

Strategies Employed by School Leadership in Implementing Inclusive School Management: A study of selected primary schools in Lilongwe rural west in Malawi

By

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Leadership and Management

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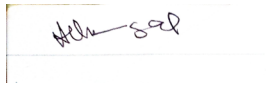
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Declaration

I, Harold Jairus Chawinga, hereby declare that the organization and writing of this thesis is my own original work and it has been carried out at Mzuzu University under the supervision of Associate Professor Simeon M. Gwayi. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other university. All the sources that I have used or quoted have been acknowledged by complete references.

Signature



Date: 04/08/2023

Signature



Date: 04/08/2023

Ass. Prof. Simeon M. Gwayi

Supervisor

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Dedication

This work has been dedicated to my beloved children Chimwemwe Jr, Atusaghe and Prince for their patience when I was away from home during my study.

Abstract

This case study was conducted to explore strategies employed by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management in two primary schools in Njewa Zone in Lilongwe Rural West District. The study was guided by three research objectives: To assess if school leaders are equipped with knowledge and skills in implementing inclusive school management; to examine the roles and practices of inclusive school management stakeholders in the implementation of inclusive education in the selected primary schools, and to analyze appropriate strategies used by the school leadership in implementing inclusive school management in the selected primary schools under study.

This study was informed by the systems theory as it advocates for the holistic view of the system components for the system to achieve its goal. This study followed an interpretivist paradigm and it involved twelve participants who were purposively sampled. The participants included: two head teachers, two school management committee chairpersons, two parents and teachers association chairpersons, two Mother Group chairpersons, and four learners. Data was collected using document analysis and semi structured interviews. Data from interviews was transcribed and analysed by coding; then identifying categories which led to generating emergent themes. Data from Document analysis was analysed by carefully reading through the school documents and identifying key information needed for the study. Data from document analysis served the purpose of triangulation as it supplemented data from interviews.

Findings of the study revealed that strategies used by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management include: team working, positive school culture, effective meetings, advocacy, collaboration, creating a shared vision and capacity building. In addition, the findings revealed the

responsibilities of ISM stakeholders in inclusive education which included the roles of the Head teachers, roles of School Management Committee Chairperson, roles of Mother Group Chairperson, roles of Parent-Teacher Association Chairperson. As well as the understanding of ISM stakeholders on the meaning inclusive education and the purpose to children with and those without special educational needs.

. The study recommends that the policy holder, the Ministry of Education, should carry out adequate orientation of school stakeholders on the best practices for implementing inclusive school management. Manual handbooks on inclusive school management for school stakeholders could bring positive impact in the long run to improve the quality of education for the marginalized children in primary schools.

Operational definitions of terms and abbreviations

Strategy: An action that managers take to attain one or more of the organization's goals.

School Leadership: The process of enlisting and guiding the talents and energies of teachers, pupils, and parents toward achieving common educational goals.

Inclusive Education: Education system which constantly works on increasing participation and removing exclusion from all aspects of schooling, in a way which makes a student feel no different from any other student and which ensures achievement (Bailey, 1998).

Inclusive School Management: The involvement of all education stakeholders such as Parents and Teachers Association, Mother Groups, learners etc. in running the school affairs (MOEST, 2016). Inclusive Education Source Book for pre-service teacher educators and practicing teachers.

Leadership: A capacity to lead, the act or instance of leading.

Management: The conducting or supervising of something; the act of managing.

ISM: Inclusive school management

NSIE: National Strategy on Inclusive Education

PTA: Parents and Teachers Association

DEM: District Education Manager

MG: Mother Group

Table of Contents

Contents

Declaration..... i

Acknowledgements..... ii

Dedication..... iii

Abstract..... iv

Operational definitions of terms and abbreviations vi

Table of Contents..... vii

Chapter 1: Introduction 1

1.2 The Problem Statement..... 6

1.3 Purpose of the Study 8

1.4 General Research Objective 8

1.5 Research Objectives..... 8

1.6 Significance of the study..... 9

1.7 Theoretical Framework..... 9

1.8 Educational Implication of the system theory in inclusive education..... 12

Chapter 2: Literature Review 14

2.1 Inclusive education 14

2.2 Roles of school leader 16

2.3 Inclusive School Management 19

2.3.1 Class management..... 21

2.3.1.1	Continuous Professional Development that Reflect Inclusive Education.....	22
2.3.1.1.2	Involving Learners in Decision Making.....	23
2.3.1.1.3	Infrastructure	24
2.4	Summary	26
Chapter 3: Methodology		27
3.2	Research Approach	27
3.3	Research Design.....	28
3.4	Sample Size.....	31
3.5	Sampling Techniques	31
3.6	Data Collection Instruments	32
3.6.1	Semi-Structured Interviews.....	32
3.6.2	Document analysis	34
3.7	Trustworthiness of the study.....	36
3.7.1	Credibility.....	36
3.7.2	Transferability	37
3.7.3	Dependability	37
3.7.4	Confirmability	38
3.8	Dissemination of Results	38
3.9	Ethical Considerations	38
3.9.1	Informed Consent.....	39

3.9.2	Voluntary Participation	39
3.9.3	Anonymity.....	41
3.9.4	Privacy and Confidentiality.....	41
3.9.5	Protection from Harm.....	41
3.10	Data Analysis	42
3.11	Chapter Summary.....	45
Chapter 4: Findings.....		46
4.1	Introduction.....	46
4.2	Thematic Analysis	48
4.3	Themes and Categories	53
4.3.1	Knowledge and skills in Inclusive School Management.....	53
4.3.1.1	Decision Making	53
4.3.1.2	Effective Communication	55
4.3.1.3	Managing Meetings	57
4.3.1.4	Leading by Example	59
4.3.1.5	Managing Conflicts.....	60
4.3.1.6	Ability to Motivate Others	62
4.3.1.7	Providing Direction.....	64
4.3.1.8	Coordination	65
4.3.2	Responsibilities of inclusive School Management Stakeholders in inclusive Education	67

4.3.2.1 Responsibilities of Head teachers	67
4.3.2.2 Responsibilities of the school management committee chairperson.....	70
4.3.2.3 Responsibilities for Mother Group Chairperson.....	71
4.3.2.4 Responsibilities for the Parent – Teacher Association.....	73
4.3.2.5 Responsibilities of Learners in Promoting Inclusive Education.....	74
4.3.3 The concept of Inclusive Education.....	76
4.3.4 Creating Enabling Environment for Implementing Inclusive School Management.....	79
4.3.4.1 Team Working	80
4.3.4.2 Creating a Positive School Culture	82
4.3.4.3 Effective Meetings	83
4.3.4.4 Open Door Policy	85
4.3.4.5 Advocacy	87
4.3.5 Promoting Partnership	89
4.3.5.1 Collaboration.....	90
4.3.5.2 Trust	91
4.3.5.3 Creation of a Shared Vision.....	92
4.3.6 Capacity Building	94
4.3.6.1 Training and Support	94
4.3.6.2 Orientation	96
4.3.7 Document Review.....	97

4.4 Summary to the chapter	98
Chapter 5: Discussion of the findings	99
5.1 Introduction.....	99
5.2 Knowledge and skills in inclusive school management.....	99
5.3 Promoting Inclusive Education.....	102
5.4 Enabling Environment for School Leadership to Implement Inclusive School Management	106
5.5 Promoting Partnership	108
5.5.1 Collaboration.....	109
5.5.2 Creating a Shared vision	109
5.6 Capacity Building of School leadership.....	110
5.6.1 Orientation	110
5.6.2 Training.....	111
Chapter 6: Summary Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations	113
6.1 Introduction.....	113
6.2 Summary of the Key Findings	114
6.3 Conclusion	115
6.4 Recommendations.....	118
6.5 Contribution of the study to theory and practice.....	119
6.6 Limitations of the Study.....	120
6.7 Areas for further research	120

REFERENCES	121
List of Tables.....	130
Appendix A: Interview guide for the Head teachersIntroduction	131
___Appendix B: Interview Guide for School Management Committee Chairperson	132
___Appendix C: Interview Guide for Mother Group Chairperson.....	133
___Appendix D: Interview Guide for Learners	134
___Appendix E: Interview Guide for the Parents and Teachers Associationchairperson.....	135
___Appendix F: MZUZU UNIVERSITY	136
___Appendix G: Request to Conduct Research.....	137
___Appendix H: A Consent Letter	138
___Appendix I: MZUNIREC Approval Letter	139

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Inclusive education is defined as an education system which constantly works on increasing participation and removing exclusion from all aspects of schooling, in a way which makes a student feel no different from any other student and which ensures achievement (Bailey, 1998). It is a human right issue and its principles are non discrimination, participation and celebration of diversity (Daniels & Garner, 1999). It assumes that living and learning together benefits everyone equitably. Inclusive education advocates that all children should have access to an appropriate education that affords them the opportunity to achieve their potential and safeguards their interests. It also caters for all children, including those with different types of disabilities, marginalized girls, orphans, and other vulnerable groups. According to UNICEF (2017), an education system is inclusive if it includes all students, and welcomes and supports them. No one should be excluded. Every child has a right to inclusive education, including children with disabilities.

Global report in Education define inclusive education as an “Education process which provides all learners with dynamic active participation and enjoyable learning” (Global Report, 2009, p.96). Inclusive education emphasizes support for all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that a full range of learning needs can be met. It denotes that all children irrespective of their strengths and weaknesses will be part of the mainstream education. UNICEF (2007) defined inclusive education as a process of addressing the diverse needs of all learners by reducing barriers to, and within the learning environment. It means attending the age appropriate class of the child’s local school, with individual tailored support. The aim of the inclusive education is to ensure that

all children have access to an appropriate, relevant, affordable and effective education within their community.

The importance of inclusive education is defined in its positive outcomes for all, children who are both with and without disabilities. For example, The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education has provided evidence that inclusive education increases social and academic opportunities for both children with and without disabilities (EASNE, 2018). It ensures joint as well as participatory learning by all population groups within an According to the committee on the rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2016), inclusive education means: A fundamental right to education; a principle that values students' wellbeing, dignity, autonomy, and contribution to society; and lastly, a continuing process to eliminate barriers to education and promote reform in the culture, policy, and practice in schools to include students.

Malawi is a signatory of several local and international conventions and agreements that advocate for the provision of educational opportunities for the learners with Special Educational Needs. Some of these international conventions include: the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2007) which has been ratified by many countries in the world and Malawi ratified it in 2009 (Article 24). It stipulates that all state parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. Governments obliged themselves to an inclusive education system. In addition is the United Nations on the Rights of the Child (1991), article 28, in which the right to education for all children is expressed.

The Dakar Framework for Education for All (2000), in which the international community pledged to ensure education as a right for all people, irrespective of individual differences. Subsequently, in 1994, inclusive education was put forward as a concept at Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education in Spain (UNESCO, 1994). It holds that all children and young people

have a right to attend schools in their local neighborhoods. Furthermore, the United Nations Sustainable Goal number four that commits all governments to implement an inclusive, equitable and quality education and lifelong learning for all (United Nations, 2017).

Sub Saharan countries, including members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) of which Malawi is a member has a document (The Secretariat of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2012), which emphasizes the goal of quality education for all lies in the implementation and sustainability of inclusive education.

The local instruments that helped Malawi to promote and advocate for inclusive and equitable quality education for sustainable development include: the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP, 2008 – 2017), which addresses the issue of both equality and access to education. NESP commits the Government of Malawi to addressing most of the challenges relating to education, including those related to learners with Special educational Needs. The constitution of the Republic of Malawi (1995) provides the right to education for all citizens, Chapter IV, Section 20 prohibits discrimination of any form. In addition, it's the Disability Act (2012) which states that “Government shall recognize the rights of persons with disabilities to education on the basis of equal opportunity and ensure an inclusive education system and lifelong learning.

Furthermore, the Malawi Education Act (2013) advocates the education for all people in Malawi irrespective of any discrimination characteristics such as race, disability, ethnicity or gender. It strives for accessibility, equality, relevant and inclusive education. Additionally, The Implementation Guidelines for the Policy on Special Needs Education (2009) provides a framework for supporting the needs of a diversity of learners’ needs which recognizes education as a basic human right and focuses on eight priority areas which are early identification, assessment and intervention, advocacy, care and support, management and planning and financing, access,

quality, equity and relevance. In addition, the Malawi National Education Standards (2015) posits that all schools should have the following minimum standards to promote inclusive education: comprehensive records of learners' admission (including birth dates, attendance and punctuality), high priority setting on regular attendance and follow ups on un authorized absenteeism and dropouts, fair treatment of all learners with regard to gender, family circumstances, disability and learning needs, and necessary steps taken to make its accommodations and facilities accessible to all learners. Lastly, it's the Malawi National Education Policy (2016) which emphasizes that the Government of Malawi recognizes that education is the backbone for social economic development, economic growth and major source of economic empowerment of all people.

The legal frameworks and policies that have been adopted by different nations including Malawi to implement inclusive education effectively, it requires effective governance capacity for institutions. When such policy directions are well understood and spearheaded by effective institutional leadership and management nations can realize the intended benefits. Leadership is defined as a process of providing direction and applying influence (Lumby & Coleman, 2016). It involves the commitment of the school leader, the staff, parents and community. It also involves managing people's emotions, thoughts and actions decisively in order to influence others towards a preferred direction (Diamond and Spillane, 2016). School leadership is central to the implementation of inclusive education. Inclusive school leaders are described as change agents whose beliefs and advocacy can inspire stakeholders of the school to adopt inclusive practices (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010; De Matthews et al., 2020).

The most critical factor of the school leaders is to develop inclusive education at school level; they consistent with inclusive education. School leaders make sure that inclusive education must be

embedded in all aspects of school life and valued and upheld by staff, students' families and the school community members (Mc Arthur, 2012). One of the roles of school leadership is creating a climate of love and belonging by working with all stakeholders at the school to assume competence and to value all students, building community in each classroom, adopting a school wide community approach and enhancing the sense of belonging of all students, staff and families (Causton and Theoharis, 2015). In this study the term school leadership is used to refer to all in key leadership roles in schools and learning communities, for example head teachers, school directors as well as leadership taking place in teams such as school management committee, etcetera.

An important focus of school leadership within the context of inclusive education is the idea or concept of Inclusive school management (ISM). Inclusive school management refers to the involvement of all education stakeholders such as Parents and Teachers Association (PTA), School Management Committee (SMC), Mother groups, Religious Leaders, Community Based Organizations (CBO), learners and other relevant community members (MoEST, 2016). It is one of the key elements in achieving inclusive education in schools. The role of the head teacher of an inclusive school is to work with and lead the inclusive education team in order to increase access and engagement for a diverse group of learners through identification and assessment of learning needs, and removal of barriers that might otherwise exclude learners.

Finally, it is very important that school leadership should use proper strategies in implementing inclusive school management in order to have a successful and active support of all the school stakeholders at the school (MoEST, 2016). Therefore, investigating the strategies employed by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management will be very important on this study.

1.2 The Problem Statement

The adoption of inclusive school management by school leadership in schools is believed to influence achievement of learning outcomes by students. This contributes to internal efficiencies (MoEST, 2016). However, evidence suggests low internal efficiencies in schools such as low achievements of students in general (Table 1a) and especially for the disadvantaged children (Table 1b). Learners are subjected to exclusion within the inclusive education system (MoEST, 2016). If the situation remain unchecked, learners in the study site, Njewa zone, Lilongwe Rural West, are going to remain disadvantaged and excluded from school and unable to meet their learning needs as well as their educational goals.

Despite the Ministry of Education orienting school leadership in inclusive school management to improve the implementation of inclusive education, there is a dearth of empirical evidence on whether or not school leaders are practically utilizing the strategies for implementing inclusive school management in schools. Hence the need to explore strategies school leadership employ to implement inclusive school management to embrace inclusive education at primary school level and promote education for all.

Table 1a: Njewa Zone Standard 8 National Examinations Results for all students

Year	Number Entered	Number Passed	% Passed	% Failure
2019	738	544	74	26
2020	731	582	80	20
2021	814	626	77	23

Source: Lilongwe Rural West DEM

Table 1b: Njewa Zone Learners with Special Educational Needs: Standard 8 National Examinations Results

Year	Number Entered	Number Passed	% Passed	% Failure
2019	52	10	19	87
2020	84	22	26	74
2021	110	29	35	65

Source: Lilongwe Rural DEM

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the strategies employed by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management in the selected primary schools in Lilongwe rural west. The Malawi Government through the Ministry of Education developed the National Strategy on Inclusive Education (MoEST,2016), in order to promote learners with diverse needs in Malawi have equitable access to quality education in inclusive settings at all levels. The strategy emphasizes on the need for networking and collaboration of players, and community participation. Bush (2007) observes that school leadership quality play an integral part in the school and the outcomes achieved by the students.

1.4 General Research Objective

The overall guiding research objective of this study was, to explore strategies that school leadership employ in implementing inclusive school management practices in the selected primary schools in LilongweRural West?

1.5 Research Objectives

- 1.5.1 To assess if school leadership are equipped with the knowledge and skills in implementingthe inclusive school management at the selected schools.
- 1.5.2 To examine the roles and practices of inclusive school management stakeholders in theimplementation of inclusive education at the selected schools.
- 1.5.3 To analyse appropriate strategies used by school leadership in implementing inclusive schoolmanagement at the selected schools.

1.6 Significance of the study

The findings of this study could bring to light how school leadership can implement inclusive school management and as a collaboration help fully embrace inclusive education at school level and determine to create a learning environment that will promote academic success for all students including those with disabilities.

The findings provide useful strategies employed by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management how they are ideal in the quest of promoting inclusive education in Malawi.

The lesson drawn would broaden the understanding of inclusive education practices in primary schools and inform educators the benefits of school leadership in managing inclusive education.

The knowledge which will be gathered from the study would assist to equip school leadership with appropriate strategies for implementing inclusive school management. This would enable communities to effectively participate in decision making issues as regards to inclusive education through school committees such as the Parents Teachers Association and Mother Groups. The study would make a contribution of knowledge in the field of inclusive education.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

The study was informed by the systems theory according to Bertalanffy (1939). Within the System theory, organizations are viewed as systems. A school system as an organization is an open system and its success depends on the interaction between the school and other stakeholders such as parents and community members.

This theory advocates studying an organization as a whole, taking into consideration the interrelationships among its parts and its relationship with the environment. The study engages the school leadership, teachers, parents, religious leaders, mother groups, community based organizations, and community members.

The school leadership and the community members are some of the important parts of the school system. They function as a unit for a specific goal as interrelated elements. The success of the school depends on how well the school leadership and the community members relate. Buchanan and Huezyski (2004) define a system as something that functions by virtue of interdependence of its component parts.

The schools under study will be examined as systems; to see how they interact with the environment and assess what kinds of systems exist in the schools and how each component of the system understands how the school leadership can implement inclusive school management taking into account the different social experiences of these components.

The concept of system theory was introduced by Bertalanffy in 1939. He was a biologist and his theory was used to explain the interrelationship which exists between different organizations. He used system to outline principles which were common to system in general. He integrated the ideas of general systems theory using biological systems as a means to understand the world at large (Irby, 2013). Different writers have used the different terms and ideas related to system theory. For example, in educational context, Griffiths (1964), Senge (1990) and Morgan (1997) have incorporated the system concepts into theoretical constructs and their application to the leadership (ibid). In any system there are things which are interrelated with one another that make the whole system more than just the sum of its element.

Senge (2000, p. 73) argues that “in organization, system consists of people, structure and processes that work together to make an organization healthy or unhealthy”. School as an organization which consist of teachers and other stakeholders if they work together they will achieve the goal in implementation of inclusive education in primary schools. This can be related to education

management as a system which consists of different parts which are related and interdependent to other systems. Therefore, generally system theory sees human behaviour as the outcome of shared interactions of persons who are within the same social systems. In addition to that it has been realised that establishing routine and consistently following them built important relational trust among the leader and teachers (Sterrett, 2011).

The major issue in system theory is communication. Communication may be defined as the process of sending and receiving information from one person to another, this can be done either verbally or nonverbal. Communication to be effective the message should be understood by both sides. Lunenburg (2010) identified important element of the communication process which are: Sender, medium, message, noise, receiver and feedback. Sender is a person who initiates the message. Receiver is an individual to whom a message is directed. Message is the spoken and or written content that need to be encoded by the sender and interpreted by the receiver. Medium is the channel by which the message is delivered and received. Feedback is the response from the receiver indicating whether a message has been received in its intended form.

Communication is very significant in any organization for the information to be able to reach the intended person. School as an organization it needs to have a good form of communication in its system. This will help the school to proper implement inclusive school management. According to Hammond (1994) says, it is important to establish effective two-way communication as a necessary trait for success at all levels of education, from school board to superintendent to principal, administrator and teacher. This ensures a constant flow of quality information from the administration to the school board.

1.8 Educational Implication of the system theory in inclusive education

In educational context, system theory plays a great role in making the whole system function in an interdependent way. This means everyone who belongs to the system has to play a certain role. Ainscow and Sandil (2010) stresses the importance of leaders gathering, generating and interpreting information within a school in order to create an inquisitive attitude in implementing inclusive education. The emphasis is being put in working together as an organization and not as a single person. Teachers should be clear about what is to be taught and when it is to be taught and the administrator should consistently ensure that the goals made are being met (Sterrett, 2011). Within the field of education system theory plays a major role in understanding how school as a social systems function. Here are some of the assumptions as cited by (Irby, 2013).

- School as a social system is goal oriented and may have a multiplicity of goals but the central one is preparation for its students for adult roles.
- Social systems are people, and these individuals act in roles as school leaders, students, teachers, parents, administrators and others.
- Social system is normative with individual role expectations for the role structure and prescribed behaviour.
- Sanctions exist in a social system where norms are being enforced with rewards and punishments. Informal sanctions also exist, such as ostracism.
- Schools are generally open systems that operate in an environment that include exchanges. They are affected by values of the community, by politics and outside forces.

From these assumptions we can say that the central goal of school leadership in schools is to implement inclusive education and make sure all learners receive equal and quality education. All

the stakeholders in the system should work together in the implementation of inclusive school management. For example most of the schools see the head teacher and teachers as the main implementer of inclusive education as a result of ineffective support most of the burden is left to head teachers. This shortcoming with the education system makes implementation of inclusive education a challenge. A review of this systems on the principles espoused in system theory will ensure that the education sector works better.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter looks at different literature reviews on inclusive education as an approach to education for all. Education for all is a concept which means creating the environment in schools where all learners are welcome regardless of their physical and mental abilities. The literature is presented under the following topics: inclusive education; roles of school leaders; inclusive school management and classroom management, continuous professional development and infrastructure.

2.1 Inclusive education

Slee and Allan (2005) hold that inclusive education is a phenomenon that is gaining worldwide focus and attention and has been described as a social movement against exclusion in education. Furthermore, UNESCO (2005) states that inclusive education focuses on schools and their systems, and in particular the restructuring of the mainstream schools so that they are better able to respond to the diversity of all students. Similarly, Mittler (2000) emphasizes that inclusive education is concerned with overcoming the barriers to participation and learning that may be expected by students, particularly students who have historically been marginalized or excluded from school. In addition, Sergiovanni (2009) believes that school leader's attitude, influences how we organize school to accommodate diverse needs and acknowledge that all children, irrespective of their race, socioeconomic status, gender or disability, deserve quality education. The basic principle of inclusive education is that all children belong to their local school and all children are able to meaningfully participate and learn at their local schools.

UNESCO (2009) elaborates on how an inclusive education system should be by stating that: An inclusive education system can only be formed if regular schools become more inclusive. This is to say that if they improve at educating all children in their communities. Further, the conference proclaimed that: "regular schools with an inclusive direction are the most active means of fighting

discriminatory attitudes, building welcoming societies, establishing an inclusive society and attaining education for all; moreover they provide effective education to many children and improve competence and ultimately the cost effectiveness of the whole education system. Mmbanga (2002) concurs that inclusive education needs to be part of the whole system equal opportunity policy; in this case children with learning difficulties, girls' and boys' learning needs would be incorporated in the curriculum and the school learning environment. There is need for government support in school leaders for the effective implementation of the inclusive school management in primary to promote inclusive education.

Weber and Ruch (2012) point out that a good school is good to all students and labours for the success of all learners. Agarwal and Chakravarti (2014) support Weber and Ruch by stating that this calls for a need to modify school strategies and the environment to meet learners' diversity. Equally, UNESCO (2002) emphasizes that to implement principles of equality and respect for human rights, all-inclusive schools must place the needs of the students at the centre in their policies and practices. Indeed, to focus on education for all, we need to adhere to the learning needs of all the students regardless of their diverse needs as, article, 26, 1948, Universal Declaration of Human Rights points out that everyone has the right to education and that education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and the strengthening for respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

EASNIE (2018) emphasizes that the importance of inclusive education is that it increases social and academic opportunities for both children with and those without disabilities. Carrington, et al., (2017) state that successful implementation of inclusive education occurs at school and classroom level and in addition, there are three areas of implementation on which inclusive education is focused and these areas are school structure, teachers and school leadership. Wills (1994) agrees

that students without disabilities benefit from inclusion because they learn greater empathy and tolerance for differences in others. Landsberg et al., (2011:10) suggest that school, community and other stakeholders within the education system cannot be separated from challenges that address social issues and barriers to learning, because they are part and parcel of the system. Furthermore, for effective inclusive implementation, there should be collaboration and support and for inclusive practices to occur there should be a change in the school system with structures which will give support to the teachers and the learners.

2.2 Roles of school leader

Leadership has been interpreted in different ways and by different authors. Pratt (2017) defines leadership as the ability of an individual or a group of individuals to influence and guide followers or other members of an organization. While, Kruse (2013) states that leadership is a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal. For the purpose of this study the term school leader refers to all those in leadership roles in schools and learning communities. The leaders may also be referred to as head teachers, school directors or principals as well as the leadership taking place in teams (Oskarsdottir, 2020). It is evident from the definitions cited that leadership is a process of influence, initiated by the leader towards the followers in order to achieve the vision.

Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) posit that school leaders play a critical role in improving learning through four sets of leadership practices. First, they are expected to: set direction by building vision, foster acceptance of goals, create high performance of expectations, and communicate direction. Secondly, they should develop staff, by: providing individualized support and consideration, offering intellectual stimulation, modelling appropriate rules and practices. Thirdly, school leaders must always seek to: refine and align their organizations when they build a

collaborative culture, build productive relationships with families and connect the school to the wider community. Finally, they are expected to improve instructional program through practices that influence the nature and quality of instruction in the classroom. Rice (2014) support the views by stating that to be successful, school leaders are expected to distribute leadership effectively for sustainable educational change and improvement that translate into improved learning outcomes. Dufour and Marzano (2011) confirm it by saying that school leaders must advocate a shift in focus to efforts aimed at building the collective capacity of educators.

Studies by Guzman (1997) revealed that the core mandate of every school leader is to diagnose his or her particular school needs and meet these needs by utilizing the resources and talents available. Furthermore, Christiansen, Heggen and Karseth (2004) share that the role of school leader is to maximize the collective talent and efforts of all those involved in the education enterprise to promote and sustain cultures. This means that for the sustainability of inclusive education, transformative leadership should be our focus. The leadership roles can bring successful inclusive education implementation.

Michigan (2013) states that school leaders have a responsibility to cultivate an environment for learning. In addition, school leaders are responsible for creating a shared vision of the school; promoting a positive culture and climate for learning; collaborating with other stakeholders; providing instructional leadership and professional development; determining student placement and monitoring and evaluating educational programs (Cobb, 2015; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Nicolas, 2015). Kugelmass and Ainscow (2004) concluded that leadership in inclusive education is marked by a collaborative nature and that school leaders play a major role in supporting collaboration. The main task of school leaders is the promotion of the best education for students and especially the disadvantaged students (Dyson, 2010; Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004

and Precey, 2011). To achieve this, the school leaders need to develop his or her employees' motivation, skills and working conditions with respect to diverse student body (Amrhein, 2014; Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008; Ingram, 1997). This will benefit the communities, families, teachers and students by ensuring that their children attend school together with their peers within their own communities.

Opiyo (2019) points out that the role of the school leader is becoming critical in promoting the delivery of equitable education by teachers in an inclusive classroom setting. West-Burn and Harris (2015) hold that it is very important to acknowledge that leading a school involves a balance of leadership focused on values, vision and the future, and management activities that are concerned with making things work. In addition, school leaders increasingly share leadership tasks and work with a range of partners in the school and local community and beyond such that school leaders have a potential to play a key role as change managers in wider system reform.

School leadership plays an essential role in establishing, improving, and maintaining high quality education that serves all students well (Bryk et al., 2008). Additionally, it is widely accepted that school leadership is vital to creating and maintaining equitable and excellent schools. Furthermore, school leader's role in inclusive school is to create and maintain inclusive service delivery. This involves a multi-step process involving multiple stakeholders (Causton, Theoharis et al., 2011). They are also considered as key actors responsible for operating and directing all administrative functions for the smooth running of the school.

The roles of the school leaders according to the researcher are: to coordinate the school activities of all education stakeholders within the school and that they are change agents in schools who brings reality to the education system such as the school policies.

The most important roles of the school leaders to me are those given by Leithwood and Jantz (2006) and Michigan (2013) authors. The authors are emphasizing team work and collaboration as the best working environments. They also encourage individuals to participate in leadership functions thereby increasing love and belonging to the school community.

2.3 Inclusive School Management

Management is a very difficult term to give a precise definition of the word. Different authors in management have viewed management from their own angles. Koontz (1988) defines management as the art of getting things done through others and with formally organized groups. While Fayol (1984) regards management as to forecast, to plan, to organize, to command, to coordinate and control activities of others. In a nutshell, management prevail in order to coordinate several tasks so that a goal is achieved.

MoEST (2016) states that inclusive school management is the key element in achieving inclusive education and highlight that involvement of all school stakeholders in running the affairs of the schools in Malawi, guarantees a wider range of input, support and ownership in an effort to provide education for all. In this regard, it further state that it is very important that all school stakeholders should be familiar with inclusive school management principles, practices and indicators. Further, it points out that moving to more inclusive ways of working involves changes in cultures across the education system, most significantly, within schools.

The development of an inclusive school management is essential to provide guidance for the school leaders and teachers in implementing inclusive education (British Council, 2020). Engelbrecht and Green (2006) highlight that the inclusive school management would save the role of monitoring and facilitating inclusive education practices at the school. Some of its tasks could include: facilitating of community involvement in matters of inclusive education; creation of

effective partnerships in all centers of learning, in order to make the school responsive to learner diversity; and accessing community support. The child belongs to the parents and the wider community, therefore involving them plays an important role in the education concerning the child. Cann (2003) states that a team of educators, parents and learners might be represented on this structure of inclusive school management. Its primary functions are to support the learning process by identifying and addressing the barriers to learning and participation, as well as accessing support from community. Dyson and Forlin (2007) confirm that any education system that claims to respect human rights must inevitably be inclusive in principle. Furthermore, to achieve inclusive school management, there must be full inclusion of all stakeholders embedded deeply in the very foundation of the school (MoEST, 2016). Full inclusion brings high quality education to all the students.

Davidoff and Lazarus (1997) elaborate that empowerment of stakeholders is essential because all the role players feel ownership of the school and without empowerment, people feel disconnected, undervalued and ultimately not engaged in their work. In addition, he maintains that the major challenge of all the schools is to build leadership and management capacity through the whole school development. Leadership and management assist all the stakeholders to exercise greater control over change process, thereby enabling them to cope with change.

Chapman and Harris (2007) stipulates that in empowering stakeholders, teachers need to be given leadership responsibilities and encourage them to work together in teams and set targets to meet the set goals. In this regard, Panuel and Riel (2007) maintain that stakeholder involvement helps to build a shared commitment to manage inclusive education at school. Inclusive school management members are the main implementers of the inclusive education at school level, therefore, good leadership and management is required for the successful of its implementation.

In Malawi context, this could mean things like giving advocacy to the community on issues regarding the rights of children with special educational needs and the goodness of enrolling all students at school.

2.3.1 Class management

Class management are actions that teachers take to establish and sustain an environment that fosters student academic achievements as well as their social, emotional, and moral growth (Weinstein, et al., 2021). The purpose is for the students' learning and to succeed.

Miller (2002) highlight that seating arrangement may affect students' learning. Further, he points out that aspects to consider when doing the seating arrangement are instructional goals and the characteristics of students. In such way that mixed group seating arrangement would allow students to have cooperative learning. Circular and cluster seating arrangement would promote discussion and interaction among students (Rosenfield, Lambert, & Black, 1985 as cited in Miller, 2002). Furthermore, UNESCO (2004) points out that; learners have diverse needs and inaccessible environment within and even outside the school may contribute to excluding them from learning institutions. Ogot (2005) supports the views that: "accessible environment helps to keep children with disabilities in schools unlike where schools have inaccessible environment. To alleviate this, the environment should be adapted to suit the needs of diverse students and that the school and the classroom should be well organized.

Inclusive education involves schools and classrooms adapting the ways in which they work to ensure all students are educated together in common contexts, and treated equitably. Similarly, Tomlison, et al., (2003) highlight that today's classroom reflects the diversity of our communities and include a mixture of students, hence the teachers need to search for strategies that address the needs of the learners and implement differentiated instructions. To meet the needs of an individual

learner is of paramount importance in inclusive education system, therefore continuous professional development will add value to this.

Cole, Waldron and Majd (2004) suggests that students with disabilities and those without exceptionalities in inclusive classrooms have a stronger academic performance than those students in a non-inclusive classrooms. The idea is supported by Dumeris, Childs and Jordan (2008) who confirms that inclusive education does not have negative impact on the achievement of students without exceptionalities and that there is even a small positive increase in the scores. Thus the literature says inclusive education fosters tolerance and acceptance of difference and is academically beneficial to students without exceptionalities. There is social interaction which improves collaborative learning and creates structures and achievable goals for all the students.

Wong and Wong (2014) points out that; creating a learning environment for inclusive classrooms that is well managed with clear structures and routines is of the utmost importance for students' success. In addition, a school must be a safe place and protected environment, where a student can come to learn without fear. A well and conducive learning environment enhances students learning and therefore, there is academic achievement.

2.3.1.1 Continuous Professional Development that Reflect Inclusive Education

McLeskey and Waldron (2002) point out that professional development for inclusive practices includes a sequenced set of learning opportunities specifically designed for individual school contexts. MoEST, (2016) state that the aim of professional development is to improve the performance of teachers in the classroom and raise learner achievement. Further, continuous professional development improves knowledge, skills and attitudes centred on the local context and classroom practices. Teachers become equipped with skills and knowledge on strategies to assist them in the teaching of learners with special educational needs.

Many teachers do not feel equipped to meet the needs of students with disabilities (Yell et al., 2004). Therefore, leaders can utilize the continuous professional development as a means to provide needed training for teachers, particularly in instructional and behavior intervention strategies and collaboration skills that address the diverse learning needs of students with disabilities (Duhaney, 1999; Fisher et al., 2000; Idol, 2006; Katsiyamis, Ellenberg, & Acton, 1999). However, McLeskey and Waldron (2002) argue that general education teachers often have to first experience inclusive teaching in order to acknowledge and identify areas where they need professional development. There is a need to reduce negative attitudes against the learners with disabilities among others to the teachers through continuous professional development in schools. In her study “Inclusive education and the Issue of Change” Liasidou (2015) mentions that capacity building amongst school leaders should be a priority in the inclusive education reform agenda if we would like to achieve a real sustainable change in inclusive education. Wit (2007) concurs with the need for professional development in inclusive education but opposes to once off training session, as they are not hands on. Continuous professional development of teachers is very important in order to maintain a high standard of students’ learning.

2.3.1.1.2 Involving Learners in Decision Making

Niegel (2006) emphasizes the involvement of community members as well as student advocacy is shared decision making when it comes to change. Once the schools make the decision to empower learners, they also feel ownership of their school. In a school situation, the acquisition of suitable knowledge, skills and attitudes can be achieved through the participation of prefecture body in all school activities (Mncube, 2009). Similarly, the Convention on the Rights of the Child confirm that students have a right to participate in decision issues that affect them. The involvement of

students in decision making process empowers students with the ability to influence their schools and their participation in their education.

The need to include students in the school's decision making process was highlighted by Alani, Isichei. Oni and Adetoro (2010) further argue that failure to involve students in decision making process in the schools can lead to difficulty in planning and implementation of school goals, which can degenerate into inadequacies in respect of human, material and physical resources.

Kauffman (2007) highlight that the net effect of this involvement is that students end up in much better in the final examinations. Furthermore, MoEST (2016) point out that performing students develop a sense of belonging to the school where they are involved in school life activities such as the decision making process. Students also increase their relationship with teachers and feel supported and respected.

2.3.1.1.3 Infrastructure

Rahman (2008) is of the opinion that providing diverse appropriate classroom infrastructures such as sitting places, built in cupboards facilitate movements in and out of the class and helps eliminate some of the barriers children with special educational needs face in regular schools. In support of this, Cornwell (2010) stresses that in a good and appropriate nurturing environment, participants are able to learn well and enjoy the experience of learning.

Bulcholz and Sheffler (2009) goes on to add that, it is important for teachers to employ the use of wide variety of teaching and learning classroom structures so as to respond to the diverse needs of the learners and satisfy them. In addition, materials such as flip charts, white boards should be positioned such that learners with disabilities such as the blind can visualize and use them even without the help of the teacher. The teaching and learning materials gives long lasting memory to students in a lesson.

UNESCO (2005) noted that there is still inappropriate infrastructure like buildings and toilets to make learning environment friendly for the physically challenged children. Similarly, studies by UNESCO (2004) shows that this can be intervened by building ramps to classrooms and school buildings, construction of adapted latrines, enlargement of classroom windows, painting walls to improve the lighting and leveling the playground to ease mobility.

Mutunda (2012) found out that availability of physical facilities is an important aspect of learning process. Furthermore, that children who are crowded in their seating positions would find it difficult to write, teachers could not move freely in the classrooms and therefore cannot assist needy children nor mark learners' work. For example, the situation in Malawian primary schools, the recommended teacher pupil ratio is 1:60 but according to MoEST (2020) states that the current teacher pupil ration is 1:68 and in some schools a teacher is responsible for over 100 students. In addition, Fajarwali (2017) highlights that school facilities and infrastructure is a contributing factor to the success of education and learning process in schools and that adequate facilities and infrastructure will make the atmosphere of education and learners to be enjoyable.

Nur (2016) points out that facilities and infrastructure play an important role in serving special needs students in inclusive school, because they give accessibility for special needs students. As a result they feel included and enjoy the learning process. Further, Land (2013) emphasizes on inclusive practices that will assist teachers meeting the educational needs of their student with disabilities and this is through structuring class infrastructures to extend to all other children in the classroom. Classroom infrastructures should be structured for free interaction and communication amongst children.

2.4 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview on the strategies employed by school leaders in implementing inclusive school management. It has highlighted that inclusive school management is a tool to promote inclusive education where disadvantaged learners would be included in education system in Malawi. Literature has indicated that school leadership has a role in providing a conducive learning environment for all children with and those without disabilities. The study has attempted to establish strategies that are employed by school leadership in order to implement inclusive school management in Malawi. If the strategies can be used properly in schools both learners with and without disabilities would have high academic performance. It has been confirmed that there is a gap in literature on strategies employed by school leaders in implementing inclusive school management in schools. The study will add scanty literature on inclusive education in Malawi and in the long run act as an eye opener for school leadership to address the exclusion of learners in education system thereby achieving education for all. Therefore, there is a need for independent researchers to study inclusive school management concept and contribute to a body of knowledge, especially from contexts such as Malawi which may be underresearched. The following chapter is about research methodology.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Paradigm

The study used interpretivism paradigm because it pays attention to and value what people say, do and feel, and how they make meaning of the phenomena being researched. Interpretivism foregrounds the meaning that individuals or communities assign to their experiences (Cole, 2006; Weaver and Olson, 2006). Martens (2010, p.7) defines a paradigm as “a way of looking at the world” This resonated in Lynch’s (2003, p.2) statement that “a paradigm can be thought of as lens through which we view the world.” He further states that different lenses entail different assumptions about the nature of the world and the ways in which we should attempt to understand it. Interpretivist paradigm will offer an in depth understanding of how the selected school leaders and other participants perceive and implement inclusive education.

3.2 Research Approach

A research approach is an idea detailed schedule for a study that begins with the wide presumptions that determine the methods of collecting data, analyzing and detailed interpretation of data (Creswell, 2014). The study used the qualitative approach. It was selected rooted on expectations of qualitative research that was used in this research and the nature and type of the research problem. A qualitative study uses non-numerical data like pictures and words (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The study aimed at exploring strategies employed by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management. This qualitative research allowed the researcher to formulate a detailed picture of people’s interactions thus gaining a deep comprehension of social realities and a range of human interactions, perceptions, endeavours and situations (Creswell, 2003). A qualitative data was also used because empirical data was to be collected in the field which was to be used in addressing the research question. Creswell (2014) describes qualitative research as a

way of investigating and comprehending the meanings attached by human beings to social or human problems. Qualitative research is multifaceted and is said to be naturalistic because it is concerned about the natural settings of interactions (Nieuwehuis, 2016).

A qualitative research has the advantage of granting permission to the researcher to collect deep-rooted and firsthand knowledge about the phenomenon they want to study. This approach collected rich data from all the participants to obtain a complete comprehension of the strategies employed by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management in the study areas.

Mc Millan and Schumacher (2010) holds that the purpose of the research approach is to identify a plan that can be used to produce empirical evidence that answers the research question. According to Moleong (2005, p. 6) “qualitative research is a study that intends to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by research informants holistically and by the way of description in the form of words and language”. The objective of this study is to get the description of school leadership in implementing inclusive school management so as to promote inclusive education.

The researcher used the qualitative approach because it gave the researcher the opportunity to be directly be involved with the participants.

3.3 Research Design

Research design may be referred to as the plan of the study that will answer the objectives. Research designs are specific procedures involved in the research process which are data collection, data analysis, report writing (Creswell, 2012). According to Bryman (2012) research designs provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data. The purpose of research design is to help the researcher to organize his or her ideas in a way that the researcher will be in a good flow. A case study design to work with was chosen in the research study.

The case study design was employed to be able to answer the research. Stake (2004) gives the definition of a case study that it is both a person inquiry about the case and the product of that inquiry. Yin (2003, p. 13) argues that, “*Case study is an empirical inquiry that investigate a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident*”.

Case study has a tendency of allowing flexibility of instrument used in data collection and allow reasonable research of the study. Creswell (2007) gives the concept of case study that, it is the qualitative approach in which the researcher explores a case or cases overtime, through detailed, in depth data collection. For example the source of information can be observation, interviews, audio visual material and documents reports. In this study, interview and document analysis were used. Choosing case study in this research design helped me to investigate deeply the strategies employed by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management in the study areas. Case study is important because sufficient data was collected by using the design as the focus was on the small population.

There are several procedures one has to undergo when conducting a case study in qualitative research. Creswell (2007) has explained some of the procedures which are; firstly, researchers should determine if a case approach is appropriate to the research problem. Secondly, is that researchers need to identify their case or cases. Thirdly, data collection in case study research is typically extensive, drawing on various sources of information such as interviews, document analysis and audio visual materials. The next procedures is that the type of analysis of the information can be a holistic analysis of the entire case or an embedded analysis of the specific aspect of the case.

Gall et al (2003) gives some advantages and disadvantages of the case study design in a qualitative research. To start with advantages; case study research through plenty description can bring a case to life. Another one is that readers of case study report may have a better basis for developing theories designing educational interventions or taking some other action. A good case study report reveal the researchers perspective and enable the readers to determine whether the investigator has the perspective on the phenomenon as they do. Also a case study is emergent quality in a sense that researchers can change the case study on which the study focuses, adopt new data collection methods and frame new research questions. The disadvantages of the case study are; it is challenging to generate the findings to other situation. Also ethical issues may rise if it shows difficulties in the report to cover the character of the society or those who were studied. Furthermore, case study are highly labour intensive and require highly developed language skills in order to identify constructs, themes, and pattern in verbal data and to write a report that brings the case alive for the reader.

As identified by Stake (2004) intensive case study is carried out if one wants a good understanding of a particular case. Furthermore, many case researchers rely on subjective data such as the testimony of participants and judgement of witnesses, but to make empirical data more objective there should be the use of replicative, falsification and triangulation methods. This is also emphasized by Bazeley (2013) that intrinsic case study is more significant to sufficiently represent the case than to draw generalization. That is why in this research, interviews and document review were used as insisted in case designs that use more than two ways of data collection might help a case study researcher to avoid subjective data.

3.4 Sample Size

The sample size of this study was 12 people in total from the selected government primary schools in Lilongwe rural west. Patton, (1990) defines sampling as a process utilized to study a small population' response to an interpretation which can then be applicable to the population that is larger in size. Collins, (1998) concurs that in order to learn about the entire population, it is preferred to look at a small part of it, sample.

The sample size comprised of 2 Head teachers, 4 learners, 2 mother group chairpersons, 2 school management committee chairpersons, 2 Parents and teachers Association chairperson. A sample of two primary schools will be chosen in Lilongwe rural west.

Table 3.1 Sex of participants

Sex	Number of Participants
Female	04
Male	08
Total	12

3.5 Sampling Techniques

Sampling is the procedure that is used to select a sample from a population (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Leedy and Omrod (2005) state that the selection of particular entities which qualitative researchers make when compiling their sample, the process of selecting them, is called sampling.

Purposeful sampling was used to select participants. Purposeful sampling is the selection of information rich cases for an in depth study when one wants to understand something about those cases without needing or desiring to generalize to all cases (Mc Millan & Schumacher, 2006).

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

The instruments for the collection of data in this study were semi-Structured interviews and document analysis.

3.6.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Creswell (2014) defines an interview as asking questions from the research and getting answers from participants in a study. Its explicit aim is to gather information about the lived world of that

individual, with specific reference to the phenomena being studied. The semi-structured interviews was used to collect data from all the participants. Van Dalen (1979) elaborates that semi- structured interviews are conducted in private setting with one person at a time so that the subject feels free to express him/herself fully and truthfully. Mc Millan and Schumacher (2010) further posit that in-depth interviews provide meanings of how individuals conceive a particular phenomenon in their world and how they make sense of the events of their lives. The research objectives formulated for this study intended to explore strategies employed by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management: hence, interviews formed the best technique to elicit information on the above phenomenon. Alshenqeeti (2014) highlights the four types of interviews that scholars predominantly use in social sciences. They are structured interviews, unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews.

The semi-structured interview type was selected to elicit data for my study, due to its nature of one-to-one interview with the participants. The semi-structure interviews had open ended questions in order to allow for flexibility, and enable the researcher to formulate follow up questions based on the responses but in line with the study objectives. Individual interviews were conducted in a negotiated venue to enable participants to be free to express their views on the topic being studied. The interview guide was formulated taking into account consideration the theoretical model and the literature pertaining to the research objectives (Mothiral, 2010). It was specifically developed to gain prompt discussion on the strategies employed by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management. The interview guide was primarily used during the interviews, however if and when need arose, the questions were either paraphrased or clarified for the participants, upon their request or by observation that the participant appeared not too confident with the way the question was asked.

At the beginning of the interview, demographic data were elicited from the participant with respect to the number of years in management position and a brief overview of the participant and his/her school leadership career. Open ended questions were asked throughout the interviews to allow the interviewers to express themselves descriptively, in narrative or descriptive forms as opposed to one word responses. The interviews were audio-recorded with written consent from participants. This was done to alleviate the omission of important details, whilst copiously attempting to copy every word spoken by the participant. It also assisted in reliability checks to ensure that the information collected was correct (Mc Millan & Schumacher, 2010).

3.6.2 Document analysis

Document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around the assessment topic (Bowen, 2009). The relevant school documents such as circulars and minutes of meetings, mission and vision statement were examined to determine whether the effective school leadership is implementing inclusive school management and involve all the school stakeholders in school activities. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) define document analysis as a strategy that has no bearing between the interviewer and the interviewee. They identify three forms of artefacts: personal documents e.g. diaries and personal letters; official documents e.g. memos, minutes and policies and objects e.g. logos, trophies and posters. Bowen (2017) succinctly posits that document analysis occurs in a systematic manner. Document analysis necessitates that the data from the documents be examined, in order to generate meaning and to develop understanding and knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). According to Bowen (2017) documents contain recorded words without the intervention of a researcher. Documents, according to Bowen (2017) serve five specific functions. Firstly, documents provide data pertaining to background information and historical insight which are within the context of the research study.

Secondly, certain information in documents requires additional questions to be asked or observation of particular situations. Thirdly, documents may provide supplementary research data, which may be valuable in the acquisition of further knowledge of the study being researched. Fourthly, documents provide an avenue to track change and development. Fifthly, documents can be used to verify findings or authenticate evidence from other sources.

The study incorporated document analysis of the stakeholders' minutes of meetings, as well as the school minutes of meetings. Circulars from the Ministry of education, Mission and vision statements were also used in the document analysis process. Document analysis was chosen as the other form of data generation, in combination with the semi-structured interviews as a means of triangulation. This would collaborate the sources of evidence through different sources of data and methods (Bowen, 2017). It would also reduce the potential biases that may exist.

A Study by Bowen (2017), identifies the following advantages of using the document analysis: it is an efficient method and also less time consuming. In addition, the availability of documents in the public domain is easily accessible. It is also a cost-effective method, as data are already available in the documents and is ready to be evaluated. Document analyses are non-reactive and stable. Yin (1994) posits that the exactness and the broad coverage of document analysis are beneficial for research studies. Contrarily, documents may have insufficient detail, may be irretrievable and may suggest biased selectively.

For this study, the documents used to obtain data were the minutes of meetings, circulars from the ministry of education, mission and vision statements of the schools which were requested. Once, the documents were received, the contents were skimmed, and thereafter, they were read thoroughly for understanding and interpretation (Bowen, 2017). After rereading the contents, they were focused on emerging themes or patterns, through the use of codes. In as much as the

documents contained information, it was important to ensure that the information in the documents pertained to the area under study, in order for it to be utilized successfully. This involved viewing the details in critical manner to ascertain the relevance of the data.

The school stakeholders' minutes contained more pertinent information to my study because it incorporated school management committee members' inputs which were beneficial to my study.

The data obtained from document analysis were organized into themes and categories, similar to what occurs with the transcripts of interviews through analysis of the content in the documents (Labuschagne, 2003).

3.7 Trustworthiness of the study

Trustworthiness refers to a qualitative research that is plausible, credible, trustworthy, and defensible (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Several issues relating to trustworthiness were considered for this study.

3.7.1 Credibility

Credibility is the level to which the results of the research mimic real life and are seen to be correct, reasonably and trustworthy (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2010). It shows how confident the qualitative researcher is in the truth of the research findings. To establish credibility, qualitative researchers use triangulation, member checking and peer review. Tracy (2013, p.226) uses the term "triangulation" and described it as a process of gathering multiple types of data seen through multiple lenses as a way of achieving credibility. In this study, triangulation was accomplished by asking the same research interview questions to different study participants as well as using multiple sources of gathering data such as interviews and document analysis (Pitney, 2004).

Member check means providing participants with the data or interpretation of the results in order to verify the accuracy based on their experiences whereas peer review is using experienced

colleagues or panel of experts to re-analyse some of the data as a way of ensuring that the researcher analysed the data correctly (Gunawan, 2015).

3.7.2 Transferability

Transferability is the state in which the research results can be used in a different context (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). This is how the qualitative researcher demonstrates that the research findings are applicable to other contexts. The notion of transferability in a qualitative research assumes that when similar things are done in an apparently similar context, a finding is likely to be transferable to other situations. Given (2008) argues that only consumers of research can determine whether a finding is likely to be transferable to their situations. There was hope that the encounter and views of the school leaders of the two chosen schools would represent the experiences and views of the others regarding inclusive education. In this instance, it is up to the users of this research findings to determine the generalizability of the findings to other education institutions in Malawi.

3.7.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the notion of repeating the study by other researchers and that the findings would be consistent (Polit & Beck, 2011). In other words, if a person wanted to replicate the study, they should have enough information from the research report and obtain similar findings as your study did. A qualitative researcher can use inquiry audit in order to establish dependability, which requires an outside person to review and examine the research process and data analysis in order to ensure that the findings are consistent and could be repeated. In the case of this research study, my supervisor, who is a qualified researcher kept on checking the research processes and provided feedback time and again to ensure the research findings were dependable. Participants were also allowed to verify the collected information in an endeavour to ascertain if the data collection techniques were appropriate or not in order to strengthen the study as suggested by Maree (2013).

3.7.4 Confirmability

Marie (2016) described confirmability as the level in which the results resemble the participants' responses and not driven by interests, bias or motivation of the researcher. This involves making sure that the researcher bias does not skew interpretation of what the research participants said to fit a certain narrative. To establish confirmability, qualitative researchers provide an audit trail which highlights every step of data analysis that was made in order to provide a rationale for the decisions made (Dye, 2008). The researcher was as neutral as possible during the course of this research to avoid any misunderstandings and biasness. This helped to establish that the research findings accurately portrayed participants' responses.

3.8 Dissemination of Results

The dissertation is part of the requirements for the award of Master of Education Degree (Leadership and management) and it will be submitted to Mzuzu University, Department of Education Foundation and Teaching Studies (ETS). Bound copies of the dissertation will also be made available to the Mzuzu University Library and all interested stakeholders to promote inclusive education. The findings would also be shared with respondents especially School Management Committee (SMC) and Parent-teacher Association (PTA),

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Studies by Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden (2000, p. state that "ethics pertains to doing good and avoiding harm." By applying ethical principles, the possibility of harm may be reduced, protecting participants in the research study. This research study was conducted in an ethical manner; hence, the Mzuzu University Ethics Committee, granted permission to conduct the research study(Appendix I).

According to George and Jones (2012) ethics is concerned with the moral values or principles that guide behavior and inform us whether actions are right or wrong. The underlying principle behind

ethics is to help people do the “right thing at the right time and in the right manner.” This is why ethics must be adhered to at all times in social research as any lapse would significantly be harmful to those taking part in the research.

Ethical issues cover an array of areas including informed consent, voluntary participation, privacy or confidentiality, protecting participants from harm.

3.9.1 Informed Consent

Glady (2004) mentions that before research can be carried out, researcher must clearly state the nature of the research to the would be participants and seek their consent to participate. The concept of informed consent, as stressed by O’Leary (2004) and Cohen et al. (2005) entails that the participants must fully understand the nature of the research and any potential risks be explained so that the participant makes an independent and informed decision to participate or not. This freedom to make independent and informed decision means the participant should neither be induced nor coerced to participate in the research.

The nature of the research was explained to the participants and from the explanation it turned out that participants made a voluntary decision to participate. They were then given letters of consent to append their signature as evidence of their informed consent (Appendix H).

3.9.2 Voluntary Participation

O’ Leary (2004) and Cohen et al. (2005) emphasize on the need that participants in a social research must be voluntary. As argued in the preceding paragraph, participants should not be induced or coerced into participating in the research but it should be out of their own volition. Creswell (1998) further advises that since participation is voluntary, participants should also be made aware of their right to discontinue at any time should they so wish. This ethical principle in social research means that participants are under no obligation to continue.

In the study, participants were told that they want to withdraw from the study, they were free to do

so and inform me. They were assured that such withdrawal would not have any negative repercussions on our relationship.

3.9.3 Anonymity

Anonymity is about removing the participants' names from the whole research as this protects participants' identity. The researcher used pseudonyms, such as "head teacher for school 1", "mother group chairperson for school 2" as opposed to real names to ensure that the participants would not be identified to the reading public.

3.9.4 Privacy and Confidentiality

O'Leary (2004) and Woods (2006) emphasize on the need to reflect on the issue of privacy and confidentiality in social research and ensure that at all times these are guaranteed.

A Study by Resnik (2011) posit that social research often requires that people reveal personal information that may be unknown to their friends and associates. As such, participants must be assured of his or her personal respect in terms of wellbeing, privacy and confidentiality. In other words the researcher must do all what it takes to make sure that the participants remain anonymous throughout the study.

Another importance on confidentiality is how the generated data will be used and be kept. In the study, participants were informed that data generated from the study would be used purely for academic purposes. The generated data was stored on a compact disc (CD) which would be securely guarded and that no other person but the researcher would access it. Participants were also informed that all the generated data in this study would be destroyed after two years of producing the final dissertation.

3.9.5 Protection from Harm

Woods (2006) observes that participants in a social research can be harmed physically or emotionally. Any harm that can befall on the participant must be clearly explained prior to getting their informed consent. As stated by Resnik (2011) the researcher is under obligation to explain

potential harm and the participants can be protected. In the study, the participants were assured that no harm would befall them as a result of their participation in the research. It was stressed that whatever they tell me would not in any way be shared with anyone else or be used against them. Nevertheless, it would be used purely for academic purposes.

The ethical principles of informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymous, and security of data and protection from harm were therefore fully adhered to this study.

3.10 Data Analysis

Le compte and Schensul (1999) define data analysis as a process a researcher uses to reduce data to a story and its interpretation. Creswell (2009) concurs with the above data description and further posits that the collection of data and data analysis occurs synchronously. Paton (1987) indicates that three things occur during data analysis: Data are organized, data are reduced through summarization and categorization, and patterns and themes in the data are identified and linked. In this study, the thematic analysis to analyze the data which was generated was used. It involved the identification and analyzing of patterns in qualitative data and to transform it into logical and sequential findings.

In analyzing the data from a thematic approach, interview data were transcribed with all the twelve participants of the study from the audio recordings that we engaged in during the interviews. In my transcriptions, word emphasis was considered, mispronunciations, pauses and incomplete sentences (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). To familiarize myself with the notes, they were read numerous time and simultaneously listened to the audio recordings a vast number of times. This assisted with the researcher in gaining a better insight into responses of the participants to the research objectives.

The first step in the data analysis involved reading and rereading the data in order to clearly understand, find the way through and make meaning of that data. This step was important in order to stay close to the data as possible- from the initial collection right through to the drawing of final conclusions as observed by O’Leary (2004).

During this step, data from each source was reviewed. The audio recordings were replayed and listened to very carefully before transcribing them (ndengu, 2012). As argued by different authors on qualitative research methodology, analysis should be done on the data which is in textual format. This is why the recordings were transcribed. Then, the transcripts were diligently compared with the recordings to ensure they were in tandem with each other. The field notes from the participants were read thoroughly to have fuller understanding of the data.

The seven-step thematic analysis was used to analyze the data according to Braun and Clarke (2006), and Creswell (2009). The seven steps are as follows:

Step 1: Preparing field notes and transcripts: Shortly after the interviews, the audio-tape recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. This format enabled the researcher to access the information readily for the purpose of analysis. Own notes were taken as a backup to assist in case of any malfunction with the audio-recording devices. Creswell's (2008) procedures to facilitate the process of analysis were of beneficial to this research study. This incorporated highlighting headers from different participants, questions and comments. Words that indicated what occurred during sessions, for example, pause and silence, were typed in to provide a realistic overview of the interview which was analyzed. To ensure that the typed transcripts were correct, the researcher listened to the audio recordings of the interviews and compared it with the verbatim transcriptions.

Step 2: Read through all the data: Once, the researcher was satisfied that the transcripts are correct, then data was read through several times, familiarizing with the contents of all participants in the interviews.

Step 3: Theme identification/generation: the themes were identified, some similar and others divergent, by the responses of the participants to my research objectives (John, 2012). Different coloured highlighters were used to highlight the possible themes to make it easier for me to identify them.

Step 4: Theme representation: The themes that were identified were eventually represented in words, to enable rich narrative and descriptive meanings.

Step 5: Coding the data: MacMillan and Schumacher (2010) posit that data coding begins by identifying relatively small pieces of data (segments) that stands alone and contains one idea. Thereafter, the segments are analysed to formulate codes. A code bestows meaning to the

segment. The coding system was used by highlighting the themes and noting them accordingly, with a name assigned to each theme, which appeared most logical (De Vos, 2005). Once open coding was complete, axial coding was undertaken which involved looking for themes so that associated themes could be clustered together. De Vos (2005) refers to this as searching for categories of meanings which are consistent but simultaneously distinct from each other. The clustering of similar themes in different participant's transcripts were noted. Selective coding was the final stage in the process of coding. All the themes were reduced to a selected number which formed the essence of this research study. Winnowing the data and diminishing it to a manageable set, according to De Vos (2005), assists in writing the final narrative.

Step 6: Visualizing and displaying the data: The data were displayed in a visual form which was easily accessible.

Step 7: Interpretation of data: The data were interpreted with the explicit aim of answering the research questions. A report on the analysis of data were done.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on the interpretivist paradigm, the qualitative research approach and the case study design which was employed for the research study. In addition, the tools used to generate data were discussed, which encompassed semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Furthermore, the trustworthiness of the study and ethical considerations of the research study were expounded on in details. In the next chapter, there is analyzing of the data that was generated by using themes and subthemes which were identified from the transcripts. The study also discuss how the theoretical framework links to my study of strategies employed by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter research findings are presented from the research study that was carried out in selected primary schools in Lilongwe rural west. Twelve participants were taken aboard in this study. Thus, this is the presentation of the views of 4 learners, 2 head teachers, two chairpersons from Parent-Teacher Association, two Chairpersons from School Management Committee and two Mother Group Chairpersons.

Data was collected from two primary schools in the quest to explore the strategies employed by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management in Lilongwe rural west. The researcher used an interview guide to collect qualitative data. For the first objective, the researcher wanted to assess the knowledge and skills equipped by the school leadership in implementing inclusive school management in the selected primary schools (Appendix A). In the second objective, the researcher also wanted to examine appropriate strategies employed by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management. This came in the wake of the fact that disadvantaged children are not doing well during the national examinations since there is exclusion within the education system. The third objective, the researcher wanted to analyse strategies used by school leaders in implementing inclusive school management in the selected schools. The reason was to come up with strategies used so that they help in promoting inclusive education in primary schools.

The chapter is divided into two main parts. It begins with how the generated data was analysed and then presenting the themes that emerged from the findings. However, before tackling these main parts of the chapter, biographical data of the participants is presented first.

Table 4.1 Participants' Biographical Data.

School A

Participant	Age	Qualification	Experience
SMC	53	Junior Certificate	5 Years
PTA	41	Malawi School Certificate of Education	6 Years
MG	54	Diploma in Agriculture (Retired)	4 Years
Head teacher	50	Teaching Certificate	10 Years
Learner 1	14	Standard 8	2 Years
Learner 2	16	Standard 8	2 Years

Table 4.1 b: Participants Biographical Data.

SCHOOL B

Participant	Age	Qualification	Experience
SMC	48	Junior Certificate	3 Years
PTA	52	Junior Certificate	5 Years
MG	55	Certificate in Child Care	7 Years
Head teacher	51	Teaching Certificate	12 Years
Learner 1	16	Standard 8	3 Years
Learner 2	17	Standard 8	2 Years

The age level, education and experience was good to provide enough information as regards to the research study. The participants working with the schools was ideal.

The age level of learners was from 14 to 17 years. One learner was in standard 7 while the other three learners were in standard 8. All the four learners were without disabilities. The study required to interview the school leadership as such, the student body was selected. Two head boys and two head girls were purposively chosen from the student body from which there was no learner with disabilities in the body. The prefects had several duties serving in the students' body.

4.2 Thematic Analysis

Data was analysed thematically according to Braun and Clark (2006) and subjected to comparative analysis where common themes emerging from the categories of the data sets were arrived at. A critical look at the categories of the data revealed that they were interrelated. This interrelationship in the data categories meant that the emerging themes were also interlaced.

Table 4.2: The matrix which summarizes the themes that emerged from the study findings.

Theme	Category
Knowledge and skills in ISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision Making • Effective Communication • Managing Meetings • Leading by Example • Ability to motivate Others • Coordination • Ability to Manage Conflicts • Providing Direction
Promoting Inclusive Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles of head teachers • Roles of SMC chairperson • Roles of PTA chairperson • Roles of Mother Group chairperson • Roles of Students
Concept of Inclusive Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaning of Inclusive Education • Principles of Inclusive Education • Benefits of Inclusive Education
Creating Enabling Environment for School Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Working • Positive School Culture

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective Meetings • Open Day Policy • Advocacy
Promoting Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration • Trust • Shared Vision
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation • Training

Table 4:3 Descriptions of Codes

Code	Code Description
IE	Inclusive Education
ISM	Inclusive School Management
Sc.Irdsp	School leadership
Stk.hlds	Stakeholders

Trn	Training
Mtng	Meeting
Collg	Collegiality
Clbbtn	Collaboration
SNE	Special Needs Education
Trt	Trust
Partsh	Partnership
Advc	Advocacy
Prct	Practices
Prmg	Prompting
Awncs	Awareness
Orie	Orientation
Comt	Committee
Htrs	Head teachers
Dsbt	Disability
Strg	Strategy
Cb	Capacity Building

Motv	Motivation
Lbe	Lead by example
Cord	Cordination
Dir	Direction
Mngt	Management
Confl	Conflict
Rol	Roles
Plcp	Principles
Supp	Support
Shdvso	Shared vision
OPD	Open door policy
Tmwk	Team work

Table 4.3 Codes and their descriptions

The next section discusses the themes that emerged from the findings and contextualizes the study finding into reviewed literature. These themes were compared to the research objectives and therefore those that were directly linked to the research objectives formed the basis for discussions.

4.3 Themes and Categories

The themes as presented above offer insights into the strategies for implementing inclusive school management and its effect in the implementing of inclusive education.

4.3.1 Knowledge and skills in Inclusive School Management

4.3.1.1 Decision Making

From the interviews, the study has revealed that the school leadership had an orientation in inclusive school management but most of the participants were worried that the orientation process was just for a short time to grasp the contents of inclusive school management principles and procedures. The study also demonstrated that the school leaders have some ideas in decision making as a vital knowledge to implement inclusive school management, as one head teacher, from school “A” had this to say:

“Decision making makes school leaders to achieve the set goals of an organization that enhances the effectiveness of the organization. As such, making decisions requires good judgement and skills so that the decision made should give a required meaning and understanding to the members that are working in a team.”

Head teacher, from school “B” had the following views:

“Decision making can be conceived as a conclusion that a school leader has reached so as to know what to do later on. There was a need for much orientation in order to acquire this leadership knowledge so that when decisions are made and are correct, the school leader is understood as a qualified, able and efficient in his/her work performance.”

However, responses from students indicated that most of the times they are left out in decision making processes which leads to failure in achieving some of the set objectives at a school. One student from school “B” had the following views:

“At first we were not consulted as students to be part of the decisions which the school is deciding to do but now we are happy that we are involved in decision making processes of the school. Now that we are involved through the students; council, we feel a sense of ownership and motivated such that we can very much promote the implementation inclusive school management at our school.”

According to the head teacher, from school “A” some of the important things he learnt from the training was decision making process which allows one to consider a number of alternatives before a final course of action is taken which made him knowledgeable enough to work as a team in implementing the inclusive school management. He said:

“It has been of paramount importance to acquire decision making skills through this orientation. Decision making is an important construct for all members in a team to define themselves, their roles and their expectations of each other. It will help me judge the process by which one can choose between a number of alternative courses of action for the purpose of achieving the set goals.”

Furthermore, the school management committee chairperson, from school “A” and “B” concurrently agreed that students are vital part in decision making process (Appendix B) and they said the following statement:

“Yes, we have to involve our students during decision making process of the school. leaving students in key management issues makes students feel less important and demotivated in

their school life endeavour. Therefore, including students' voice is a good motive to changes happening at school."

In summary, the skill of decision making is one of the important functions of the inclusive school management. It makes team members in team working achieve the objectives in time and uses resources at work place properly. Decision making plays a vital role in management.

4.3.1.2 Effective Communication

Majority of the participants stated that having knowledge in effective communication enabled school leadership to understand well the elements that facilitate the implementation of inclusive school management which are relationships, shared experiences and transparency. That is, the transfer of information from one person to another person. As such, effective communication is necessary for the better performance of the work to be done by members. For instance, head teacher for school "B" said:

"Communication is the means by which work is done, ideas are shared, encouragement and support provided. As a leader, you must be able to communicate effectively and employ clear communications skills which will help members understand their roles clearly and perform them."

Furthermore, head teacher from school "A" agreed with the sentiments made by his counterpart from school "B" that communication that is clear, allows members of the organization to have the same message and better facilitates delegation of the authority. He emphasized that:

"The message sent by school leaders must be the same message that is received by members. As communication is a means through which delegation and decentralization of authority is successfully accomplished in an organization."

Most participants admitted that effective communication helps in smooth working and also saves time. They also said: communication makes members of an organization understand in the same sense that provide mutual understanding. In most of the time, effective communication ends when it reaches its destination. Participants also agreed that communication makes it possible the interaction between members of the working team in an organization. It was noted that communication provides information needed for decision making. School leaders as managers of schools should create a clear and open communication system that is appropriate to the whole organization, and also encourage creativity and innovation.

To support the above statement, the school management committee chairperson, from school “B” said that, communication in an organization help to convey orders, instructions or information so as to bring desired changes in the performance and attitude of the people. He emphasized that:

“Effective communication is a part and parcel of any successful organization. Any communication should be free from barriers so as to be effective. As school leaders, we are responsible to guide and execute programs that nurture and develop high performance of members at school.”

As such, organizations which develop effective communication processes are more likely to have a more positive working environment and more likely in achieving their objectives. As the success of any organization, it depends on how effectively they are able to communicate with others. The study findings therefore, confirm that effective communication plays a role to help school leaders implement inclusive school management.

4.3.1.3 Managing Meetings

Managing meetings, which is about the process of coordinating a meeting and managing members of the team to get the results needed in the amount of time allotted. Many participants agreed that in managing meetings, careful attention is paid to thorough planning before the meeting, booking of the actual meeting and leadership skills during the meeting. Throughout the research, it has been found that school leaders who manage their meetings have an opportunity to keep their team members in synch and build team work, trust and motivation.

Most of the respondents lamented that most of their meetings they did, took much of their time as such the meetings did not yield the needed results. However, the parent-teacher association chairperson from school “A” said:

“Managing meetings well is needed in an organization such as our school. In order for a meeting to be productive and efficient, the person managing the meeting should have a clear idea of how the meeting should go and what needs to be accomplished. Most of our meetings are not time conscious but mind you time is money.”

The parent-teacher association chairperson, from school “B” said the following statement:

“Managing meetings is ideal, because it can lead to greater productivity in the work place and makes more members in a team to be engaged. What is needed is that the person managing the meeting should begin the meeting with an introduction of members attending the meeting and ably clarify each person’s role in the meeting. He should make sure that everyone understand the general flow of the meeting so that members are likely to stay on track even if the discussion strays from the main objective of the meeting.”

During the interviews, it was revealed that head teachers were the ones managing most of the inclusive school management meetings instead of the chairperson of the inclusive school management, who was duly elected. Head teacher, from school “B” commented:

“Head teachers indeed chaired some of the inclusive school management meetings. This was done by request from the committee chairperson who usually said had difficulties in managing meetings. The committee requires more orientation to equip them with the skills such as managing meeting.”

The Parent-teacher association chairperson, from school “B” revealed what he learnt during the orientation, that:

“During the meeting, the chairperson for that meeting should work through the agenda sequence, encourage participatory by all, and work toward consensus. As the meeting proceeds, he has to clarify and summarize decisions or conclusions which have been reached.”

The mother group chairperson, from school “A” further pointed out that:

“It is a good thing to set a schedule for how long the meeting will take place and communicate this schedule with members of inclusive school management so that everyone is encouraged to be efficient with their time when contributing. Again, everyone should be given a chance to speak and the chairperson should encourage participation from the quieter ones.”

Through semi-structured interviews, it was revealed that school leadership preferred the skill of managing meetings because it provided a positive feedback on the work that members have

Accomplished (Appendix C). The school management committee chairperson, for school “B” said that managing meetings well helps others to feel comfortable in contributing and encourage active listening.

4.3.1.4 Leading by Example

Participants unanimously agreed that leading by example is among the skills that school leadership use in implementing the inclusive school management. It is about the guiding of others through your behaviour instead of your words. They said, when you lead by example, you make it easy for others to follow you. The Mother group chair person, from school “B” had this to say:

“Practice what is usually preach in order to emulate a good example to other team members. A leader who talks one thing, but does another, is not trusted.”

The school management committee chairperson, for school “B” concurred with the Mother group chairperson from school “B” that actions of leaders may encourage others to act in the same way, therefore, a leader should consider the example he/she set when making decisions and act upon them. He pointed that:

“Someone who leads by example let their actions and not their words do the talking. For example, if you implement new rules for the office, then follow these rules just closely as you expect everyone else to follow them, you lead by example.”

Agreeing to SMC chairperson, for school “B” was the Parent-teacher association chairperson, from school “A” who had this to say:

“School leaders create a picture of what is possible. People can look at you and say, well, if he can do it, people can as well do it.” Most people want to follow someone who has a strong sense of direction and casts vision that resonates with them.”

By incorporating certain attitudes and practices into your life, you not only improve your life, but begin to fashion yourself into the kind of person that others will follow and emulate the two head teachers, from school “A” and for school “B” concurrently said that:

“A leader who lead by example position himself/ herself as a credible person who deserves to be respected and trusted by team members. One of the responsibilities of the school leader is to inspire other people to do the best they can do for the benefit of the organization.”

Most of the respondents agreed that leading by example helps other people to see what lies ahead and act swiftly to counter any challenges along the way in their endeavour to implement the inclusive school management.

4.3.1.5 Managing Conflicts

Most of the respondents said, managing conflicts appears to be one of the important knowledge that school leaders need to have and use properly. This is about the process of dealing with incompatibilities or disagreements arising from, for example diverging opinions, objectives and needs. Bearing witness to this the head teacher, from school “B” had this to say:

“Conflicts are a natural part of the work place, therefore, it is wise important that school leaders understand conflicts and know how to resolve them. My fellow school leaders, we should be aware of conflicts by keeping eyes and ears open for any changes in work place climate and any signs of developing a conflict.”

The head teacher, from school “B” further added that:

“kupewa kuposa kuchiza” which literally means prevention is better than curing in terms of managing conflicts. Preventing conflict from happening is a vital role at work place so that team members concentrates in doing their work. Head teachers make sure that conflict is avoided at our school community as it spreads negatively which may slow the progress of work.”

A learner, from school “A” concurred with the head teacher, from school “B” that managing conflicts helps to maintain good social relations and develop high quality solutions. He stressed that:

“As a student representative, am privileged to be involved in the managing of conflicts at this school. We conduct awareness campaigns twice every school term to sensitize fellow students on the prevention of conflicts and its benefits. As members of inclusive school management, we ensure that problems must be addressed at the right time to prevent conflicts from happening and its adverse effects at a later stage.”

Concurring with the learner, from school “A” was the school management committee chairperson, from school “A” who said that successful conflict management requires developing trust among participants. He also highlighted it in this way:

“Everyone is striving to show how valuable they are to the place where they are working and at times, this can lead to disputes with the members of the team. As school leaders, we should not turn a blind eye to any symptom of hidden conflict. Again, we should be wise enough to question the situation, analyze and resolve the conflicts at work place and not let the disagreement continue to improve morale and efficiency within a team.”

Also agreeing with the learner, from school “A” and the school management committee, from school “A” was the head teacher, from school “B” who had this to say:

“Conflicts can arise everywhere due to all of us having our own interests, personalities, reactions and thought processes. In this reasoning, there is a need to manage conflicts well so that it stimulates greater team creativity in inclusive school management. I also realized that managing conflict prevents fall out between team members and leads to peaceful and stress free life.”

4.3.1.6 Ability to Motivate Others

The study revealed that ability to motivate others contribute to high morale in team working in inclusive school management. The general perception of the participants was that motivation is something that moves the person to action which is already initiated.

Many participants stated that the ability to motivate others is about the possibility to cause someone to do something enthusiastically by offering internal or external rewards. It is the school leadership responsibility to motivate others to work the very best of their abilities on your team members.

This is how, head teacher from school “A” said during interviews:

“Motivating a team by giving them incentives such as rewards is ideal. People may have all the expertise but if they are not motivated, it’s unlikely that they will achieve their true potential. Motivated people have a positive outlook and that they are excited about what they are doing. Team members who are motivated enjoy their jobs and perform well.”

The head teacher, from school “B” expressed the following statement:

“One feels very honoured when motivating a team. Motivated people have a positive attitude at work, they reduce the rate of absenteeism and improve performance in

their work. They work very hard to achieve their goals without being pushed by their superiors.”

Agreeing to the head teacher, from school “B” was the school management committee chairperson, from school “A” who said:

“As leaders, we need to understand that to motivate people you have to give them a reason to be motivated. We need to praise team members in order for them to work harder. When you praise one person in front of others, it encourages them to work harder or perform better and simultaneously motivating others to work hard in order to be praised. Members feel that they are part of a team working effectively and cooperatively on the same goals.”

In an interview with the Parent-teacher association chairperson, from school “A” it was confirmed that ability to motivate others, school leaders needed to have good working relationship with team members (Appendix E). This is what was said:

“Motivation leads to stability of the work place. School leadership should encourage good performance through rewards and reinforcements, and maintain open communication with all the team members. School leadership have to create a good working environment that support a strong team motivation.”

This was confirmed by the observation by Olusola (2011) that motivation is a fundamental instrument for regulating the work behavior of team members.

However, the school management committee chairperson, for school “B” had this to say:

“A school leader can motivate others by listening to them. Everyone appreciates being heard and being listened to. It shows that you are interested in what others have to say and

you care about their lives. When team members know that their thoughts are being considered, they feel free to express their ideas, opinions, and their perspectives.”

Concurring to what the school management committee chairperson, for school “B” said was the mother group chairperson, from school “A” who expressed that:

“As a leader, it is very vital that you keep your team feeling motivated and inspired. Assigning responsibility to members shows that you trust them and believe they have the skills to get job done. There is need to provide members with support which people need to achieve their goals.”

The study revealed that school leaders have a major role to motivate team members in the work place. This will help the needed potential to assist the inclusive school management improve inclusive education.

4.3.1.7 Providing Direction

Providing direction, which is about instructing, guiding and overseeing the performance of the workers achieve the predetermined goals. Different people are brought together under one organization. It is the leadership which has to guide, lead and coordinate the activities of the individuals in achieving the objectives. Throughout the research, it has been found that providing direction is a paramount role which requires school leadership to acquire properly in order to execute the inclusive school management and reach its maximum potential. The direction we are talking here is the process and techniques involved in issuing instructions. Direction is an ongoing activity as it continue through the life of an organization. Most of the participants agreed that direction initiates action and that it is here the actual work starts. Mother group chairperson, from school “A” for instance, said:

“Direction is telling people what to do and seeing that and seeing that they do it. In this case, the school leader directs members about what to do, how to do, when to do and also see to it that their instructions are properly followed.”

The Parent-teacher association chairperson, for school “B” echoed this sentiment by saying:

“Direction helps in putting plans into performance and paves the way for controlling the operations like those in inclusive school management. It provides clarity about responsibilities and accountabilities in doing their work. Without leadership to direct work actions, people become in active and leads to less productivity at work.”

Agreeing to this was the head teacher, from school “A” who said that direction initiates actions to get the desired goal at work place. He emphasized that:

“Usually, providing direction to team members, there is achievement of the set goals of the organization. One also ensures that every member has to work towards the defined purpose of the organization.”

The study findings therefore confirms that providing direction in an organization such as the school is very essential for the purpose to be achieved. This can help maximize learning potential for students with disabilities.

4.3.1.8 Coordination

Participants mentioned that coordination was another useful skill which school leadership need to have and practice. Since, inclusive school management is about the involvement of other school committees in the running of the school affairs. It was also revealed that coordination plays a great role in the implementation of inclusive school management in uniting the members.

Every organization, such as a school has several committee members, each with different views, opinions, activities and background. All these activities in the organization will need coordination for the purpose of unity. The school leadership experience is that coordination ensures a better connection of roles among the group members and build trust among them. Here are the views of the chairperson, from school “B” who said:

“It is ideal to have acquired the skill of coordination of an organization. It creates unity in action among the various activities of an organization. It helps bring together key members whose cooperation could prove beneficial in other areas of the school affairs. Our school, indeed is going to improve the education for all by accommodating all the learners through the coordination of various committees.”

The head teacher, from school “A” concurred with the sentiments by the school management committee chairperson, from school “B” that coordination lead to better organizational performance through internal and external strings. He stressed that:

“We need to integrate the efforts and skills of different committee members at our school in order to achieve common objectives. This can help us eliminate duplication of work which can result to cost effective operations. Usually, SMC chairperson encourage team members to work as one big team to achieve the implementation of inclusive school management.”

Furthermore, the mother group chairperson, from school “B” said that:

“The chairperson privileged to say that coordination at work tends to manage resources and the teammembers well such that there is prevention of conflicts from arising at school. In this case objectives are achieved without wastage of time.”

Viinamaki (2007) says that coordination is the interrelation of functions, structures, and resources in an organizational content. The more efficient coordination is in all levels of administration, the common outcomes, cohesion, will be arrived at the most appropriate way; because coordination is a tool of bringing different components together. The researcher is also in support that coordination is all invisible string which runs throughout an organization and binds everyone together.

4.3.2 Responsibilities of inclusive School Management Stakeholders in inclusive Education

Key stakeholders in inclusive school management in this study were: Two school management committee chairpersons, two parent-teacher association chairpersons, two mother group chairpersons, two head teachers and four learners from the student council.

Through the open ended questions asked during the semi-structured interviews, Inclusive school management stakeholders were very vocal about their roles and practices in fostering the implementation of inclusive education at the school. It was found that they had a great and vital role to play in inclusive education. This was noted through interviews by the researcher.

4.3.2.1 Responsibilities of Head teachers

Participants stated that head teachers are a central to facilitating systematic changes and teaching school members to adopt attitudes and practices that are consistent with an inclusive vision and mission. They further said that the head teacher is a staff member of the school with a mission to make the school a better place for children to learn. The findings revealed that head teachers have a duty to spear head the implementation of inclusive education in collaboration with other school committee members. Through interviews, the head teacher, from school “A” (Appendix A) narrated the following sentiments as his roles in the implementation of inclusive education at his school:

“Head teachers make sure that, I form an educational climate which provides learning opportunities for all students, including those with diverse needs so that they reach their potential in education. I also have to monitor teaching, learning and assessment of learners with diverse needs at the school. This helps me to see to it that learning is truly taking place at the school for both students with and without disabilities.”

Furthermore, he said:

“As the head teacher for this school, I ensure that educational adaptations and modifications

to the physical environment is done within the school community. For example, widening doors and passable spaces to allow a wheel chair user enter the classroom without difficulties. I have also to mainstream inclusive education in the school improvement plans so that the needs of the students with diverse needs and those without, are fairly accommodated.”

In agreeing to this, was the school head teacher for school “A”. Who explained that:

“I plan for the work for that term systematically. My responsibilities at this school include the following: regarding the promotion of inclusive education. I promote a sense of responsibility and shared ownership for the academic social emotional growth of every student at this school. I also have a significant role to promote the recognition and appreciation that all students regardless of disabilities, have strengths and are the contributing members of the school community. This promote unity at our school. But most important, I make sure that collaboration planning time is part of the school structure so that members have to plan school work together and

include all students in them.”

The head teachers make out the difference in how inclusive education is implemented and enforced in schools.

4.3.2.2 Responsibilities of the school management committee chairperson

Commenting on the responsibilities of the school management committee chairperson, the respondents gave varied responses, which confirmed that school management committee is a vital agency which provide a role in monitoring and working to improve the implementation of inclusive education. The respondents unanimously agreed that the chairperson of the school management committee has a very important duty to promote inclusive education at the school. The following were the statements uttered by one of the school management chairperson, from school “B” who said:

“SMC chairperson is responsible for raising awareness of communities within the school catchment area about the importance of children’s education under the inclusive education set up. This helps parents and guardians to send their children with diverse needs at their nearest and within reach school. I make sure that the school construct and maintain the school infrastructure such as ramps, modifying toilet seats, widening entrances, adapting chairs and tables for the students with disabilities. This allows children with disabilities to feel at home and valued at our school.”

“Apart from this, SMC chairperson also is responsible for conducting awareness campaigns on key educational issues such as the inclusive education so that people from the community understand it well and provide its meaning. They make sure that high quality education and learning is taking place for all the students with and those without disabilities. Even allocate resource room for the remedial support services for students with diverse needs at this school.”

The school management committee chairperson, for school “A” concurred with his counterpart from school “B” that:

“SMC chairperson makes sure that there is availability of specialized teaching, learning and assessment resources for all students. The students should not find any difficulties in pursuing their education at the school.”

“My other responsibility is to reinforce by-laws that promote inclusive education. For example, discrimination of any kind is not allowed at our school. Parents are encouraged to enroll their wards regardless of any condition in which the child is in so that we achieve the education for all.”

“Furthermore, another responsibility is to advise the school head teacher on matters that affect the general development of the school and the welfare of learners and also lobby for the deployment of specialist teachers at our school from the district education manager.”

However, it was revealed that roles and practices of inclusive school management stakeholders create a supportive learning environment which facilitates quality learning experiences for students.

4.3.2.3 Responsibilities for Mother Group Chairperson

Through interviews, respondents reported that mothers can be an important agent of change. They have the capacity to enhance awareness and using their voices to influence and make progress for the girls; education. The findings revealed that effective executing of inclusive school management stakeholders’ roles and practices, the school can have high academic achievement of the

disadvantaged learners. These were the views of the mother group chairperson, from school “A” who explained that:

“My main role at this school is to promote girls enrolment, retention and completion of education for all girls regardless of any disabilities. My work is also to send back to school the girls who have abandoned school for their own reasons and make sure that they remain in school until completion of their primary education. This is done in conjunction with the families of the concerned girls and this has helped disadvantaged girls to go back to school and complete their education.”

“Mother Group chairperson make a follow up on girls who frequently absent themselves from school for a goodnumber of days to find out what is wrong with them. I don’t have to choose the type of girlsto visit. All girl learners both with disabilities and those without are visited. They are given apreliminary psychological support to the school girls who have been abused in one way oranother and then refer them to institutions like the child protection offices, health professionals and the police. They are assured and convinced to come back to school after all the needed processes have taken place and done.”

“Mother Group chairperson also take time to go around communities to conduct resource mobilization in supportof vulnerable learners’ needs. The resources are then shared to the disadvantaged girls inorder to promote their education. This helps to prevent the girls’ from school dropout. Finally, public awareness is made in school communities about the importance of education and access to education for the girl child.”

In agreeing to the sentiments made by the mother group chairperson, for school “A” was the mother group chairperson, from school “B” who said that:

“The Mother Group chairperson provide guidance and counselling to girls on issues of adolescence, feminine hygiene and sexuality among them. This is done by holding talks with girls in at school. Another responsibility is to reinforce the agenda of keeping girls in school and ensure that girls return to school after early marriage or any other abuse.”

4.3.2.4 Responsibilities for the Parent – Teacher Association

Participants said that parent-teacher association is a formal body which is made up of parents whose children are officially registered as students in the school together with their teachers. They claimed that Parent-teacher association promote public private partnership of parents and teachers towards the education of their children. According to the two parent-teacher association chairpersons who were interviewed, said that parent-teacher association plays a significant role in promoting inclusive education at their school (Appendix E). This is what one of the parent-teacher association chairperson, from school “A” explained that:

“As parent-teacher association chairperson for my school, have several duties to perform to see to it that parents and teachers’ voice is heard at the school. One responsibility is to conduct sensitization campaigns to encourage parents to allow their children with diverse needs attend school. The children have to attend their community schools. In addition, we support parents, teachers and students to make sure that all children at the school are treated in accordance with the ethos of the school. Those who do not abide by the agreed ethos are taken to task and given discipline measures so that peace and harmony prevail at my school. But also to keep the parents of the children who are bonafide registered at the school, are well informed about the activities which have been planned for the school through meetings.”

The parent-teacher association chairperson, from school “B” had this to say:

“The PTA chairperson enjoys his post as the chairperson for the school parent-teacher association. He realize that as the chairperson, has some duties to perform at my school in order to improve inclusive education. One of the duties is to sensitize parents to assert their children’s right to education in inclusive settings. Here, each learner belongs to the same school and each one is valued the same regardless of any discriminatory characteristics.”

“Apart from this role, we inform parents of current changes in the school system so that parents are aware of the changes happening at their school.”

4.3.2.5 Responsibilities of Learners in Promoting Inclusive Education

The findings revealed that participants’ understanding of their roles in the implementation of inclusive education. The researcher asked participants to explain the roles they play to implement inclusive education (See Appendix D, question no. 4). One of the students, from school “A” had this to say:

“As students of the same school, we need to show love and belonging to each other regardless of any disabilities which one may have. As a student, my role is to develop an appreciation and respect for the unique characteristics and abilities of each individual learner at the school. Besides this, there is need to help and support all classmates with a sensitivity towards others’ differences. For example, we do together group work assignments.”

Agreeing to this was the student, from school “B” who explained that:

“We develop friendships and strengthen a positive self-image by engaging activities with peers. Through these friendships, social interaction is enhanced and everyone at school feels welcome. We are also a communicating key information to school about the health

and community issues that may have a bearing on students”

4.3.3 The concept of Inclusive Education

The findings revealed that participants' understanding of term 'inclusive education' and its purpose to children with and those without disabilities. The researcher asked each participant to explain what they understood by the term 'inclusive education' (See Appendix C, question 6 and Appendix B, question 9). The majority of the respondents demonstrated their full understanding of the term 'inclusive education' and their definitions were in line with the one given by UNICEF (2007) which states that:

“Inclusive education is a process of addressing the diverse needs of all learners by reducing barriers to, and within the environment. It means attending age appropriate class of the child’s local school, with individual tailored support. Here, in Malawi, it is viewed as ‘a learning environment that provides access, accommodates, and supports learners”
(MoEVT, 2007).

Inclusive education is a new approach towards educating the children with disabilities and those without within the same classroom. Each learner belonging to the same school and each one is valued and has a right to learning there regardless of their diverse learning needs, abilities, disabilities, culture, gender, race, class, learning style, language, socio-economic background, whether they are street children, working kids, children heading families, orphans etc. This type of education seeks to address the learning needs of all children with specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion. It implies that all learners, with or without disabilities being able to learn together through access to common schools and community educational setting with an appropriate network support services. This is only possible if flexible education system that includes the needs and different types of learners and adapts itself to meet

their needs. To this effect on the concept of inclusive education, the participants had the following to say: The head teacher from school “A” had this to say:

“Inclusive education is for us to bring together all children who have barriers in learning. Some of these children are those who are disabled or some who do not cope in class. Their levels of knowledge differs from other children of the same age and same classroom. Therefore, when you are teaching children, every teacher requires to have the background of each learner so that he is able to manage the learner appropriately.”

The school management committee chairperson, from school “A” explained that

“According to my understanding the meaning of the term inclusive education as for me is that Inclusive education is when different learners with different capabilities, learn together in one space and that is inclusive education.”

The parent-teacher association chairperson, from school “A” narrated that:

“Inclusive education is where all children are included without looking if they are physically disabled or they are special in what they are in. Maybe, let’s say mentally, or according to language because children differ, you see, therefore, inclusive education is where children are put together and all get the same education.”

Furthermore, the head teacher from school “B” said that:

“Inclusive education as per my understanding is the putting together of children according to special needs in the mainstream schools and not be placed in special schools. It is for

us to bring together all children who have barriers in learning.”

Agreeing to the head teacher from school “B” was the Parent-teacher association chairperson from school “B” who echoed that:

“My understanding of inclusive education is that learners are no separated. They are in the same classroom, even if they speak different language, physically, intellectually and gender or race. Some children are poor financially. Look where our school is located, some come from families where there is gender based violence, thus creating another barrier, behavior and performance in class activities. Inclusive education deals with some of these things.”

The mother group chairperson, for school “B” added her voice that:

“Inclusive education is about children, but it includes all children according to their potential and abilities. Do you understand? It is where a child would receive a chance to get his / her own care according to a particular way through which she/he learns at school or the way she/he is able to grasp things at school. A place where children would not be discriminated in relation to the way they are, do you understand? It includes every child, any kind of a child, but there would be a provision which would be present which will cater for all children as per their abilities and potentials in relation to class environment.”

One of the student from school “A” had this to say:

“To my understanding, inclusive education is that all learners must be in the same classroom, even those with barriers. It is the type of education which does not discriminate each other.”

The research participants had a positive attitude towards inclusive education. They believed that it was a concept that allowed all the learners to be accepted and ensures that they are all granted equal opportunities. Learners were of the idea that educators were dedicated to educating them. The two learner participants in the study were satisfied with how learning together with peers with disabilities in the same classroom is taking place (Appendix D). This is what they said:

“We feel very happy to be in a group of learners together with other children with disabilities in the same classroom because we are used to help dictate them, when copying notes from the chalkboard. It is the best method since it makes learners with disabilities to feel part of the community because they are also human beings.”

The study findings revealed that, school leaders are largely responsible for the implementation of inclusive education but they do not have the authority to devise or enact solutions to the challenges of this in their school community. The head teacher from school “B” said:

“To work for inclusive education as a school leader, one has to believe that we are powerless without the authority to make decisions in a number of identified areas within the school, such as devising and implementing initiatives, mobilizing resources, getting members of the community” involved in school activities. The government should give us authority to make decisions at local level so that it gets authentic work from them.”

4.3.4 Creating Enabling Environment for Implementing Inclusive School Management

This is the overarching theme that emerged from the findings. Enabling environment concerns the warm, welcoming and nurturing climate that facilitates a sense of belonging. This study noted that creating the enabling environment for school leadership to implement inclusive school management using proper strategies will promote inclusive education in the selected primary

schools in Lilongwe rural west and greatly contribute to reducing inefficiencies in the education sector to both learners with and those without disabilities. As noted in from the study, factors contributing to the enabling environment for the strategies in implementing inclusive school management are manifold. These factors include issues of team working, positive school culture, effective meetings, open door policy and advocacy.

4.3.4.1 Team Working

This study revealed that the implementation of inclusive school management is largely attributed to team work. Participants said that inclusive school management is very important in promoting inclusive education where all learners are welcome regardless of ability or disability. Results indicated that team work in inclusive school management is one of the strategies employed by school leadership when implementing the inclusive school management to embrace inclusive education at school level. School leadership revealed that they have been hearing about the inclusiveschool management in the latest times as a concept in their leadership experience to deal with thepromotion of inclusive education at school level. Head teacher, from school “A” had this to say:

“Hearing of the new concept of inclusive school management in schools after ten years of staying in this zone was a surprise. We have been working on this as a group and not as an individual. But it is working well.”

However, some participants appeared to have some little knowledge on inclusive school management as one way of ensuring inclusive education practice at school level. These were their views:

“We only know about the inclusive education as a way of teaching both learners with and without disabilities but not the inclusive school management which involves school

stakeholders to work together to propel the learning of our children in the enabled environment. At first, our thought was that it is only the duty of the head teacher to deal with the concept of inclusive school management at school level.”

The general perception of the participants was that they are satisfied with team strategy, which according to them is “ideal.” As school management committee chairperson, for school “A” puts it:

“The team work method is an important cooperative manner and should exist in the school’s setting as it supports each other and much responsible in carrying out tasks and solve the problems together to achieve team goals.”

The school management committee chairperson, from school “B” said:

“Working together as a team is a smart way to deal with much of the challenges which a school faces such as the inclusive education. “Ine ndimangoona ngati ndizongopanga maphunziro a ana olumala okha basi.” Literally meaning that, he thought that inclusive education is only for the children with disabilities. Therefore, we indeed need to work as a team, together as a school so that no child is left behind in education.”

The assertion made by school management committee chairperson, for school “B” that stakeholders of the school need to work together as a team because team work is a popular approach for achieving high standards in the performance of duties and achieve high level of satisfaction among members based on the vision, mission and the organization’s goal.

The Parent-teacher association chairperson, from school “A” concurred with the sentiments made by the chairperson of school management, for school “A” that:

“A school organization with well-established team work will be able to implement the well planned educational programs as well as contributing to the productivity and quality services in the school organization.”

Even the parent-teacher association chairperson, from school “B” echoed that:

“Team work among the school stakeholders can be described as a group that is always working together in performing their tasks and are aware of their commitments and roles in achieving the desired goals in education.”

4.3.4.2 Creating a Positive School Culture

Many participants stated that creating a positive school culture is yet another strategy for school leadership to implement the inclusive school management. These are the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions. A positive school culture has an extraordinary positive influence on the members of the school and it is considered to be a driving force in achieving school goals. Then, it is necessary for school leaders to have the social conditions necessary for the school stakeholders’ success. For instance, Head teacher, from school “B” stated that:

“A positive school culture is a place where your efforts are translated into positive experiences for both staff members and students, and parents such that success and joy, and accomplishment are all the main features of a positive school culture. When a school has a positive school culture, all stakeholders are excited to work because they see the bigger picture, and students are in a better position to learn.”

Agreeing with the head teacher, for school “B” the chairperson of the school management committee, from school “A” made the following statement during the study:

“positive school culture enhances school effectiveness and reflects the importance of creating a positive school culture that empowers all school stakeholders to work towards a common goal which improves the effectiveness of the school.” This is in sync with Dimmock et al; (2021) that each school has a unique culture. The school culture is observed as a key aspect of the school that enhances and gives meaning to various activities of the school.

Most of the participants admitted that the prevailing atmosphere at a school will affect everything that goes on inside its wall such that relationships and interactions are characterized by openness, trust, respect and appreciation.

These participants also agreed that school leaders can contribute to the effectiveness of schools by building a positive school culture since positive school culture has a set of values which connect the people in an organization, affecting the interaction and coordination which then can influence the school development such as the inclusive education. As part of the school culture, the whole school community must uphold the importance of not segregating students who are more capable of independently meeting grade level requirements from those who need a wider variety of assistance to make the grade.

4.3.4.3 Effective Meetings

Conducting effective meetings where two or more people come together for the purpose of discussing a predetermined topic by school leadership with the school stakeholders is another contribution to the implementation of inclusive school management. Throughout the research, it had been found out that school stakeholders bemoan the lack of involvement in “meaningful and professional decision making.” Most stakeholders lamented lack of involvement in decision making through effective meetings. Most of the stakeholders spoke that conducting effective

meetings at a school level, can help the school management. Mother group chairperson, from school “A” for instance, said:

“We do not have effective meetings taking place at our school. This deprives us as stakeholders to have meaningful input as regards to the decision making of the school. We take more time to meet as stakeholders of the school which is not good because effective meetings are important for collective decision making, planning and follow up, accountability and other practices that will help school leaders to build a good organization.”

The chairperson for parent-teacher association, from school “A” echoed this sentiments by saying:

“Effective meetings are another way that help people to boost team work practice, as each member can share their own achievements, problems, and can come up with better solutions in a way members can be on track that goes directly to higher achievement”

Attendees who leave after an effective meeting will be positive and motivated by the work accomplished through active participation in the meeting. This can lead to positive thinking of the school activities where members feel valued and that their input were taken on board.

However, the situation is different at school “A” where members conduct effective meetings and are consulted before the meeting take place. They play an active role in decision making and leadership roles. As the head teacher, from school “A” pointed out that:

“Our school is open and transparent in its dealings. Stakeholders are consulted in most of the issues that require their input. The chairperson of the chairperson of

the meeting respects and listens to our suggestions and sometimes we make decisions together during meetings.”

The chairperson for the parent-teacher association, from school “B” stated that:

“Meetings are an important vehicle for personal contact and at such meetings, the previous day’s events or performance are reported and the day’s action are formulated. During meetings, normally the school leader, collects information about the performance of his / her school. This, according to the parent-teacher association chairperson, makes the school stakeholders own decisions that are taken on board and consequently can help improve on school effectiveness.”

The assertion by the parent-teacher association chairperson, for school “B” stressed that meetings should occur regularly to facilitate a strong supervisor-supervisee relationship such that there must be a return for the organization on the time that stakeholders invest in effective meetings.

The mother group chairperson, from school “A” said:

“There must be meetings weekly or biweekly to help to boost the overall team performance and keeping the members together.”

The views supported by the chairperson of the meeting should stick to the agenda of the meeting and that throughout the meeting participants should feel that they are welcome, are useful to the group and are receiving personalized attention.

4.3.4.4 Open Door Policy

The use of the open door policy was also cited as being critical if school leadership is to implement the inclusive school management in Lilongwe rural west. Each participant stressed on the need for

the policy at the school work place to encourage team members to approach the leadership with issues, concerns, or comments regarding on going school development at the school.

The open day policy was articulated by all participants as an intention to foster an environment of collaboration, high performance, and mutual respect between the school management and other stakeholders in the implementation of inclusive school management at school level in the quest to embrace inclusive education. The policy motivates team members to commit themselves fully to the common goal as open day policy help school leadership understand their teams and allow members to feel like part of the organization. The head teacher, for school “B” stated that:

“When school leaders maintain the open door policy for members to approach them and have a meaningful discussions, it promotes a culture that encourages discussions over an argument. Sharing of information increases and makes speed in making decisions which results in delivering better products and services at school.”

The head teacher, from school “A” had this to say:

“When every member, irrespective of their position in the organization, can have an open discussion and share their opinions with the school leaders or senior members, a culture of equality and empowerment prevails at the work place such that any program which can be initiated at school, for example the inclusive education can propel very well.”

Agreeing with the head teacher, for school “A” was his counterpart from school “B” who echoed that:

“School leaders who do not create an open door policy with their team, they may discourage them, leading to poor morale and lowers the production.”

The organizations with open door policy enjoy cordial environment that fosters healthy discussions between management and members of staff. A true leader has to have a genuine open door policy so that his members are not afraid to approach him for any reasons. The study findings, therefore, support that the open door policy can an effective factor for school leadership to implement inclusive school management.

4.3.4.5 Advocacy

It was noted that advocacy played a vital role in the implementation of inclusive school management within the school catchment area. Bearing witness to this was the mother group chairperson, from school “A” who had this to say:

“Advocacy affords people the opportunity to have their views and wishes considered when decisions are being made about peoples’ lives. Well informed communities are able to make informed decisions and communicate their views to their elected representatives. Here, we are saying that people are able to ask for what they want and need to tell others about their thoughts and feelings.”

The mother group chairperson, from school “B” explained the following statement:

“Advocacy as involves us in speaking out for ourselves the things that are important to us, such as the issue of inclusive school management. That is taking action ourselves in order to bring about change, we as a school are seeking. Especially, our voices must be heard on issues that are very important to us as a school.”

A learner, from school “A” concurred with the mother group chairperson, from school “B” when she said:

“All activities to be done at school should have a clear purpose and be a means to achieving our goal. As a school, we need to raise awareness and support on issues and then influence change together as a school. By including others in our advocacy efforts, they will support the issue and take action toward the school’s common goal. That the intended purpose can be achieved.”

Accounting for advocacy as an approach for the implementation of inclusive school management within the school’s catchment area, the school management committee chairperson, from school “A” had his own story to tell. This was the way he puts it:

“There is a need for the school leadership to understand his / her target audience so that he /she may reach them effectively during the advocacy. We have to identify those that have capacity, ability and passion with school issues to drive those issues and reach out to all the stakeholders and convince them for a process of creating change at school.”

Concurring with the school management committee chairperson, for school “A” was the head teacher from school “B” who highlighted in this way:

“As leaders or implementers of inclusive school management, we have to engage key people and elite authorities within the school catchment area to add voice and influence change. We can also use an advocacy champion, usually a powerful individual at community level, those that have good connection with different actors and stakeholders to help provide the needed change. In this case, we can have strategic engagements with the stakeholders of the school like the parents, legislator for the area, ward counsellors and various committees on education.”

Agreeing with the head teacher, from school “A” was the parent-teacher association chairperson, from school “A” who had this to say:

“Indeed advocacy can be a useful tool to bring together different forces by allowing expression of voices and ensuring accountability of different actors including the head teachers who are holders and implementers of education policies at school level. In one way, advocacy will help us improve educational services at our school.”

4.3.5 Promoting Partnership

Participants agreed that partnership is a common relationship formed in the community and that this kind of relationship is formed by interactions among community members for the sake of need fulfilment. It is an effective method to implement inclusive school management. It also good that a school forms relationships with parents and others in the catchment area of the school. The participants supported that partnerships in education at least involves three components: parents, school and community. He further highlighted that the objectives of this partnership is to promote school program and climate, that provide services and family support, develop leadership skills as parents connect family and community at school, and assist teachers with their work.

School leaders need to foster positive partnerships to improve development of their schools. This environment brings in respect, builds trust and promotes unity of purpose. Participants argued that partnerships between schools and communities in their surrounding is regarded as pivotal in school management. They further, acknowledge that this partnership as the recent demand of education in this era.

4.3.5.1 Collaboration

This is when two or more people work together using thinking and sharing of ideas to achieve a common goal. Collaboration reflects the notion of the school as a community. It involves mutual engagement of participants in a coordinated effort to solve a problem together. When school stakeholders in education collaborate their mutual influence involves shared power and equality amongst participants. According to the participants in the study, a common goal is what binds people together in their work and enables them to achieve positive outcomes. The mother group chairperson, from school “B” explained that:

“It’s very important for everyone to know the goal and subscribe to the goal. That goal right at the top, that’s what we are all working toward.”

Furthermore, the mother group chairperson, from school “A” said:

“The head teacher acts as a bridge between the school and the community. He should always strive to maintain positive collaboration between the two of us. For the school to be effective and also carry out any meaningful development these two institutions must work as collaborative partners. A good collaboration will contribute to a sense of binding among individuals resulting in mutual commitment to each other to achieve the goals.”

The two head teachers in the study, agreed and emphasized that they have a responsibility to bridge the relationship between schools and communities and ensure that inclusive education is always cordial. According to them, schools do not exist independent of their communities. The school get learners from the communities and once they are educated, they return to their communities. They stressed that it requires schools and communities to work as collaborative partners in the management of the schools. The head teacher, from school “A” stressed that:

“Communities have a role to play in implementing the inclusive school management which will see members from the community being elected to this management team to run the affairs of the school and promote the inclusive education.”

Collaboration has become and will continue to be a significant and critical factor in the dynamics of contemporary education and school reforms.

4.3.5.2 Trust

All the respondents in the study gave positive opinions about trust in collaborative working relationship. They showed their views about trust in team members as the collaborative practice cannot be implemented without trust in members.

The parent-teacher association chairperson, from school “A” had this to say:

“Trust must be there among the school stakeholders otherwise members cannot do their work with each other and in the end the team performance will suffer. An example is that sometimes team members are geographically dispersed, so they cannot meet physically with them. Therefore, this is where trust works as a basis that anyone can assign task to another person by trusting him that the person will own the task and will perform the assigned work properly.”

The parent-teacher association chairperson, for school “B” concurred with the parent-teacher association, from school “A” by saying that:

“Trust is the only thing which gives a member confidence to share their things, confidence to work with others and work to help others. Therefore, trust must be there among the members and build peace in working relationships.”

4.3.5.3 Creation of a Shared Vision

Most of the participants said that shared vision has been attributed to the implementation of inclusive school management in Lilongwe rural west. The study has found out that school leaders who have a clear vision can give a team direction and inspiration and be the foundation for goal setting and action planning. They supported that shared vision is necessary to create a learning organization where people are connected, bound together by a common goal. As noted from this statement by the head teacher, from school “B” that:

“A shared vision is intended to generate a clear organizational purpose and promote the necessary changes in the organization so that it can achieve its desired future outcomes. If you become a stakeholder in the shared vision, then, you will work hard to accomplish it.”

This statement clearly shows that if the school stakeholders came together and make a shared vision for their school, the implementation of inclusive school management will be a success for the school programs.

Furthermore, it was stated by the head teacher from school “A” that:

“Involving others in the creation of a vision is a greater degree of commitment, engagement and diversity of thought. It is better to involve team members and other stakeholders who might add valuable ideas and contribute to the vision of the school.”

Shared vision has a possible effect on an organization’s innovativeness which in turn affects the organization’s performance. A shared vision provide guidance on what to preserve and what to change. It should be noted that without shared vision, individuals are less likely to share the desired organization’s outcomes.

The school management committee chair person, from school “A” had this say:

“Achimwene, masomphenya ndi othandiza kutukula sukulu yathu” (My brother, vision can help to develop the progress of our school). A shared vision gives energy and focus which help members to see a deeper meaning in the daily work, instead of feeling as if they are performing routine tasks that do not contribute to the school’s bigger picture.”

The participants noted that critical aspect of a shared vision is that when it is universally known and understood, it gives the organization a sense of purpose and direction. The sense of direction is always the most powerful when objectives are formulated with the school stakeholders who are included in the school’s development.

The parent-teacher association chairperson, from school “A” added that:

“A well-developed school wide vision takes into account the school’s unique strengths, needs and reflects the hopes, needs and efforts of the entire school community. The shared vision provide stakeholders with a sense of collective responsibility and unity.”

However, the school management committee chairperson, from school “B” was quick to argue that to achieve a shared vision and goals, there was a need for the unity of purpose in the inclusive school management team. He said:

“Through the unity of purpose dedication and loyalty are fostered and success through purposeful action is realized since all members of an organization are focused on a common goal.”

4.3.6 Capacity Building

Participants indicated that capacity building as a process of developing and strengthening skills, instincts, abilities and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt and thrive. They said that, it is one of the factors that contribute to the implementation of inclusive school management. Participants stated that, capacity building fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment so that community partners gain greater control over their own future development.

The school management committee chairperson, from school “B” stated that:

“Capacity building is an intervention that strengthens an organization’s ability to fulfil its mission by promoting sound management, and strong governance to achieving results”

These sentiments were supported by Harsh (2010) that capacity building can be seen as a change process targeted at aligning beliefs and refined practices with desired growth targets within the organization, such as a school. It encourages local people to take action on local issues themselves.

According to the respondents of the study, capacity building makes members become efficient and effective. They argued that individual efficiency and effectiveness contributes to group and organizational effectiveness since the whole is the sum of its parts.

4.3.6.1 Training and Support

Most of the participants in this research study revealed that they had very limited or no experiences with the inclusive school management activities, including training and support were restricted. They also revealed that the few workshops that were hosted by the ministry of education were limited to one member representative of the management team through the cascade model of training who had to disseminate the information to the other members of team.

The training workshops could, therefore, be considered hardly successful as the member who had to offer feedback was not able to disseminate the content of the inclusive school management workshop correctly, as the duration of the training workshop was two hours only. According to them, it was virtually impossible to learn everything about inclusive school management. And again there were no follow up workshop and support from the ministry of education. The school management committee chairperson, from school “A” had this to say:

“Training is a means to ensure that members have knowledge and right skills to be able to do their work effectively and competently. Unfortunately, when we got elected to school management committee chairperson position, there is no any training conducted as to how members would interact and work with the school. The training, may help to improve the availability and quality of members in a team as it is a process that involves the acquisition of skills, concepts, rules and attitudes to increase member performance.”

He further said that:

“We use our own initiative to practice the inclusive school management because there is no way out to avoid it.”

The parent-teacher association chairperson, from school “B” revealed that:

“My working experience with the school as a member of the parent-teacher association for quite a good number of years is marvellous. My work at least involved working with several committees with the school but did not know that whatever was being doing was known as the inclusive school management. Now that it has been known, it will be fine-tuned to provide better services.”

However, the school management committee chairperson, from school “B” had the following views:

“May the ministry of education actually provide us with adequate trainings on inclusive school management do that as team members, we should effectively manage the school and promote inclusive education. This is because trained personnel are able to deliver and make better and economic use of the resources thereby reducing and avoiding waste.”

The benefit of training is to enhance the knowledge and skills of the members to operate the task which is set by the organization. Participants asserted that training helps to manage change by increasing the understanding and involvement of members in the change process and also provides the skills and abilities needed to adjust to new situations.

4.3.6.2 Orientation

Commenting on how the school ensured that the content of orientation programs linked with the needs of the new elected members of inclusive school management, the head teachers and the school management committee chairpersons gave varied responses which appeared to suggest that there was no formal preparation for the orientation. The responses of the head teachers and the school management committee chairpersons ranged from relying on the initiative of the inclusive school management members, and some of the experiences of the head teachers of the schools under study.

To ensure that new elected inclusive school management members were linked with the needs of the school, the head teacher for school “A” and from school “B” made the following remarks respectively:

“The newly elected members in various school committees need to be provided information for them to function comfortably and effectively in the school organization. We know that the members’ orientation is about introducing the new members to the work place which includes the job responsibilities, their team members and so on. The idea is to make them feel at home, make them aware of the school policies and familiarize with their new roles and people they will work with.”

The school management committee chairperson, from School “A” and school “B” indicated the following views:

“Effective program of new members of various school committees who will later form the inclusive school management is of vital importance because it reduces the anxiety of the new members by providing them with information on the work environment, introducing them to co-workers, and encouraging them to ask questions where necessary since newly elected members worry about how well they will perform in their new endeavours.”

They further said that:

“A person who has been oriented formally are likely to generate ideas to solve the organizational problems thereby increasing the performance of the organization.”

4.3.7 Document Review

This part of the study analysed the minute book of meetings, mission and vision statements of the two schools that were studied. The mission and the vision statements were analysed to see if they embraced the inclusive education at the school.

It was noted that the mission and the vision statements of the schools did not embrace inclusive education. The mission and the vision statements highlighted quality teaching and learning, academic excellence and nurturing responsible and economically able citizens with morals. They were both silent on inclusive education. The researcher also noted that for both institutions the mission and the vision statements were displayed clearly in the head teacher's office for everyone to see.

The other document that was analysed was the minutes book of the meetings which were held by the school leadership for the two schools. I expected the minutes to also capture something on inclusive education. But there was no such information contained in the minutes of the meeting. The minutes were full of the general development plans of the school and announcements from the district education office and some discipline issues. The circulars from the Ministry of Education were also analysed and were found to be silent on the topic under study and any issue relating to inclusive education.

Despite the two schools being inclusive schools, where they accommodated both learners with and those without disabilities, they lacked emphasis to promote inclusive education in the schools.

4.4 Summary to the chapter

This chapter focused on the findings that emanated from the data that was thematically analysed from the transcripts of the semi-structured interviews and from the document analysis. The strategies which were found to be used by the school leadership were: Team working, positive school culture, effective meetings, open day policy, advocacy, collaboration, and trust, creating a shared vision, orientation and training.

Chapter 5: Discussion of the findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the research carried out at the two primary schools in Lilongwe Rural West, in the Central West Education Division. The findings are discussed in light of the system theory by Bertalanffy (1939). The theory is emphasizing the interaction between the school and its environment. The successful interaction can improve the school's academic performance for both children with disabilities and those without. While the system theory of Ludwig Bertalanffy was incorporated for the discussions, the purpose of the study was to explore strategies employed by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management. Here, the researcher acknowledges that the development of inclusive school management maintains that stakeholder involvement in schools helps to build a school commitment to manage inclusive education at school (Panuel & Riel, 2007). However, the researcher used the system theory in order to find out if the strategies used by school leadership in the implementation of inclusive school management in the school system. Firstly, leadership knowledge and skills: effective communication, decision making, managing meetings, ability to motivate, coordination and providing direction are presented. Secondly, the discussion looks at promotion of inclusive education and this is done in section 5.3. Thirdly, enabling environment for school leadership is presented. The fourth part focusses on partnerships, and the fifth part discusses capacity building in the implementation of inclusive school management.

5.2 Knowledge and skills in inclusive school management

The inclusive school management has an endorsement of the Malawi Government through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology for its implementation in primary schools (MoEST, 2016). The study revealed that the school leadership had limited knowledge and skills

in inclusive school management. They did not have adequate time during the orientation to acquire the needed knowledge and skills in inclusive school management. This finding was not encouraging because the disadvantaged children are still being excluded within the education system. Literature suggests that school leadership plays a critical role in improving learning through a set of leadership practices (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). This is in agreement with what Davidoff and Lazarus (1997) advocated that empowerment of school stakeholders is essential because all the role players feel ownership of the school and without empowerment, people feel disconnected, undervalued and ultimately not engaged in their school work. According to Bertalanffy's system theory, primary school is conceptualized as a system within a bigger education system. This means that it remains an asset of the education system (Emirbayer & Johnsson, 2008 in Dorji, 2010).

The study established that school leadership had a variety of opinions about the inclusive school management. This variety of opinions on inclusive school management reflected the category of school leadership who took part in the study. The study included school leadership who had an orientation on the concept. The orientation took place using the cascade model, such that representatives of the trainer of trainers did not manage to orient other members well. The knowledge and skills they acquired was not enough to make them active members of the inclusive school management. This resulted into other members being lazy to attend to their duties and meetings with other stakeholders in ISM. The information on inclusive school management principles and procedures rested in the few members who attended the orientation session at the zonal headquarters. This was evidenced through the examples they were giving during the discussions. However, the school leadership who attended the orientation and those who were briefed by those who attended, started implementation of inclusive school management in their

schools but lacked vivid examples in their explanations. Generally, all participants perceived inclusive school management concept as very important component of school leadership. They saw it as a reform that has taken a right path that would lead primary school reformation in provision of quality education for both children with and those without disabilities.

The school leadership who attended the orientation assisted other members to have a better understanding of the principle and procedures as vehicles for promoting inclusive education as confirmed by Engelbrecht and Lazarus (2006), who highlighted that inclusive school management would save as a role of monitoring and facilitating inclusive education practices in schools. This would increase accessibility of education by all children and their contribution in school life.

The inclusive school management has shown that it remains a concept for achieving the goal of creating a right based inclusive education with a principle of welcoming all children. To achieve this aim, school based practices on inclusive value are needed, establishing a clear and common concept of inclusive education for the entire educational community (Booth and Ainscow, 2015). Looking at the way the school leadership explained inclusive school management in this study, it was clear that they understood the philosophy behind it and how it works. This understanding will be of much help to future studies on the perception of students towards inclusive education in primary schools in Malawi.

According to systems theory, inputs include knowledge and human resource in an organization (Bertalanffy, 1939; Laszlo, 2010; Krippner, 1997). In this case, school leadership knowledge and skills they have in inclusive school management are the examples of inputs of the system. In the absence of the inputs such as the school leadership playing their role, implementation of inclusive school management at primary school level can be a failure.

5.3 Promoting Inclusive Education

The information gathered in this study established that effective executing of inclusive school management key stakeholders roles and practices, the school can have high academic achievement of the disadvantaged children. This was evident from the school leadership effort to provide a conducive educational climate which helped maximize learning potential in both children with diverse needs and those without. Using Bertalanffy's system, it could be said that school leadership interacted with their environment as they were conformed to their practices, in this regard, their working with the school had to speak volumes on this. In addition, school leadership's understanding of their role in creating a conducive and non-threatening learning environment for all children including those with disabilities has improved (DFID, 2010). The finding of the study concur with Wong and Wong (2014) who established that creating a learning environment for inclusive classroom that is well managed with clear structures and routines is of the utmost importance for students' success. They further highlighted that a school must be a safe place and protected environment where a student can come to learn without fear. The stakeholders ensured that all the learners have the right to sustainable, equitable and quality education and can learn together to achieve their full potential. This was evident from the discussions as the participants said they conduct awareness within the catchment area on key education policies such as the inclusive education among others and they also sensitize parents to allow children with diverse needs attend school. The literature suggests that stakeholders should work hand in hand with the school to achieve the goal number 4 of the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development which calls upon us to ensure inclusive and equitable, quality education and provide life-long opportunities for all (UN, 2015-2030). This is also affirmed by the Malawi Government through the implementation of the Malawi Agenda 2063 (MIP1) which is emphasizing making inclusive

education a priority area. To achieve this aim, all school stakeholders must work together to achieve the common objectives in education.

It emerged from the study that roles and practices of inclusive school management stakeholders create a supportive learning environment which facilitate quality learning experiences for students. The majority of respondents highlighted that the value of inclusive education for every student is that they can work together with other children thereby being included in education. The findings relates to the 2018 studies by European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE which affirmed the importance of inclusive education in that it increases social and academic opportunities for both children with and without disabilities (EASNIE, 2018). The stakeholders organized activities to help parents support their children's learning at home and at school. This was confirmed by Nguyet and Thu Ha (2010) who established that for successful inclusive education, all educators and stakeholders must an attitude that is positive towards inclusive education. They were convinced of the life-long benefits that comes with inclusion.

As regards to school infrastructure, findings revealed that the stakeholders ensured physical access to the schools. To avoid exclusion of children from learning institutions, the inclusive school management stakeholders provided accessible environment within and outside the school. Ogot (2005a) established that accessible environment helps to keep children with disabilities in school. The stakeholders in the study areas adapted the environment to suit the diverse learners' needs. This is corroborated by UNESCO (2004) which state that accessible environment can be possible by building ramps to the classrooms and the school buildings, construction of adapted latrines, enlargement of classroom windows, widening doors, painting walls to improve the light and levelling the play grounds to ease mobility. Similarly. UNICEF (2014) emphasizes that Governments must ensure that the school's infrastructure and facilities are accessible to everyone.

This is also affirmed by article 4 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) which call upon the states to conceive universally designed facilities and develop minimum standards to ensure that facilities are accessible (UN General Assembly, 2007).

The study revealed that inclusive school management stakeholders had a good understanding of the concept of inclusive education. They understand what inclusive education is and they were able to define inclusive education although most of them could not give examples of inclusive education policies in Malawi. Participants believed that all learners should be taught in the same classroom regardless of physical or mental disabilities. Related findings were established by O'Riordan (2017) who established that people understand inclusive education as a shift from the medical model of education to the social model where educational needs of varied learners are met in the mainstream classrooms. The understanding of inclusive education is that, it is a system where all learners, irrespective of their disabilities, are catered for in the same school. A study conducted by Nketsia (2017) established that inclusive education is a process of helping all learners actively participate in the whole learning process without discriminating against those with disabilities or learning barriers. However, In Malawi, inclusive education is viewed as “a learning environment that provide access, accommodates, and supports all learners (MoEVT, 2007, p.6). The knowledge of inclusive education was put into practice by some participants. The literature reviewed suggests that inclusive education focuses on schools and their systems, and in particular the restructuring of the mainstream schools so that they are better able to respond to the diversity of all students (Mitler, 2000). In this case, inclusive school management stakeholders ensured that students developed love and belonging to each other regardless of any discriminatory characteristics. The findings are also supported by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology who established that inclusive school management is the key element in achieving

inclusive education and also highlighted that the involvement of all stakeholders in running the school affairs in Malawi, guarantees a wide range of input, support and ownership in an effort to provide education for all (MoEST, 2016). The above mentioned findings reiterate the importance of emphasizing the interaction between the individual's development and the systems within the school's context as stated by Bertalanffy (1939).

It also emerged from the study that most of the key inclusive school management stakeholders' meetings were partially related to the promotion of inclusive school management. The meetings were conducted to communicate information from the district education office and to make other special announcements. This slowed down the enthusiasm which stakeholders had to implement inclusive school management and embrace inclusive education. Some participants pointed out the need to discuss inclusive education in their stakeholders' meetings. Craven & Golabowski (2000) established that meetings should support the organization's goal and mission. In this case, the goal and mission of the inclusive school management meeting was to discuss its implementation and promotion of inclusive education. Similarly, this is confirmed by the Malawi Education Standard 13 which calls for adoption of strategies and practices that support all learners irrespective of their status to attain educational outcomes without hindrances (MoEST, 2013). Therefore, having fruitful discussions in the inclusive school management meeting would have shown and bring positive results for the education for all.

The system theory by Bertalanffy, ascertains that a school does not operate independent of its community. There is always perpetual interaction sandwiched between the two. This, demonstrates the importance of interaction that its success depends on the interaction between the school and its stakeholders such as parents to work together to help school leadership implement inclusive school management. This is in view of the fact that the school gets its inputs from the local community,

works on them as through puts and outputs from the local community. The district education office must make sure that it works with schools to promote inclusive school management to be fully implemented in schools.

5.4 Enabling Environment for School Leadership to Implement Inclusive School Management

The study established that proper use of strategies for implementing inclusive school management can enhance community participation in school programs which is ideal for children learning process. The participants highlighted that team working and open door policy were good strategies because team working among the school stakeholders was described as a group that is always working together in performing their task and be aware of their commitment and roles in achieving the desired education goals. Related study by Salas, E. et al; (2015) revealed that using team work helps in determining multiple solutions as team members bring their collective ideas to address an issue. On the other hand, the open door policy was cited as a critical strategy to implement inclusive school management because the stakeholders are able to approach the school leadership with any issue, concerns or comments regarding the ongoing school development in their school. Literature reviewed established that organizations with open door policy enjoy cordial environment that fosters healthy discussions between management and its members and that a true leader has to have a genuine open door policy so that his people are not afraid to approach him/her for any reasons (Mc Cabe, 1990). Once school leaders have learnt these strategies on inclusive school management, they will be able to implement them in their respective primary schools.

The presented study also revealed that creating a positive school culture is a strategy to enhance the implementation of the inclusive school management in schools. It was evident that positive school culture empowered all the school leadership to work towards common goals which

improves the effectiveness of the schools. This is confirmed by the study conducted by Van der Weisthuizen et al (2005) who posit that a positive school culture plays a significant role in directing the behavior of the school members towards achieving the school goals and that school leadership can contribute to the effectiveness of schools by building positive school cultures. Adequate orientation to school leadership, as revealed by this study, can lead to the enhancement of the implementation of inclusive school management in primary schools.

Another strategy which emerged from this study is that of effective meetings. Some participants highlighted that effective meetings provided another way that helped people to boost team work practice because each member can share their own achievement, problems and can even come up with the better solutions, in a way members can be on track that goes directly to higher achievements. The study concurs with Cornelius & Associates (2006) who advocated that the goal of effective meeting is to move a group of people through a process towards developing a common desired outcome. The strategy was ideal for school leadership to implement the inclusive school management fully.

The study also revealed that advocacy was the strategy which the school leadership used to implement inclusive school management. Most participants highlighted that advocacy involved the school leadership in speaking out for themselves the things that are important to them, such as the issue of inclusive school management or inclusive education. A related study was conducted by Heliesar (2008) who revealed that advocacy involves participation in the policy making process, raising public awareness and support to shift balance of power and bring about change. The strategy was seen to be of benefit in the implementation of inclusive school management.

It was also revealed from this study that the use of inclusive school management in schools provided tremendously to the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools since it

involves all the school stakeholders within the school. Therefore, each key stakeholder had a need to ensure that inclusive school management was active at the study schools. This is confirmed by the British Council Report (2020) which revealed that the development of inclusive school management is essential to provide guidance for school leadership and teachers in implementing inclusive education. Similarly, the Malawi Government through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology affirmed that inclusive school management is the key element in achieving inclusive education (MoEST, 2016). Thus, involving key stakeholders in a meaningful way through inclusive school management helped to foster positive feelings between the school and the parents. The system theory by Bertalanffy (1939) emphasizes taking into consideration the interrelationship among the parts of the organization and its environment, the study engaged the school leadership, parents and the community members as important parts of the school system.

5.5 Promoting Partnership

The study disclosed that creating partnerships with parents and the community was another strategy school leadership employed in implementing inclusive school management. Parents and schools are two of the central living environments of children as such their partnership is an important factor in education. It allows formation of a common relationship in the community by interaction of the parents and the community members for the sake of need fulfilment.

This result correspond with the finding by Epstein (2009), which stated that partnership in education at least involves three components: parents, school and community. He further highlighted that the objective of this partnership is to promote school programs and climate, provide service and family support, and develop skills and leadership as parents, connect families and community at school and assist teachers with their works. This interaction brings in respect, it

builds trust and promotes the unity of purpose at school level. The partnership resulted in positive education programs at the school such as the inclusive education to take its course.

5.5.1 Collaboration

The study revealed that collaboration between the school and other stakeholders was another strategy used by the school leadership. This collaboration engaged the school stakeholders in a coordinated effort to plan school development programs together. In turn the initiation of new programs at the school were welcomed by all the people. Related studies affirmed that stakeholders in a collaborative relationship hold common or mutual goals that may be beneficial to their organization, to themselves as well as to each other (Cook & Friend, 1991; Welsh & Sheridan, 1995; West, 1990). Stakeholders in collaboration process share information, responsibilities to jointly plan, implement and evaluate their program of activities to achieve a common goal. Similarly, the collaboration in education may bring together people of unequal status such as head teachers, parents and community members but all these stakeholders must believe that they have a meaningful contribution to make and their input must be valued to others (O'shea & O'shea, 1997). Thus, putting parents and community members in school governance is a way to include an important group of stakeholders with the hope of gaining increased support and satisfaction. This also improves the school's responsiveness to their communities.

5.5.2 Creating a Shared vision

The study established that creating a shared vision was another strategy used by school leadership to implement inclusive school management. Most of the participants highlighted that a clear vision can give a team direction, inspiration and be the foundation for goal setting and action planning. When one become a stakeholder in a shared vision, he/she then will work hard to accomplish the set objectives because a shared vision gives members energy and focus. Senge (1990) revealed

that shared vision is what you and other members want to create or accomplish as part of an organization and he further state that; a shared vision is derived from the members of the organization by creating common interests and a sense of shared purpose for all the organization's activities. Similarly, Calantone et al. (2002) found that shared vision has a positive effect on an organization's innovativeness which in turn effects the organization's performance. Thus, a shared vision can help generate a clear purpose and promote the necessary changes in the organization such as the school, that it can achieve its desired future outcomes.

The schools understudy were examined as a system by Bertalanffy. The reason was to see how they interact with the environment and assess what kinds of systems exist in the schools and how the school leadership employed the strategies for implementing inclusive school management.

5.6 Capacity Building of School leadership

Under capacity building of school leadership there emerged two themes which included orientation and training. The school leadership acknowledge the importance of capacity building on the concept of inclusive school management before they can begin executing their duties as members of inclusive school management so that they would have positive impact in the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools. As such, capacity building would help in bringing the mindset change.

5.6.1 Orientation

Orientation of school leadership is another strategy which emerged from this study. The orientation was inadequately done such that participants did not acquire the required skills in ISM. The school leadership need to be inducted so that they are provided with information which is needed to function effectively in an organization. It is to make the new selected members feel at home, make them aware of the school policies and familiarize them with the new role and people they will

work with. The study findings concurs with Majoko (2016) and Engelbrecht et al; (2015) who advocated that school stakeholders need to be fully oriented to be able to implement various school programs in schools. However, not all the school stakeholders had received the orientation at the two schools and that the orientation time was not adequate for the participants to gain the required knowledge and skills in inclusive school management. It was evident that there was need for adequate orientation for the school leadership to operate properly.

5.6.2 Training

The study revealed that some school leadership had limited knowledge or no experiences with inclusive school management activities, including training. Training provides the skills and abilities needed by members to adjust to new situations at the school. Participants highlighted that training of school leadership was the most needed thing to eliminate the gap which exists in inclusive school management and equip them with knowledge and skills which can enhance their capabilities. A related study by Sommer Ville (2007) revealed that the benefit of training is to enhance the knowledge and skills of employees to operate the task which is set by the organization. School leadership should receive the training thoroughly to enable them execute their roles at their school and as part of motivation. The training would have propelled their working as inclusive school management members and embrace inclusive education.

The system theory by Bertalanffy, provided a good platform on which to assess the purpose of the study. It explains the interrelationship which exist between different organizations. As noted in the study, there are a variety of strategies employed by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management. These strategies fall within the five themes namely: knowledge and skills of school leadership, promoting inclusive education, creating enabling environment for school leadership, promoting partnerships and capacity building. It calls for collaboration among different

local and national players in education sector such as the DEM, MoEST and nonstate actors like NGOs and the community at large. These play their rightful role to support the school leadership in their quest to implement inclusive school management and embrace inclusive education.

Chapter 6: Summary Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of the current research study was to explore the strategies employed by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management in selected primary schools in Lilongwe rural west. In this chapter, the context of the problem presented in chapter one is given. Then, the chapter presents a summary of the key findings, conclusion and recommendations based on these findings and in sync with related objectives. These are then followed by the limitations of the study; suggestions for areas for further research study.

The critical research question guiding the study was on how school leadership implement inclusive school management in the selected primary schools in Lilongwe rural west. In order to answer this critical research question and achieve the purpose of the study, the following were the research objectives that guided the study:

1. To assess knowledge and skills equipped by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management at the selected primary schools.
2. To examine the roles and practices of inclusive school management stakeholders in the implementation of inclusive education at the selected primary schools.
3. To analyze strategies employed by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management at the selected schools.

6.2 Summary of the Key Findings

The first objective focused on the assessment of whether or not school leadership were equipped with knowledge and skills in implementing inclusive school management at the selected primary schools in Lilongwe rural west. Findings revealed that effective communication, decision making, managing meetings, and leading by example, managing conflicts, ability to motivate others, providing direction and coordination, were key factors of the knowledge and skills thematic area. These factors enhance school leadership to work cooperatively with each other in inclusive school management. As school leaders, there is a need to have these knowledge and skills in order to achieve the desired set objectives.

The second objective examined roles and practices of inclusive school management stakeholders in implementing inclusive education.

The study findings revealed that roles and practices of inclusive school management stakeholders in implementing inclusive education have positive impact on the welfare and learning process of children both with and without disabilities. For example, the parent-teacher association chairperson has a duty to support parents, teachers and students to ensure that all children are treated in accordance with the ethos of the school. The school management committee chairperson has a responsibility for ensuring high quality education and learning resources for all students with and those without disabilities are provided at the school. The findings indicate that students with disabilities have an added advantage to work on class assignment with those without disabilities. This has been due to social interaction which exists in inclusive setting at the school.

Finally, the third objective discussed the Strategies employed by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management.

From the study, the following strategies were found to be used by the school leadership in the implementation of inclusive school management and promote inclusive education. These are creating enabling environment for school leadership, promoting partnership and capacity building.

By creating an enabling environment for school leadership, it was revealed from the findings that the working together of school leadership was ideal to enhance community participation at school which could bring positive changes needed in schools. The factors include: Team working, creating a positive school culture, effective meetings, advocacy and open door policy.

On promoting partnership, findings revealed that no man is an island. The inclusive school management committee need to work with other partners like parents in order to promote school programs and that interacting with others brings trust to the school leadership. Therefore, it becomes very easy to initiate new school programs and developments.

Capacity building was also found to be very useful to the school leadership. Members of ISM need to be oriented before they begin to execute their roles so that they know what to do. The factors on capacity building include the orientation and training.

6.3 Conclusion

This study has been about strategies employed by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management in selected primary schools in Lilongwe rural west, in the central west education division. The study was an excitement as it accorded a rare opportunity to get to the bottom of the appropriate strategies which are used by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management. Several strategies were clearly found but chief among them were the strategies bordering on creating enabling environment for school leadership to implement inclusive school management and specifically, team working, positive school culture, effective meetings,

collaboration and trainings among others. These promote the implementation of inclusive school management and improve inclusive education.

The findings revealed that school leadership have an important role to implement the inclusive school management and therefore promote inclusive education. However, they face some difficulties in their roles as they have limited knowledge and skills to implement the inclusive school management. One important point that was cited was that as school leaders, they are largely responsible for implementing inclusive school management but they were not part of the formulation of the system of inclusive school management since the formulation of policies is done at national level, affecting school leadership who were only duty bound to implement only. As such they cannot be against the system but just to implement them. As school leadership, they feel that their role towards promoting inclusive education jeopardized. They also mentioned about lack of support for inclusive school management in schools by the district education headquarters and Ministry of education itself as one of the factor impeding the promotion of inclusive education.

The school management committee chairperson and the parent-teacher association chairperson as stakeholders of inclusive school management, they need to have a thorough training in inclusive school management so that they are able to work perfectly as a team and achieve the set objectives of the school. Such being the case, it means they need to be motivated to boost their morale and working commitment for the school programs.

It is a necessity that to effectively implement inclusive school management, school leadership are required to undergo some orientation which would equip them with requisite competences. However, it was found from the study that some of the inclusive school management stakeholders had limited knowledge and skills due to that the orientation time they attended did not much with the contents they were supposed to learn. Much more, in one school, only two people attended the

orientation with an aim of orienting other fellow inclusive school management stakeholders when they go back to their schools. This meant that the process of orientation was underachieved by the key stakeholders of inclusive school management.

Additionally, the two head teachers and two mother group chairpersons underscored that promoting the implementation of inclusive education in the study site is not a precinct of one man but requires a multilevel sectoral approach. They accepted the idea that there must be a shared responsibility in education to work as a team in inclusive school management to promote inclusive education.

Lilongwe rural west is among those districts which suffers exclusion of marginalized students in education sector. However, little was known as to why disadvantaged children in particular had low pass rate in the standard eight national examinations. Hence, there was a need for this particular study so as to unearth the appropriate strategies employed by school leadership to implement inclusive school management to promote inclusive education.

More precisely, this study had several objectives. Firstly, it did assess the knowledge and skills which are equipped by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management in selected primary schools in Lilongwe rural west. Secondly, it examined roles and practices that inclusive school management stakeholders do to implement inclusive education i.e. forming education climate which provides learning opportunities for all students, including those with disabilities. Thirdly, it has uncovered strategies used by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management. By using the strategies, all learners will benefit their learning potential and achieve high academic achievements, in particular the disadvantaged learners.

Basically, interviews and document analysis were the researcher's main ways of collecting data. The semi-structured interviews were used.

Since the researchers' intention was to explore the strategies employed by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management in selected primary schools, interpretivist paradigm was used. This paradigm was found to be the most appropriate because it allowed in-depth interaction between the researcher and the participants.

This study has employed one theory; the system theory. The theory addresses the objectives of this study since it is used to explain the interrelationship that exists between different organizations. In this case the school and communities it works with.

From the findings of this research study, it is beyond any reasonable doubt that school leadership have a central role to provide a conducive learning environment for all learners to be included in the education system and achieve their potential in life.

6.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following summary of recommendations for action are being made:

- The Ministry of Education should devise a follow up program and support the inclusive school management to see to it that it is being implemented in all schools.
- The Ministry of Education should come up with a manual or hand book for inclusive education roles and procedures on ISM and distribute the hand book to all schools.
- The District Education offices should provide meaningful orientation to inclusive school management key stakeholders before they begin to execute their duties as members of inclusive school management.

- A lot of sensitization meetings be undertaken with the community members that surround schools to make them understand the rationale for inclusive education.
- The Department of Inclusive Education under the Ministry of Education in Malawi needs to set standards and requirements for inclusive school management and ensure that these standards are met in all schools.

6.5 Contribution of the study to theory and practice

The findings of this study have implications for both theory and practice. The main theoretical contribution that this study offers regards to issues of inclusive school management in schools. The issue of inclusive school management need to also be looked upon from a micro perspective. As findings suggest, school leadership at micro level, has a critical role to play in order to promote inclusive education. Through provision of aspects that improve inclusive school management like effective communication, managing meetings, decision making, ability to motivate others, stakeholders' practices in inclusive school management, coordination and providing direction. Besides, there is also need for fostering collaboration among members and with the community, team working, and promoting a positive school culture. School leadership also need to be supported with capacity building through the provision of orientation and training. Through creating enabling environment that enriches key stakeholders in inclusive school management work, school leadership at school level can raise and gain commitment of members in inclusive school management and therefor, promote inclusive education.

The findings of this study and recommendations provide a guide to school education managers, policy makers and other concerned stakeholders in the education sector to enable them recognize and initiate strategies at school level that will make school leadership work place experience in

primary schools, a more friendly, enjoying and satisfying. By promoting and supporting inclusive school management so as to promote inclusive education.

6.6 Limitations of the Study

As noted by Cohen et al, (2006), every research has its own limitations. In the case of this study, the following were the limitations:

- The Covid- 19 pandemic caused considerable delays during the study. The number of learners coming school was reduced due to the mandatory wearing of mouth masks of which most learners did not have, such that it took a long time for the researcher to interview possible learners for the study.
- There is not much research that has been done on the inclusive school management in Malawi primary schools. Available literature on this subject is minimal.
- Some of the participants refused to have the interview recorded and it was difficult to capture all that they said. However, the remedy was to capture the main points from their responses and write down as field notes.

6.7 Areas for further research

The following are recommendations for areas that further research should look at in order to

- It is recommended that the Malawi Government conducts a large scale research on the strategies employed by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management country wide.
- It is suggested that the Malawi Government conducts a study on the perception of students with disabilities on the implementation of inclusive education in Malawi.
- A comparative study on management styles that promote inclusive education in primary schools.

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List of Tables.....	130
Table 1.1a Njewa Zone Standard 8 National Examinations Results for all Students.....	6
Table 1.1b Njewa Zone Results for Learners with Special Educational Needs: Standard 8 National Examinations	7
Table 3.1 Sex of Participants	31
Table 4.1a Biographical Data of Participants.....	47
Table 4.1b Biographical Data of Participants.....	48
Table 4.2 The Matrix which presents Themes that emerged from the study findings.....	49
Table 4.3 Codes and their descriptions.....	50

Appendix A: Interview guide for the Head teachers

Introduction

The researcher is carrying out this study, as a partial fulfilment of academic requirement. The study aims to explore the strategies used by school leadership in implementing inclusive school management. I would like to ask your permission to audio record our discussion during this interview. The information you will provide will be treated with confidentiality and will be used solely for academic purpose.

What do you understand by the term inclusive school management?

Do you have any background in inclusive education?

What leadership knowledge and skills did you do in inclusive school management?

Tell me the appropriate strategies you use in the implementation of inclusive school management?

Can you describe your work as a school leader with the school stakeholders to promote inclusive education?

Describe how you involve learners in decision making process.

How important is the implementation of inclusive school management in your mainstream primary school?

Can you describe the roles and practices of inclusive school management at your school?

What challenges do you face in the implementation of inclusive school management at your school?

What are your general suggestions that you think can improve the implementation of inclusive school management?

Appendix B: Interview Guide for School Management Committee Chairperson

What are your roles in Inclusive school management as school committee chairperson?

Describe how you work with other school stakeholders in making school for all at your school.

What could be done to implement inclusive school management in the school?

Did you receive any training in in inclusive school management?

If yes, how is it helping you?

If no, what are the challenges?

How are parents of children with disabilities involved in school activities?

Describe any inclusive school management you do at this school.

How accessible are the facilities at your school for the learners with special educational needs?

What are the challenges you face when working together as inclusive school management?

What suggestions do you have as how to promote inclusive education at your school?

Tell me the standard eight national results between special educational needs children and those without at your school.

Appendix C: Interview Guide for Mother Group Chairperson

What is your understanding of inclusive school management?

Have you ever heard about inclusive education? Where? and When?

Describe how you work with other school stakeholders in order to promote inclusive school management?

Did you have any training on inclusive education?

Do you have any strategies you use to work with other stakeholders of the school?

Are you satisfied on how you work with other school stakeholders on how to promote inclusive education?

What changes can take place to improve inclusive school management at your school?

What are your roles and practices in inclusive school management at this school?

How would you describe the support children with special educational needs receive from their families?

What challenges do you face in inclusive school management?

Appendix D: Interview Guide for Learners

What is your understanding of inclusive education?

What are your roles in inclusive school management at this school?

How are you involved in the school decision making processes?

What is the benefit of learning together with learners with special educational needs?

What can the school do to promote inclusive school management?

Describe how you assist the school to promote inclusive education?

Describe the standard eight national examinations results between children with special educational need and those without at this school?

Appendix E: Interview Guide for the Parents and Teachers Association chairperson

What is inclusive school management?

Describe your working relationship with the head teacher as regards to promoting inclusive Education?

Can you describe your roles and practices on inclusive school management?

How do you describe the ways you use in your work to collaborate with other stakeholders of your school?

Could you please describe the community perception of children with special educational needs?

How do you compare the standard eight Malawi national examinations results for the past three years at your school between children with special educational needs and those without?

What is the relationship between parents and teachers as regards to inclusive school management?

Do you have any suggestions on how to promote inclusive school management?

What are the elements of communication that facilitates inclusive school management?

Appendix F: MZUZU UNIVERSITY

Department of Teaching, Learning and

Curriculum Studies

Mzuzu University

Private Bag 201

Luwinga

Mzuzu 2

Tel: (265) 01320575/722

Fax: (265) 01320568

Mdolo.mm@mzuni.ac.mw

16TH MAY 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/ Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: MR HAROLD CHAWINGA

Mr Harold Chawinga is a registered Master of Education (Leadership and Management) program student at Mzuzu University. He has been cleared by the Mzuzu University Research Ethics Committee (MZUNIREC) to collect data for the research study he is conducting as a requirement for the program.

Kindly assist him accordingly.

Yours Faithfully,

Dr Margaret M. Mdolo

Program Coordinator

Appendix G: Request to Conduct Research

Mzuzu University

Private Bag 201

Luwinga

Mzuzu 2

Dear Sir/ Madam,

REQUEST FOR CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOU INSTITUTION

I am a Master of Education student in Leadership and Management at Mzuzu University. I am doing research on “Strategies Employed by School Leadership in Implementing Inclusive School Management in public primary schools in Lilongwe Rural West.

I would like to seek for consent to collect information from your institution concerning Inclusive Education. Your responses to the interview will be treated as confidential and will be used for academic purpose only. I assure that your identity and your institution will not be disclosed.

Yours Faithfully,



Harold Jairus Chawinga

Cell: 0993647415/ 0888046017 Email: haroldchawinga@gmail.com

Appendix H: A Consent Letter

Dear Participant,

I am a student of Mzuzu University in the department of Education and Teaching Studies (ETS) under the supervision of Dr. S. Gwayi. I am pursuing Masters of Education (Leadership and Management).

You are hereby kindly invited to participate in a research exercise titled Strategies Employed by School Leadership in Implementing Inclusive School Management: A case of selected primary schools in Lilongwe Rural West. The purpose of the study is to explore strategies for implementing inclusive school management.

The study employed focus on document analysis and interview methods. The researcher hopes that's the derived information may help in the leadership in whether enhancing or modifying the practices in regard to Inclusive Education. Furthermore, it may help to rectify appropriate strategies that educators use during implementation of Inclusive Education.

The information that was collected was be treated with utmost confidentiality. Please note that participation in this study is absolutely voluntary; meaning one is free to excuse him/herself from participating anytime s/he feels to do so. There was no any form of token other than verbal upon participating in this exercise. Be assured that the responses to this study would only be used for academic purposes. As such, participant's identity were concealed.

If you are interested to participate in this study, please sign below:

Signature..... Date:/...../2022

Appendix I: MZUNIREC Approval Letter



MZUZU UNIVERSITY

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH

Mzuzu University
Private Bag 201
L u w i n g a
M z u z u 2
M A L A W I
TEL: 01 320 722
FAX: 01 320 648

MZUZU UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (MZUNIREC)

Ref No: MZUNIREC/DOR/22/63

12th May, 2022

Harold Chawinga,
Mzuzu University,
P/Bag 201,
Mzuzu.

haroldchawinga@gmail.com

Dear Harold Chawinga,

RESEARCH ETHICS AND REGULATORY APPROVAL AND PERMIT FOR PROTOCOL REF NO: MZUNIREC/DOR/22/63: STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN LILONGWE RURAL WEST.

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

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

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

Committee Address:

Secretariat, Mzuzu University Research Ethics Committee, P/Bag 201, Luwinga, Mzuzu 2; Email address: mzunirec@mzuni.ac.mw

Wishing you a successful implementation of your study.

Yours Sincerely,



Gift Mbwele

MZUZU UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATOR

For: CHAIRMAN OF MZUNIREC