teachers in the schools within the zones they serve. In other words, all PEAs, Headteachers and teachers had a good understanding of the primary role that PEAs have in enhancing teacher continuous professional development in the schools. The perceptions given are in line with the roles outlined by the Ministry of Education policy in the TDC Management Handbook: A Guidebook for Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) and Teachers in Malawi (2011) as well as in Guidelines for the Management of Education Functions Devolved to District Assemblies (2008). This indicates that PEAs, Headteachers and Teachers have a better view of the roles of PEAs in teacher continuous professional development.

4.3. The actual practice of PEAs in Schools and Zones about promoting teacher continuous professional development.

After understanding the perceptions of PEAs, Headteachers and Teachers on the role of PEAs in the continuous professional development of teachers, the research wanted to find out if what is being said about the roles of PEAs in continuous professional development for teachers is what is being practised by them in their respective schools and zones. This involved asking headteachers and teachers to understand their views on what is being practised by PEAs on the ground.

As per the policy, the PEAs are there to promote continuous professional development through their school visits where they carry out supervision by conducting lesson observations, checking teachers' records, and checking the general school atmosphere to see if standards are being met. Where standards are not met, they are supposed to assist teachers through coaching or mentoring. PEAs are also expected to conduct INSETs that are school-based or zone-based. The responses given by teachers in focus group discussions and headteachers through face-to-face interviews show that little is being done by PEAs on the promotion of continuous professional development of teachers. HT 12 had this remark as his comment:

"Some are doing and others not. They just come at the school asking headteachers, 'Are you okay here? Please give me the visitors book to sign.' In the visitors book they sign that they have supervised the school yet they have not done so."

This indicates that the extent of the work done depends on the seriousness, dedication, knowledge and skills of the PEA concerned.

Some PEAs do their job though not to a greater expectation and required standard. Some of the PEAs go to schools and conduct supervision but instead of sharing the observations with teachers directly, they leave the issues with headteachers to address them. HT3 had this to say:

"The PEA comes to the school, supervises teachers and gathers the challenges. He then discusses with the headteachers. He leaves the challenges to the headteacher in order to address them. In this case their role to develop the teachers directly becomes low."

In this scenario, it shows that the PEA do the supervision but instead of discussing with teachers the issues observed, he/she leaves them with the headteacher to deal with them. This reduces

their direct interaction with teachers. The approach that the PEA can use to deal with the issues can be different from the way the headteacher can deal with them. This greatly shows the PEA's attitude towards their job. Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) outlined that the disposition or attitude of policy implementers is a key factor that affects policy implementation. If PEAs have negative attitudes towards their job, or towards the teachers they serve, effective teacher continuous professional development cannot be implemented properly in their respective zones.

Some teachers also had the view that PEAs do conduct supervision though not in a professional manner and to the expectations of the teachers themselves. The relationship between PEAs and teachers in some zones is not all that good as per the view of teachers in this FGD 3:

"PEAs do their job yes, but sometimes they forget that they are our advisors. Instead of advising us sometimes they just criticize us. 'You don't know your work. What are you doing here?' Such criticism demotivates us." (FGD 3)

The group continued to say:

"They only forget that they are treating adults. They need to treat us as adults, there is no need to shout at us, but just to give a piece of advice, Mr. A this is your weakness can you do something please. Not saying, 'Why did you do this and that?' on top of his voice. We tend to get demoralized in this way." (FGD 3)

The sentiments given by teachers in FGD 3 agree with what teachers in FGD 5 said:

"Partially yes but sometimes you may see PEA doing something contrary. For example, instead of advising teachers he/she says some words which may frustrate teachers. Instead of advising teachers he/she may say: 'Is that the way you learnt at college? Is that the way to teach the learners?' In such a way teachers may feel frustrated." (FGD 5)

FGD 5 further said

"Other PEAs are lazy. They do not come to schools but stay in the offices. Some send headteachers to supervise on their behalf instead of them going for supervision."

What the teachers argued in the two FGDS is in line with what Wanzare (2005) revealed that some quality assurance and standard officers while carrying out teachers' assessments boss and harass teachers. This affects teachers negatively. As observed by Awauh (2011), inspection and supervisory services are essential elements of a system that has a direct impact on schools and teacher performance. Teachers with negative perceptions towards supervision are likely to have low job commitment, therefore, reducing productivity. Supervisors are supposed to advise teachers on the best practices in education management in the process of curriculum implementation (Muchanje, 2020).

The study further found that other PEAs fail to do their work in promoting teacher continuous professional development because of a lack of resources, long distances to schools, laziness and also being unfriendly as pinpointed by the teachers in the following focus group discussion:

"Partially yes. PEAs fail to meet their roles as they say they do not have resources; PEAs do not reach all schools because of long distances and inadequate resources; PEAs are busy doing other things that are not related to their work, so they fail to perform their core roles; Some roads to other schools during rainy seasons are impassable, so PEAs fail to reach them; it depends on how the PEA's dedication to his or her duty because other PEAs do manage while others who are not dedicated do not." (FGD 7)

The same view was also shared by another FGD:

"It is not actually happening. Normally it depends on the life style of that particular PEA of that particular zone. Some of the PEAs are friendly while others not. So, the performance might differ."

In school supervision, the main objective of the supervisor is to help improve teaching and learning. It is to make teachers and pupils realize the need to make good use of instructional time and for teachers to teach the right curriculum contents. Supervision plays a vital role in selecting materials of curriculum content to facilitate teaching and learning in assessing the whole educational process (Dewodo et al.,2020:33). But the study done by Zepeda and Ponticell (1998) indicates that teachers perceive supervision as a fault-finding agenda by supervisors. So, the behaviour of the PEAs as portrayed by teachers above agrees with the findings of Zepeda and Ponticell (1998).

In this research question of study, the headteachers were also asked to give their views on whether PEAs are doing their work according to their perception of the role of PEAs in the promotion of teacher continuous professional development. Their views were similar to what the teachers pointed out. They had the view that PEAs do their work but do not do it to the required standard. That is to say, they do not do much to promote the continuous professional development of teachers. Four out of 12 Headteachers commented that PEAs do not do much in their work. Below is what HT6 had to say:

“This is happening in this zone but what matters is degree how one can see it.” (HT6)

This agrees well with what HT8 remarked

Yes, they do but they do not do their work on high frequency as expected.”

Some PEAs visit the schools but because of laziness, they do not carry out the required supervision that can assist teachers to grow professionally. HT 12 had this to say in his comment:

"Some are doing and others not. They just come at the school asking the HT: 'Are you okay here? Please give me the visitors book.' In the visitors book they sign as if they have done school supervision yet they have not done so."

In this case, it is not in line with the modern concept of supervision which aims at the achievement of instructional objectives. This modern concept of supervision involves the working cooperation between the supervisors and the teachers for the improvement of instructional strategies. Wiles (1955) as cited by Ogunsanya (2022) explained that instructional supervision includes all the activities that lead to the improvement of teaching, related to improving human relations, in-service training and curriculum development. Supervision is designed to improve and increase teachers' capabilities, upgrade their knowledge and skills, give them support in their work, and improve their perception of students and learning. So, where PEAs just visit schools and do little of their role and to another extent where they do not visit the schools hinder the professional growth of teachers thereby compromising the quality of education in the district and the country as a whole.

From the arguments given by headteachers and teachers, there is little work done by PEAs to promote their relationship and hence improve the quality of teaching. The negative attitude of teachers towards supervision is a result of the way supervision is conducted by a layman who is not professionally trained as a supervisor but found their way into supervisory positions through promotions or other means. Our PEAs are also applying the traditional approach of supervision

which focuses on a fault-finding approach, where the supervisor goes to school to criticize and condemn teachers, not seeing anything good in them (Adenokun, 2000). This is contrary to education supervision. In the context of education, supervision refers to the roles played by an education officer (or supervisor) in being responsible and making sure that teachers do their work effectively.

4.4 How PEAs organise CPD training in the schools in their respective schools and zones.

In this research question, the investigator wanted to know how PEAs organise the CPD training for teachers in their respective schools and zones and to find out if teachers are involved in the organisation of the CPD training so that it becomes meaningful to them. It involved asking PEA, headteachers and teachers how CPD trainings are organised at the school level and zone level. From the findings, there are two types of CPDs for teachers that are organised within the zone where the PEA leads, these are, the school-based CPD training organised at the school level by the school management team and Cluster/Zone-Based CPD training organised at the TDC by the PEA and zone management team.

4.4.1 School-Based CPDs Training

From the findings, school-based CPD trainings are organised at the school level. All PEAs, Headteachers and teachers agreed that school school-based CPDs trainings are organised by the schools themselves. Below is what one of the PEAs alluded to:

“CPDs at school level are organised by schools themselves. The PEA is just invited to facilitate on certain topics.” (PEA 4)

It was further found that many schools have a CPD Committee which takes a leading role in organising CPDs for teachers within the school. One headteacher for one school had this to say:

“At school level, in every school we have the CPD committee which organise the needful areas from the teachers. So, after finding the challenges, they decide to address those challenges. They organise the CPD and then choose the facilitators to facilitate the CPD.” (HT 8)

When preparing yearly School Improvement Plans (SIP), CPD is budgeted for. After receiving a School Improvement Grant (SIG) from the government through District Education which has some funds for CPD, the CPD Committee and School Management Team (Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Section Heads) solicit topics from teachers to be tackled during CPD training. The remark given by FGD 12 indicates this process:

“At school level, when schools are preparing to be funded with school improvement grants, the headteacher gives us chance to have our proposal for CPD. So, in the process of gathering those things to be covered by SIG funds, we ask him to have a certain amount in order to have CPDs. After planning for SIP, we have a CPD committee that organises CPDs. As teachers, we think of some areas that we need to be assisted on accordingly. After getting may be a topic or topics the CPD committee sits down and discuss on how they can assist us. If they are not knowledgeable, they ask for a certain assistance from the PEA or even from anyone who can do that better.” (FGD 12)

All the PEAs also agree to this set up as alluded to by one of the PEAs:

“As government schools we receive school improvement grants (SIG). And from the grants we usually tell headteachers to plan for a CPD for the teachers. Schools sit down and look at the challenges they are facing and take one topic to discuss. So, in all schools at least they have one CPD for the teachers once in a year. In school based CPDs, they usually invite me to be the facilitator. I do co-facilitate with the headteacher.” (PEA 5)

After soliciting topics, facilitators (teachers) are identified within the school that can facilitate the topics outlined or facilitators can be identified from outside the school. Facilitators from outside the school can be the PEA or any other teacher from another school within the zone or the district. Below are some remarks given by one of the PEAs as his comments:

“CPDs at school level are organised by schools themselves. The PEA is just invited to facilitate on certain topics.” (PEA 5)

One of the headteachers, HT3, held the same view as he elaborated that:

“Facilitators are identified within the school amongst the teachers and sometimes we invite the PEA to facilitate if there is an item that require more clarification from higher authorities.”

The date for facilitation of the INSET or CPD training is set and facilitation is done. Where the PEA is not a facilitator, the PEA can be called to attend as an observer so that he/she emphasizes some of the concepts or ideas that are being covered but, in most cases, he/she is not called. The study has found that all the PEAs agreed on this and that they are not mainly involved in school-based CPD. If asked to come then they are either facilitators or observers in the CPD. One of the PEAs had this remark:

“So, in all schools at least they have one CPD for the teachers once in a year. In school based CPDs, they usually invite me to be the facilitator. I do co-facilitate with the headteacher.” (PEA 5)

He is in agreement with PEA 10 who had this remark:

“I only take part in school based CPDs if I’m invited. I can go and assist them in facilitating. If I’m not invited, I don’t go.”

The Headteachers had the same idea about the organisation of the CPD training at the school level that PEAs are just invited when needed. All of them had the same sentiment. Much of the arrangement is done by the school itself as explained below:

“Facilitators are identified within the school amongst the teachers and sometimes we invite the PEA to facilitate if there is an item that require more clarification from higher authorities.” (HT3)

Teachers in all focus group discussions gave the same arrangement that PEAs are invited when needed but most of the facilitation is done by some teachers within the school.

“A PEA may be involved if there is a role for him/her to play. For example, he/she comes in as a facilitator if there is a certain area whereby, he/she needs to help the headteacher in facilitating. But in most cases, he/she comes as a visitor.” (FGD 2)

In a nutshell, in School-based CPD training teachers take part in the organisation as well as contributing the topics which they find problems when teaching in their respective classes. This agrees with what Sharma et al (2011) point out that teacher development is most effective when it takes place at the place of work for the teacher, that is, at the school. This is because the teacher can readily see the context of any new ideas or skills learned. She or he can also apply the acquired skills, knowledge and attitudes in school.” Back, De Geest, Hirst, & Marie (2009), point out about school-based CPD that teachers within a school (or within several schools) jointly develop their professional skills. Examples include peer review and coaching, mentoring, study groups and communities of practice.

School-based CPD is one of the most popular approaches for teacher professional development (TPD) programmes (Bell, 1991; Banda,2012). As the name suggests, this is the approach that is

based on the notion that schools must meet to discuss problems facing them as individual schools. The key point of school-based TPD is that a school is a learning community and that there is expertise enough to plan and implement TPD programmes that are responsive to the school's needs (Bell, 1991; Banda,2012). Schools have everything that can support TPD activities. The meetings must take place at the school for every teacher to attend with ease. So, from the explanations given by teachers, headteachers and PEAs, many schools carry out the school-based CPD in which they are involved to a greater extent.

Craft (2000:20) points out that, the school-based approach to TPD aims at achieving a better match of professional development course to the needs and culture of professionals at a school as well as at having a direct impact on practice. The advantages of school-based teacher professional development include low cost, relevance to the needs and aspirations of the school and responsiveness to the problems (Guskey, 2000).

4.4.2 Zonal level CPDs training

These zone-level CPD trainings are organised by the PEA in consultation with the headteachers. Sometimes they are organised differently depending on zonal leadership, the PEA. In some zones, they have a CPD committee and organisation is done by this committee in collaboration with the PEA as alluded to by one of these PEAs:

“At zone level we have a CPD committee and we do meet at the TDC. In that meeting we discuss the challenges that have been encountered at a particular period of time. Then there we discuss and make a program that we should have CPD in order to solve the challenges we have met during supervision.” (PEA 3)

This is in line with what Phorabatho and Mafora (2013) point out that organising involves creating organisational structures that enable people to work together effectively towards achieving the organisation's planned objectives through the best utilization of resources (Lourens, 2012; Lussier, 2009; Smit et al, 2011). Van Deventer (2008) and Steyn (1999) suggest that when organising, CPD managers should, among other critical aspects, form steering committees, establish a CPD-linked organisational structure, delegate certain functions and, coordinate relevant activities to effectively put the programme into action.

Other zones in the sampled district have no special CPD committees. Instead, they use capable teachers in particular areas to make a plan for CPDs as alluded to by PEA 4:

"At zone level, what actually happens is, when I go round in schools doing supervision of teachers and see that many schools have similar challenges I come back and sit down. I identify teachers who are good in those challenging areas to be facilitators in the zonal CPDs. I invite them, then plan together the CPD and using zonal finances CPD is conducted."

Other PEAs, instead of having special Zone CPD committees, use headteachers as the zone management team that makes decisions on when to conduct CPDs. This is indicated by many PEAs as per the comment given below:

"When we go for supervision, we identify some issues. So, we come together with the headteachers and decide on how can overcome those issues. If the schools have some resources, they organise CPDs to be conducted at school level. If there are major issues in many schools, we organise CPD at zone level." PEA 6

The lack of CPD committees in some zones suggests that CPD managers who are the PEAs at the zone level, monopolize their role since there are no structures or committees formed to

oversee CPD for teachers. PEAs or CPD managers who do not organise effectively and those who centralize their role run a risk of becoming ineffective as a result of increasing workload, lack of cooperation and resistance on the part of their subordinates (Phorabatho and Mafora, 2013:621).

From the PEAs' explanation, Zone CPD training is initiated when they go to schools conducting school supervision, they identify issues or challenges. This makes them either call Headteachers or Zonal CPD committees (in zones where these committees exist) to plan together on how they can overcome the identified challenges. From there, they can either ask headteachers to conduct school-based CPDs or organise Zonal-based CPDs. Some PEAs use Zonal Improvement Grants (ZIG) to meet the cost of the CPD.

If funds are not available PEAs either conduct CPD without finances or do not conduct it at all. All focus group discussions (FGDs) and ten out of twelve headteachers commented about the organisation of Zonal level CPDs that zone level CPDs are not being conducted. One of the headteachers had given this remark as his comment:

"To be frank, most of the times we do not have CPDs organised by the PEA." HT 4

The same view was also shared by another HT 5 who said:

"No CPDs are being organised by the PEA at zone level."

Below are also the remarks given by two of the FGDs:

“Rarely CPDs are done at zone level. To be specific lately (nowadays) we do not have zonal CPDs.” FGD 1

“No CPDs are done at zone level but only at school level.” FGD 3

Those FGDs that were saying that CPDs are rarely conducted had knowledge that Zonal level CPDs were being conducted some years ago before 2020, mainly the ones that were being organised nationally during National Reading Program INSETs. FGD 9 had this comment on zonal-level CPDs:

“At zone level CPDs are rarely conducted. Many CPDs were being conducted before Covid-19 during National Reading Program. After that no CPDs are being organised by the PEA.”

From the responses given by the headteachers and teachers in focus group discussions, CPDs are rarely conducted in zones or not being conducted at all. This agrees well with the study done by Meke (2012) which noted that the number of CPDs that PEAs initiate, is minimal compared to the number of CPDs they get involved in because the government or NGOs have asked for their service in the organisation of those CPDs. This is because TDCs are not funded; therefore, it is difficult to conduct frequent training as CPDs have monetary implications.

When PEAs were asked to give documents supporting their sentiments that CPD training was being conducted in zones, none of them produced any supporting evidence. The non-availability of documents for review by PEAs to support their sentiments indicates that no or few CPD trainings are conducted by PEAs. In this case, PEAs only rely on the management meetings with Headteachers where they share supervision findings. They also rely on the CPD training that is being conducted at the school level using the School Improvement Grant. One of the Headteachers gave the remark below:

“For those PEAs that are doing their job, they ask headteachers to conduct these CPDs. If Headteachers find that a certain thing is difficult to them, they invite the PEA to go to the school to facilitate in the school-based CPD.” (HT 12)

The same view was also shared by another PEA 11 who said:

“CPDs are not conducted due to monetary issues. No money no CPD. CPDs conducted in schools the PEA is not invited and even not told that the schools are having CPDs.”

These comments show that CPDs at the zone level are conducted depending on the seriousness and dedication of the PEA to his/her job as well as the availability of the financial resources at the TDC.

In many zones of the district, CPD training for teachers is rarely conducted due to inadequate or absence of funds. The other factor that makes PEAs not organise the teacher CPDs is limited training for their job. The empirical data also evidenced that the majority of the CPD managers were not sufficiently trained to manage CPDs for teachers. This corresponds with other studies (Mafora and Phorabatho, 2011; Mizell, 2010; Mulkeen et al., 2005) that pointed to education managers often being marginalized and not receiving specific training and development related to the task of managing curriculum change implementation. One of the PEAs alluded that:

“The challenge I get when facilitating teacher CPDs is lack of skills. You know PEAs are just appointed and they don’t undergo any training. You just use previous experience.” (PEA 4)

4.5 The contextual challenges that affect the role of PEAs in facilitating CPD for teachers at the school or zone level

The PEAs face so many challenges when discharging their duty in promoting the continuous professional development of teachers. The study surfaced the following challenges that were pinpointed by the PEAs in the sampled district:

4.5.1 Inadequate literature books /support instrument or reference materials:

One of the ten PEAs, when asked to give the challenges that negatively affect their work of promoting teacher continuous development, had this as his remark:

“The other thing I can say is issue of textbooks. For this CPD to be well done, we require reference books to be used during facilitation of teacher CPDs.” (PEA 3)

What the PEA pointed out shows that their work is negatively affected as a result of inadequate literature books or reference materials that are needed during CPD training. PEAs are supposed to be equipped with enough information for them to assist the teachers. Some of this information is found in literature books that the PEAs can read and understand. The absence of these reference materials makes them unable to deliver enough content to the teachers. This is in agreement with what Carron and De Grauwe (1997:31) argued that the performance of supervisors depends on the availability and quality of support instruments such as manuals and guides. Furthermore, Certo (2006:13) points out that “supervisors can prepare themselves for the job by reading various books on management and supervision.” However, supervisors in most countries lack these helpful instruments. De Grauwe (2001:76) noted that, when these instruments are available in some cases, they are not more than circulars and administrative forms. Similarly, it is further indicated that the provision of support instruments such as manuals and guidelines in many cases proved to be inadequate and as a result, the supervisors are

“starved of useful information” (De Grauwe, 2001b:292). Therefore, inadequate information available to PEAs makes them fail to do their job of promoting teacher continuous professional development effectively.

4.5.2 Mobility challenge:

This mobility challenge was given by all PEAs in the sampled district. The challenge is mainly aggravated by: (i) the unavailability of motorcycles to some PEAs in some zones; (ii) the malfunctioning of motorcycles as they are very old and have been overused; and (iii) no provision of fuel or enough funding by the DEM’s office. Some PEAs, when asked to give the challenges that they face when carrying out their duty in promoting teacher continuous professional development about mobility, had these remarks as their comments:

“Another issue is that of malfunctioning of the motorbike. We need our motorbikes to go for service at least once in a year. Since I arrived here the motorbike has not been maintained or repaired. So, visiting 14 schools in the zone is a challenge.”

One PEA had lamented that he uses a bicycle cycling himself to and from schools during school visits:

“Apart from lack shortage of financial resources and laziness or lack of dedication of teachers who usually to their old practices, mobility is a challenge to me. Imagine that I do go to schools to supervise on a mere bicycle, cycling to and from myself as a PEA.” (PEA 8)

4.5.3 Schools that are located very far from TDC and are in hilly areas:

Another PEA had to relate this mobility challenge to the long distances they cover when visiting schools. Some schools are very far from the TDC. The PEA gave this remark:

“Another issue is that I have a school that is 45km away from this TDC and to go there and then come back, it’s a challenge. My motorbike is an old one, the oldest in the district. And most times I borrow a motorbike from someone so that I have to go for supervision. So, transportation is a problem. If I have to go to the nearest school, I have to use a bicycle. From here to the next school is about 9km, I do cycle.” (PEA 5)

In some zones, the geographical positions of many schools are far and in hilly areas which makes it difficult for some aging PEAs to reach them to assist teachers accordingly. One of the PEAs when asked to give challenges, this is what he had said:

“In addition, the zone has schools that are in awkward geographical positions as it is covered by hills. So, for me to move from here going down there, so many kilometres, I don’t go there most often. According to my age, moving on a motorcycle at such long distances, sometimes I don’t feel proper, so I don’t go most often to some schools because of their geographical positions.” (PEA 9)

This agrees very well with what FGD 7 gave when asked to state whether what they viewed as PEA's role in teacher CPD was what is in practice and what they expected PEA to have done more in their work:

“Partially yes, because they do not reach all schools because of long distances and inadequate resources. In addition, some roads to other schools are impassable during rainy season so PEAs fail to reach them. DEM’s office should appoint youthful teachers to be PEAs who can manage to travel to distant schools other than old ones who are already tired and cannot travel to remote schools that are in hilly areas.” (FGD 7)

Dittmar et al. (2002:4) indicate that expecting a supervisor to cover so many schools is difficult and even problematic if the roads are bad and long. In this case, the PEAs visit few schools if the schools are very far, hilly and with poor roads. Failure of PEAs to move within the zone affects

supervision of schools negatively thereby compromising the quality of education. To improve the supervisory service for the PEAs, the availability of transport is the first step. As, De Grauwe (2001:92) outlines, "recruiting officers and paying them salaries, without giving them the possibility to go out and visit schools is hardly a good investment" and without transport supervisors "remain in their office, without the possibility to visit schools." De Grauwe (2001) argues that in many countries transportation for visiting schools is not available and when available, used for other purposes (De Grauwe, 2001b:294). In this case, PEAs who have no good means of transport and have schools that are far, hilly and muddy roads remain in their homes or offices and this makes their work of promoting teacher CPDs come to a standstill.

4.5.4 Absence of PEA houses in some zones, absence of TDC halls and office:

Another challenge that surfaced by the study is the absence of the PEA house as well as the absence of the TDC hall and office. Five of the ten PEAs mentioned this challenge.

One of these PEAs gave this comment:

"For our zone, we don't have PEA's house. We do get accommodated outside the zone administrative centre. So, as we leave there, the house rent is high and to move from there to come here, it's a long distance. We need a PEA's house and a TDC hall. Apart from that, mobility is a challenge in the district. PEAs are using the old motorbikes which can breakdown at any time. This affects work of PEAs. If PEAs are not visiting schools regularly, the schools can die in terms of standards. Another issue is the TDC where we are here, we have just used the classroom for the TDC. It is a classroom which was supposed to be used by learners for learning." (PEA 2)

The absence of the PEA's house is making this PEA to move long distance to the TDC before he starts another long journey to schools to conduct his supervisory role.

The absence of the PEA's house is making this PEA move a long distance to the TDC before he starts another long journey to schools to conduct his supervisory role.

The second PEA further says that the long distance that he travels makes him utilize the greater chunk of the little ZIG given for fuel to travel from his residence to the TDC thereby making him unable to carry out his roles of promoting teacher continuous professional development as per the remark given below:

"I am not residing here simply because the zone is lacking the PEA's house. So, I commute from home to the TDC, which is a long distance. The money I am given through Zone Improvement Grant (ZIG), to me is not enough to carry a number of activities. Much of the money is mostly used in procuring fuel and motorcycle maintenance, so, I do not have spare money that I can use for doing so many activities that I am supposed to do as a PEA." (PEA 9)

In this scenario, the absence of PEA's house makes the PEA move long distances to and from the duty stations thereby consuming more time that could have been used in promoting teacher continuous professional development. The absence of a TDC hall makes the PEAs use structures that are not suitable for adult learning. There is the use of the classroom to act as TDC thereby depriving learners of learning in their normal classroom. One of the PEAs had this to say:

"The TDC where we are here, we have just used this classroom for the TDC purpose but it was supposed to be used by learners to learn in this structure." (PEA 2)

De Grauwe (2001) points out that to carry out their activities properly supervisors need a house, an office and some basic office equipment such as computers, filing cabinets and so on. In the absence of the computer, report writing will be difficult and time-consuming for the supervisors (De Grauwe, 2001a:13). Further, De Grauwe argues that "it is somewhat startling, that such are

relatively cheap items as filing cabinet is absent in so many offices”. So, the lack of these items and infrastructure hampers the activities of PEAs in promoting teacher continuous professional development.

4.5.5 Lack of adequate technical skills:

The challenge of lack of adequate skills by PEAs surfaced as they are made to start working with no induction or training at all. Many PEAs in the sampled district were taken on board on an administrative arrangement by the DEM’s office and have not been trained as PEAs either by the district or by the Ministry of Education through DTED. One of the PEAs had this to say:

“The challenge I get when facilitating teacher CPDs is lack of skills. You know PEAs are just appointed and they do not undergo any training. You just use previous experience.” (PEA 4)

The second PEA further outlined that she was forced to go to different zones to learn from long serving PEAs to get what they were doing. This PEA gave this remark:

“The other challenge is that I was not trained as a PEA. The first time I was appointed as PEA, I was given a very big zone. So being a big zone, I had to travel all the way to Mponda Zone and other zones in Zomba to interact with some of the oldest PEAs. I was talking to them and finding out how they were serving their zones. That’s how partially I learnt my work.” (PEA 5)

This makes them work without proper skills on how to promote the continuous professional development of teachers in the zone or schools. This is in line with what Ige (2012) argued that many curriculum advisors are incompetent because they lack the skill and pedagogical training

necessary for the job. In the Malawian context, the curriculum advisors are the PEAs and Inspectors. The lack of skills by these quality assurance officers negatively affects the quality of education. As a result, PEAs may become less confident when confronted with the task of training teachers and this may ultimately cause teachers to distrust and disrespect these PEAs. That is why Makaye (2015:54) argued, “Cluster coordinators need the crafted competency and literacy to effectively discharge their mandates”.

Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) hinted in their model which has formed the theoretical framework of this study that for policy implementation to be successful the policy implementers should have the technical skills and capacity to influence positive implementation of public policies. In this situation where PEAs are not fully trained in their job, the promotion of teachers' continuous professional development is hampered. So, PEAs need to be trained to perform their work effectively. This is supported by a study conducted by Tesema, (2014), in which he points out the need to provide supervisors with appropriate in-service training to improve their supervisory activities to develop their supervisory expertise, the necessary tools such as supervisory guides, and adequate funding for this training to eliminate supervision problems. It is also further confirmed by the study conducted by Goldring et al. (2020), which showed the need to develop the role of supervisors through training and development to provide academic support to teachers and increase the effectiveness of academic content and teaching methods, as well as the need to provide dedicated training for key supervisors and focus on meeting times, and for professional learning and continuous development supervisory skills to advance the global educational process. Scholars in the field of educational supervision recommended that supervisors should possess some working knowledge and skills to be able to provide the necessary assistance, guidance, and support services to teachers for improved classroom

practices (Glickman, Holland, 2004). PEAs as curriculum leaders should have a thorough understanding of contemporary approaches to effective teaching and learning so that they can effectively convey, provide and coordinate information about the latest ideas and approaches of subjects and assessment strategies to staff members.

4.5.6 More schools are allocated to one zone or one PEA

This is another challenge that the study surfaced. Two out of the ten PEAs pointed out that zones are having more schools. The following remark is the comment made by one of the PEAs:

“Another issue is that more schools are allocated to zones. We need to have a good number of schools that the PEA can manage to visit and supervise.” (PEA 2)

This challenge makes the PEA have large numbers of teachers to be supported. With many schools in a zone, few teachers are reached out during supervision or coaching/mentoring thereby compromising the continuous professional growth of all teachers in the zone.

A study conducted by the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) in 2001, reported poor supervision of schools and teachers in Namibia. The study argues that ‘supervisory staff has too many schools and teachers to cover to be able to visit them all regularly’ (De Grauwe, 2001: 143). This leads to weak supervision and support services to schools.

Discussing the school clusters, Giordano (2008:11) indicated that, school clusters are expected to accomplish a thousand different things and tend to be overburdened. The number of schools in which the supervisor is responsible greatly contributes to the workload of the supervisor. As

Carron and De Grauwe (1997:21) point out, “the increasing number of teachers and schools in recent years is not proportional to the number of supervisors”. In addition, Giordano (2008:137) outlines that assigning both administrative and pedagogical tasks to a single person in a cluster can undermine the goal of improving educational quality. PEAs are assigned both administrative and pedagogical tasks, so with many schools allocated to them make them get overstretched and in the end fail to promote teacher continuous professional development.

4.5.7 Inadequate operational funds for the PEAs

Findings indicate that the district provides inadequate financial resources to zones. In other words, there are inadequate operational funds for the PEAs to use in several activities at the TDC like conducting CPDs for teachers, and monitoring and supervision of schools under their jurisdiction. All the ten PEAs gave this as another major challenge that affects their operations that can promote teacher continuous professional development.

“Some of the schools are far from the TDC, about 22km, so to move a distance like that you need adequate fuel.” (PEA 2)

As alluded to by PEA 2, the PEAs if inadequately funded, will not get the required fuel for their motorbikes and maintenance of their bikes. The moment ZIG is finished the PEAs are left helpless in their work and may start using their little salaries for office operations as alluded to by PEA 3:

“The main challenge that we have is shortage of resources. The district education office does not provide us with enough resources like fuel so that we can go round the schools doing monitoring and supervision. After being given ZIG funds, if it is over, just know that you will be using own financial resources. And also, the motorcycles we are using are very old. So, when we receive ZIG funds, most of the money is for motorbike maintenance and procuring of fuel. It is not enough.”

Van Meter and Van Horn in their model outlined that funding is the cutting edge of policy decisions. Gerston (2004) explains that adequate financial resources enhance long-term planning, making staff arrangements, operationalizing policies and completing objectives. He further argues that the adequacy, timely release of resources and its efficient management is critical to the attainment of policy goals and objectives. Mnatwana (2014) affirms that a lack of resources is the primary obstacle curriculum advisors confront when observing and assisting schools. Malumbete (2021) further claims that insufficient financing has resulted in irregular school visits by curriculum advisors. The study of Haris et al. (2018) also shows the need to provide financial incentives to support supervisors push them to carry out supervisory operations and provide instructions to teachers to develop the educational process and become more efficient. Giordano (2008:109) pointed out that, school clusters are not “low-cost alternatives” and necessarily require resources to carry out their activities. De Grauwe (2001a:15) indicated that “the supervision service needs to be supported by resources and without such commitment, the impact of the service will be very little”. In other words, the government needs to invest heavily in the operations of the clusters or zones for them to yield intended good results.

The challenge of inadequate operational funds brings another problem of lack of lunch or meal allowances. PEAs move from their centres to schools to assist teachers in their continuous professional development. They lack funds to cater for their lunch when they go for supervision. In most cases, PEAs use their little salary to buy fuel and cater for their lunch. PEA 2 had this to say:

“And another thing is to say when the PEA moves to that area, he needs something to eat. Some of the headteachers do not even give the PEA some water to drink, so we need to have money to use on the way for food and the like.” (PEA 2)

The provision of adequate financial resources to PEAs can help them to cater for meals as they conduct supervision in schools. In this situation where PEAs are going hungry can demotivate them thereby making them fail to provide enough support to teachers in schools. This finding is in line with what Giodarno (2008:64) pointed out “Coordinators in some cases cover their travel expenses”. De Grauwe (2001:14) further points out that “lack of resources has many implications”. It causes a heavy workload and if this is combined with a lack of resources, the workload becomes difficult to manage.

Van Meter and Van Horn (1975), in their implementation model, emphasized that lack of resources in policy implementation is a major contributor to the failure of policy implementation. PEAs in zones cannot implement the policy on the promotion of teacher continuous professional development without the availability of required resources. To perform effectively, zones need heavy investment as there are additional levels of educational administration between the Ministry of Education and Schools.

4.5.8 Teachers are reluctant to change for the better after being assisted or advised.

This is another challenge that came out when PEAs were being interviewed. PEAs pointed out that teachers are reluctant to change for the better after being assisted or advised. In other words, teachers display laziness or lack of dedication. Today they are assisted, and tomorrow they repeat

the same mistakes. Four out of the ten PEAs mentioned this challenge. One PEA had this to say in his comment:

“The other challenge is that, teachers we have nowadays are not serious or not dedicated. Why am I saying so? Because, I might visit this school today and find a challenge, I usually tell them can you sit down and plan on how you can get rid of this problem. The other time I go there as a follow-up, I would see that same problem. So, if I talk to the headteacher, he would say I talked to the teachers, can you go and see. If I go into the classrooms, I see the same mistake. If I tell teachers, they would just promise that they would change. Come next time madam we are going to change. The other time you there, it is the same problem. So, I see no seriousness in the teachers.” (PEA 5)

The other PEA had this to say emphasizing the laziness and lack of dedication by many teachers after being mentored or advised by their supervisors:

“The main challenge is laziness of teachers or lack of dedication. We may discuss today, off they go and then you follow them, you find there are just slight changes. They go back to whatever they were doing.” (PEA 8)

In this case, teachers neglect to implement the instructions of the PEAs given to them either during supervision or during INSETs. This finding is in line with the study by Kristiawan et al. (2019), which emphasizes the need for the teacher to abide by the instructions of the supervisor to improve the teacher’s performance in carrying out the main task and to know educational shortcomings or errors that must be fixed while following the instructions of the educational supervisor.

4.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the researcher presented the findings of the research study. In the first place, the researcher has presented the findings on the understanding of PEAs on the concept of CPD and the perceptions of teachers, headteachers and PEAs on the roles of PEAs in teacher CPDs. According to the findings of this research study the PEAs narrowly have the view that CPD is the imparting of knowledge and skills that can help them in their profession. The findings also indicated that the PEAs have the following roles on teachers' CPDs: supervise and advise teachers; organise teacher CPD training and facilitate them; mentor or coach teachers; make sure that education standards are being followed; act as role models; act as innovators of new ways of teaching; provide guidance and counselling. Though these were their perceptions towards PEAs' roles, many PEAs were not meeting these roles. Some had poor relationships with teachers which led to teacher demotivation.

Secondly, the researcher presented the study findings about how PEAs organise and facilitate the continuous professional development training of teachers at the school or school level. According to the study the findings have indicated that rarely or no CPD training is done at zone level. If the CPD training has been organised at the zone level, teachers are not involved in the organisation process. CPD trainings are done at the school level once in a year using the SIG funds. These school-level CPDs are organised at school and PEAs are rarely invited to supervise or facilitate. In the organisation of school-level CPDs, teachers are involved and also asked to contribute topic areas to be covered during CPDs.

Thirdly, the researcher presented the findings on the contextual challenges that PEAs face in promoting or facilitating the continuous professional development of teachers. The study findings indicated the following challenges: inadequate literature books/ support instruments or

reference materials; mobility challenge; schools located very far from the TDCs and in hilly areas; absence of PEAs' houses and TDC halls; lack of adequate supervisory technical skills; more schools allocated to one zone or one PEA; inadequate operational funds for the PEAs; teacher reluctant to change for the better after being supervised or advised the PEAs.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter summarizes the study, draws conclusions and makes recommendations based on the conclusions.

5.2 Summary

The research study was carried out to investigate the role of PEAs in promoting the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of teachers in primary schools, policy versus practice. The study emanated from a concern that despite the institutionalization of the positions of Primary Education Advisors in Teacher Development Centres whose core duty was to promote the continuous professional development of teachers after the introduction of free primary education in 1994, teachers still ran away when PEAs themselves and inspectors when they visit the schools in their respective zones. Most teachers when visited by inspectors are rated below minimum standards though PEAs are still there that are providing supervisory and advisory services to them. In addition, there is also poor learner performance at all levels of the primary education system as compared to the performance of learners in other SADC countries.

The literature review shows that no thorough studies to look into the role of PEAs in the continuous professional development of teachers in Malawi have been conducted. This motivated the researcher to find out the role of these PEAs in continuous professional development comparing what is in policy and what is in practice. The study was guided by the following main research question: How do PEAs facilitate the continuous professional development of teachers at the school and zone levels? To answer this main question, the following were the research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers and PEAs on the role of PEAs in the Continuous Professional Development of teachers at the school level or zone level?
2. How do PEAs organise Continuous Professional Development trainings in the schools in their respective Zones?
3. What are the contextual challenges that affect the role of PEAs in facilitating CPD for teachers at the school or zone level?

The study was placed within the interpretive paradigm and used a qualitative research design based on the fact that it involves detailed verbal descriptions of characteristics, cases, settings, people or systems obtained by interacting with, interviewing and observing participants (Thomson, 2007). The research study aimed at elucidating the perceptions of teachers and PEAs on the role of PEAs in the continuous professional development of teachers in primary schools in education zones in the Machinga district, that is comparing what is in the policy and what is practised in the ground. Qualitative data collection was done through conducting face-to-face interviews with PEAs and headteachers and focus group discussions were done with teachers. A total of 10 PEAs and 12 headteachers were interviewed. The researcher conducted 13 focus group discussions with teachers from various schools where TDCs were located.

5.3 Conclusions

5.3.1 PEAs, Headteachers and Teachers' perceptions of the roles of the PEAs in the continuous professional development of the teachers.

Firstly, it has emerged from the study that the PEAs have a narrow view of the concept of continuous professional development. This narrow view is just looking at CPD as an in-service training for teachers that is conducted at the school level or cluster/zonal level. The narrow view considers CPD as the imparting/ acquiring of some specific sets of skills and/ or knowledge to deal with some specific new requirements. Their narrow understanding implies that the PEAs have a limited way of promoting teacher continuous professional development in their respective zone. Teachers are not given the needed support hence lowering their teaching quality. The broad view considers CPD as a much deeper, wider and longer-term process, in which professionals continuously enhance not only their knowledge and skills, but also their thinking, understanding and maturity; they grow not only as professionals, but also as persons; their development is not restricted to their work roles, but may also extend to new roles and responsibilities (Padwad & Dixit, 2011:7). Understanding of the broader aspect of the CPD will enable PEAs to assist teachers accordingly hence improving the education standards.

Secondly, the findings have shown that almost all the PEAs, Headteachers and Teachers had better perceptions of the roles of the PEAs in the continuous professional development of the teachers. They viewed PEAs as supervisors, organisers of CPDs at the zone level as well as facilitators, teacher mentors or coaches, role models to teachers, innovators of new ways of teaching methods and providers of guidance and counselling to teachers and headteachers. This is in line with what is given by scholars. In addition, literature has further shown that PEAs are

education standards officers, instructional leaders and excellent teachers (Chapman, 2001) which the PEAs, Headteacher and Teachers did not give.

As a matter of policy in Malawi, the major role of the PEAs in a zone is to provide support and means for the continued professional development of teachers (TDC management handbook, 2011:11). The placement of PEAs in the zones was to bring advisory services closer to teachers and PEAs are supposed to be spending 60 % of their time advising and supporting teachers in the zone (TDC management handbook, 2011:31)

Based on this finding, it can be concluded that the participants realize the roles of the PEAs in the continuous professional development of the teachers for quality teaching and learning. The findings of the study do not show a mismatch in the perceived roles of the PEAs and the stipulated roles in the policy documents, however, what was evident was that while the support by PEAs in the continuous professional development of teachers is available, it is not reaching the level at which it is required. Supervision of teachers to promote their continuous professional development is not being done professionally and is also not adequate. In some instances, the relationship between the teachers and the PEAs is not good due to the way teachers are being handled by these PEAs. Poor handling of teachers by PEAs is retarding these teachers' professional growth. This affects the implementation of government policy about teachers' continuous professional development. Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) argued that the attitude of policy implementers affects policy implementation. Negative attitudes of PEAs towards their job, or towards the teachers they serve, hinder the implementation of policies.

Further, the researcher also established that some PEAs lacked a clear understanding of their role in promoting teacher continuous professional development. They had the view that teachers'

continuous professional development has to do with conducting an INSET only. They know little that their school visits to conduct lesson observations, coaching and mentoring are part and parcel of their role in promoting continuous professional development of the teachers in their zone. Therefore, the PEAs need to improve in their way of facilitating and promoting the continuous professional development of teachers at all times so that they can improve the quality of teaching and learning for quality education to prevail in the country.

Thirdly, the research study has revealed that despite lacking training nearly all PEAs, in theory, know their role in teacher continuous professional but practically little is being done. Failure to practice what they are supposed to do leads to teachers failing to receive the proper guidance and support leading to low morale of teachers in their work. The supervision that the PEAs conduct helps in ensuring that work is done by teachers almost accurately and to the required standard.

Fourthly, the study has also revealed that when some PEAs go for supervision in schools, they are not friendly to their teachers whom they have gone to assist. Some of the PEAs lack approachability and fail to communicate properly what they know to teachers. They also show little understanding towards the concerns or challenges faced by teachers. Furthermore, teachers also felt that some PEAs are resistant to change. They resist new ideas and innovations suggested or given by teachers in their zones. This is in line with what Mulenga (2021) found out in his study that some education standards officers were still in old school inspectors who behaved like superiors who had nothing to learn from teachers. Such behaviour creates a stagnant environment and prevents evolutionary improvements in schools or zones. This leads to making teachers feel unsupported or not valued thereby demotivating them. Resistance to change, as pointed out by Lomba-Portela et.al. (2022), is part of people's characteristics, can manifest itself in a direct or deferred way and has various causes: habits, insecurity, fear of the unknown, poor

communication, acquired inertia, among others. Generally, resistance is an individual reaction that arises from opposition to change (Folger & Skarlicki, 1999). Oreg (2003) argues that resistance to change is an individual characteristic that shows a negative attitude toward change, and there is a tendency to avoid and even fight against it. In the education sector, this resistance to change must be considered whenever changes or reforms are being made for the improvement of education quality. Change in an organisation is indeed inevitable. That is why Garbanzo-Vargas and Orozco-Delgado (2010) also argue that the dynamisation of schools has to be carried out by promoting innovation and change led by innovative, pedagogical, situational, technical and/or transformational leadership. PEAs need to embrace the positive change that teachers bring to the teaching profession for quality education to be achieved.

5.3.2. Organisation of CPD training in schools and Zones by PEAs and Implications.

In this study, it was important to look into the views of teachers and PEAs about how they perceived the process of organising CPD trainings that promote teacher continuous professional development in the zone by PEAs. The study has revealed the following findings:

Firstly, the zone-level CPD training, initiated by the PEA and the Zone management team is not normally conducted except for those organised by the Ministry of Education, like, National Reading Program Training. School-based CPDs are conducted once a year using SIG funds. In this scenario, failure to conduct zone-level CPDs for teachers has some disadvantages in the sense that: 1) there is limited sharing of expertise among teachers. 2) Teachers miss opportunities for networking within the zone. 3) There is a lack of specialized support teachers need to address the unique requirements of their teaching context. 4) Failure to conduct zonal-level CPDs may create a potential for stagnant practices. That is to say, teachers may continue with outdated and

ineffective instructional practices. Cluster CPD trainings offer unique benefits that can enhance collaboration, support and growth among teachers professionally.

Secondly, the study findings have revealed that almost all PEAs, Headteachers and Teachers know how CPD trainings are supposed to be organised both at the school level and zone level. They know the steps like conducting of needs assessment, identifying CPD objectives, allocating funds to the CPD training activity, identifying and inviting CPD facilitators, creating schedules, communicating to participants and then conducting the CPD training as well as evaluating after CPD training are done to find out if the intended changes are there in teachers. This is important in the sense that CPD training can be organised in schools and zones. The only challenge as revealed by the study is that teachers are not involved when organising zonal CPD trainings making these trainings irrelevant to them as participants

Thirdly, the findings have further revealed that few CPD trainings are organised once a year at the school level using SIG funds. No CPDs initiated by the PEAs are conducted at the cluster level due to a lack of technical skills by PEAs and budget limitations. The findings have further shown that PEAs are not given enough funding to cater for all activities in the whole year. The inadequate funding makes them fail to carry out their duties like maintenance of motorbikes, purchase of fuel, and organising of teacher CPD training at the school level or cluster level. Furthermore, the absence of or inadequate funding makes the Zonal PEAs fail to discharge their duty of supervising and conducting cluster CPDs as per the guiding lines given to them by the government.

5.3.3 The contextual challenges that PEAs face and Implications.

The study investigated the contextual challenges that PEAs face as they discharge their duty of promoting the continuous professional development of teachers in schools. PEAs face many challenges that make it difficult for them to effectively perform their role of supporting schools on issues about the continuous professional development of teachers. The research study revealed the following key challenges:

Firstly, it was found that PEAs are not provided with adequate resources. PEAs are given little funding like ZIG which comes once a year. The ZIG is not enough to meet all the needs that PEAs have. In terms of mobility, they are not frequently provided with new motorcycles that can help them to move in all schools to carry out supervision. In addition, PEAs are not provided with upkeep allowances to help them during supervision. Van Mater and Van Horn (in Widodo, 1974) point out that: "Policy resources must also be available to speed up the implementation of a policy administration. These policy resources consist of funds or other incentives that can facilitate the implementation of a policy. Lack of or limited funds or other incentives in policy implementation is a major contribution to the failure of policy implementation." Funding is the cutting edge of policy decisions. Crosby further indicates that the government's inability to prioritize and match resources efficiently has been a major cause of implementation failures (Crosby 1996). Some PEAs have no houses for accommodation provided as well as no TDC hall and office. This demotivates them as they spend their little salaries on house rents. The absence of a TDC hall affects negatively the quality of their CPD training. Therefore, inadequate resources provided to PEAs make them fail to carry out their role of promoting the continuous development of teachers in their respective zones to the required standard as per the requirements in the government policies.

Secondly, the findings have shown that PEAs have many schools in their zones which means more teachers to supervise. The high number of teachers makes them fail to provide enough coaching and mentoring to all teachers as per the requirement. In addition, PEAs have administrative roles that prevent them from carrying out their supervisory role. This is consistent with other findings (Mafora & Phorabatho, 2011; Chisholm et al., 2005; Robins and Barnwell, 2002) which outline that educational supervisors face a lot of onerous administrative responsibilities and accountability that often erode their time for managing teachers' CPD for curriculum change implementation. As per policy, the PEAs are supposed to spend 60% of their time assisting teachers but sometimes the administrative roles make them very busy at the expense of the supervisory roles. Many scholars have outlined that a heavy workload for educational supervisors leads to increased stress, reduced quality of work, limited professional development and strained relationships. Denga and Ekpo (1994) found out that overload whether quantitative or qualitative may lead to stress and concomitant gross ineffectiveness. Orjiji (2000) identified work overload and a load of the job as factors that can generate feelings of hopelessness and also may contribute towards a lack of motivation, depression and inefficiency.

Thirdly, it was found out that all the PEAs that were interviewed in the district were put in the positions on administrative arrangement. They were not purposefully trained on how to carry out their job. The lack of technical supervisory skills that the findings have revealed makes PEAs not know the proper procedures on how they can promote teacher CPDs in their zone hence affecting the quality of education service delivery. PEA in Malawi receives limited in-service training. Training is very important to the success of any business entity. The finding revealed here is in line with what Tesema (2014) found out that lack of pertinent training programs for supervisors, a dearth of supervisors with experience in school supervision, a lack of supervision guides and a

lack of funding for supervisory activities are some of the factors that have an impact on school supervision. Hendy (2023) points out that ignoring the importance of workplace training to workers or employees brings an unsafe workplace environment, unhappy and unsatisfied employees and reduced productivity. Supervisors like PEAs therefore need to be given relevant in-service training to improve their supervision activities, necessary tools (supervision or CPD guides) and sufficient funding for this training to eliminate school supervision issues in schools (Tesema, 2014). Training will help PEAs improve their professional needs and keep pace with new developments in their profession. The job performance of these PEAs in promoting teacher continuous professional development in this way will improve.

The lack of technical skills that PEAs have, makes them do their job on a trial-and-error basis. This negatively affects the implementation of the underlined policy of creating the positions of PEAs. This agrees very well with what Van Meter and Van Horn point out that successful implementation demands that there is a clear understanding of the policy standards and objectives by policy implementers (Van Meter and Van Horn 1975). In other words, the absence of training for PEAs makes the policy unclear and ambiguous to PEAs. On the other hand, the unambiguous policy objectives and standards or the policy content contribute effectively to the attainment of sound policy implementation. If the PEAs are not trained or not communicated effectively on what they are supposed to do and what the policy says about their job about the promotion of teacher continuous professional development they cannot discharge their work to the required standard.

From these findings, in a nutshell, the study reveals that there is very little support that is rendered to the PEAs to enable them to operate normally to meet their key role of providing the support and means for the continued professional development of teachers. Little funds are

provided, no purposefully designed training for newly recruited PEAs, little help on mobility, and a heavy workload allocated to them. As an established post of Primary Education Advisors and looking at their job of quality assurance officers, more resources are supposed to be allocated to achieve the quality of education. As the Ministry of Education in the CPD framework (2018) states “no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers”, PEAs are there to improve the quality of teachers to raise the quality of education. Therefore, reducing these challenges or barriers can make them work with confidence and greater motivation.

Implications and Recommendations

This research study investigated the role of PEAs in teacher professional development in trying to understand why some teachers run away from inspectors and PEAs during inspection and supervision. It also wanted to understand why most teachers are rated below minimum standards by inspection despite having PEAs who provide advisory and supervisory roles in schools. Based on the conclusions the following are the implications and their respective recommendations.

Firstly, the finding that has revealed that there are inadequate resources made available to the PEAs implies that PEAs fail to carry out their roles in promoting the continuous professional development of teachers in their respective zones hence affecting negatively the teaching and learning quality. In this scenario, the research study recommends that the government should increase funding for PEAs. That is to say, MOE should provide adequate funding to PEAs for their operational activities. More funding should also be allocated to zones for teacher CPD training. This will enhance quality teaching and learning. In addition, the government should also provide adequate transport facilities to aid the movement of PEAs. That is to say, MOE

should provide new motorcycles to PEAs and the replacement of these be done within a specified period. This will ease mobility challenges.

Secondly, on the finding that PEAs have heavy workloads as a result of too many schools and responsibilities in their zones implies that PEAs fail to adequately supervise their teachers effectively and assist them in growing professionally. Failure to supervise teachers effectively can lead to laxity of many teachers in following the education standards of their work thereby reducing the quality of teaching and learning in schools. In this state, the research study recommends that the Government through the Ministry of Education should consider the reduction of workload for PEAs by reducing the number of schools from a range of 10-15 to a range of 4 to 8 schools depending on the population of teachers in those schools. It is indeed a fact that PEAs have double responsibilities: Conducting administrative roles and supervisory roles that assist teachers. Reduction in the number of schools will enable the PEAs to carry out these two responsibilities properly. In addition, this reduction in workload will further reduce the distance that PEAs travel from the TDC to the schools thereby allowing them to spend more time on teachers that need their assistance within their respective zones.

Thirdly, findings have revealed that PEAs lack technical supervisory skills which implies that many PEAs are performing their work without following the recommended supervisory and advisory standards, thereby, negatively impacting the quality of supervision and promotion of teacher continuous professional development. This further results in teachers not being developed professionally due to a lack of professional guidance from the PEAs. In this situation, the research study recommends that a training and retraining program should purposefully be organised for all PEAs in the country. PEAs need to undergo training for them to know their role in teaching continuous professional development and professional ethics. This capacity building

should be purposefully designed by the Ministry of Education for Malawi and should cover areas like how PEAs can facilitate teacher' continuous professional development in their zones. The training program will help PEAs to improve their professional needs and keep pace with the new developments.

Fourthly, another finding has revealed that there is a poor relationship between some PEAs and teachers implies that teachers do not work comfortably with great motivation. The study therefore recommends that PEAs should be taught how to provide encouraging feedback to teachers during lesson observations or supervision so that observation is positively interpreted as a continuous professional development activity rather than a fault-finding venture.

Finally, regarding the research finding that indicates the absence of PEA houses implies that PEAs spend more time travelling from rented houses to the TDC or schools thereby reducing PEA-to-teacher contact time. The absence of TDC halls in some zones also affects the quality of assistance that PEAs render to the teachers in the zones. TDCs are the ideal places for conducting non-residential teacher CPD training. The research study, therefore, recommends that the Government through MOE should construct TDCs in zones that lack these. In addition, PEAs houses should be constructed to reduce PEAs' travel time from the rented houses to the TDCs thereby maximizing time for PEA to Teacher interaction.

5.4 Areas for Future Research

From the findings of this study, some areas have emerged as requiring further study. The researcher, therefore, proposes the following as areas for future study in the area of CPD implementation for teachers:

1. This study targeted PEAs, Headteachers and Teachers in Machinga Education District only. Hence, the results are conclusively generalizable to the Roles of PEAs in the Continuous Professional Development of teachers in the Machinga Education District. There is a need to conduct a national study that will target PEAs, Headteachers and Teachers in all the education districts in the country. Such a study coverage would give a convincing holistic picture of how PEAs facilitate the promotion of teacher continuous professional development. Such kind of a holistic picture can easily influence policy change in the area of implementation of teacher continuous professional development by PEAs in the country.
2. Another study using the same methodology can be conducted but comparing the roles played by PEAs in teacher continuous professional development in best-performing districts and poorly performing districts in PSLCE examinations
3. Regarding the poor relationship between teachers and PEAs in some zones, a study can be conducted on the effect of the relationship between PEAs and Teachers on the performance of learners.

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APPENDICES

1.0 Interview Schedule

1.1 APPENDIX A: Face to face interview questions for the PEA

Instruction:

The main purpose of this interview is to collect relevant information to find out on the role of PEAs in Continuous professional development of teachers, policy versus practice. The information you provide will have constrictive and paramount importance for the successful accomplishment of this study. Therefore, you are kindly requested to give your genuine

response. Your responses will be used only for academic purpose and the responses will be kept confidential.

SECTION A: Background information of Participant

1. Name of Zone: _____
2. Name of Participant: _____
3. Gender: _____
4. What qualification do you hold? _____
5. Where did you obtain it from? _____
6. For how long have you been in the profession? _____
7. What position are you holding? _____
8. How long have you been in this position? _____

SECTION B: Perception of PEAs to their role in teacher CPD.

1. What do you understand by the term Continuous professional development (CPD)?
2. What role do you play in CPD of teachers in your zone or schools?
3. What impact does your role in teacher CPD bring to the schools in the zone?

SECTION C: How PEAs facilitate/implement teacher CPDs in the schools of their zone

1. How do you organise CPDs for teachers at school level and at zone level?

2. How do you involve teachers in organising their CPDs
3. What activities do you do in the zone that facilitate teacher CPD?
4. How often do you conduct teacher CPDs in your zone or schools?
5. What view do you have of any plans that can improve teacher CPDs in your zone and the district as a whole?

SECTION D: Contextual challenges faced by PEAs

1. What challenges do you face as you facilitate teacher CPD in the Zone or School?
2. How can each challenge be overcome?

1.2 APPENDIX B: Face to face interview questions for headteachers or deputy headteachers

Instruction:

The main purpose of this interview is to collect relevant information to find out on the role of PEAs in Continuous professional development of teachers, policy versus practice. The information you provide will have constrictive and paramount importance for the successful accomplishment of this study. Therefore, you are kindly requested to give your genuine

response. Your responses will be used only for academic purpose and the responses will be kept confidential.

SECTION A: Background information of Participant

1. Name of Zone: _____
2. Name of Participant: _____
3. Gender: _____
4. What qualification do you hold? _____
5. Where did you obtain it from? _____
6. For how long have you been in the profession? _____
7. What position are you holding? _____
8. How long have you been in this position? _____

SECTION B: PEAs role in teacher CPD

1. In your view, what do you understand is the role of the PEA in CPD for teachers at school or zone level?
2. Do you think what you understand as PEA's role in teacher CPD is what they do in practice? Please elaborate.
3. Give some examples of activities that PEAs actually do to promote teacher CPD in your school or zone?

SECTION C: How CPDs are implemented by PEA

1. How are CPDs organised in this zone?
2. Do you think PEAs are really important in teacher CPD? If yes, how? If not, why not?
3. Is there anything more you would like your PEA to have had done to promote teacher professional development? Please elaborate.

1.3 APPENDIX C: Focus group discussion questions for teachers

Instruction:

The main purpose of this interview is to collect relevant information to find out on the role of PEAs in Continuous professional development of teachers, policy versus practice. The information you provide will have constrictive and paramount importance for the successful accomplishment of this study. Therefore, you are kindly requested to give your genuine response. Your responses will be used only for academic purpose and the responses will be kept confidential.

SECTION A: Perception of teachers on PEAs role in teachers CPD

1. In your view, what is the role of the PEA in CPD for teachers at school or zone level?
2. Do you think what you understand as PEA's role in teacher CPD is what they do in practice? Please elaborate.
3. Give examples of activities that PEAs actually do to promote teacher CPD in your school or zone?

SECTION B: How CPDs are implemented by PEA

1. How are CPDs organised in this zone?
2. Do you think PEAs are really important in teacher CPD? If yes, how? If not, why not?
3. Is there anything more you would like your PEA to have had done to promote teacher professional development? Please elaborate.

2.0 Letters

2.1 APPENDIX D: Request letter to UNIMAREC

FROM: Hendrix Likeke, C/O Chikwawa District Education Office

Post Office Box 21, Chikwawa.

TO: The Chairperson, UNIMAREC, P.O. 280, Zomba.

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT RESEARCH DATA.

I write to request your higher office to grant me permission to go and collect data for my research study in Machinga Education District.

I am student of the University of Malawi pursuing my Masters in Policy, Planning and Leadership (PPL). One of the conditions for the University is to do research and attached is my Research Proposal entitled, **“The Role of Primary Education Advisors in Teacher Continuous Professional Development, Policy versus Practice”**.

If given permission, I shall go and collect the data that will assist me in producing the final report for my thesis.

Your favourable consideration pertaining to this request will be highly rated and greatly appreciated.

Hendrix Likeke

MED/PPL/25/18

2.2 APPENDIX E: Request letter to DEYS Machinga to conduct research in zones and some schools

C/O Chikwawa District Council

Private Bag 1

Chikwawa

The Director of Education Youth and Sports

Machinga District Education Office

Private Bag 24

Liwonde

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SOME SCHOOLS AND
TDCs YOUR EDUCATION DISTRICT

I am Hendrix Likeke, a Master of Education Policy, Planning and Leadership student in the School of Education at the University of Malawi (Chancellor College). As part of my degree requirements, I am expected to conduct educational research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in the following schools in schools and Zones:

The title of my research project is: The role of PEAs in the continuous development of teachers, Policy versus Practice: a case study of Machinga District. Policy on the Role and Responsibilities by Government of Malawi in a Guidebook of Primary Education Advisors and Teachers in Malawi, 2011, states the functions of PEAs in relation to CPD for teachers. However, schools still face challenges of good learner performance and teachers mostly being rated below minimum standards by inspectors. The study seeks to find out the perception of teachers and PEAs on the roles of a PEA in CPD for teachers. The study will use semi-structured interview, focus group interview as well as document review. Participants will be interviewed for

approximately 1 hour at the place and time most convenient to them. Each interview will be voice recorded.

Responses to this study interview will be treated with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used instead of the actual names. Participants will be contacted well in advance for interviews and they have been purposively selected for this study. Participation will always remain voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study for any reason, anytime if they so wish, without incurring any penalties.

For further information on this research study, please feel free to contact me using the following contact details: Hendrix Likeke, 0885399290/0984645240 or email: hendrix.likeke@gmail.com. OR My supervisor, Dr. Symon Chiziwa can be contacted on 0991 335 535 / 0888 554 209 and email at schiziwa@cc.ac.mw.

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your positive response pertaining to this request will be highly rated and greatly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours faithfully

Hendrix Likeke

2.3 APPENDIX F: Participants information and consent sheet

PARTICIPANTS INFORMATION SHEETS

1. RESEARCH TOPIC: **The role of Primary Education Advisors in continuous professional development of teachers: Policy versus Practice.**

2. NAME, POSITION AND CONTACT ADDRESS OF RESEARCH TEAM

Investigator

Hendrix B.E. Likeke

Masters student in Policy, planning and leadership at the University of Malawi (Chancellor College), Post Office Box 280, Zomba

Contacts: 0885 399 290 / 0984 645 240

Email: hendrix.likeke@gmail.com

Supervisor

Dr Symon Chiziwa

University of Malawi (Chancellor College), Post Office Box 280, Zomba

Cell: 0888 554 209 / 0991 335 535

Email: schiziwa@unima.ac.mw

You are cordially invited to take part in the above research study of: **The role of Primary Education Advisors in continuous professional development of teachers: Policy versus Practice.** Before you make a decision whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully.

3. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The purpose of the study is to investigate why teachers are rated below minimum standard and why teachers show reluctance to be supervised by PEAs by running away or absenting themselves from work during supervision, by looking at how PEAs facilitate Continuous Professional Development of Teachers at school and zone level as their role in promoting teacher professional development.



4. WHY HAVE I BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You have been invited to take part in the research study because you are a teacher or Headteacher or PEA or DEYS/CEO under Ministry of Education in Malawi working within the Civil Service.

5. WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I AGREE TO TAKE PART?

You will be invited to take part in a face to face interview or focused group interview based on your current level of class you are teaching in the school or position you are holding in the school or zone. This interview will be face to face and held at a mutually convenient date and time. With your agreement to this invitation, the interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. This transcription will then be shown to you for you to check its accuracy and for you to confirm that you are still happy for it to be used in the study

6. DO I NEED TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

It is entirely up to you whether you participate or not. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign a consent or declaration form. You may also decide to withdraw your consent to participation at any opportune time during the research study, without any negative repercussions to you, by contacting me via these cell numbers: 0885 399 290 / 0984 645 240 or email: hendrix.likeke@gmail.com

7. WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE ADVANTAGES OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?

It is hoped that individual participants will benefit from the opportunity to reflect in detail on the role of Primary Education Advisors in continuous professional development of teachers: Policy versus Practice, which has considerable potential for their personal and professional development. Furthermore, in evaluating this crucial but under-researched role, it is hoped that a more thorough understanding of role of PEAs in CPD for teachers will emerge, which is important for policy-makers, managers and researchers. Such research, for example, may lead to an improvement in professional development by devising specific training, development and support for PEAs in Malawi.

8. WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGES OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?



In agreeing to take part in this research study there will be a time commitment to consider, as the interview is likely to last up to 1 hour. While there will be a time commitment required from participants, it is felt that the benefits of involvement will outweigh the costs incurred.

9. WILL WHAT I SAY DURING THE INTERVIEW BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

All information collected will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations). In order to protect the anonymity of each participant, pseudonyms will be used to ensure participants are not identified. All electronic data will be held securely in password protected files on a non-shared laptop and all paper documentation will be held in locked cabinets in a locked office. Data generated by the study will be kept securely in paper or electronic form in line with University of Malawi policy.

10. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

Following respondent validation as outlined above, the data will be analyzed and used in my Masters and future publications in appropriate academic journals and/or books. All participants will be able to have access to a copy of the published research on request.

11. WHO WILL REVIEW THIS STUDY?

This application will be reviewed by the University of Malawi Research Ethics Committee (UNIMAREC) and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University of Malawi has the appropriate insurances in place pertaining to this.

12. WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN IN CASE OF RELATED RESEARCH INJURY?

In the event of the research related injury, contact the principal investigator and the chair of the research and ethics committee (UNIMAREC) that reviews and approves a particular study on the research and rights of participants for further assistance. Here is **UNIMAREC Chairperson contact details**: Dr Victoria Ndolo of University of Malawi Research Ethics Committee (UNIMAREC), P.O. Box 280, Zomba. +265 995042760

Do you agree to continue with the study ? YES

NO

Name of the respondent:



Age:

Male/Female

Signature:

Date:

Name of the interviewer:

Signature:

Date:

THANK YOU



2.4 APPENDIX G: Response letter from Chairperson of UNIMAREC



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

Our Ref: P.11/22/201

Your Ref.:

31st May 2023

Mr Hendrix Likeke
Department of Education
University of Malawi
P.O. Box 280
Zomba

Email: hendrix.likeke@gmail.com

Dear Mr Likeke

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

Telephone: (265) 1 526 622

Fax: (265) 1 524 031

E-mail: vc@cc.ac.mw

**RESEARCH ETHICS AND REGULATORY APPROVAL AND PERMIT FOR
PROTOCOL NO. P.11/22/201. THE ROLE OF PEAS IN CONTINUOUS
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS': POLICY VERSUS
PRACTICE' - THE CASE OF MACHINGA EDUCATION DISTRICT.**

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,



Dr Victoria Ndolo
CHAIRPERSON OF UNIMAREC



CC: Vice Chancellor
Registrar
Director of Finance and Investments
Acting Head of Research
UNIMAREC Administrator
UNIMAREC Compliance Officer

2.5 APPENDIX H : Permission letter from DEYS to conduct research in Machinga

Phone:
Fax mail:
Cell:0996141758 / 0888867104
Email:
machingadem@gmail.com



Communications should be
addressed to:
Director of Education
Youth and Sports
P O Box24
Machinga

14 June, 2023

FROM: The Director of Education, Youth and Sports
Machinga District Education Office
Private Bag
Machinga

TO: Mr Hendrix, Likeke
Chikwawa District Council
Private Bag 1
Chikwawa

Dear Mr Likeke

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN TDCs AND SCHOOLS IN MACHINGA EDUCATION DISTRICT

Your application to conduct research entitled, "The role of Primary Education Advisors in Continuous Professional Development of Teachers" in Machinga Education District has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that teaching and learning programmes are not interrupted.

2.6 APPENDIX I Introductory letter to PEAs and headteachers from DEYS-Machinga

Phone:
Fax mail:
Cell:0996141758 / 0888867104
Email:
machingadem@gmail.com



Communications should be
addressed to:
Director of Education
Youth and Sports
P O Box24
Machinga

14 June, 2023

FROM: The Director of Education, Youth and Sports
Machinga District Education Office
Private Bag
Machinga
TO: All the PEAs
All Headteachers

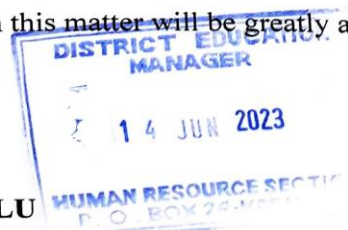
Dear Sir/ Madam

INTRODUCTION OF MR HENDRIX LIKEKE

I write to authorize the above-named Officer of Chikwawa District Education Office to visit TDCs and Schools to get information about the role of Primary Education Advisors in the continuous professional development of teachers at school level. The period for collecting information in schools and TDCs is from 19th June, 2023 to 18th July, 2023.

Your cooperation on this matter will be greatly appreciated.


D. NAMIKUNGULU



FOR DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AND SPORTS.