

MZUZU UNIVERSITY



**EXPLORING THE PREPARATION AND CHALLENGES THAT NOVICE HEADTEACHERS
FACE IN THEIR HEADSHIP ROLES:
A CASE OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOL HEAD TEACHERS IN BLANTYRE AND
CHIKWAWA DISTRICTS.**

By

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ABSTRACT

In Malawi, head teachers operate in challenging school environment where there is overcrowding, acute shortage of teaching and learning resources, inadequate number of teachers and extreme poverty. Despite such challenging environment, stakeholders on the other hand, expect nothing less, but the best from the schools. This poses a huge challenge for head teachers, more especially novice head teachers who are expected to manage their schools with very limited resources and produce the desired outcomes. Therefore, this study was conducted to explore how novice head teachers were prepared in their new jobs and the challenges they experienced in the course of performing their expected work. The purpose of this study therefore, was to establish the significance of preparing novice headteacher in order for them to perform effectively for the efficiency of the school contributing to quality education in the country. The research used a qualitative research approach using multiple case study design. The sample size was eight novice head teachers. School leadership positions in the two districts were dominated by males hence only two female teachers made part of this sample. In addition, two South west education division (SWED) officials were also included in the sample. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews using open ended questionnaire.

The study revealed that novice head teachers were not prepared in any way prior to taking up their new responsibilities. However, they were at times exposed to post-induction training in the form of management meeting where leadership and managerial issues were discussed. This study further revealed that novice head teachers encountered numerous challenges in their new role as school leaders, managers and administrators. Some of the challenges included dealing with the deviant teachers, financial management, resistance to change, resource management, drug and substance abuse amongst students and students' extreme poverty. To mitigate the challenges, the study revealed that novice head teachers were mentored by their previous teachers. In addition they also networked with veteran head teachers and fellow novice head teachers within and outside their educational clusters. Some of the novice head teachers made use of the top management team and the Parents Teacher Association (PTA). The researcher therefore recommends that novice head teachers should be inducted, and that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) should be responsible for the development of induction models, which should be accessible to novice head teachers for referencing. Networking and mentoring should be encouraged and novice headteachers should take personal responsibility in developing the required skills through online study or attending other leadership workshops and conferences.

Key Words: novice head teachers, preparation, challenges, leadership and management.

Approval Page

Declaration

I declare that this research study is my own work and that it contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

Signature.....

Date.....

Dedication

I dedicate this piece of work to my mother, Maggie Kandoje, who has never got tired of caring and supporting not only me but also my children. May the Almighty Lord grant her many healthy years ahead.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BCD	Blantyre and Chikwawa Districts
SWED	South West Education Division
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NPQH	National Profession Qualification for Headship
EDE	Education Department of England
NGA	National Governance Association
SCEL	Scottish College of Educational Leadership
GTCS	General Teaching Council of England
GESC	Ghana Education Service Council
ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
CSS	Conventional Secondary School
CDSS	Community Day Secondary School
HT	Head Teacher
DHT	Deputy Head Teacher
SO 1	SWED Official 1
SO 2	SWED Official 2
PTA.	Parents Teacher Association

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0. Introduction and Background

For the past two decades , literature has affirmed that the head teacher's role is different from that of an ordinary classroom teacher, as such head teachers require specific preparation in their roles. The roles of a head teacher include planning, organizing, directing school activities, supervising teaching and learning, budgeting among others. These roles are managerial and administrative in nature unlike the roles of a classroom teacher which mostly include teaching, maintaining classroom discipline and assessing students performance. Another reason for the head teachers' preparation is the increasing complexity of school contexts in which head teachers operate like the cultural, social, economic and political contexts (Bush, 2010). In the Malawian public schools, head teachers operate under very challenging situations whereby there is overcrowding, acute shortage of teaching and learning resources, inadequate number of teachers and extreme poverty. These conditions pose a huge challenge for head teachers more especially novice head teachers who are expected to manage their schools with very adverse conditions to produce the desired outcomes. In addition to the said conditions, head teacher preparation is a moral obligation.

According to Oduro (2009) effective school leadership had been identified as an essential ingredient in achieving quality education in both developed and developing countries. To ensure this, developed countries train head teachers in educational management. For instance, in the Anglophone world, head teacher preparation and development is a key leverage point in education policy with many nations establishing systems of licensing, accreditation and mandatory programs (Eacott & Asuga, 2014). Outside the Anglophone world, like Singapore

promising teachers are selected into various leadership and managerial roles within the school and those that have proved competent are enrolled into ‘Leaders in Education Programs’(Bush, 2018). Upon successful completion of the program, they are deployed as school leaders with continued development trainings (Ibid, 2018). Despite such realization and commitment in head teacher preparation by the developed countries, throughout Africa, there is no formal requirement for aspiring or current head teachers (Arikewuyo, 2009; Bush & Adore, 2006; Herriot et al. 2002; Oduro & Macbeath, 2003). Mostly, head teachers are appointed on the assumption that good teachers could become good school leaders. However, as far as organization performance is concerned, the quality of the leader matters. That is why organizations invest in leadership training and management. Similarly, if Africa is to achieve quality education, it needs to invest in head teacher training and management. Lack of head teacher preparation had been described by Obura (2009) as the missing ingredient in Africa’s attempt to achieve quality education. Eacott and Asuga (2014) indicated that without significant attention to the preparation and development of school leaders, government initiatives aimed at building world class education systems are unlikely to succeed.

In Malawi, for the past decades, several attempts have been made to train head teachers. For example, in 1998 MoEST trained some primary head teachers with financial assistance from the Department for International Development (DFID) under the project called ‘Malawi School Support Systems Program (MSSSP) (MoEST, 2000). Then, in 2000, MoEST trained 724 secondary school head teachers with financial assistance from the World Bank under ‘Secondary Education Project’ (SEP) (World Bank, 2007). In 2004, MoEST trained other secondary school head teachers with financial assistance from the African Development Bank (ADB) under the

project, ‘School Management Improvement Program (SMIP), and in 2009, 25 head teachers were trained with assistance from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

However, MoEST (2008) indicated that management and planning capacity in secondary education were weak and in turn contributed to poor quality in teaching and learning. In addition, MoEST (2013) reported that a number of planned activities aimed at improving governance and management of the system were envisaged and these included training of head teachers. However, very little was reported on the training of head teachers and indicated that decentralization will be the key reform area to improve governance and management of secondary education (MoEST, 2013:35). MoEST also developed a handbook in 2014 for head teachers entitled, ‘Secondary School Management Handbook: A Practical Guide for Secondary Schools in Malawi’. However not all managerial aspects have been addressed in this handbook.

A study done by Wamba (2015) in Mzuzu indicated that there was neither formal preparation nor training for the head teacher’s job. He noted that opportunities for pre-service and in-service head teacher trainings in Mzuzu were almost non-existent. He recommended that MoEST should come up with induction programs for novice head teachers. Wong (2005) indicates that the best way of developing novice head teachers is to have a clear understanding of their challenges and adopt a constructive induction program that can train and sustain them in their roles. Literature (Alegado, 2018; Pinela-Baez et al, 2019; Spillane & Lee, 2013) also affirm that even though head teachers might fully be prepared for their new job, they still experience daunting challenges in the first year of their headship. However, preparation minimizes the said challenges. Alegado (2018) indicated that running a school could be very isolating and lonely job; a fact novice head teachers may not fully understand or appreciate until they are in the role.

Head teachers face a constant push-pull of competing demands on a daily basis made by students, parents, staff, community agencies or the government. These competing demands become more challenging to novice head teachers because they do not possess adequate skills to deal with them. The researcher therefore assumes that novice head teachers in Blantyre and Chikwawa Districts (BCD) might not be exempted from experiencing these challenges. It was this background that the researcher's interest was aroused to explore how novice head teachers were prepared in their new roles and the challenges they faced in the course of their work in South West Education Division mainly BCD.

1.1. Problem Statement

Leadership act as a catalyst without which other good things are quite unlikely to happen. Leithwood et al. (2006) established that the role of the head teacher is a crucial factor in the overall success of a school. This agrees with Starr (2009) who indicated that the role of the head teacher now equates with that of a chief executive officer (CEO) of a corporate organization responsible for strategic planning, budgeting and managing organization. As such head teachers need training in leadership, management and administrative skills. MoEST indicated that decentralization will be the key reform area to improve governance and management of secondary education. In Mzuzu, a study done by Wamba (2015) indicated that there was neither formal preparation or training for the head teacher's job. He noted that opportunities for pre-service and in-service trainings in Mzuzu were almost non-existent and training was ad hoc, idiosyncratic and did not seem to follow a specific pattern.

In BCD, head teachers continued to be appointed and deployed in various secondary schools. The problem was that while these head teachers were supposed to be trained, it seemed they were not trained and currently, the program seems not to have been well established within the SWED system. As such, the possibility of novice head teachers experiencing various challenges was inevitable. It was with this background that this study was conducted to explore how novice head teachers were prepared into their new job and the challenges they faced in the course of their work in BCD.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study was to explore how novice head teachers were prepared for their new job and the challenges they experienced in the course of doing their job in BCD.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the objectives of the study were;

- A. To investigate the criteria used when appointing head teachers in the Malawian Secondary schools.
- B. To find out how head teachers were prepared for their new roles as school leaders, managers and administrators.
- C. To identify challenges experienced by novice head teachers as they were doing their job.
- D. To find ways novice head teachers used to mitigate the challenges.

1.4. Research Questions

The main research question that guided the study was:

How were novice headteachers prepared for their new roles as school leaders, managers and administrators.

The sub-questions were as follows:

1. What were the qualification of the head teachers appointed for this headship role?
2. What kind of training did headteachers receive prior to their appointment as head teachers?
3. What challenges did novice head teachers experience in the course of doing their work?
4. What were the strategies used in mitigating the said challenges?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The study could be significant in several ways. Firstly, the findings of this study could help participating novice head teachers to improve their efficiency by learning and understanding how other novice head teachers were doing. Secondly, the findings could help SWED to come up with established systems for training novice head teachers and their continued professional development upon the realization of the challenges they faced. Thirdly, aspiring head teachers could also have a better understanding of their roles and the common challenges experienced thereby being mentally, emotionally and psychologically prepared for the headship role. Lastly, the study will add to the existing literature on school leadership and management in Malawi.

1.6. Theoretical Framework.

Over the centuries, there has been debate on whether leaders are born or made. This debate has led to the development of so many theories of leadership such as the trait theory and the skills theory among others. However, most of these theories view leadership as grounded in one or more of the following three perspectives. Firstly, leadership is seen as a process that involves influence and occurs in a group context with the aim of achieving a goal (Schedlitzki & Edwards, 2014). Secondly, leadership is seen as a combination of traits or personality characteristics. Lastly, it is seen as certain behaviors or leadership skills (ibid, 2014). This study was based on leadership as certain skills or behaviors and was guided by the Three Skills Theory of Leadership (TSTL).

The TSTL was developed by Robert Katz in 1995 when he published his paper entitled ‘Skills of an Effective Administrator’ in the Harvard Business Review (Virkus, 2009). Later on, it was expanded by Mumford and his research team in 2000 when they published their paper entitled ‘Leadership Skills for a Changing World: Solving Complex Problems (ibid, 2009). This theory was opted because it states that learned knowledge and acquired skills or abilities are significant factors in the practice of effective leadership (Wolenski, 2010). As such, head teachers need to learn the required skills that will enable them to perform their duties effectively. The TSTL emphasizes that acquired skills in knowledge and developing a leadership style are the real key issues to leadership performance. It does not deny the relationship between inherited traits and the capacity to become an effective leader. It simply emphasizes that traits and learned skills and knowledge all come together and intersect in a unique way within the organizational

context (Wolenski, 2010). TSTL acknowledges that anyone can become a leader, and all that is needed is to work hard to develop the necessary skills for an effective leader.

A popular model of TSTL suggests three distinct skill sets which are technical, conceptual and human skills. Baez (2018) describes technical skills as an understanding of, and proficiency in a specific kind of activity, particularly one involving methods, processes, procedures, techniques, and problem-solving skills. Technical skills are a must for supervisory managers. Schools as organizations have methods, procedures, and processes of doing things. As such it is important for novice head teachers (who also happen to be supervisory managers) to have technical skills. Technical skills will help them in performing tasks such as budgeting, procurement, staff evaluation and other administrative and managerial functions.

Conceptual skills on the other hand are skills that involve the ability to see the enterprise as a whole (Schedlitzki & Edwards, 2014). Gorton (1983, as cited by Bathuleng, 2015) defines conceptual skills as those skills which the head teacher needs in order to see the school as a whole and in relation to other schools, in the district and the national educational programs. Conceptual skills will help novice head teachers to demonstrate a sense of organizational power and authority thereby portraying a sense of self-confidence. Conceptual skills will also help the novice head teacher to be aware of the interwovenness and interaction of the social structure of the school and how they relate to the larger community.

Lastly, Schedlitzki & Edwards (2014) define human skills as the ability to work effectively as a group member and to build cooperative effort within a team. Human skills are portrayed as the abilities one has when it comes to working with individuals. Understanding behavior, group dynamics, motives, attitudes and feelings of individuals are the main

characteristics of good human skills (ibid, 2014). Novice head teachers need human skills because they interact with people from various backgrounds. Human skills will help novice head teachers to have meaningful relationships with all stakeholders. Apart from understanding other people's behavior and group dynamics, novice head teachers also need to know themselves. They need to have self-awareness skills. Gorton (1983 as cited in Bathuleng, 2015) pointed out that a novice head teacher should understand himself/herself first, like his/her strengths and weaknesses, his/her vision and mission of the school. Understanding oneself will help novice head teachers understand the areas of their weakness that may need extra support from other stakeholders. Schedlitski and Edwards (2014) noted that higher level leaders need to have strong conceptual skills as opposed to supervisory leaders who need to have strong technical skills. However, human skills are always required, no matter the level or position one has in the organization. Novice head teachers however, need to have all the three sets of skills as they all relate to their job. According to Schidlitzki & Edwards (2014) these skills cannot be acquired in one setting but through leadership training and development which occurs in phases as follows;

PHASE I: Pre-service Preparation

This phase consists of learning activities and other processes that take place prior to initial job placement. It involves taking academic courses from colleges or universities (Kitavi, 1995 as cited by Bathuleng, 2015). However, in Malawian context, the pre-service training may have little impact on the novice head teachers' preparation into their headship role. This is so because in Malawi, it takes more years, not less than 10 years, for one to be appointed head

teacher. As such most of the leadership skills gained through university courses might have been forgotten because they were not being practiced.

PHASE II: The Induction Phase

Oburu, Onderi & Ajowi (2014) define induction as the process designed to acquaint new employees with the knowledge and skills necessary to adapt and be successful in the organisation. Induction is important in the sense that it assists new employees to adapt quickly in the new environment thereby becoming productive as quickly as possible. This is the most important phase of preparation for novice head teachers in BCD. Lack of leadership and managerial skills makes novice head teachers incompetent in their work as a result, they feel frustrated and disappointed. Induction would therefore make them become more competent and confident in their work quickly, thereby leading to a greater productivity (Bathuleng, 2015). According to Wong (2005) the induction process in an educational institution is supposed to be a comprehensive, coherent, and sustained professional development process organized by a school district to train, support, and retain new teachers. The definition suggests that the induction activities are designed to promote teachers' professional development and integrate them more effectively into the school. Similarly, the new head teachers also need to be integrated more effectively in their new environment and adjust with less disruption. Wong (2005) indicates that the best way of developing novice head teachers is to have a clear understanding of their problems and adopt a constructive induction program that can train and sustain them in their roles. This is further emphasized by Bush and Oduro (2006) who noted that novice head teachers need well- structured induction strategies that aim at developing knowledge, skills, attitudes and

values which will make them effective and efficient educational managers.

PHASE III: In-service Trainings

This is the last phase and consists of in-service learning opportunities that are provided to the novice head teachers while they are engaged in their job (Schidlitzki & Edwards, 2014). The in-service training phase is directed towards meeting local school needs as such participants are involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation process. It is part of the long- term systematic staff development plan.

All the three phases explained above are important for the proper acquisition and utilization of skills as well as for the effectiveness of the novice head teachers' job. As such, this theory suggests that novice head teachers need to have pre-service training, induction and in-service training. All the efforts and resources organizations and individuals put in leadership training and development, is an indication that even though leaders may have some inborn qualities, training and preparation makes them more effective in their job. Effective organizations require effective leaders and effective leaders are as a result of training in necessary skills. It is therefore incredibly helpful for individuals and organizations to know which skills need to be learned and developed for them to be effective. In a similar manner, the government and stakeholders need to assess which skills are needed for the head teachers' job and need to be developed. Any leader can learn certain skills and turn himself/herself into a remarkable one. Acquiring such skills through training will help minimize the challenges that novice head teachers face and thereby becoming more confident and productive in their work.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0. Introduction

This chapter provides the review of literature on how head teachers are appointed, their preparation in their new job, the challenges they face in the course of their work and strategies used in mitigating the challenges.

2.1. Criteria for Appointment to Headship

Different countries have different criteria of appointing novice head teachers. Eacott and Asuga (2014) indicate that developed nations have established systems of licensing, accreditation and mandatory programs for novice head teachers. Examples on how these systems and programs work will be discussed below, and also how other countries in Africa including Malawi appoint head teachers.

2.1.1. Criteria for Appointment to Headship in England.

In England, Bush (2013) indicates that head teachers begin their professional careers as teachers and progress to headship via a range of leadership tasks and roles, often described as ‘middle leadership’. However, according to England Department of Education (EDE, 2017) selecting a head teacher is the legal responsibility of the school board and they do that in accordance with the School Staffing Regulations. The EDE (2017) further indicates that the board follows a number of processes which include the following; they first advertise the vacancies in a manner that is considered appropriate. Thereafter shortlisting is done which is

followed by a call for references from the applicant's current or former employer. In order to judge levels of skills and competency, the candidate is tested in a variety of ways such as leading an assembly or leading a discussion with pupils. Sometimes they may be given a financial or budgeting task. They may also be required to teach a lesson or observe a lesson and provide feedback to the teacher. After going through such tasks which judge their levels of skills and competency, then they are called for interviews. After the interviews, then a decision to appoint a head teacher is made after assessing his/her performance on every stage of the assigned tasks. Once the Board has ratified the decision of the selection panel, then an offer of conditional appointment is made. It has to be noted that there are no specified general qualifications for the head teacher's job in England. Each school board is responsible for setting the head teacher's specifications which include the qualifications, experience, skills and personal qualities that are required for the particular headship role being recruited, while bearing in mind the context of the school (EDE, 2017). The National Governance Association (NGA) through 'The Headteacher Recruitment Toolkit' however, provides guidelines on each aspect of the head teacher's specifications as follows:

Qualification: According to the NGA (2018:22), "headteachers are not required to have a Qualified Teacher Status (TQS)." As such school boards are encouraged to clearly indicate why a particular qualification is necessary and if equivalent knowledge and skills obtained through experience can be an option.

Experience: NGA (2018) clearly indicates that years of experience is not a measure of competence, only of time served. It is the nature and quality of the experience that is important like what skills and knowledge have been obtained by the person regardless of the duration of

time. For example, an experience in successfully managing a large team involving a range of roles might be preferable to a minimum three years in Deputy Headship role which might not involve line management (Ibid, 2018).

Professional skills and knowledge: Knowledge in curriculum, theory and best practice, school systems, government policy/political environment, context (religious/social dimensions), safeguarding special needs is a must (NGA, 2018). Professional skills in any of the following areas; teaching, people management, resources management, strategic planning and effective communication is also necessary.

Personal qualities: These are personal qualities in regard to their behaviours, style and approach. The qualities should be those that will be able to be tested during the selection process (ibid, 2018).

2.1.2. Criteria for Appointment to Headship in Scotland

In Scotland, The Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCEL) has led the development of the 'Into Headship' qualification which is now Scotland's national qualification for headship. The 'Into Headship' was designed in consultation with universities, local authorities, the SCEL and The General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS) (Amakyi & Ampah-Mensah, 2013). The 'Into Headship' focuses on the specificity of headship role and the strategic role of head teachers. There are currently seven university partners accredited by the GTCS that deliver the 'IntoHeadship Qualification' program in partnership with local authorities and SCEL. The program is designed as a 60 credit postgraduate certificate qualification and forms part of a Masters Leadership pathway (Ibid, 2013). On successful completion, participants

are awarded the Standard for Headship Qualification (SHQ) which will become a prerequisite for all new head teachers in Scotland from 2019 (Ibid, 2013). Apart from the SHQ, there is also the Standards for Leadership and Management that lay down the foundations for professionalism and leadership required by all head teachers. It is a framework for aspiring head teachers and identifies key qualities that are required to succeed as an experienced head teacher.

2.1.3. Criteria for Appointment to Headship in Ghana

In Ghana, according to Bush & Oduro, (2006) there are two ways of appointing head teachers. Firstly, head teachers are appointed through direct posting, which involves appointing newly trained teachers to lead schools in rural areas. The second strategy is appointment through interviews which is largely associated with the appointment of urban schools through recommendation. They further reported that head teachers in Ghana are not required to complete a professional standardized preparatory program in educational administration. However, Amakyi & Ampah-Mensah (2013), reports that The Ghana Education Service Council (GESC) requires head teachers to meet the following criteria to be eligible as a senior high school head teacher: S/he should be a professional graduate teacher with satisfactory work history and conduct within the GESC. Secondly, s/he should have served at the rank of deputy director for at least 2 years. Thirdly, s/he must have served as an assistant headmaster/mistress, unit head at the headquarters, or an equivalent position for at least 3 cumulative years. Lastly, s/he must not be over the age of 55 years at the time s/he applies for the position. Those who meet the above criteria are appointed as senior high school head teachers.

2.1.4. Criteria for Appointment to headship in Malawi.

In Malawi, in his presentation paper entitled Malawi Public Service Regulations and Human Resource Management in the Civil Service, Chivwati-Gondwe, an official from the Directorate for Department of Human Resource Management and Development (DDHRMD) in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) in reference to Circular letter no. PSC/05/11/84 dated 23rd July, 1984, clarified that an officer has to serve at one post for at least four years to acquire skills and prepare him or her to the next grade. He further indicated that promotion to headship is a privilege in the Civil Service with a lot of conditions attached to the process as follows:-

- 1) There must be available vacant and budgeted posts.
- 2) If the vacant posts are more than the eligible candidates, a recommendation for direct promotion to the relevant Service Commission for direction may be submitted.
- 3) In cases where vacant posts are less than the number of qualifying candidates, an open competition at the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) is mounted based on merit (at the interview process 70% interview Results and 30% classroom setting assessment results). In order to encourage wider experience and allow officers to fill vacant posts where they exist, Government policy provides an offer of appointment letter to the successful candidate to report to a new work station within 30 days. Then the responsible officer of the new school writes to the Secretary for Education who prepares a submission to the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) to direct the promotion to the next grade with effect from the date the officer reported for duties (Ref. PSC/05/2/13 dated 30th June, 1997). If the officer fails to report, then the promotion is revoked.

This is in agreement with what Wamba (2015) noted that there is a formal, and semi-formal way to school headship in Malawi. He noted that the formal way is done through appointment and promotion. One is appointed by the MoEST after a careful assessment of the candidate's teaching records and educational background. The other formal way is through substantial promotion as put in place by the MoEST where positions are advertised in the local newspapers. Candidates who are qualified for this leadership credentials—apply and after an examination of their backgrounds in teaching and leadership, they are called for an interview, and follow the same procedures as already alluded to. The semi-formal way is community recruitment based on religious affiliation. There are many religious denominational schools throughout Malawi like Catholic, Protestants and Adventist among others. In these religious schools, when a vacancy for a head teacher opens up, people in the community can tap a teacher and recommend him/her to the District Education Manager who finally makes a formal appointment (Wamba, 2015). According to MoEST, (2011-2012 Establishments) Conventional Secondary Schools (CSS) are supposed to be headed by a Grade PF head teacher while Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS) are supposed to be headed by a Grade PG head teacher.

2.2. Preparation of Novice head Teachers in their New Roles as School Leaders

Literature has affirmed that head teacher preparation has a significant influence on the performance of the school as well as student outcomes. There are different programs on head teacher preparation with other countries having professional qualification, licensing and accreditation. In this study, samples on head teacher preparation in England, Malaysia, South Africa and Malawi had been explored.

2.2.1. Preparation of Novice Head Teachers in England

Across the Anglophone world including England, leadership preparation and development is a key leverage point in education policy, with established systems of licensing, accreditation, and mandatory programs, (Eacott & Asuga, 2014). For instance, in 2009, The United Kingdom introduced the National Profession Qualification for Headship (NPQH). As the name suggests, it was a professional qualification and not a course. According to Taylor, McAleavy and Jones, (2017) The NPQH program comprised a two-week placement at a school in a different context from the participant's own; three core study modules (leading and improving teaching, leading an effective school, succeeding in headship), each involving 50 hours of activity; two further elective modules; and a final assessment. It was a mandatory course for all novice head teachers. However, in 2012 it was reverted to optional status because some local authorities attributed problems in making appointments, in part to NPQH's mandatory status, (Bush, 2013). The other problem was that of having weak links with masters' level school leadership programs. However, the government still recognizes its value and importance, and endorses it as the qualification for anyone aspiring school headship. The program receives government subsidy, (Ibid, 2013). Since there are no specified general qualifications for the head teacher's job in England, but are dependent on the particular needs of the school, so there is no general preparation for the head teachers' job. Their prior individual specific qualification, experience, professional knowledge and skills are enough for the head teacher's job on the context of the school.

2.2.2. Preparation of Novice Head Teachers in Malaysia

In Malaysia, The University of Malaya offers a graduate program in principal-ship to provide prospective educational leaders with the knowledge and skills essential in leading and managing educational institutions (Amakyi & Ampah-Mensah, 2013). The Institute runs courses for principals in various areas like school governance and management, school leadership and instructional supervision; curriculum leadership and pedagogy; human resource management in educational organization; school financial management; and school management and law among others (Ibid, 2013).

2.2.3. Preparation for Novice Head Teachers in South Africa

In South Africa, a new qualification called Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) was introduced for aspiring and practicing principals. It was piloted in six provinces in South Africa. Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi (2011) evaluated the ACE program and came up with the following findings; The ACE was delivered by universities, but was different from typical university programs in being practice-based. The emphasis on practice resulted from the evidence that, although many school leaders hold university qualifications in management, their collective impact on school outcomes was minimal. The ACE program model involved;

(i) Teaching: Teaching was done through modules. Critics say the materials were too detailed, over-theoretical, and inadequately connected to the realities of disadvantaged schools in South Africa.

(ii) Mentoring: Literature suggests that the effectiveness of mentoring for adult learners depends on the following features: Thorough training of mentors, careful matching

of the partners, adopting a peer stance rather than an apprenticeship model, avoiding a prescriptive approach. Mentoring seemed to be ideal for the ACE however, the cost of providing one-on-one mentoring, and the limited availability of well-trained and motivated professionals, with good experience of leading township and rural schools was a constraint.

(iii) Networking: This was found to be the most favored mode of leadership learning, even though groups in most provinces met rarely; the sessions were often informal and voluntary, with variable attendance levels (Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2011).

In conclusion, most participants claimed to have improved their management practice, and the initial effects of the ACE program on learner achievement were neutral. A search on whether it is still practiced or not proved futile as no search yielded the desired data.

2.2.4. Preparation for Novice Head Teachers in Malawi

In Malawi, there is no policy in relation to head teacher preparation and job performance. Wamba (2015) noted that formal training for head teachers' job is essentially nonexistent, and that training in headship is not a requirement for appointment to head teacher. However, several attempts have been made to train head teachers in Malawi. For instance, in 1998, the MoEST trained some primary head teachers with financial assistance from the Department for International Development (DFID) under the project called 'Malawi School Support Systems Program (MSSSP) (MoEST, 2000). Then in 2000, MoEST trained 724 secondary school head teachers with financial assistance from The World Bank under 'Secondary School Education Project' (SSEP) (World Bank, 2007). In 2004, MoEST trained some secondary school head

teachers with the financial assistance from the African Development Bank (ADB) under the project, 'School Management Improvement Program'. In its situational analysis, MoEST (2009) reported that 25 head teachers were trained in school management with the financial assistance from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). MoEST (2009) further recognized the need to train more head teachers in order to build skills in school management at all levels. Surprisingly, in the same document, (MoEST, 2009) in its priority policies and programs, nothing of head teacher's training had been mentioned. The priority policies and programs were to increase enrollment to achieve access and equity, increase infrastructures to accommodate the increased enrollment and more teaching and learning resources. As much as this is appreciated in achieving 'Education for All', Oduro (2009) argued that African governments should not be satisfied with the increased pupil enrollment rates in schools and the quantity of visible structures developed on campuses of schools. Children should not only be given the opportunity to be in school, but rather should also participate meaningfully in the process of learning. He emphasized that African governments need to acknowledge that the process of achieving quality education requires effective leadership. This is the type of leadership that effectively manages the increased enrollment resulting from the access expansion initiatives, facilitate the implementation of change initiatives, create conducive teaching and learning environment and provide the needed professional support for teachers and pupils. He further indicated that head teachers' leadership role and development is the critical missing ingredient in sub-Saharan Africa's quest for attaining sustainable development through quality education. This is a true reflection of what is happening in Malawi and only if MoEST could consider headship preparation as a priority, then Malawi could achieve quality education. Eacott & Asuga (2014) also emphasize that without significant

attention to headship preparation, government initiatives aimed at building world class education systems are unlikely to succeed. MoEST (2009:61) acknowledges that management and planning capacity in Secondary Education are weak and in turn contributes to poor quality in teaching and learning. It further admits that management information is not sufficient, and is inadequately used (Ibid, 2009:61).

The fact that MoEST acknowledges the following;

- (i) that management and planning capacity in Secondary Education are weak and in turn contributes to poor quality in teaching and learning.
- (ii) that management information is not sufficient, and is inadequately used.
- (iii) and decides not to consider head teacher training in its priority policies and programs is very worrisome.

Consequently, poor quality education in Malawi is inevitable due to lack of training of head teachers as school leaders, administrators and managers.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology also developed a handbook in 2013 for head teachers entitled, “Secondary School Management Handbook: A practical Guide for Secondary Schools in Malawi.” However, not all managerial aspects have been addressed in this book. MoEST (2013:35) also reported that a number of planned activities aimed at improving governance and management of the system were envisaged and these included training of head teachers. However, very little was reported on the training of head teachers. As a solution, it further indicated that decentralization will be the key reform area to improve governance and management of secondary education (MoEST, 2013:35). Hence, the researcher’s interest to explore how head teachers are prepared for their new job in SWED mainly in BCD.

Wamba (2015) noted that head teachers who were mentored or held a position of leadership prior to their appointment seemed to manage their schools much better. For example, candidates who were department heads, deputy head teachers were in a much better position to lead their school than those who were strictly classroom teachers, he concludes.

2.2.5. Challenges Faced in the Preparation of Novice Head Teachers

Literature (Arikewuyo, 2009, Bush & Oduro, 2006, Herriot, et al., 2002; Oduro & Macbeath, (2003) has affirmed that in Africa, there is no formal preparation for the head teachers' job. This is despite the fact that many African governments have tried their best to have formal established systems for training novice head teachers. The need to have head teachers' preparation has been part of discussions among educational leaders in Africa for the past thirty to forty years. For instance, In South Africa, Westhuizen & Vuuren (2007) report that several pleas had been made for the formal training of head teachers since the 1970s. In Kenya too, the need for preparation and development of head teachers could be traced back to the 1970s (The Training Review Committee (Wamalwa Report, 1971 as cited by Ibrahim, 2011) which discovered that there was no regular systematic programs to train head teachers, as such saw the need to train such professional officers in administrative and managerial aspects of their work. Despite such realization, there is still no formal preparation nor training for head teachers' job in Africa. The researcher wondered as to what could be the challenges that African governments including the Malawi faced in the preparation and training of novice head teachers. A review of literature had indicated a variety of challenges in different countries. For instance; head teacher preparation in Kenya had not been consistent due to lack of funding and resources. Ibrahim

(2011) reported that a nationwide program for primary school head teachers was offered from 1996 through 2000 in Kenya. The Primary School Management (PRISM) project was implemented using a cascade mode of training delivery. This gave an opportunity to 16,700 headteachers in Kenya to participate in school management learning activities with a range of educational stakeholders including inspectors of schools, fellow headteachers, and community members (Crossley et al., 2005). However, PRISM was implemented with donor funding and, therefore, had a specific implementation period that ended with the funding. As for secondary school head teachers, Ibrahim (2011) also indicated that lack of finances was a problem to some principals whereby their schools could not have afforded to sponsor them for the KESI courses due to poor fee payment. In South Africa, Westhuizen (1991) indicated that there was no uniform and national management development policy that existed in the Education Department. Mestry (2017), agreed that head teacher preparation had stagnated due to lack of coordinated system to meet the identified needs of head teachers. He indicated that the Ministry of Education had made numerous attempts to raise the professional standards and competencies of school principals by formulating the South African National Professional Qualification for Principalship (SANPQP). This draft policy identified a number of key principles that ought to inform a national professional qualification for existing and aspiring principals. More recently, the South African Standards for Principalship (SASP) had tried to lobby the members of the public for the legislation of SASP. However, such attempts did not materialize due to lack of a coordinated system (Department of Basic Education, 2004 as cited by Mestry, 2017). In Malawi too, several attempts had been made to train head teachers in Malawi by the Department of International Development (DFID) in 1998, the World Bank in 2000, the African Development Bank (ADB)

in 2004 and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in 2009. Wamba (2015) reports that these trainings were attended by large numbers but seemed to be unsuccessful because many head teachers were left out of the initial planning as a result they resisted any form of change in their schools. Secondly, the lack of cohort training created additional problems. For example, in some schools, a senior staff might have taken the training in the earlier phase of the project. By the time the other staff were trained, some of the staff trained earlier had either retired or been posted away to different schools (Ibid, 2015). From the literature available, it seemed like all the training had been funded by the international organizations as such once the funding was over, the program also ended. MoEST (2013:35) reported that decentralization would be the key reform area to improve governance and management of secondary education (MoEST, 312013:35). Hence the need to explore how SWED was preparing novice head teachers and the challenges faced in the course of preparation.

2.3. Challenges Faced by Novice Head Teachers in Their New Roles

Novice head teachers face various challenges and difficulties in the early stages of their headship despite whether they are fully prepared or not. However, those who are prepared seemed to cope up much better than those who had not been trained (Bathuleng, 2015). These challenges differ from novice head teacher to the other depending on the nature of their training and the context of their schools. For instance a novice head teacher in a rural setting might experience different challenges than a novice head teacher in an urban setting. However, there are some unique challenges that are experienced by almost all novice head teachers despite whether one is trained or not or the context of their schools (Alegado, 2018; Howard & Mollary,

2018; Pineda-Baez et al., 2019; Spillane & Lee, 2013). Some of the challenges include the following;

2.3.1. Challenges in Dealing with the Legacy, Practice and Leadership Style of the Previous Head Teacher.

Novice head teachers often find themselves compared to the previous head teacher whether the previous head teacher was good or bad (Spillane & Lee, 2013). If the previous head teacher was good, the incumbent is forced to follow his/her leadership style and practices but if the previous head teacher was bad, the incumbent is expected to do much better to save the situation. More challenging for novice head teachers is coming into a place where the staff, students, and community members have become accustomed to the existing culture and routines developed under the previous administration (Ibid, 2013). Changes brought in by the novice head teacher are thus often resisted because school members feel that their way of life is being challenged.

2.3.2. Challenges in Dealing with Multiple Tasks, Managing Time and Priorities

Most novice head teachers become overwhelmed with the work load whereby the moment they open their doors, students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders demand their time one after the other. In addition to this, there is a lot of paperwork that needs to be done, not mentioning supervision and other duties as instructional leaders. With the large number of disconnected tasks that accompany the role, novice head teachers struggle to manage their time and priorities. In particular, they are often frustrated by the large volume of administrative tasks,

which limits their ability to get inside classrooms and perform their duties as instructional leaders (Spillane & Lee, 2013).

2.3.3. Challenges in Dealing with Incompetent or Difficult Teachers

Novice head teachers do not have the necessary experience and skills to deal with incompetent or difficult teachers. Howard and Mollary (2018) noted that the strategies of helping the incompetent or difficult teacher in clinical supervision, evaluation, and peer observation require skills which novice head teachers do not possess. As such supporting, reprimanding, and counseling these individuals is not only difficult to them, but also stressful. In addition, it requires significant time and paperwork to stop meditating and removing negative ideas from the mind which are caused through interaction with such teachers (Ibid, 2018). Novice head teachers are often not well-prepared or well-supported in managing these such issues.

2.3.4. Professional Isolation and Loneliness

Tahir et al. (2017) found that novice head teachers experienced a profound sense of isolation from their peers as they moved into headship. They noted that most novice head teachers are often surprised that, the moment they take on the official title, staff members become more cautious and distant themselves. According to Kitavi (1995) as cited in Bathuleng (2015) head teacher isolation without guidance, can result in novice head teachers making mistakes which can cause disastrous long-term consequences for themselves and the profession. Spillane & Lee (2013) indicates that school principals who express a sense of loneliness, isolation, and alienation also experience a diminished sense of meaningfulness, power, job

satisfaction and job performance. As such, there is a need to come up with coping strategies on how novice head teachers could overcome a certain degree of loneliness and isolation.

2.3.5. Challenges in Dealing with School Budgets

Managing the school budget is challenging for many novice head teachers as many of them are not often exposed to this task in their previous roles (Bolam et al., 2000). School head teachers are supposed to monitor and supervise the school accountant concerning revenue and expenditures. However, many novice head teachers do not have skills in regard to financial statements yet they are supposed to give monthly report regarding the same. They rely on the same accountant to produce the financial statements. This practice is undesirable because the school accountant may choose to manipulate the financial statements, resulting in dubious activities that may have negative implications on the school.

According to Spillane & Lee (2013) these challenges are as a result of inadequate pre-service training, poor induction and/or lack of induction, poor in-service training and ambiguous job description.

2.4. Ways of Mitigating the Challenges

Howard & Mollary (2018) noted that there are no easy ways of mitigating the challenges. However they indicate that acknowledging them by the supervisors could be the most important step in helping novice head teachers. They further emphasize that pre-service training, induction and in-service training are the best ways of mitigating these challenges. However, in the absence of these training, the following coping strategies could be employed.

2.4.1. Mentoring

Novice head teachers may choose to have their own mentors who might be the previous head teacher or any other veteran head teacher of their choice. The mentors become reference points whenever the novice head teachers do not know what to do in a particular situation. The advice helps to boost their confidence level and improve their practical knowledge related to school leadership (Tahir et al., 2016).

2.4.2. Maintaining Professional Network

One of the coping strategies is to network with either their peers or more especially the veteran head teachers. According to Bathuleng (2015) novice head teachers need to contact or visit the veteran head teachers whenever they need assistance in managerial and administrative issues. Howard and Mollary (2018) while agreeing that professional networking could be a solution, are also quick to mention that time demands and job overload of head teachers, more especially novice head teachers often interfere with the potential to network. As such they advocated the use of shared leadership like distributed leadership and team leadership as some of the coping strategies.

2.4.3. Practicing Distributed Type of Leadership

Recognition of job overload and the effectiveness of distributed leadership may assist novice head teachers in reducing challenges in managing time and priorities as well as overcoming the legacy of the previous headteacher (Howard and Mollary (2018). Participation in leadership roles like in planning and organizing by other staff members makes them responsible and committed in the implementation of the plans. As such either failure or success becomes a shared responsibility.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0. Scope of the Chapter

This chapter discusses the research design, the paradigm, the method of inquiry, population of the study, sampling techniques, study site, data collection instruments, pilot study, validity and reliability, ethical considerations and data analysis procedures that were used in this study.

3.1. The Research Approach

There are three types of research approach namely: quantitative, qualitative and Mixed methods approaches. This study was qualitative in nature. According to Creswell (2009) qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Marguerite, Dean and Katherine, (2006) indicate the following as some of the characteristics of qualitative research;

- Studies are carried out in a naturalistic setting.
- Researchers ask broad research questions designed to explore, interpret, or understand the social context.
- Participants are selected through non-random methods based on whether the individuals have information vital to the questions being asked.

The above characteristics of qualitative research best suited the study which was exploring how novice head teachers were prepared in their headship roles through their own experiences in their respective schools (natural setting). It also used open-ended questionnaires and structured interviews. Lastly, the participants were purposively and conveniently sampled which were

non-random methods of sampling and fitted this approach.

3.2. Research Paradigm

A paradigm is a way of describing a world view that is informed by philosophical assumptions about the nature of social reality (known as ontology), knowledge (epistemology), and ethics and value systems (axiology) (Patton, 2002). There are various paradigms that are used in educational research. Some of them include; positivism, interpretivism also known as social constructivism, pragmatism and transformative paradigm. Each paradigm is based on a set of assumptions about the nature of social reality, knowledge and human behavior. This study therefore adapted the interpretive paradigm because interpretive paradigm allows researchers to view the world through the perceptions and experiences of the participants (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). The researcher then uses those experiences and perceptions to construct and interpret his/her understanding from the gathered data (Ibid, 2015). This paradigm best suited this study because the researcher explored how novice head teachers were prepared for the headship roles and the challenges they faced in the course of their work through their own experiences. The researcher then interpreted those experiences and perceptions to establish how novice head teachers were prepared in BCD and the challenges they faced.

The interpretive approach could be traced back to Edmund Husserl's philosophy of phenomenology which is the study of human consciousness and self-awareness, and to the German philosopher Wilhem Dilthey's philosophy of hermeneutics which is the study of interpretation. The interpretive approach was in later years elaborated by Martin Heidegger and

Max Weber (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012). Interpretive paradigm believes that knowledge and truth is subjective as such it accommodates multiple perspectives and versions of truth. What is true or false is culturally bound, historically and context dependent although sometimes it may be universal, and within a given period of time (Ibid, 2012). The multiple perspectives and version of truth fitted well with this study because participants had different perspectives regarding head teacher preparation and different were the challenges they faced as a result of time and location. As for ontology, Interpretivists believe that reality is socially constructed, complex and ever changing (Creswell, 2012). As such there can be many realities as possible according to individuals or sometimes can be shared among groups. They also believe that reality is limited to context, space, time, and even to individuals and/or groups in a given situation; as such it cannot be generalized into one common reality (Chilisa and Kawulich, 2012). In the interpretive paradigm, the crucial purposes of researchers are to get 'insight' and 'in-depth' information concerning the problem which was what this study was all about; to get an insight and in-depth information in the way novice head teachers were prepared in their new roles and the challenges they faced.

3.3. Research Design

Research designs are plans and procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009). There are various research designs in qualitative research such as ethnography, phenomenology, narrative research, ground theory studies and case study. This study used the case study design. There are several definitions and kinds of case studies. Yin, (2003) defines case study as an

empirical approach that investigates phenomena in its natural setting within bounded time and place to gain a deeper understanding of the issue. Gall, Gall & Borg (2007) provide a definition which is based on the characteristics of the case study. To them, a case study is an in-depth study of one or more instances of a phenomenon in its real-life context that reflects the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon. This means that the case study provides a unique example of real people in real situations and therefore enabling the reader to understand ideas more clearly and how such ideas and abstract principles fit together (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). The case study approach fitted this study because the study reflected multiple perspectives of head teachers (real people) in regard to their preparation and the challenges they faced in their respective schools (real situation).

Case studies can either be a single case or multiple cases depending on various different reasons. As such this study was a multiple case study in the sense that each novice head teacher was regarded as an individual entity on its own because each one of them was unique because they were not trained in the same way. At the same time, novice head teachers had different perspectives concerning their preparation and had different challenges depending on various reasons such as environment. So this study was a multiple case study with multiple perspectives and fitted the interpretive paradigm which believes in multiple perspectives of truth and that knowledge and reality is subjective to individuals or groups of individuals in a given situation.

3.4. The Study Site

This study was conducted in selected secondary schools in Chikwawa and Blantyre Districts in the South West Education Division. These districts were chosen because Blantyre

District is the commercial city of Malawi whereby resources and other services were readily available unlike Chikwawa which is a rural education district where most of the resources and services were hardly available. So it was possible that novice secondary school head teachers in Blantyre District might have had different experiences from those of their counterparts in Chikwawa District. So the combination of these two distinct study sites helped the researcher to obtain contrasting data as multiple sources in qualitative research helps in the credibility of the data (Yin, 2003).

3.5. Population of the Study

Creswell (2012) defines population as a group of individuals who have the same characteristics. In this case, all secondary school head teachers in Blantyre and Chikwawa Districts (BCD) comprised the population of this study. However, the target population were novice secondary school head teachers who were in the first year of their headship. A target population also known as a sampling frame according to Creswell (2012) is a group of individuals with some common defining characteristic that the researcher can identify and study (Ibid, 2012). It is within the target population that the researcher selects a sample for the study. BCD had a population of 85 secondary schools head teachers with a target population of 11 novice head teachers.

3.6. Sampling Techniques

Best and Kahn (2006) define sampling as the process of selecting a group of subjects for a study in such a way that the individuals represent the larger group from which they have been

selected. So in this study, the targeted 11 novice head teachers represented all novice head teachers. Purposive Sampling and Convenient sampling were used in determining the participants. Purposive Sampling is where sample units are chosen because they have particular features or characteristics which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and questions which the researcher wishes to study (Creswell, 2012). In this study, novice secondary school head teachers were chosen as respondents because the study targeted them. Convenient Sampling refers to an approach in which selection is made purely on the basis of who is available and is willing to provide the needed information for the study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Information on the years of service for the novice head teachers was obtained from the Human Resource Officer (HRO) at the South West Education Division Office. The researcher was provided with the novice head teachers' contacts, and appointments were made to meet them. The Divisional Human Resource Officer (HRO) and a Senior Education Methods Advisor (SEMA) at the South West Education Division were also part of the sample because they were responsible for the appointment and preparation of head teachers, and had a lot of knowledge about the head teachers' roles in their respective schools. The sample included eight novice secondary school head teachers (two females, six males) whereby three males were from Chikwawa Education District, two males were from Blantyre Rural and three (two females and a male) from Blantyre Urban. Currently, leadership positions in Malawian secondary schools were dominated by male head teachers hence only two females participated in this study. In multiple case studies, sample size is determined by the number of cases required to reach saturation, a point whereby no new data provides additional insight. This study did not reach saturation as the last participant gave great additional insights. The researcher wished if she

could have used all the 11 novice head teachers however, the remaining three were not willing to participate.

The researcher explored the participants' background to determine whether their qualification and experience could provide responses to the research sub-question one which was to find out the qualifications for the head teachers job in BCD. The head teachers were referred to as HT1 up to HT8 depending on the order of their interviews and division personnel were referred to as SO1 and SO2. Below is a table summarizing their qualification, grade, and responsibilities held prior to their appointment.

Name	Sex	Academic Qualification	Grade	Responsibilities head prior to appointment
HT1	M	Diploma in Education	J	DHT, HOD, Coordinator (OS)
HT2	F	Bachelors in Education	I	DHT, HOD
HT3	M	Bachelors in Theology	J	DHT, HOD
HT4	M	Bachelors in Education	I	HOD, Teacher-Bursar
HT5	M	Diploma in Education	J	DHT, HOD
HT6	M	Diploma in Education	J	DHT
HT7	M	Bachelors in Education	H	Coordinator (OS), Boarding Master
HT8	F	Master of Education	G	DHT, HOD

Table 1. Summary of the HTs Qualifications and Responsibilities.

Profile of Participants

All the participating novice head teachers were head teachers of Community Day Secondary schools.

HT1

A male head teacher within Blantyre Urban. He had a Diploma in Education and was in his 50s. By the time he was promoted to the headship position, he was on grade J, but recently had been promoted to grade I. Prior to his appointment as Head Teacher, he had been Deputy Head Teacher. As the DHT, he had been;

- the chairperson of bursary committee which he said had helped him to interact with members of the public.

- the chairperson of discipline committee

- the chairperson of the internal Procurement Committee (IPC)

He also said that in one year, he served as head of department for Sciences (HOD), Coordinator for the open school, and chair of the examination department as well as sports master.

HT2

A female head teacher in Blantyre Urban. She had a degree of Bachelor of Education and was in her 40s. Prior to her appointment as Head Teacher, she had been a DHT for seven years and performed the same roles as HT 1. She had also been an HOD (Languages) for four years and her grade was I.

HT3.

A male head teacher from Chikwawa District. He started working as a primary school teacher then upgraded himself. He had a degree in Theology and was in his 40s. His grade was I

but by the time he was promoted to headship, he was grade J. Prior to his appointment, he had been a HOD as well as a DHT.

HT4.

A male head teacher from Chikwawa District. He had a degree of Bachelor of Education and was in his 30s. His grade was H but at the time of his appointment, he was at grade I. Prior to his appointment, he had been an HOD and a Teacher-Bursar for eight years. He was combining both duties before he was relieved of being an HOD. He had also been a form teacher and a patron for Wild Life Club.

HT5

A male head teacher from Chikwawa District. He has a diploma in Education and is in his 40s. His grade was I but during the time of his appointment, he was at grade J. Prior to his appointment, he had been an HOD (Languages) as well as DHT.

HT6

A male head teacher from Blantyre Rural. He previously worked as a primary school teacher and then went to Domasi College of Education where he graduated with a Diploma in Education. His grade was J and was in his 40s. He had been a DHT for two and a half years prior to his appointment as a head teacher.

HT7

A male head teacher from Blantyre Rural. He had a degree in Education and was in his 50s. His grade was G but during his appointment, he was on grade H. Prior to his appointment, he had

been a coordinator for the Open School, a boarding master, a form teacher, and a social welfare chairperson. He said being an open school coordinator and a boarding master made him to start appreciating the head teacher's job.

HT8

A female head teacher from Blantyre Urban. She had a Master's degree in Technical and Vocational Education, a bachelor's degree in Business Studies, a Diploma in Education and Certificate in project management and strategic planning. She was in her 30s and her grade was G. She had been a DHT for six years prior to her appointment as HT.

All the participating novice head teachers were head teachers of Community Day Secondary Schools with some having a combination of boarding element. For instance, HT3, HT4 and HT 8 had both day and boarding students.

The figure below summarizes the academic qualification of the participants.

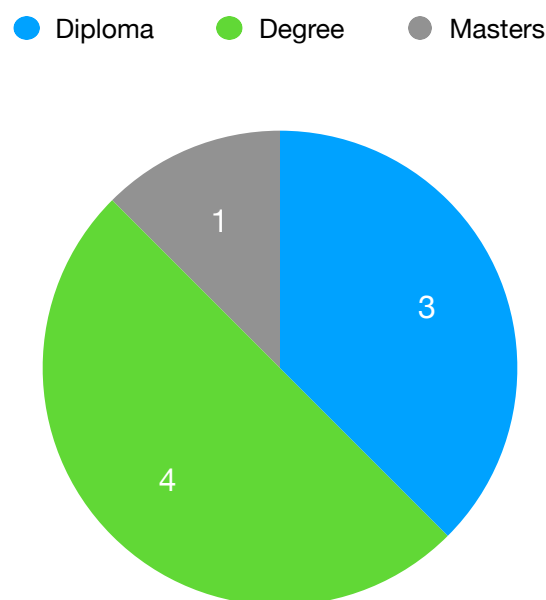


Table 1. Showing qualifications of head teachers

SWED Official 1 (SO1)

A Senior Education Methods Advisor (SEMA) from the Department of Inspectorate and Advisory Services (DIAS).

SWED Official 2 (SO2).

She was one of the officers in the Human Resource Department.

3.7. Data Collection Instruments

There are a number of data collection instruments in qualitative research such as observations, narratives, surveys and interviews among others. In this study, data was mainly collected through semi-structured interviews. Creswell (2007) indicates that in any inquiry, it is important to understand and use methods providing the most appropriate fit with the research questions at hand, and note modifications to the methods accordingly. Therefore the researcher used a modified open-ended questionnaire and interviews. The researcher chose to use these instruments because according to Best & Khan (2006) the use of multiple data collection in qualitative research helps to minimize bias and therefore improve trustworthiness and credibility of the data collected. The open-ended questionnaire was chosen to give respondents freedom to respond in their own words and consequently provide a deeper understanding regarding the problem. Chilisa & Greece (2005) indicates that the use of questionnaire also helps to ensure confidentiality and anonymity whilst eliminating intimidation. The open-ended questionnaire was the first to be administered and before its formal administration, all participants were contacted through phone and the researcher booked an appointment to give more information on

the study and to deliver the modified open-ended questionnaire. This was followed by face to face, semi-structured interviews. This study considered a case as a single in-depth interview with each novice head teacher. Semi-structured interviews were preferred because they had a standardized format which meant that the same questions were asked to each interviewee in the same order. This made it easy to develop patterns and themes during data analysis. The interviews were audio recorded for better data analysis which was done right after each data collection and fits the multiple case studies analysis of data which emphasizes the importance of analyzing each case right-away.

Yin (2009) indicates that it is important to make use of multiple sources of evidence in order to triangulate data and develop converging themes. So data was collected from two sources thus novice head teachers (8 novice head teachers) and SWED officials (two) over a period of two months. It is also important to note that participants have complex experiences that sometimes do not unravel neatly before the researcher. So to avoid collecting unnecessary data, it is important to have intentional and purposeful interview questions which align with research questions. To achieve this, questions a, b, c, and d which were about their gender, age, qualification, how they were appointed and responsibilities held prior to their appointment were aimed at obtaining responses in relation to research question one. While questions e and f focused on+- their preparation and gave responses to research question 2 with e specifically focusing on induction and f on post-induction trainings. Question g focused on challenges and was aligned with research question 3 and finally question h was aligned with research question 4 which was seeking ways of mitigating the challenges.

3.8. Data Analysis

According to Creswell (2012) data analysis refers to the process of systematically examining data with the purpose of spotlighting useful information. There are different techniques of analyzing data in qualitative research such as narrative analysis, ground theory coding and thematic content analysis among others. However, all of them focus on the coding process (ibid, 2018). Coding involves categorically marking and referencing units in the text with codes and labels as a way of indicating similar patterns and meanings (Chilisa and Greece, 2005). This study took the thematic content analysis approach whereby raw data from the recorded interviews was transcribed into descriptive format. Then the transcribed data together with data from the questionnaire were organized into manageable units which were coded and synthesized. Then themes were developed which reflected the objectives. Then interpretation was done. This study considered a case as a single in-depth interview with each novice head teacher. So each case study was analyzed independently, however emerging themes were confirmed by the other case studies. Baxter & Jack (2008) indicate that multiple case study design enables replication (by the use of more than one case) to independently confirm emerging constructs and identify complementary aspects of the phenomenon under investigation by analyzing within and across settings. So in being consistent with multiple case study design, each case was analyzed independently with subsequent cross-analysis and compilation. As such, it was not the intention of this study to compare the case studies but to independently confirm emerging themes across the case studies. The researcher chose this method because it includes robustness in triangulating the data. Since saturation was not reached, the findings could not be

generalized, and fits the interpretive paradigm that believes in multiple perspectives of truth and that knowledge and reality is subjective depending on context, time and space among others.

Data triangulation was also obtained by the use of novice head teachers and the division officials.

Finally, member checking with each participant was done to confirm the conclusions of the study and to guard against the possibility of the researcher's bias and reactivity.

3.9. Pilot Study

A pilot study is a small-scale test of the methods and procedures of data collection to be used on a larger scale research project (Porta, 2008 as cited in Leon et al. (2010)). The fundamental purpose of conducting a pilot study is to examine the feasibility of an approach that is intended to be ultimately used in a larger scale study. A pilot study was done among veteran head teachers who had been head teachers for more than five years. The veteran head teachers were to examine the content and construction of the instruments to see whether they were understandable and were addressing the issues at hand. A total of five veteran head teachers (three males and two females) were included in the pilot study. The pilot study was significant as it gave the researcher an overview of the whole data collection and analysis procedures. It also gave the researcher an opportune time to adjust where necessary.

3.10. Trustworthiness and Credibility

In this study, issues of trustworthiness and credibility were checked through triangulation and member checking. Triangulation refers to the process of using multiple data collection methods, data sources, analysts or theories to check the trustworthiness and credibility of the

findings (Creswell, 2012). The use of multiple data sources (from the head teachers and officials from SWED) helped in making the findings trustworthy and credible. Member checking, on the other hand, refers to the process of having participants review your research findings which leads to corrections, revisions and additional insights resulting in accuracy and completeness of the findings (ibid, 2012). So the participants were presented with the findings for their final input.

3.11. Ethical Issues and Considerations

Research ethics refers to a set of rules and regulations that helps the researcher to know what is acceptable and not acceptable in conducting a research (Pheko, 2008). Although literature claims that most educational researches do not have great harm to subjects, Creswell (2012) indicates that since qualitative research, especially case study approach deals with human beings, that alone calls for ethical considerations. First and foremost, the researcher sought permission from the Mzuzu University to allow her to go and conduct the research and to introduce her to relevant authorities in this case The Education Division Manager (EDM) for SWED. Then the researcher booked an appointment with the EDM who is the overall manager of all schools in Blantyre and Chikwawa Districts, through phone to explain to him the intent of the study and seek his permission to conduct research among novice secondary school head teachers in BCD. To safeguard the safety of the participants, the researcher informed the participants about the nature of the research. They were told that their participation was voluntary as such some participated while others did not participate. Those who were willing to participate were asked to sign the consent forms. They were also informed about their liberty to answer or refuse

to answer any question, and that they could withdraw from the study anytime they wished. Participants were also assured that their identity will remain confidential throughout the research process. Pseudonyms were used instead. The participants were also told that the interviews were audio recorded for better data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

4.0. Introduction.

This chapter presents the findings from a qualitative research study that was conducted using multiple case study design and followed the interpretive paradigm. A total of eight head teachers were interviewed who were: two females and six males. This was so because leadership positions were dominated by males. For instance, for the past year in Chikhwawa and Blantyre Rural districts, no female head teacher was appointed. In addition to the eight head teachers, two officials from the SWED were also interviewed. This study considered a case as a single in-depth interview with each novice head teacher. So each case study was analyzed independently, however emerging themes were confirmed by the other case studies. This was done in accordance with what Baxter & Jack (2008) indicated that multiple case study design, enables replication (by the use of more than once case) to independently confirm emerging constructs and identify complementary aspects of the phenomenon under investigation by analyzing within and across settings. As such this study was not intended to compare the case studies but to give a wider exploration of the research objectives..

The researcher had two sets of data, one from the questionnaire and the other from interviews. Data from interviews was transcribed and merged with data from the questionnaire. Thereafter codes were developed and from the codes, themes reflecting the objectives were established and were cross checked with themes from the other cases. The finding were presented according to the specific objectives and the discussion on each objective was done

right away. The findings could not be generalized because saturation was not reached and fits the interpretive paradigm.

4.1. Specific Objective One: Criteria to Appointment to Headship

Objective one was to find out the criteria used in appointing novice head teachers. The issue of criteria on appointing head teachers was of interest not only to the researcher but also to the participants. This was so as HT7 said,

“I have many questions like in our division, what is it that they look for, when appointing someone to be a head teacher? For instance, one finds a head teacher with a grade yet there are so many teachers with higher grades. Should we say all those teachers are incompetent?”

According to the findings, there were several factors that were considered in appointing head teachers. Some of them included the following:

4.1.1. Competence and Performance

HT4 indicated,

“I had been a teacher-bursar before and did my work satisfactorily that most of the times, I also did all the head teacher’s job. As such I was not surprised when the division called me and asked me if I was interested to hold a higher position as head of a secondary school to which I said Yes, I was interested.”

SO1 indicated that a teacher might be spotted as a potential head teacher and then s/he goes through an assessment period for about three years and above without his or her knowledge.

Upon being satisfied with his or her performance in all those years, then s/he might be considered for headship. He continued to say that the assessment was done through inspection reports whereby once the Senior Education Methods Advisors visit a school, they also made sure to assess such a particular teacher through schemes and records of work, lesson plan, through HODs as well as head teacher.

“Sometimes even through interaction with students, one is able to hear some success stories of some teachers. So if the report is good from a couple of inspection, then s/he is included in the list of potential head teachers.” He concluded.

This was in agreement with what HT5 had indicated.

“I was appointed as a head teacher after the division officials assessed me in many areas through their visits to my previous school. I convinced them and thereafter they asked me to assist them in this office.”

This meant that some teachers were aware that they were being assessed to become head teachers and what SO1 claimed that they were not aware of the assessment was just an assumption.

4.1.2. Dedication and Commitment to Duty

HT1 indicated that,

“In one year, I was the Head of Department, Coordinator of the Open School, and Chair of the examination Committee. These were all challenging positions but I committed myself and my time to these positions. Sometimes, I could leave my home early in the morning and go back late evening even though my house was within the vicinity of the school.”

SO2 also indicated that upon having a list of all potential head teachers, then as a division,

“We sit down and discuss all those prospective head teachers. We shortlist them kuona kuti awa akakwanitsa (will s/he manage)? You have to know that some might be competent enough to lead schools but might not be committed to their job so those ones cannot be trusted with such a responsibility.”

4.1.3. Middle Management

The SO1 indicated that rarely did they appoint someone to become a head teacher without being a HOD or a DHT first. He said,

“Madam, if someone has been an HOD and managed his/her department well and was promoted to become a DHT, that one cannot fail to manage a school, unless otherwise.”

It was noted that all of them had been HODs before except two (HT6 and HT7). Again six out of the eight headteachers had been DHT prior to their appointment. However, those two (HT4 and HT7) who had not been DHT, had been exposed to administrative functions before. Like HT4 had been a teacher-bursar and claimed to perform all the head teacher’s duties while HT7 was the coordinator for the open school.

4.1.4. Grade

In response to how she was appointed as a head teacher, HT8 said

“I have been a DHT before for about six years so this was a promotion to me, after all my grade qualified me to be a head teacher.”

SO1 indicated that those who had been promoted through interviews and had been given the

substantive grade of headship thus F for conventional Secondary Schools and G for Community Day Secondary Schools (MoEST, 2011-2012 Establishments), were automatically given schools to head where there were vacancies. He said that.

“If one has passed the interviews, and has been promoted to the necessary grade, then we have no choice but to give him/her a school, but that is different ndi ma promotion a chisawawa ayi (with just being promoted anyhow). Such promotions do not consider who is capable of doing what”

It had to be noted that in April, 2019 all teachers were promoted to their next grade without going through interviews. Although MoEST recognized those on Grade F and G as head teachers for Conventional Schools and Community Day Secondary Schools respectively, SO1 agreed and said;

“Indeed grade is one of the qualifying factors for one to be appointed as a head teacher, but grade alone is not enough. Practice is first and foremost a priority other than a grade.”

This was reflected in the grades of head teachers whereby most of them were at grade J, other than the recommended grades of G in CDSS and F in CSS (MoEST 2011-2012 establishments). The study also revealed that while some head teachers were happy being head teachers despite their low grades, others were not happy doing the work that they felt were not qualified to do because of their low grades. SO2 emphasized that prospective head teachers were told in person before the list of postings was out. That was evidenced by what HT4 indicated,

“I was called at the division and was asked if I was interested to hold a higher position as head of a secondary school to which I said yes.”

HT6 had the same experience. He testified,

“I was only called by the education division office and informed me that I was posted to school x to take the position of the headteacher.”

However, SO 1 also indicated that sometimes it was difficult to call all the prospective head teachers. Therefore in such situations, teachers just saw their names being posted somewhere as head teachers and their expectation was that they will comply with the posting instructions.

This was what HT8 experienced as she narrated;

“I just saw the postings that I am now the head teacher of the school. Previously I was the deputy head teacher of the same school. The head teacher himself had been posted to another school as deputy head teacher.”

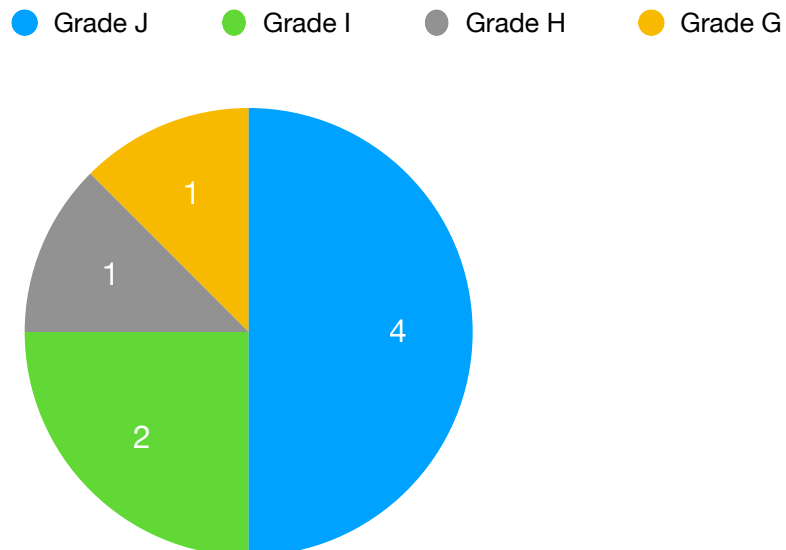


Figure 2. Grades of Head Teachers at the Time of Appointment

4.1.2.. Discussion on the Criteria for Appointment to Headship

The study revealed that head teachers were appointed based on the following; One's grade though only HT8 met the grade requirement of Grade G, (a minimum grade required to be appointed as head teacher) (MoEST, 2011-2012 Establishment). There were a number of reasons why someone's grade was rarely considered when appointing head teachers. For instance, for one to be promoted as a head teacher for a Conventional Secondary School he/she had to serve for not less than 12 years and 8 years for Community Day Secondary Schools. This was so because all degree holders begin their profession on grade I and assuming that they were promoted every four years as stipulated in Circular letter no. **PSC/05/11/84 dated 23rd July, 1984** that meant they attained the required grade for headship (Grade F) for CSS after 12 years and (Grade G) for CDSS after 8 years. Unfortunately, this was not the case. Promotion did not take place as stipulated and even if they were to be done as stipulated, it would also be dependent on whether one passed the interviews or not. As such in most cases, for one to get the required grade for headship, meant that one had served for a long period of time and by the time one got the required grade, s/he was well advanced in age. No wonder HT4 had this to say,

“These veteran head teachers mostly do not perform their duties effectively. They are just in those positions because of their grade and age. They are respected yet they are non-performers. People just fear them.”

It was also noted that all head teachers in the study had been HODs before appointed as head teachers except two (HT6 and HT7). Again six out of the eight novice head teachers had been DHT prior to their appointments. HT4 and HT7 were the only ones who had never been

DHTs, however they have been a teacher bursar and a coordinator for the open school respectively.

The researcher recommended that positions of a head teacher should be accompanied by the necessary grade. This would help novice teachers to remove the feeling that they have just been appointed to fill a vacancy as noted by SO1 who indicated that,

“Mostly, novice head teachers have a feeling that I am a head teacher just by appointment, just to fill the vacancy but my grade does not qualify me for this post.”

Once promoted to an appropriate grade, the novice head teacher would execute his/her duties with confidence. The subordinates would respect the new head teacher thereby reducing the insubordination among teachers. So, once a teacher had been identified, and appointed to fill a headship vacancy, it should be substantive promotion and not just administrative. In so doing, teachers will be encouraged to work hard because they would be aware that their hard working spirit would be paid. Performance Appraisal should be encouraged and maintained..

In conclusion it can therefore be noted that the head teachers had gone through ‘school middle management.’ This in line with what Bush (2013) indicated that in England, school leaders begin their professional careers as teachers and progress to headship via a range of leadership tasks and roles, often described as ‘middle leadership’. Progressing to headship via middle management was important. For instance, in case of an HOD who oversee all the activities in the department; s/he was responsible for planning the activities of the department and making sure that the needs of the department were met, and also making sure that teaching and learning was taking place in the department. Likewise with being a DHT whose responsibilities included maintaining discipline in the school, being the chairperson of bursary

committee and internal Procurement Committee (IPC) as well being responsible for all academic issues in the school. So if a person has been a HOD and a DHT prior to becoming a head teacher, s/he was in a better position to head a school than someone who has never been a HOD or a DHT before. The findings also agree with what Wamba (2015) indicated that head teachers who held a position of leadership prior to their appointment seemed to manage their job much better. He cited that heads of department and deputy headteachers were in a much better position to lead their schools than those who were strictly classroom teachers. The researcher therefore recommended that this practice should be maintained and encouraged.

Finally, it has also been observed that competence of the person and commitment to duty were priorities rather than grade even though grade was important. This was evidenced with most head teachers being grade J but competent enough to lead schools. As such the practice of choosing head teachers based on competence, and not on one's grade (which is attained through number of years of service) should be encouraged. Such findings agreed with what NGA (2018) clearly indicated that years of experience is not a measure of competence, only of time served. It is the nature and quality of the experience that was important like what skills and knowledge has been obtained by the person regardless of the duration of time. If head teachers were chosen based on their competences through performance appraisals as is the case with SWED, then that could encourage teachers to work hard because they would know that their hard work will be paid without considering their grade. Mostly, teachers do not work hard because they know that even if they work hard they may still not be rewarded accordingly. And if such caliber of competent and hardworking head teachers were trained whilst in the prime of their life, the

government could be assured of having continued competent head teachers who would make meaningful impact for a long time unlike training someone who might be retiring in the next few years.

Summary

The study revealed that there were a number of factors that were considered for one to be appointed as a head teacher. These included; competence and performance, dedication and commitment to duty, middle management as well as grade. It was also found that although the MoEST considers grade as the main qualifying factor for one to be appointment a head teacher (2011-2012 establishment), it was rarely used in the appointment of head teachers in Blantyre and Chikwawa Districts. The researcher therefore recommended that choosing head teachers based on their competencies and performance, commitment and dedication, and having gone through middle management should be encouraged. The appointment of head teachers should not only be administrative but rather be substantive promotion where candidates would be interviewed and promoted based on the results of the interviews. Positions should be accompanied by the necessary grades. As such use of Performance Appraisals on teachers in the schools be encouraged and maintained.

4.2. Specific Objective Two: Preparation to Headship

The second objective of the study was to find out from the participants the type of training they received prior to taking up their appointment as well after their appointment. Two pre-determined themes came out from their responses. The first theme was to find out how they were inducted in their new job and in what skills and competences. The second theme was to

find out any post-induction trainings they received after their appointment to headship. Finally, the researcher wanted to find out any other support that they received to help them discharge their duties effectively. The study revealed that head teachers did not receive any induction or training prior to their appointment despite MoEST acknowledging the need and importance of such trainings. However, the study also revealed that novice head teachers received post-induction trainings or in-service trainings in the form of management meetings. They also received support mostly from their former head teachers from their previous schools, other head teachers in the cluster, the division personnel, HODs, Teachers and chiefs.

4.2.1. Induction

The participants were asked whether they were inducted or trained prior to their appointment. The responses from all the participants indicated that they were neither inducted nor trained prior to their appointment. For instance, HT1 said,

“There was no orientation or any induction before I took up the post. Only management meetings where best practices were shared, and of course they were helpful because what was shared was exactly what was on the ground and one was able to relate.”

HT2 agreed with HT1 saying,

“I had to go through the headship process through try and error. I have been only attending management meetings whereby management issues such as discipline, finances, resources and other official documents were tackled. But there was no induction of any sort.”

HT8 lamented and said,

“I was not trained prior to taking up the post, never got any training in headship. My predecessor did not even handover the school to me. I had to go through the headship process through try and error” [pg. 101].

On the contrary, HT6 indicated of being trained even though the training had nothing to do with leadership and management. He reported,

“Of course I had gone for a training but just like a teacher. It was organized by the European Union and was called Improving Secondary Education in Malawi. It had nothing to do with leadership and management but as a teacher and concentrated more on Lesson Planning, Preparation of Schemes and Records of Work, how to do Teaching and Learning Using Locally Available Resources (TALULAR) and others”

The researcher asked SWED Officials how novice head teachers were prepared for their headship roles since the head teacher’s job was different from that of a classroom teacher. In her response, SO2 clarified that any teacher was a manager in the sense that s/he coordinates various school activities as requested. So as they were coordinating those school activities, they were learning in a certain way on how to coordinate a school. In addition, she also indicated that only those teachers who had been either HOD or DHT were appointed to headship position. She narrated,

“We rarely appoint teachers who have not served as either deputy head teachers or heads of department. So if a teacher has been a Head of a Department and successfully managed the department, and then s/he is promoted to become a Deputy Headteacher, that one is able to manage a school.”

This explanation agreed with the findings whereby all participants had been deputy head teachers

before except for two. However, those two had also previously been exposed to administrative work since one had been a teacher bursar and the other one had been a coordinator for the open school as such coordinated and managed all the activities of the open school. SO1 also indicated that novice head teachers were called to the division for a briefing session.

“Briefing takes place at the division, whereby they are briefed on various policy documents like accounts, audit, inspection, if it is a new school then issues of registration, official stamp and uniform are also discussed. Then after three to four months, they are visited.”

However, this explanation on briefing new head teachers contradicted with what all participants indicated that they received no orientation prior to their appointment. A conclusion was therefore made that there was no formal training nor induction for novice head teachers prior to their appointment in BCD. Having gone through without the induction process, the researcher sought the participants' views on whether they felt induction was still important or not. All the participants indicated that induction was necessary and important that the division needed to arrange for such events for all novice head teachers. HT4 said,

“Induction is necessary and it is unfortunate that it is not there. I was lucky because I have been a teacher-bursar, and the HT whether deliberately or not inducted me because most of his duties were done by me. Thus drafting all letters, filing, everything was done by me and him, his work was just to sign. But no official induction was given to me except this one. What I am doing is through experience.”

The study also revealed that many novice head teachers were not aware on which documents to submit, when to submit and to who. This was evidenced by what HT7 said,

“Yes induction is important. Once the postings are out in July, then in August should be induction or training. I was surprised one day when I received a call from the division saying ma staff return simunabweretse (You did not bring the staff returns). I was not aware when I was supposed to submit them and let alone to who. There were no handovers, and no-one told me how to do some things in the office.”

HT8 expressed the importance of induction in this way,

“It was difficult for some of us. It was through try and error. No hand overs, and in such circumstances, induction could have served a great deal.”

The SWED Officials were asked on how they inducted novice headteachers. In their responses, both of them confessed that induction takes long to happen. SO2 explained that induction was organized in two forms;

(i). National Induction Course which was organized by MoEST. In this induction, the division was asked to submit names of HT, DHT, HOD and the targeted number was given. After sometime, these teachers were called for an induction course. It was called School Level Leadership Training or School Level Management training. When asked the last time the National Induction Course took place, she responded by saying,

“It has been a while since it was last done.”

(ii). The second one was organized by the Division.

“Having filled so many posts on administrative basis and knowing the problems that schools have, we set aside some funds and schools also contribute for induction of novice head teachers. Then we go to a designated place away from their duty stations so that they should concentrate.” She explained.

According to SO1, the division conducted the last induction for head teachers some three years ago.

The participants were also asked about the skills and competencies that they needed in order for them to discharge their duties effectively. Below is a table summarizing skills needed by novice head teachers.

Required Skills	Frequency
Leadership and Management Skills	8
Financial and Resource Management	7
Counseling and Guidance Skills	6
Human Relation Skills	6
Communication Skills	5
School Policies, Laws and Regulation	4
Record Keeping	4
Group Psychology/Dynamics	1
Time Management	1
Strategic Planning	1
Problem Solving Skills	1

Table 2. Showing skills required by Novice Head Teachers.

Another institution that was also involved with head teacher preparation in Malawi was the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE). A pilot study that was done among veteran head teachers showed that upon qualifying to the substantive grade of PF, they were called for head teacher

training at MIE for two weeks. Efforts to talk to the responsible person at MIE and to check whether the program is continuing or not proved futile.

Discussion on Induction

The findings agreed with what Wamba (2015) noted that there was no formal training nor preparation for the head teachers job in Malawi. Training for head teachers took place on the job through trial and error. The study also revealed that training was not a requirement for one to become a head teacher despite MoEST, Division Officials and all participants acknowledging that it was important. The need for induction and training for novice head teachers could not be overemphasized. This is so because when it comes to organisational performance, the quality of the leader is very crucial. So, it is the same with schools as organisations, the quality of the head teacher is very important. That was why Eacott and Asuga (2014) indicated that without significant attention to the preparation and development of school leaders, government initiatives aimed at building world class education systems are unlikely to succeed. From the first day of their appointment, novice head teachers assumes the same responsibilities as veteran head teachers and are expected to perform accordingly. However, novice head teachers have little knowledge and mostly are not sure of whether what they are doing is the right thing or not. From the theoretical framework, Wolenski, (2010) indicates that learned knowledge and acquired skills or abilities are significant factors in the practice of effective leadership which in turn lead to effective organisational change. Induction and training would have made novice head teachers to acquire skills that would have made them to be more competent and confident in their work, thereby leading to a greater productivity. This is what Onderi & Ajowi (2014) indicate that induction acquaints new employees with the knowledge and skills necessary to adapt and be

successful in the community and the organisation. Unfortunately, this was not the case with novice head teachers in CBD. It was unfortunate that novice head teachers were not inducted because in any job and in any undertaking, one needs to be inducted in order to avoid doing unnecessary things. No wonder Obura (2009) describes the lack of training and induction of novice head teachers as the missing ingredient in Africa's attempt in achieving quality education.

The lack of induction resulted in lack of confidence among novice head teachers which forced them not to introduce the necessary changes but to keep on with status quo. While trying to keep on with the status quo, many lost control and became frustrated. This agrees with what Bathuleng (2015) indicates that lack of induction makes novice head teachers feel incompetent and may lead to disappointment resulting in most of them leaving the profession. Effective organisations are as a result of effective leaders which in turn are a result of effective preparation and training in necessary skills. Induction would have assisted novice head teachers to adapt quickly in the new professional environment thereby becoming productive as quickly as possible. Participants however suggested several ways on how induction could have been done. For instance, some said it could be done by the division personnel, others through staff training institutions like Malawi Institute of Management (MIM), Malawi Institute of Education (MIE), Staff Development Institute in Mpemba and/or at Mponela, while others thought it should be done by the Ministry headquarters.

HT7 had this to say,

“Once appointments are made, there should be orientation or induction. Like what parliament is doing now with the newly elected Members of Parliament. So the same should apply to novice head teachers having a week or two for training.”

The researcher agrees with HT7 that once appointments had been made in July, then the division should have planned the date of their induction in August. If the worse came to the worst then at least a briefing at the division should be done rather than letting head teachers go on their own. In addition to the mentioned skills needed by novice head teachers, the researcher also recommends self-awareness skills. Self-awareness skills would help the head teacher to know oneself and one's strengths and weaknesses, one's vision and the mission of the school. Good managers are expected to first of all be managers of themselves before managing organisations. On the other hand, induction for a week or two weeks could not suffice to cater for all the needs of novice head teachers. As such in-service or post-induction trainings are necessary.

4.2.2. Post-Induction and In-Service Trainings.

The study also revealed that novice head teachers had in-service or post-induction trainings in the form of management meetings. The in-service training assisted novice head teachers in solving some of the challenges they faced. This was evidenced by what HT1 indicated,

“(I only attended) management meetings where best practices were shared. Of course they were helpful because what was shared was exactly what was on the ground and one was able to relate.”

HT3 also agreed,

“I have been only attending management meetings whereby management issues such as discipline, finances, resources and other official documents were tackled.”

Discussion on Post-Induction and In-Service Trainings

In BCD, in-service trainings had been taking place in the form of management meetings. In these meetings various aspects of leadership and management were tackled and participants found them helpful as already stated earlier in the chapter. As such, such meetings should be commended and encouraged. In addition the division could also once in a while organize seminars and workshops. If funding is a challenge, then the participants should be asked to pay or schools had to contribute just as SMASSE workshops were currently doing. Schools contributed and the same could be done with leadership seminars and workshops for head teachers. On the other hand, novice head teachers should take personal responsibility in developing themselves through self-study, reading scholarly literature in leadership and management or in any other areas of need, attending conferences, distance learning, as suggested by Wamba (2015). Other opportunities could have included upgrading themselves by taking a course at the university level in leadership training, financial management, decision-making skills, human resource management and any other courses of their choice.

The above strategies deal much with theory, but to get practical assistance as to what was on the ground, the researcher recommended that there should be mentoring and networking. The novice head teachers should be given a chance to choose their mentors and the division should have the mandate to accept or not to accept. This is so because the mentees need to have a right attitude towards their mentors otherwise it might not work and the mentors need to take a peer stance rather than an apprenticeship model. This agreed with what Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi (2011) indicated that mentoring works well if there is a careful matching of the partners and are

adopting a peer stance rather than an apprenticeship model. The division should be given the mandate to accept or not to accept the mentee's proposal of a mentor because the mentees may not know the mentors properly. It had also been observed that the novice head teachers received support from various stake. holders. This should be encouraged.

Formal preparation for novice head teachers (in form of induction and post-induction or in-service trainings) is a necessity that should not be left to chance if Malawi is going to achieve quality education. It will help novice head teachers to remove all fear and doubt thereby being able to make sound judgement, earn respect from others and develop meaningful relationships with all stake holders. This will create a high sense of confidence and self-esteem resulting in more productivity which in turn will contribute to high quality of education.

4.2.3. Any Other Support Given to Novice Head Teachers

On professional support provided to novice head teachers, the study revealed that the novice head teachers received support mainly from their previous head teachers who served in their previous schools, other novice head teachers, heads of departments from the current school, teachers, chiefs within the cluster and personnel from the divisional office. HT7 said,

“My former HT sat down with me and counseled me on community relations and school culture. He was very supportive professionally and I really appreciate him. Teachers HODs and even chiefs supported me.”

HT6 also had this to say,

“Head teacher from my previous school trained me on some roles of the head teacher and gave me some notes to read. The division office were also calling me to see how I

was settling, and head teachers around the school also supported me.”

HT8 said,

“The EDM himself provided the support I needed. Since there were no hand overs, he told me what to do and I simply followed. The DIAS too, I could call them if I was not sure of what to do.”

Such explanations agreed with what SO1 indicated,

“Our doors are always open for them. We give them our contacts so that they could call us immediately if something was not right. In fact we tell them never to deal with a situation that they are not sure of. Also our periodical visits to schools is when they are thoroughly helped either on supervisory visit or inspection visit.”

Seven head teachers indicated that they received support from various groups of people except HT5 who claimed to have received no support from anyone else. Below was a summary of the support received and from who and its frequency.

Type of Support Received	Personnel Providing Support	Frequency
-Moral Support and Encourage. -Training on roles of a Head teacher. -Provision of document and notes required by HTs. -Counselling on school relations and school culture. -Understanding people, how to handle staff and elect people in positions. -Office politics and how to handle it. -Resource management. -Record Keeping.	Former Head Teacher	5
-Moral support and counseling. -How to solve discipline cases mainly concerning teachers -How to manage a boarding school	Fellow HTs in the Cluster	4
-Moral Support and		

Summary

In summary, the study revealed that novice head teachers did not receive any induction or training prior to their appointment. However, they had post-induction or in-service in the form of management meetings where they were exposed to different managerial skills which helped them to deal with some of the challenges they faced. They had also received support from various personnel such as teachers, heads of department, their previous head teachers and other head teachers in the cluster, chiefs and the division personnel. Lack of induction had resulted in novice head teachers encountering numerous challenges and the division found it hard to discipline the head teachers as they did not prepare them. As such things just moved on. The researcher recommends that induction should be fully developed by MoEST, and should be implemented first and least by the division. Thereafter depending on the availability of funds it could be done at National level or any other Staff Development Institutions. The division should plan in-service trainings in the form of seminars, workshop and even conferences and schools should contribute. Novice head teachers should also take personal responsibility in upgrading themselves through workshops, seminars, conferences, reading and even attending courses in their areas of interest. They also needed to have mentors who might help them in practical situations they face.

4.3. Specific Objective 3: Challenges Novice Head Teachers Faced

Since the novice head teachers were not inducted in their new job, challenges were inevitable. The study revealed that all participants encountered numerous challenges in their new roles. Some of the challenges included the following; challenges in dealing with deviant

teachers, financial management, resistance from teachers, students and members of the community, interpreting government policies, record keeping, and management of resources.

4.3.1. Challenges in dealing with Deviant Teachers

The study revealed that 6 out of the 8 participating head teachers had challenges in dealing with deviant teachers who could not abide by the ethics of their job. The deviant behaviors included; reporting for duties while drunk, shabby dressing, unpunctuality and abscondment from duty.

HT5 said,

“No matter how you speak to them, there is no conformity. They come at their own time regardless of the time of their lesson.”

HT3 also confessed that,

“Some of the teachers tend to bring some issues that are contrary to the policies of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. e.g. Coming to school while drunk, and shabby clothing. [pg. 102].

He continued to say,

“They abscond classes and could even insult me and entice students to strike against me.”

HT7 indicated that,

“The Heads of Department were not supportive in the sense that they could not execute their duties. So it was like a nightmare to me since I did not know how to make everyone do their job willingly without being pushed or asked to do what they were supposed to do.”

Discussion on Dealing with Deviant Teachers

Some participants indicated that they had tried counseling the teachers but there had been no conformity. This could be because of what Spillane & Lee (2013) noted that the strategies of helping deviant teachers require skills which novice head teachers do not possess. As such supporting, reprimanding, and counseling these individuals is not only difficult to them, but also stressful. No wonder BCD novice head teachers were dismayed with the fact that despite counseling such teachers, there was no conformity at all. The researcher suggests the following as ways of dealing with deviant teachers.

Use of Peer Counseling

The peers in this case could refer to teachers who either had the same challenges that the deviant teacher is facing but were conformed or they had never experienced the challenges but are willing to assist. Conformity on the part of the counselor is crucial because s/he becomes a role model to the client by virtue of being a counselor. As such head teachers need to ask teachers who comply by the standard of MoEST and could be regarded as exemplary. Peer counseling provides one-on-one, confidential support by creating a conducive environment whereby the client feels free to talk about issues, challenges and accompanying feelings. The counselor does not provide solutions to the client like prescribing what to do and what not to be done which is exactly the opposite of what most novice head teachers do. Instead, the counselor should help the client to develop solutions to his/her problems through the use of active listening, open dialogue and practical coping strategies.

Use of Top Management Members

Another strategy is by the use of top management members like HOD or DHT. Some teachers correspond quickly to their immediate bosses as such use of top management could also assist.

Use of Coercive Power

If the above strategies have failed, then the novice head teachers may use their coercive power to necessitate the desired changes. This is in line with what Samson & Daft (2012) indicate that managers should use their formal power to force employees to change. Then if this does not yield any result, the novice head teacher should lodge a case against the teacher following the approved procedures laid by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology which is the last strategy.

The above strategies may work according to situations and personalities. As such the researcher recommends that novice head teachers should develop interest to know their teachers beyond work experiences. They need to know their personalities and behaviours hence the need for interpersonal relational skills among novice head teachers.

4.3.2. Challenges in dealing with Financial Management

The study also revealed that novice head teachers had challenges in financial management. HT1 said,

“I was coming from a cost center whereby every month there was funding. Now this is a non-cost center with low fees.

HT2 experienced the same challenge,

“Managing finances was a challenge as I have never been in-charge. Mostly, we just spend as the need arises. Tracking expenditure and income is not there. One just has to rely on the accountant.”

Financial management was a general problem in all the participants. The study revealed that they relied much on the school accountant for all financial operations. They operated on trust of the accountant. They were not able to follow how much they have collected (as their income) or how much they have spent (expenditure) as they had no knowledge on financial and accountancy skills.

Discussion on Dealing with Financial Management

Managing school finances is one of the major tasks of head teachers as such it was necessary that novice head teachers had sufficient knowledge of financial skills if they were to manage school finances effectively. However, this was not the case with novice head teachers in BCD. The study indicated that novice head teachers in BCD lacked knowledge in financial and accounting skills which made it difficult for them to track expenditure and income, or to track frauds. They also lacked knowledge in budgeting as such they spent as the need arose. Such kind of expenditure could not bring about any development.

The lack of financial and accounting skills by novice head teachers was very worrisome because financial resources are the hub of all activities that take place in the school. Without financial prudence, development could not take place. Budgeting would have helped novice head teachers to spend according to priorities and not as the need arises as HuczynkKi & Buchanan (2013) noted that budgeting is the main controller of expenditure. Knowledge in financial management would also help novice head teachers not just to rely on what the school accountant says, but

they would also actually be able to track income and expenditure. In addition they could easily track any fraud. In so doing they would be able to control expenditure consequently resulting in surplus which could be used for other developmental activities within the school. One may argue that the lack of teaching and learning resources somehow might be attributed to the lack of budgeting and financial management and strategic planning among head teachers. Novice head teachers need to have knowledge of the basics of financial management. Therefore the researcher recommends that knowledge in financial and strategic planning should be one of the requirements in appointing head teachers. They need to take courses on the same. It might be week end courses or during the holidays but it should be a requirement.

4.3.3. Resistance to Change

The study showed that novice head teachers faced resistance from members of staff and in some cases students and the community as a whole.

HT7 testified,

“Another challenge I faced was the comparative view of members whereby members of the community want you to be the other.”

The study further revealed that resistance to change was not only against the new head teacher but was also against any new innovation and changes that the novice head teacher brought about.

HT5 shared his experience.

“Previous head teacher mixed day classes and open classes, but I had to separate them. Everybody starting with teachers, students themselves and even the community were against it.”

Discussion on Dealing with Resistance to Change

The findings had also revealed that members of teaching staff, students as well as the community not only resisted the novice head teachers, but also any innovations or changes which they brought about with them. There are a number of reasons why people resist change. Samson & Daft (2012) indicated that people resist change if it contradicts with their self-interest. This is exactly what happened with HT5. By separating day scholars from open scholars contradicted the interest of the teachers, the students themselves and even the community. Another reason why people resist change is because of the use of different assessment tools. People resist change because their assessment of the change might be different from the change innovators (ibid, 2012). For instance, HT5 perhaps thought of separating day scholars from open scholars because the two were different and needed to be treated differently while the students and the community thought the separation meant having little access or no access at all to education resources. Novice head teachers are first of all supposed to understand why people are resisting them or the changes they bring about. Understanding the reasons behind the resistance will help them to employ necessary strategies to overcome the resistance and consequently gaining acceptance and approval. For instance, the teachers, the students and the community of HT5 lacked understanding on why the two were being separated. In that case HT5 could have educated and communicated to the people the rationale behind the separation before implementing the changes. This agrees with what HuczynkKi & Buchanan (2013) indicated that people are much more likely to change their behavior when they understand the rational reasons for doing so. Another strategy that HT5 could have employed was to involve the concerned members in the initial stage of planning how to separate the two groups of students. In that case

both the HT and the resisters could have worked together in designing how to separate the two and they would have also agreed how the two groups of students would be treated. This is in line with what Samson & Daft (2012) indicates that participation of users and innovators pays off because users understand the change and become committed to the change. The researcher therefore recommends that novice head teachers first of all need to have an understanding of why people resist change. Only after knowing the reasons for the resistance, will they be able to employ necessary strategies to overcome it. In other words, they need to know how to manage change to achieve performance. This could only be done through training in management skills.

It was also observed that the division personnel were hardly involved in mitigating the challenges that novice head teachers faced. None of the participants indicated of sharing their challenges with the division personnel. Novice head teachers should not be afraid to share their challenges with the division personnel. Sharing their challenges will not only assist them but will also help the division to appreciate the challenges that novice head teachers face. In so doing, they will be able to come up with the necessary strategies of overcoming the challenges.

4.3.4. Challenges in dealing with drug and substance abuse among students

In addition, some head teachers also experienced challenges in dealing with students who indulged in drug and substance abuse. HT2 reports,

“Many students are involved in drug and substance abuse and discipline them is a challenge.”

Discussion on the Drug and Substance Abuse among Students

There were so many reasons why students indulged in drug and substance abuse. These included

recreation purposes, stimulants to improve performance in school or sports, steroids for growth and laxatives for weight control. Whatever the purpose, students who indulged in drug and substance abuse do much harm to themselves than good. There were a number of strategies that could be employed to help such students. The first thing that novice head teachers should do is to encourage the talk about drug and substance abuse among students as well as teachers. Teachers should be encouraged to talk about the actual facts about drug and substance abuse in their lessons. This would help in disseminating information about the dangers of drug and substance abuse consequently preventing some students in indulging in the same. For those already involved in drug and substance abuse, novice head teachers should find out what kind of resources were available around the school which could help the students. They should have school counselors who should be willing to develop a positive and warm rapport with the students. The school counselors could help students learn coping and stress management skills such as: self-control, standing up to peer pressure, time management, dealing with difficult situations like conflict or loss and setting goals. The counselors should also be in frequent contact with the parents, other teachers and the administration as all these might offer assistance in one way or the other. The counselors should be able to discuss their concerns with the concerned student in a supportive and non-punitive way. Set goals with the students and provide support until the student is conformed. If all supportive strategies are exhausted, then suspension and other punitive ways could be employed.

4.3.5. Challenges in dealing with extreme poverty among students

HT7 said,

“Many students come from poor families, some are orphans, and others are coming from child-headed families. They lack many provision which affects their performance.”

Discussion on Dealing with Extreme Poverty

Extreme poverty was one of the common characteristics of students among Malawian schools. Poverty affects student performance as already indicated by HT7. Many novice head teachers tend to feel compassionate about students who live in extreme poverty. That was not wrong, but then there is also need to hold them to high expectations. There were a number of strategies that could be employed to help students who live in extreme poverty. Firstly, the just introduced policy of mother groups could be ideal. This was whereby members of the community mainly women form a group to look into the social welfare of the students more especially the needy ones in their community. As such novice head teachers should be encouraged to initiate the introduction of mother groups in their communities through the Parents Teachers Association.

Novice head teachers should also expose the students to various experiences. Many students in extreme poverty have a limited amount of experiences. Exposing them to experiences by inviting different role models to have a talk with them could be ideal. The students should also be given chance to set goals and coach them to achieve their goals. They should also be held accountable for their performance. Novice head teachers should share their high expectations from the students. By keeping high expectations from the students, novice head teachers reinforce to the students that they believe in the students' abilities. This provides chance to the

students to show-off what they are capable of doing, and to soar high above the expectations of the community.

4.3.6. Challenges in dealing with limited resources

Novice head teachers also indicated having challenges in dealing with limited resources. The limited resources included both human resource as well as material resources. HT7 lamented,

“Running a school from form one to form four with few teachers just seven teachers and limited classrooms has been a challenge. For instance you cannot see form one classrooms from here. We are renting a certain building that is a bit far from here. Now how can I supervise teaching and learning from here.”

Discussion on Managing Limited Resources

Novice head teachers had challenges in managing limited resources, which was both human and material resources. Novice head teachers first of all need to acknowledge the situation and recognize that business could not be conducted as usual. Such acknowledgement would help them not to be so much overwhelmed with the situation thereby reducing stress. On the other hand, they also need to understand that other stakeholders are expecting them to manage the limited resources and bring out the desired outcomes. Therefore novice head teachers should be encouraged to have a strategic vision which would help them to plan and determine priorities, identify adjustments, negotiate tradeoffs and be more readily able to adapt to a change.

Summary

Novice head teachers encountered numerous challenges. Some of the them included; challenges in dealing with deviant teachers, challenges in financial management, resistance to change, challenges in dealing with drug and substance abuse among students, challenges in dealing with extreme poverty among students and challenges in dealing with limited resources thus both human and material. As such, the researcher recommends that novice head teachers should develop interest to know their teachers beyond work experiences. Knowledge in financial and strategic planning should be one of the requirements in appointing head teachers and novice head teachers should be encouraged to take courses on the same. It might be week-end courses or during the holidays but it should be a requirement. Lastly, novice head teachers should be encouraged to have a strategic vision which will help them to plan and determine priorities, identify adjustments, negotiate tradeoffs and be more readily able to adapt to a change.

4.4 Specific Objective 4: Ways of Mitigating the Challenges

The study revealed that novice head teachers employed a variety of strategies in mitigating the challenges they encountered. Some of the strategies included the following; networking, mentoring, use of top management, and The Parents Teacher Association. However, the study also revealed that the division personnel were hardly consulted to assist in solving the challenges.

4.4.1. Networking

The study revealed that novice head teachers contacted or visited other head teachers within the cluster or peer head teachers whenever they needed assistance in managerial issues. This was evidenced by what HT3 indicated,

“I had to ask veteran head teachers on how they manage such documents and even asked them to show me all important documents required by the head teacher”.

HT4 indicated,

“I am lucky that I have four youthful head teachers and it is easy to ask them questions.”

Discussion on the Use of Networking

The study revealed that novice head teachers had networks with other head teachers either within or outside the cluster. While other participants networked with veteran head teachers, some networked with their youthful novice head teachers. The findings had revealed that no matter which group of head teachers (either veteran or novice) one was in contact with, networking had been more helpful to the participants. The participants indicated that the most beneficial part of networking was that they shared on practical issues of their job. This agreed with what Bathuleng (2015) indicated that networking helps novice head teachers to liaise with fellow head teachers and share ideas on effective practices and concerns.

The researcher therefore recommends this practice of networking especially within the same cluster. This is so because some challenges were specific to some environment. So if head teachers within the cluster were networking, they might be able to understand each other better than another head teacher from another cluster. For instance, the findings had revealed that one of the challenges that novice head teachers faced in rural areas with students was that of extreme

poverty while in Blantyre Urban the challenge with students was that of use of drug and substance abuse. So if head teachers from the urban areas network, they might understand the problem of drug and substance abuse among students much better than those in the rural areas and vice versa. So networking within the cluster should be encouraged among head teachers, however there should be no restriction at all.

4.4.2. Mentoring

The study further showed that novice head teachers looked up to their former head teachers as their mentors. HT8 indicated,

“Mrs Nsaru (not real name) has been a mentor to me. I take some and leave the other pieces of advice.”

Discussion on Mentoring

The study also revealed that most novice head teachers put themselves under the mentorship of their previous head teachers in their previous schools. Mentoring had proved to be beneficial to many participants because mentors offered professional support, guidance and assistance to novice head teachers on their daily management work.

HT7 indicated,

“My former head teacher was very supportive. He was an old man and guided me as a child.”

As much as reference points whenever the novice headteachers did not know what to do in a particular situation, the idea of treating mentees as children should be discouraged. This was so because according to Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi (2011) mentorship works well if

the partners adopts a peer stance rather than an apprenticeship model. Mentors should avoid a prescriptive approach rather they should work together to develop possible solutions. As such the researcher recommends that if mentoring is to be adopted, then there should be a training on mentorship so that mentors are acquired with necessary skills in mentorship. Otherwise, it may not work. Mentoring helps novice head teachers to be more confident in their work and this agrees with what Tahir et al (2016) indicated that the advice mentees get from their mentors helps them to boost their confidence level and improved their practical knowledge related to school leadership.

4.4.3. Use of Top Management

The study further revealed that novice head teachers used their deputies and heads of departments to help them deal with some of the challenges they encountered.

HT3 testified,

“I asked heads of department and the deputy head teacher to talk to them[deviant teachers] and it was very effective. They have changed.”

Discussion on the Use of Top Management

The study further revealed that that novice head teachers made use of the top management in solving some of the challenges they faced mainly in dealing with deviant teachers. The top management used counseling and guidance in persuading their fellow teachers to change their deviant behaviours. Some other people tend to listen better to their immediate bosses than the supervisor. The researcher found the use of top management as a good example of distributed leadership as such head teachers are encouraged to exercise shared or distributed leadership. In

distributed leadership, success or failure becomes a shared responsibility thereby reducing stress and work over load on the part of the head teacher. Distributed leadership should not only be exercised in finding solutions rather top management should be involved in all leadership roles such as planning, organizing and many others. In so doing members become more responsible and committed in the implementation of the plans. This agrees with what Howard and Mollary (2018) indicated that recognition of job overload and the effectiveness of distributed leadership may assist novice head teachers in reducing challenges in managing deviant teachers, time and priorities, as well as overcoming the legacy of the previous head teacher.

4.4.4. Use of Parents Teachers Association (PTA)

It has also been found that the use of Parents Teacher Association (PTA) by novice head teachers in dealing with some of the challenges they faced was very helpful. For instance, HT5 had to elect a PTA which helped him to stabilize the school. He testified,

“I had to establish the PTA and now everything has normalized.”

However, no single participant mentioned seeking assistance from the division despite acknowledging the moral support they received from division personnel.

Discussion on the Use of Parents Teachers Association (PTA)

The study also revealed that novice head teachers used the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) in mitigating the challenges they faced mainly if the challenges were to do with the members of the community. It is very imperative that each and every school has a working Parents Teachers Association because of the various important roles that the PTA performs. For instance, the PTA is mostly used in fundraising for developmental activities. However, it could

also be used in maintaining discipline in the school which contributes greatly to the performance of the school among others. It is therefore important that novice head teachers builds strong working relationship with the PTA.

Summary

In summary, the study revealed that novice head teachers had a number of coping strategies to overcome the challenges they faced. Among them included; Networking, Mentoring, Use of Top Management and Use of Parents Teachers Association. The study also revealed that the division personnel were hardly involved in providing the solutions that novice head teachers faced. Novice head teachers should not be afraid to share their challenges with division personnel as in so doing the MoEST would not have appreciated the challenges that they faced. However, they also needed to understand that as much as one strategy may work for one head teacher, the same strategy might not had worked for the other teacher. As such, it was very important for novice head teachers to understand the nature of the challenge, and the extent of the challenge before employing any strategy.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The chapter provides a summary of the findings, conclusion and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

Summary of the Findings

The study revealed that head teachers were appointed based on the following; competency and performance, commitment and dedication to duty, having gone through middle management and one's professional grade. The findings also revealed that novice head teachers were not prepared in any way prior to taking up their new roles. However, they had post-induction trainings in the form of management meetings. It also revealed that due to lack of preparation, novice head teachers encountered numerous challenges which they found hard to deal with, as they did not possess the necessary skills in managing the challenges. Some of the challenges included; challenges in dealing with deviant teachers, challenges in dealing with the legacy of the previous teacher, financial management, resistance to change, limited resources and extreme poverty among other challenges. Novice head teachers came up with some coping strategies which included networking, mentoring, use of top management and use of the Parents Teachers Association.

Recommendations

The researcher made the following recommendations.

- Use of Performance Appraisals on teachers in the schools be encouraged and maintained.
- The appointment of head teachers should not only be administrative but rather be substantive promotion where candidates would be interviewed and promoted based on the results of the interviews. Positions should be accompanied by the necessary grades.
- Knowledge in financial management skills and strategic planning should be a requirement in appointing head teachers.
- Induction programs should be fully developed by the MoEST, and should be implemented first and least by the division. It could also be done at National Level or any other Staff Development Institution depending on the availability of funds. The induction program modules should be updated and accessible to novice headteachers so that they could be able to make references on later days.
- In-service training programs should also include workshops, seminars, and conferences. Schools should contribute towards the in-service training programs just like SMASSE workshop are done.
- Mentorship and Networking should be established and encouraged. Novice head teachers should develop strong working relationship with the community through the PTA Association.
- Novice headteachers should take personal responsibility in developing the necessary skills through self-study, reading scholarly literature or taking a course at the university level in the area of need, attending conferences, distance learning.

Conclusion

In SWED, particularly in BCD where the study was conducted, novice head teachers were not prepared into their headship roles. This was pathetic bearing the social, cultural and economic context in which Malawian head teachers operate. They operated in conditions where there was overcrowding in schools with limited teaching and learning resources, shortage of teachers and extreme poverty. As a result, novice head teachers faced a number of challenges which made their job not only challenging but also frustrating. The lack of preparation of novice head teachers resulted in poor leadership and management of schools consequently, resulting in poor quality education. To achieve quality education, MoEST should consider head teacher preparation as a priority among other priorities. Only then, will Malawi be able to achieve the desired quality education.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Consent Form for Participants

Name of Researcher: Zelita Zamula.

Contacts: 0888 52 99 92 / 0996 45 36 25

Email : zELITAZAMULAZZ@gmail.com

Title of the Study:

Assessing the Preparation of Novice Head Teachers into Their Headship Role: Case Study of Selected Secondary Schools in Blantyre and Chikwawa Districts

Purpose of the Study:

The aim of the study is assess how novice head teachers are prepared into their headship roles.

Its purpose is to establish the significance of novice head teacher preparation as it contributes to effective leadership which in turn contributes to quality of education.

Your Role as a Prospective Participant:

- Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw from the study anytime you wish.
- You have the liberty to answer or refuse to answer any question.
- Your identity will remain confidential throughout the research as pseudonyms will be used instead.
- There are no risks in this study.
- If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me on the numbers above or through my email above. If you are willing to participate, could you please sign below:

DATE:_____

Name of Participant_____

Signature of Participant._____

Appendix B: Questionnaire for Head Teachers

Title of the study: Assessing the Preparation of Novice Head Teachers into Their Headship

Roles: Case of Selected Secondary Schools in Blantyre and Chikwawa Districts.

Name of Participant:

Name of the School:

Date :

Questionnaire

a. Please, tick your gender.

Male [] Female []

b. To which of the following age groups do you belong?

21-29 []

30-39 []

40-49 []

50-59 []

60 and above []

c. Please, tick the professional and academic qualification/s you hold.

Diploma []

Degree []

Masters []

Doctorate []

Any other [] Please, specify

.....

d. How did you get appointed as a headteacher?

Please, specify

.....

.....

e. Were you trained prior to taking your post as a headteacher

.....

If yes, could you please describe the nature of your training?

.....

.....

.....

f. After you took up your post as a head teacher, what kind of trainings did you receive and in what skills or competencies?

.....

.....

.....

. Have you experienced any challenges in relation to your roles as a headteacher?

.....

If yes, can you please explain?

.....

.....

.....

h. What do you think can be some of the ways of mitigating the challenges?

.....

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU SO MUCH

Appendix C: Interview Questions for Head Teachers

DATE:.....

TIME:.....

Name of Participant:.....

Name of School :.....

Location :.....

1. To begin our discussion, please tell me about your professional qualification.
2. What post/s of responsibility did you held before being promoted to headship?
3. What do you think are the necessary skills required by novice head teachers in order for them to lead and manage a school effectively?
4. How can such skills be imparted to novice head teachers?
5. Did you think it is necessary for novice head teachers to be inducted prior to taking up their posts? If yes, can you describe how this induction program could be conducted?
6. Could you please explain any continuous development programs that you have been involved with?
7. How have these in-service training helped you in effective delivery of your job?
9. What challenges did you encounter in performing you duties as a new head?
10. What coping strategies did you employ to overcome the challenges?
11. Any other comment you may give in regard to head teacher preparation that has not been covered by these questions?

**Appendix D: Interview Guide Questions for Human Resource Officer and Senior
Education Methods Advisor at South West Education Division**

DATE:.....

TIME:.....

Name of Participant:.....

Position :.....

Title of the Study: Assessing the Preparation of Novice Head Teachers into Their Headship

Roles: Case of Selected Secondary Schools in Blantyre and Chikwawa Districts

1. Could you please explain how head teachers are appointed?
2. Bearing in mind that the roles of a head teacher are different from the roles of a classroom teacher, how do you prepare novice head teachers for their new roles?
3. How are novice head teachers inducted?
4. Could you please describe the skills and competencies that are included in the induction program?
5. Any other support that is provided to head teachers?
6. Could you explain some of the challenges that novice head teachers face once they have taken the headship roles? How do you help them overcome the challenges?
8. would you say you are satisfied with the way INSET programs are organized for the head teachers? If yes, please explain.
If no, how can the INSET programs be more useful/ beneficial to the Head teachers?
9. Any issue/s you would like add or explain that has not been covered by these question

Appendix E: Introductory Letter from Mzuzu University

	MZUZU UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF THE DEAN FACULTY OF EDUCATION	Private Bag 201 Luwero Mzuzu 2 MALAWI Tel: (265) 01 330 722/576 Fax: (265) 01 330 605
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Ref.: MU/1/D3.0

11th April 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

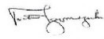
Dear Sir/Madam

PERMISSION TO COLLECT RESEARCH DATA

Zelita Zamula is a registered Master of Education (Leadership and Management) Program student at Mzuzu university. She is supposed to collect research data for a study titled *Assessing the preparation of novice head teachers into their headship roles: A case of selected secondary schools in Blantyre and Chikwawa districts*. The Faculty of Education at Mzuzu university has approved and cleared this research proposal.

Kindly assist her accordingly.

Yours faithfully,



Associate Professor Victor Mgombezulu
Dean, Faculty of Education.

Appendix F: Sample Responses

- Peer counselling
→ Top management
→ Co-ordinate power
→ Report back/forward following approved procedure
- d. How did you get appointed as a headteacher?
Please, specify.....
Posted by the division
.....
.....
.....
.....
- e. Were you trained prior to taking your post as a headteacher?
Not at all
If yes, could you please describe the nature of your training?
N/A
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
- f. After you took up your post as a head teacher, what kind of trainings did you receive and in what skills or competencies?
Never got any training in headship. My predecessor did not even handover the school to me. I had to go through the headship process through trial and error.
.....
.....

of both students and teachers.

g. Have you experienced any challenges in relation to your roles as a headteacher?

Yes.

If yes, can you please explain?

- Challenges in handling incompetent and unruly teachers who are unwilling to work hard.
- Discipline of students who indulge in drug and substance abuse.
- Challenges in interpreting some government policies to the community.

h. What do you think can be some of the ways of mitigating the challenges?

- Adequate training of the role of headteachers in the community.
- Professional development that can be organised by the government time and again to equip new headteachers on their new roles so that they confidently handle any case that comes their way.

THANK YOU SO MUCH.

g. Have you experienced any challenges in relation to your roles as a headteacher?
yes

If yes, can you please explain?

- unruly behaviours of students and how to handle them.
- Resistance to change for some other students and teachers malbehaviours

h. What do you think can be some of the ways of mitigating the challenges?

- Consistency in disciplining the offenders.

THANK YOU SO MUCH.