

**INVESTIGATING PERCEPTIONS OF TRANSPARENCY AND
ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM IN NKHATA-BAY DISTRICT**

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

CATHERINE WITNESS NKHOMA

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

AUGUST, 2017

**INVESTIGATING PERCEPTIONS OF TRANSPARENCY AND
ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM IN NKHATA-BAY DISTRICT**

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

By

**CATHERINE WITNESS NKHOMA
B.Ed. (Humanities)-University of Malawi**

Submitted to the Faculty of Education, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Education in Policy, Planning and Leadership.

**UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE**

AUGUST, 2017

DECLARATION

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

Name

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Bob Chulu, PhD (Lecturer)

Main Supervisor

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Frank Mtemang'ombe, M.Ed. (Lecturer)

Head of Department

DEDICATION

To my lovely son, Daniel and daughter Grace, for their patience when I went back to school. May you be motivated to work extra hard in your work despite challenges in front of you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank God for His amazing work in my life to the extent of seeing me through to this academic height. Secondly, I would like to sincerely acknowledge the following individuals and institutions for their support during the time of my study. My supervisor, Dr Bob Chulu, for his constructive criticisms, comments and guidance rendered to me towards the production of this thesis. Dr. Davies and Agnes Mweta for their inspiration and support throughout the period I was at school. Finally, my mother, for her presence in my children's lives when it seemed too difficult to do so.

I would also like to acknowledge the Irish Embassy for providing me with the scholarship to study for this degree.

Finally, my family for the faith, encouragement and love you have for me which inspires me all the time. I salute you for your love and support.

May Almighty God bless you all.

ABSTRACT

The study investigated stakeholders' perceptions of transparency and accountability in the implementation of the Primary School Improvement Program (PSIP) in Nkhata-Bay District, Malawi. PSIP was rolled out as an intervention to influence community participation at school level, based on the foundation of transparency and accountability. Currently little is known whether the program has improved participation having promoted transparency and accountability. The study used mixed method design and data was generated through Community Score Card (CSC) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The study results demonstrated that community members from SMC, PTA and Mother Groups play an important role in strengthening transparency and accountability at school level. Transparency performance scored highly in terms of capacity building issues, community participation, display of SIP priorities, communication of roles and responsibilities to the stakeholders. However, it was learnt through FGD that accountability issues were hampered by the lack of termly meetings, display of SIP records and reports, and other reporting mechanisms which were not done according to PSIP manual to increase access to information. The implications therefore from the study are that despite PSIP having improved community participation of all stakeholders at school level through the transparent means of the school management, there is need for more effort by the policy makers to improve accounting mechanisms which are slightly hampered by lack of termly meetings and display of reports.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	VI
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	VII
LIST OF FIGURES	XI
LIST OF TABLES.....	XII
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	XIII
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	XIV
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Chapter overview	1
1.1 Background to the Primary School Improvement Program (PSIP)	1
1.2 Description and importance of Primary School Improvement Program (PSIP).....	4
1.3 School Improvement Plan (SIP) and Quality Education	4
1.4 Importance of transparency and accountability in PSIP	6
1.5 Roles of stakeholders	8
1.6 Statement of the problem	10
1.7 Purpose of the study.....	10
1.8 Main research question	11
1.9 Specific research questions	11
1.10 Significance of the study.....	11
1.11 Delimiting Factors	12

1.12 Chapter summary	13
CHAPTER TWO	14
REVIEW OF LITERATURE	14
2.0 Chapter overview	14
2.1 Governance in education.....	14
2.2 Community participation	16
2.3 Decentralisation and School based management (SBM) system.....	17
2.4 Impact of transparency and accountability in school governance	18
2.5 General snapshot of studies done on the subject	20
2.6 Research gaps and conclusions	21
2.7 Conceptual framework.....	22
2.8 Chapter summary	24
CHAPTER THREE	26
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	26
3.0 Chapter overview	26
3.1 Research design	28
3.1.1 <i>Research strategy</i>	28
3.1.2 <i>Research time horizon</i>	28
3.2 Study area and choice of participants	29
3.3 Data generation methods.....	30
3.3.1 <i>Community Score Card (CSC)</i>	31
3.3.2 <i>Focus Group Discussion (FGD)</i>	33
3.4 Data analysis and interpretation.....	34

3.5 Ethical considerations	35
3.6 Chapter summary	36
CHAPTER FOUR.....	37
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY	37
4.0 Chapter overview	37
4.1 Demographic characteristics of the participants	37
4.1.1 Gender and roles characteristics.....	37
4.1.2 Education levels.....	39
4.2 Findings on Existence of Transparency in the Implementation of PSIP at School	
Level	40
4.2.1 Capacity building by SP.....	41
4.2.2 Displays of SIP priorities.....	44
4.2.3 Community Participation in SIP development and implementation	46
4.2.4 Adherence and compliance to procedures when there is misappropriation of	
School Improvement Grant.....	49
4.2.5 Availability of other related SIP records by both SP and SU.....	51
4.2.6 Communication of roles and responsibilities.....	53
4.3 Accountability mechanisms of both Service Providers and Users	55
4.3.1 Availability of facilities for citizen complaints.....	55
4.3.2 Implementation and monitoring of a social contract.....	56
4.3.3 Conducting meetings where progress reports are presented.....	57
4.4 Strengths and challenges in the implementation of PSIP	60
4.4.1 Sensitisation on the roles and responsibilities.....	60

4.4.2 Participation in SIP development and implementation.....	61
4.4.3 Accounting for actions.....	62
4.4.4 General Successes of the programme.....	63
4.4.5 General challenges of the programme.....	64
4.5 Chapter summary.....	65
CHAPTER FIVE	67
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS.....	67
5.0 Chapter overview	67
5.1 Conclusions of key issues	68
5.2 Study Implications	70
5.3 The achievement of objectives versus conceptual framework	72
5.3.1 Who-The locus of accountability.....	72
5.3.2 What-Object of accountability.....	72
5.3.3 How-Procedures for ensuring accountability.....	72
5.4 Areas for further study	73
5.5 Chapter Summary	73
REFERENCES	74
APPENDICES	79

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The Social Accountability Framework Illustration	23
Figure 2: Research Process “Onion”	27
Figure 3: Gender Characteristics of Service Users	38
Figure 4: Educational Levels of Respondents	39
Figure 5: Capacity Building by Service Provider	41
Figure 6: Capacity Building Scores by Service Users	43
Figure 7: Graph Showing Scores on the Display of Sip Priorities-Sp	44
Figure 8: Graph Showing Scores on the Display of Sip Priorities-Su	45
Figure 9: Graph Showing Scores on Community Participation in Sip-Su	47
Figure 10: Chart Showing Scores on Availability of other Related Sip Records-Sp	51
Figure 11: Graph Showing Scores on the Availability of other Related Sip Records-Su	52
Figure 12: Graph Showing Communication of Roles and Responsibilities-Su	54
Figure 13: Graph Showing Scores on Implementation and Monitoring of A Social Contract- Su	57
Figure 14: Graph Showing Scores on Conducting Meetings for Report Presentation	58

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Categories and Positions of the Participants to the Study	30
Table 2: CSC Indicators.....	32
Table 3: Frequency Table for Scores and Percentages of Facilities for Citizen Complaints by SP.....	56

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Introductory Letter from Chancellor College	79
Appendix 2: Community/Service User Score Card Questionnaire.....	80
Appendix 3: Service Provider Score Card	83
Appendix 4: Focus Group Discussion Questions	85
Appendix 5: Sample Service Provider and User Score Card.....	86
Appendix 6: Letter from District Education Manager – Nkhata-Bay.....	91

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CSC	Community Score Card
DFID	Department of International Development
DSS	Direct Support to School
DC	District Council
DEP	District Education Plan
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MG	Mother Group
NESP	National Educational Sector Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSCPPSM	National Strategy for Community Participation for Primary School Management
PTA	Parents Teacher Association
PSIP	Primary School Improvement Program
SBM	School Based Management
SIG	School Improvement Grant
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMC	School Management Commitment
SP	Service Provider

SU	Service User
TI	Transparency International

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter overview

The chapter gives a background to Primary School Improvement Program (PSIP), its importance, how it affects quality education and describes the stakeholders in the program. It also gives the statement problem, research questions, purpose, significance, and limitation to the study.

1.1 Background to the Primary School Improvement Program (PSIP)

Malawi follows an 8-4-4 school system where it takes eight years of primary education for pupils to write Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations which leads them to secondary school for additional four years. At the end of four years, the students write Malawi School Leaving Certificate Examinations after which they might be selected to a public university depending on their performance as well as availability of space. The other left out group would join private universities or vocational technical colleges.

Due to increasing enrolment without adequate funding and management, primary education is the one which faces most of the challenges in the entire education system (National Education Sector Plan (NESP), 2008-2017). Such inadequate funding and

management in turn has led to, among other challenges, ‘poor participation of school committees in school management’ (MGDS, 2006). As a result, the third NESP priority goal in primary education aims at responding to this challenge in two ways. Firstly, mobilising communities to participate in ‘whole school development’ and management for both normal and special needs pupils. Secondly, ensures appropriate decentralisation of delivery of education services which incorporates processes of planning, budgeting and financing, and monitoring and evaluation (M &E).

In 2006, the Government of Malawi introduced Direct Support to Schools (DSS) program as a school management and financing model in order to improve school management and governance. According to Nampota and Munthali (2004), it was hoped that when school management improved, quality and relevance of education could also improve. In addition, the DSS program was an attempt to involve all important stakeholders in school management. However, the level of participation of some stakeholders like teachers and learners was unsustainable as reported by Nampota and Munthali. According to Nampota and Munthali, it was unsustainable because the community was not in a position to conduct an analysis of the needs of their schools and plan actions that may impact on education of their school. The program was then replaced by the Primary School Improvement Program (PSIP).

The Primary School Improvement Program started in 2010, with an intention to reverse the limited involvement of community, teachers and learners in the process of administration of DSS. According to PSIP manual (2011), apart from addressing the

limited involvement of stakeholders, the program seeks to increase ability of the stakeholders to undergo a thorough analysis of the issues affecting their schools and planning relevant activities and address them using the grant they would receive.

The program requires a school to prepare a School Improvement Plan (SIP). Nampota and Munthali writes that SIP is a summary document which spells out priority needs of the school and the actions that will be undertaken in order to improve quality of education. According to PSIP guidelines (2011), the process for the SIP development is participatory in nature and involves the community level stakeholders of School Management Committees (SMC), Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), teachers and learners in their own right.

According to National Strategy for Community Participation in Primary School Management (NSCPPSM) (2004), the process of SIP development and implementation is supposed to be transparent to all the stakeholders, which are the Community, SMC and PTA members. NSCPPSM (2004) further emphasises that transparency and accountability ensures full participation as school environment is assumed safe and secure to accept contributions from all members engaged in the educational process. The degree of success of the PSIP program can be affected by the levels of transparency and accountability being exercised and experienced by the stakeholders.

1.2 Description and importance of Primary School Improvement Program (PSIP)

The PSIP started in 2010 as a pilot programme and its full roll out started in 2011 in a phased out fashion to the rest of the country. The project was piloted in Nkhata-Bay, Dedza and Mulanje Districts. PSIP is meant to address the challenge of equitable access to quality and relevant primary education that is properly governed and managed. Through this program, school communities are supposed to develop and implement SIP.

The School Improvement Plan is a useful tool that helps schools and their communities to successfully achieve quality education. The planning process provides community members an opportunity to be involved in needs assessment and prioritisation, drawing of action plans, and implementation of agreed plans of their schools. These plans are fed into the District Education Plans (DEP) and are revised on annual basis. Upon successful submission and approval of the plan, the school is able to have access to a School Improvement Grant (SIG) which is a funding from the District Council (DC).

1.3 School Improvement Plan (SIP) and Quality Education

As the School Improvement Plan is a school community plan for implementing specific activities designed to improve the quality of the school, National Strategy for Community Participation in Primary School Management (NSCPPSM) (2004) highlights that the ultimate objective of this plan is to improve student achievement levels. This can be done when the focus is on developing a quality education environment and reflect National Education Sector Plan (NESP) goals.

When developing the SIP, the quality of the process used is very important. Fernandez (2015) argues that there is a strong and consistent association between the quality of school planning and overall student performance. As such, for the plans to achieve the ultimate objective of improving quality of education, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) has a long list of guiding principles for effective school improvement planning. These have been included in the PSIP manual (2010) as follows: (1) An environment of openness and inclusivity should be fostered by school management to encourage community involvement, (2) Strong proactive leadership is critical to effective implementation of the SIP, (3) Checks and balance to strengthen accountability and strong financial management being important. Finally, the monitoring of activities must be realistic in what community expect.

According to PSIP manual, the SIP planning process starts with a SIP planning process meeting called by the chairperson of SMC in collaboration with the Head teacher.

This meeting should include individuals who have participated in SIP trainings. These normally include: the Head teacher, Deputy Head teacher, SMC members, Parents and Teacher Association (PTA) members and Mother Group (MG) chairpersons as well as other interested community members such as pupils and teachers (PSIP manual, 2010). The overseer in the development of the SIP is the SMC. SMCs are legal requirement for all schools in Malawi, as stipulated in the Education Act (1962). They are composed of members of the community served by the primary school

1.4 Importance of transparency and accountability in PSIP

Ambassa, Ngwe and Dossing (2011) provides the definitions of transparency and accountability in this study.

Transparency is defined as the clear and public disclosure of information, rules, plans, processes and actions on the part of governments, businesses, organisations and individuals. Accountability on the other hand is defined as responsible individuals or organisation being held to account for the regular exercise of the powers entrusted to them in accordance with rules and duties attached to their status. School improvement program is built on the theory of participatory approach to planning. In this approach, the assumption is that the relevant stakeholders do participate in the process from the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages. Transparency ensures a safe, secure and disciplined environment and it demonstrates that parents, business and communities are actively engaged in the educational outcome as argued in NSCPPSM (2004). Transparency provides an opportunity for the various stakeholders to be involved in the school improvement process ensuring that the needs of all students are addressed.

Hallak and Poisson (2006) spelt out the importance of being accountable by saying that it ensures that relationships between the relevant stakeholders are better nurtured as trust grows, eliminate surprises, increase job performance and improves productivity and effectiveness. In addition, resources are better allocated when everyone knows their roles.

Therefore for the program to be successful, it is necessary to build the confidence of all the SIP stakeholders. According to Evans (2011), there are two main objectives of having transparency and accountability in school improvement planning especially in poor developing countries. The first is that it seeks effective public service provision by ensuring that citizens have the information and oversight to hold service agent accountable for the provision of basic services. The second objective is that it correlates with improved social and economic outcomes. This is very important in developing countries like Malawi where waste and corruption are high. Evans (2011) referred to a study done in Philippines where decreased corruption in Education sector was shown to actually improve pass rate and test scores on the annual examination by over 10%. Malawi as a poor country needs efficient and effective usage of the limited resources available. Transparency and accountability could therefore bring the required impact on the intended beneficiaries of a program so that they benefit socially and economically from it.

On the other hand, Winkler and Gershberg (2003), says the reverse of transparency and accountability would bring back increased central government involvement in the project which decreases creativity and independence from bureaucracy. This does not provide a desirable environment for community participation.

1.5 Roles of stakeholders

With the onset of decentralisation in Malawi and the approval of the Local Government Act in 1998, the District Councils (DC) have increasingly controlled educational activities in the District as they appraise, prioritise and fund education plans. According to Winkler and Gershberg (2003), further decentralisation at school level, including local community does empower parents and can improve school performance. The PSIP increases high levels of parental and community participation and is therefore associated with improved school performance. A real decision making power in PSIP is a means of increasing the voice of education's clients, who are parents and learners.

According to National Strategy for Community Participation in Primary School Management (NSCPPSM)(2004), there are three local stakeholders at school level that are very much involved in SIP development namely; Communities, Parents Teacher Associations and School Management Committees. Their roles and responsibilities are discussed in the next few paragraphs.

Communities elect and hold accountable the School Management Committee through PTA, and they take an active interest in the ongoing management of their school. Before the PSIP, community participation in education was through the provision of labour and material resources. The NSCPPSM (2004) viewed this as unsustainable participation. For sustainable participation to occur, community participation needs to move towards participation in 'whole school development'. According to NSCPPSM (2004) this takes place in seven levels of participation: passive participation, information giving, and

participation for material incentives, functional participation, interactive participation and finally self-mobilisation. This ladder of participation prevails when the system is transparent and accountable; otherwise the participation may be stopped midway.

Parent Teacher Association's main role is to mobilise communities and elect and hold school management committees accountable through regular audits and reviews of their activities during PTA meetings. It is recommended by the Ministry that every school should have a PTA made up of parents and teachers together with community leaders. The PTA effectively represents the community as a whole. The PTA typically meets three or four times a year. PTAs are not a legal requirement, but they are central to ongoing community participation in primary school management. PTAs are responsible for providing the SMC with relevant information relating to issues of concern in the community towards the upkeep and management of their primary school.

According to the Education Act (1962), every school should have a School Management Committee (SMC) composed of community members. SMCs are a legal requirement for all schools and are composed of the community served by the primary school. The overall role is to oversee the management of school resources and those working at the primary school in close collaboration with school staff and the community as a whole. It is comprised of nine members.

According to NSCPPSM (2004), there are reports that in some schools PTA and SMC often do not exist, which underscore need to establish them. In certain cases, they exist,

but the members are untrained and/or unaware of their roles and very often they are subservient. In some communities, schools have reported that there is confusion on SMC and PTA roles and responsibilities due to lack of standardised capacity building activities.

1.6 Statement of the problem

It has been five years since the PSIP was rolled out in the country as an intervention to influence community participation at school level. The PSIP is based on the foundations of transparency and accountability at each level of the system, from communities and schools, to zones, districts and central government (PSIP Improvement Grants Operational Manual, 2010, p27). As such, transparency and accountability represent one component of PSIP for bringing the “Enabling Environment” or mutual trust amongst stakeholders as set out in the National Strategy for Community Participation in Primary School Management. At present, little is known as to whether or not PSIP has indeed improved community participation and whether or not there is promotion of transparency and accountability in PSIP in order to improve community participation at school level. Therefore, there is need to investigate these two principles of good governance in the implementation of the PSIP to see if it has indeed improved community participation

1.7 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate transparency and accountability in the implementation of PSIP in Nkhata-Bay District.

1.8 Main research question

The study has a main research question as follows: To what extent does transparency and accountability component exist in primary school governance and management?

In order to answer this question, the study investigated transparency and accountability in the implementation of the Primary School Improvement Program (PSIP).

1.9 Specific research questions

Three specific research questions guided the study and these are:

- To what extent does transparency exist in the implementation of PSIP at school level?
- How do service providers and service users account for their actions to the school community?
- What are the strengths and challenges in the implementation of PSIP?

1.10 Significance of the study

The study findings hope to be of great importance as they might help in providing literature for further studies on how transparency and accountability can be investigated or measured in the Primary Education Sector in the country. The findings hope to assist policy makers in the review of the PSIP in Primary School Management. Finally, it is hoped that the findings would ensure increased local sustainable participation of local stakeholders/communities in the primary education sector which will ultimately bring quality education

1.11 Delimiting Factors

According to Creswell (1994), ‘delimitations suggest how the study will be narrowed in scope’. This research was bound by several delimiting factors due to time limit of the study. The factors included; location, participant’s perceptions and components studied under school management and governance.

The study was done in Nkhata-Bay District despite that the programme is spread country-wide. Nkhata-Bay is one of the Districts that started PSIP as a project in Malawi, more so in the Northern Region. Secondly, the issue of stakeholders. Stakeholders to the SIP development and implementation are many; starting from the Ministry, Regional, District, Zonal and School level. However, the study only incorporated those that were very much involved at school level as part of assessment. School based stakeholders involved specifically include: Head Teachers, Deputy Head Teachers, members from School Management Committees (SMC), Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and Mother Groups.

School governance and management is a broad topic for discussion. The study narrowed it down to transparency and accountability components only and further narrowed to a specific programme which was PSIP for specialisation. The study used a community score card (CSC) and as Addai (2004) points out CSC ‘solicits user perceptions on quality and satisfaction of facilities ...’ As such this can be very subjective as it can be a personal attack on Service Providers (SP).

Minor limitations that may indicate a potential weakness were in the design and were as follows. (1)The researcher was not a member of the community and was therefore viewed as an outsider. This made people reluctant to speak openly. (2) Data generated was a snapshot for a period of one week, yet the programme has been there for five years. As such conclusions could not be drawn about transparency and accountability in PSIP over a long period of time. (3) In conclusion, the study results could not be generalized to other Districts rather than Nkhata-Bay. However, the results can inform the policy makers on the role of transparency and accountability in PSIP and in Primary Education.

1.12 Chapter summary

The chapter has discussed the background to PSIP and its importance in terms of quality education, the importance of transparency and accountability in PSIP, the roles of stakeholders in the implementation of the programme. The chapter also discussed statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, the significance, and delimiting factors of the study.

The next chapter will look at literature that was reviewed regarding this study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Chapter overview

The review of the literature for this study was divided into the following subtopics: governance in education,, decentralization, community participation, capacity building in participation, school based management system, impact of transparency and accountability in educational management and governance, general snapshot of studies done on the transparency and accountability in the primary education system, research gaps, conceptual framework and chapter summary.

2.1 Governance in education

Ambassa, et al. (2011) refers good governance to a participatory process, based on accountability, transparency, effectiveness, responsiveness and the avoidance of any form of exclusion by citizens. It is the key mechanism in translating the efforts of Government and Development partners into real benefits of the people. The National Education Sector Plan (NESP 2008-2017) sets out the Malawi Government's Educational goals and objectives. Improved governance and management of education is one such goal and is also defined as a key theme for realising the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS 2008)).

Primary education is the longest existing structure under Basic Education in Malawi, affecting the greatest number of people and is the basis for all other education. Only if Primary Sector functions well can a student gain the basic knowledge to progress to Secondary Education. However, Malawi primary structure harbours most of the challenges in the entire education system due to increasing enrolment without adequate funding and management (NESP, 2008. p11).

The Primary School Improvement Programme (PSIP) therefore is purposed to improve primary school challenges leading to improved completion rates, improved teacher and learner attendance, improved teacher contact time, reduced pupil teacher ratios, and enhanced community participation in the management of primary schools (PSIP manual, 2010, p7). Further to that, PSIP enhances the decentralisation process which is believed to improve delivery of education services in Malawi. For the effectiveness and efficiency to be manifested in the education sector, PSIP has been based on the foundation of transparency and accountability component of governance and management, allowing community participation to prevail as a product thereof. (PSIP manual, 2010).

From the definition of governance, the study fetched to implicitly see how participatory the whole program was at school level so that it fulfils its purpose as stated in the PSIP in improving primary school challenges in Malawi.

2.2 Community participation

Community Participation definition varies both at international and national level depending on who, forms and the levels involved. However, according to this study, the interest is the one definition of participation by Rose (2003) which is ‘the ability to take part in real decision making and governance, where all members have equal power to determine the outcome of decisions and share in a joint activity. This, according to Rose is genuine participation, voluntary and spontaneous.’ This is unlike in other forms of participation where communities are merely kept informed of development at school level and are expected to accept decisions that have already been made.

According to Bray (2000) for a community to be fully participatory, community members should themselves choose their roles, and would need the appropriate skills to carry out their functions effectively. This point is also supported by Matovu (2006) when he talked about capacity building in participation. Matovu argued that capacity building in participation is a process of strengthening the key actors’ capacity to identify their needs and determine their own values, priorities, and destiny. The process consists among others developing awareness, acquiring knowledge and skills for purposes of meaningful participation.

Community participation can be a strong tool to tackle some educational problems. The Primary School Improvement Program (PSIP) in Malawi was rolled out in the country as an intervention to influence community participation at school level. However, according to Uemura (1999) any strategy or tool that is meant to achieve high degree of

communication participation requires careful examinations of the communities because each community is unique, and complicated in nature. He argued that no community is homogenous, there is need for establishing communication channels and need for continuous assessment as communities, needs, and demands evolve.

From the literature therefore, it would be worth noting whether the PSIP would not be operating in vacuum and without detractors. The issues of capacity of both service providers and users, equal involvement in decision making and development of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) do assist in achieving high degree of participation.

2.3 Decentralisation and School based management (SBM) system

Malawi approved the Local Government Act in 1998 ushering in decentralisation where District Councils control even educational activities to improve school performance. Bogaert, Goutali, Saraf and White (2012) establishes that once communities and parents are sensitized to their role and potential impact in the decentralised system, they are likely to participate in school management which leads to a functional school based management group which in turn is best poised to hold actors accountable. Decentralisation promises to enhance efficiency and democratic voice within government by creating linkages between government offices and communities. However, Bogaert et al. (2012) states that empirical studies have not so far been able to prove that this is the result. Scholars on the other hand link it to growing levels of corruption and illicit practices.

Cardwell (2005) in Bogaert et al.(2012) defined School Based Management (SBM) as a systematic decentralisation of authority and responsibility to the school level to make decisions on significant matters related to school operations within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, curriculum, standards and accountability through school committees. Cardwell emphasised that much of the literature highlights that decentralization of education requires appropriate resource allocation; taking into account number of students, level of schooling, special educational needs and the school location. UNFPA (2000) cited a challenge of decentralisation in the developing countries. It states that many developing countries mistakenly decide to decentralise too quickly. They undermine the importance of establishing clear rules, roles and responsibilities in order to boost participation and accountability. The other issue is shortage of technical skills which in the developing countries is very expensive. Unless there is political will to overcome this, local authorities retain labour bound to low levels of participation.

The literature cited therefore require the gradual process of decentralization with appropriate resources, skills, political will as fundamental backbone of any program if it should register an impact.

2.4 Impact of transparency and accountability in school governance

The literature on the impact of transparency and accountability was from MCGee and Gaventa (2010). This was based on a study response to a prevailing situation of little attention being paid to the impact and effectiveness of transparency and accountability initiatives despite their rapid growth and the growing donor support received. In response

to this, the study, based on literature and experiences across the field with the special focus on transparency and accountability work was conducted to improve an understanding among policy makers and practioners of the available audience and identify gaps in knowledge to inform a longer term agenda.

MCGee and Gaventa report that through greater accountability, ‘leaky pipes’ of corruption and inefficiency are repaired, aid is channeled more effectively, and in turn development initiatives produce greater and more visible results. For many Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other social actors, accountability is also a path to empowerment, or at least to enhanced effectiveness of civil society and donor organizations, large and small, in responding to the needs and voices of those they claim to serve. For the public service, transparency and accountability initiatives contribute to better budget utilisation and better delivery of services.

However, the study report cautions against drawing generalised conclusions from the existing evidence base, for a number of reasons. In some cases, the initiatives are very new, and accompanying impact studies are underway or just beginning, making it too early to detect or explain resulting impacts. In many other studies, the focus is on only one initiative in one locality, precluding general conclusions, or permitting conclusions based only on limited anecdotal evidence.

2.5 General snapshot of studies done on the subject

With Education for All targets of achieving 100 percent enrolments of school age children by 2015, Global enrolment is increasing but there is real concern that the quality of education is jeopardized by poor management and corruption (Dossing et al.,2011). According to Dossing et al. (2011), there was an observation made to the effect that when there is lack of transparency and accountability in public school system and supplies go missing, it is the poor that suffer most.

Democratisation in Africa has brought in a more decentralised management approach in a primary school administration in Africa, giving more room for local participation of the stakeholders at grassroots. However, this has brought with it issues of poor governance in education sector. The review looked at international studies done in Bangladesh, Mexico, Cameroon and South Africa. In all cases, transparency and accountability was studied at primary education level (Transparency International, 2011.)

Firstly, a study done in Bangladesh and commissioned by Transparency International (TI) was meant to identify gaps and flaws in the country's basic education system and locate and investigate corruption.

The findings, according to Karim (2004) revealed that students do unauthorised payments to schools for different services despite free education service. There was misuse of the criterion for eligibility for food education programme.

Transparency International (TI) commissioned a study too in Cameroon and South Africa on mapping transparency, accountability and Integrity in Primary Education in 2011.

The findings in both countries revealed insignificant lack of transparency and timeliness in how school budgets are allocated and distributed, embezzlement of education funds rank forefront of problem within primary education, school administrators not having means to run the schools, poor implementation and enforcement of rules and regulations.

The literature gave lessons that despite several programs being run in different countries, challenges to the education sector appear to be similar in relation to transparency and accountability issues. Service delivery to the service users is compromised with corruption, lack of capacity by the service providers and poor implementation planning and with delayed funding.

2.6 Research gaps and conclusions

According to TI (2011) report on lessons learned in Primary Education in Cameroon and South Africa, the literature in the education sector of these governance components is said to be thin, with no national independent initiative and educational context within which they happen. All the cases were sanctioned by the Transparency International which is an international body. This confirms what Coronel (2012) stated, that there is transparency rating paradox. She said that the measurements ‘exist because multilateral agencies and civil Society organisations need data, to put pressure on government or to advocate for transparency reforms. What they measure, how they measure and who does the measuring all depend on the goals and resources of the groups that conducted the assessments’.

This research therefore gave a national independent scholarly approach, with an educational context of a specific programme based on the foundation of transparency and accountability.

2.7 Conceptual framework

The study used the World Bank (2005) Social Accountability conceptual relationship theory (the who, what and the how). The background to the framework is related to the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) on education. The Goal states that ‘Universal Primary Education and gender parity at all levels of education must be available by 2015’. This has led in expansion of access to education and abolition of fees in the hope of achieving the goal. This consequently has also led to a general decline in education results (World Development report, 2004).

A strategy thrust to mitigate this challenge, according to the same report, is to help increase the number of service users in decision making and oversight of school management; enhancing transparency, accountability and responsiveness of the system to resource allocation, utilisation and performance.

According to the World Bank (2005) report, the strength of the social Accountability approach is that it operationalises and strengthens direct relationship that is there between users of education services, policy makers and service providers. In order to clarify the concept of social accountability in the education sector, the theory considers the different components of the accountability relationship – the who, what, and how – by defining the

actors that can be held accountable, the issues for which they can be held accountable, and the appropriate mechanisms for social accountability.

The first question is *who* is accountable to *whom*, that is, *the locus of accountability*. Many different parties can be held accountable or hold others accountable. The second question is *what* a particular actor is accountable *for*, that is, *the objects of accountability*. Different types of accountability focus on different issues (e.g. the planning, handling of finances, proper conduct or performance). An accountability object can be any issue which an actor can legitimately be held responsible for and called on to justify or change its action. The third question is *how* these actors account for their actions, that is, *the procedures for ensuring accountability*.

The overlapping relationship is illustrated as in Figure 1.

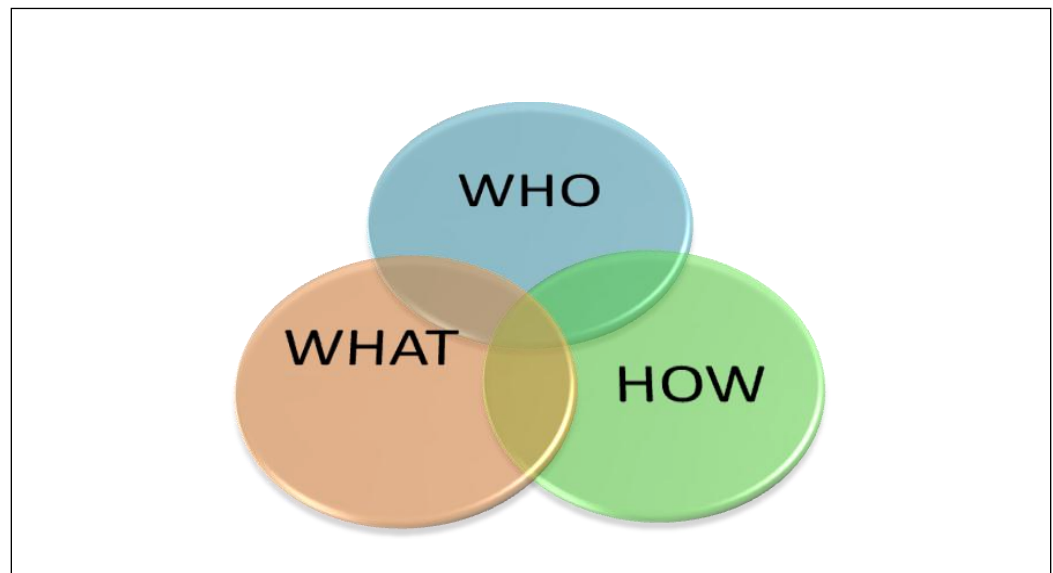


Figure 1: The Social Accountability Framework illustration

Source: World Bank, (2005) Social Accountability in the Education Sector Sourcebook

The ‘who’ in this study were the stakeholders of PSIP at school level and zonal level. The study analysed who is accountable to whom in PSIP.

The ‘what’ were the roles and responsibilities these stakeholders have been assigned to undertake in the programme. The question is what were these actors/stakeholders accountable for?

The ‘how’ were the mechanisms/benchmarks the program laid out as means of ensuring transparency and accountability in the program. This is in terms of stakeholders accounting for their actions in PSIP.

The social accountability framework approach has proven very successful where conventional mechanisms of accountability, such as finance, political and administrative are proven not to be effective or where service users feel that the direct engagement is needed to raise an issue, improve situation or expose inefficiencies (World Bank Report, 2005).

However, this approach relies on a broad range of political, institutional, cultural and historical pre-conditions both on supply and demand side.

2.8 Chapter summary

The chapter reviewed some related literature regarding governance in the education sector, community participation, decentralization and school based management system, community participation, school-based management, impact of Transparency and accountability, the general snapshot of studies done on the subject, research gaps identified in the area so far. The review has given us the information that governance in the education sector is gaining ground in a bid to improve quality community

participation. However, not much has been studied yet on the impact of the elements of governance and in particular, relating to a specific program. The intention for this study is solely for academic purposes and this might provide an independent nationalistic views unlike other studies commissioned elsewhere for international bodies' interests.

The chapter finally looked at conceptual framework.

The next chapter looks at the research design and methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Chapter overview

This chapter looks at how the study was carried out. It describes the methodology including the design, study area and choice of participants, data analysis and interpretation. It also provides justifications and limitations of the path/process chosen. Finally, the chapter looked at the ethical considerations of the process. The detail of the study process followed Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2009) so called research process ‘onion’ consisting of five different layers: research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, time horizon and data generation methods. As approaches in the different layers have dependencies, they suggest a research process should be developed from the top down, starting with the outside layer, and thereafter peeling away each layer until the fifth layer is reached.

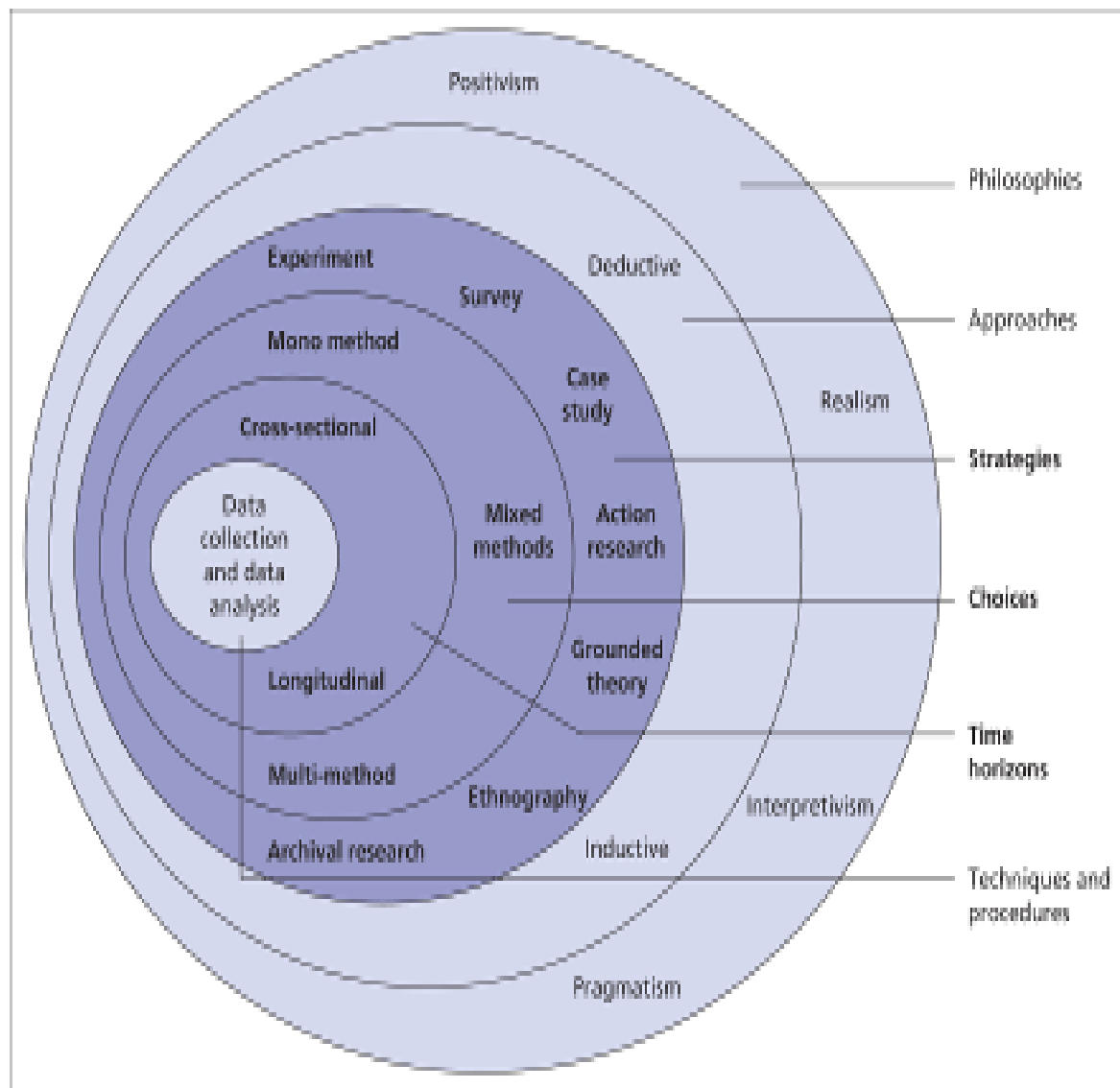


Figure 2: Research process “Onion”.

Source: Saunders M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. 2009, p83

3.1 Research design

The study employed mixed methods approach. Creswell (2011) said as a method, ‘it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies’. This study used questionnaire in form of Community Score Card (CSC) which is a quantitative data generation tool. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was used to generate qualitative tool. A combination of both approaches provides a better understanding of the problems than using either approach.

3.1.1 Research strategy

The study used survey (descriptive) strategy which Robson (1998) defines as the generation of standardised information from a specific population, allowing for quantitative data generation. Robson continues to say that surveys allow evidence to be gathered concerning ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘how many’, and ‘how much’ and ‘where’. Surveys have no control over behavioural event and only focus on contemporary events. (Saunders et al., 2009). This strategy was more appropriate with the conceptual framework used in this study which looked at the social accountability relationship theory. The theory looked at the “who, what and how”.

3.1.2 Research time horizon

The time horizon was cross-sectional as it describes the state of affairs in the population at just one point in time (Robson, 1998). The study had limited time frame and not aimed at studying change and development.

3.2 Study area and choice of participants

The study was conducted in Nkhata-Bay District in the Northern Region of Malawi, where the PSIP started as a Project in 2009. There are fifteen (15) zones with eighty-five (85) public primary schools in the District. Four zones and eight schools were randomly selected to participate in the study. The participants who were purposively sampled were divided into two categories: Service Users (SU) as well as Service Providers (SP).

The service users in PSIP are local community members who are specifically involved in the program planning and implementation and they include members from Parent Teacher Associations, School Management Committees, Mother Groups, and learners. In this study, they were represented by four (4) Parent Teacher Associations members and four (4) School Management Committees members from each school, one Mother Group (MG) Chairperson and learner representatives. That meant ten (10) community representatives from each school. There were eight schools coming from four zones in total.

The service providers in the case of the PSIP are those employed officials with the Ministry of Education involved in PSIP. In this study they were represented by the District Education Manager (DEM), four (4) Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) from the Zones where schools are coming from as well as Eight (8) Head teachers from the eight schools. There were a total of ninety-three participants involved in the study.

Table 1 shows the categories of the participants and the positions of those who participated in the study:

Table 1: Categories and positions of the participants to the study

No	Category A:	Positions
1	Service providers	- District Education Manager (DEM) /Regional Coordinator for PSIP in the North
		- Primary Education Advisors (PEA)
		- Head Teachers
		- Deputy Head Teachers
2	Category B:	Positions
	Service Users	- School Management Committee (SMC) members
		- Parents Teacher Association (PTA) members
		- Mother Group chairpersons
		- Learners
		Note: In some schools where the research team visited after the schools have knocked off for the day, had no learner participating as the team did not want to disturb their learning process.

Source: Researcher data generation

Purposive sampling was used to get a sample of the population for the study as these members were key participants and have been involved in the program. This meant that the study purposively looked for those individuals with the right information depending on their role in PSIP.

3.3 Data generation methods

Two data generation methods and tools were used in the study to generate both quantitative and qualitative data. They include a questionnaire in form of Community Score Card (CSC) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

Both categories of the participants were subjects to the tools. The first tool used was the questionnaire where service providers and service users sat in separate rooms and scored on the card. If they had issues for clarification they were given the opportunity to ask. During the FGD both categories met and discussed the predetermined themes raised to them.

3.3.1 Community Score Card (CSC)

This is a tool developed by CARE Malawi in 2002 to bring out the promotion of participation, transparency, accountability and informed decision making through the involvement of stakeholders in assessing service delivery. According to Addai (2004), CSC has a number of benefits: it is simple to use by the community members who mostly have low education level to understand concepts; it offers the opportunity for the beneficiaries of the services to assess the provider and the provider to review the strategy in planning other projects; it enhances confidence in the service provider especially when scores are high; it provides accountability in service and facility delivery; and finally it shares responsibilities for monitoring the quality of services with users.

The CSC, in this study, had taken indicators for scoring from the PSIP manual (2010) from pages 27 to 28 where every level of SIP development and implementation has specific measures laid down for compliance. Each indicator had a rate of scoring from zero (0) to five (5). A zero (0) represented a score where the participant did not want to rate because either s/he was not aware of the indicator or incidence towards that indicator has not yet occurred at that school. One (1) represented 'very bad score' going up to five

(5), which represented ‘very good’ score for that specific indicator. Participants were just expected to tick in the box where ‘their perceived’ score was. The indicators were scored by two categories of respondents; service providers and service users and the indicators are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: CSC indicators

CSC INDICATORS	
SCORED BY SERVICE PROVIDERS	SCORED BY SERVICE USERS
- Capacity building for the stakeholders	- Communication and display of roles and responsibilities of stakeholders of SIP
- SIP display on a notice board	- Communication, implementation and monitoring of a social contract
- Stakeholder Involvement in SIP development and implementation	- Capacity building trainings
- Adherence and compliance to procedures when misappropriation of funds has occurred	- Involvement of stakeholders in all stages of SIP management
- Availability of other related documents/ records of funds for inspection at any time for all items of expenditure	- Display of SIP priorities on notice board
- Display of roles and responsibilities of stakeholders of SIP	- Display of details of funds (School Improvement Grant) received from the District Council and expenditure details
-	- Adherence to procedures when misappropriation of funds has occurred
	- Regular meetings conducted where progress reports are presented

Key stages of the CSC

The researcher used Addai (2004) key stages of developing and implementing the score card. The following steps were used

1. Collection of supply-side information from the manual for input tracking.
2. Selection of indicators from the information gathered in the manual.
3. Setting a range of scores from 0= neutral/indifferent score, 1= very bad score, 2 = bad score, 3 = just ok score, 4 = good score, 5 = very good score.
4. Explaining to the service providers the need and purpose of the exercise. This helped to prevent any form of antagonism or fear of blackmailing and skepticism.
5. Conducting interface meeting between SP and SU through FGD to ensure generation of community opinions/perceptions.

However, according to CARE Malawi (2002), the only challenge of the tool is that it requires time as it is a relatively new concept in the research circles.

3.3.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

In order to cross-check the perceptions generated through the scoring card, follow up Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted. Both categories of service providers and Service users were involved in FGD. The session took place after the scoring has taken on the CSC where discussion of the predetermined theses was done. Clarification of other issues in terms of giving more details on the indicators was also done. A group of nine to ten members each for a session met per school. There were six sessions done in three day, each group was interviewed once.

According to Krueger (1998), FGD is a study method used for exploring specific population knowledge, attitude toward, and behavior regarding a given topic. Coolican (2004) further defines FGD as when a researcher brings together a panel of experts, with a particular interest and who are fairly representative of the general population. Barbour (2008) underscores one of the hallmarks of this qualitative data generation tool as its capacity to capture and illuminate context. Rose (2003) also indicates that FGD are sensitive and reflective of context; the location of the FGD session and the association this has for the group, its composition and identification of patterning in data, all influence or impact on the discussion.

The following predetermined themes were given to the groups for discussion: accounting for actions, assessing sensitisation on SIP, stakeholder participation in SIP, general successes and challenges of PSIP so far.

3.4 Data analysis and interpretation

Data generated were analysed in two phases. Firstly, data from the community score card were analysed using frequency scoring matrix where frequency scores were added and summarized for ranking the transparency and accountability indicators. Then the scores were converted into a percentage for interpretation.

Pre-determined themes from the Focus Group Discussions were analysed by summarizing the issues manually. Krippendorf (2004), stated that thematic analysis

involves identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data, i.e. themes.

The Researcher captured the discussion in the notebook and picked the issues as they came. Later it was re-read for identification of clearer issues for explanation of events.

As the study employed a mixed method approach, data generated by the two tools and then analysed quantitatively and qualitatively serves as a validation process, giving also a broader perspective removing the personal biasness.

3.5 Ethical considerations

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Head of the Educational Foundation Department giving her the confirmation to conduct the research (see appendix 1). The letter was shown to all respondents of the study. A verbal informed consent was obtained from all the respondents to participate in the research. The District Education Manager as a gatekeeper gave the research team an introductory letter as the researcher went into schools (see appendix 6).

Confidentiality issues were adhered to throughout the process. This included; no names of the participants were used in the study on the score card. Schools and participants were given alphabetical letters and pseudo names for identification respectively when doing analysis.

3.6 Chapter summary

The Chapter discussed the research design, approach, strategy, time horizon, and study area, choice of participants, data analysis and interpretations. Finally, it discussed the ethical considerations.

The next chapter discusses the results of the findings by looking at demographic characteristics of the sampled population, the existence of transparency in the implementation of PSIP at school level, accountability mechanisms of both SP and SU. And finally it discusses strengths and challenges experienced by PSIP.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

4.0 Chapter overview

This chapter discusses the findings of the study. The study aimed at investigating perceptions on transparency and accountability in the implementation of the PSIP in Nkhata-Bay District. The results are presented using the following; demographic characteristics of the participants, the existence of transparency in the implementation of PSIP at school level, accountability mechanisms of both service providers and users and finally there is a discussion of the strengths and challenges in the implementation of PSIP. The chapter ends with a summary of the findings of the study.

4.1 Demographic characteristics of the participants

Characteristics of the service providers and service users were analysed in terms of gender, roles and levels of education.

4.1.1 Gender and roles characteristics

Out of the eight-five (85) participants, Thirty-five (35) were women who were coming mostly from Mother Groups composition. Mother Group is a composition of females selected to deliberately look at issues of a girl child at school. There was only one Deputy

Head Teacher at school E. The remaining fifty-five (55) were men elected in position of SMC, PTA, working and in the category of service providers

The same picture is repeated even when data is segregated between service users and providers. Locally 36 % are women given that opportunity to be involved in PSIP while 64% are men who are elected to hold positions in either SMC or PTA.

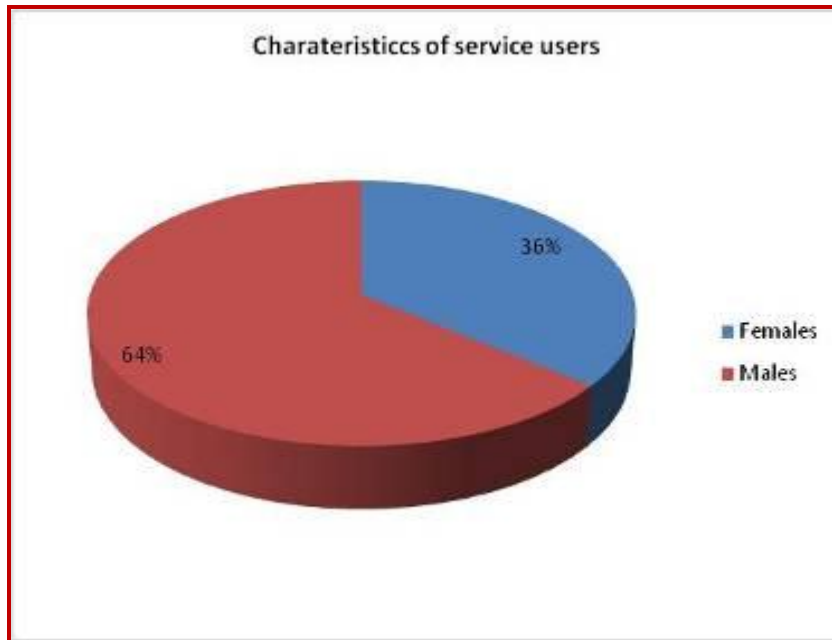


Figure 3: Gender characteristics of Service Users

This finding implies that there are more males than females in the SMC and PTA leadership, which is worrisome because according to Rose (2003) gender dynamics promote community participation. According to Rose (2003) report, gender division of labor was apparent in Malawi where women usually get involved in community activities, men on the other hand, take on more of the community leadership roles.

4.1.2 Education levels

The Primary School Leaving Certificate was the highest level of education of the respondents representing 40% as seen from figure 4, with no member of the local community gone as far as tertiary education.

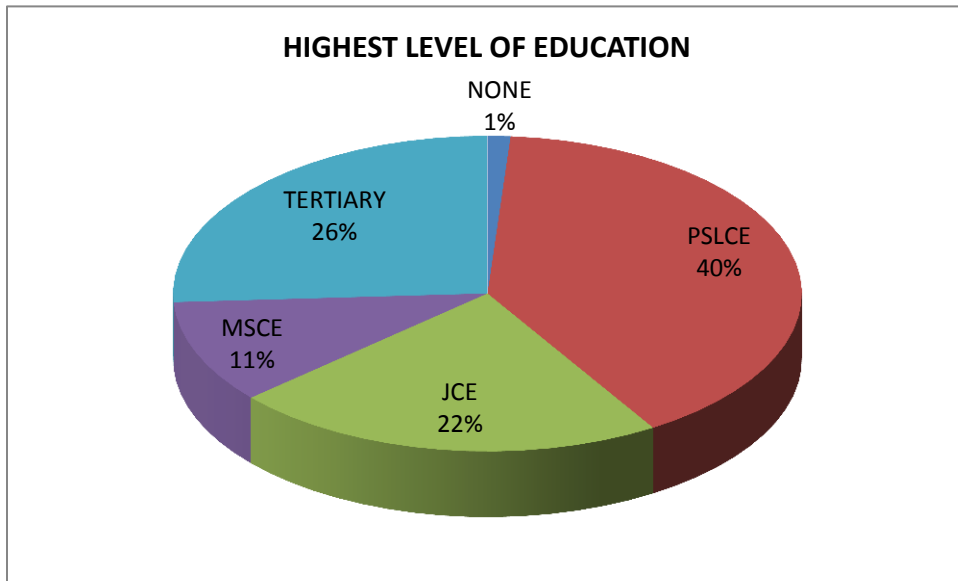


Figure 4: Educational Levels of respondents

The interpretation of the above chart on education levels is not good if parent involvement in pupil's school activities is to improve because parents with higher levels of education are more likely to be involved in their children's school, (Child trends data bank, 2013). This finding also agrees with Noel et al., (2013) who observed that increasing parental involvement in schools can be challenging when families do not speak English as they may not feel able to participate in school activities, such as school meetings, events or volunteering.

Despite that the PSIP planning and reporting meetings will be conducted using local language, some concepts still are better articulated and understood in English, which is the official language in Malawi.

As such, the Primary School graduates who represented community here cannot converse well in English and therefore their participation/ involvement may not be effective as demanded by the PSIP. The forty (40%) percent of community members were the one trained up to PSLCE only and therefore may be lowly educated and hence not comfortable to participate in the committees as required.

4.2 Findings on Existence of Transparency in the Implementation of PSIP at School Level

Quantitative data generated from a score card for the transparency and accountability indicators was analysed using a frequency scoring matrix. Frequency of scores were added up for that indicator and converted into a percentage.

Service providers scoring process was conducted and completed separately from service users. Though the process for scoring was the same as that of the users, the pace with the providers was much quicker because of the literacy levels of the providers.

Transparency indicators scored included capacity building issues, display of SIP priorities, community participation in SIP development and implementation, adherence and compliance to procedures when misappropriation of SIG has occurred, availability of other related SIP records. Finally it looked at the display and communication of roles and responsibilities.

4.2.1 Capacity building by SP

The first indicator to be analysed was capacity building. Capacity issues assist in the effective participation of individuals in any programme. Capacity refers to the ability of school management committees to fully execute all required responsibilities (Bogaert et al., 2012). Matovu (2006) argued as well that capacity building exposes both public officials and communities to participatory approaches, methods and improves competencies in other areas such as public relations and listening. As such the indicator is a very important one during this PSIP.

The first score indicator analysis was done for the Service providers as seen from figure 5

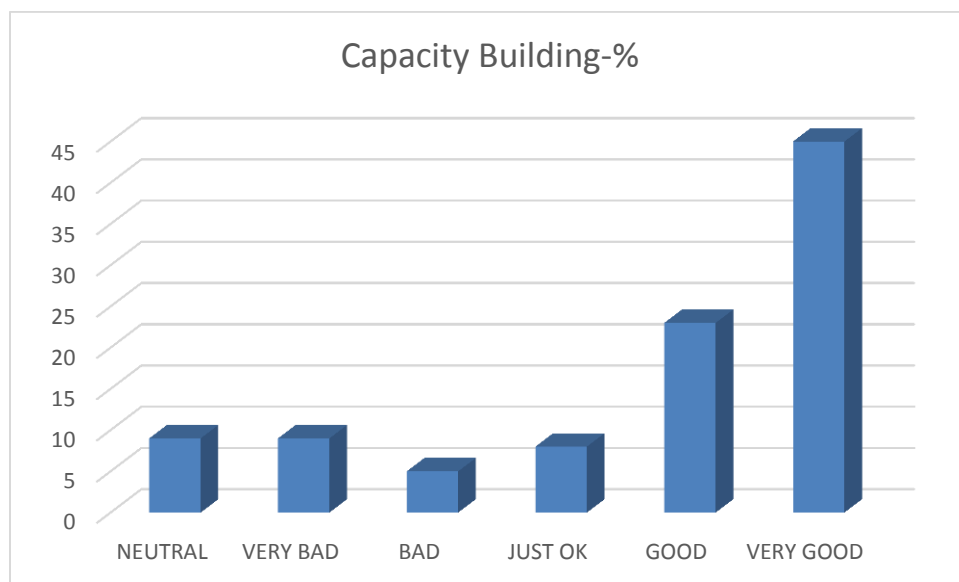


Figure 5: Capacity Building by Service Provider

The providers indicated that they provide the necessary capacity as seen from the graph above where most of SP scored from 'very good' with 43% to 'good' scores at 22%.

This means that capacity issues were taken seriously for the participation of the community members in the school issues.

According to SIP manual, capacity building for stakeholders should take place every year in order to incorporate changes that do happen frequently in the planning processes. The service providers during FGD, especially the PEAs, indicated yearly training are done as per requirement. One comment from PEA 'Chinganji' had the following concern on the training itself;

Despite doing yearly trainings which is a plus to the SP, the training content is deep as a result community representatives do not follow. Apart from the deep content making understanding of some concepts difficult, the treasurer of the SMC is chosen on the basis of the character and not ability. As a result the head Teacher or his/her deputy does the work on the updating the cashbook. ' (FGD, 25/04/15)

Service users scored the indicator almost the same way like the service providers. The scores registered all the way from the neutral to the very good score as indicated from figure 6.

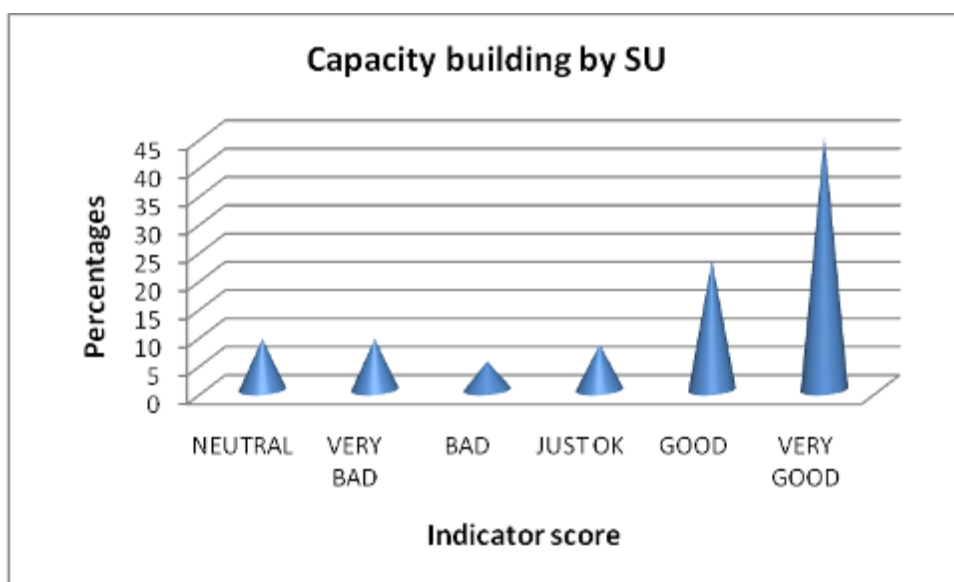


Figure 6: Capacity building scores by Service Users

The figure shows that there are some community members who had no idea of the capacity building issue which was meant to assist them in the planning process of the SIP. Nine (9)% of the service users scored the 'neutral' score. The same percentages were registered for the 'very bad' score. The scores moved from 'very bad' score all the way to forty-five (45)% 'very good' scores.

From the FGD, all the service users had reported that they had attended the trainings, which was verified by the service providers and reportedly done at zonal level on yearly basis. This finding implies that capacity building issue to the local communities in the PSIP is doing well to allow effective participation of stakeholders. This affirms UNFPA (2000) report that stated that unless clear roles and responsibilities are established, participation is affected negatively. In this case, participation is not negatively affected by capacity issues as trainings are done as required.

4.2.2 Displays of SIP priorities

SIP priorities are school plans that stakeholders in PSIP come up with in terms of needs and are chronologically arranged according to priority. These priority needs in form of plans are supposed to be displayed both in the Head Teacher's Office and on the school notice board so that the community is aware of both the plan and progress thereof. Figure 7 shows the percentages of scores on the display of priorities by service providers.

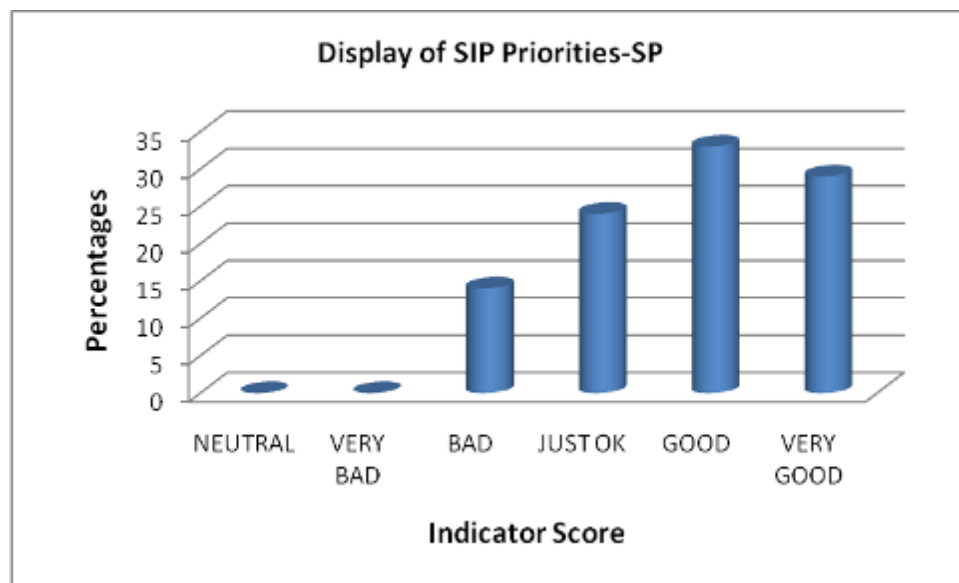


Figure 7: Graph showing scores on the display of SIP priorities-SP

The scores for this indicator by the SP spread from 14% of the 'bad' scores to 33% of the 'good'. During the FGD, the lowest score was explained that the plans could not be displayed outside on the school boards for security reasons. Most school visited had no fence surrounding their premises. The other reason for the low score on the display was that the SIP document could not be summarized and be displayed. Rather it was the whole document available on the Head Teacher desk in the SIP file for perusal when need be.

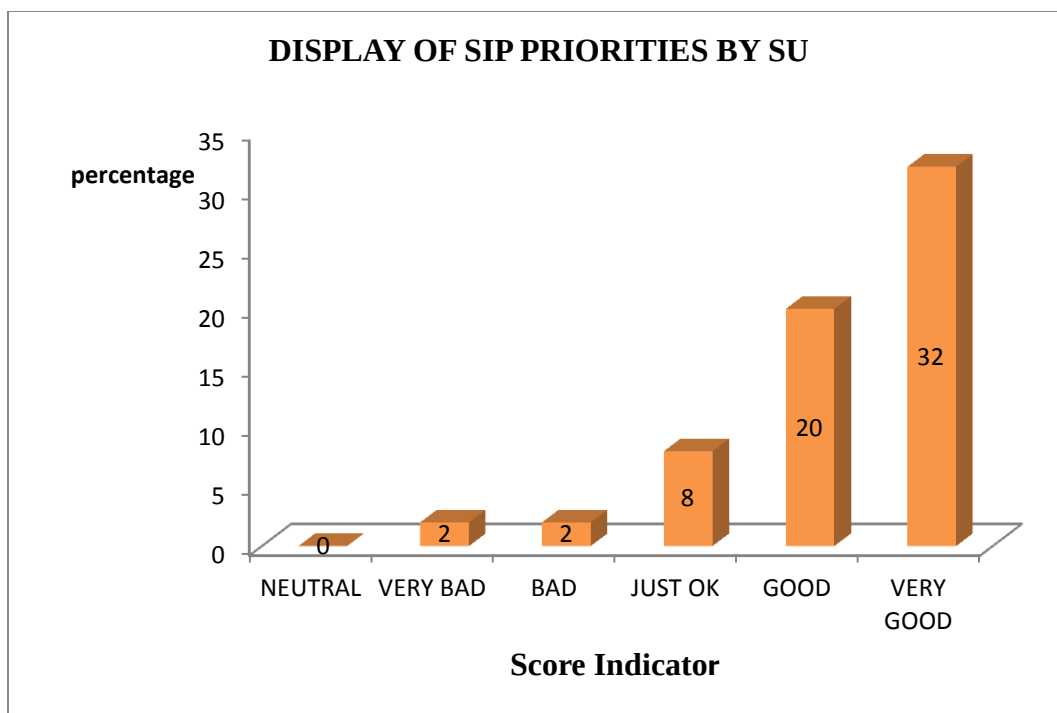


Figure 8: Graph showing scores on the display of SIP priorities-SU

The SU score has moved from two (2) % ‘very bad’ score to thirty-two (32) % ‘very good’ score. This is ironic in the sense that the SPs are the ones responsible for the display and yet their highest frequency scores were at 33% on just a ‘good’ score. However, the Service Users’ highest frequency score reached a 32% and on a ‘very good’ indicator score.

The issues raised during the discussion was twofold. Firstly, some community members were not aware that the SIP has to be displayed both in the Head Master and school boards. As such it was difficult for them to comment objectively on it. The issue of security around the school premises made Head teachers not to display on the school

boards was the second issue. As such, the Service Users condoned the behavior of the Head Teacher.

Rather Head Teachers keep all the documents in a file for SIP, despite knowing the rule that they need to display. Through the discussion, service providers indicated that the exercise had reminded them on their role in displaying the summary for transparency's sake.

The findings showed that SIP documents were available in all schools for perusal. It is only the issue of display being a concern due to fears of vandalism. Unfortunately, service users did not mind the failure to display.

The findings strengthen the social accountability concept framework (World Development Report, 2004) that states that to improve service delivery social accountability initiatives rely also on precondition factors on the supply side like access to information allowing all stakeholders to constructively engage in education service provision.

This study finding converges with those results from Cameroon and South Africa highlighted in the literature review where it was found that there is poor implementation and enforcement of rules and regulations by the school administrators.

4.2.3 Community Participation in SIP development and implementation

Community participation is the backbone of the SIP, more important is the parent involvement in school governance which is seen as a means of making schools more accountable to the society. (Uemura, 1999).

The scores were very high on this indicator with a 50% on ‘very good’ and then 39% on ‘good’ as seen on in figure 9.

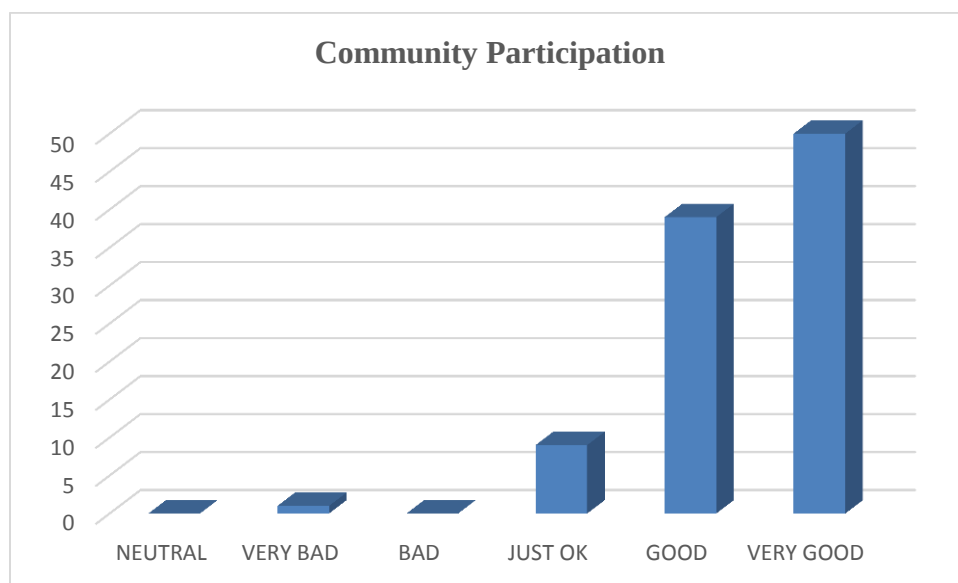


Figure 9: Graph showing scores on community participation in SIP-SU

Most of the respondents talked well of the program as quoted by PTA member of School of school A,

‘Community participant is good because we plan and implement programs together, as a result no mistrust and false claims on the use of funds by the responsible people.’

(FGD, on 25/04/15)

The few respondents who scored this poorly from two schools (B and H) mentioned that they were involved during prioritisation of the needs only, and were not aware that the process they were doing was part of SIP.

Members valued their participation in SIP and explained that the involvement had assisted in so many ways. The benefits were many. Firstly, participation brought awareness of the challenges faced by the schools and helped share information on how to assist pupils as they take part in the day to day activities of the school. Secondly, participation assisted in witnessing together the flow of funds at school and therefore mutual trust was encouraged and nurtured. The pupils were able to voice their needs as most times pupils have been left out in the previous projects. Finally, it encouraged ownership of the school projects as the needs were identified by the community themselves and therefore implementation was easy. According to the discussion, this bottom-up approach gave them powers on their community than top-down one where they only received resources they did not ask for.

The other benefits of community participation stated by services users included that community members were able to uncover problems that teachers missed in their day to day running of the school. For example, issues of girl child are unique and deep yet teachers may subtly not reflect that in the school needs. Mother Group members are sensitive on these issues and reflect them in the plan. It also promoted transparency and accountability as people knew what was happening at the school. The challenges involved in community participation cited during FGD included that there was limited participation as other people still look for monetary incentives in order to take part. This kills the spirit of volunteerism. The other challenge was that it takes time to agree on priorities as other people were adamant on their idea and would not want to bulge in to others even when the other idea was good.

The results in this indicator mean the community is part and parcel to the program and are seeing the benefits of being involved in their school for once. School based management (SBM) then according to Bogaert et al. (2012) is effective as school committees are able to make decisions on significant matters relating to school operations within a centrally framework of PSIP policy. In this case SBM is strongly tied to decentralisation movement.

This study finding also confirms what Uemura (1999) implied in the meaning of participation as being a more active role, rather than passive, in real decision making at every stage including identification of problems. This kind of participation, he confirms in education can do a lot like maximizing limited resources, identify and address problems, promote girls education. Which has proven true with this program.

4.2.4 Adherence and compliance to procedures when there is misappropriation of School Improvement Grant

The score card had 86% scores on this indicator on neutral score. The indicator was one of the benchmark that the service providers had to prove their transparent way of handling funds from the District Office. Through FGD, it was noted that most schools visited had not had cases of misappropriation of funds so far. However, the remaining 14% score was on ‘just ok’ and came from the District Education Manager (DEM), and one Primary Education Advisor who acknowledged that in some schools things have gone bad in terms of management of funds. However and I quote:

Communities have acted by assisting in the arrest of the suspect. In other cases, the community acted by informing the higher authorities of the conflict of interest by the contractor to the Head Teacher. (FGD, 25/04/2015)

The findings implied that incidences of misappropriation of School improvement Grant (SIG) was not too common. Most committees were using funds for the intended purposes. Cases of corruption prevail too in those incidences cited by the two officials. However communities are empowered to use the procedures given to them in the manual. As MCGee and Gaventa (2010) indicated earlier that with greater accountability, inefficiencies are repaired, aid channeled more effectively and then accountability becomes a path to empowerment.

4.2.5 Availability of other related SIP records by both SP and SU

The indicator was specifically for School Improvement Grant received and expenditure detail documents.

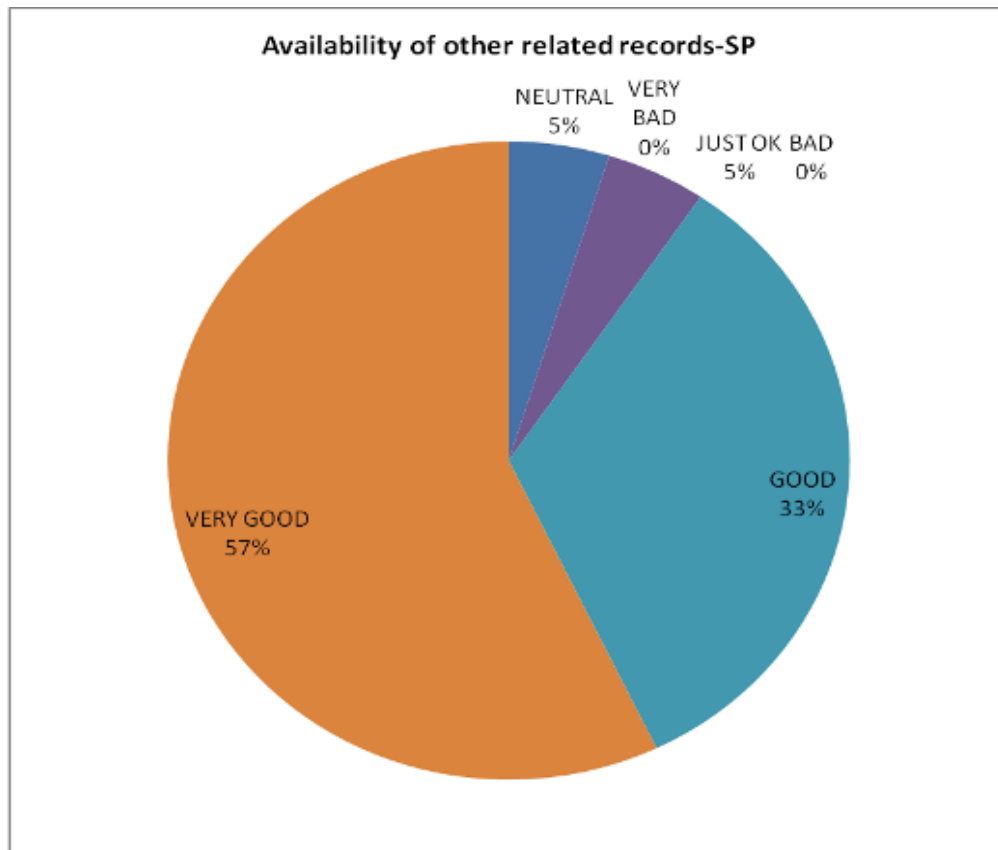


Figure 10: Chart showing scores on availability of other related SIP records-SP

More than half of the service providers scored on 'very good'. This showed their understanding on the need to have other SIP related records available for inspection at any time. The findings showed that the documents were available. The documents were readily available in all offices as Head teachers showed the SIP file where funds received and expenditure details were filed.

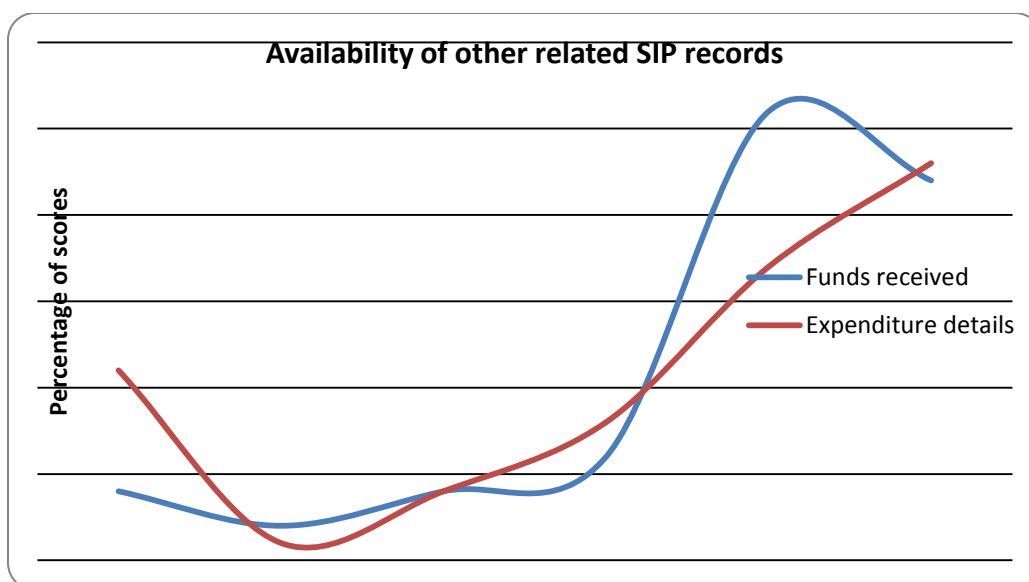


Figure 11: Graph showing scores on the availability of other related SIP records-SU

The SU scored separately the indicators of availability of funds received and expenditure details'. The findings show that records were made available when need be at the Head Teacher's office. In figure 11, there is a quick jump from 'just ok' score to the 'good' or 'very good'. This is good especially as it is coming from the Service users.

From the FGD, respondents mentioned that there is a call for a meeting whenever funds have been received from the District Office. Thereafter, procurement process starts. There is normally no document to show during that meeting apart from a verbal report on the amount received. A member of SMC from school G reported as follows:

Normally, when cash is received, a meeting is called by SMC where amount received at the school is stated. We take the plan drawn earlier and the procurement process starts. We need to admit here, no document is shown. However, the community has the trust in what we say. (FGD, 26/04/15)

During discussion, the other respondents indicated that the verbal report was fine because the display of how much funds have been received might woo thieves to the school. There is 16% 'neutral' score on the expenditure details. This came from the members of PTA from school F who mentioned that there is no report but rather a show of things procured which is enough. One PTA committee member emphasised as follows;

Ife za lipoti tilibe nazo ntchito, kaya imakhalpo mu fayilo kaya ayi, sitidziwa, koma chomwe timaona ife ndi katundu wagulidwayo ndiye ofunika. Pamenepo timadziwadi kuti ndalama zinabweradi.

Translated as 'it is not an issue for the community to see the expenditure report. As long as they have procured the goods and delivered them, it is fine' (FGD, 26/04/16)

The finding imply that the citizens are not empowered yet and do not understand that publishing information on expenditure and resource allocation significantly improves the parameters of transparency and accountability by stakeholders in the system.

4.2.6 Communication of roles and responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders in SIP are specific and have to be communicated to the office bearers if they are to be followed well. The service users were asked to rate this to see if communication to them was done and also if the roles were displayed on the board as the PSIP manual dictates.

Ninety-five (95 %) percent of the 64 service users showed that they were informed very well about their roles and responsibilities as shown on figure 12 .

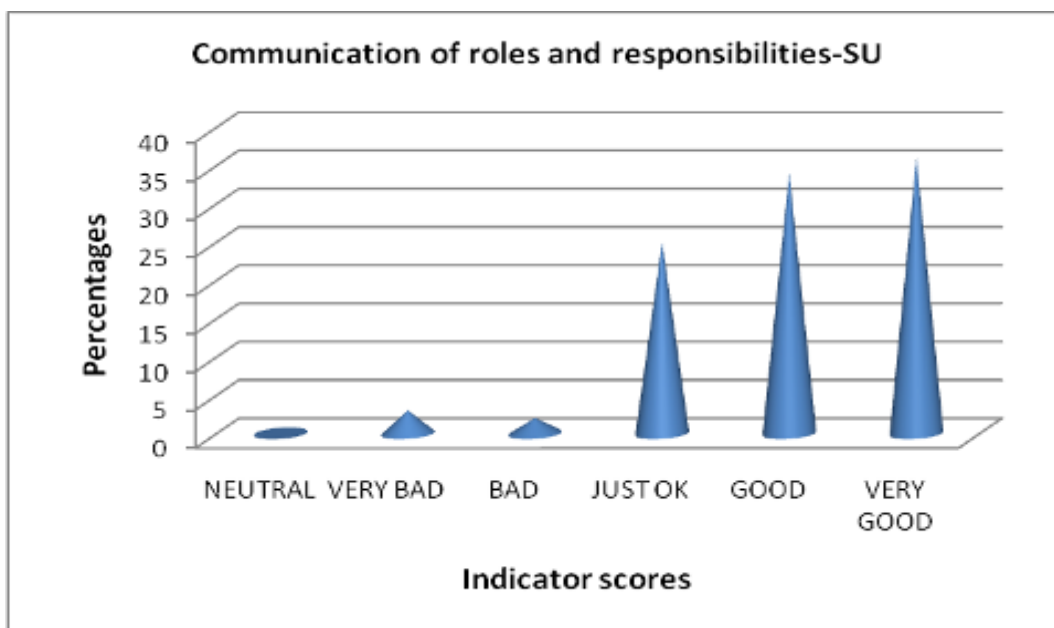


Figure 12: Graph showing communication of roles and responsibilities-SU

According to Primary School Improvement Program guidelines (page 19), SMC and PTA chairpersons are signatories to the SIP and the school bank account and it is the role of the Head Teacher to work closely with these chairperson in the SIP activities. In all the schools visited to, the members were aware of the roles they had to play.

Mother Group members specifically appreciated their role in assisting girl child in accessing quality education. One member from school ‘C’ reported;

Sanitation and sexual harassment issues have improved in our schools as girls know where to present their concerns and as ‘mothers’ we empower them by giving them a voice whenever a PTA meeting is taking place. Before our inclusion in the program, girls were suppressing their challenges and the school community consequently registered more girl drop outs.

(FGD, 26/04/15)

The findings on this indicator mean that service providers did a wonderful job in communicating roles of the stakeholders in the program. In this way everyone is assumed to play their roles efficiently. This augurs well with earlier statement by Uemura (1999) that active participation promotes girls education.

4.3 Accountability mechanisms of both Service Providers and Users

According to Ambassa, et al (2011), accountability is when individuals or organizations are being held to account for the regular exercise of the powers entrusted to them in accordance with rules and duties. The accountability indicators scored by service providers and users included: availability of facilities for citizen complaints, the implementation and monitoring of a social contract and finally respondents looked at conducting meetings where progress reports are to be presented.

4.3.1 Availability of facilities for citizen complaints

This indicator is a benchmark for SP to check if community members were provided with channels that would grant service users' facilities to lodge complaints regarding school plans. As shown in the table 3, the highest score was 43% on 'just ok', meaning they may be satisfied but not happy with the situation.

Table 3: Frequency table for scores and percentages of facilities for citizen complaints by SP

SCORE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NEUTRAL	2	10
VERY BAD	0	0
BAD	1	5
JUST OK	9	43
GOOD	6	29
VERY GOOD	3	14
TOTAL	21	100

According to Cronia O' Regan (2002), this indicator assist communities to act empowered by being able to report a malpractice. This can be in a form of complaints box, or formal committee instituted to handle complaints such as on procurement, teaching and learning process, etc. As it is, it can be interpreted that the community was not fully empowered to lodge complaints with procedures or facilities in place.

4.3.2 Implementation and monitoring of a social contract

A social contract is where stakeholders, especially the lead persons, write their names and signatures against the SIP priorities, pledging to carry out all activities in the SIP with diligence and commitment as well as to use the available funds in a transparent and accountable manner as entrusted by the school community members (School Improvement and financial management, 2010). Once the development of the SIP has been done, all the stakeholders involved in the implementation are supposed to sign the social contract. The contract should therefore be monitored in case there would be diversion. If there is diversion, communication should be made on the same.

Highest score for this indicator was 46 % on ‘good’ scores, despite few places where there were not sure what a social contract is (2%)

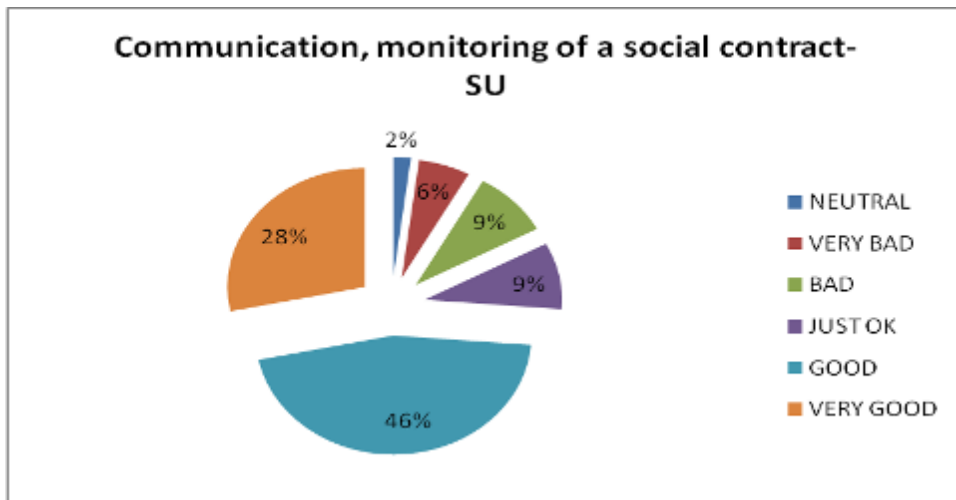


Figure 13: Graph showing scores on implementation and monitoring of a social contract-SU

The score implied that a social contract is monitored well by both the service provider and users during the implementation of PSIP. One of the most important aspects of good governance structure is the clear definition of roles and responsibilities and the full execution thereof. This finding affirms Caldwell (2005) in Bogaert et al. (2012) that once roles and responsibilities are communicated, it is a strong incentive for the improved performance of SMC executives and greater community participation.

4.3.3 Conducting meetings where progress reports are presented

According to School Improvement and Financial Management Template Booklet (2010), there are two types of progress reports. One is done on a termly basis where generally there is a description of the SIP priority list if completed activities and comments on progress to date. The second one is called the annual SIP progress report; where basically

there is need to indicate the level of completion for each priority, greatest achievements and challenges in the year. The report also needs to look at key strengths to build on and recommendations for the next year's SIP.

Both of these reports need to be confirmed by the SMC or PTA chairperson and relayed to the school community. Therefore, there is always need for the termly meetings with the service users for feedback purposes.

The findings from the score card are as from figure 14.

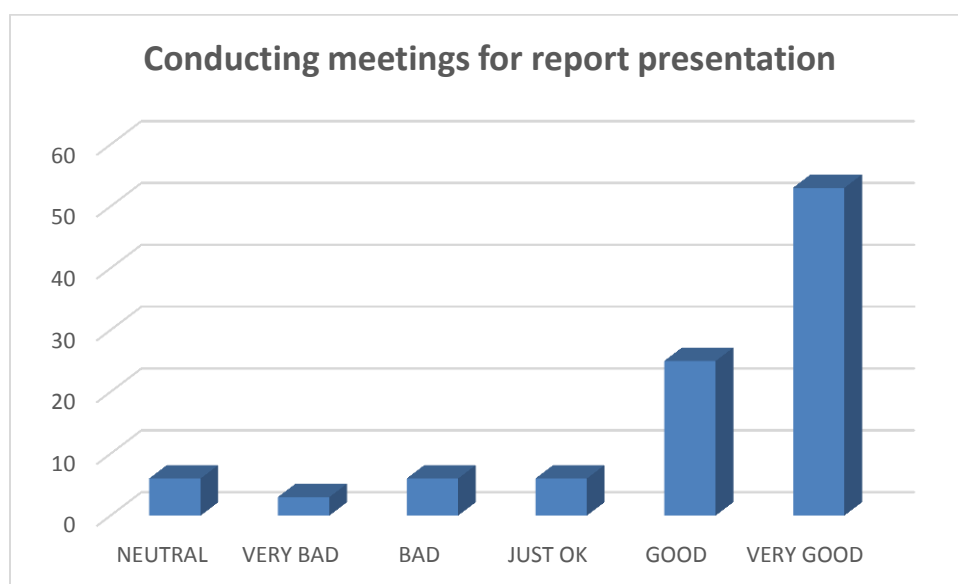


Figure 14: Graph showing scores on conducting meetings for report presentation

The highest score on the indicator was 53% on 'very good' indicating that they conduct meetings to update the community on SIP. However there is a contradiction during FGD as participants indicated that these meetings were not done on 'termly' basis as suggested by the SIP guidelines. Rather it was when funds have been received, goods procured, and

activity project completed. It was reported that most community members did not show up when there was nothing to tell them.

One participant from school D expressed his concern during the FGD as follows:

‘Ndalama nthawi zambiri zimabwera mochedwa, mwina chaka chikamatha. Kuwaitana anthu opanda chenicheni chodzawauza, kumakhala ngati kuwataitsa nthawi ndipo samabwera. Komano tikagula katundu, anthu obwera amachulukirapo kusiyanaso ndi popanga ma pulani’.

Translated as ‘SIG/funds sometimes is disbursed late and inviting people to a meeting without anything to report on SIP is a waste of time as they do not mostly show up. However, the turn up is quite impressive when we have procured goods, and we invite them to see and update them. Most of the times, SIG comes towards the end of the financial year.’(FGD, 25/04/15)

The above finding imply that meetings were determined by a specific activity happening not according to the manual prescription. In all the places the researcher visited, the PTAs had never been empowered to conduct meetings; the authority to call for one was in the hands of SMC. Yet, the guidelines give the PTA the mandate to hold SMC accountable through the holding of regular meetings to which they must report on their actions (PSIP guidelines, 2011).

The interpretation on this indicator is that meetings where duty bearers are to be held accountable are held. The only drawback is that they are held when need be and not on

‘termly’ basis as the PSIP manual dictates. There is need for service providers to be proactive in information dissemination in order to be very transparent in their dealings rather than being reactive as it is on the ground.

4.4 Strengths and challenges in the implementation of PSIP

The discussion of the strengths and challenges were done according to the predetermined themes as follows.

4.4.1 Sensitisation on the roles and responsibilities

The strength of the program in terms of sensitization was that training on the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders took place every year so that the plans reflected changes that frequently did take place in the planning and financial management processes. These capacity building workshops were done at zonal level, where all schools in a zone converge at one place for about two days. The content is in English but the facilitator translates into local language to ensure understanding. Participants seize these opportunities to interact and share lessons too.

The challenge discussed on sensitization was on inadequate financial resources. Despite these sessions taking place every year, there are some challenges to the sensitization program. Not all members attended the sensitization workshops as service providers chose who to go depending on cash flow. Mostly the Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary attended on annual basis and the rest of the members are just briefed on the changes where necessary. Apart from selection of members to the training, the content is

rushed through for two days due to resource constraint. According the DEM the content can be ably done in a week.

The above discussion therefore indicates that participation in primary school governance and management is affected negatively by capacity issues due to financial constraints, proving that technical skill development in developing countries is expensive (Bogaert et al., 2012).

4.4.2 Participation in SIP development and implementation

The strengths to PSIP in terms of participation of stakeholders were several. Service Users indicated that PSIP had helped them to be aware of the challenges being faced by the school management, sharing information on how to assist the school and witness the flow of funds together.

Other benefits of participation in SIP are stated as follows by the respondents during FGD:

‘As community members, we are eyes and ears at the school, nothing misses the community now on what is happening at the school; It has encouraged bottom up approach in school management unlike the top down approach which did not encourage ownership of the school projects; It promotes transparency and accountability as everyone knows what is happening, with no clear grounds for suspicion; and what could have been missed by one group of people is picked by the other interest group and therefore, the plan is all encompassing. (FGD, 27/04/15)

The findings in this theme showed that through understanding the need for their participation in PSIP, the school management was motivated to be as transparent as possible to involve all stakeholders. There were no challenges discussed under participation in SIP development and implementation

4.4.3 Accounting for actions

SIP development and implementation follows a participatory process that allows all community stakeholders an opportunity to make a contribution (PSIP Guidelines, 2011). Since, practically, it is impossible for the whole community to participate in the process, it elects Parents Teacher Association (PTA) which is given the role to elect the SMC and hold it accountable. The PTA is supposed to take active interest in the ongoing management of their school on their behalf. The SMC is to manage resources at the school including those teachers working and pupils studying there (NSCPPSM, 2004). Since these are delegated roles, they are supposed to account back to the community they are representing.

The discussion registered challenges and no strengths as issues of accounting back posed a bit problematic. The first challenge was on the issue of termly school meetings where activity progress reports have to be presented and later the report to be posted on the school board. This was not done according to the PSIP guidelines (2011, page 18) which dictates termly meeting and underscores the importance of a school notice board. It states that ‘it is important that schools communicate what is happening at the school with the community. This can improve the relations between the school and the community and it

can encourage more transparency and accountability. The notice board should be put where parents and community leaders can easily read it and where it encourages them to come into the school’.

The study found no single display of SIP priorities, funds received and expenditure detail report in all the schools visited. Service users condoned that practice in pretext of fear of vandalism and attracting theft at school. SU were comfortable with mere information given to them verbally during the meetings.

The discussion therefore indicated that accounting for actions and holding duty bearers accountable was a great issue with PSIP having looked at issues of display of records at the school notice boards and conducting progress termly meeting.

4.4.4 General Successes of the programme

The programme in the District has been highly praised by both categories of the respondents. SU mentioned that the SIP has improved quality of education by making available more teaching and learning materials, improved attendance ratio of girls by being sensitive to sanitation issues. The leaders also indicated that the SIP has made sharing of issues at zonal level very easy as interaction among committees is being treated as a learning point.

On the part of SP, they expressed appreciation of SIP on three fold. Firstly, they mentioned that it has made access to education easier by assisting in the maintenance and rehabilitation of school buildings, sanitation facilities and teacher-house ratio. On quality

improvement, they indicated that Continuous Professional Development (CPD) was made possible as well as availability of teaching materials. On governance and management goal, SIP has empowered the community to take part in the day to day running of the schools, effecting decentralization to be real in this democratization era.

4.4.5 General challenges of the programme

The first challenge to be highlighted was on the percentage allocation to SIG which is done according to National Education Sector Plan (2008-2017) goals. There are three goals to be fulfilled namely; quality and relevance; Access and Equity and then Governance. The percentage allocation is 50:40:10 respectively and implementation to be done in that order regardless of the priority needs. PSIP as a program was rolled out to offset issues of community participation which is a governance concern. The 10 % allocation is to governance. Note should be taken that needs vary from year to year and one school to another. Caldwell (2005) supports appropriate resource allocation. However, the idea was to take into account a number of factors, like the number of students, level of schooling, special educational needs and the school location. In this case it implies that resource allocation should be dependent on those factors and not ‘one size fits all’ pattern used by the Ministry of Education.

The other challenge was on delayed funding which affected procurement system. As prices fluctuated, basically quantities planned and needed got reduced. All, except one school visited, had received SIG for that financial year. The study was done a month before the financial year was going to an end (May, 2015). Schools bemoaned that the

late funding made the whole process of planning a waste of time. This affected the pupils negatively too because their learning materials, such as notebooks, come close to closing the academic year. It was also reported that this late disbursement eroded trust and confidence in the committee as other community members thought the money came but was used for other things first. The method of accessing the SIG was also another challenge discussed. The process was said to be very complicated with new concepts introduced every year. To most community members whose education levels are low, it was quite a daunting job to complete all the forms and do the reporting needed.

Finally, the selection of members for training affected the participation of the committee as those who did not attend that year tend to just look at the activities from a distance as the current concept might not be familiar to them. This gave room for exclusion of those members from total or active participation in SIP that year.

4.5 Chapter summary

The Chapter discussed the results of the findings in detail by looking at the demographic characteristics of the sample, the existence of transparency in the implementation of PSIP at school level, the accounting mechanisms of both service providers and users. Finally, it discussed the strengths and challenges in the implementation of PSIP. The findings show that the local representatives at school level are predominantly male (64 %) in leadership positions and are mostly holders of Primary School Leaving Certificate (40%). Transparency in the program is doing well in almost all the indicators such as capacity building, monitoring of social contract, display of SIP priorities and communication of

roles and responsibilities. However, issues of accountability presented few challenges due to lack of display of details on boards due to no school boards, and no 'termly' meeting to account for actions to the school community.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.0 Chapter overview

The chapter presents a summary of the findings of keys issues, implications linked to data analysis and recommendations. The chapter also proposes further areas of research. Finally, it states the achievement of objectives in relationship to conceptual framework.

PSIP is the program that seeks the ability of stakeholders to undergo a thorough analysis of the issues affecting school, plan activities and address them using grant received. National Strategy for Community Participation for Primary School Management (NSCPPSM, 2004) states that the degree of success of PSIP might be affected by the levels of transparency and accountability being exercised and experienced by all stakeholders. These two governance components ensure full participation of community in the educational process. The process of School Improvement Plan (SIP) development, implementation and monitoring is required to be transparent to all stakeholders if it is to be effective.

.

5.1 Conclusions of key issues

The study aimed to investigate perceptions of transparency and accountability in the implementation of PSIP in Nkhata-Bay District. Transparency and accountability are fundamental ingredients to the program for community participation. Local committees are elected at school level to represent the whole community in ensuring schools are run accordingly. The way these service users ‘perceive’ the program is what determines the level of participation by the communities in the programme which is being provided to them through providers.

The following are the summaries of the findings and conclusions:

- 5.1.1 Local community representatives at school level who are the stakeholders in the PSIP include PTA, SMC and Mother Groups members play a leading role in primary school governance and management. School based management where decisions are made at school level is being operationalised by these committees. However, their capacity to effectively make decision is affected by selective membership to training and content being rushed through due to financial constraints.
- 5.1.2 Leadership roles are mostly picked up by males (65%) at school level in governance and management. Low levels of education are high by people holding positions in the communities and hence affecting their understanding to capacity building workshops that do take place every year. Consequently affecting efficiency of the program and not being able to give local communities a democratic voice. The same challenge affects community participation especially

in financial management as other activities like updating cash are eventually passed on to the Deputy Head teacher.

5.1.3 The existence of transparency is quite good in that all the indicators from the score card scored highly. This implies that this governance component is gaining good ground at community level. The program is transparent so far in building the capacity of the stakeholders, display of SIP priorities, community participation, and communication of the roles and responsibilities. Despite that being the case, the issue of failure to display reports and other records on school notice boards for public consumption has persisted throughout the discussion and need immediate attention.

5.1.4 On the issue of accountability, local representatives generally have no issues to complain about in terms of facilities of complaints and monitoring of social contract. However, issues of reporting back to the community have some limitations on display of expenditure details and frequency of the meetings. Accountability, according to McGee and Gaventa (2010) is a path to community empowerment and as such need to be guarded properly in all programs that involve local citizenry. Thus, termly reporting to the community through meetings and use of notice boards need to be stressed.

5.1.5 On the strengths of the program; it has scored highly in terms of its community sensitisation and participation whose benefits are widely recognised by the

members of the community. But somehow the program has its challenges which are discussed subsequently.

- 5.1.6 Transparency and accountability issues in the program are negatively affected by several factors. Firstly, there is late disbursement of funds which makes participation in the implementation very slow. This comes as a result of suspicion due to late delivery of the funds. Secondly, the method of accessing SIG is said to be complicated with new concepts being introduced every year. It is quite a difficult job for local members with low education levels to complete all the forms and do the reporting needed. Finally, the selection of some members of the committee for training affects participation of the whole committee as other members are not familiar with new concepts. This then compromises trust, access to information and then consequently community participation in school governance and participation.

5.2 Study Implications

Based on these findings, the following implications are made for all stakeholders in the implementation of PSIP:

- 5.2.1 Community members have proven to be the ones strengthening transparency and accountability in relation to the program. Therefore service providers at both District and Zonal level should effectively build capacity of these by ensuring attendance to all the committee members and allow adequate time for training and

not rushing through. Dosing et al., (2011) even promote clear and simple standards materials, probably translated into vernacular, to be made in the area of ethics, financial management and supervision.

5.2.2 The use of the school notice board is very crucial as it has been stressed in the Primary School Improvement Program Guidelines (2011, p 18), as it ‘helps in improving the relations between the school and community and it can encourage more transparency and accountability’. World Bank report (2005) confirms too that the publishing, displaying and effective use of the information displayed on these boards build a solid base of evidence to make claims where necessary. Therefore policy makers should ensure all schools are provided with enough security so that the SIP priorities and reports are readily available for public consumption.

5.2.3 Timely budget allocations should be a priority. Social accountability initiatives improve service delivery and these rely too on a broad range of pre-conditions such as political, cultural and financial ones. Dossing et al., (2011) agrees to that and the study therefore pledges for District Education Offices to play a proactive role in ensuring timely funding from the Ministry of Education.

5.2.4 The study has revealed some strengths and challenges to the PSIP regarding transparency and accountability issues in primary education sector in the country. The findings should add knowledge to the sector on measurement of these

governance issues. As such, the study recommends application of this knowledge at national level as the study was not initiated by an international body with their own interests but rather it was solely for academic purposes

5.3 The achievement of objectives versus conceptual framework

This study used social accountability framework. From the discussion of the results, the objective has been achieved in corresponding to the framework.

5.3.1 Who-The locus of accountability

According to PSIP, the services providers at school level, namely PEA, Head Teacher and Deputy Head teacher are to account to service users in the name of SMC and PTA and Mother Groups. Later, these groups of people are to account to the school community especially to parents and learners.

5.3.2 What-Object of accountability

The service providers are to provide information on PSIP, capacity building and orientation of the roles and responsibilities. On the other hand, SMC, PTA and mother Groups are to report back to the community on the progress made to the school on SIP. This is according to the social contract signed.

5.3.3 How-Procedures for ensuring accountability

The 'how' is mostly through the reporting mechanisms. Both lead persons regardless of either being SP or SU sign a social contract which has to be followed diligently throughout the year. Termly progress reports are given to the community through display

on the school board and Head Teacher's office. On the ground, it was also reported that verbal reports are done during a community meeting, where parents are invited especially when funds have arrived, procurement has been done and the project finished.

5.4 Areas for further study

Other areas that need to be looked into are encouraged if community participation is to be enhanced at community level in primary school governance and management. These could be: education levels and community participation in school management in Malawi, learner participation in school management issues, how progress reporting affect community participation, and the role of Non-Governmental Organisations in community participation.

5.5 Chapter summary

The Chapter summarised the keys issues from the findings and conclusions on the subject. The Chapter also looked at implications on the same and suggested other areas of further research. Finally, it looked at the achievement of objectives versus conceptual framework used.

REFERENCES

- Addai, E. (2004). *The community score card approach for performance assessment!* (A water Aid briefing paper. 2004, No 4). Accra: Pronet North.
- Ambassa, L. Ngwe, G., & Dossing, H. (2011). *Mapping transparency and integrity deficits in primary education in Cameroon*. Retrieved on 18th March, 2015 from www.ti-cameroon.org.
- Barbour, R. (2008). *Introducing qualitative research: A student guide to the craft of qualitative research*. London: SAGE.
- Bogaert, S. Goutali, M. Saraf, P., & White, J. (2012). *Enhancing school-based management in Ghana: Report for Transparency International workshop in development practice*. Columbia: School of International and Public Affairs.
- CARE Malawi (2013). *The community score card (CSC): A generic guide for implementing CARE's CSC to improve quality of services*. Lilongwe: Cooperative for assistance and relief everywhere inc. Malawi.
- Coronel, S. (2012). *Measuring openness: A survey of transparency ratings and the prospects for a global index*. Colombia: Open Society Foundation.
- Coolican, H. (2004). *Research methods and statistics in psychology* (4th ed). London: Hodder and Stoughton Educational.
- Creswell, J.W. (1994). *Definitions, delimitations, and significance*. (Research design: qualitative and quantitative approaches (pp105-142.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication.

- Creswell, J.W., & Clark, V.L. (2011). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. (2nd ed): Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Department for International Development (DFID). (2001). *The Challenges of Universal Primary Education*: United Kingdom. Department for International Development.
- Dossing, H. Mokeki, L., & Weideman, M. (2011). *Mapping transparency, accountability and integrity in primary education in South Africa*. Berlin: Transparency International Organisation.
- Evans, H.J. (2011). *Accountability and goalsetting* Retrieved on 18 March 2015, from www.gpc.edu/files/accountabilityandgoalsetting.pdf.
- Government of Malawi.(2014) *Education Sector Implementation Plan II (2013-2017/18).Towards quality education, Empowering the school*. Lilongwe: Government Print.
- Government of Malawi. (2010). *Implementation of priorities within priorities: Primary School improvement Programme Improvement grants operational manual*. Lilongwe: Government Print.
- Government of Malawi. (1962). *Malawi Education Act*. Zomba: Government Print.
- Government of Malawi. (2008). *Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS 11: Lilongwe*. Government Print.
- Government of Malawi. (2008). *National Education Sector Plan 2008-2017*. Lilongwe: Government Print.

- Government of Malawi. (2004). *National Strategy for Community Participation in Primary School: The move beyond bricks towards community involvement in whole school development*. Lilongwe: Government Print.
- Government of Malawi. (2011). *Primary School improvement Program, School improvement plan, Development and Implementation Guidelines*. Lilongwe: Government Print.
- Government of Malawi. (2010). *School Improvement and Financial Management Template Booklet*. Lilongwe: Government Print.
- Karim, S. (2004). *Transparency in education: Report card in Bangladesh*. Paris: International institute for educational planning.
- Koskan, M. (2014). *The qualitative report: How to conduct focus groups*. Retrieved 8 March, 2015 from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR19/koskan10.pdf>
- Krueger, R. (2002). *Designing and conducting focus group interviews (rkrueger@umn.edu)*. Buford Ave: University of Minnesota.
- Matovu, G. (2006). *Capacity Building for Participatory Planning and Budgeting in Africa: Initiatives and Strategic Perspectives (gmatovu@mdpafrica)*. Maseru: MDP-ESA
- McGee, R. & Gaventa, J. (2010). *Synthesis report: Review of impact and effectiveness of transparency and accountability initiatives*. London: Institute of Development Studies.
- Nahem, J.(ED). (2004). *The users' guide to measuring local governance*. Oslo: UNDP Governance Centre.

- Nampota, D. C., & Munthali, M. (2014) Access versus quality: A lens through primary school improvements plans in one educational zone of Chingale District: *Malawi Journal of Education and Development*, 4, 2014.
- Robson, C. (1997). *Real world research: A resource for social scientists and practioner-Researchers*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Rose, P. (2003). *Communities, gender and education; Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa*. Sussex: Centre for International Education.
- Rose, P. (2003). *Community participation in school policy and practice in Malawi: Balancing local knowledge, national policies and International agency priorities*. University of Sussex: Centre for International Education.
- Saunders, M. Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research methods for business students*. (5th ed.). London: Prentice Hall.
- Ternieden, M.D. (2009). *A case of community participation in primary education in three village schools in Ethiopia*. Washington DC: George Washington University.
- Uemura, M (1999). *Community Participation in Education: What do we know? In effective Schools and Teachers and the Knowledge Management System*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- United Nations Population Fund, (2000). *Annual Report*. New York: UNFPA.
- Winkler, D.R., & Gershberg, A.I. (2003). *Education decentralization in Africa: A review of recent policy and practice*. North Carolina: Research Triangle Institute International.

World Bank (2005). Social Accountability sourcebook (chapter 4) in *Social Accountability in the Education Sector*. Retrieved on 4 March, 2015 from <http://www-esd.worldbank.org/sac/>

World Development Report, (2005). *Access Equity in Basic Education* in Better Investment Climate for Everyone. Retrieved 2 March, 2015 from [worldbank.http://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/5987](http://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/5987)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Introductory Letter from Chancellor College


CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

Principal: Richard Tambulasi,
B.A. (Pub Admin), BPA (Hon), MPA, Ph.D

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

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

25th May 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

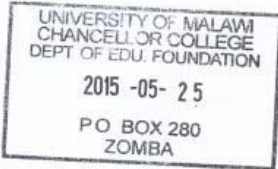
**INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR MASTER OF EDUCATION
(POLICY PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP)**

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

Ms Nkhoma is working on her thesis, *"An assessment of Transparency and Accountability in the Primary School Improvement Programme: A case of Nkhata-Bay District"*. This is meant to be a request to your institution or organization to assist our student in her endeavor to collect data.

Thank you


Symon E. Chiziwa, PhD
Head, Education Foundations Department


UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE
DEPT OF EDU. FOUNDATION
2015 -05- 25
P.O. BOX 280
ZOMBA

Appendix 2: Community/Service User Score Card Questionnaire

Date: _____ School Name: _____ Zone: _____

1.1 Introduction

My name is Catherine Nkhoma, a student pursuing Masters.....at Chancellor College, a constituent college under the University of Malawi. This questionnaire will assist the researcher in fulfilling course requirements. The study aims at **Assessing Transparency and Accountability in Primary School Governance and Management: A case of Primary School Improvement Program (PSIP)**. Your participation in this study is for free and will be greatly appreciated by the researcher.

1.2 Instructions

- i) Make sure that you understand the question clearly before responding.
(*Musanayankhe funso, onetsetsani kuti mwamvetsetsa zoyenera kuchita*)
- ii) Please ask for a clarification where you are not clear.
(*Pamene simunamvetsetse, muli ndi ufulu kufunsa*)

SECTION A

Demographic Data

In this section question 1 - 3, **Circle** only what is applicable to you

- 1) Gender of respondent
A. Male B. Female
- 2) Highest level of Education attained by respondent
A. PLCE B. JCE C. MSCE D. Tertiary
- 3) Community Committee Membership of respondent
A. PTA B. SMC C. Mother Group D. Learner

SECTION B

Operational Questions

Questions 4 - 14, **Tick** in the box what is applicable to you

NB: Neutral = 0, Very Bad = 1, Bad = 2, Just OK = 3, Good = 4, and Very Good = 5

General Operational Questions		SCORE					
		NEUTRAL	VERY BAD	BAD	JUST OK	GOOD	VERY GOOD
		=0	=1	=2	=3	=4	=5
4	SMC and PTA roles and responsibilities are communicated and displayed on the school notice boards. <i>(Kuuzidwa ndi kuika ntchito za SMC and PTA pa notice bolodi)</i>						
5	Communication, implementation and monitoring of a social contract. <i>(Kuuzidwa, kugwira ntchito komanso kuunikira kwa zosayinira pa social contract)</i>						
6	Capacity building trainings every year. <i>(Kuphunzitsidwa za SIP chaka chilichose)</i>						
7	Involvement of all stakeholders in all stages of SIP development and implementation. <i>(Kutenga mbali kwa aliyense wokhudzidwa pa siteji iliyonse ya SIP)</i>						
8	Display of SIP priorities on a school notice board with termly progress reports. <i>(Kuonetsa ma plan ovomerezedwa pa sukulu komanso ma lipoti a mmene ntchito ya SIP ikuyendera pa sukulu bolodi)</i>						

9	Display of details of funds received from the District for the School Improvement Grant on a school notice board as well as the Head teacher Office on a termly basis. <i>(Kuika pa sukulu bolodi komanso mu ofesi ya a Head momwe ndalama za SIG zabwerera kuchokera ku Council)</i>						
10	Adherence to procedures when misappropriation of funds has occurred. <i>(Kutsatilidwa kwa malamulo pamene ndalama za SIG zasokonekera)</i>						
11	Proactive disclosure of expenditure details at the Head Teacher's office and School notice board <i>(Kupereka ndondomeko ya zachuma mu ofesi ya Head ndikumata pa sukulu bolodi)</i>						
12	Adherence and compliance to the signed social contract by all stakeholders. <i>(Kutsatidwa mwa chindunji kwa social contract)</i>						
13	Conducting regular meeting where progress reports are presented <i>(kupanga misonkhano pafupi pafupi pamene ma lipoti a SIP amapelekedwa)</i>						

Appendix 3: Service Provider Score Card

SERVICE PROVIDER SCORE CARD QUESTIONNAIRE

Date: _____ School Name: _____ Zone: _____

1.1 Introduction

My name is Catherine Nkhoma, a student pursuing Masters.....at Chancellor College, a constituent college under the University of Malawi. This questionnaire will assist the researcher in fulfilling course requirements. The study aims at **Assessing Transparency and Accountability in Primary School Governance and Management: A case of Primary Schools Improvement Program (PSIP)**. Your participation in this study is totally free and will be greatly appreciated by the researcher.

1.2 Instructions

- iii) Make sure that you understand the question clearly before responding
- iv) Please ask for a clarification where you are not clear

SECTION A

Demographic Data

In this section question 1 - 3, **Circle** only what is applicable to you

- 4) Gender of respondent
B. Male B. Female
- 5) Highest level of Education attained by respondent
B. PLC B. JCE C. MSCE D. Tertiary
- 6) Position of respondent
B. PEA B. Head Teacher C. DEM

SECTION B: Operational Questions

General Operational Questions		SCORE					
		NEUTRAL	VERY BAD	BAD	JUST OK	GOOD	VERY GOOD
		=0	=1	=2	=3	=4	=5
4	Holding capacity building trainings every year.						
5	SIP priorities displayed on a school notice board with termly progress reports.						
6	Involvement of all stakeholders in all stages of SIP development and implementation.						
7	Adherence and compliance to procedures when misappropriation of funds has occurred.						
8	Documentary records of funds available for inspection at any time for all items of expenditure.						
9	Availability of facilities for citizen complaints.						

Appendix 4: Focus Group Discussion Questions

Head Teacher		SMC		PTA		
--------------	----------------------	-----	----------------------	-----	----------------------	----------------------

1. Were you sensitized on your roles and responsibilities in SIP?

2. How do you rate your participation in SIP?

3. How do you account for their actions to the school community?

4. What are the successes of this program in your community?

6 What are the challenges of this program in your community?

Appendix 5: Sample Service Provider and User Score Card

SERVICE PROVIDER SCORE CARD QUESTIONNAIRE

Date: 27/05/2015 School Name: LUKALAZI Zone: MAZAMBA

1.1 Introduction

My name is Catherine Nkhoma, a student pursuing Masters.....at Chancellor College, a constituent college under the University of Malawi. This questionnaire will assist the researcher in fulfilling course requirements. The study aims at **Assessing Transparency and Accountability in Primary School Governance and Management: A case of Primary Schools Improvement Program (PSIP)**. Your participation in this study is totally free and will be greatly appreciated by the researcher.

1.2 Instructions

- i) Make sure that you understand the question clearly before responding
- ii) Please ask for a clarification where you are not clear

SECTION A

Demographic Data

In this section question 1 - 3, **Circle** only what is applicable to you

- 1) Gender of respondent
☒ A. Male B. Female
- 2) Highest level of Education attained by respondent
A. PLCE B. JCE C. MSCE ☒ D. Tertiary
- 3) Position of respondent
A. PEA B. Head Teacher ☒ C. Deputy Head D. DEM

SECTION B

Operational Questions

Questions 4 - 10, Tick in the box what is applicable to you

NB: Neutral = 0, Very Bad = 1, Bad = 2, Just OK = 3, Good = 4, and Very Good = 5

General Operational Questions		SCORE					
		NEUTRAL	VERY BAD	BAD	JUST OK	GOOD	VERY GOOD
		=0	=1	=2	=3	=4	=5
4	Holding capacity building trainings every year.					✓	
5	SIP priorities displayed on a school notice board with termly progress reports.						✓
6	Involvement of all stakeholders in all stages of SIP development and implementation.						✓
7	Adherence and compliance to procedures when misappropriation of funds has occurred.	✓					
8	Good documentary records of funds available for inspection at any time for all items of expenditure.						✓
9	Availability of facilities for citizen complaints.						✓
10	Decision making at different levels of SIP.				✓		

SERVICE USER SCORE CARD QUESTIONNAIRE

Date: 27/05/15 School Name: Mwaloni Zone: Maramba

1.1 Introduction

My name is Catherine Nkhoma, a student pursuing Masters.....at Chancellor College, a constituent college under the University of Malawi. This questionnaire will assist the researcher in fulfilling course requirements. The study aims at **Assessing Transparency and Accountability in Primary School Governance and Management: A case of Primary School Improvement Program (PSIP)**. Your participation in this study is for free and will be greatly appreciated by the researcher.

1.2 Instructions

- i) Make sure that you understand the question clearly before responding.
(Musanyankhe funso, onetsetsani kuti mwamvetsetsa zoyenera kuchita)
- ii) Please ask for a clarification where you are not clear.
(Pamene simunamvetsetse, muli ndi ufulu kufunsa)

SECTION A

Demographic Data

In this section question 1 - 3, Circle only what is applicable to you

- 1) Gender of respondent
☒ A. Male B. Female
- 2) Highest level of Education attained by respondent
A. PLCE B. JCE C. MSCE D. Tertiary ☒ *None
- 3) Community Committee Membership of respondent
A. PTA ☒ B. SMC C. Mother Group D. Learner

SECTION B

Operational Questions

Questions 4 - 14, **Tick** in the box what is applicable to you

NB: Neutral = 0, Very Bad = 1, Bad = 2, Just OK = 3, Good = 4, and Very Good = 5

GENERAL OPERATIONAL QUESTIONS		SCORE					
		NEUTRAL	VERY BAD	BAD	JUST OK	GOOD	VERY GOOD
		=0	=1	=2	=3	=4	=5
4	SMC and PTA roles and responsibilities are communicated and displayed on the school notice boards. (Kuuzidwa ndi kuika ntchito za SMC and PTA pa notice bolodi)					✓	
5	Communication, implementation and monitoring of a social contract. (Kuuzidwa, kugwira ntchito komanso kuunikira kwa zosayinira pa social contract)					✓	
6	Capacity building trainings every year. (Kuphunzitsidwa za SIP chaka chilichose)			✓			
7	Involvement of all stakeholders in all stages of SIP development and implementation. (Kutenga mbali kwa aliyense wokhudzidwa pa siteji iliyonse ya SIP)					✓	
8	Display of SIP priorities on a school notice board with termly progress reports. (Kuonetsa ma plan ovomerezidwa pa sukulu komanso ma lipoti a mmene ntchito ya SIP ikuyendera pa sukulu bolodi)				✓		
9	Display of details of funds received from the District for the School Improvement Grant on a school notice board as well as the Head teacher Office on a termly basis. (Kuika pa sukulu bolodi komanso mu ofesi ya a Head momwe ndalama za SIG zabwerera kuchokera ku Council)					✓	
10	Adherence to procedures when misappropriation of funds has occurred. (Kutsatilidwa kwa malamulo pamene ndalama za SIG zasokonekera)	✓					
11	Proactive disclosure of expenditure details at the Head Teacher's office and School notice board (Kupereka ndondomeko ya zachuma mu ofesi ya Head ndikumata pa sukulu bolodi)					✓	

12	Adherence and compliance to the signed social contract by all stakeholders. (Kutsatidwa mwa chindunji kwa social contract)					✓	
13	Conducting regular meeting where progress reports are presented (kupanga misonkhano pafupi pafupi pamene ma lipoti a SIP amapelekedwa)						✓

Appendix 6: Letter from District Education Manager – Nkhata-Bay

7.6 Appendix 6: Letter from the District Education Manager- Nkhata-Bay

