

**Investigating how social studies teachers implement continuous  
assessment in Malawi: A case of urban community day secondary  
schools in Mzuzu City**

By

**Joseph Kawale**  
**(MEDTE11/18)**

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Education in Teacher Education

At

Mzuzu University

November, 2025

## Declaration

I, Joseph Kawale, declare that, the organisation and writing of this thesis is entirely my own and has been carried out at Mzuzu University under the supervision of Dr. Foster Lungu. It has not, nor is it being concurrently submitted for any other degree than the Master of Education (Teacher Education) of Mzuzu University.

All reference material contained in here has been duly acknowledged.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

(Student)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

(Supervisor)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Acknowledgements**

My heartfelt gratitude goes to my Heavenly Father for giving me life, strength and internal guidance to accomplish this task. To God be the Glory. He makes everything beautiful in its time (Ecclesiastes 3: 11).

My profound acknowledgements should go to my supervisor, Dr. Foster Lungu for his guidance, inspiration, patience and giving me fulfilling academic experience. I am also grateful to my wife, Wanangwa Mzumara-Kawale, my son Elhurg and my two daughters Chigomezgo and Kimberly for their patience and understanding when I dedicated time to this study. I also thank my father and mother, Rev Dr. Winston Raphael Kawale and Mrs Sneria Kawale, my father-in-law Mr. Plaston Mzumara and my brother Hon Sam Kawale for their moral and material support.

I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to my brother-in-law Misheck Mzumara for his support and for making the years I spent at Mzuzu University to be some of the most worthwhile moments of my life.

Thanks also to the Head Teachers for their cooperation and support to allow me to conduct this study in their schools. Finally, special thanks to the participating teachers who spared their valuable time to provide data for this study.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to my wife Wanangwa Mzumara-Kawale, my father Rev Dr. Winston Raphael Kawale and my mother Mrs Sneria Kawale.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the implementation of continuous assessment (CA) by social studies teachers in urban community day secondary schools in Mzuzu city. It revealed challenges faced by social studies teachers and investigated CA practices and techniques. Qualitative case study design was used and Purposive Sampling technique was used to sample the 16 social studies teachers from eight secondary schools. The Planned Change Model was used as a theoretical framework to understand the perception of teachers on CA. Primary data was collected through an interview guide with closed and open-ended questions. The key findings were that social studies teachers do not use diverse assessment strategies and that teachers do not assess all the three domains of learning (cognitive, affective and psychomotor). Challenges that persist when the social studies teachers implement CA such as lack of learner seriousness, inadequate time, large class sizes, resource constraints, low attendance and cheating were amongst the findings. Teacher perceptions analysed in the study revealed mixed views on CA, with both positive and negative perceptions and that the strategies teachers use to curb the challenges do not fully address challenges. The study highlights a gap between policy and practice and the need for teachers to be oriented in conducting CA and addressing challenges. The study emphasises on the importance of CA as it enables teachers to monitor progress and adjust instruction. The recommendations include teacher development programs focusing on assessment, addressing challenges through resource allocation, policy refinement and enhancing teacher support. This study informs education policy, teacher development, and practice improvements to enhance student learning outcomes in Malawi.

**Keywords:** Continuous Assessment, Summative Assessment, Formative Assessment, Outcome Based Education (OBE), Assessment Strategies

## **Abbreviations**

CA            Continuous Assessment

MIE           Malawi Institute of Education

OBE           Outcomes-Based Education

MSCE        Malawi School Certificate of Education

JCE           Junior Certificate of Education

MANEB       Malawi National Examinations Board

CPD           Continuous Professional Development

MOE           Ministry of Education

# Table of Contents

|                                                                          |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Declaration .....                                                        | 2  |
| Acknowledgements.....                                                    | 3  |
| Dedication.....                                                          | 4  |
| ABSTRACT .....                                                           | 5  |
| Abbreviations .....                                                      | 7  |
| List of Tables.....                                                      | 11 |
| CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .....                                             | 12 |
| 1.1 Chapter Overview.....                                                | 12 |
| 1.2 Background information.....                                          | 12 |
| 1.3 Problem Statement.....                                               | 18 |
| 1.4 Main Objective .....                                                 | 19 |
| 1.5 Specific Objectives .....                                            | 19 |
| 1.6 Significance of the Study.....                                       | 19 |
| 1.7 Limitations.....                                                     | 20 |
| 1.8 Delimitations .....                                                  | 21 |
| CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW .....                                       | 22 |
| 2.1 Chapter Overview.....                                                | 22 |
| 2.2 Definitions of Continuous Assessment and its Importance.....         | 22 |
| 2.3 Continuous Assessment Strategies/Techniques .....                    | 27 |
| 2.4 Challenges Faced by teachers in Implementing Continuous .....        | 30 |
| Assessments.....                                                         | 30 |
| 2.5 Theoretical Framework .....                                          | 33 |
| 2.6 Summary of the Literature Review and Theoretical Framework and ..... | 39 |
| Conclusion.....                                                          | 39 |

|                                                                             |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY .....                                                 | 41 |
| 3.1 Chapter Overview.....                                                   | 41 |
| 3.2 Research Design .....                                                   | 41 |
| 3.3 Study Site/ Location .....                                              | 43 |
| 3.4 Sample .....                                                            | 43 |
| 3.4.1 Characteristics of the Sample Used.....                               | 44 |
| 3.5 Data Collection.....                                                    | 47 |
| 3.6 Data Analysis .....                                                     | 49 |
| 3.7. Trustworthiness and Credibility .....                                  | 50 |
| 3.7.1. Triangulation .....                                                  | 50 |
| 3.7.2. Member Checking.....                                                 | 52 |
| 3.8 Ethical Consideration .....                                             | 53 |
| CHAPTER FOUR. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION .....                        | 55 |
| 4.1 Chapter Overview.....                                                   | 55 |
| 4.2 Implementation of Continuous Assessment by Teachers.....                | 55 |
| 4.2.1 Frequency in Conducting Continuous Assessment .....                   | 55 |
| 4.2.2 Resources Used .....                                                  | 59 |
| 4.2.3 Techniques used When Conducting Continuous Assessments .....          | 61 |
| 4.3 Challenges teachers meet when implementing continuous assessments ..... | 64 |
| 4.3.1 Low Attendance of Leaners in Assessments.....                         | 64 |
| 4.3.2 Time Factor .....                                                     | 68 |
| 4.3.3 Inadequate Assessment Tools.....                                      | 75 |
| 4.3.4 Cheating.....                                                         | 80 |
| 4.3.5 Inadequate or No Orientation .....                                    | 83 |
| 4.3.6 Negative Perceptions of Teachers on Continuous Assessments.....       | 86 |

|                                                                       |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| CHAPTER 5. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS... | 95  |
| 5.1 Chapter Overview.....                                             | 95  |
| 5.2 Summary of findings .....                                         | 95  |
| 5.3. Conclusion.....                                                  | 98  |
| 5.4. Recommendations. ....                                            | 100 |
| 5.5 Areas of Further Study.....                                       | 101 |
| REFERENCES .....                                                      | 102 |

## List of Tables

|                                                                                                                    |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Table 3.1 Summary of the respondent's characteristics                                                              | 46 |
| Table 4.1. Summary of frequency in conducting Continuous Assessment                                                | 57 |
| Table 4.2. Number of teachers and the resources used when conducting CA                                            | 61 |
| Table 4.3. Techniques teachers use to assess learners                                                              | 62 |
| Table 4.4 Illustration of the number of learners against the respondents                                           | 81 |
| Table 4.5 Summary of the perception of the respondents on CA                                                       | 88 |
| Table 4.6 Summary of the challenges associated with CA, their possible causes and strategies used to address them. | 92 |

# **CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Chapter Overview**

This chapter presents the background information, problem statement, main objective, specific objectives, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations.

## **1.2 Background information**

According to Malawi Institute of Education (MIE 2013), the Malawi Government through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology reviewed the secondary school curriculum with a view to improving its quality and relevance. The secondary school curriculum has been aligned with the primary school curriculum which has been reviewed prior to the secondary school one which emphasizes on continuous assessment as a tool for learning. The Malawi Ministry of Education Science and Technology in 2009 produced a report on Curriculum and Assessment Reform report, explaining that continuous assessment in the teaching and learning process provides feedback on what learners have achieved and so builds up a record of each learner's progress against the primary outcomes for each learning area and also gives a chance to learners to assess their own performances and setting their own goals for improvement. According to the NESP (2008-2017) and PIF (2000), the rationale for reviewing the secondary school curriculum was to provide students with the academic basis for gainful employment in formal, private and public sectors and to prepare students for further education according to their abilities and aptitudes. It is important to note that for the majority of children in Malawi, secondary education is terminal.

Consequently, according to the MIE (2013), the curriculum aims at enabling students to develop into adults with sound intellectual, moral, physical and emotional abilities. It also put emphasis on practical skills that enable students to achieve self-employment and at the same time addressing the whole range of students' interests, equipping them to become independent learners. For this to be achieved, much emphasis is focused on student-centered teaching and learning approaches, and most importantly, assessment of learners.

Abejehu (2016) defines assessment as any activity that is designed to collect information about the knowledge, attitudes, or skill of the learner or a group of learners. It is also a process through which the quality of an individual's work or performance is judged. It plays a significant role in the educational development of a learner. Assessments provide the necessary feedback required in order to maximize the outcomes of educational efforts. It is a means of quality control of determining the level of accountability displayed by stake holders in the educational industry and also of determining the effectiveness of teaching and learning as well as in finding out student achievement. Assessment should be conducted frequently in order to be updated on the performance of the individuals being assessed, hence the term Continuous Assessment (CA).

Continuous Assessment is a method in which the students' performance in a term, session, or a course is determined using a series of tests and other instruments administered on the students at various times. It can be conducted at the end of a lesson, topic, and theme on weekly or monthly basis. Therefore, it is an ongoing process based on observations of what learners know, understand and can do (Plessis

et al 2003). Jones (2018) argues that the practice is not simply continuous testing, but is beyond giving a test since it involves every decision made by the teacher in a class to improve students' achievement. It is a demanding task that requires the use of various assessment tools in order to assure the achievement of curricular objectives by each and every student (Abera, 2012). According to Hayes et. al (2020), continuous assessment is characterized by its systematic, comprehensive, cumulative nature and guided oriented technique of evaluation rather than single terminal process of learner evaluation. Therefore, it promotes frequent interaction between students and teachers that enable teachers to know the strengths and weaknesses of learners and to identify which student needs review and remediation.

The introduction of continuous assessment in the Malawian secondary school curriculum have been received with mixed reactions by teachers and other educational stakeholders, especially in secondary schools. Some teachers may have embraced this mode of assessing learners on a continuous basis on the premise that continuous assessments give them an opportunity to assess the learners' progress periodically and give feedback to the learners for motivation Suksie (2018). However, other teachers may not be comfortable with continuous assessments. From my experience of teaching Social Studies for over 10 years and anecdotal information from other fellow teachers, continuous assessments have increased their workload in terms of planning, conducting/administering, marking and recording the assessments, which is a lot of work considering the high teacher-learner ratio of 1:70. Under the Millennium Development Goals, the target was 1:40 (UNESCO: 2007). The Sustainable

Development Goals (2015-2030) set the target at 1:30. While the Malawi's National Education Sector Plan 2008-2017 sets the target at 1:60.

As the CA is being implemented in all secondary schools of Malawi, it is faced with several challenges that hinder its effective implementation. According to Obi and Obineli (2019), a noticeable challenge in implementing continuous pertains to assessment techniques teachers are using. The most common method of assessing learners is conducting a written exercise which consists of structured questions which learners are expected to answer on a piece of paper. This is mostly due to the lack of teaching and learning materials in most public secondary schools which also hinders the effectiveness of continuous assessment. Clinging to such assessment techniques, teachers do not fully measure the cognitive, affective and psychomotor abilities of learners, as such continuous assessments become ineffective. Winstone and Bould (2020) enlightens that continuous assessments should act as a mechanism whereby the final grading of learners in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning systematically takes account of all their performances during a given period of schooling. He further explains that it should involve the use of a variety of assessment instruments and techniques by assessing various components of learning, not only the thinking processes but including behaviors, personality traits and dexterity. This is one aspect which social studies teachers in Malawi lack, and needs to be addressed.

The failure to use a variety of assessment techniques indicates that teachers do not have the full information, skill or competence about the other techniques they can use. Reddy (2016) states that the failure of most teachers to use different techniques in implementing continuous assessments effectively could be due to the way it was

conceptualized and also due to some other inherent problems in its operation such as time, planning and availability of resources. Deonarain (2004) strongly believes that the nature of the conventional assessment program (paper-pencil testing) contributes strongly to the teacher's failure to use other assessment techniques. Furthermore, assessments are mainly at the end of a section or end of term and through pencil-paper testing. Little or no alternate creative assessment strategies were being used which could allow learners to have greater opportunity in understanding and displaying their skills and knowledge. This could be attributed to inefficient or absence of orientation of teachers on the concept of CA which could have enlightened them on various assessment techniques which can be employed.

It appears that some teachers do not understand the rationale behind the implementation of continuous assessment, and also the proper techniques in conducting them. Teachers use assessment techniques which are only convenient to them and administer CA when they feel like it, contrary to the proper guidelines of conducting CA. Oyekan (2016) stresses that, continuous assessment as a formative and systematic activity, requires an operational plan to engage learners on periodic appraisal of learning contents, on weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis by subject teachers. However, teachers conduct them once or twice per term in Malawian schools. Deonarain (2004), reported that some teachers were simply interpreting continuous assessment as "assessing continuously"- meaning giving more tests more frequently. This unsatisfactory practice reveals that there is a possibility that some secondary school teachers do not fully understand how to implement CA in their subject areas.

This in return, brings in the question as to whether continuous assessments are conducted effectively and efficiently in Malawian schools or not.

In an attempt to find more literature on the subject of continuous assessment in Malawi, the results showed that very little research has been done to show how teachers implement continuous assessment and no formal study has ever been conducted on how social studies teachers are implementing continuous assessment. Whilst this is not conclusive evidence that formative assessment does not exist in Malawi, it indicates that very little time and research has been dedicated to the formal study of continuous assessment in Malawian secondary schools. In order to fill the literature gap, this study endeavor on investigating the techniques that are used by social studies teachers when they are conducting continuous assessments in the junior secondary school level classes and correlated information from studies of other African countries how continuous assessment is practiced The study also aimed at identifying the challenges the teachers face in the process and the strategies that social studies teachers use to cope with the challenges faced in carrying out continuous assessments.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

The shift from summative to formative assessment in the current curriculum underscores the importance of continuous assessment in enhancing teaching quality and student learning outcomes. However, existing literature suggests that the implementation of continuous assessment by social studies teachers remains a significant challenge, with many teachers lacking the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively integrate diverse assessment strategies into their practice. This gap between policy expectations and actual implementation has far-reaching implications for teaching quality, student assessment validity, and ultimately, learning outcomes.

The limited understanding of how social studies teachers implement continuous assessment in their classrooms creates a significant knowledge gap, hindering efforts to inform teacher development initiatives and policy refinement. Furthermore, the scarcity of research on this specific topic in the Malawian context exacerbates the problem, making it difficult to develop targeted interventions that address the unique challenges faced by social studies teachers.

This study aims to address this knowledge gap by investigating the implementation of continuous assessment by social studies teachers in urban community day secondary schools. By exploring the challenges, opportunities, and implications of continuous assessment implementation, this research seeks to inform policy and practice, ultimately contributing to improved teaching quality and student learning outcomes.

## **1.4 Main Objective**

The main objective of the study was to investigate how social studies teachers implement continuous assessment in community day secondary schools in Malawi.

## **1.5 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of the study were as follows:

- i. To examine the techniques used by social studies teachers in conducting continuous assessments in junior secondary school level.
- ii. To identify the challenges encountered by teachers in conducting continuous assessments.
- iii. To document the strategies adopted by social studies teachers to address the challenges encountered in carrying out continuous assessments.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study will provide valuable insights to the Government of Malawi, particularly the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and other relevant stakeholders on the techniques used by social studies teachers in conducting continuous assessments. This knowledge will enable policymakers to develop targeted interventions and strategies to support teachers in effectively implementing continuous assessments that cover all learning domains.

The study's findings on the challenges and solutions implemented by teachers will inform the development of teacher training programs that focus on building teachers' capacity to conduct continuous assessments. Additionally, the findings will inform curriculum implementation by identifying effective assessment strategies that align with

curriculum goals and objectives. This will ultimately contribute to improving teaching and learning outcomes in Malawi.

The study's findings will also inform Ministry of Education, Science and Technology policy decisions on assessment, teacher training, and resource allocation. By understanding the challenges and solutions implemented by teachers, policymakers can develop evidence-based policies that support effective continuous assessment practices. Furthermore, the study's findings will provide a reference point for future research on continuous assessment, challenges, and teacher/student perceptions, contributing to the broader knowledge base in education.

### **1.7 Limitations**

Gay (2012) defines limitations as some aspects of the study that the researcher knows that may negatively affect the results or generalizability of the results but over which he or she probably has no control. During the study, it was discovered that most of the participants were not trained to teach the subject but they are requested by the head teachers to teach the subject due to the shortage of staff. For the researcher, this was a limitation as some of the participants were not be able to give in depth information as they lack the knowledge in the core methodologies and pedagogies of the subject. However, the participants experience in teaching and assessing learners were used as adequate and credible data for the research.

Another limitation that may have hindered the progress of this research, was the difficulty of getting adequate and relevant locally prepared materials on the implementation of continuous assessment in general and teaching and learning social

studies in particular. Due to this fact, this study is not supported with review literature in the context of Malawi adequately. However, most of the international literature established are very much relatable to the Malawian schools' context.

### **1.8 Delimitations**

The scope of this study was limited to investigating how social studies teachers implement continuous assessment in community day secondary schools, specifically focusing on 8 selected urban schools. This methodological choice had implications for the study's generalizability, as the findings may not be representative of all schools across the nation. The constraints of time and resources necessitated this limited scope, which may have affected the data's validity and generalizability. However, steps were taken to mitigate these limitations, such as using a qualitative approach to gather in-depth insights into teachers' practices and challenges.

Additionally, the study's findings can still provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers, particularly in the context of urban community day secondary schools. Future studies could build upon this research, exploring the implementation of continuous assessment in other contexts to further enhance the understanding of this topic.

## **CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Chapter Overview**

Continuous Assessments are being conducted in all Malawian schools, and the way CA is conducted differs from one school to another. It also differs from one teacher to another depending on how it is defined and understood in that particular setup, which this study aims at establishing. This chapter discusses the definitions of CA, literature on its importance techniques and the challenges social studies teachers face in carrying out continuous assessments. The chapter also discusses the “Planned Change Model as its conceptual/theoretical framework which enlightens the progress of CA as the phenomenon under study.

### **2.2 Definitions of Continuous Assessment and its Importance**

The terms assessment, test and evaluation are interchangeably referred to the same activity of collecting information for making decisions about the students through observation, self-report and tests in order to improve their learning process. Bachman (2004) describes assessment as the process of collecting information about something that we are interested in. In education, it is the process of gathering and discussing information from different sources in order to improve the level of knowledge, attitudes, or skills of the learners according to Kellaghan and Greany (2001). In addition to that, assessment is the process by which learners work or performance is judged. Maphalala (2016) argue that assessment focuses on testing, measuring or judging the progress and the achievement of the learners. In addition to that, Bachman and Palmer (2010) state that assessment is used to provide a description of the progress of individuals.

Onyelefu (2018), argue that assessment has come to be termed alternative assessment, authentic assessment, or informal assessment, all of those varieties of assessment focus on measuring learner's ability to use knowledge gained in real life situations and it is carried out continuously over a period of time. These continuous variety of assessment is termed as " Continuous Assessment". They take the shape of specific tasks that are given to the students based on what has been taught. The teacher observes students doing these tasks and then makes a judgment on how well they are doing on a periodically. Maphalala (2016) captures the real essence in the practice of continuous assessment as a mechanism where the final grading of a student in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of behavior takes a systematic account of all performances during a period of schooling.

From the above definitions continuous assessment can be regarded as a process that is used in collecting information about students' performance with regard to all learning domains made throughout the teaching learning process. It also involves the interpretation of information to have objective ground to make decisions with regard to learners learning status and also the methods of instruction delivery. As such, a necessity in the teaching and learning process.

Understanding the purpose of continuous assessment is of great importance because it helps the teacher to properly implement it. Continuous assessment is purposely designed to improve teaching and learning for all students, mainly improving instruction. According to Tierney (2016) assessment activities acts as indicators for teachers to know whether what they have taught was effective or not. If learners are learning what is expected it will show in the results of the assessment. If the assessment show that

the learners are not doing well on a particular topic or skill then this tells the teachers that they must find a new way of teaching the lesson or topic, in turn to improve instruction.

Continuous assessment is also recognized as a mechanism to provide feedback for students and teacher. Simply assessing students and reporting the result is not likely to affect learner's performance. Assessment result should review both correct and incorrect performance of students and in addition, to correct students' errors. Esposto and Weaver (2011) state that assessment gives students feedback on their progress during semester when they still have time to modify their practice. In other words, CA allows learners to frequently check the work that they have completed, and allows them to make the corrections in areas they have not done well. Mitko (2004) adds that the feedback enables teachers to know the strengths and weaknesses of learners and identify which students need review and remediation. Not only that allows the learners to focus on topics they have covered but have not yet mastered.

It is imperative to mention that CA also motivates students to learn on an on-going basis. Jones (2015) asserts that motivation is enhanced when learners can see for themselves that they are improving as a result of taking the action recommended in the feedback. When learners do well in assessments, they are motivated that they are able to grasp the content and they have a sense of fulfillment that they are achieving something at school. Hedge (2000) points out that a student knowing that his/her performance has been good in a previous assessment can be a very positive motivator for further study. According to Onyelefu (2018), students at any level have to be encouraged during teaching and learning process. Necessary motivation and follow up

system have to be designed. As such, effective teaching and conducting frequent assessments effectively, learners may be able to understand the content delivered and this can be shown by giving back positive feedback through assessment results.

While classroom exercises and weekly tests are used for instructional purposes, continuous assessments also help to provide information for teachers to make informed decisions about the learners in order to determine whether they are eligible to progress to the next classes or not. According to a study on conducted by Hayford (2007), in secondary schools in Ghana, at the end of every term, teachers calculate learners' marks and convert them as 40% to add to examination marks for the purpose of reporting learners' attainments. Volante and Beckett (2017) report that information from continuous assessment is used for decisions such as promotion from one class to the next class. However, in Malawian secondary schools, learners are not restricted to progress to the next class even though their performance is below average. Whether a student has failed in all the three academic terms, the student will still progress to the next class and even sit for the national examinations in form four. This dilutes the importance of continuous assessment as they are not considered as a contribution to a learners' progress to the next class, consequently, devaluing the quality of education.

Another important objective of continuous assessments is to improve and modify their pedagogical strategies. Hyford (2007) states that teachers use continuous assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching. Learners' general performance enables teachers to know whether the lesson was successful or not. According to Abosalem (2016), assessment is a crucial part of any learning and teaching activity. Not only does it inform instructional decisions made on a day-to-day basis and helps diagnose

teachers' strengths and weaknesses related to classroom instruction. Furthermore, assessments also shape the teaching practices of teachers according to the learning styles of their students. Killen (2017) concurs by stating that CA allows teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching strategies relative to the curriculum and to change those strategies as dictated by the need of their students. In a study conducted by Asamoah-Gyimah (2002) in Ghana, he suggests that continuous assessment enables teachers to review their own performance and effectiveness in getting their messages across to their students in the most efficient manner. In his study, 68% of his respondents reported that they used continuous assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of their own work, while 32% did not use continuous assessment to evaluate their work. Again, a third of the teachers in the study did not use the information from their assessment. However, he did not explain why the teachers did not use information to evaluate the effectiveness of their lessons. This shows that some teachers do not take this objective of continuous assessments seriously. From my experience as a social studies teacher, most teachers do not fully consider this objective as paramount because they feel that their teaching strategies are effective enough and do not need to be improved or modified. Teachers need to fully understand the purpose and importance of conducting continuous assessments effectively and how much it may contribute to the improvement and modification of their pedagogical strategies.

### **2.3 Continuous Assessment Strategies/Techniques**

According to Kozłowska and Wisniewski (2018), a technique may be a special way in which the educator uses a method and a tool to provide opportunities for learners to demonstrate their performance. It may also be the way learners choose to demonstrate evidence of attainment. The different pieces of evidence that learners produce as part of CA are collected into a portfolio. Kozłowska and Wisniewski (2018) continue to explain that CA involves assessment activities that are spread throughout the year, using various kinds of assessment techniques. Kidane (2017) explains that a variety of methods, appropriate tools and techniques must be used in order to commensurate with the learners' needs. It includes a range of different assessment strategies and techniques which are used in classroom in order to gather information about students' learning and used to measure students' performance or achievement. Ali (2018) elucidates that different strategies of assessment can be selected by teachers to meet specific purposes and students' needs, but when teachers do not use it in a formal way, they cannot provide systematic information about the students' learning. Furthermore, teachers are expected to have a sound knowledge of what each technique offers. In addition, the teacher needs to have strategies and activities for students in the same class in order to differentiate between the levels of the students by engaging them in several assignments. Ali (2018) continues to argue that different assessment procedures must be used by the teacher in any educational setting to help students attain learning targets in the course curriculum. As such, it is imperative for teachers to have knowledge a variety of techniques when assessing learners in order to be able to assess the learners and implement CA effectively.

Continuous assessment is supposed to be conducted using a variety of assessment tools and techniques for it to be effective. Benton and Young (2018), affirms that assessment strategies such as investigations, practical demonstrations, research assignments and projects are suitable to constructivist learning as they emphasize understanding, creative thinking and problem solving instead of memorizing and reproducing information as is conducted in pencil-paper tests. Hayes et.al (2020) agree by stating that constructivist techniques support learning and teaching, self-development and self-evaluation. In my experience as a social studies teacher, an observation was made that most teachers in secondary schools assess learners using the pencil-paper test. Lo (2021) narrates that there is a rise in this form of assessment which focus on low-level recall of factual knowledge which elevates content over skills and where assessment is largely undertaken by written examinations. One of the disadvantages of only using pencil-paper assessments in CA is the lacking in exposing a deeper understanding and thinking of learners. Also, when learners are writing down answers, the teachers do not really know how and what the learners are thinking. These views were reiterated by Hayes et al (2020) who reported that if the assessment of learners is based on the traditional pencil-paper tests, then it is not preparing the learner for the workplace simply because assessment would be seen as only focusing on a particular aspect of a learner's development. Further, a research conducted by Muhajirah (2020) revealed that abilities of students remained undiscovered due to inadequate use of assessment methods. As such, use of a variety of continuous assessment methods are regarded to be more effective as the teachers are able to assess the different abilities of the learners.

Outcomes-based Education (OBE), forms the foundation of the curriculum in Malawi. According to the MIE (2013), the secondary school curriculum has been reviewed to align it with the primary school curriculum. This curriculum puts emphasis on student-centred teaching and learning approaches, including continuous assessment. Chirwa and Naidoo (2010) explain that the Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform (PCAR) was designed on the principles of integrated learning areas, which are outcomes, learner-centered pedagogies and continuous assessment, which was implemented in 2007. OBE strives to enable all learners to achieve to their maximum ability by setting outcomes at the end of the learning process Murphy (2017). The outcomes, previously called objectives, ought to be demonstrable by a learner at the end of an activity. One of the key elements of OBE, as reported by Hayes et al (2020), is the emphasis placed on the need for assessment as an integral part of teaching. The learners should be assessed in terms of cognitive thinking as well as psychomotor and affective domains to inform on teaching and learning. The Malawian curriculum suggests some assessment methods and strategies that are to be used in an OBE environment, these include research, group discussion, presentation, teacher observation, question and answer, essay writing, case study, field trips, narrations (story telling), peer assessment, role playing, debate and project work (MIE 2013). All these techniques in social studies are expected to be utilizing when conducting continuous assessments because they have an impact on the teaching and learning outcome. That is why this study aimed at finding out which techniques the teachers use and how they implement it in assessing the learners.

Continuous assessment requires the use of a range of different assessment methods to gather valid and reliable information about the students' progress. Suskie (2018) agree by stating that the application of multiple assessment methods produces different messages to students. However, Suskie (2018) warns that all forms of assessment techniques contain some error, which implies that teacher must assess students frequently and with a variety of methods. Shilenge (2004) observes that as CA is being implemented, some teachers are still not clear about assessment procedures and they do not have the necessary skills of using the different assessment methods. As such, there is need for continuous professional development in the areas of assessment. Some of the areas in which teachers may need support include; designing assessment tasks, assessment methods, ways of assessing student-teachers' prior knowledge and how to use those assessments.

## **2.4 Challenges Faced by teachers in Implementing Continuous**

### **Assessments**

Kidane (2013) states that the implementation of CA intends to improve the quality of teaching and learning and assessment of learners. However, it has also introduced schools to the challenges associated with the implementation of the educational change. The argument presented here is simply that every change produces new information and concepts which create challenges. As such, the concept of continuous assessment has brought its own challenges, especially in its planning, implementation and evaluation phase. Initially, before rolling out the new curriculum, teachers were oriented on the change from traditional assessment strategies such as tests and examinations OBE which emphasizes on CA. However, according to Winstone and

Boud (2022), many teachers are not been trained on effective assessment strategies, as such they are doing an inadequate job on how they are conducting continuous assessment in the classroom. In my experience, in some institutions, it was only the head teacher and the heads of departments that attended the orientation on the new curriculum for a few days. The rest of the teachers were oriented on the same for only a few hours during a school-based CBD. Chirwa and Naidoo (2010) reveal that the training courses to prepare teachers to implement the continuous assessment policy in the new curriculum were ineffective because the orientation period was too short. Not only that, the topics for orientation were selected by the trainers and not teachers. Furthermore, the orientation programmes were in general and common to all teachers and rarely addressed individual teacher's needs and concerns. As such, teachers found it difficult to comprehend and understand the philosophy, and methods of continuous assessment in the current curriculum.

Another major challenge in implementing continuous assessment is the large class sizes in term of learner population. According to a study by Kidane (2013) in Ethiopia, most teachers lamented on the large class sizes in most schools as the major challenge. Kapambwe and Mullenfa (2008) concur by stating that a good number of teachers fail to appreciate the need to administer assessments on an ongoing basis such as weekly, fortnightly or after a topic due to the large sizes of their classrooms. Chiziwa and Kunkwezu (2022) echo that workload becomes higher as they are required to mark and keep records of the progress of all learners. In a study conducted by Mohammedseid (2017) in Ethiopia, some schools have large class size of 70, 75, 80 to 90 students respectively. A report by UNESCO (2005) states that Malawian classrooms

are generally congested with an average teacher: student ratio in secondary schools of 1:90. This implies that class size in these schools are beyond the average recommended standard. As such, teachers are facing challenges to conduct CA in large classes because it is difficult to mark and record all students' day by day progress. However, in the area of pedagogy, it is justified that teaching large classes with CA are nowadays no longer a threat to the teaching and learning process. There are a variety of assessment techniques which can be facilitated in groups or pairs such as group discussions and presentation, pair work, projects and debate. Suskie (2018) argue that large class size is often defined in numbers. However, number of students alone is not sufficient but rather there are physical conditions such as amount of space available, teaching focus, teaching methodology and availability of resources.

Inadequate time is regarded as another factor that brings challenges in the implementation of CA. The procedure of conducting continuous assessment is laborious and time consuming. It consists of forming the assessment, marking, recording, giving feedback and revising the assessment. According to Carless (2015), continuous assessments, combining both grading and feedback, is not only costly to design and implement, but mainly it is time consuming. Hernandez (2012) agrees that it is time consuming to design assessment tasks and feedback so that students use the feedback to support their learning. The amount of time teachers spend in paperwork can reduce efforts for supporting pupils who record lower attainments in class to improve. Nikmard and Tavassoli (2020) argued that teachers spend so much time on paperwork that they have less time to help pupils to improve. The Malawian junior section social studies

syllabus contains a lot of topics to be covered and the content is bulk. As such, teachers prefer to give more time in teaching rather than conducting CAs.

From the discussion, CA is expected to be conducted periodically. This is done during the teaching and learning process. Teachers are expected to assess the learners while the lesson is in progress or after the lesson. An assessment can also be conducted after every week, fortnight or topic. Several assessment techniques such as group work, presentations, question and answer, pencil-paper test can be used interchangeably to know progress of the learners as well as of the teacher. Ever since CA was introduced in the Malawian secondary schools' curriculum, teacher's perception is that the assessment should be conducted at least twice in a term which is contrary to how it should be implemented. Furthermore, pencil-paper test is the dominant assessment technique used by teachers which fails to assess learners in other learning domains. All this seem to be originating from the lack of understanding of the concept of CA. In this case, there is a need to investigate how teachers are conducting CA in order to clarify the concept.

## **2.5 Theoretical Framework**

A number of theories were relevant to understanding how social studies teachers implement continuous assessment in community day secondary schools of Malawi. However, the Planned (Programmed) Change Model developed by Bullock and Batten in 1985 was found to be particularly relevant to the study and was chosen as a theoretical and conceptual frame to guide this study. The model provides a systematic framework for introducing change, helping the educators navigate the transition to the new concept, hence its relevance to the study. Furthermore, the model elaborates on

effective communication, ensuring that teachers understand the rationale, benefits and implementation strategies for continuous assessment.

According to Sidikova (2011), change is what presses us out of our comfort zone and it is inevitable. Change may be planned years in advance or may be forced upon an organization because of a shift in the environment. The Malawian curriculum shifted from teacher-centered approach to learner-centered approach which is in line with OBE. This shift is what has made this study to use the Planned Change Model as it relates to continuous assessment from the phase it was introduced, how it is being adopted by secondary school teachers and how it is being implemented.

This model helped to answer the research questions, clarify concepts, as well as providing a context for interpreting the findings. The study endeavored on finding out the implementation of continuous assessment by social studies teachers, which was another concept added in the secondary school sector. This concept underwent the process of change through the phases as elaborated by Bullock & Batten's Planned (Programmed) Change Model. Bullock & Batten (1985) explain that the first phase of a change is for an organisation to decide on the need for change. Explore and decide on the need for change, identify what changes are required and to identify resources required. Gichuhi (2017) refers to this phase as the exploration phase. In this exploration phase, a needs assessment is conducted in order to determine whether that change or reform is indeed needed or not. Any changes in the curriculum has had an impact on how and on what we teach. In addition, changes are also made the way learners are assessed, that is if the introduction of OBE are to become meaningful Chiziwa (2020). Therefore, the need to assess whether the change is necessary or not.

According to the USAID program known as the Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) in 2003, it emphasized on the use of continuous assessment as an integral part of class room instruction that is necessary to improve the quality of education in the country. In relation to this, Jones (2018) points out that in order for assessment to play a more useful role in helping students learn it should be moved in to the middle of the teaching and learning process instead of being postponed as only the end point of instruction. This is to say that assessment of learning is no longer seen as external examination added at the end of a course but as a continuous process from the very beginning of the course. Similarly, with respect to the need for continuous assessment, Walde (2016) states that the field of evaluation is undergoing changes and to a large extent moving away from psychometric testing and into educational assessment. The changes have come about as a result of development in how learning is perceived. Regarding this, Abera and Bayabeyin (2017) add that the new policy of continuous assessment is aimed at bringing out a paradigm shift in educational assessment in several ways. Abera and Bayabeyin (2017) explain that the central characteristic of this shift is the moving of assessment from a judgmental role to a developmental role. As such, it was established that there was a need to change the assessment strategies in secondary schools from summative to formative as is the case in the Malawian curriculum.

The second phase is known as the Planning phase. Bullock & Batten (1985) explain that this is the stage whereby there is understanding and diagnosis of the problem, clarifying goals and objectives, identifying specific activities required to undertake change, agreeing changes with stakeholders and identifying support required to enable

the change to occur. This is the where an action plan is established once changes identified are agreed. Marshak (2016) describe an action plan as an organizational strategy to identify necessary steps towards a goal. It considers details such as goals, responsible officers, tasks/strategies and also time frame. In this case, one of the goals for continuous assessments is to assess and give feedback to learners frequently, the responsible officers are the subject teachers and the tasks/strategies are the various assessment techniques. The time frame is at least during every lesson, after every lesson, after every week, fortnight, after every four weeks or even after every topic/unit covered. This action plan is also outlined in the schemes and records of work of the teachers on how they will implement the continuous assessments.

Thirdly, the implementers are oriented or inducted about the change/reform. Orientation is regarded as making someone familiarize him or herself with a particular concept. Whereby adaptation is when someone is already familiarized with a concept and what is left is full understanding and acceptance of the concept. Mtika and Gates (2010) explain that with pedagogical practices, orientation is not only important in issues concerning teachers, but also in issues of curriculum and educational management. The ministry of education through its educational divisions and zones conducted trainings and workshops throughout the country sensitizing teachers on the new curriculum. Unfortunately, teachers were not oriented in details on how continuous assessments should be conducted in terms of the various strategies to be used due to the limitation of time at the orientation trainings.

In the fourth stage, the change is implemented. However, the change is either adopted or rejected. Bushe and Marshak (2016) stress that resistance to change is inevitable and some of the noticeable reasons for resistance include includes people's habits, lack of incentives and inadequate or no preparation of the participants, differences of opinions, lack of understanding and also the nature of the change. In this case, the change to formative assessment has met several challenges such as lack of resources to conduct variety of assessment techniques, differences in opinions as some teachers still prefer the old system of summative assessment. Vavrus (2009) asserts that it is critical that policy makers to recognise that examination system, the material infrastructure of schools and the quality of education may limit the likelihood of a fundamental shift. This may be seen in the dual problem of teaching practices whereby teachers fail to implement learner-centered approaches, but at the same time they may well have been unable to adopt such practices when they are teaching. Viegut (2015) adds that teachers can be frustrated and resistant to change when they do not get enough support. This, probably, means that teachers' attitudes towards any reform are influenced by the level of support they receive and they may turn into a key factor at implementing new assessment model. In other words, being frustrated and stressed by an assessment model that is quite challenging and unknown for them, teachers may not be willing to use it and stick with old assessment instruments.

Finally, an evaluation is conducted to determine whether progress is being made or not. Bullock & Batten (1985) describe it as an integration phase. This is when the organization is stabilizing and embedding change, results and outcomes from change communicated throughout the organization are analysed. Furthermore, there are

ongoing monitoring and evaluation exercises. Head teachers, heads of department have the role of monitoring and supervising the implementation of continuous assessment. Teachers also evaluate the progress of learners in these assessments conducted and determine whether it is implemented effectively or not. With an effort to make sure that continuous assessment is implemented effectively in all secondary schools, the government of Malawi through the Malawi Institute of Education (M.I.E), supervises, monitors and evaluates its effectiveness.

However, Dunphy and Stace, (1993) warned that programmed models of change are unable to integrate transformational change. They do not acknowledge organizational conflicts or assume they can be easily resolved. Gichuhi (2017) concurs by saying that this model is not suitable for crisis situations or for events which demand quick action and swift change. Although there are shortcomings in the programme approach, it does have an important place in the implementation of change.

For change to be successful, teachers should be able to alter their behaviors and beliefs. They must take the initiative and participate fully in implementing the change. Kivunja (2015) explains that there are so many pressures that teachers and students encounter in their classrooms; amongst others, these are: lack of physical resources like books, laboratories, desks; lack of necessary skills to implement change; lack of external support from curriculum planners and attitudes of learners they are supposed to teach. The school management such as the head teachers and heads of departments must be able to assist and support to teachers when necessary. The teachers must be involved in the implementation process and this process must be

negotiated at all levels. Kivunja (2015) adds that teachers also need to understand the culture of schools in which the curriculum is implemented.

## **2.6 Summary of the Literature Review and Theoretical Framework and**

### **Conclusion**

From the discussions in the literature, continuous assessment is a process that is used in collecting information about students' performance with regard to all learning domains made throughout the teaching learning process. Understanding the purpose of continuous assessment is of great importance because it helps the teachers to appreciate it and properly implement it. The study aims at finding out the strategies/techniques teachers use when they are assessing the learners. Several strategies were discussed on how teachers use to implement CA and also the importance of using a variety of methods. The strategies include research, group discussion, presentation, teacher observation, question and answer, essay writing, case study and field trips. The literature in this study reviewed some of the challenges that teachers encounter when they are conducting continuous assessments, which is also one of the specific objectives of the study. The challenges include, large class size, lack of resources and time factor.

The Planned Changed Model helped to elaborate more on the experiences teachers have gone since the concept of CA was introduced in the education system of Malawi. The model is divided into four phases. The first phase being the exploration phase. Where a needs assessment is conducted in order to determine whether that change or reform is indeed needed or not. This is followed by the planning phase whereby there is

understanding and diagnosis of the problem, clarifying goals and objectives, identifying specific activities required to undertake change, agreeing changes with stakeholders and identifying support required to enable the change to occur. Orientation and induction about the change/reform is conducted in the third stage before implementation which is the fourth phase of the model. In this phase change is either adopted or rejected. Malawian teachers are in the fourth phase of the model. Finally, an evaluation is conducted to determine whether progress is being made or not. This phase is yet to be formally implemented by the Ministry of Education. The implementation of continuous assessment by social studies teachers can be well described with the underlined phases of the Planned/Changes Model adopted by this study.

The Planned Change Model is detrimental in the introduction and implementation of a phenomenon like continuous assessment. As explained, the model has a structured approach that provides a clear framework for introducing change ensuring a systematic and organized approach. The model also involves stakeholders in the change. This fosters ownership and encourages collaboration and communication among stakeholders. Imperatively, the model allows a gradual implementation, enabling educators to adapt to the new assessment approaches and build confidence in its use. It provides opportunities for feedback and refinement. Finally, it encourages ongoing monitoring and evaluation, enabling educators to refine and improve the approaches overtime and facilitate data-driven decision-making during curriculum review.

## **CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Chapter Overview**

This chapter describes the research design and explains the study site/location and why the location was chosen. The sample size, sampling techniques used, data collection methods and how the data was analyzed is also explained in the chapter. The study also considered the trustworthiness and credibility of the data, this chapter explains how they were executed and how ethics were observed and considered during the study.

### **3.2 Research Design**

This research is qualitative in nature and was conducted using a case study approach. According to Gay (2012), a case study is an in-depth investigation of an individual, group or institutions. He further adds that case studies are typically conducted to determine background, environment and characteristics of phenomenon with problems. Ridder (2019) expresses that the case study approach allows an investigation to retain holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events. It is also appropriate when examining contemporary events and is related to the way the initial research questions have been defined. Merriam and Tidsell (2019) states that case studies focus on a specific situation, they are descriptive and heuristic, and they offer insights and understanding of the cases being studied. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the 'how' questions that form the basis of this research study favor a case study approach. One of the unique strengths of this approach is its ability to deal with the full variety of evidence that is generated by the research questions. In this study, the phenomenon

under investigation is the implementation of Continuous Assessment in urban community day secondary schools.

A case study approach was chosen over others because it would lead to an in-depth analysis of continuous assessments, activities involved in its process, and in-depth perception from the participants (Creswell 2014). Furthermore, a case study approach is an adaptable research design because of its flexibility. Payne (2020) explains that case studies can be designed to accommodate various research questions and objectives, making them a flexible research approach.

The case study approach aligns with the research objectives as it provided an opportunity for an in-depth examination of how social studies teachers implement continuous assessment in community day secondary schools, which aligns with the main objective of investigating implementation practices. Through case studies, the research gathered detailed information on the techniques used by social studies teachers in conducting continuous assessments, addressing the first specific objective.

The case study approach enabled the researcher to identify the challenges encountered by teachers in conducting continuous assessments, meeting the second specific objective. Furthermore, by exploring the experiences and practices of social studies teachers, the case study approach assisted to document the strategies adopted by teachers to address challenges, fulfilling the third specific objective.

Ultimately, the case study approach provided rich, contextual data that can help the researcher understand the complexities of continuous assessment implementation in

community day secondary schools, making it a suitable methodology for achieving the study's objectives.

### **3.3 Study Site/ Location**

The study was conducted in Mzuzu, a city in Malawi's Northern Region, about 350km north of the capital, Lilongwe.

It is also the third largest city, by population (Malawi Population and Housing Census Main Report: 2018). Mzuzu has several residential locations where community day secondary schools are located.

### **3.4 Sample**

The study employed a purposive sampling technique to select 16 Social Studies teachers from 8 urban Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs). This approach ensured that participants could provide rich and informed insights into the research problem.

The study focused on urban CDSSs due to their unique challenges, such as limited resources, high student-teacher ratios, and urban poverty, which can differ from conventional schools (Maier et al., 2017). The schools were chosen for their proximity, allowing for adequate time at the research site and facilitating data collection. Although not explicitly stated as a criterion, the selection of CDSSs provides insights into specific needs and challenges of urban education, which can inform policy decisions and resource allocation.

Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who could purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2018). This technique allowed the

researcher to hand-pick Social Studies teachers who teach in the junior section and practice continuous assessment, ensuring that the sample was relevant to the study's objectives. By selecting participants based on specific criteria, the researcher aimed to collect rich and adequate data (Patton, 2002).

The use of purposive sampling in this study is justified by the need for in-depth insights into the implementation of continuous assessment in urban CDSSs. By focusing on a specific subset of teachers, the researcher gathered detailed information that can inform policy decisions and resource allocation, ultimately contributing to improved educational outcomes for students in these schools.

#### **3.4.1 Characteristics of the Sample Used**

From the 16 respondents interviewed, eight of them were male and eight were females. The average age of the respondents was 42.5 years. Of the 16 sample, the minimum qualification of the respondents was a Diploma in Education while the ones with the highest qualifications have Bachelor's Degrees. Eight of the respondents have Diplomas in Education (Dip. Ed) and the seven respondents have Bachelor's Degrees in Education. Only one respondent has a Bachelor's Degree in Theology with a University Certificate of Education (UCE). This implies that all the respondents are qualified secondary school teachers. According to Elden (2015), the qualification of a teacher has positive impacts on the quality of education the learners are accessing. Eleven of the respondents specialized in teaching social studies while five of the respondents were teaching the subject due to the shortage of the subject teachers in their school.

The average years of teaching experience of the sample was 13.8. This indicates a commendable amount of years from the respondents which can provide adequate knowledge on the topic under study. Yamin-Ali (2021) argues that experience usually brings about knowledge, self-confidence, self-esteem and high level of responsibility, hence in this case, influencing the assertiveness and effectiveness of the respondents with adequate information and also their commitment to the profession. It should also be noted that teaching experience determines teachers' level of understanding of continuous assessment in schools. According to Saphier (2024), an assumption has been made that every adult has had life and work experience and has gained some wisdom and insight from these experiences. Therefore, experienced teachers are expected to have important perspectives about teaching and learning activities and may offer a rich source of ideas and relevant information of the topic understudy. In this case, implementation of continuous assessment may be sensitive to years of experience. Table 3.1 summarizes the characteristics of the respondents.

Table 3.1 Summary of the respondent's characteristics

| RESPONDENT | SCHOOL | AGE      | SEX | QUALIFICATIONS | YEARS OF EXPERIENCE | MAJOR SUBJECT   | MINOR SUBJECT   |
|------------|--------|----------|-----|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| TEACHER 1  | 1      | 42       | M   | Dip. Ed        | 17                  | English         | Chichewa        |
| TEACHER 2  |        | 36       | F   | B. Ed          | 9                   | Geography       | Social Studies  |
| TEACHER 1  | 2      | 37       | M   | B. Ed          | 10                  | English         | Geography       |
| TEACHER 2  |        | 39       | M   | Dip. Ed        | 7                   | Social Studies  | Geography       |
| TEACHER 1  | 3      | 34       | F   | Dip. Ed        | 12                  | Social Studies  | History         |
| TEACHER 2  |        | 43       | F   | B. Th and UCE  | 10                  | Bible Knowledge | Social Studies  |
| TEACHER 1  | 4      | 46       | M   | B. Ed          | 18                  | Social Studies  | English         |
| TEACHER 2  |        | 35       | F   | Dip. Ed        | 10                  | Bible knowledge | Social Studies  |
| TEACHER 1  | 5      | 38       | M   | Dip. Ed        | 7                   | Social Studies  | Bible Knowledge |
| TEACHER 2  |        | 38       | M   | B. Ed          | 10                  | Social Studies  | History         |
| TEACHER 1  | 6      | 48       | M   | Dip. Ed        | 15                  | History         | Social Studies  |
| TEACHER 2  |        | 48       | F   | Dip. Ed        | 20                  | Social Studies  | Bible Knowledge |
| TEACHER 1  | 7      | 36       | F   | B. Ed          | 15                  | Geography       | History         |
| TEACHER 2  |        | 53       | F   | B. Ed          | 23                  | History         | Geography       |
| TEACHER 1  | 8      | 42       | F   | Dip. Ed        | 15                  | Biology         | Human Ecology   |
| TEACHER 2  |        | 51       | M   | B. Ed          | 23                  | Geography       | Social Studies  |
|            |        | AVG 42.5 |     |                | AVG 13.8            |                 |                 |

Table 3.1 Key: AVG: Average, Dip Ed: Diploma in Education, B.Ed.: Bachelor's Degree in Education, B.Th.: Bachelor's Degree in Theology, U.C.E: University Certificate of Education

### **3.5 Data Collection**

This study used face-to-face interviews with predetermined open-ended questions and conducted in a conversational format as a means of collecting primary data. Gay (1987) states that if interviews are well conducted, they can produce in-depth data. This method of data collection was appropriate because it gave room for clarity where the respondent did not understand the question. Not only that, but it also enables the researcher to probe further and gain more information. Finally, there is authenticity of the information since it came from the actual person who conducts the CA. Shado (2019), concurs by saying that this method is most appropriate as it allows a researcher to ask questions which cannot be effectively structured and it is flexible in the sense that it gives the researcher the liberty to probe for more data and for particular responses, clarification and confirmation of information from respondents. An interview guide (see Appendix VII) was used to direct the interview process in a logical order. This also allowed the researcher to make sure that all the planned questions were asked. This method made it possible for this study to have more data on the techniques used by social studies teachers when conducting continuous assessments and more information on the challenges together with the strategies they use to cope with the challenges faced in carrying out continuous assessments.

Document analysis was another method of collecting data that was used. Vicente (2020) states that documents can be official records of different types designed as records of action and activity. This method therefore, was important because it helped to confirm the primary data collected from the face-to-face interviews, such as

assessment techniques teachers used. With the teacher's consent and permission, documents such as the social studies syllabus, schemes and records of work, lesson plans, text books, assessment schemes and mark-books were analyzed by the researcher.

This study also used the naturalistic observation. Flick (2020) describes observation as the gathering of data through vision as its main source. He further states that it is a method by which information is sought by way of investigation by observation without asking questions from the respondent. In this study, classroom activities were observed as they occurred naturally, such as how the teachers were conducting the continuous assessments i.e. assessment techniques, materials used (question papers or chalkboard), seating plan, time allocated and the assessment room environment. Creswell (2018) explains that in observation the researcher takes field notes on the behavior and activities of individuals at the research site. In this case, learner's behaviors were also observed to see if they have any effect on the implementation of continuous assessments i.e. seriousness and attitudes towards continuous assessments. An observation form (see Appendix VIII) was used to collect the data when observing a continuous assessment being conducted. Descriptive field notes of observed activities were taken, and so were reflective notes. Four teachers were chosen randomly, and two lessons for each teacher were observed, making a total of eight observations on how teachers implement continuous assessments. This data collection method also assisted to observe how the teachers are able to cope with the challenges they face as they conduct the continuous assessments.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

This study used the inductive analysis approach to analyze the data collected. According to Flick (2020) inductive analysis refers to approaches that primarily use detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts, themes, or a model through interpretations made from the raw data by an evaluator or researcher. Cao and Henderson (2021) explain that the primary purpose of the inductive approach is to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies.

The 16 interview transcripts, observation notes, and document review findings were prepared for analysis by organizing and familiarizing with the data. The researcher conducted an initial reading of the transcripts, identifying and coding specific phrases, sentences, or paragraphs that related to the research objectives. This process involved assigning codes to the data without preconceived notions or categories. The codes were then grouped into categories based on their similarities and differences. These categories were refined and reorganized as the analysis progressed. The categories were further analyzed to identify emerging themes related to continuous assessment. These themes were identified based on their frequency, dominance, or significance in the data. The themes were verified by re-reading the transcripts and ensuring that they accurately reflected the data. This involved checking for consistency and coherence within and across the themes. The themes were then interpreted in relation to the research objectives, and conclusions were drawn about the techniques used by social studies teachers in conducting continuous assessments and the challenges they faced.

### **3.7. Trustworthiness and Credibility**

Trustworthiness and credibility are paramount in any qualitative research. Cao and Henderson (2021) explain that with trustworthiness, the researcher checks for the accuracy and credibility of the findings. This facilitates the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings. Credibility establishes whether or not the research findings represent, believable information drawn from the participant's original data and is a correct interpretation of the participants' original views (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). This was achieved by employing the triangulation procedure to ensure trustworthiness and credibility of data and also member checking to verify findings with participants to ensure accuracy.

#### **3.7.1. Triangulation**

Triangulation was used in this study in order to validate the data collected. Merriam and Tidsel (2015) explain that "Methodological triangulation combines dissimilar methods such as interviews, observations and physical evidence to study the same unit", (p.69). This enabled the researcher to study the variety of data from one standpoint using different methods. This research used multiple methods to collect data such which included interviews, observations and document analysis as triangulation is required. Shearmar (2022) explain that in triangulation, the multiple and different methods, investigators, sources and theories obtained are used in corroborating evidence and verifying data. Furthermore, triangulation helps to reduce bias and it cross examines the integrity of participants' responses.

The interviews provided in-depth insights into teachers' experiences, perspectives, and practices regarding continuous assessment. They allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions and probe for more information. They also enabled the researcher to understand the teachers' thoughts, feelings, and attitudes towards continuous assessment. Observations provided first-hand information on how teachers conducted continuous assessments in real classroom settings. Interviews allowed the researcher to observe the actual practices and challenges faced by teachers. Classroom observations also helped to validate the data collected through interviews and document analysis.

Document analysis provided physical evidence of teachers' assessment practices, such as schemes of work, lesson plans, question papers, and mark books. It helped to verify the techniques used by teachers to assess learners. It also provided quantitative data, such as the number of learners in mark books, which validated the challenges faced by teachers.

By combining these methods, it made it possible to verify the data collected from one method with data from another method (e.g., verifying interview data with observation notes and document analysis). It increased the credibility of the findings by showing consistency across multiple data sources. Not only that, it reduced biasness and increased the validity of the findings by using multiple methods to study the same phenomenon.

Overall, the use of multiple methods and data triangulation enhanced the credibility and validity of the study's findings, providing a comprehensive understanding of continuous assessment practices in the context of Social Studies education.

In this case, data triangulation was achieved in this study by verifying the data collected from the different data collection methods by looking at their coherence and validity. Data collected from an interview was verified by looking at documents such as schemes of work, lesson plans, question papers and mark books in order to verify the techniques used to assess the learners. Challenges such as large class size was verified by looking at the number of learners in the mark books which verified the number of scripts the teachers have to mark. Observing CA being conducted validated the data on the techniques used, challenges faced and the strategies the respondents use to cope with the challenges.

### **3.7.2. Member Checking**

In order to validate the accuracy of the data, member checking technique was also employed in the study. According to Tidsel (2015), member checking is regarded as a research technique that is used to enhance the validity and credibility of qualitative research findings. In order to achieve this, data obtained from the participants was grounded by their own words, practices and experiences. Participants were interviewed and their responses were incorporated into the final analysis. Their responses and attitude towards CA resonated with their attitude and how they conduct CA. This is indicated in the findings by the transcription of the participant's experiences and quotes to validate the finding.

### **3.8 Ethical Consideration**

The researcher sought permission from the Post Graduate Coordinator in a written document (See Appendix I) to collect research data. A letter was written to the Education Division Manager (North) requesting for permission to carry out a research in selected community day secondary schools in Mzuzu city (see Appendix II). As an employee of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, negotiating access to conduct interviews was not a problem. Permission was also sought through a written document from the head teachers (see Appendix III) of the schools under study and teachers (see Appendix VI).

Prior to the research, the researcher made self-introductory remarks as a student from Mzuzu University carrying out a research and explained the nature of the research to the participants. Written information regarding the purpose of the research and the role that they were asked to play was provided to the head teacher (see Appendix IV) and the respondents (see Appendix V). The respondents signed an informed consent form agreeing to the provisions of the study before they provided the data (see Appendix VI). Consequently, the researcher used numbers throughout the study, essentially so as not to reveal the identities of the informants. Schools were numbered from 1 to 8, and the teachers were numbered teacher 1 and 2. The study interviewed 2 teachers per school, as such they were identified as “Teacher 1” and “Teacher 2” and reported as “Teacher 1 of school 3” for example.

As an educator, the researcher acknowledged the potentiality for biasness in this study, particularly given the professional background and experience in teaching and assessment. The researcher's role in this study was that of an investigator, seeking to

understand the practices and challenges of social studies teachers in conducting continuous assessments in community day secondary schools.

As an educator, the researcher recognized that his professional background and experience may have influenced the interpretation of the data. The researchers' familiarity with assessment practices and challenges may have shaped his expectations and perceptions of the data, potentially leading to biases in interpretation. However, the researcher strived to approach the data with an open mind, bracketing his experiences and assumptions to allow the participants' voices and perspectives to emerge. Throughout the data collection and analysis process, he engaged in reflexive practices, regularly examining his biases and assumptions, and seeking to ground his interpretations in the data. By acknowledging the potential for bias and taking steps to mitigate it, the researchers aim was to ensure that the findings of this study accurately reflect the experiences and perspectives of the social studies teachers who participated in this research.

## **CHAPTER FOUR. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Chapter Overview**

This chapter presents results on how social studies teachers implement continuous assessment in community day secondary schools of Malawi. The findings in this chapter describe the techniques used and the challenges faced by the teachers when implementing continuous assessment. It also documents the strategies social studies teachers use to cope up with the challenges faced when carrying out continuous assessments.

### **4.2 Implementation of Continuous Assessment by Teachers.**

Through interviews, respondents were asked how they implement or carry out continuous assessment. Through the interviews using the designed questionnaire, the researcher managed to achieve the first objective of the study, which was to examine the techniques used by social studies teachers in conducting continuous assessments in junior secondary school level. The responses from the teachers were categorized as follows: the frequency of conducting continuous assessments, the resources they use and the techniques used when assessing learners.

#### **4.2.1 Frequency in Conducting Continuous Assessment**

The respondents explained how regularly they conduct CA in a term. Teacher 2 of school 6 narrated:

*I conduct continuous assessments after every four weeks. I am assured that after four weeks I am able to cover a few units or topics. Each assessment is worth twenty marks, making continuous assessment to contribute forty marks to the final grade at the end of the term.*

Teacher 2 of school 4 stated that she conducts an assessment after every two weeks. She explained:

*After every fortnight, I conduct an assessment in order to see if the learners are able to grasp the content they have learnt. This is usually done as a weekend test on a Friday and feedback is given on the following Monday whenever possible.*

Another respondent said that he conducts them after every topic taught, which totals to at least 4 to 6 continuous assessments per term. However, teacher 2 of school 7 mentioned that she conducts a continuous assessment only once per term. She explained:

*I conduct a continuous assessment once in the middle of the term. It is in a form of a midterm test to assess the learners on what they have learnt in the first part of the term. This test is out of forty marks which complements to the end of term examination marks for the final grade.*

From the 16 respondents, two of the teachers stated that they conduct CA twice in a term. Eight of the respondents stated that they conduct it twice per term representing half of the respondents. One respondent does it three times per term and two of the respondents mentioned that they conduct continuous assessments at least four times in a term. Two other teachers stated that they at least assess learners five 5 times in a term. It was found that only one of the respondents conducted continuous assessments six times per term. Table 4.1 summarizes the regularity of teachers in conducting continuous assessments which concludes that the participants do not conduct CA as required.

Table 4.1 Frequency of conducting continuous assessments.

|                              |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Number of Respondents</b> | 2 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| <b>Regularity Per Term</b>   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Using a questionnaire, respondents were questioned on how they conduct CA. The research revealed that half of the do not understand the primary role of continuous assessment. As described by Mohammedseid (2017), CA is an on-going, diagnostic, classroom-based process that uses a variety of assessment tools to measure learner performance. The teachers interviewed do not conduct continuous assessments as it is expected to be. With regards to the summary of the findings represented in Table 4.1, this research concludes that teachers continue to conduct summative assessments after a period of time and not during the course of learning. Onyefulu (2018) states that continuous assessment is purposely designed to improve teaching and learning for all

students. Volante and Beckett (2017) concur by saying that the primary purpose of formative assessment is assessment *for* learning and its secondary purpose, is assessment *of* learning. Assessment *for* learning involves assessing the learners' attainment of the concepts taught, whereby in assessment *of* learning, the teaching strategies are assessed. Therefore, CA is expected to be an assessment that is part of classroom activities and is a fundamental process that is required to promote teaching and learning. An assessment of teaching strategies is expected to be put in place in the course of teaching, from which the data collected from the respondents, there is none.

Berhe and Embiza (2015) argue that assessment of learning is the assessment of whether the learners have grasped the content delivered by the teacher. However, the respondents showed that they conduct continuous assessments solely for learning and after a long interval. From the documented data observed such as the mark book and schemes and records of work, the number of CAs recorded by the teachers range from 1 to 6 in a term. This is contrary to the expectations of CA implementation which is supposed to be conducted as much as possible for example during every lesson, after every lesson/topic, weekly or every fortnight as stipulated by Mohammedseid (2017). This reveals that the teachers do not fully understand the purpose of continuous assessment or they were not properly inducted/oriented on how regular CA should be conducted. According to Ali (2018), this is in contrast with the third phase of the Planned Changed Model whereby with any new phenomenon, people have to be fully aware and understand how things are supposed to operate.

#### 4.2.2 Resources Used

In Malawian schools, resources such as flipcharts, printers, computers, overhead projectors, adequate textbooks and internet are needed for the smooth implementation of CA. The schools that have adequate resources use the chalkboard, charts and printed papers to assess the learners. Whereby, the schools that have inadequate resources are limited to the use of the chalkboard.

All the 16 respondents stated that they assess learners using the chalkboard. Questions are written on the chalkboard and learners answer the questions on a piece of paper. For the respondents, this is the only way how to conduct a continuous assessment. Teacher 2 from school 3 explained:

*Every time I conduct continuous assessments I use the chalkboard. Questions are written on the board and the learners answer them on a piece of paper or in their notebooks. Our school does not have adequate resources such as printing paper to print assessments for the learners, so chalkboards are the only readily and easily accessible resources we have and use.*

Teacher 2 of school 2 stated that they are limited to use the chalkboard because they do not have other alternatives. He explained:

*Due to the lack of resources such as printed paper, textbooks and flipcharts, I only have the chalkboard to use to assess the learners. If our school had computers and access to the internet, I would be giving the learners research assessments and ask them to write reports. Other resources such as projectors could at least help to ease the work of writing so many questions on the chalkboard which is very exhausting.*

Teacher 1 from school 3 differs from the other respondents in terms of resources used. She stated that her school receives adequate funds to purchase adequate teaching and learning materials. She narrated;

*My school is cost center, as such it is able to acquire resources such as chart papers and printing paper. I usually write the questions on the chart papers prior to the assessment and paste them on the board. The learners answer the questions in their notebooks or on a piece of paper. When funds are available, we are able to administer printed assessments.*

Table 4.2 illustrates the number of teachers and the resources they use when conducting continuous assessment.

Table 4.2 Number of teachers and the resources used when conducting continuous assessment

| RESOURCES USED        | Flipcharts | Printed Papers | Overhead Projectors | Computers | Textbooks | Chalkboard |
|-----------------------|------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS | 4          | 2              | NONE                | NONE      | 2         | 16         |

The challenge of inadequate resources found in this study are consistent with what Kaambankadzanja (2001) and Nsapato (2005) have argued that lack of resources influences teachers' decisions in the classrooms in the sense that the type of resources available, determines the method to be used to assess the learners. For the effective implementation of continuous assessments, resources have to be available. This is in line with the MoEST (2019) who affirms the importance of resources to ensure proper implementation of teaching and learning practices to realise quality education. This study sought to find out the resources used to conduct CA, and it has found that most schools do not have adequate resources to enable teachers to use various assessment techniques.

#### 4.2.3 Techniques used When Conducting Continuous Assessments

The study also aimed at describing the techniques used by social studies teachers when conducting continuous assessments. The respondents were asked to state the techniques they use when assessing the learners and Table 4.3 below illustrates their responses.

Table 4.3 Techniques the respondents use to assess the learners.

| Technique             | Question and Answer | Group Assignment | Presentations | Debates | Projects | Role Play | Demonstrations |
|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------|---------|----------|-----------|----------------|
| Number of Respondents | 16                  | 1                | 1             | NONE    | NONE     | NONE      | NONE           |

All of the respondents stated that they use the question and answer technique when assessing the learners. From the 8 classroom observations of CA being conducted, all of the assessments were administered using the question and answer (pencil-paper test) technique. It was also observed that none of the teachers interviewed administered CA during the course of learning. As the schemes and records of work were being analysed, it was noticed that learner-centered assessment techniques such as presentations, debates, projects, role play, demonstrations are rarely or never used. Teacher 2 of school 4 highlighted;

*When I assess the learners, I use the question and answer strategy. I write questions on the board; the learners answer on a piece of paper. After marking the scripts, I give them feedback and revise the assessment with the learners. I do not use other techniques such as debate and projects because they cannot cover all the topics taught and are time consuming.*

Teacher 1 of school 6 had a different view from the others. He reiterated:

*I prefer using group assignment to assess the learners because of the limited time I have and the large class. I organise the learners in groups then different topic questions are given to each group. The learners discuss the question in their groups and present their findings. Upon presenting the findings, a write up is also submitted. In that way, the presentation carries 10 marks, while the write up carries 30 marks, making a total of 40.*

Apart from the question and answer method used during the lessons to assess learners, pencil-paper tests are the dominant strategy used by the teachers to assess the learners. This indicates that continuous assessments that are conducted in the participating schools, mostly use techniques that assess the cognitive domain of the learners neglecting the affective and psychomotor domains as illustrated in Table 4.3. Cagaanan (2017) observed that many teachers in most levels of education are incompetent in conducting effective and efficient assessment as all the domains are not assessed. Brookhart and McMillan (2020) agree that most teachers are over dependent on measuring students' progress in the cognitive domain in a school-based assessment with total neglect of the affective and psychomotor domains of learning. This study aimed to find out the strategies that teachers use when conducting CA, it has revealed that, most teachers in community day secondary schools assess learners mainly in their cognitive domain, while the other domains are neglected because the teachers do not utilize a variety of assessment techniques.

### **4.3 Challenges teachers meet when implementing continuous assessments**

In order to achieve the third objective of the study on the challenges teachers face when conducting CA, the respondents were asked to outline some of the challenges. This was facilitated by the questionnaire and also through the natural observation technique. In the process of discussing the challenges, the respondents were also asked how those challenges occur and how they cope with the challenges. The common challenges that the respondents revealed included low attendance of learners, time factor, lack of resources, cheating, inadequate or no orientation and negative perceptions of teachers on CA.

#### **4.3.1 Low Attendance of Learners in Assessments**

All of the respondents agreed that there is high absenteeism of students when continuous assessments are being conducted. Some learners have the tendency of absconding while others absent themselves from continuous assessments. Teacher 2 of school 1 lamented:

*When I announce to the learners that on such a day they are going to write a continuous assessment, some students tend to abscond it. They miss out without giving me a reason. Other learners do not even hand in their paper work.*

Teacher 1 of school 8 stated that some learners just have the fear of assessments. She explains:

*Some of my students have a fear of being assessed. I have about 58 students in my social studies class, but when I administer an assessment, only 40 turn out, meaning about 18 abscond the assessment.*

One of the reasons why low attendance pose as a challenge in the smooth running of CA is the negative attitude of learners towards it. Teacher 1 of school 8 elaborated;

*Learners do not take continuous assessments seriously like they do with end of term examinations. Some even say that continuous assessments will not contribute to the final grade in Malawi Secondary Certificate of Education examinations. That is why most of them abscond or they do not prepare for it efficiently. This is shown when they submit a blank paper or answer only one question of the whole assessment or sometimes they do not even write at all.*

Teacher 1 of school 4 added that learners do not value CA. He explained:

*Learners consider the end of term exams as something of high value, since they are printed out. Whereas, CA is not taken seriously since it is written on the board and learners answer on a piece of paper from their notebooks.*

In one of the assessments exercises observed, learners were seen coming into the classroom ten minutes into the period. Some were even leaving the classroom without submitting their papers. In another class that was observed, the total number of learners was 48, but the number of learners' present were 33. Using the triangulation technique by gathering the respondents class data from the attendance register and the number of scripts handed in, it revealed that fifteen students were absent from the assessment. This established that low attendance and absenteeism is indeed a challenge to the implementation of CA.

In a study conducted by Samson and Allida (2018) in Uganda, it was found that pupils have negative attitudes to continuous assessment as they see it as something that requires extra work and therefore tend to dislike it. Learner's negative perception to continuous assessment ultimately lead to their lack of seriousness in the exercise, as such making the implementation a challenge. Kapambwe (2010), states that some pupils stay away from schools in Zambia due to the fear of very challenging work such as assessments. This trend eventually leads to learners dropping out of schools completely.

In an attempt to curb the challenge of low attendance in CA, 7 of the respondents stated that they encourage the learners by introducing motivational incentives. One of the respondents explained how he motivates the learners:

*I motivate my learners by giving gifts to those that are on the top ten list. Gifts range from exercise books, rulers, pens and pencils. This makes the learners to work hard and take both continuous assessments and final exams seriously because they are aware of their importance and the gifts they will receive after achieving the best grades.*

Another respondent stated that he posts the assessment results on the schools' notice board. He explains:

*I post the results on the schools' notice board starting from the highest scoring student to the lowest scoring students. Those that absconded the assessment are given a zero grade. I do this in order to deter the learners from absconding assessments and working hard to avoid being on the list as those that have failed.*

Ten of the sixteen respondents agreed that they issue punishments to learners who do not write continuous assessments. After the punishment, the learners are given an assessment to write. Teacher 2 of school 1 explained:

*All learners that abscond continuous assessments are given punishments ranging from sweeping, mopping the classrooms to slashing the grass. This acts as a deterring agent as the learners' fear doing punishments, as such some of them do not abscond assessments.*

In addition to that, teacher 2 of school 1 said that apart from giving punishments to learners that do not write CA, parents are also involved in the disciplining of such learners. She explains:

*The parents of those that lack seriousness are ordered to come and take part in the discussions of disciplining their wards. From the discussions with the parents, the way forward on how both teachers and parents can work together in helping the learners to be serious is determined.*

Upon employing these measures, some students change for the better. Shilenge (2004) stresses that most parents show a high level of concern for their children's education and have high expectations of the school. Therefore, involving parents in CA implementation is an effective strategy to motivate learners. For instance, by allowing them to sign their children's homework or assessment every week, if there is a problem with learners' work they communicate with the teachers through the homework books. Black and William (2018) alludes that this motivational strategy has proven to be effective.

#### **4.3.2 Time Factor**

All the respondents claimed that there is inadequate time on the time table and to complete the heavy workload they have to effectively implement continuous assessments. They claimed that assessments are expected to be conducted during the normal learning periods. Teacher 2 of school 2 explained that in most CDSSs Social

Studies is usually given two or three periods per week. In single shift schools, one period runs for 40 minutes, as such a double period runs for at least one hour and twenty minutes. In double shift community day secondary schools, one period runs for 35 minutes. As such, a double period consists of one hour and ten minutes. He narrates;

*In single shift community day secondary schools like ours, social studies in the junior section is given at least three periods per week. On a particular day you have one period, another day two consecutive periods. I use the double period to assess the learners, as such having at least one hour and twenty minutes.*

*During this allocated time, I use it to write all the questions on the board and at the same time the learners are answering the questions which is not enough. It becomes more difficult when I am not given two consecutive periods, so I have to assess the learners in one period which is always difficult and almost impossible.*

The respondents agreed that they utilize the double periods they are given to conduct continuous assessments which they claim that it is still not enough. Teacher 2 of school 4 confessed that the learners are just given back their marked scripts and no revision is done due to lack of time. Teacher 2 of school 5 concurs to say that he does not have adequate time to revise the assessment administered after giving them the feedback.

He explains:

*Due to inadequate time, once I have marked the scripts, I hand them over to the learners and they revise the assessment in their own time. I advise them that they should revise the paper during the study circle time after classes.*

The respondents' view on time is similar to the findings in a research conducted by Deonarain (2002) which confirmed that among some of the problems that exist in the implementation of CA, insufficient time allocation is one of them. The main reason behind this time factor challenge is that on the time-table, many subjects compete for the little time (periods) given. It was observed that on the time table, some subjects have more periods than others. One of the teachers explained;

*The number of periods allocated on the time table favors mostly the science subjects. The new curriculum has put science subjects as its priority, seconded by language subjects then finally the humanities subjects. For instance, only 3 periods per week are given to social studies, but at the same time there is a lot of content which needs to be covered and also assessments have to be conducted in between the given time. This is different with other subjects such as mathematics and English where they are given over 6 periods per week.*

Eleven of the respondents stated that the time factor is caused by the heavy workload they have. The respondents stated that they also teach other subjects as well, and they also administer CAs in those subjects. The respondent with the most learners was teacher 2 of school 8 with 62 students in his class. He explained:

*I have 62 learners whom I teach social studies. This means, for the first assessment I have to mark 62 scripts and another 62 scripts for the second assessment. On top of that, I also teach other classes and other subjects which I teach and administer CA. As such, I do not have adequate time to mark, give feedback and revise the assessment.*

Teacher 1 of school 2 shared his experience of the challenge, he narrated;

*For the social studies class alone I have 57 students, which means 57 scripts to mark. Two assessments meaning that I have 114 scripts to mark. I also teach English in form 3 where I also have to conduct continuous assessments and it is more congested than the social studies class.*

During the study, it was discovered that there were cases whereby there are two or more streams and teachers were assigned to teach in all the streams. Teacher 2 of school 5 explains:

*I teach social studies and geography in form 1, 2 and 3. In all these classes there are two streams (A and B) and are heavily congested. Continuous assessments have to be administered in all these classes. Under such conditions, I feel that it is impracticable for me to undertake thorough assessment of the students in each stream as the workload is so overwhelming.*

In order to curb the challenge of inadequate time to conduct, some of the respondents mentioned that they arrange periods with fellow teachers in order to have adequate time to write the questions on the board and administer the assessment. Teacher 2 of school 7 explains;

*I utilize the day they I have a double period to conduct an assessment. If the double period is not enough, I arrange with the subject teacher coming before or after my period in order to have adequate time. Sometimes such arrangements do not work as the other teachers might also have an assessment on the same day or they have a lot of work to cover. As such, I sometimes arrange to conduct them after classes.*

In order to confirm the arrangement of CA by the respondents, a scheme and records of work and the time table of the teachers were inspected. The four respondents whose classes were observed, it was revealed that the teachers used the double periods allocated to them on the timetable. Not only that, the lessons were conducted in accordance to the scheme of work.

Another respondent explained how she manages time by arranging periods to be convenient for her. She narrates:

*In order to keep time, I arrange time for a continuous assessment either during the first two periods of the day (7:30am) or the first two periods after break. This allows me to write the questions early in the morning before the first period of the day or writing the questions during break time before period after break.*

Teacher 2 of school 8 also arranges time with other teachers and he confirmed on the benefits of this remedy. He explains:

*Arranging time with other teachers is a remedy that has proven to be effective to deal with the problem of limited time. I “ borrow” a period from fellow teachers to combine with my two periods so that I may have 3 periods to conduct CA. this period I have borrowed I have to give it back in the near future. By doing this gives me the liberty to move around the class and assist learners where they are stuck and minimizes the chances of cheating.*

The arrangement of classes by teachers in order to have adequate time to assess the learners reveals that teachers do not assess learners during the teaching and learning process. Shado (2019) argues that continuous assessment is a learning activity that should be deeply embedded in teaching and learning process. Mohammedseid (2017) concurs by stating that CA should no longer be seen as an external examination added at the end of a course but as a continuous process from the very beginning of the course. This shows that teachers are still sticking to the traditional way of assessing

learners after the learning process, which is contrary to the purpose of CA that it should be or can be conducted in the teaching and learning process.

Other respondents stated that they reduce the number of assessments to be conducted in order to curb the challenge of time and work. One of the respondents claimed that she administers only one continuous assessment. She explains:

*By administering one continuous assessment in the middle of the term, I am able to minimize the challenges of heavy workload to mark, and it also gives me adequate time to mark and give learners a timely feedback.*

In a similar situation, Kapambwe (2008) states that in Zambia, teachers are overwhelmed with the number of learners in a class and the workload, as such they tend to reduce the number of continuous assessments they conduct in a term. Such practices are against the recommendation of continuous assessments as they have to be conducted on regular basis in order to achieve assessment for learning and assessment of learning, as stipulated by Black and William (2018).

Teacher 1 of school 6 considers the use of group assignments as a means to avert the challenge of time. He explained:

*Apart from pencil-paper tests, I give learners group assignments. A particular topic or unit is given to the learners which they discuss in their groups. They discuss the questions they present the findings to the whole class and submit a write up. This strategy saves time in marking and to give timely feedback to the learners.*

The use of a variety of methods to assess learners is a recommendation in the implementation of CA. Ali (2018) asserts that CA entails the utilization of a variety of methods to give learners ample opportunity to demonstrate their abilities more fully. This also allows learners to be assessed in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning as one strategy cannot measure all of them. Strategies such as debates, group work, presentations have proved to save teachers a lot of time and minimize the workload. However, as Winston and Bould (2022) affirms that all forms of assessment techniques contain some errors, which implies that learners must be assessed frequently and with a variety of methods

#### **4.3.3 Inadequate Assessment Tools**

The lack of assessment tools/resources was considered as another challenge in the implementation of continuous assessments. The respondents concurred with each other that most community day secondary schools have inadequate resources such as printing paper and tonner to print out assessments. As a result, the respondents depended on the use of the chalkboard and the learners use their note books or a page torn from their notebooks. Teacher 2 of school 4 stated:

*The only resource available is the chalkboard, but using the chalk board becomes exhausting as I usually have a lot or long questions such as case studies. Sometimes using the chalkboard limits the type of questions to assess the learners on. Charts, diagrams and tables become difficult to draw on the board as such I omit them as test items. Furthermore, learners have to write the long assessments in their notebooks, or sometimes have to tear a page or two from their notebooks, which is not on.*

Teacher 1 from school 3 asserted teaching at a cost center gives them an advantage of having adequate resources to carry out CA. She explained:

*My school, being a cost center, is able to purchase teaching and learning resources which we can use to conduct CA. Some of these resources include tonner, printing paper and chart papers. However, if I am to administer a printed-out CA using a pencil-paper test, I am only allowed to formulate a maximum of a two paged question paper printed on both sides.*

Teacher 2 of school 3 also lamented on the challenge of resources. She explained:

*The lack of printing paper, tonner, chart papers and textbooks in our school limits the way we assess the learners. We cannot assess the learners individually using textbooks because they are not enough for each and every student.*

All of the respondents agreed that the main cause of this challenges is the lack of preparedness by the government. Teacher 2 of school 4 explains:

*Personally, I blame the Ministry of Education for introducing a policy when they don't have the resources to support it. We are told to assess the learners using a variety of techniques. These techniques require resources which are not available in our schools.*

The lack of resources in government secondary schools show that the Ministry of Education lacks commitment in the implementation of school curricula. Mhango (2008) reveals that the Ministry drags its feet in dealing with pertinent issues that affect the quality of education in the country. Kaambankadzanja (2001), adds that the Ministry is very sluggish in its commitment to planned educational activities, in this case reducing the effective implementation of continuous assessment by teachers.

The respondents agreed that resources are a limitation to the effective implementation of continuous assessments. As such, they tend to use the locally available resources when assessing the learners. Instead of using printed papers, the teachers agreed that they use resources such as the chalk board, chart papers and the learners mostly use either their exercise books or pieces of papers as answer sheets. Teacher 2 of school 7 explains;

*The chalk board is the most readily available resource which I use in order to assess the learners, but it is exhausting, as such, I ask short questions or essay questions. I do not bother to ask long test items or those that include diagrams, graphs or even case studies as they require a lot of space. It is tiresome!*

Another respondent stated how he uses chart papers to assess learners. He narrates:

*I prefer to use chart papers when I am assessing learners. I write the questions on the chart papers in advance and post them on the chalk board in the classroom. This saves me time and I am able to ask questions that consist of tables and graphs, even sketch pictures*

Teacher 1 of school 3 agreed on the use of the chalkboard and chart papers as effective resources to assess learners. She further adds that textbooks can also be used to assess learners. She explains:

*For us teachers to implement continuous assessments effectively, schools should have adequate textbooks enough for each and every student to use. In the textbooks there are activities as well as questions that a teacher can use to assess the learners. When I use textbooks, I save time since I do not bother to write the questions on the chalkboard. Questions that consist of charts, pictures, tables and graphs are easily included in the assessment.*

Hayford (2017) affirms that lack of resources such as textbook can hamper the process of CA. In a study conducted by Kidane (2013), it reveals that a majority of teachers complain that they have inadequate teaching and learning materials. In this study, during the CAs observed, all teachers used the chalkboard to assess the learners which is a clear indication that teachers do not use other resources when assessing learners such as textbooks, printed tests or chart papers as they are not available, if so but inadequate.

UNESCO (2005) provides an insight into the benefits of utilizing formative assessment strategies and also stipulates that effective formative assessment requires adequate resources. The lack of resources such as I.C.T equipment i.e. computers and projectors, tonner or ink and printing papers has limited the use of other strategies in conducting continuous assessments. Resources such as printed papers, charts and the overhead projector allows the teachers to incorporate all kinds of questions that include diagrams, charts and pictures which they fail to ask when using the chalk board a CA resource. Ratsatsi (2015) argues that availability of adequate and appropriate resources is important for successful implementation of educational innovations such as CA. Pahad (2017) echoes by stating that resources play a crucial part in the implementation of any policy, without it challenges are inevitable.

This resonates with what occurs in the second phase of the Planned Change model which is Planning. Bullock & Batten (1985) states that there is a need to identify support required to enable the change to occur. In this case, when planning to enroll continuous assessment in the curriculum, availability of resources should be paramount.

#### 4.3.4 Cheating

Cheating is regarded as one of the challenges in the implementation of continuous assessment especially during pencil-paper tests which is the dominant method of assessing learners in the schools' understudy. Teacher 2 of school 2 explains:

*There is a lot of cheating during assessments especially when the questions are being written on the board. It is difficult to write the questions on the board and at the same time monitoring the learners.*

Teacher 2 of school 1 concurred by saying;

*There is a lot of cheating going on during a continuous assessment exercise. As I am writing the questions on the board, I face the board and the learners take it as an opportunity to discuss the answers amongst themselves.*

All of the respondents agreed that large class size and the lack of resources such as charts, desks, printed papers or textbooks, are the major contributing factors of cheating during continuous assessments. On the issue of large class size, 14 of the respondents stated that they have learners more than the required number which is 40. According to the Malawi National Education Sector Plan 2008 - 2017 (2008), its aim was to increase the teaching staff to student ratio in Community Day Secondary Schools from 1:104 to 1:60 and ultimately reduce it to 1:40 by 2017. Data collected from mark books indicated that teachers have a lot of learners which they have to assess. The respondent with the

most learners had a total of 82 students, while the respondent with the lowest number of learners had a total of 62 learners. The average classroom size of the respondents is 48.8. Table 4.4 illustrates the number of learners against the respondents.

Table 4.4 Illustration of the number of learners against the respondents

| Teacher       | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
|---------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| # of learners | 62 | 77 | 78 | 71 | 78 | 68 | 73 | 70 | 58 | 55 | 68 | 61 | 75 | 82 | 61 | 60 |

The ratio of the students is not proportional to the number of desks in the classrooms.

Teacher 1 of school 5 narrated;

*Due to the large class sizes, desks are not enough for the learners. The learners are congested in classrooms and they are seated three learners per desks instead of two. This gives the learners the opportunity to peek in each other's work and whisper to each other the answers to the questions.*

Teacher 1 of school 4 also explained how the lack of resources causes learners to cheat during assessment. She explained:

*Due to the lack of resources, learners have to tear papers from their notebooks to use as an answer sheet. In the process of tearing the papers, they peek into their notes for answer. This could be curbed if we assessed the learners using printed papers.*

All the respondents agreed that punishments are given to any learner that is found committing the malpractice. Teacher 2 of school 5 explains:

*The learners are warned before the assessment that if they are found cheating, they will be severely punished.*

Another respondent agreed on giving punishments to learners who cheats. She explained:

*Punishments are usually given after the learners have knocked off. Sometimes I disqualify the culprits and give them a zero mark.*

During one of the assessments which was observed, the researcher witnessed a teacher snatching a paper from two learners who were caught cheating. The learners were discussing the assessment while the teacher was writing the questions on the chalk board. They were sent out of the class and were told to remain after knocking off for a punishment. In another assessment observed, while the teacher was also occupied with writing questions on the board, an opportunity was created for learners to cheat as they were peeking in each other's work and notebooks besides that, discussing the questions with each other by whispering.

The results produced by the learners may not truly reflect the achievement of the learners because of the malpractice of cheating. The good "false" grades the learners produce consequently develop false impressions to the teachers that they are teaching and implementing continuous assessments effectively. According to Mohammedseid

(2017), the malpractice of cheating is seriously one of the threatening factors that challenges the effective assessment of learners.

#### **4.3.5 Inadequate or No Orientation**

Among the respondents interviewed, three of them attended the full-scale orientation workshop on the new curriculum for five days. Twelve of them stated that they were not fully oriented on how to conduct continuous assessment but were briefed on the new curriculum in one day. One of the respondents stated that she has never attended any orientation session on the new curriculum. The study reveals that not all teachers have had the privilege to attend the full orientation and how to implement continuous assessments effectively. Teacher 1 of school 1 narrates:

*From our school, only the heads of department and a few selected teachers attended the week-long orientation on the new curriculum which included more information on how continuous assessments should be conducted. The rest of us were taught what our colleagues learnt in one week at a one-day workshop at our school.*

Teacher 1 of school 7 lamented on difficulties in calculating grades for the learners. She explained:

*I sometimes struggle to make calculations to come up with final grades for the learners since it requires mathematical skills. Every teacher makes his or her own calculations as long as a final grade is given. If there was adequate training or orientation on how to properly calculate the grades of the learners, things could have been easier.*

All of the teachers agreed that their lack of orientation on CA is mainly caused by the government' s failure in preparing the teachers on the new phenomenon. Teacher 2 of school 7 explained:

*I blame the government for failing to orient us all fully on how to conduct continuous assessment effectively. Firstly, only a few were chosen to participate in a full scale orientation and secondly, orientation occurred in the middle of the school calendar when we have already started implementing CAs.*

Teacher 1 of school 8 also points a finger at the ministry of education on its failure to prepare teachers on the new development. He narrated:

*The government through the ministry of education introduced CA in secondary schools without preparations. There resources are inadequate and we are not trained on how we can conduct CA without adequate resources, but they expect us to deliver it effectively.*

The twelve respondents that did not take part in the full-scale orientation on CA, rely on the one-day school-based training they participated. Teacher 1 of school 7 explained:

*I depend on the information that we were briefed on a one-day school-based training we had. Although there were a lot of topics to be covered on that day, continuous assessment implementation was included briefly in the topic of end of term examination. With that, the administration has a false image that teachers are well oriented on how to conduct CA.*

Teacher 2 of school 4 who has never attended any form of orientation stated that she relies on the information passed on from her fellow teachers on how CA should be implemented. She explains:

*I ask my fellow teachers on how CA should be conducted effectively. Most of them tell me that it is just a matter of giving the learners a short test once on a while and the recorded grades should be added with the end of term examinations grades. Where I have some other problems, I consult my head of department.*

Bento and Young (2018) asserted that the lack of orientation of teachers to assessment strategies, generates distorted perceptions, misunderstandings in the implementation of continuous assessment. From the data collected through the interviews, the study found that there is inaccurate administration of assessments mainly due to the lack of

knowledge on the concept of CA due to inadequate orientation. Consequently, students are being given inflated continuous assessment marks due to the teachers' inability to administer CA and calculate the grades properly. Asefa (2015) stresses that this unfortunate conduct gives the students a false sense of security that they are well-prepared for national exams, thereby, leading to unrealistic expectations and diminished effort. Asefa (2015) continues to advise that teachers need practical exposure to basic practical statistical concepts of calculating grades and trainings in proper implementation of CA. Bullock & Batten (1985) asserts that for proper implementation of a change or phenomenon, in the third phase of the Planned Change Model, the implementers should be oriented or inducted about the change/reform. The model also states that orientation assists implementers to familiarize themselves with the new concept.

#### **4.3.6 Negative Perceptions of Teachers on Continuous Assessments**

The respondents were asked to express themselves how they feel about continuous assessments. From the interviews conducted, classroom observations and documentations, this study can reveal that there is a mixed reaction from the respondents. From the 16 respondents' explanations, 10 of them have positive attitudes towards CA, while 6 of them had negative attitudes towards it. Despite the majority of positive responses from the respondents, the few negative perceptions stated by the teachers hinder the implementation of CA to a large extent.

Teacher 1 of school 4 expressed how he feels about CA. He explains:

*CA is just a waste of time, we have a lot of workload to teach, but the little time we have to teach we use it to conduct a continuous assessment. The grades are not even recognized by the Malawi National Examinations Board as such I feel that it is just a waste of time.*

Respondent 2 of school 3 also expressed her negative attitude towards CA. She said explained:

*CA disturbs the completion of schemes and syllabus. In Social studies, there is a lot of content to be taught in a very short period of time. As this is the case, I strongly say that CA is a hindrance and I conduct it because it is a policy and it cannot be negotiated. But I conduct it only once in a term.*

Such sentiments made by teacher 2 of school 3 were reflected to the number of assessments she conducts per term. When checking her scheme and records of work for term 3, it showed that she planned to conduct only one CA in a form of a short test, which is in contrast to how CA should be conducted. CA is supposed to be conducted at regular intervals e.g. after a lesson, topic, daily or weekly as stipulated by Suskie (2018).

From the responses of the teachers, most of them shared the same reservations on CA. These negative perceptions were analyzed and summarized into Table 4.5.

Table 4.5. Summary of the negative perceptions of the respondents on continuous assessments.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Continuous assessments are a waste of time                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 2. They do not contribute to the MSCE grades                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 3. MANEB does not recognize Continuous Assessment grades                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 4. Continuous assessments disturb the planned scheme and delays the completion of the syllabus as one has to conduct an assessment (2 periods needed), give feedback and revise (another 2 periods needed), almost a week and a half is consumed |
| 7. Continuous assessments is suitable for tertiary education not secondary education                                                                                                                                                             |
| 8. Continuous assessments adds pressure to the teachers                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 9. Continuous assessments are conducted for the sake of records and implementing the policy.                                                                                                                                                     |

Teachers' negative perceptions of continuous assessments may be caused by their own experiences when assessing the students (Harrison, 2015). As continuous assessments have yet to become seamlessly integrated into teaching and learning processes, many teachers have not had positive personal experiences with this practice. As such, teachers continue to treat assessment practices, formatively or summative, as isolated tasks. Modupe and Sunday (2015) state that teachers need to experience positive instances of continuous assessments if they are to integrate it into their practice. Currently, teachers widely base their use of continuous assessments on their perceptions of continuous assessments, which are mostly negative, rather than on positive outcomes of continuous assessments.

Another cause of the negative attitude of teachers towards CA could be that they are not involved in the planning, designing and development of the new phenomenon, but they are only appearing in the implementation stage. Volante and Beckett (2017) share the same sentiment by stating that teachers' perceptions on continuous assessment might have been influenced by their lack of involvement and participation in the design and development process of the continuous assessment policy. For educational innovations to be successful, there is a need to involve those who are going to implement the innovations in the planning stage, if they are to be successful. Jones (2018) argues that educational innovations are "people-centered" activities. Hence, they depend for their success on the values, attitudes and behavior of intended beneficiaries and on their effective participation in the educational innovation's design and management. The perception of the respondents in this study indicate the lack of knowledge and appreciation of the CA policy, which may be originating from their absence in the planning and designing of it. Furthermore, as Alausa (1999) emphasized, teachers are the main implementers of continuous assessment programs; thus, they need to have enough knowledge and positive attitude about continuous assessment. Asefa (2015) stated that teachers need to have a positive attitude toward continuous assessment and believe that continuous assessment is necessary, as such, they are likely to increase the academic achievements of their students. Ten of the respondents have positive perceptions towards continuous assessments. The positive perceptions originated from their understanding of CA and appreciating its importance, hence they implement it effectively. One of the teachers stated:

*CAs are very important because they keep the learners alert. When the learners know that they are going to be assessed at the end of the lesson or topic, they become so attentive not to miss anything in the lesson. That is why I strongly recommend this policy.*

The response of teacher 1 of school 2 indicate some positive sentiments with CA. He explained:

*With CA, I am able to assess my learners more frequently than ever. This has helped me to check each and every learners' performance, those that are struggling, I am able to assist them in time and accordingly.*

Teacher 1 of school 1 praised the importance and effectiveness CA in regards to pedagogies. He explained:

*When using a variety of assessment techniques, I am able to assess the learners in all the learning domains. For instance, with simple tests, I am able to assess their cognitive domain. By conducting debates, I am able to assess their psychomotor and affective domains in the process. This practice of continuous assessment has helped me to know the strength and weaknesses of my learners.*

According to the Planned Change Model, those that have positive attitude towards a phenomenon, either understand the importance of it and/or they fully understand its concept (Bullock and Button, 1985). In this case, there is a need for teachers to have positive attitudes towards CA for them to implement it effectively.

Table 4.6 illustrates a summary of the challenges associated with CA, their possible causes and strategies used to address the challenges.

Table 4.6 illustrates the challenges associated with CA, their possible causes and strategies used to address the challenges.

| <b>Challenges associated with CA</b>           | <b>Possible causes of the challenges</b>                                                                              | <b>Strategies for addressing the challenges</b>                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>-Low Attendance Of Learners</b>             | -Negative Attitude of Learners Towards CA                                                                             | -Motivational Incentives<br>-Punishments<br>-Parents Involvement                                                                                 |
| <b>-Time Factor</b>                            | -Limited Number of Periods Allocated for the Social Studies<br><br>-Heavy Workload                                    | -Period Arrangement<br><br>-Reducing the Number of Assessments to be Conducted<br><br>-Group Work Assessments<br><br>-Variation in CA Techniques |
| <b>-Lack Of Resources</b>                      | -Lack of Preparedness by the Ministry of Education                                                                    | -Use Locally Available Resources                                                                                                                 |
| <b>-Cheating</b>                               | -Large Class Size                                                                                                     | -Punishments<br><br>-Involving Parents and Guardians                                                                                             |
| <b>-Inadequate Or No Orientation</b>           | -Failure of the Ministry of Education in Orienting All the Teachers on Full-Scale on CA                               | -School Based Training (CPDs)<br><br>-Consulting fellow teachers                                                                                 |
| <b>-Negative Perceptions Of Teachers On CA</b> | -Negative Personal Experiences with CA<br><br>-Teachers Not Involved in The Planning, Designing and Development of CA | -Developing positive attitude towards CA<br><br>-Understanding the concept of CA and its importance                                              |

The research was very much focused on the implementation of CA. In line with the first objective of this study to examine techniques and approaches used to conduct CA, this study reveals that teachers do not conduct CA regularly as it is supposed to be done. Which clearly indicates that they do not have a full understanding of how CA should be conducted. The approaches teachers used to conduct continuous assessment was dominantly question and answer using a paper-pen test which only assesses a learners' psychomotor domain leaving behind other domains. This indicated a shortfall in the implementation of CA as Kidane (2017) explains that a variety of methods, appropriate tools and techniques must be used in order to commensurate with the learners' needs. Teacher should include a range of different assessment strategies and techniques in the classroom in order to gather information about students' learning and used to measure students' performance or achievement.

The findings also reveal the challenges teachers face when conducting CA. The respondents raised issues such as low attendance, inadequate time and tools/resources, cheating, teacher's perception towards CA and most importantly inadequate or no orientation on how to conduct continuous assessment. During the interviews, the teachers responded on how they deal with the challenges they face when implementing CA. It was revealed that the teachers themselves have established they own solutions to the challenges. The study shows that teachers issue punishments to deter students from absconding CA and other teachers give incentives to motivate students. Special time is arranged to assess the learners and they use readily available resources to implement CA. The study has also revealed that in some schools, CPDs

have been organized to orient teacher on the implementation of CA. Teachers that did not attend any CPD consulted senior or fellow teachers to understand the concept of CA. The fourth phase of the Change Planned Model emphasizes on monitoring and evaluation of a phenomenon being implemented. During this phase, the phenomenon of continuous assessment is expected to be stabilizing and teachers are embedding change. The results and outcomes from the change are recorded. The challenges are thoroughly analysed and possible solutions are implemented by the teachers, school administrators and policy makers.

## **CHAPTER 5. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Chapter Overview**

This chapter presents a summary of findings of this study which investigated how social studies teachers conduct continuous assessments, the challenges face by teachers in conducting continuous assessments and documented the strategies social studies teachers use to cope with the challenges they face in carrying out continuous assessments. A conclusion is derived from the findings and also recommendations are outlined.

### **5.2 Summary of findings**

One of the objectives of the study was to describe the techniques used by social studies teachers in conducting continuous assessments in junior secondary school level. The study found that most teachers do not use a variety of assessment strategies to assess all the three domains i.e. cognitive, affective and psychomotor. From the classroom assessments that were observed, the dominant strategy that the teachers use is administering a test by writing questions on the board and the learners write the answer in their note books or on pieces of paper. This assessment technique only assesses the cognitive domain, which leaves out the other domains unassessed. Other strategies which can assess the psychomotor and affective domains such as presentations, projects, role plays or research are seldom used. Suksie (2018) reveals that little or no alternate creative assessment strategies being used when assessing learners, this can

lead to less chances for learners to have an opportunity to understand and display their skills and knowledge. Therefore, it cannot be denied that social studies teachers do not assess learners in all the domains and teachers do not use other assessment techniques rather than the traditional pencil-paper test, hence, CA is not being fully implemented.

The study also found out that most teachers do not conduct assessments on regular basis. From the interviews and documentations, this study has revealed that teachers have established their own number of assessments to be conducted per term. Others say twice per term, while others think at least four times in enough. Some of the respondents stated that they assess learners once in a term. This is contrary to the policy as it recommends that continuous assessments should be conducted as much as possible. Riddler (2019), states that there is confusion amongst teachers in terms of how often the learners must be assessed. He also asserts that there is no agreement amongst teachers in terms of how regularly continuous assessment should be conducted. Related to a study conducted by Adsefa (2015), teachers fail to conduct CA effectively because there are no clear manuals and guidelines on how to implement it. Continuous assessment is expected to be an on-going process and should be conducted during lesson delivery. Therefore, it should not only appear to be conducted once or twice per term, but even in every lesson of the term if possible, which this study has discovered that most teachers are failing to implement.

Another objective was to identify the challenges associated with CA, their possible causes and the strategies the teachers use to address the challenges. In total, there were 6 challenges mentioned by the teachers. Three of the challenges mentioned stood

out to be most prominent. The first one being low attendance of learners. This challenge was stated to be caused by the negative attitudes of learners towards CA and addressed by issuing motivational incentives to learners, punishments and involving parents in issues concerning CA. Another major challenge was time factor which the respondents stated that it is caused by the limited number of periods allocated for the social studies and heavy workload. The teachers addressed this challenge by arranging periods to their convenience and reducing the number of assessments to be conducted among others. The third major challenge mentioned by the teachers was their negative perception on CA. This was said to be caused by the teachers' negative personal experiences with CA and their feeling of not being involved in the planning, designing and development of CA policies. The teachers stated that developing positive attitude towards CA and understanding the concept of CA and its importance as the most effective remedies to the challenge.

This study has found that some schools have the facilities and resources to implement CA effectively, while others do not. Once these issues of facilities and resources are dealt with, CA may be implemented effectively. Merriam and Tidsel (2015) acknowledges that the old educational curriculum required a radical reconstruction, hence the important to adopt the current OBE curriculum. He cautions, however, that such innovations must take account of the resource status of schools and classrooms. The respondents revealed that they are able to use their own initiatives to cope up with the challenges. Some of the teachers interviewed in this study use incentives and punishments to motivate learners, others use locally available resources in case of limited resources. Yamin-Ali (2021) asserts that teachers have to put into action to cope

with difficulties and ensure that the process of CA will be run smoothly. From the findings of this study, it cannot be denied that teachers have the ability to cope up with the challenges that hinder the proper implementation of CA.

### **5.3. Conclusion**

The main objective of the study was to investigate how social studies teachers implement continuous assessment in community day secondary schools of Malawi. This study has revealed that social studies teachers, as the implementers of continuous assessment in the schools under study, do not understand the standard implementation practice of the policy. It has been observed that teachers are practicing continuous assessment of learners in different ways and manners which can only be attributed to some forms of confusion in the understanding of the policy. The researcher saw the confusion in the areas of how often the learners should be assessed, and how many of such assessments should be conducted.

Despite the teachers attempting to implement continuous assessments, challenges still prevail affecting the effectiveness of continuous assessments. Although some of the challenges seem to originate from the way the practice was introduced, some of them are resolved by the teachers themselves while other challenges such as large class sizes and resources are administrative and management issues which can be worked out internally.

The study's findings underscore the complexities of implementing continuous assessment policies in community day secondary schools in Malawi, revealing a

disconnect between policy intentions and actual practice. Through the lens of the Planned Change Model, this research highlights the challenges of navigating the "unfreezing" phase, where teachers struggle to understand and internalize new assessment practices. The study demonstrates that without adequate support, training, and resources, teachers may resort to varying practices, undermining the effectiveness of continuous assessment.

This study contributes to the understanding of the Planned Change Model, particularly in the context of educational reform. It highlights the need for a systematic approach to introducing new policies, including comprehensive training, resource allocation, and ongoing support. The research also reinforces the importance of clarity and consistency in assessment practices, demonstrating that ambiguity can lead to confusion and ineffective implementation.

In line with policy implications, this study reveals that educational authorities must provide ongoing training and support to ensure teachers understand and can effectively implement continuous assessment policies. Furthermore, adequate resources, including manageable class sizes and assessment materials, are essential for effective implementation.

By examining the implementation of continuous assessment through the Planned Change Model, this study provides insights into the challenges of educational reform and the importance of effective change management. Ultimately, it contributes to the development of more effective policies and practices that support teachers and enhance student learning outcomes.

## **5.4. Recommendations.**

### **1. Comprehensive Orientation/Induction**

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology through the school administrators should provide teachers with a mandatory thorough orientation and induction on the importance, objectives, and effective implementation of continuous assessment, preferably before the start of a new academic year.

### **2. Capacity Building**

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology through Teacher Training Institutions Organize should organise CPD (Continuous Professional Development) trainings for teachers to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to assess all learning domains (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor), at two trainings in an academic calendar year.

### **3. Resource Allocation**

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and school managers should ensure that schools have adequate funds to purchase resources necessary for effective continuous assessment implementation in the financial year.

### **4. Guidance Materials**

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in collaboration with Curriculum Development Department or Malawi Institute of Education must develop and distribute teaching handouts, such as leaflets, handouts, and handbooks, to provide clear

guidelines on conducting continuous assessments, promoting uniformity among teachers.

### **5.5 Areas of Further Study**

a) The importance of CA has been discussed in this study. It would be of great importance that further research should be conducted on the impact of CA on the performance of learners in order to appreciate whether it is supporting the attainment of quality education or not. This study only focused on how teachers conduct CA and the challenges they face, but did not investigate the impacts of CA on the performance of learners.

b) This study has investigated continuous assessment from the teachers' perspective. It is therefore recommended that a study be carried out on learners' perceptions of continuous assessment in social studies.

c) This study found out the techniques teachers use when conducting CA. The teachers in this study used the pencil paper assessment as their prime mode of assessment which does not assess the other domains of learning. Further research could be conducted on the effective assessment techniques for Social Studies which covers all the learning domains.

d) More research needs to be done on the implementation of CA in Social Studies. Due to the little research has been done on this in Malawi as suggested by the literature review, more research needs to be done on how teachers conduct CA in semi-urban and rural schools.

## REFERENCES

Abosalem, Y. (2016). Assessment techniques and students' higher order thinking skills.

*International Journal of Secondary Education, Vol. 4, No 1, pp. 1-11.*

Ali, L. (2018). The Design of Curriculum, Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education with Constructive Alignment. *Journal of Education and e-learning Research, Vol. 5, No1, pp 72-78.*

Adebowale, O.F. (2008) *Continuous assessment policy implementation in selected local government areas of Ondo state (Nigeria): Implications for successful implementation of the UBE program.* Obafemi Awolowo University.

Ahukanna R. A., Onu, M. I. & Ukah, P. N. (2007). Continuous Assessment in Primary and Secondary Schools: Issues and Problems. *Journal of Teacher Perspective*, 17, [www.rsisinternational.org/journals/ijrsi/archive/volume-vii-issue-i](http://www.rsisinternational.org/journals/ijrsi/archive/volume-vii-issue-i)

Aluasa, A.Y. (1999). *The Impact of Assessment on students learning.* Oxford Brooks University: Oxford.

Alausa, A.Y. (2006). Continuous Assessment in our schools: Advantages and Problems.

<http://www.nied.edu.na/journals/journal9/Journal%209%20Article%202.pdf>

Amedahe, F. K. (2002). *Review of Continuous Assessment: Guidelines for Identifying Critical Instructional Objectives for Designing Continuous Assessment*. A Seascope Project, University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

Asamoah-Gyimah, K. (2002). *An Evaluation of the Practice of Continuous Assessment in SSS in Ashanti Region of Ghana*. Master's Thesis: University of Cape Coast.

Awofala, O. A., and Babajide, F. T. (2013). Examining attitude towards continuous assessment practices among Nigerian pre-service STM teachers. *Journal of Education and Practice*. Vol. 4, No. 13, pp. 37-49.

Bachman, L. F. And Palmer, A. (2010). *Language Assessment in Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bachman, L. F. (2004). *Statistical Analyses for Language Assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Black, P. and William, D. (1998). *Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards through Classroom Assessment*. Vol. 80, No 2, pp 139-148

<https://doi.org/10.1177/003172171009200119>

Bearman, M., Dawson, P., Boud, D., Hall, M., Bennett, S., Molloy, E., & Joughin, G.,  
(2014), Guide to the Assessment Design Decisions Framework,

<http://www.assessmentdecisions.org/guide>

Benton, S. L. and Young, S. (2018), Best Practices in the Evaluation of Teaching. IDEA  
Paper# 69. IDEA Center, Inc.

Black, P. and William, D. (2018). Classroom Assessment and Pedagogy: Assessment in  
*Education: Principles, Policies and Practice*, Vol. 25, No 6, pp 551-575.

Bushe, G. R. and Marshak, R. J. (2016). *Valuing Both the Journey and the Destination  
in Organization Development*. Palgrave Macmillan. New York

Cagaaman, J. (2017). Research Competency among Elementary School Teachers; an  
Evaluative Assessment for School-Based Action Research (SBAR). *Review 1*

Cao, X. and Henderson, E. (2021). Exploring Diary Methods in Higher Education  
Research. Rutledge.

Capper, J. (1996). Capper, J. *Testing to Learn, Learning to Test: Improving Educational  
Testing in Developing Countries*. International Reading Association: Newark.

- Chirwa, G. and Naidoo, D. (2010). *Continuous Assessment in Expressive Arts in Malawian Primary Schools*. University of Johannesburg.
- Chiziwa, W. K. M. C., and Kumkwezu, E. D. (2021). Investigating Teacher Assessment Practices in the Teaching of Social Studies in Malawian Primary Schools. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol 9, pp 480-495.
- Chiziwa, W. (2020). *Curriculum Reform: Initial Primary Care School Teachers Experiences with OBE in Malawi*. Livingstonia Press.
- Creswell, J.W. and Poth, C.N. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications
- Creswell, J.W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches (4<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Coffee, A. (2014). *The Sage Hand book of Qualitative Data Analysis*. London: Sage.
- Deonarain, S. (2004). *An Investigation into Teachers' Views of Continuous Assessment (CA) and Its Implementation in Grade 12 Higher Grade Mathematics in the Ethekwini Region*. University of KwaZulu-Natal

Esposito, A. S., and Weaver, D. (2011). Continuous Team Assessment to Improve Student Engagement and Active Learning. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice: Vol. 8, Issue, 1, pp. 1-11.*

Flick, U. (2020). Introducing Research Methodology *Thinking Your Way through Your research Project*. Sage Publications.

Frankfort-Nachmias, C. & Nachmias, D. (2005). *Research methods in social sciences*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). London: Arnold.

Hayes, D., Mills, M., Christie, P. and Lingard, B. (2020), *Teachers & schooling making a difference: Productive Pedagogies, assessments and performance*. Routledge.

Hayford, S. K. (2007). *Continuous Assessment and Lower Attaining Pupils in Primary and Junior Secondary Schools in Ghana School of Education*. University of Birmingham: United Kingdom.

Hernández, R. (2012). Does continuous assessment in higher education support student learning? *High Edu Vol. 64, pp 489– 502.*

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-012-9506-7>

Gay, R. (2012). *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Columbus: Merrill Publishing Company.

- Giorgi, A. (2009). *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology: A modified Husserlian Approach*. Duquesne University Press: Pittsburgh, PA
- Graneheim, U. H., & Lundman, B. (2004). Qualitative content analysis in nursing research: Concepts, procedures and measures to achieve trustworthiness. *Nurse Education Today*, Vol. 24, No. 2, pp 105-112.
- Hares, L. (2013). *Introducing Formative Assessment in Malawi: Challenges and Opportunities*. Unpublished
- Hernandez, R. (2012). *Does Continuous Assessment in Higher Education Support Student Learning*. *Higher Education*, Vol 64, No 4, pp 489-502.
- Hilton, C. E. (2015). The importance of pretesting questionnaires: a field research example of cognitive pretesting the Exercise Referral Quality of Life Scale (ER-QLS), *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, Coventry: Coventry University Press.
- Jansen, J. (1997). Why OBE will fail? *Macro Educational Policy Unity*. Faculty of Education. Durban: UDW
- Johnston, C. (1996). *Unlocking the Will to Learn*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press
- Jones, C. (2005). *Assessment for Learning*. London: Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA).

Jones, P. (2020). *OBE Strategy for Adult Learning*. IGI Global.

IEQ/Malawi (2003). Continuous Assessment for Standard 3: A Training Manual for Educators in Malawi [online]. Available at [http://www.ieq.org/pdf/CA\\_Manual.pdf](http://www.ieq.org/pdf/CA_Manual.pdf)

Kaambankadzanja, D.O.P. (2001). *The changing role of primary school head teacher in Malawi*. Unpublished Masters, University of Manchester: Manchester.

Kapambwe M., and Mulenfa, M.G. (2008). *The Implementation of School Based Assessment (CA) in Zambia*. The 2008 IAEA Conference.

Kapambwe, M. W. (2010). *The implementation of school based continuous assessment (CA) in Zambia*. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 5(3), 099-107. Retrieved from <http://www.academicjournals.org/ERR>

Kellaghan, T. and Greaney, V. (2001). *Using Assessment to Improve the Quality of Education*. Paris:

Kidane, A., (2013). *The Challenges of Implementing Continuous Assessment in Physical Education Classes in Some Selected High Schools in Addis Ababa*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.

Kivunja, C. (2015). Why students don' t like assessment and how to change their perceptions in 21<sup>st</sup> century pedagogies. *Creative Education*, Vol. 6, pp 2117-2126.

<http://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2015.62025>

Kozłowska, A., and Wisniewski, Z. (2018). Methods for Assessing the Effectiveness of Language Learning- A Comparative Study. *An International Conference on Applied Human Factors and Ergonomics*. Springer: Cham.

Krishnaswami, R. O., & Ranganatham, M. (2010). *Methodology of research in social sciences*, (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Mumbai: Himalaya Publishing House.

Lewis, A. (1999). Summative National Curriculum assessments of primary aged children with special needs. *British Journal of Special Education*, Vol. 23, No 1, pp 9- 14.

Longwe, H. (2016). *Academic research and writing in theology and religious studies*. Mzuzu. Mzuni Press.

Macnee, L. C., & McCabe, S. (2008). *Understanding Nursing Research: Using Research Evidence-Based Practice*. Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

Maier, A.M. Daniel, J. Oaks, J., & Lam, O. (2017), *Community Schools: An Evidence-Based School Improvement Strategy*. Learning Policy Institute and the National Education Policy.

Marshak, R.J. (2006). *Anxiety and change in Contemporary Organisation Development.*

*OD Practitioner, Vol. 48, No 1, pp 11-19*

Merriam, S. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Case study applications in Education.*

San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Middleton, R.D.J. and Verspoor, A. (1990). *Planning Educational Reform in Developing*

*Countries: The Contingency Theory.* London: Duke Press Policy Studies

MIE (2013), *Syllabus for Social Studies Forms 1 and 2.* Domasi: Malawi Institute of

Education:

Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (MBEC). (1999). *Towards Improving*

*Continuous Assessment in Schools. A Policy and Information Guide.* Okahandja:

NIED.

Ministry of Education (1988). *Final Report of the Sub-Committee on Assessment at*

*Basic Education Level.* Accra. Ministry of Education-Ghana.

MoEST (2019). *The 2018/19 Education Sector Performance Report, Strengthening*

*Education Management and Accountability to Improve Learning Outcomes for*

*All.* MoEST

- Modupe A., V., and Sunday O., M., (2015). *Teacher's Perception and Implementation of Continuous Assessment Practices in Secondary Schools in Ekiti-State, Nigeria. Journal of Education and Practice Vol.6, No.29, pp 44.*
- Mohammedseid, A. (2017). Challenges in Implementing Continuous Assessment. *International Journal of Innovations in TESOL and Applied Linguistics, Vol. 4 No.2, pp 36*
- Murphy, P E. (2017) Student approaches to learning, conceptions of mathematics, and successful outcomes in learning mathematics. In *Success in higher education* Springer, Singapore
- Nikmard, F., & Tavassoli, K. (2020). The effect of diagnostic assessment on EFL learners' performance on selective and productive reading tasks. *Journal of Modern Research in English Language Studies, Vol. 7, No 1, pp 79-104*
- Nsapato, L. (2005). Factors affecting the quality of basic education in Malawi' Paper presented at the Malawi National Education Conference, Lilongwe, Malawi.
- Ojerinde, D. and Falayajo, W. (1984). *Continuous Assessment: A New Approach.* Ibadan: University Press.
- O' Malley, J. M. and Pierce, L. V. (1996). *Authentic Assessment for English Language learners.* London: Longman Publishers.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J. and Leech, N. L. (2007). Validity and Qualitative Research: An Oxymoron? Quality & Quantity,

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11135-006-9000-3>

Onyefulu, C. (2018). Assessment Practices of Teachers in Selected Primary and Secondary Schools in Jamaica. *Open Access Library Journal*, Vol 5, pp 5038.

Payne, A. (2020). Qualitative Research Methods: Case Study Methodology. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications

Torrance, H. (eds.) *Changing educational assessment: International perspectives and trends*. London: Routledge.

Plessis, Prouty, D, Schubert, J, Habib, M, George E, (2003). *Continuous Assessment: A Practical Guide for Teachers*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.

Ramsuran, A. (1997) *Exploring the Relationship between Policy and Practice: A Study of Continuous Assessment*. Durban: University of Durban Westville.

Ratsatsi, D. (2005). *Challenges in Curriculum Innovations: Lessons from Botswana's Experiences*. Paper presented at the Regional Curriculum Conference, Mangochi: Malawi.

Robson, C. (2002). *Real World Research. 2nd edition*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

Samson, B. and Allida V., (2018). The Influence of Continuous Assessment on Academic Performance in Primary Schools of Ibulanku Sub-County, Iganga District (Uganda) *Baraton Interdisciplinary Research Journal (2018), Vol 8, pp. 1-7.*

Sandra, V. (2013). "*Education Governance in Canada and the United States. Education Governance for the Twenty-First Century: Overcoming the Structural Barriers to School Reform.* Brookings Institution Press.

Siyum, A. B. (2016). Implementation of Continuous Assessment and Its Effectiveness in Adwa College of Teacher Education, Ethiopia. *International Journal of Education, Culture and Society. Vol. 1, No. 1, 2016, pp. 16-22.*  
doi: 10.11648/j.ijecs.20160101.14

Suksie, L. (2018). *Assessing student learning: A common sense guide.* John Wiley and Sons.

Susuwele-Banda, W. J. (2005). *Classroom Assessment in Malawi: Teacher's Perceptions and Practices in Mathematics.* Doctoral Thesis, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Thomas, G. (2009). *How to Do Your Research Project: A Guide for Students in Education and Applied Social Sciences.* Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc.

Thomas, D. (2006). A General Inductive Approach for Analyzing Qualitative Evaluation Data. *American Journal of Evaluation*, Vol. 27 No. 2, June 2006, pp237-246 DOI: 10.1177/1098214005283748

Thomas, G. Walker, D. and Webb, J. (1998). *The Making of the Inclusive School*.  
London: Taylor and Francis Group

UNESCO, 2005. Education for All: The Quality Imperative [online]. Available at:  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001373/137333e.pdf> (Accessed: 11<sup>th</sup>  
August 2019)

UNESCO, (2007). Education for All by 2015 Will we Make It? EFA Global Monitoring  
Report. UNESCO, Paris.

Vicente, B. C. (2020) *Advancement in Document Layout Analysis*: University of  
Valencia.

Volante, K. and Beckett, D. (2017). Formative Assessment and the Contemporary  
Classroom: Synergies and Tensions between Research and Practice. *Canadian  
Journal of Education*, 24, 39-255.

Walde, G. (2016). Assessment for the Implementation of Continuous Assessment: The  
Case of METTU University. *European Journal of Science and Mathematics  
education* 4 (4): 534-544 <https://doi.org/10.30935/scimath/9492>

Winstone, N. E. and Bould, D. (2022). The need to disentangle assessment and feedback in higher education. *Studies in higher education, Vol 47, No 3, pp 565-667.*

Yamin-Ali, Y. (2021). Teacher Educator Experiences and Professional Development: Perspectives from the Caribbean

## **Appendix i Letter of Introduction**

**Ref.: MU/1/D3.0**

**11<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

### **TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **PERMISSION TO COLLECT RESEARCH DATA**

Joseph Kawale is a registered Master of Education (Teacher Education) Program student at Mzuzu University. He is supposed to collect research data for a study titled “ Investigating how Social Studies teachers implement continuous assessment in Community Day secondary schools in Mzuzu, Malawi.

The Faculty of Education at Mzuzu University has approved and cleared this research proposal.

Kindly assist him accordingly.

Yours faithfully,

Associate Professor Victor Mgomezulu

Dean, Faculty of Education.

Private Bag 201

L u w i n g a

M z u z u 2

Tel.: (265) 01 320 722/575 Fax: (265) 01 320 505

OFFICE OF THE DEAN, FACULTY OF EDUCATION

MZUZU UNIVERSITY

## Appendix ii Letter to The Education Division Manager (N)

**Appendix ii Letter to The Education Division Manager (N)**

Mzuzu University  
Private Bag 201,  
Luwingu,  
Mzuzu.  
Tel. 0999 395 631  
Email: joekawale@yahoo.com

The Education Division Manager (N)  
P.O. Box 133,  
Mzuzu.

Dear Sir/Madam

*Approved for ethical clearance*

**REQUEST TO CARRYOUT A RESEARCH IN SELECTED COMMUNITY DAY  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MZUZU CITY**

I am Joseph Kwaile, a post graduate student at Mzuzu University pursuing a Master of Education degree programme in Teacher Education. I am carrying out a study on investigating how social studies teachers implement continuous assessment in community day secondary schools in Mzuzu city, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the award of the Master's Degree. I am therefore writing to request for permission to carry out this study in some of the schools in Mzuzu City, within your division.

Attached is an introduction letter from Mzuzu University

## **Appendix iii Letter to the Head Teacher**

Private Bag 201,

Luwinga,

Mzuzu.

**Tel. 0 999 395 631**

**Email:**

**joekawale@yahoo.com**

The Head teacher,

\_\_\_\_\_Community Day Secondary School.

Dear Sir/Madam

### **REQUEST TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL**

I am Joseph Kawale, a post graduate student at Mzuzu University pursuing a Master of Education degree programme in Teacher Education. I am carrying out a study on investigating how social studies teachers implement continuous assessment in community day secondary schools in Mzuzu city, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the award of the Master's Degree in Education.

I am therefore writing to request for permission to carry out this study in your school. Attached is an introduction letter from Mzuzu University and an information sheet for more information of my study.

Yours faithfully,

Joseph Kawale (MEdTE 11/18)

## Appendix iv Information Sheet for Head Teachers

Research study investigating how social studies teachers implement continuous assessment in community day secondary schools in Malawi.

I, **JOSEPH KAWALE**, am conducting a research for my Master's Degree in Education (Teacher Education) Mzuzu University. I am carrying out a study that investigates how social studies teachers implement continuous assessment in community day secondary schools of Malawi. I would like to conduct this research among Form 1 and 2, Social Studies teachers at eight community day secondary schools in Mzuzu city.

I would like to find out how social studies teachers implement continuous assessment, the techniques they use, identify the challenges they face and the strategies they use to cope with the challenges.

I would like to observe a continuous assessment in progress by the form 1 and 2 social studies teachers and video-record the activity if the teachers accept so that I can capture as much information as possible. I would also like to interview these teachers on the strategies they use when conducting continuous assessments, the challenges and the techniques they use to overcome these challenges. I would like to voice-record the proceedings of the interviews in order to save time if the teachers accept.

My research will benefit your school in that the responses from the Social Studies teachers will contribute to an understanding of the factors that affect implementation of continuous assessment in some Malawian community day secondary schools so that appropriate interventions can be looked into by the pre-service educators and in-service organisers. Furthermore, the findings will contribute knowledge to the research in social studies education that developing countries can identify with.

If you allow your school to take part in my study, I would like to make it clear that participation is entirely voluntary, no negative consequences will result from your participation, and all information will be treated with confidentiality. If you do allow your school to participate, please remember that the Form 1 and form 2 social studies teachers may decline to answer any question, and they may withdraw from the study at any time. In order to protect confidentiality, all the names will be fictitious, if they will be used.

I will provide you with a summary of my research results on completion if you would like me to.

Thank you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(Researcher)

Cell No. \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Mzuzu University

# **Appendix v Information Sheet for Social Studies Teachers**

## **INFORMATION SHEET FOR SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS**

Research study investigating how social studies teachers implement continuous assessment in community day secondary schools in Malawi.

I JOSEPH KAWALE, am conducting a research for my Master's Degree in Education (Teacher Education) Mzuzu University. I am carrying out a study that investigates how social studies teachers implement continuous assessment in community day secondary schools of Malawi. I would like to conduct this research among Form 1 and 2, Social Studies teachers at eight community day secondary schools in Mzuzu city.

I would like to find out how social studies teachers implement continuous assessment, the techniques they use, identify the challenges they face and the strategies they use to cope with the challenges.

I would like to observe a continuous assessment in progress by the form 1 and 2, social studies teachers and video-record the activity if the teachers accept so that I can capture as much information as possible. I would also like to interview these teachers on the strategies they use when conducting continuous assessments, the challenges and the techniques they use to overcome these challenges. I would like to voice-record the proceedings of the interviews in order to save time if the teachers accept.

My research will benefit your school in that the responses from the Social Studies teachers will contribute to an understanding of the factors that affect implementation of continuous assessment in some Malawian community day secondary schools so that appropriate interventions can be looked into by the pre-service educators and in-service organisers.

Furthermore, the findings will contribute knowledge to the research in social studies education that developing countries can identify with.

If you allow yourself to take part in my study, I would like to make it clear that your participation is entirely voluntary, no negative consequences will result from your participation, and all information will be treated with confidentiality. If you do accept to participate, please remember that the Form 1 and form 2, social studies teachers may decline to answer any question, and they may withdraw from the study at any time. In order to protect confidentiality, all the names will be fictitious, if they will be used.

I will provide you with a summary of my research results on completion if you would like me to.

Thank you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(Researcher)

Cell No. \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Mzuzu University

## **Appendix vi Consent Letter for Social Studies Teachers**

### **CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH**

Dear Sir/Madam, my name is I am Joseph Kawale, a post graduate student at Mzuzu University pursuing a Master of Education degree programme in Teacher Education. I am carrying out a study on investigating how social studies teachers implement continuous assessment in community day secondary schools in Mzuzu city, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the award of the Master's Degree.

Information you give in this study will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will not be accessible to any person except me and my supervisors. Information you give will be used for academic purposes only.

Participation in this study is voluntary. For this reason upon accepting to take part in this study, you are requested to sign in the spaces provided below.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix VII Interview Guide for Social Studies Teachers**

### **Interview Guide for Social Studies Teachers**

Dear respondent, my name is Joseph Kawale (MedTE 11/18). I am a student of Mzuzu University pursuing a Master of Education (Teacher Education) programme. I am carrying out a study investigating how social studies teachers implement continuous assessment in community day secondary schools of Malawi. You are kindly requested to assist in answering all questions to enable me carry out this study successfully. All information you give will be treated with utmost confidentiality. The data collected will be used for academic purposes only.

#### **SECTION A**

##### **BIOGRAPHIC DATA OF THE RESPONDENT**

1. Code \_\_\_\_\_ number \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ Participant: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐
4. Age of respondent \_\_\_\_\_
5. Academic Qualification : Diploma ☐ Degree ☐ Master's Degree ☐ Other ☐ \_\_\_\_\_ (Specify)
6. Years of teaching experience.

## SECTION B

### DATA QUESTIONS

1. How do you carry out continuous assessment?

---

---

---

---

2. What challenges do you encounter when you conduct continuous assessments?

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. Why do you think these challenges arise?

---

---

---

---

4. How do you deal with the challenges that you encounter?

---

---

---

---

---

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

## Appendix viii Observation form for Classroom Assessment Observation

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Code number of teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of learners: \_\_\_\_\_

| AREA OBSERVED              | DESCRIPTIVE FIELD<br>NOTES OF OBSERVED<br>ACTIVITIES | REFLECTIVE NOTES |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Assessment Technique Used  |                                                      |                  |
| Types of questions used    |                                                      |                  |
| Materials used by teacher  |                                                      |                  |
| Materials used by learners |                                                      |                  |
| Seating plan               |                                                      |                  |
| Environment                |                                                      |                  |
| Learners Attitudes         |                                                      |                  |
| Evaluation                 |                                                      |                  |