

**EXPLORING THE CONTRIBUTION OF COMMUNITY BASED READING
CAMPS TO THE REDUCTION OF REPETITION IN LOWER PRIMARY
GRADES: THE CASE OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ZOMBA RURAL
EDUCATION DISTRICT**

M.ED (POLICY, PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP) THESIS

MARTIN MADALITSO MBENDELA

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

JUNE 2021



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By

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(Policy, Planning and Leadership)

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JUNE 2021

DECLARATION

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

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Full Legal Name

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

We, the undersigned declare that this thesis is from the student's own work and effort.
Where he has used other sources of information it has been acknowledged. This thesis
is therefore submitted with our approval.

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Supervisor

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late wife Angella. You were supportive to all my academic endeavours and this advanced academic work is the fruition of your support.

May your soul rest in eternal peace. AMEN

To my Children and wards, this award is also devoted to you so that it acts as an inspiration for you to achieve more and go yonder!

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ABSTRACT

Despite having policies and strategies aimed at reducing repetition in primary schools, class repetition has remained on the higher side in Malawi. The Ministry of Education has been losing over MWK 14 billion annually for the past five years on primary school repeaters. These policies on repetition rely on communities' support to education among others to help reduce repetition. However, the communities have not been involved in direct delivery of education and where such initiatives existed studies have not shown whether these initiatives contribute to reduction of repetition. Therefore, this study explored the contribution of community based reading and numeracy camps in Zomba rural district to reduction of class repetition. The study hybridized two overlapping conceptual frameworks; the World Business Council for Sustainable Development's (WBCSD) *Measuring Impact (MI) Framework* and the DFID's 4Es *Value For Money (VFM) Framework*. The study used the mixed methods approach. Checklists, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and documentary analysis were used to generate data. The study sampled 606 learners (437 camp going learners, 167 non-camp going learners). Data was also collected from 64 informants through interviews. Scientific Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and thematic analysis were used to analyse data. The study revealed that over the past five years, learners who attended camps had significantly lower repetition records than those who did not attend camps. Major implications in the study are; the success of each project depends on its design, the Ministry is aware of the repetition problem and its consequences, the repetition policies have not been effective and community involvement in delivery of complimentary education can help reduce repetition in lower primary grades. The same study at a larger scale is a suggested further research.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis
CBE	Complimentary Basic Education
CPEA	Coordinating Primary Education Advisor
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DEM	District Education Manager
DFID	Department for International Development
EDM	Education Division manager
EFA	Education for All
EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics assessment
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESIP	Education Sector Implementation Plan
ESPR	Education Sector Performance Report
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FPE	Free Primary Education
KII	Key Informant Interview
LB	Literacy Boost
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NALP	National Adult Literacy Programme
NB	Numeracy Boost
NESP	National Education Sector Plan
NRP	National Reading Program

OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
PTA	Parents Teachers' association
SACMEQ	Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SCI	Save the Children International
SMC	School Management Committee
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
T/A	Traditional Authority
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific Commission
VfM	Value for Money
WBCSD	World Business Council for Sustainable Development

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter gives an overview of the study. It provides an overview of the education system in Malawi. The chapter also gives a brief global, regional and national Universal Primary Education policy contextual background and some of its consequences upon adaptation by Malawi. The chapter also highlights some of the Malawi primary school repetition policies as one of the policy responses to the problems associated with the Free Primary Education and community based reading and numeracy camps as one community approach to support education delivery. In the subsequent sections, the chapter narrows the discourse into the statement of the research problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance, delimitations and limitations of the study.

1.2 The Malawi Education System

The education system in Malawi is structured at an 8-4-4 pattern comprising primary, secondary and tertiary levels respectively. Primary education consists of eight years in school, thus: infant (Std 1 and 2), junior (Std 3 and 4) and senior (Std 5, 6, 7 and 8). In Std 8 pupils write the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations in order to gain access to secondary school. Secondary education lasts for four years and is split into two sections each of two years. Until 2015/16 academic year learners were writing the Junior Certificate Examinations at the end of Form 2 which was used for

selection into the senior secondary section. In Form 4, in order to complete secondary and progress to tertiary education, learners sit for the School Certificate of Education Examinations. The duration of tertiary education varies between two to four years depending on the chosen course. The administration of the Malawi education system has been decentralized into six education divisions; namely; Northern, Central East, Central West, South West, South East and Shire Highlands education divisions. The divisions are a devolved arm of the Ministry of Education mostly responsible for management of the secondary schools. The divisions control a number of education districts within their boundaries. Currently there are 34 education districts in Malawi. Each education district is managed by the District Education Manager (DEM) under a devolved structure mostly managing the primary schools as part of the decentralization policy. Each education district is further divided into education zones and each zone oversees a cluster of about 7 to 15 primary schools and is managed by a Primary Education Advisor (PEA). Primary schooling in Malawi is free.

1.2 Global, Regional and Local Basic Education Contexts

For the past two decades, basic education has been pegged as a priority for both governments and international agencies involved in the education sector. Because of this, there have been various world platforms that developed instruments and protocols aimed at improving access to basic education. Some of the notable ones are the 1989 International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the 1990 Jomtien (Thailand) Education for All policy. In the year 2000, the Education For All policy was reaffirmed at the Dakar Framework For Action conference and in the same year the United Nations developed and adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) a policy blue print which guided the World development discourse for the next fifteen years. The Millenium Development Goals were then replaced by

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. Both the MDGs and SDGs feature achievement of universal quality primary education which all the countries especially the developing countries are compelled to achieve. This is an opportunity for the African continent which according to demographics was and still is the world's most youthful continent with about 15% of its population under the age of 15 years (Africa America Institute, 2015).

As a result of the implementation of the Education for All and the subsequent Millennium Development Goals, the African region experienced an impressive enrolment increase in primary schools. In comparison with the other regions of the world, the Sub-Saharan Africa demonstrated greatest improvements in primary education enrolments (Africa America Institute, 2015). This overt increase in enrolment in the schools in Africa brought along a lot of challenges on the governments forcing the governments to respond to these challenges in different ways. Even though this has been the case, studies have demonstrated that the Sub-Saharan African countries failed to keep abreast of the demands associated with the increases in enrolment leaving the quality of education in the region in a sub-optimal state. Learning outcomes plummeted tremendously manifested by high repetition and dropout rates. Disaggregated by world regions repetition rates were and are still highest in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 1998 & Ndaruhutse, 2008). According to UNESCO reports, repeaters constitute a tragic waste of human, social and economic potential of the concerned countries. To this extent, the expected benefits of the registered increase in enrolments get undermined by these significant levels of repetition which studies have termed as an acute symptom of school wastage. As a matter of commitment to the Education for All protocol Malawi adopted the Free

Primary Education (FPE) policy in 1994 (Rose, 2007). Like the other countries the adoption and implementation of the FPE policy in Malawi resulted into tremendous increases in enrolment (UNESCO, 2004 cited in Rose, 2007). Many studies have shown that this unprecedented increase in enrolment due to the introduction of the FPE policy consequently placed huge pressure on the sector resulting into poor educational outcomes and declining levels of attainment culminating into high repetition and dropout rates among others (Wamba & Mgomezulu, 2014; Chimombo et al. 2008; Kayuni & Tambulasi, 2007; Kendall, 2007a, 2007b; EQUIP, 2006; Bisika, 2005; Kunje, Lewin & Stuart, 2003; Dowd, 2001; Tizora, 1999; Mwale, 1998; Kunje, 1997 and MoEST, 1995). According to the World Bank repetition in Malawi has been on the rise since the introduction of the FPE policy (World Bank, 2010). Repetition in Malawi has comparatively been on the higher side in Sub-Saharan Africa. For example, in its 2011 study report the World Bank reported that at a repetition rate of 19.4 percent in 2008, Malawi primary repetition stood above the SSA repetition average of 14.7 percent. A related study on 2002/03 repetition trends in some SSA countries showed that at 16 percent Malawi primary repetition rate was among the highest in the region (Ndaruhutse, 2008). Figure 1 below shows the 2002/03 repetitions trends for some SSA countries. Just in 2017 repetition rate in Malawi was at 24.5% for boys and 23.3% for girls (Education Sector Performance Report-ESPR, 2017). This was also among the highest in the region. This is also proffered by Jere (2012) who mentioned Malawi as one of SSA countries whose education systems are characterized by very high initial enrolments in primary schooling with high repetition rates also. To address the issue of repetition education sectors and school systems around the world differ in the policy approaches on repetition. Majority of Sub-Saharan African

countries (including Malawi) require pupils who fail to master the curriculum work for a given grade to repeat the grade (Ndaruhutse, 2008).

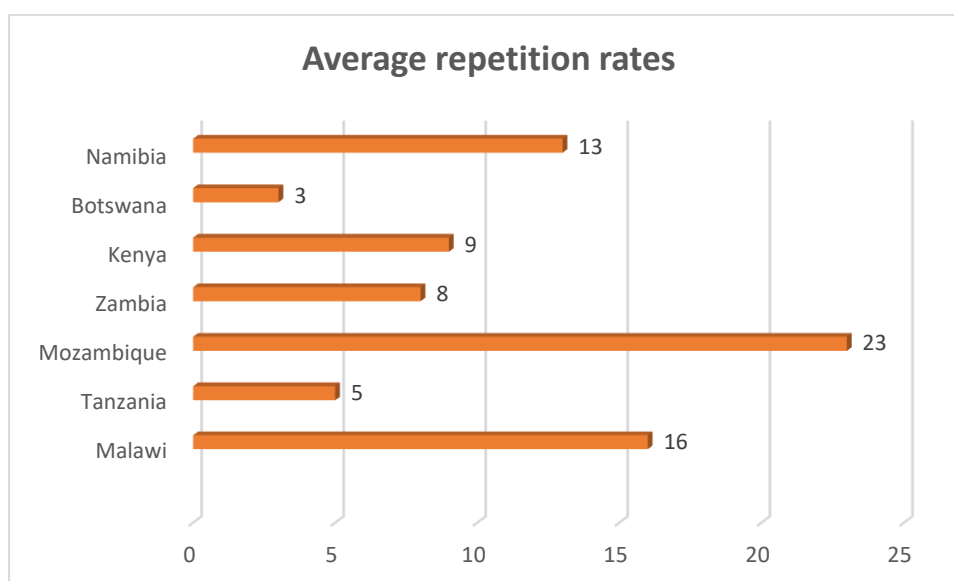


Figure 1:2002/03 country repetition trends

Source: (World Bank, 2011)

1.4: Policies /programs in response to the consequences of the FPE policy in Malawi

To ameliorate the challenges brought by the FPE policy the government and other development partners developed, designed and reformed policies and strategies to be implemented in the education sector. Examples of some of these policies/programs are the 1992/93 repetition policy revised in 1995, and a 2011 circular titled "*Guidance on Reduction of Class Sizes, Repetition, and Improvement of Promotion Rates in Public Primary Schools*", National strategy on community participation in primary education, double shifting and teacher hardship allowance policies by government and establishment of community based reading camps by development partners such as Save the Children among many others. The Government also included reduction of repetition as a priority activity in both Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP) I

and II of the 2008/17 National Education Sector Plan (NESP). There have been some evaluative research work and studies that have been carried out on many of these policies and initiatives in education. For example, Chikazinga (2017) carried out a retrospective analysis on repetition policies in Malawi and in its 2013/14 EFA global monitoring report UNESCO highlighted Save the Children's basic education initiative that incorporate community focused intervention (which is predominantly the community camps) as one of the successful and effective approaches (UNESCO, 2013/14).

1.5 Repetition policies in Malawi

By definition a public policy is whatever governments choose to do or not to do (Dye, 2013). According to Thomas Dye, public policies may regulate behaviour, organize bureaucracies, distribute benefits or extract taxes. The Malawi primary school repetition policies have been classified as both regulatory and constitutive in nature as they aimed at controlling the actions and behaviour of repeating in schools while at the same time providing secondary selection and primary school repetition guidelines to authorities and parents (Chikazinga, 2017).

Originally, the first Malawi primary school repetition policy was first introduced in 1992/93. This 1992/93 repetition policy was in two forms, the first form set the repetition targets by limiting the percentage of pupils that should repeat for each standard of the primary cycle while the second form of the policy aimed at limiting repetition in standard eight. The policy did set directives to penalize pupils who repeat standard 8 by reducing their chances of getting selected to secondary schools thereby improving the chances of new entrants of being selected to secondary school. The political transition to multiparty democracy in 1994 also brought reforms to the

education sector a development that led to the revision of the primary school repetition policy in 1995/96 (table 1). Due to this, the standard 1-7 repetition policy was revised, such that the set class repetition percentages were abolished and the policy directed that pupils should be allowed to repeat once per class. Some of the reasons highlighted were that limiting pupils to repeat by setting out fixed percentages was both undemocratic and a contradiction to the attainment of Education for All goals advocated through the FPE policy in Malawi (Chikazinga, 2017 & Wolf, Lang et.al, 1999).

Table 1: The 1992/93 and 95/96 Malawi repetition policy

MALAWI REPETITION POLICY			
1. I wish to inform you that the Ministry of Education and Culture would like to reduce the number of repeaters in all primary schools from October 1993.			
2. It has therefore, been directed that only a specific percentage of repeaters will be allowed per standard as outlined below:			
Standard	School Year		
	93/94	94/95	95/96*
Standard 1	15	10	8
Standard 2-3	10	8	7
Standard 4-7	10	10	7
Standard 8	45	35	30
Acting Secretary for Education and Culture, May 12, 1993			
*The policy was reissued by the Secretary with revised 95/96 targets on September 25, 1995			

Source: Wolf, Lang, Mount and VanBelle-Prouty, (1999).

In 2011 the Ministry of Education produced a circular titled "*Guidance on Reduction of Class Sizes, Repetition, and Improvement of Promotion Rates in Public Primary Schools*". Analysis of Education Management Information System (EMIS) reports shows that for the past 15 years, repetition in Malawi primary schools has hovered at around 20%, which is by a wide margin below the world best practices in as far as repetition percentages are concerned. Repetition rates of 5% and below are usually considered to be acceptable and healthy in order to ensure quality education.

1.6 The community based reading and numeracy camps

Almost all the repetition policies depend to a certain extent on the community for them to function properly. Though this is the case, there are no programs institutionalised in the communities where communities provide complementary basic education to in school learners. However, some development partners are coming up with such innovations that involve the community in the provision of education to such learners. A good example of such a development partner is Save the Children. According to UNESCO (2013/14), Save the Children designed a Literacy Boost programme that was first implemented in a small selection of countries including Malawi. The programme aims to improve early grade reading skills in government schools through teacher- and community-focused interventions. In Malawi, Save the Children started implementing two basic education innovations in 57 primary schools in T/As Chikowi and M'biza in Zomba rural education district. The innovations are called the Literacy Boost and Numeracy Boost initiatives which were rolled out in 2009 and 2012 respectively (Ndalama, 2017). The rationale for the implementation of the two initiatives was basically driven by evidence based findings that revealed that on learner performance basis, Malawi internationally remained at the bottom of a 12

country study (SACMEQ, 2011) and at national level learners performed at levels well below expected benchmarks set by the Malawian curriculum (EGRA, 2011 & EGMA, 2010). According to Save the Children, the initiatives target early grade learners (std 1-4 then but shifted to std 1-2 in 2016). The programs were designed in conformity with the national school curriculum. The two programs use a three pronged approach involving the learner assessment, teacher capacity building and the community action. The community component includes the community based reading and numeracy camps. The community-based camps are locally run by communities and offer after school practice in numeracy and literacy to early grade learners in a relatively low cost, funny and flexible manner. The facilitators at the camps are volunteers from the communities who work hand in hand with the camp supervisors (teachers) in the schools.

1.7 Statement of the problem

Studies on the Malawi repetition policy reveal that there have been challenges with the implementation of the policy rendering it one of the less effective policies in education (Chikazinga, 2017). To date, repetition rates in Malawi still remain higher in primary schools especially at lower grades ranking the country among the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa. The implementation strategies of the policy have several shortcomings. One strategy was that teachers should provide remedial classes and support for repeaters to ensure that they all get promoted to the next classes. The other strategy rested on the communities where government planned to empower the communities to come up with other initiatives that could reduce repetition. A study by Chikazinga (2017) doubts the feasibility of these strategies by expressing that it was not clear as to whether the Ministry of Education considered how practical it was for

teachers who are highly demotivated by a plethora of factors could conduct such remedial classes. The study also goes on stating that the policy did not explicitly state how the communities could support the repeaters so that they get promoted to the next classes. Compounding the problem are studies that have shown that community participation in improving quality in education delivery hasn't been fully recognised nor extended systematically to a wider practice (Ndaruhutse, 2008). In addition, research has also shown that although there is abundant literature underlining how problematic repetition is and its negative impacts are, little research goes a step further in offering realistic policy recommendations on how repetition can be addressed and reduced in the specific context of Sub-Saharan Africa (Ndarutse et al, 2008). This is also typical of the situation in Malawi. In Malawi, institutionalised community participation in education principally borders on school governance and management only and not necessarily on delivery of education (MoEST, 2004). For example, two education programs where the community is involved in delivery of education are the National Adult Literacy Programme (NALP) and the Complementary Basic Education (CBE) program. NALP targets men and women over the age of 15 years while the Complementary Basic Education program aims to provide a relatively cost-effective alternative to primary education to children and youths who faced difficulties in accessing formal schooling (Moleni & Nampota, 2006). According to UNESCO, targeted additional support via community volunteers is another key way of improving learning for students at risk of falling behind (UNESCO, 2013/14). Sharma et al. (2016) also reported that community involvement in education can also serve as an effective means of advocating for and mobilising the resources needed to move towards a high-quality public system of education. Literature on community participation in education through delivery of

some sort of education to in schoolchildren in Malawi is scarce and rare. It is therefore the scope of this study to explore the contribution of community reading/numeracy camps to the reduction of repetition in lower primary grades.

1.8 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore the contribution of community based reading camps to the reduction of repetition in lower grades of primary schools.

1.9 Research questions

In order to address the above research purpose, the study tried to answer the following main question; Do community reading camps contribute to reduction of repetition among learners in lower primary grades in T/A Chikowi and M'biza (Zomba rural)?

The under listed formed the subsidiary questions;

How do the performances of learners who attend camps compare with those who do not attend the camps? What are the repetition trends between these two groups of learners?

- i. What are the frameworks (structural and operational) that sustain and make the camps effective if any?
- ii. What are the perceptions of various stakeholders (Education officials, PEAS, Teachers, camp facilitators and community leaders) on the nature and effectiveness of the repetition policy?
- iii. What are the perceptions of various stakeholders (Education officials, PEAS, Teachers, camp facilitators and community leaders) about the effectiveness of the reading camps? Do the stakeholders feel the reading camps can or do contribute to the reduction of repetition?

- iv.** What are the determinants of the successes and challenges to implementation of reading camps

1.10 Significance of the study

The repetition policy is ineffective partly because of its approach being reactive instead of being proactive. Strategically, the policy has been criticised for using impractical strategies rendering it ineffective. This study was designed, if anything, to benefit policy and decision makers by exposing to them alternative effective implementation strategies or even better still catalyse a policy design shift from a reactive to a somehow proactive approach. Several studies have shown that most of the challenges leading to repetition are more pronounced in rural schools than urban schools. This, therefore means that the likelihood that a learner would repeat is higher in rural than urban primary schools. The ineffectiveness of the repetition policy therefore to a greater extent, negatively affects rural learners who are also in majority. This study will also benefit these learners from the rural schools. In return, government and the ministry of education would also benefit by getting possible effective means of reducing wastage brought by the increasing numbers of repeaters in schools. Since studies have shown that most initiatives that involve the community in delivery of education target out of school individuals, there is scarcity of literature on initiatives such as the reading camps that provide education to in schoolchildren. The study also aimed at filling this literature gap about the community initiatives such as the reading camps.

1. 11 Study Delimitations & Limitations

1.11.1 Delimitations

Delimited to the community based camps and the schools to which they are linked, the study focused on the type of repetition practiced in Malawi where learners are required to repeat a class when they fail examinations and not on automatic promotion. The study also focused on community reading/numeracy camps. As such,

most of the information was solicited from the communities and the schools. Lastly, the researcher has experience with community-based literacy and numeracy camps hence the interest to explore the phenomenon in line with the repetition trends in Malawi and the Malawi repetition policy.

1.11.2 Study limitations

Many studies experience various limitations and this study was no exception. One of the challenges faced was unavailability of some respondents especially those from the Ministry headquarters for interviews. This delayed the data collection process. To mitigate this and to avoid extended delays, those officers who could be extremely hard to interview physically were just sent the interview guide through email so that they could respond by answering the questions in writing and send back to the researcher. This made sure that the valuable information that was planned to be sought from these respondents was still solicited. The other challenge was to get quantitative data from some schools that were far from the Teacher Development Centres. This was dealt with by asking the head teachers to send the data to the PEAs from whom the researcher collected the data. This also took time since some head teachers had gone for holiday for schools were on holiday that time. The final challenge was the low turnout of the participants for some Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). In a bid to make for the effect this could bring to the validity of the qualitative data, the researcher added an extra FGD to make for those participants who did not come to the other earlier FGDs.

1.12 Definition of key terms

Policy: An explicit or implicit single decision or group of decisions which may set out directives for guiding future decisions, initiate or retard action, or guide implementation of previous decisions (Haddad, 1995).

Repetition: The practice of making learners who have not fully mastered the curriculum or achieved a certain academic standard repeat the academic year (Ndaruhutse, 2008)

Repetition rate: Proportion of pupils from a cohort enrolled in a given grade at a given school-year who study in the same grade in the following school-year (World Bank, 2014).

Dropout rate: Proportion of pupils from a cohort enrolled in a given grade at a given year who are no longer enrolled in the following school year (World Bank, 2014).

Community based reading camps: After school village gathering centres for lower grade learners.

Effectiveness: The extent to which the intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance (OECD-DAC, 2002)

Impact: Positive and negative, primary and secondary, long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended (OECD-DAC, 2002)

1.13 Chapter 1 Summary

This introductory chapter has given an overview of this study whose report is confined in this thesis. It provided an overview of the Malawi education system, a brief contextual background for the global, regional and national basic education. The chapter also highlighted how Malawi ratified the 1990 Jomtien Education For All policy through the 1994 Free Primary Education policy, the consequences of the Free Primary Education and some policy and programme responses to those challenges. The chapter also narrowed the discourse to the statement of the research problem, research questions, significance, limitations and delimitations of the study. The next chapter reviews literature related to the study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter reviews literature related to the study. The impact of primary repetition on the education sector in Malawi and community participation in primary education are the areas reviewed in the chapter. At the end, the conceptual frameworks that were used in the study are also presented and discussed.

2.2 The impact of primary repetition on the education sector in Malawi

As already discussed in the previous chapter, Malawi primary repetition rates are among the highest in SSA. Most of the challenges leading to repetition are more pronounced in schools in rural areas than urban areas (Milner, 2010; George, 2004; Rose, 2003; and Amadio, 1996). A study on primary schools in Malawi conducted by the World Bank categorized the factors responsible for learner repetition and attrition into three categories namely; household, community and school levels (World Bank, 2016). All these three factors are more prominent and worse in rural areas than in urban areas. This therefore means that the likelihood that pupils would repeat is higher in rural schools than in urban primary schools. Just for example, in the 2014/15 academic year, the primary school repetition rate in Malawi was at 21.9% and of this, 92% of the repeaters were from the rural primary schools while only 8% were from the urban schools (MoEST, 2015). Repeaters constitute a tragic waste of human, social and economic potential of the concerned countries. High repetition rates tend to inflate school participation indicators and therefore misinform about school access,

thus revealing issues of internal efficiency in the education system. It mainly drains resources as learners stay longer than expected to which extent the expected benefits of the registered increase in enrolments get undermined by these significant levels of repetition which studies have termed as an acute symptom of school wastage (MoEST 2017. & UNESCO, 1998¹). A quick analysis of wastage in terms of financial loss through primary school repetition in Malawi over the past five academic years (2012/2013 to 2016/2017) shows that there has been a tripled increase in the money lost annually through repetition from MK7.6 billion in 2012/2013 to MK23.0 billion (EMIS, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014 and 2013). Figure 2 below is a graphical comparison of the financial losses over the five years.

¹ UNESCO 1998 (EFA status & trends, 1998)

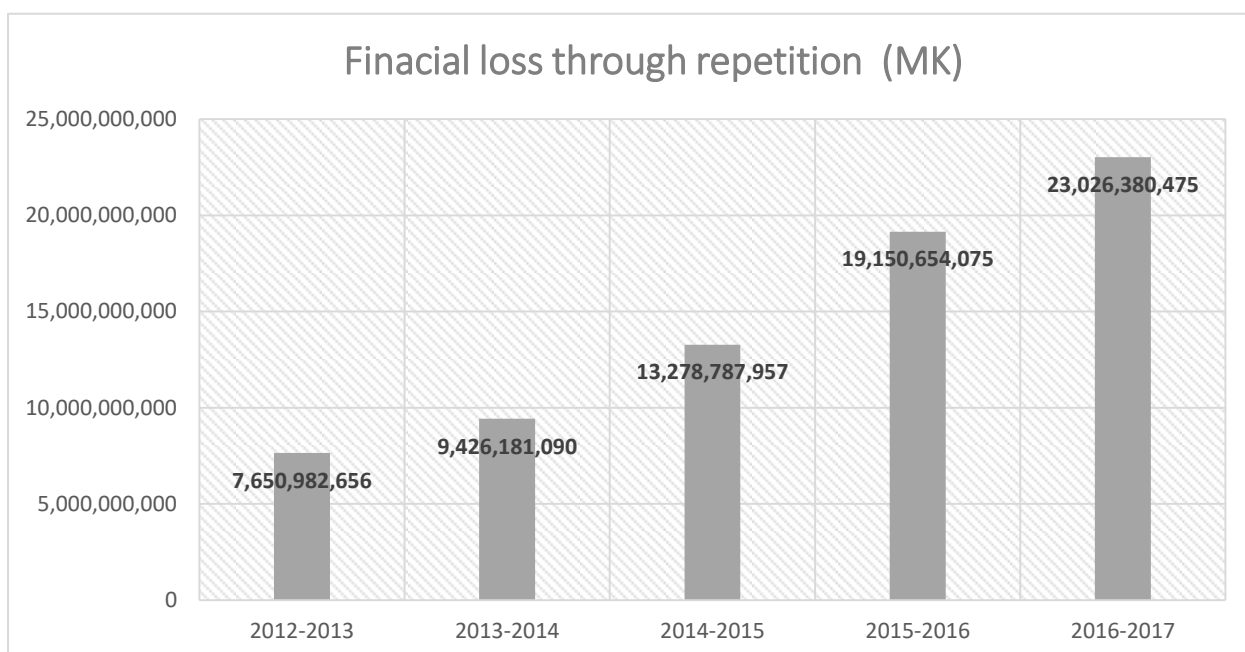


Figure 1: Graphical presentation of wastage in primary education through repetition

Source: 1. Data= EMIS 2017; EMIS 2016, EMIS 2015, EMIS 2014 & EMIS 2013.

2. Graph= author

Over the past five years the number of repeaters and repetition rates in primary schools in Malawi have been on an increase from 832,896 (18.5%) in 2012/2013 to 1,170,337 (23.9%) in 2016/2017. This was also the same trend in cases of primary unit costs (MK 9,186 in 2012/2013 academic year to MK19,675 in 2016/17). The total loss for the past five years was therefore MK72.5 billion. Put in simple mathematical terms this means that on average, the government has been losing MK14.5 billion annually over the past five years through repetition. To the extent where the government financial allocations to the education sector have been termed inadequate, losing so much money through repetition is a big problem to the already resource constrained education sector. Addressing repetition to avoid these undue losses in the system cannot be overemphasized. The 2017 Education Sector

Performance Report (ESPR) indicated that Universal primary education and compulsory education that is advocated in the Malawi education act cannot be realized without addressing high wastage in the primary education system to class repetition (ESPR, 2017).

Table 2 gives an analytical summary of repetition, repetition rates, primary unit costs and financial loss through primary school repetition in Malawi over the past five years.

Table 2: Primary enrolment, repetition data, unit costs and financial loss through repetition

YEAR	PRIMARY ENROLMENT	NO. OF REPEATERS	REPETITION RATE (%)	PRIMARY UNIT COST (MK)	FINANCIAL LOSS (MK)
2012-2013	4,497,541	832,896	18.5	9,186	7,650,982,656
2013-2014	4,670,279	896,110	19.2	10,519	9,426,181,090
2014-2015	4,670,279	1,021,681	21.9	12,977	13,278,787,957
2015-2016	4,804,194	1,123,535	23.3	17,045	19,150,654,075
2016-2017	4,901,009	1,170,337	23.9	19,675	23,026,380,475
Total money lost through repetition for the past five years					72,532,986,253
Average annual loss through repetition for the past five years					14,506,597,251

Source: *Enrolment, repetition rates and unit costs taken from Ministry of Education Annual Education Statistics Publications: EMIS 2017; EMIS 2016, EMIS 2015, EMIS 2014 & EMIS 2013.*

2.3 Community participation in Primary Education in Malawi

After the 1990 Jomtien Education for all conference community participation in school education has appeared as one of the most prominent features in all educational development programmes at global level (Narwana, 2015). Community involvement in education is important as it aids in the ability to identify local education issues and to develop strategies to resolve barriers that impede access and retention and compromise quality (Sharma, et al.,2016). According to Sharma et al. (2016), in resource-constrained countries, community participation can also serve as an effective means of advocating for and mobilising the resources needed to move towards a high-quality public system of education. In Malawi the community participation in primary education at school level is spearheaded by institutionalised school governance structures such as the Parents and Teachers' Associations (PTAs), School Management Committees (SMCs) and Mother groups. However, studies have shown that the participation of the communities in education through these structures is predominantly on school management and administration. A study by Dekker (2010) cited in Galafa, Beaton, Lucas & Andrew (2018) on Malawians' perception of community participation in school development found that most Malawians do not take it as merely partaking in activities on community level but also taking part in the decision making process pertaining to the school's project implementation. In 2004, the Government of Malawi developed the National Strategy for Community Participation in Primary School Management. The strategy was developed to empower communities particularly through structures such as Parents Teacher Association (PTAs) and School Management Committees (SMCs) to help government in promoting access to quality education following the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in the country (Link for Education Governance, 2014).

According to Link for Education Governance (2014), the strategy called for community participation that goes beyond brick and mortar and involves other key areas of management especially in effective control of school resources and being equally involved in decision-making. These and many other studies point to the fact that community participation in education in primary schools in Malawi is more on management and not necessarily on the provision of education. Although there are some programs on community participation in education delivery, these are predominantly on either out of school youths or adults. For example, two notable of such education programs where the community is involved in delivery of education are the National Adult Literacy Programme (NALP) and the Complementary Basic Education (CBE). NALP targets men and women over the age of 15 years while the Complementary Basic Education program aims to provide a relatively cost-effective alternative to primary education to children and youths who faced difficulties in accessing formal schooling (Moleni & Nampota, 2006). The CBE uses community facilitators who are volunteers to be facilitating the provision of the CBE (Jere, 2012). Literature on the provision of complimentary education to in school youths by the communities is however rare and scarce. The quality of the education provided in public primary schools especially in lower grades is poor hence higher repetition rates. A World Bank study on Malawi primary education found that teachers in lower classes in Malawian primary schools are overburdened with work comparing to fellow teachers in upper classes (Ravishankar et al, 2016). To this extent, then, it is imperative that the community gets involved in providing support of some kind to complement the classroom teaching and learning especially to lower grade learners. Studies have shown that targeted additional support via trained teaching assistants or community volunteers is another key way of improving learning for students at risk of

falling behind (UNESCO, 2013/14). This is in agreement with Allen and Chavkin (2004) who reported that volunteer tutors provide individual attention that most teachers cannot provide, especially as class size expands. This is typical of the situation in Malawi where classroom learner enrolments have been swelling since the rolling out of free primary education. This was one of the reasons that led Save the Children to develop a basic education program where the community is involved in provision of basic education to lower grade learners through community based reading/numeracy camps (Allen & Chavkin, 2004).

The EFA global monitoring report cited this Save the Children' basic education initiative as one of the effective strategies that can promote and improve quality learning (UNESCO, 2013/14). It is therefore along this that this study would like to explore the contribution of the community reading/numeracy camps to the reduction of repetition in lower primary grades.

2.4 Conceptual frameworks

The study hybridized two somehow overlapping conceptual frameworks; the World Business Council for Sustainable Development's (WBCSD) *Measuring Impact (MI) Framework* and the DFID's 4Es *Value For Money (VFM) Framework* adapted in this study as the 4Es *Value For Resources (VFR) Framework*. The reason is that both of the frameworks are based on assessing impact of development initiatives, which is the main purpose of the study. The WBCSD framework principally guided on the procedural steps of the data collection process while the 4Es VFR framework guided on the 'technical' (content) development of the data collection tools.

a. The WBCSD Measuring Impact (MI) conceptual framework

The WBCSD (MI) framework is based on a four-step methodology that attempts to merge the perspectives of a business/initiative contribution to development with the societal perspectives of what is important where that business/initiative operates. The four steps of the framework are; 1. setting boundaries, 2. measuring direct and indirect impacts, 3. assessing business/initiative contribution to development and 4. prioritizing management response which also includes identifying priority areas for action and preparing recommendations (WBCSD, 2006). This framework helped the study to merge the contribution of the camps to education indicator (reduction of repetition) and the perspectives of the society (stakeholders) on the same. In addition, the four steps of the framework informed the structural design of the study.

b. The 4Es VfR conceptual framework

The Value for Resources (VfR) framework is about maximizing the impact of every resource spent to improve people's lives. The framework is based on the logical framework or results chain in a project/program with the ultimate result being impact of an initiative. The framework therefore informed the development (content wise) of the data collection tools which followed through the framework in a way. Figure 3 is an illustration of the 4Es VFR framework.

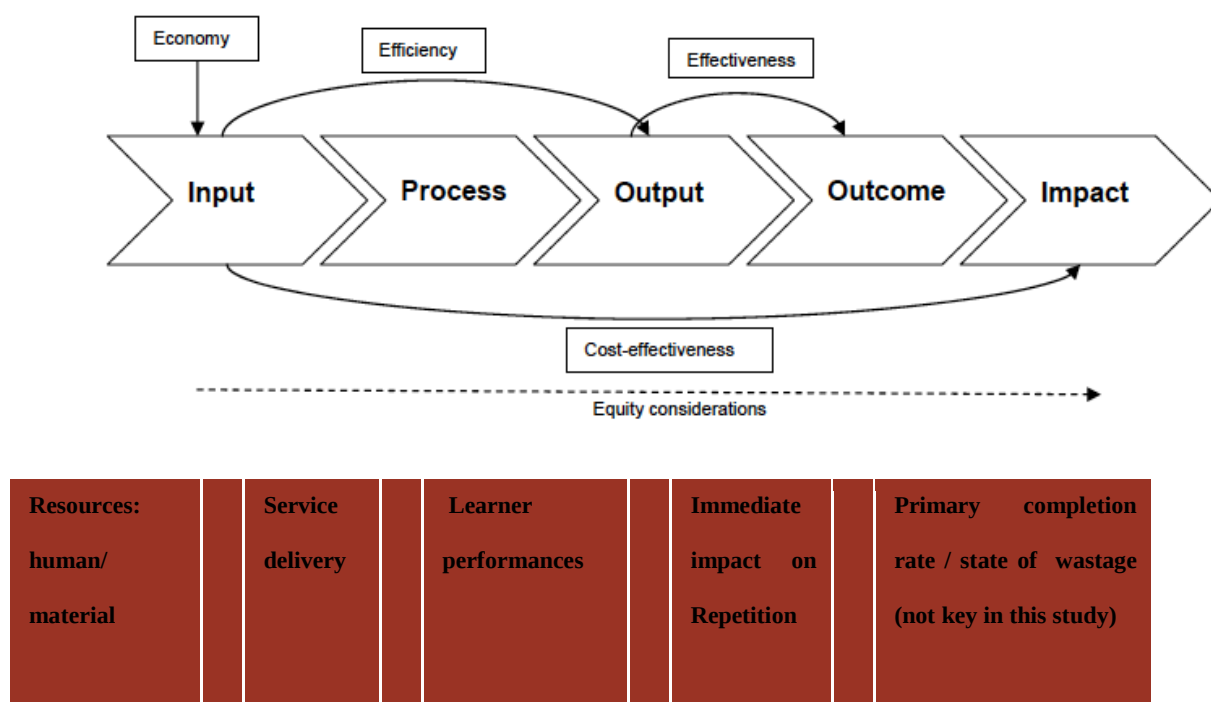


Figure 2: 4Es VFR conceptual framework

2.5 Chapter 2 Summary

This chapter has given the review of literature related to this study. The chapter has discussed the Free Primary Education policy background, the impact primary repetition has on the education sector and community participation in primary education in Malawi. The study used the World Business Council for Sustainable Development's (WBCSD) *Measuring Impact (MI) Framework* and the DFID's 4Es Value For Resources (VFR) Framework. The WBCSD framework principally guided on the procedural steps of the data collection process while the 4Es VFR framework guided on the 'technical' (content) development of the data collection tools.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter overview

Documenting research methodology is important for seeing how the conclusions are drawn from the evidence so as to help others who might want to do the research over again and to assess the overall quality of the study. This chapter therefore presents the methodology that was applied in the study. It comprises the research design and approach, sampling and unit of analysis and research methods.

3.2 Theoretical perspective/Paradigm

A Study belongs to particular epistemological position or paradigm or even a number of paradigms. Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that studies the nature of knowledge and process by which knowledge is acquired and validated. There are a number of epistemological positions (schools of thought) about the nature of knowledge and how it is acquired (Babbie, 2007). Three main paradigms are used as a guide in search for truth namely; Positivism, Constructionism or Interpretivism and critical theory/transformational also known as feminist theory (Creswell, 2009). This study used the critical theorists' preference that uses both approaches, positivism and constructionism paradigms called the mixed approach. The tenets (principles) of positivism and constructivism are the assumptions underlying quantitative and qualitative research respectively. According to Creswell (2009) while the former assumes an objective social reality (that social reality is relatively constant across time and settings), the latter assumes that social reality is constructed by the participants in

it (that social reality is continuously constructed in local situations). Positivists believe in testing theories for the nature of reality and how it works on the ground (Blaikie & Priest, 2016). They believe in total objectivity that the researcher remains a passive participant when generating information. Positivists therefore prefer quantitative research methods whose study is replicable and its findings generalizable. On the contrary, constructionists believe that nature of reality in the social world is constructed and reconstructed as such they believe in searching knowledge for understanding from participants' views about social issues that affect them (Neuman, 2006). They therefore believe in qualitative research method and prefer using open ended questions for participants to freely express their views on the issues under study. The use of both paradigms of positivism and constructionism makes the researcher deeply understand and explain the findings of the study. Therefore, this study was conducted through a mixed methods research design.

3.3 Proposed Research Design and Methodology

A research design is a logical sequence that connects the empirical data to the study's initial research questions, and then ultimately, to its conclusions (Yin, 2003). While research approach as defined by Bryman (2008 in Daba Tolesa, 2010) refers to the general orientation of conducting a social research. Basically, there are three broad approaches to social research namely; qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods (Creswell, 2009 & Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

This study whose report is confined in this thesis used the mixed methods approach and a concurrent parallel convergent design. The study used the mixed methods approach because the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches, in

combination, provides a better understanding of the research problem than either approach alone (Bian, 2017 & Creswell, 2008). The researcher's preference for the concurrent parallel convergent design was to make the researcher best understand or develop more complete understanding of the research problem by obtaining different but complementary data and also for validation purposes. This justification is also proffered by Bian (2017).

The researcher collected both types of data (quantitative and qualitative) concurrently, analyzed the two data sets separately and then merged the results thereafter interpreted the combined results. The merged data was analyzed by joint display using a table to show both quantitative and qualitative results and then look for similarities and convergences for interpretation. Figure 4 below shows the conceptual framework of the design.

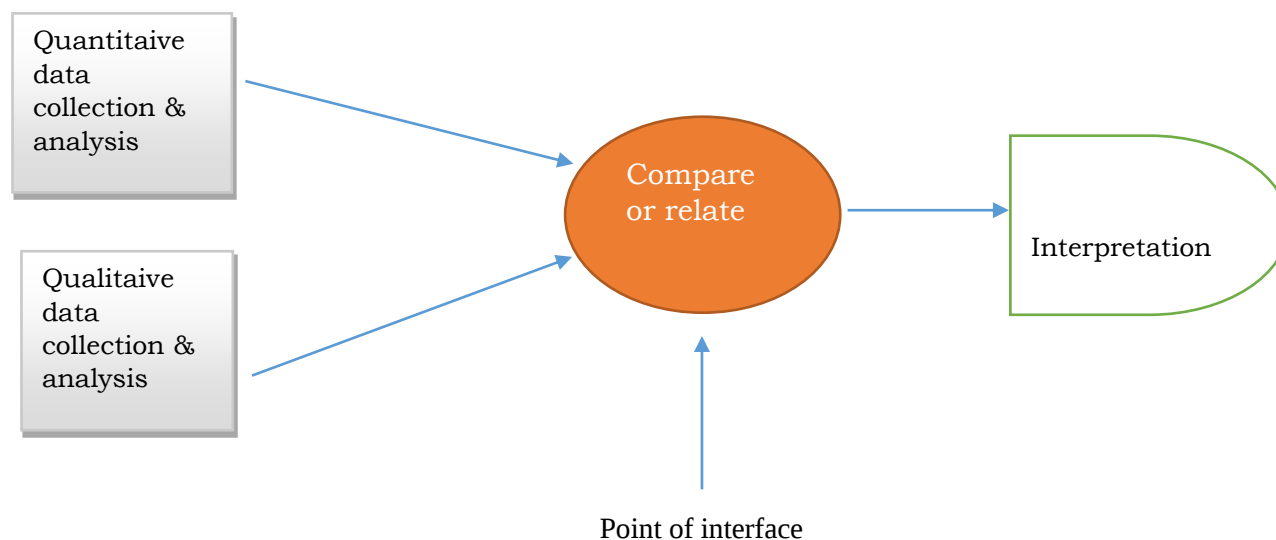


Figure 3: Convergent Parallel Design framework

Source: Hui Bian. <http://core.edu/Statistics Research>

3.4 Sampling and Unit of analysis

This study was based on rural community participation in education through community based camps in seven education zones in Zomba rural (Chikala, St. Anthony, Chimwalira, St. Martin, Chikomwe, Namatapa and Namiwawa) zones.

For the purpose of time and money the study collected secondary data (standard 2 five year repetition records) from 15 primary schools from all the seven zones and primary data (views and perceptions from interviews and discussions) from only three zones namely Chikala, St. Martin and Chimwalira zones. These zones are close to each other. Qualitative data was also collected from one primary school from each of the three zones and from one community camp from each primary school. Selection of the primary schools and the camps was purposeful basing on their proximity to the zones and the schools respectively. Purposeful sampling was used so as to save on time and money since the units were close to each other. So from this approach three zones, three primary schools and three community based camps. Were purposively selected for primary data collection. Table 3 shows the names of zones and the schools and figure 5 is the map showing the project schools. The names of the camps were Khosola, James and Kailu all from Namiwawa zone.

Table 3: Sample schools

Data type	Zone	School	Total
Qualitative	Chimwalira	Kalambo	3
	St Martin	Muluma	
	Chikala	Chikala	
Quantitative	Chimwalira	Utwe, Mtimaoyera,	15
	St. Martin	Mateketa, Namiyala, Khuluvi	
	Chikomwe	Kayeramadzi, Mulinga	
	Chikala	Milola, Mpachika	
	Namatapa	Namakungwa, Ntangatanga	
	Namiwawa	Nanjiwa	
	St Anthony	Gologota, Likhubula	

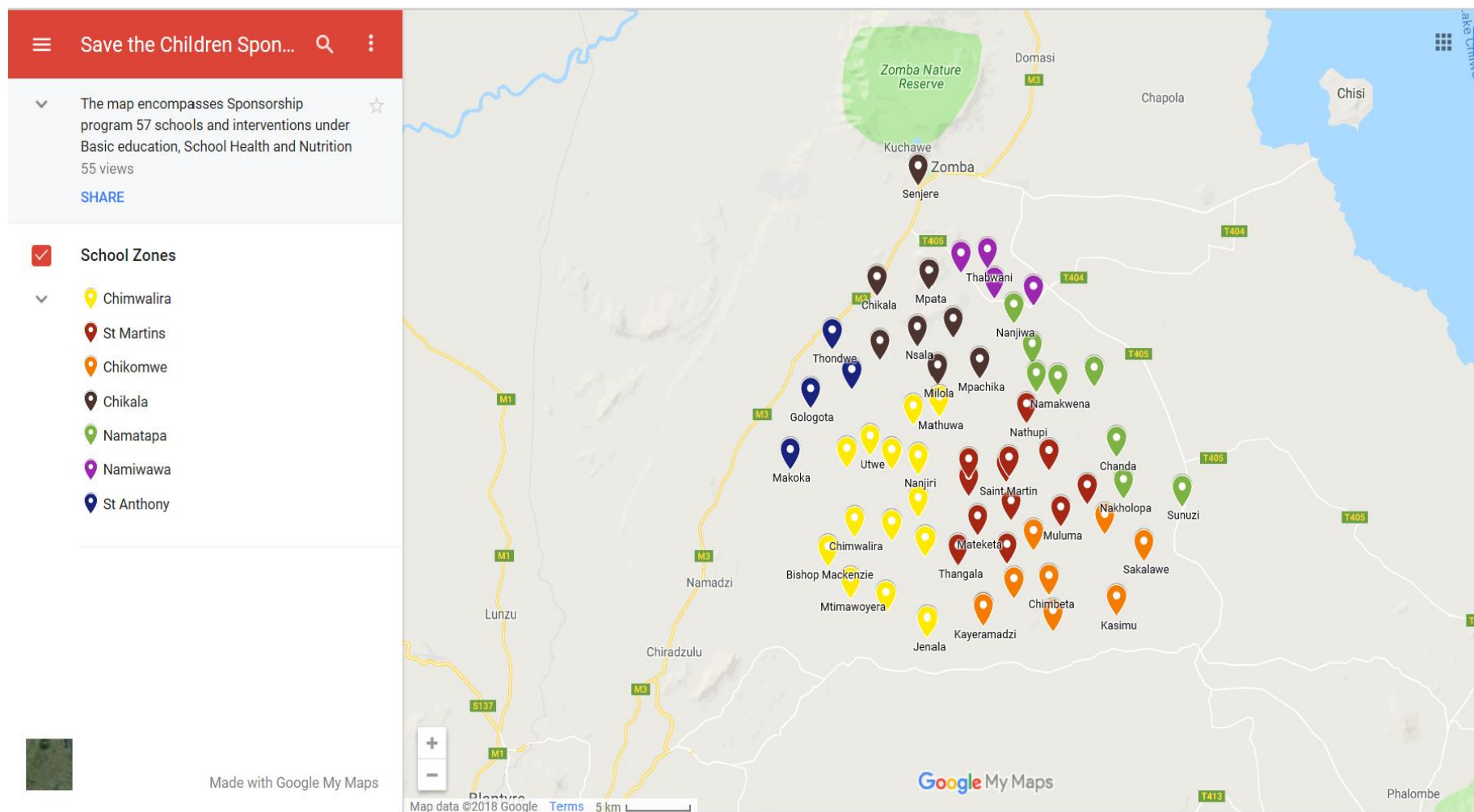


Figure 4: Map showing all the project schools (the study area)

Qualitative data was also collected from the Ministry of Education headquarters, district education office and from the National Reading Program (NRP) district office. Figure 6 below is a diagrammatic illustration of the interconnectedness of the data collection units.

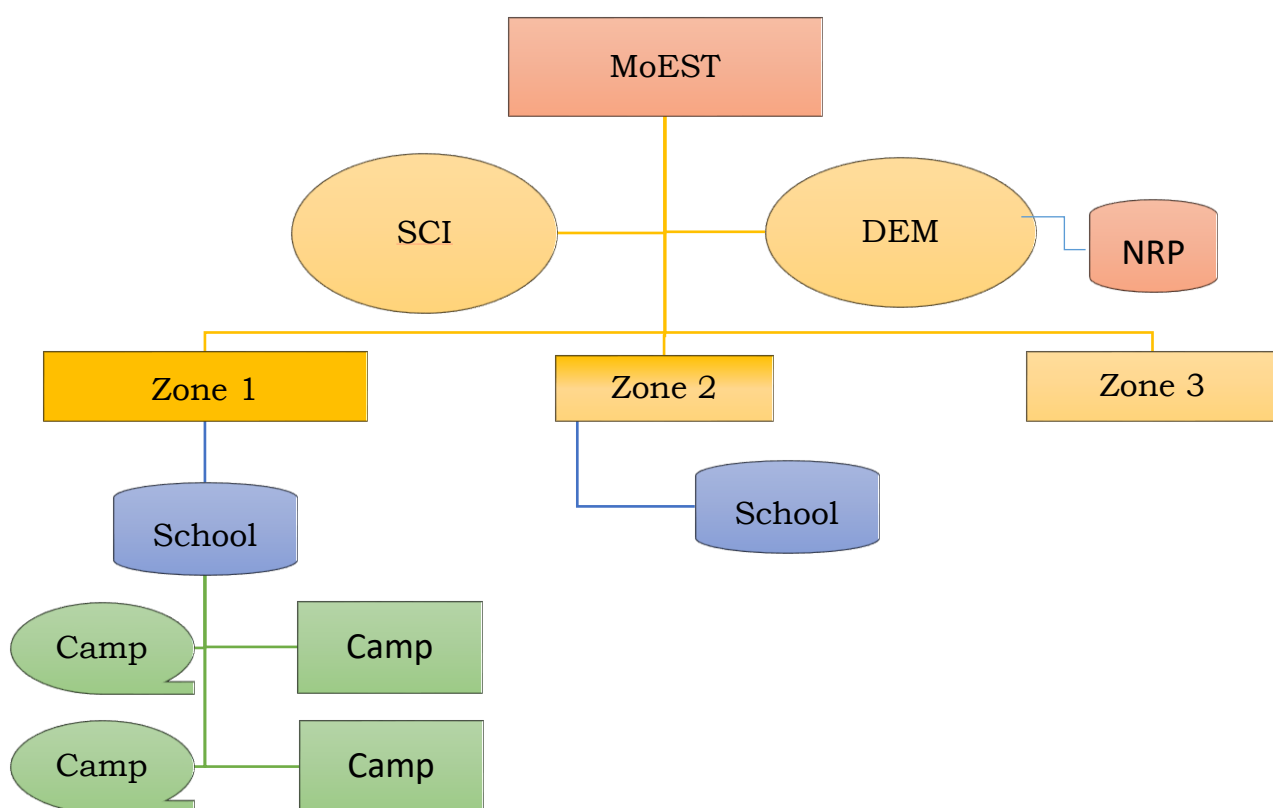


Figure 5: An illustration of the of the data collection units

3.5 Data collection instruments (research methods)

Research method is a technique used for collecting data that can involve different specific tools of data collection through which the researcher listens to and observes others (Bryman, 2008). For ease of collection and analysis of data a research matrix was developed to map each research question to its data collecting question and then each data collecting question to the data collection tool/s as shown in appendix A.

The following section presents data collection tools used in this study. To address the objectives of the study data was collected from both secondary and primary sources. The primary data was used to also validate and triangulate the findings from the secondary data.

3.5.1 Quantitative data collection and analysis

The quantitative strand of the research involved secondary data collection and analysis. The sample frame from which the quantitative data was collected was selected using systematic sampling technique. Sampling refers to the process of selecting individuals from a larger group of people and drawing conclusions that are an accurate representation of how the larger group of people acts or what they believe (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

Desk review was conducted to deeply understand the policy context of the repetition policy, the state of repetition in Malawi, the basic education in general and the community based camps in particular. The central focus of this study was to explore whether the community reading camps contribute to the reduction of repetition among lower grade primary school learners which was confined in answering the first question of the research. To answer the first research question, the study collected two sets of quantitative data from secondary sources. Firstly, the researcher collected and compiled the names of two sets of standard 2 learners. Those who attended camps and those who did not attend camps from 15 schools for the past five academic years. These names were collected from Save the Children yearly end line reports. Secondly the researcher sampled 40 percent of each of these groups of learners for each year using Systematic sampling technique. The sampling was systematically done by firstly deciding on how many subjects were to be in the sample (n) (which was 40%

of the total population (N) for each type of the learners -camp goers and non-camp goers). The researcher then divided N (the total number of members/learners in each population) by n to determine the sampling interval (K) to apply to the list of the members/learners. After this the researcher selected the first member randomly from the first K members of the list, and then selected every K th member of the population for the sample. This then made the sample frames for the learners whose data was to be collected. The researcher then went to the schools of the selected learners and collected repetition data for these two groups of learners. The researcher also collected and compared the baseline (2013) and end line (2017) repetition data for the schools with the aim of establishing the repetition status quo of the schools. Quantitative data was transferred into the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. The term significant is used throughout to represent a statistical finding of significance at $p < .05$ or lower. Tables were generated by the same software. These tables were transferred to Microsoft Excel in order to generate graphs for some of the presentations. Summary or inferential statistics was then used to analyse learners' performance in terms of repetition between the two groups of the learners in each case. Quantitative data was collected from July to August 2018

3.5.2 Qualitative data collection and analysis

As already indicated, this study used a mixed methods approach and a concurrent parallel convergent design. The qualitative component of the research involved primary data collection and analysis. This data was collected from 64 people and from all the three zones named above (table 4). The data was key in answering the research questions ii to v and also in triangulating the findings of the quantitative data results. This data was also used to gauge out from the views of the respondents their

counterfactual analyses of the camp initiative. Qualitative data was collected from June to August 2018.

Table 4: Summery and biographies of respondents

Tools	Participants						Age ranges
	Position	Total (N)	Sex				
			Male	%	Female	%	
KIIs	Ministry officials	3	1		2		33-85
	PEAs	5	5		0		
	Save the Children	1	1		0		
	H/T	4	3		1		
	Camp supervisors	2	2		0		
	Local leaders	8	5		3		
FGDs	SMC	9	5		4		27-58
	PTA	8	3		5		
	Mother group	6	0		6		
	Camp facilitators	18	10		8		
Total		64	35	55%	29	45%	

1. Key Informant Interview (KII)

According to Bryman (2008), a qualitative interview refers to a process in which “the interviewer has a series of mostly general questions that are in the general form of an interview guide but in which the interviewer is able to vary the sequence as well as ask further questions in response to what are seen as significant replies. A key informant is a person knowledgeable of the phenomenon being sought after and therefore a considerable source. Semi-structured key informant interview guide was the main data collection instrument for this study. The key informants included the following; the Deputy Basic Education director from the Ministry of Education, District Education Manager for Zomba rural education district, Save the Children Basic Education Manager, National Reading Program (NRP) district coordinator for Zomba district, Coordinating Primary Education Advisor (CPEA) for Zomba rural education district, five Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) from the project impact area, 2 camp supervisors (who are also teachers), 2 head teachers and 8 village heads. In total there were 23 informants that were interviewed. Table 5 below summarizes the key informants that were interviewed and the type of information sought after from them.

2. Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

A focus group discussion is a form of group interview in which there are several participants ranging from five to ten people (Bryman, 2008). The study collected information from 41 participants from three FGDs; one for camp facilitators and two for SMCs, PTA, and Mother groups. Among other things, the FGDs gave a chance to the participants to bring out ideas that they thought were important and significant,

argued about the ideas and then after reached a consensus before agreeing on one idea.

Table 5: Summery of key informants and roles

Key Informant	Role	Key research aspect answered
Director for Basic Education	Provide policy overview for the repetition policy	Existence, effectiveness/successes/challenges
DEM-Zomba rural (one)	Highlights on relevance and achievements made, coordination	Existence, relevance, effectiveness and process, sustainability of repetition policy and reading camps
District Coordinator (NRP)	Highlights on relevance and achievements made, coordination	Relevance, effectiveness and process, sustainability of repetition policy and reading camps.
Save the Children	Coordination	Process, effectiveness, successes/challenges of reading camp implementation.
Coordinating PEA	Coordination/management at ground level, effectiveness, sustainability	Relevance, effectiveness and process, sustainability of repetition policy and reading camps
PEAs	Coordination/management at zonal level, effectiveness, sustainability	Relevance, effectiveness and process, challenges of repetition policy and reading camp
Local leaders	Coordination at community level, effectiveness, sustainability	Relevance, effectiveness and policy process, sustainability/challenges for reading camps
Camp supervisors & head teachers	Coordination at ground level, effectiveness, challenges/successes	Relevance, effectiveness and policy process, successes/challenges for reading camps
SMC, PTA & Mother groups	Coordination at ground level, effectiveness, challenges/successes, sustainability	Relevance, effectiveness and policy process, sustainability/challenges for reading camps

3. Camp session observation

Most of the discussion in this study bordered on the reading and numeracy camps. It was therefore imperative in the first place for the researcher to observe one or two camp sessions so as to familiarize himself with the camps especially in line with this study. This was to give the researcher a grounded knowledge about the camps so that in subsequent discussions if there were going to be any emerging themes or issues that need to be sought after the researcher could adjust the other tools or questions accordingly. However, this did not happen since the researcher was the one implementing the camp initiative hence had in-depth knowledge about the camps.

Qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This was done using a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) by NVIVO computer software version 12. Procedurally the researcher collected and recorded data and field notes. The data was then typed and imported onto the NVIVO computer software. The researcher then went through each document identifying the temporary nodes in the themes based on phrases or paragraphs in each document, and organised them in a set of lists.

Then the data was reduced and grouped into codes or nodes. Similar codes were collapsed into sub-themes and then into themes which were displayed into a matrix. The analysed data matrix was then exported to the excel sheet. Next the researcher collated and collapsed all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes. Finally, the researcher interpreted the findings and drew conclusions. Figure 7 below summarises the procedures used in the thematic qualitative data analysis.

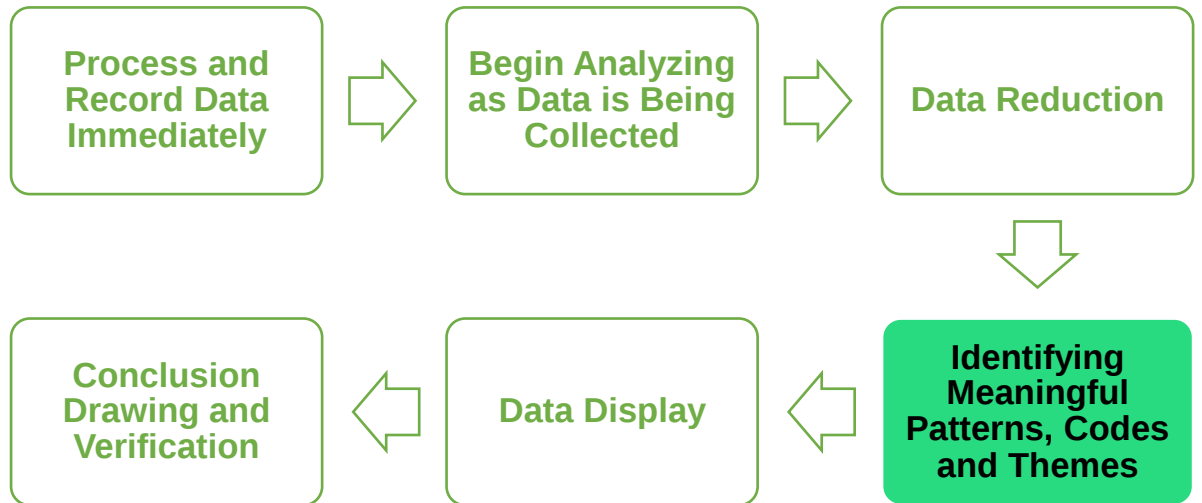


Figure 6: Thematic data analysis steps. Source: author

3.6. Ethical Consideration

Ransome, (2013) defines ethics as a system of moral values concerned with the degree to which the research adheres to professional, legal and social obligation to the study. Ethical considerations were given a priority throughout this study. The researcher assured the participants of confidentiality before engaging them in any data or information collecting exercise. They were told that their responses would be used for nothing but the study only (*see data collection tools in appendices*). The participants were also given the freedom of choosing to participate or not to participate in the study. In some cases, where data was collected from government officers, the introductory letter (*appendix E*) from the college/department was presented before indulging the incumbents in any form of data collection activity. Since data was also collected from camps which are the structures instituted by Save the Children, the researcher sought consent from Save the Children to use the facilities for the study.

3.7 Chapter 3 Summery

This chapter has given an overview of the research methodology. The researcher used a mixed methods approach and a concurrent parallel convergent design. Quantitative data was collected from 15 primary schools and the data was analysed using SPSS and Excel computer packages for significance and cross tabulation. Systematic sampling technique was used to get the sample frames for quantitative data collection. Qualitative data was collected from 64 respondents from the Ministry of Education headquarters, the District Education office, Save the Children field office, NRP district office, PEAs, head teachers, camp supervisors, camp facilitators, SMC members, PTA members, mother group members and community leaders. This data was analysed using thematic analysis by a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) which was done by NVIVO computer software version 12. Sampling technique for the qualitative data collection was purposeful. The chapter has also presented ethical considerations used in the study. The findings and results were interpreted and are presented and discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Chapter overview

The purpose of this study whose report is confined in this thesis was to explore the contribution of community based reading camps to the reduction of repetition in lower grades of primary schools. The study used a mixed methods approach and a concurrent parallel convergent design. However, more weight was given to the qualitative method as compared to the quantitative one. The study findings are presented under the following four subsections; 1. Performance analysis between camp goers and non-camp goers, 2. Frameworks that impact on the efficiency of reading camps, 3. Determinants of the successes and challenges to implementation of reading camps and 4. Perceptions of stakeholders on the effectiveness of the repetition policy.

4.2 Performance analysis between camp goers and non-camp goers

The results of the quantitative component were organized into two categories based on the indicator being analyzed. These are; (i) Comparative repetition trends for camp going and non-camp going learners for five years and (ii) Comparative populations for camp going and non-camp going learners for the five-year period.

(i) Analysis for repetition trends for camp going and non-camp going learners

A total of 606 learners (304 girls, 302 boys) were systematically sampled from 1,515 learners from 15 schools. This represented 40 percent of the total population. Of the 606 sampled learners, 437 were camp goers and 169 were non camp goers. The relative five years' repetition data for these learners was collected from the schools (table 6).

Table 6: Repetition data summary for camp going & non-going learners

Year	Total ppn of camp goers	No. of sampled camp goers			No.of repeaters	% repetition	Total ppn of non- goers	No. of sampled non camp goers			No. of repeaters	% repetition
		B	G	total				B	G	total		
2017	195	39	39	78	36	46	105	21	21	42	24	57
2016	221	44	44	88	21	24	79	16	16	32	18	57
2015	206	41	41	82	20	24	81	16	16	32	14	43
2014	232	46	47	93	17	18	85	17	17	34	11	32
2013	239	48	48	96	28	29	72	14	15	29	9	31
Total	1093	218	219	437	122	Mean. 28	422	84	85	169	76	Mean. 44
Missing					15						8	

The data from table 6 above was further analyzed graphically and presented here in two categories; (a) Correlation between camp attendance and repetition (b) Populations trends of camp goers and non-camp goers

a. Correlation between camp attendance and repetition

From the table 6 above the researcher filtered out the repetition percentages for the camp going learners and non-camp going learners for the past five years . The data was then analysed by a paired samples t-test using SPSS (CI=95%) and was also used to produce a comparative linear graphical illustration using excel (Figure 7).

Table 7: Significance test (camp attendance versus repetition)

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	Camp goers - Non-goers	-15.800	11.432	5.113	-29.995	-1.605	-3.090	4	.037

The results show that there have been significant differences in repetition between the two groups of learners during the period of five years ($P = 0.037$). With a mean repetition rate of 28 for the camp going learners against the mean repetition rate of 44 for the non-camp going learners the study established that fewer learners who attended camps repeated than those who did not.

However, as can be observed from the graph in figure 8 below the repetition trend for the camp going learners increased significantly from 2016 to 2017 while that of that non-camp going learners remained constant during the same period.

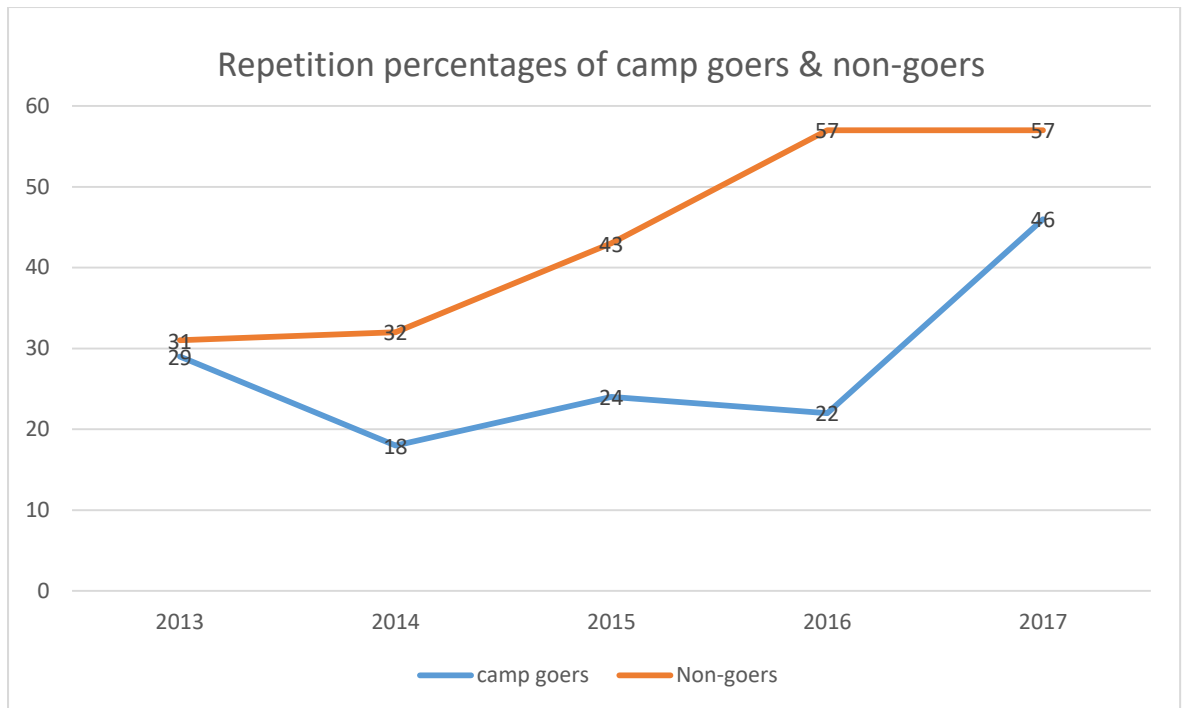


Figure 7: Repetition graphs for camp goers and non-goers Learners (P=0.037)

However, analysis of populations of camp going and non-camp going learners revealed that the annual average numbers of camp goers decreased by 18% (from 239 in 2013 to 195 in 2017) while that of non-camp goers increased by 45% (from 72 to 105) during the same period (figure 9).

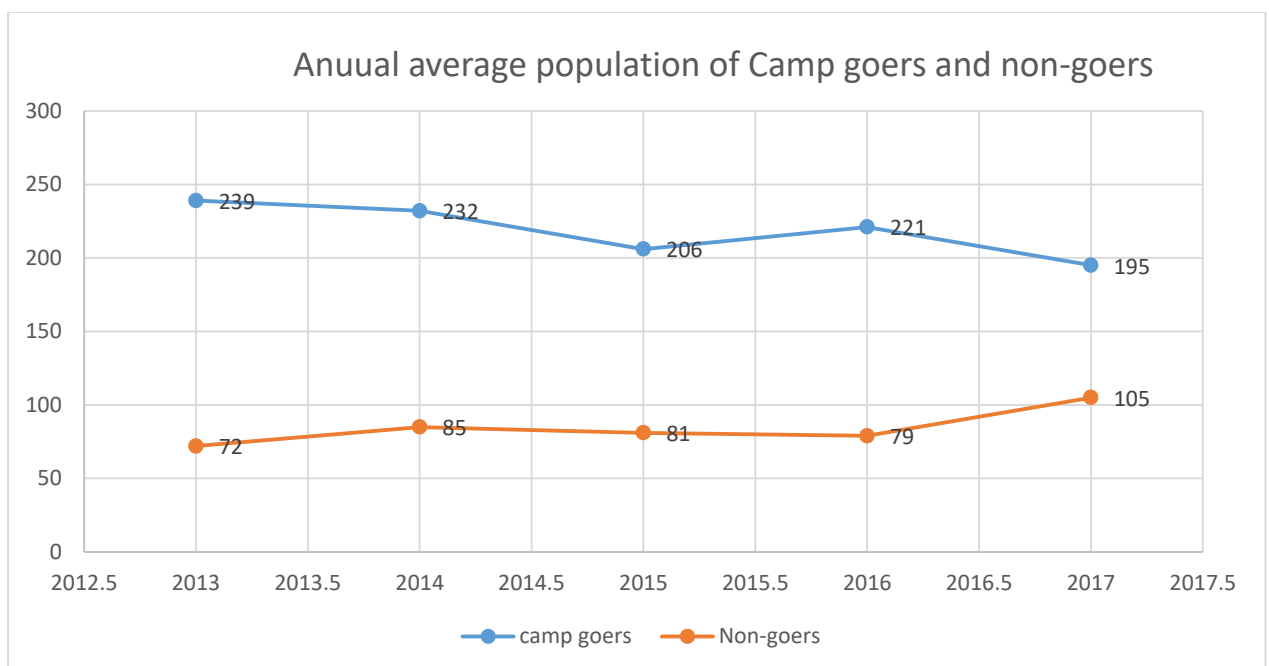


Figure 8: Graphical population comparison of camp goers and non-goers

These findings correlate with qualitative data findings by this same study and also with findings from other related studies. All teachers (camp supervisors) and head teachers that were interviewed indicated that few learners from villages where there were vibrant camps repeated as they performed relatively better in class and a good number of them passed examinations and got promoted. This was also agreed to by most respondents that were interviewed in this study. The respondents were of the view that the camps enhance learner performances which then in turn automatically translates into reduction of class repetition as most of the learners pass examinations and get promoted to next classes. This qualitative finding triangulates the above quantitative finding from the comparative learner performances by camp going and non-camp going learners. This qualitative finding has a key and lock fitness with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development's (WBCSD) *Measuring Impact (MI) Framework* used in this study. The WBCD (MI) conceptual framework attempts to merge the perspectives of an initiative's contribution to development with the societal perspectives of what is important where that initiative operates. In this case, the camp initiative's overall objective which is to contribute to the improvement of learning outcomes (which in turn reduces class repetition), merges well with the societal perspectives of what the issue is. Here, according to literature and the perspectives of all the stakeholders one of the most problematic issue the education system is failing to curb is class repetition.

A 2013 Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) report on the functionality of the reading camps by Chiuye and others found that overall, learners in schools with designated reading camps demonstrated higher skills than those in schools without reading camps (Chiuye et.al, 2013).

Table 8: MTE report on functionality of reading camps summery of Overall Learner Performance by Standard and type of School

Sub test	Standard	Mean (items read correct)	
		Treatment	Comparison
Letter naming	Std.2	14.41	11.7
	Std.4	49.9	39.6
Word writing	Std.2	1.7	1.3
	Std.4	3.7	2.8
Familiar word reading	Std.2	4.8	3.9
	Std.4	18.7	13.9
Oral reading	Std.2	19.8	15.3
	Std.4	119.7	83.6
Comprehension Questions	Std.2	1.1	0.7
	Std.4	2.8	2.1

Source: (Chiuye et.al, 2013).

Although the mid-term evaluation on the functionality of reading camps focused on literacy only, other study reports on numeracy comparing learners attending reading camps to those not attending reading camps have also depicted similar findings. During the 2016/17 Numeracy Boost (NB) end line survey conducted by Save the Children differences were noted in the NB group with those who went to the camps at home doing better than their counterparts who were not attending camps (table 9).

Table 9: Learner Math Gains For Those Who Attend / Do Not Attend Math Camp Sessions

Group	If Learner Attends or Do not Attend Math Camp Sessions	Mean
Control	Do not Attend Math camp	12.32
	Attend Math Camp	-3.59
Treatment	Do not Attend Math camp	9.78
	Attend Math Camp	25.78

Source: SCI- NB 2016/17 end line survey report

According to the results in table 9 above, learners from the treatment group who go to camps realized a gain of 25.78 percent against 9.8 percent for those who do not attend camps. For the control group, the gains were 12.32 percent for those who did not attend camps and negative 3.59 percent for those who go to camps. From the data above, it therefore shows that learners who attend reading camps were doing better than those not attending camps.

The researcher also pulled out and compared repetition values for the project schools for the 2009 baseline against 2017 end line study reports (figure 10).

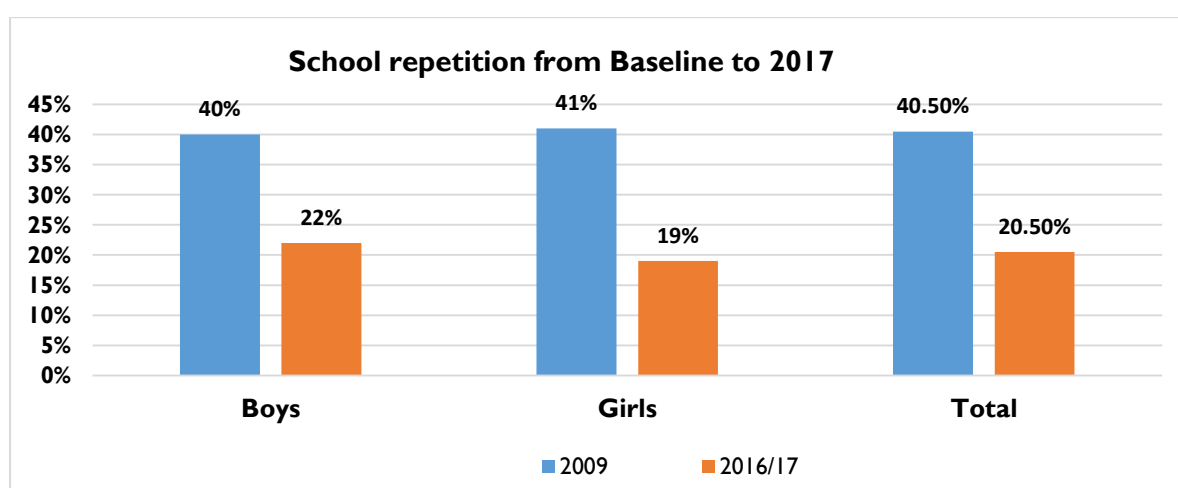


Figure 9: Baseline and end line repetition values for the project schools

Source: Researcher

As can be observed from the figure, it is evident that repetition has been declining over the period. Repetition decreased from 40.5% in 2009 to 20.5% in 2017. This represents an average percentage decrease of about 50% which is significant. This can also be attributed to the Numeracy and Literacy boost programs that have been implemented in the schools since 2008. These programs also include the camp initiative among others. UNESCO reported that targeted additional support via community volunteers is another key way of improving learning for students at risk of falling behind (UNESCO, 2013/14). This was also elucidated by Allen and Chavkin (2004) who wrote that volunteer tutors provide individual attention that most teachers cannot provide, especially as class size expands in response to tighter school budgets. All these study findings to a certain extent corroborate with the finding of this study that when it comes to class repetition, learners who go to the community camps perform better than those who do not. These camp going learners have more time on task with the support from camp facilitators (volunteers). These learners have a comparative privilege of getting complementary support on what they learn in class.

4.3 Frameworks that impact on the efficiency of reading camps

The study also went further to establish the factors or frameworks that impact on the efficiency of reading camps. To do this, the study concentrated on stakeholder awareness of the existence of the reading camps, sources and types of materials used at the camps, coordination and linkages, community support and volunteers' and parents' motivation.

4.3.1 Stakeholder awareness of the existence of the reading camps

Under this, the study aimed to establish whether the stakeholders in the sector were aware of the existence of the community reading camps established by Save the Children in the impact area. All the respondents expressed knowledge about the community-based camps. Right from the top officials at the Ministry of Education headquarters down to the locals in the communities, all respondents acknowledged having heard about, interacted with or observed the community based camps established by Save the Children.

4.3.2 Sources and types of materials for camps

The study also gathered information about the sources and types of materials that guide the camp sessions and where the camps get teaching and learning resources. Respondents cited different sources of materials that were used at the camps. The most responses cited Save the Children as a supplier of most of the resources like chalk, supplementary reading materials, book banks, chalk boards, slates, cartons and many others. The schools were also mentioned as sources of some materials such as teacher schemes of work, chalk, flip charts and chalkboards. The community also provides locally made materials such as print rich locally made from local ink, seeds, tins and burnt bricks paste etc.

4.3.3 Coordination and linkages with other structures

The study also aimed at establishing the functionality (or lack thereof) of the community based camps in terms of coordination and linkages that are there between the camps and the primary schools they belong to. To establish this, the study interviewed camp supervisors (teachers) and camp facilitators (community

volunteers) on how they link up with each other and how camp supervisors support the camp facilitators. While all the camp supervisors stressed the point that they visit and technically support the camp facilitators by mentorship and coaching, there were mixed and differing responses from the facilitators. 13 out of 18 (almost 70 percent) of the camp facilitators were at pains bemoaning the lack of support from their camp supervisors while only 5 (about 30 percent) indicated that they receive some kind of technical support from their camp supervisors. For example, one focus group discussion had the following responses;

How do you work with the camp supervisors? Do they support or visit you?

R3. It takes long for the supervisor to come here and I have even forgotten when he last visited the camp and sometimes I forget who our camp supervisor is.

R1. They are always minding their work at school and show little interest for us and the camps. In some cases we just meet when there is training organized by Save the children

R2. Our supervisor tries to send messages about what is happening at school through learners. Things like closing dates and sometimes holidays and some other important information but not necessarily curriculum materials let alone visiting the camp sessions.

R4. The teachers have a lot of work to do so extending their work seems so hard for them.

The study established that though by design the camps and the schools are to be linked through the camp supervisors, this is not the case in as far as the study findings could reveal. This finding can be used to explain the quantitative finding in section 4.1 where it was found that the performance and attendance of camp going learners was declining.

4.3.4 Community support

Under this, the study wanted to establish the extent to which the communities support the camps. Under community support, the question wanted to find out whether the community in general or parents in particular support the camps and how?. Whether local leaders support the camps and how?. Most of the respondents indicated that where and when camps were functional, parents support the camps in various ways. Some of the most common ways that were mentioned were that parents help with production of locally made camp teaching and learning materials and keeping of the book banks, provision of camp gathering sites and sending their children to the camps. There were some mixed and divided reactions from different focus group discussions on whether local leaders support the camps and how as can be observed from the two discussion extracts with camp facilitators below;

FGD 1 (Muluma school)

R7: some chiefs are not happy with the idea of breaking some camps and merge them so they stopped supporting the camps as they used to do in the past before the camp restructuring.

R4: In the other villages ie. Daundi village leaders try to develop bylaws that make children go to camps but it's not in all the villages

R2: Though in some villages the chiefs support camps the observation is that most of the village chiefs do not

R5. Local communities can support camps by mobilizing resources only that our communities do not have an appeal for education and they don't actually see the inbuilt benefits of education. They shuffle the responsibility of educating their children on to the shoulders of the government

FGD 2 (Kalambo school)

R3: the chief talks about camps at meetings such as funerals

R4: The chief in my village instituted local policing called 'inkhata' that arrests those children who are absent from school and also chase children in the afternoon to camps

R1: The chief makes bylaws that make parents pay a fine when their children are absent from school as well as camps. They pay MK250 (mentioned VH Gwaa as an example). The Chief supervises what happens at the camp and he buys sweets and distributes the sweets to children who come to the camp sessions in order to motivate them.

R6. The problems came with the restructuring of the camps where those villages whose camps were closed do not find it interesting to be sending their children to camps in other villages as such the chiefs from those villages are now indifferent to the camp initiative.

The study found that while most parents support the camps, some local leaders indeed support the camps while others do not. The major cause for the problem was with the redesigning of the camp initiative. Originally, each village had its own camp and it seems all was going on well that time. But due to some other reasons, Save the Children collapsed and closed some camps so as to reduce the number of camps. This then meant that children from the villages whose camps were closed have to go to camps in neighboring villages. This created political wrangles and resentment among some local leaders who in turn became indifferent to the camp initiatives. One local leader in one interview lamented that:

It all started well until when they closed some camps including one from my village. This makes children from my village walk long distances to access a camp at a nearby village and more over the chief for that village is my subordinate. (KII with a local leader from around Muluma school)

Again, this might explain the dwindling camp functionality and outcomes as observed in previous sections.

4.3.5 Volunteer and parents' motivation

Under this, the study sought to establish whether the volunteers and parents alike were motivated or not motivated to be supporting the camps and also what motivates them if any. It was found that mostly, the camp facilitators were intrinsically motivated by their interest in education. A majority of the interviewed volunteers about 75 percent indicated that they were motivated by their interest in education while less than 20 percent said that they just do it because either they were asked by the leadership to do so or they do not have anything to do. However, this was not the same view among the parents, local leaders and camp supervisors. This group faulted the volunteers that they were not so dedicated citing lack of incentives as a major reason. Almost over 80 percent of the camp supervisors, chiefs, PTAs and SMCs indicated that the volunteers in many cases do not take the initiative at heart. One camp supervisor and a local leader had something like this to say;

To say that the volunteers are motivated is being naive...most of the volunteers are demotivated and they drag their feet into the camp thing. In the very beginning there were several frequent incentives from Save but now there are no such frequent incentives as a result, the volunteers drop out and even when we recruit new ones they don't stay much longer. (KII with a camp supervisor and a local leader at Muluma school)

This was however also reflected by Save the Children through an interview with one field office staff who cited volunteer laxity as one of the major challenges faced by the implementation of the camp initiative.

On the contrary, all the groups that were interviewed indicated that many parents and guardians were interested in the education of their children and wards. The things that were mentioned as motivating factors for this ranged from the advocacy and sensitization that has been there by different stakeholders on the importance of

education to the reinforcement of by-laws by community leaders penalizing the parents whose children do not partake in education activities. However, some informants indicated that though this was the case, there still were some parents who do not value education and hence were somehow indifferent to the call for their support for the education of their children. So, it was found that there were a number of factors that motivate parents to be sending their children to the camps of course when and where the camps were functional.

4.4 Determinants of the successes and challenges to implementation of reading camps

This sub-section presents some determinants of the successes and challenges for camp initiative implementation that the study profiled.

4.4.1 Camp implementation successes

The study found out that there were many successes registered by the camp initiative. The respondents from the interviews and FGDs cited some of the notable major successes as follows;

- Almost all the crucial stakeholders from the Ministry of Education head office down to the communities were aware and in support of the community camp initiative. This can ensure sustainability of the initiative.
- By design, the camps are overseen by camp supervisors who are teachers who provide technical guidance to the facilitators. This helps aligning the camps to the national curriculum and also ensure efficiency.
- By design the camps use or are supposed to use locally made materials which enables the community to be supporting the camps with low cost expenses a thing that also ensures sustainability. The materials used at the camps are produced locally by the communities. The study also revealed that the

linking of the camps to the schools and the camp supervisors created a self-perpetuating supportive framework that make the camps sustainable and effective. This fits well with the DFID's 4Es VFR framework also used in this study. This framework indicates that the lower first 'E' which is Economy/ inputs of a project the higher the sustainability of the project.

- By design the camp sessions are more of a meeting place for children where they share fun while learning differently from the structured school settings. This attracts children to be flocking to the camps voluntarily.

4.4.2 Camp implementation challenges

The study also found that the camp initiative had several challenges. The major challenges cited by various stakeholders engaged by the study are;

- One of the most outstanding challenges for the camp initiative is volunteer laxity. Many volunteers leave out and as a result, this stifles the functionality of the camps. One of the reasons cited for this was lack of incentives for volunteerism.
- Lack of permanent meeting structures for camp sessions. By design camp sessions are conducted at open air space (figure 11). This becomes a problem during rainy season and bad weather conditions during which camps can't operate.



Figure 10: A typical community based camp session in progress

- Most of the respondents observed that the meeting times for the camps were inadequate for maximum benefits to be seen. Almost all camps meet twice in a week which they thought was not enough.
- Restructuring of the camps was cited by most community leaders and camp facilitators as one of the challenges created by the implementers. Initially each village had its camp but since 2016 the camps were restructured by reducing the number of camps to half (from 550 to 241 camps). This meant several villages were combined to be using one camp a thing that created havoc resulting in many children not attending camps for one reason or another. This also increased the number of learners per camp since children from a number of villages were made to go to one camp. In addition, this created disinterest and political havoc among community leaders.

4.5 Perceptions of stakeholders on the effectiveness of the repetition policy/ies.

Question iii of the study intended to establish the perceptions of various stakeholders on the nature and effectiveness of the repetition policy. In order to address this question the study collected data on stakeholders' knowledge about the existence of the repetition policy, effectiveness of the repetition policy and policy implementation gaps and challenges. The data on this was collected from the Ministry headquarters down to the teachers in the schools.

4.5.1 Knowledge about the existence of the repetition policy

When asked whether they knew about the repetition policy different respondents gave different responses and some of them conflicting ones. 6 of the 23 key informants admitted that there is a repetition policy in Malawi while 9 said there is no repetition policy in Malawi and 8 said they have no idea whether there is such a policy or not. The most striking fact was that even the top Ministry of Education officials gave conflicting responses about the policy. The following were some of their responses;

R1. No we don't have the policy. There was a circular on repetition which was circulated in all the schools. It stated that only 20% of the learners should be allowed to repeat a class. The circular has now been developed into a policy and is now called promotion policy. The policy is not yet in operation as there are still a few things to be done.

This policy among other things allows learners not to repeat a class. There are to be standardized tests at zonal/district level administered at grade 2, 4 and 6 and it also advocates for remedial lessons for the weaker learners. The policy is part of the GPE MESIP project.

(KII with Basic Education Department official at the Ministry of Education. July 2018)

R2. Yes, I know there is such a policy. It states that only 5% of learners should repeat a class and the rest should be promoted. However, the policy has not yet

been started to be implemented. I heard that there is coming a type of policy called automatic promotion but as of now there is no repetition policy in the schools (KII with top official at the DEM office. August 2018)

Just as can be observed from the two responses above it shows how conflicting knowledge about the existence of the policy different officials from the same Ministry have. Two of the five PEAs interviewed admitted that the policy is there while the remaining three indicated that there is no such a policy. Almost all the head teachers and the camp supervisors showed that they were ignorant about the policy. To the extent that two of the head teachers confused the repetition policy with the re-admission policy. This leaves the question as to whether the policy really exists or not. It can therefore objectively be concluded that whether it exists or not the repetition policy is not implemented in the primary schools.

4.5.2 Repetition policy effectiveness

The responses given as to whether the policy is effective or not pointed to the fact that the policy is not existing. However, most of the PEAs indicated that they just rely on the arbitration of the school heads and teachers to determine who should repeat or not but they clearly indicated that there are no specific and clear guidelines on that being followed. One PEA indicated that repetition in the country can not be easily dealt with as there are many causes of repetition in the country.

Amwene tisanamizane kuti (my brother let's not hoodwink each other that) repetition can be dealt with. Just go around the schools one by one and ask the causes of repetition you will be loaded with shocking explanations that you will believe me that reducing repetition in Malawi especially this district is a non-starter. (KII with one PEA)

The study established that with such findings about the existence of the repetition policy above, there is neither reinforcement nor monitoring of a policy which seems

not to be there. However, one official at the district office indicated that PEAs and head teachers are the right people to be reinforcing and monitoring the implementation of the policy where the policy existed.

Briefly, the study established that there was a policy in the 1990s on repetition but in 2011 there was just a circular that was developed to control repetition in primary schools. The study established that these policies lacked awareness and advocacy. Many respondents stated that if the policy was launched then many of the implementers at the school level including teachers were not sensitized about it. These findings are also in agreement with a retrospective analysis on the primary school repetition policies that characterized the Malawi primary repetition policy as one of the most ineffective policies (Chikazinga, 2017)

4.6 Chapter summery

This chapter has presented and discussed the findings of the study. The study findings have been presented under the following four subsections; 1. Performance analysis between camp goers and non-camp goers, 2. Frameworks that impact on the efficiency of reading camps, 3. Determinants of the successes and challenges to implementation of reading camps and 4. Perceptions of stakeholders on the effectiveness of the repetition policy. The study found that learners who attend the community reading/numeracy camps have less propensity of repeating than those who do not. The study also found that the camps get support from the community and that they run on locally made materials. However, lack of permanent gathering structures is one of the challenges the camps face. The qualitative findings were used to triangulate the quantitative findings for further understanding of the research findings.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Chapter overview

This chapter presents the conclusion and implications of the study findings as well as areas for further research.

5.1 Conclusion

The Malawi primary school education sub-sector has been losing a lot of its resources through high classroom repetition. Repetition has been on the rise since the introduction of the Free Primary Education policy in 1994. The study has established that the former attempts to address repetition have not been effective and unpopular. This study also corroborates with other studies that functional community based camps enhance learner performance. The study has established that the camp initiative is effective and instrumental in contributing towards the reduction of class repetition in lower primary grades.

In the most general terms, the community camp initiative can be a start strategy in addressing some of the challenges characterizing the rural public primary schools in poor countries which lead to poor learner performances, high repetition and drop out. This study has therefore added onto the literature some effective approaches of addressing those challenges that have been affecting efficiency in the primary schools in Malawi and other poor countries in the region and beyond.

5.3 Implications of the study

5.3.1 Persistent high repetition rates

On the issue about high repetition rates in Malawi primary schools the study has found that the system has failed to curb this problem since the introduction of FPE in 1994. This implies that there are internal inefficiencies in the sector. To the extent that there have been efforts by the Ministry to reduce repetition i.e through the 1993/94, 95/96 repetition policy, the 2008-2017 NESP, ESIP I & II and the 2011, circular on repetition among others, yet the repetition rates still remain on the higher side this implies that the policies had some problem/s either by design or implementation.

5.3.2 Community support to repetition policy implementation

The success of most of the previous repetition policies depend to a greater extent on the teachers and the support by the communities. The study has established that community based reading camps enhance learner performances which in turn reduce repetition in a way. This implies that while the policies rely on remedial support to learners, this cannot be so effective by teachers only but also by the communities through such initiatives like community based camps.

5.3.3 Regulation of the camps

The study has noted that while camps can have such greater contribution to the success of any policy related to education delivery and support of communities on the same, there is a lot that needs to be reviewed or improved on the camp initiative. The implication on this is that if a policy on repetition has any bearing on strategies that involve community involvement in support to education delivery then the camp initiative can be one of those best and effective strategies. However, if that can be the

case some scrupulous work in design and implementation of such strategy can be instrumental and inevitable.

5.3.4 Project design and implementation

On a lighter note the study established that project design and implementation affected the functionality and achievement of the camp initiative objectives. It was a finding of this study that before restructuring of the camps the initiative was yielding impactful results both in terms of learners' performances and community support. However, after restructuring of the camps the study noted that the functionality of the camps and hence the performances of the learners who attended the camps dwindled. The implication of this is that the success of any project depends to a greater extent on its design.

5. Areas for Future research

The study proposes areas for future research to fill up gaps that need to be attended to as follows:

- a. on the other community based strategies that can help reduce primary school class repetition
- b. on this same topic in other parts or districts of Malawi which then could be compared with the findings of this research
- c. on how differences in cultural, traditional and religious beliefs, settings and diversities can affect the camp initiative if it was to be scaled country wide as a common approach

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Research questions matrix

Research question	Data collection questions	Data collection tools	Respondents
i. What are the frameworks (structural and operational) that sustain and make the camps effective if any?	i. Briefly tell me what a camp is? When and where does the camp take place?	FGD	Camp facilitators
	ii. What materials guide what you teach the learners at the camp?	KII	SCI/DEM/PEAs/ Head teachers/Camp supervisors
	iii. Where does the camp get T/L materials from? (who provides the T/Ls)		
	iii. What motivates the parents to be sending their children to the camps? Are there any policies/laws that compel the parents to send their children to the camps?		
	i. Tell me what is it that happens at the camp Explain your roles as a supervisor. How do you work with camp facilitators? (linkage)	KII	Camp supervisor
	ii. what motivates the parents to send their children to the camps? Are there any policies/laws that compel the parents to send their children to the camps?		
	iii. what motivates the volunteers to be		

	facilitating the camps		
	ii. what motivates the parents to send their children to the camps? Are there any policies/laws in the community that compel the parents to send their children to the camps? iii. what motivates the volunteers to be facilitating the camps iv. What are your roles as a facilitator? how do you work with the supervisors (linkage) iv. how does the community leadership support the camps?	FGD	Camp facilitators
ii. What are the perceptions of various stakeholders on the nature and effectiveness of the repetition policy?	i. Recent statistics show that repetition rates in Malawi are among the highest in the SADC region what could be the possible causes of such high repetition rates in primary schools in the country? iii. What are the impacts of such high repetition rates in public school? ii. Does Malawi have a repetition policy? If yes ii. What does the current repetition policy state? iii. How is the repetition	KII	Director BE/DEM/PEAs/ Head teachers/SC

	policy implemented? (who is the policy holder and who implements) iii. How is the policy implementation monitored? Is there any mechanism/anyone who monitors? iii. iii. In your perception is the policy effective? Why/how? iv. What are the major gaps /challenges of the policy if any? v. How best can repetition be reduced? -policy wise		
iii. What are the perceptions of various stakeholders about the effectiveness	1. Do you know about Save the Children's reading camps? ii. In your view are reading camps helpful?	KII	Director BE/DEM/PEAs/ Head teachers/SCI/sup ervisors/Chiefs

of the reading camps? Do the stakeholders feel the reading camps can contribute to the reduction of repetition?	Explain iii. In your view can the camps help reduce learner repetition? How? iv. Is there any difference in performances between learners who attend camps and those who do not? Explain vi. How can local communities support the camp initiative for the camps to be effective? ii. How do camps help (i) learners (ii) teachers? iii. Are there any other community based initiatives apart from the reading camps that you know can help reduce repetition?	FGD	Camp facilitators
iv. What are the successes and challenges of the implementation of community based camps?	i. What have been the major successes that the camps have registered so far? iii. Are there any lessons learnt in relation to camps that are worthy flagging out? Ii. What are some of the challenges you have experienced while running the camps? iii. How can these challenges be addressed and by who?	KII	DEM/PEAs/Head teachers/camp supervisors/chiefs /SCI
		FGD	Camp facilitators
v. Recommendations	i. What do you recommend for the repetition policy to be effective?	KII	Director BE/DEM/PEAs/ Head teachers/SCI

	ii. If government had to scale up the reading camps what recommendations would you draw for effective implementation of the camps	KII	Director BE/PEAs/Head teachers/camp/S CI supervisors/ chiefs
		FGD	Camp facilitators
	iii. Do you have any other recommendation or advice in relation to the reading camps/ repetition policy that you may wish to share?	KII/FGD	All

Appendix B; Interview guide for camp supervisors/peas/head teachers/chiefs

Name of informant.....Age.....	
Position of informant.....School/Zone.....	
Year joined service.....	
Venue:.....Date:.....	
Sex of Informant:	Male.....Female:.....

My name is I am collecting information on reading camps for my study in Education that I am pursuing at Chancellor College. I am here to have a chat with you as a..... (*name the position*). We are going to engage in a discussion bordering on reading camps. I will be guiding the discussion but you should be in this discussion which is going to take us about 20 minutes. free to contribute and ask questions. The information that is going to be gathered from this discussion is not going to be communicated to anyone. It shall only be used for the purpose of this study.

1. Briefly tell me what a camp is?

2. What materials guide what is taught at the camps?

3. Where does the camp get T/L materials from? (who provides the T/Ls)

4. How many camps does this school/Zone has (*School=for head teachers & Supervisors; zone=for PEAs*)

5. {For camp supervisors only} What are your roles as a camp supervisor? how do you work with the camps and camp facilitators? (*probe for linkage with the camps*)

3. What motivates the volunteers to be facilitating the camps? (*probe for any incentives if attached*)

4. Where do the camps get T/L materials from? (who provides the T/Ls)

6. What motivates the parents to send their children to the camps?

7. How does the community support the camps?

8. Have there been any difference in performances between learners who attend camps and those who do not? Explain

9. How do the following benefit from camps?

(i) learners:

(ii) teachers:

10. In your view can the camps help reduce learner repetition? How?

11. How can local communities support the camp initiative for the camps to be more effective?

12. Malawi has a repetition policy do you know this policy? **If no** 17. 

13. What does the policy state? *(check whether the respondent really knows what the policy states)*

14. Do you implement the policy in your school/zone? *(head/supervisor= school; PEA=zone)*

15. In your view is the policy effective? Explain *(check for gaps and strengths)*

16. How is the implementation of the policy monitored in the schools?

17. Are there any other community based initiatives apart from the reading camps that you know can help reduce repetition?

18. What are some of the challenges you have experienced while running the camps?

19. How can these challenges be addressed and by who?

20. If government had to scale up the reading camps what recommendations would you draw for effective implementation of the camps

21. What are your other recommendation/s or advice in relation to the effective implementation of;

i. reading camps

ii. the repetition policy?

This is the end of our discussion. I thank you for your time and constructive responses. Once again be assured that all that has been discussed here is not going to be communicated to anyone but only to be used for this study.

Appendix C: Interview guide for Directors/EDM/DEM/SCI

Name of informant.....Age.....	
Position of informant.....Institution.....	
Year joined service.....	
Venue:.....Date:.....	
Sex of Informant:	Male.....Female:.....

My name is I am collecting information on reading camps for my study in Education that I am pursuing at Chancellor College. I am here to have a chat with you as a..... (*name the position*). We are going to engage in a discussion bordering on reading camps and the repetition policy. I will be guiding the discussion but you should be free to contribute and ask questions. The information that is going to be gathered from this discussion is not going to be communicated to anyone. It shall only be used for the study. I hope you are willing to partake in this discussion which is going to take us about 20 minutes.

1. Recent statistics show that repetition rates in Malawi are among the highest in the SADC region what could be the possible causes of such high repetition rates in primary schools in the country?

2. What are the effects of such high learner repetition rates in public primary schools?

3. Does Malawi have a repetition policy? If no go to 10 

4. What does the current repetition policy state, how did it start? (*what is the history of the policy*)

5. How is the repetition policy implemented? (*who is the policy holder and who implements it*)

6. How is the policy implementation monitored? Is there any mechanism/anyone who monitors it?

7. In your perception is the policy effective? Why/how?

8. What are the major gaps /challenges of the policy if any?

9. How can those challenges mentioned above be addressed?

10. Do you know any programs/projects or policies that also aim at reducing repetition in the country? If yes

(a) name them (b) who is implementing them?

SN	Program/project/policy	Implementer
1		
2		
3		
4		

11. Are you aware of Save the children's community based reading camps? if yes how did you come to know them ?

12. Community reading camps are centers in the villages where lower grade learners gather after school and facilitators teach them literacy and numeracy they learn at school. In your view can the community reading camps help reduce repetition in primary schools? If yes, how?

13. Are there any other community based initiatives apart from the reading camps that you know can help reduce repetition?

14. If government had to scale up the reading camps what recommendations would you draw for effective implementation of the camps

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

15. What are your other recommendation/s or advice in relation to the effective implementation of;

i. the reading camps

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

ii. the repetition policy?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

This is the end of our discussion. Thank you for participating in the study

Appendix D: FGD guide for SMC/PTA/Mother group/Camp facilitators

Name of camps for FGD: School:
Venue: Date:
Number of participants: Male: Female:

NAMES OF Participants:

SN	Name:	Age	Position:	Code
1				R1
2				R2
3				R3
4				R4
5				R5
6				R6
7				R7

My name is I am collecting information on reading camps for my study in Education that I am pursuing at Chancellor College. I am here to have a chat with you as a group. We are going to engage in a discussion bordering on reading camps established by Save the Children. I will be facilitating the discussion but each one of you should be free to contribute. The information that is going to be gathered from this discussion is not going to be communicated to anyone. It shall only be used for the study. I hope you are willing to partake in this discussion which is going to take us about 30 minutes.

1. Briefly tell me what a camp is? When and where does the camp take place)
(This is an entry question. Participants are asked to do a broad brush of what the camp is)
2. What are your roles as a camp facilitator? how do you work with the camp supervisors (probe for linkage with the school)
3. What motivates you the volunteers to be facilitating the camps? (probe for any incentives if attached)
4. Where does the camp get T/L materials from? (who provides the T/Ls)
6. What motivates the parents to send their children to the camps?
7. How does the community leadership support the camps?

8. Is there any difference in performances between learners who attend camps and those who do not? Explain
9. How do camps benefit
 - (i) learners
 - (ii) teachers?
10. In your view can the camps help reduce learner repetition? How?
11. How can local communities support the camp initiative for the camps to be more effective?
12. Are there any other community based initiatives apart from the reading camps that you know can help reduce repetition?
13. What are some of the challenges you have experienced while running the camps?
14. How can these challenges be addressed and by who?
15. If government had to scale up the reading camps what recommendations would you draw for effective implementation of the camps
16. Do you have any other recommendation or advice in relation to the reading camps that you may wish to share?

This is the end of our discussion. I thank you all for your constructive participation in this discussion.

Appendix E: Introductory Letter



CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

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

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

16th March 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR MASTER OF EDUCATION (Policy Planning & Leadership)

Mr Martin Mbendela (MED/PPL/16/17) is a student of Education in the Department of Education Foundations at Chancellor College, University of Malawi studying for his Masters in Policy Planning and Leadership.

He is working on his thesis titled, ***“Exploring the Impact of Community Based Reading Camps on Repetition in Primary Schools”***.

This is meant to be a request to your institution or organization to assist our student in his endeavor to collect data.

Thank you

E.T KAMCHEDZERA, PhD

POSTGRADUATE COORDINATOR - EDUCATION FOUNDATIONS DEPARTMENT

