

Identification of groups of secondary school teachers who leave the teaching profession in Malawi

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Abstract

Teacher loss is rampant in Malawian secondary schools, resulting in depletion of skilled and experienced teachers and consequently compromising student learning outcomes. Using a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches, the study gathered data from different practitioners. Analysis of the findings reveals that there are three categories of teachers who tend to voluntarily leave teaching on various grounds. Unqualified teachers who have not received an in-service training to acquire a professional qualification in teaching leave because they are denied access to certain benefits professionally trained teachers get from the education system. Newly recruited teachers leave because of their inability to cope with the school conditions. Teachers who did not initially choose teaching for their college training leave because they are not committed to the profession. This study proposes improvements in teacher training and management to attract and keep quality and trained teachers in the secondary schools. Further research is, however, needed to establish the significance of these issues in the context of Malawi.

Keywords: teacher loss, policies, leadership, in-service

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1. Introduction

Increasing equitable access to quality and relevant secondary education is one of the Government of Malawi's objectives for education. But persistent loss of quality teachers threatens the delivery of quality secondary education. This study illustrates how shortcomings in pre-service or in-service training as well the management of the teachers push certain groups of teachers out of the schools.

One of the missing elements in the effort to improve access to quality secondary education in Malawi is a realistic strategy for teacher supply amidst the persistent loss of skilled and experienced secondary school teachers. The supply of teachers has failed to keep pace with demand, which is aggravated by the growing enrollment of learners in the secondary schools (Teachers' Union of Malawi 2007). This problem could be one of the contributing factors to recurring poor student learning achievements in national examinations. The World Bank (2010) observed that in Malawi academic performance across the board is very weak, particularly in areas of science and technology, because of poor teaching and learning. This can partly be attributed to the shortage of teachers in the schools.

This study investigated the types of secondary schools teachers who tend to leave the teaching profession. Analysis of the findings reveals three groups of teachers that usually leave teaching in large numbers. The study found that teachers who do not have any formal professional training in teaching and have not been exposed to any in-service training to equip them with the necessary pedagogical skills are most likely to leave the teaching profession. Teachers who are newly trained and deployed to the schools stay for a short period of time because they fail to cope with the school conditions for a number of reasons, one of which is the failure of training institutions to fully prepare them for the difficult conditions present in most of the schools, especially in the rural areas. Teachers who did not originally choose teaching for their college training constitute another group of teachers that usually leave the teaching

profession. This is a group of teachers who are re-directed from courses of their first choice to fill vacancies in teacher training programs. Although they become teachers, their commitment to the profession is not guaranteed.

It is evident from these results that most of the issues that push the various groups of teachers out of the secondary schools originate from shortcomings in the both pre-service and in-service teacher training programs. This study suggests the need for strengthening teacher training programs to curb the problems that drive out quality teachers from the schools.

1.1 Background of the study

Malawi is a landlocked country in south-eastern Africa. It is bordered by Mozambique on the east and southwest, by Tanzania on the north and northeast, and by Zambia on the west and northwest. Lake Malawi, one of the largest and deepest lakes in the world, accounts for almost one-fifth of the country's area.

According to the United Nations, Malawi (2014), Malawi remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.418 in 2012, ranking 170 out of 187 countries. Its life expectancy stands at about 54.8 years and the country is marked by high levels of vulnerability including poor nutrition.

The country's GDP was US\$3.5 billion in 2014 with a per capita income of US\$290. About 75 percent of the population of 14.8 million people, which is projected to grow to 30 million by 2030 (National Statistics Office [NSO] 2012) earns less than US\$1.25 per day. Agriculture contributes 30 percent of the GDP and more than 80 percent of export earnings.

Illiteracy levels are high, especially among women. About 40 percent of the population is ages 10 to 29, giving the country a vast human resource potential which can greatly contribute to national accelerated and sustained economic growth and development if this population is well-trained and utilized.

Expenditures for social services such as health and education have been low as a result of poor economic performance. Over the past few years, allocations to education have been below 20 percent of the national budget. In the 2014/15 financial year, the government allocated 17.7 percent of its budget towards the education sector (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MoEST] 2015). Within the education sector, secondary education gets the smallest share of funding. According to the sector's performance report for the 2014/15 financial year, secondary education was allocated 14 percent while basic and higher education got 53 percent and 30 percent, respectively. The remaining 3 percent went to other functions within the sector.

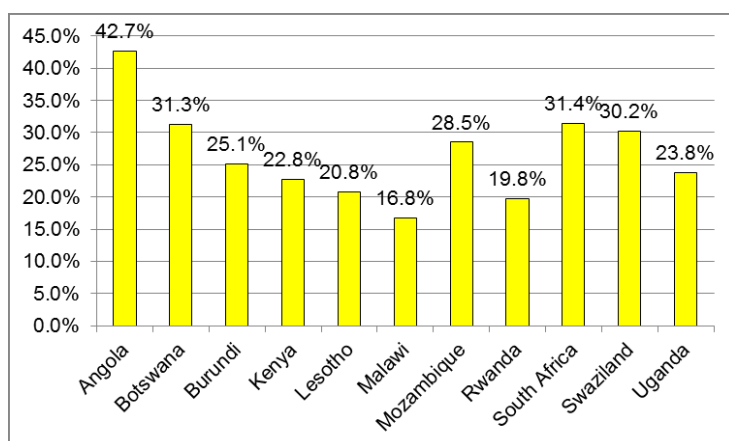


Figure 1. Secondary education as a proportion of recurrent education expenditures for various african countries 2011

Source: MoEST 2012a.

Expenditure on secondary education in Malawi is the lowest among the countries presented in Figure 1. In 2011, Angola allocated the biggest proportion of expenditures, at 42.7 percent, to secondary education while Malawi allocated only 16.8 percent. These financial challenges make it difficult for the government to offer a robust secondary education in the country.

The education sector is managed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) which is responsible for the provision of primary and secondary schooling, and teacher training and continuing professional development. Administratively, the sector is

divided into six education divisions and thirty-four districts. Basic education consists of early childhood development, adult learning, out-of-school youth education and primary education. Primary education runs for eight years and is free. The official entry age is six. Secondary education is offered through conventional secondary schools, community day secondary schools, grants aided (faith-based) secondary schools, open and distance learning centers, and private and designated schools. Enrollment in the secondary education system has been increasing by close to 3 percent every year and the gender parity index, which has also steadily been improving over the past years, reached 0.88 in 2015 (MoEST 2015). A Malawi School Certificate of Education is awarded to learners who successfully complete the four-year cycle of secondary education. This certificate qualifies the graduates for tertiary or any post-secondary training. The length of training for post-secondary education programs varies (UNESCO 2010a). Depending on years of training, the graduate is offered a certificate or diploma, or a bachelor's, master's, or doctorate degree.

Primary school teachers are trained at both private and public Primary Teacher Training Colleges. Secondary school teachers receive their training at institutions of higher learning, which are either public or private. The public pre-service institutions include Mzuzu University, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Domasi College of Education, and University of Malawi's constituent colleges of Polytechnic and Chancellor College. Private institutions that produce secondary school teachers include African Bible College, Catholic University, Adventist University, Nkhoma University, and Livingstonia University. The estimated total output from these institutions was 499 in 2011 (MoEST 2012c). The number of teachers graduating from the various colleges is expected to rise because of an expansion that has taken place in most of these colleges as well as an increase in the number of institutions producing secondary school teachers.

There are various channels through which one enters college for secondary school teacher training in Malawi. Some candidates are directly recruited from among secondary

school graduates. Others enter through an upgrading scheme which caters to unqualified or under-qualified teachers who want to upgrade their qualifications. Under-qualified teachers are those who have a qualification lower than a diploma. These teachers have been receiving upgrading courses at Domasi College of Education through residential and Open and Distance Learning (ODL) program. Unqualified teachers are a group of teachers who possess a general diploma or degree. They become qualified teachers after undergoing a professional in-service training program which awards them a University Certificate of Education (UCE). These unqualified teachers are hired to fill secondary school staffing gaps in subjects that lack enough specialist teachers. Currently, Chancellor College of the University of Malawi and Mzuzu University are implementing this program with funding from the government.

1.2 Shortage of teachers in secondary schools

Despite the growing number of training institutions that produce secondary school teachers, the Education Sector Plan 2013-2018 reports that there is a great shortage of qualified teachers. It is estimated that more than 60 percent of teachers in the secondary schools are unqualified (MoEST 2015). Statistics show that, in 2014, the learner to qualified teacher ratio was 46:1 (MoEST 2013a). This ratio is higher than the ministry's target of 20:1. The ratio has remained high for the past few years as shown in Figure 2.

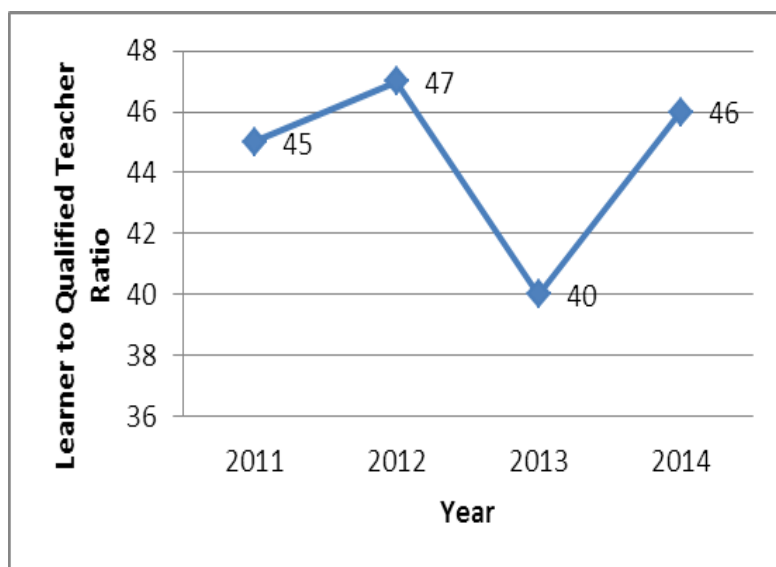


Figure 2. Trend of learner to qualified teacher ratio from 2011 to 2014

Source: MoEST 2011, 2012b, 2013a, and 2014.

Figure 2 reflects the low supply of trained teachers, suggesting that the combined output of the training institutions fails to meet the demand for qualified teachers (Kadzamira 2006). The problem is further aggravated by the government's failure to recruit the required number of teachers due to budgetary limitations (MoEST 2012a). Perennial loss of teachers is another possible explanation for the existing shortage of teachers in schools. Some teachers are said to be lost immediately after they finish their training. It is estimated that only about 10 percent of the newly trained secondary school teachers go on to teach (MoEST 2013b). Delays in deploying teachers to schools after they graduate could be one of the factors contributing to this phenomenon. In some years, newly graduated teachers have not been deployed at all, forcing them to look for alternative employment.

A World Bank study revealed that the loss of secondary school teachers in Malawi in 1996 was at 8 percent. Since then the situation has not improved, as in 2007 it was reported that secondary schools lost about 9 percent of its teachers in one single year (TUM 2007). In contrast, primary schools in Malawi lose only 5 percent of its teachers each year (UNSECO 2010a). More

secondary school than primary school teachers leave teaching because their higher qualifications make them more competitive on the labor market (UNESCO 2010a). The rate at which Malawi loses its secondary school teachers is one of the highest in the sub-Saharan African region. A UNESCO (2010a) study on loss of teachers in sub-Saharan Africa between 2005 and 2007 revealed that Lesotho and Malawi experienced highest losses of secondary school teachers compared to other countries in the region.

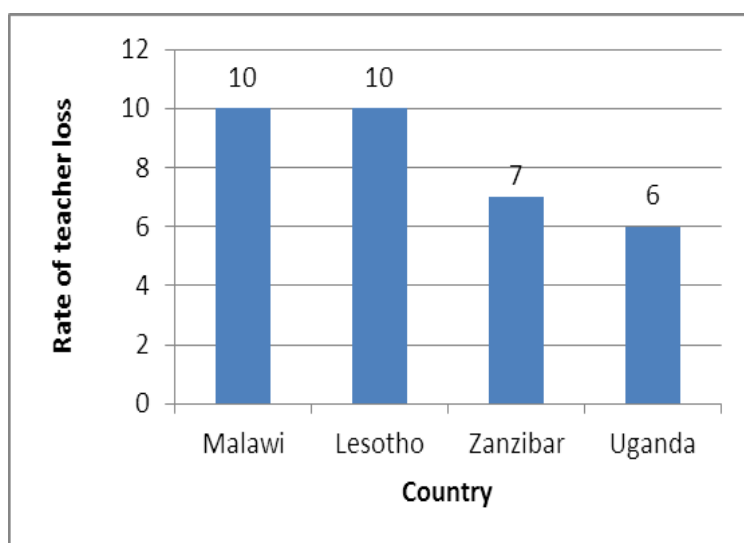


Figure 3. Rate of teacher loss in selected countries

Source: UNESCO 2010a.

Figure 3 compares the rate of teacher loss among some selected countries in 2010, and reveals that Malawi experienced one of the biggest losses of teachers from the secondary schools. The figure shows that Uganda and Zanzibar experienced lower losses among the four countries.

There are several ways through which secondary teachers in Malawi leave the classroom. The notable reasons include resignation, retirement, illness, dismissal, transfer to non-teaching posts, and some other unknown reasons. Statistics from the Malawi's Ministry of Education's annual data books show variations in the number of teachers lost from the secondary schools between 2011 and 2014. Table 1 presents the teachers' losses from secondary schools in Malawi experienced during this period.

Table 1. Number of secondary school teachers lost by reason from 2011 to 2014 in Malawi

Reason	2011	2012	2013	2014
Resigned	252	232	215	359
Transferred to non-teaching post	136	162	140	208
Retired	110	101	104	180
Dismissed	120	79	122	179
Prolonged illness	69	49	80	60
Unknown	176	198	172	148
Total	863	821	833	1134

Source: MoEST 2011, 2012b, 2013a, and 2014.

Table 1 shows that in the 2013/14 academic year alone, a total of 1,134 teachers were lost from the secondary schools. Teacher loss through resignation is a cause for great concern in Malawi, as most secondary school teachers leave for this reason. According to the table, a total of 359 secondary school teachers resigned from teaching in the 2013/14 academic year, constituting 29 percent of all the teachers who left teaching in this particular year. This study was conceived to identify the types of teachers that comprise this group with the purpose of developing tailored solutions to curb the problem of teacher loss in this manner to retain quality and trained teachers in the secondary schools.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate and identify the types of secondary school teachers who voluntarily leave the teaching profession. The findings of the study are intended to inform the government and its development partners on effective strategies to retain well-trained and quality teachers in the secondary schools.

1.4 Research question

To effectively explore the issue under study, the following guiding question was posed: which groups of secondary school teachers voluntarily leave the teaching profession? A supplementary question was: why do they leave?

In the next sections, the report presents a review of related literature that illustrates the conceptual framework of the study, and describes the method that was employed to answer the question and the limitations that were encountered. It then presents a discussion of the results as well as implications for teacher education and management, and finally presents a conclusion of the study.

2. Literature Review

The investigation into the types of teachers who leave the secondary schools started with a review of related literature on studies done in Malawi and elsewhere. The review looks at different aspects such as the importance of a teacher, global perspectives on teacher loss, factors that push teachers out of the teaching profession, and the effects of teacher loss. The review provides an understanding of some of the reasons why teachers leave teaching and the effect of the teachers' departure on the school system. The review, however, starts with a general understanding of the importance of a teacher.

2.1 Importance of a teacher

The central importance of teachers in ensuring quality education is widely acknowledged (UNESCO 2010a, 1). The presence of a teacher in a school serves several purposes. A teacher motivates a learner to go to school and at the same time facilitates the learner's learning. Kayuni and Tambulasi (2005), in their study on teacher turnover in Malawi, attested to the fact that a teacher is an essential resource for facilitation of learning that increases a learner's educational

achievement. Although a teacher is not the only resource a learner requires to achieve her/his learning goals, it is argued that a teacher has desirable effects on learning because unlike textbooks, computers, or facilities, teachers have preferences about how to teach, what to teach, when to teach, and where to teach (Lankford, Loeb and Wyckoff 2002). A teacher has the ability to vary and manipulate the learning process in response to the prevailing classroom conditions and learners' needs.

Apart from promoting learning, a teacher is also known to increase learners' access to education. Learners would rather go to schools where they are sure they will learn because there is a teacher. This impact of a teacher was observed by Ghuman and Lloyd (2010) in rural Pakistan where the presence of a teacher was seen to attract children to school. The study revealed that children were willing to enroll in a school that had a teacher. Schools that do not have teachers might find it difficult to attract children. Parents would not be willing to send their child to a school where they know there is no teacher and where learning will not take place.

2.2 Trends in teacher loss

Despite the importance of a teacher, many school systems are losing this resource. Although it is a global challenge, countries in sub-Saharan Africa experience the worst losses (UNESCO 2010b). This is attributed to economic challenges prevalent in this region. Teachers leave for various reasons. However, teacher loss due to transfer from one school to another, retirement, or ill health is unavoidable (See, Gorard and White 2004). This happens naturally. UNESCO's study on teacher attrition in sub-Saharan Africa observed that these causes account for fewer teacher losses (UNESCO 2010a). It is resignation that is considered a problem because in many countries this is the main cause for teachers' departures from the teaching profession. Table 2 shows a comparison between teachers who left due to resignation, retirement, or death in selected African countries.

Table 2. Percentage of Teachers who left teaching due to resignation, retirement, or death in selected African countries

Country	Retirement	Death	Resignation
Malawi (2006)	6	15	29
Uganda (2005)	6	10	34
Zambia (2005)	1	4.5	51

Source: UNESCO 2010a.

As shown in Table 2, in Malawi, Uganda, and Zambia, resignation is the greatest reason for teacher loss. Boyd et al. (2009) observed that teachers who resign are mostly those who are capable and can easily find alternative jobs outside teaching. They are generally trained teachers with skill and expertise to teach.

2.3 Factors that push secondary school teachers out of teaching

There are a number of factors that push teachers out of the teaching profession. Kadzamira (2006, 16) in a study that investigated factors that motivate and incentive teachers in Malawi, observed that, compared to other employment categories, “teachers are underpaid and affects their motivation and morale.” This problem may not be specific to Malawi alone. It is a general problem in most sub-Saharan African countries. Bennel and Akyeampong (2007), in their study on teacher motivation in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, noted that teachers in Ghana engaged in moonlighting to supplement their income. However, in other contexts, mainly in developed countries, where salaries are less of a concern, teacher loss is still an issue because of other factors (Burk et al. 2013). In these places, there are other factors that influence teachers to leave the profession. For example, Elfers, Plecki and Knapp (2006) found that in the United States of America, salary is “not a factor” when a teacher makes a decision to leave teaching. This does not mean that teachers do not need money. Teachers need money, but there are several factors that

add to the frustration of being a teacher. Adoniou (2013) in his study on teacher attrition in Australia found that it is not necessarily money that pushes teachers out of the profession since higher pay has not helped to improve teacher retention. They discovered that despite the increased pay, teachers still left due to other factors.

Riggs (2013), in her study of why teachers quit teaching, learned that there are a number of factors that push teachers out of the profession in the American schools, for example, family or personal reasons. According to Hancock and Scherff (2010), these factors are not found only in the American schools, but are common across diverse teaching contexts. Other factors such as teacher preparation experiences and pathways into teaching have an effect on teacher retention in the American schools (Boyd et al. 2009). In this study, teachers who had more years of training were professionally grounded and tended to persist in the schools unlike those who went through shorter periods of training.

Other studies have found that some teachers leave the school because of their inability to cope with the demands and conditions they face in the teaching profession. Tiplic, Brandmo and Elstad (2015), in their study which investigated the antecedents of teacher loss in Norway, identified organizational and contextual factors as having a significant impact on teacher turnover. They found that lack of teaching materials was one of the causes of a teacher's decision to leave teaching. According to their study, teachers become frustrated when a lack of materials inhibits the positive results of their teaching. As a result, some of them leave teaching for an alternative employment (Boyd et al. 2009). UNESCO (2010a) observed that in sub-Saharan Africa, qualified teachers have higher opportunities for alternative employment. Because of this advantage, these teachers leave in larger numbers compared to other teachers.

2.4 Categories of teachers who leave teaching

Different studies have identified the different types of teachers who leave teaching. Newly recruited teachers form one such group, who leave teaching in the early years of their career.

Hancock and Scherff (2010) observed that in the United States, there is a tendency for teachers to leave the profession within the first five years of service. The International Institute for Educational Planning (2006, 28) found that “between 30 and 50 percent of new teachers in the United States leave teaching within the first five years.” Tiplic, Brandmo, and Elstad (2015) found that in Norway, teachers tend to leave within the first five years of their teaching as well. They noted that 33 percent of teachers who joined teaching in 2006 left the profession within five years of becoming fully qualified. The longer serving teachers might have developed resilience and become used to the school conditions.

A World Bank (2004) study noted that teachers in locations where living conditions are poor, teachers who teach subjects that are in demand in other jobs, and higher qualified teachers do not stay in the schools. Hancock and Scherff (2010) observed that in the United States, teachers who teach in minority and poor schools leave early. Djonko-Moore (2015, 3) observed that American schools that are high poverty and racially segregated (HPRS) experience high levels of teachers loss.

2.5 Effects of teacher loss

There are notable effects of teacher loss on the school system. Instability of staff resulting from high turnover is one of them. It is estimated that, globally, turnover in teaching is about four percent higher than in other professions (Riggs 2013). Teacher loss also entails the depletion of expertise and has serious cost implications (Tiplic, Brandmo and Elstad 2015). Education systems are forced to divert their limited resources to recruiting and training new teachers. The loss of teachers is harmful and costly for resource-constrained settings (Djonko-Moore 2015). Due to their limited resources and the high cost of training new teachers, many countries struggle to replace the lost teachers. This problem is evident in Malawi where it is found that “schools do not have enough teachers despite that every year new teachers are produced and deployed” (Kayuni

and Tambulasi 2005, 94). This also explains why the demand for qualified teachers in this country is an endless problem (TUM 2007).

In their study on teacher loss in Ghana, Bennel and Akyeampong (2007, 68) found that because of this problem, schools tend to be chronically under-staffed, creating high vacancy rates. In most cases, this results in a shortage of trained teachers, forcing many school systems to lower teacher standards to fill teaching openings (Fredricksen and Fossberg 2014). This tendency leads to high levels of under qualified teachers consequently lowering student performance (Ingersoll and May 2012). World Bank (2004, 23) reports that the “shortage of qualified teachers results in the use of large numbers of unqualified teachers in schools throughout sub-Saharan Africa.” The study further noted that in some countries such as Zimbabwe, half of the teachers are unqualified, while in Uganda only 28 percent are qualified. In Malawi, “most of the teachers in the community day secondary schools are former primary school teachers and therefore experience difficulty in teaching secondary school curricula content” (Milner et al. 2007).

The shortage of teachers also results in great inefficiencies in the performance of the schools (World Bank 2004). Djonko-Moore (2015, 18) contends that, the “shortage of teachers undermines efforts to provide a rigorous education to learners.” Elfers, Plecki, and Knapp (2006) add that it reduces size of the teaching force which consequently results in a high ratio of learners to teachers. As class sizes increase, “time on task” for learners decreases (Urwick and Kisa 2013). This phenomenon also increases the workload of the remaining teachers (Bennel and Akyeampong 2007). This situation makes it difficult for a teacher to give adequate attention and provide the necessary support to each individual learner. As a result, the contact period between a teacher and a learner becomes minimal. World Bank (2004) noted that teaching contact hours in some Sub-Saharan African countries are very low by international standards. This lack of time for teachers makes it difficult for them to effectively plan and deliver their lessons.

2.6 Rationale

The rate at which teachers leave the secondary schools in Malawi is challenging considering the difficulty to replace them. The Malawi Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP II), running from 2013 to 2018, is silent on strategies to address the problem of teacher loss in the secondary schools. This shortcoming could be the result of a lack of information that could be used to address specific issues leading to the loss of the teachers. This study was, therefore, conceived to close this information gap and assist policy- and decision-makers in making informed decisions based on actual evidence to effectively retain quality teachers in the secondary schools. This study examined the feelings, attitudes, and concerns of teachers by exploring the experiences of serving and former teachers as well teacher trainers and managers to provide possible suggestions aimed at increasing the retention of trained teachers in the schools.

Furthermore, teacher issues need to be handled holistically throughout their career path. In Malawi, no study has explored the experiences of new, serving, and former teachers to understand the differences in their professional needs. This study proposes a holistic approach to addressing teacher-related problems by exploring the retention challenges affecting different groups of teachers.

3. Methodology

This section describes the methodological processes that were used to undertake the study, including the study design, sampling procedure and the sample size, tools used, procedure for collecting the data, data analysis, and report writing. Each of these elements is described in detail in the following paragraphs:

3.1 Study Design

The study mainly employed a qualitative approach but was supplemented by a small amount of statistical presentation. Because of the need to conduct a detailed investigation into the issues that lead to some teachers' decision to leave the teaching profession, this design was found most suitable, as it offers the flexibility that resulted in an in-depth exploration of the teachers to identify which teachers leave and for what reason. However, due to the need for establishing measurements of the issues that were explored, a quantitative analysis was added to the process to build on the qualitative design (Creswell 2003). This analysis was used as a supplementary approach to deepen the exploration and obtain a comprehensive understanding of the issues in question. The quantitative component of the study provides a statistical perspective which gives a measurable understanding of the issues.

This study uses ethnographic methods to bring a clear understanding of the issues within the education system that influence specific secondary school teachers to leave. Gall, Borg and Gall (2003, 607) mention that "ethnography involves first-hand, intensive study of the features of a given culture and the patterns in those features." It helps in knowing the cultural patterns, behaviors, and perspectives of a specific group or groups of people (Gay and Airasian 2003). In this study, this leads to a better understanding of reasons behind the decisions the different groups of secondary school teachers make to leave the teaching profession.

3.2 Sampling and sample size

The study targeted serving and former secondary school teachers, deans of faculty of education and student teachers from the university campuses, and education divisional managers. The sampling of teachers was both purposive and snowballing. It was purposive in the sense that only those that were deemed to possess the data relevant for the study were earmarked for participation. This approach was applied mainly to the participants other than the former

teachers, who were sampled using a snowballing process as it was not possible to identify them in advance. Snowball sampling (Goodman 1961) was used to select former teachers in that each former teacher identified fellow former teachers until the number of participants grew.

The study targeted serving and ex-teachers who had a first degree in any field. The choice of this group of teachers was based on an understanding that there are motivational differences between degree and diploma holders and between qualified and unqualified teachers (Kadzamira 2006). The serving teachers came from both rural and urban schools. The study targeted those who had served for at least five years to appreciate their motivation for staying in the schools. The student teachers were those who were studying for their first degree in education in the university colleges that participated in the study. The choice of the participating student teachers was based on their availability because during the time of the study some of them were sitting for their end of semester examinations.

The sample of serving teachers was drawn from all the six administrative education divisions, namely: South West, Shire Highlands, South East, Central West, Central East, and Northern Division. This was done to ensure that the views of teachers in different settings were captured and incorporated in the study. The education division managers are administrative officers who manage these divisions. They were chosen to participate in this study because of their responsibilities managing secondary school teachers. They were, therefore, deemed a vital source of information regarding the teachers. In total, a sample of 79 participants was involved as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Sample size

Category of Participants	Number		
	Male	Female	Total
Former teachers	15	4	19
Serving teachers	31	9	40
Deans of Education	4	0	4
Student teachers	5	6	11
Education Divisional Managers	4	1	5
Total	59	20	79

Source: Authors.

3.3 Tools for data collection

A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect qualitative data from the participants. The interviews were done with the deans of faculty of education, student teachers, divisional managers, and serving and former teachers. These guides were semi-structured to ensure consistency in exploring the issues from the perspectives of different participants. The flexible nature of the guide allowed for a varied interview process in view of the different settings and circumstances under which the participants were found. In addition, a document analysis guide was designed for collecting and capturing secondary data from the documents that were reviewed. The reason for using a guide was to standardize the manner in which data from the various documents was captured. A tabulated form was designed and used for collecting statistical data about serving teachers at a divisional level. This statistical data was needed to provide an understanding on the magnitude of the issues uncovered by the study.

3.4 Data collection procedure

The data collection process started with piloting of the tools to ensure that they were valid and reliable enough to produce the quality of data that was needed for the study. This piloting was done with selected teachers in Shire Highlands Education Division, located in the southern part of Malawi, where the actual data collection activity was scheduled to start from. This piloting activity helped to identify and rectify potentially problematic areas in the tools and the data collection process itself.

The participants were asked in advance about their availability and to provide their consent to participate in the study. The study team worked in pairs to conduct face-to-face interviews using the provided guides. One member of the team was a main interviewer and the other member hand-recorded the interview proceedings. Each interview session took about one hour. The form for collecting statistical data from the Deans of Education and the Education Division Managers was hand delivered and collected in person by the study team members themselves. This approach resulted in a 100 percent response rate.

3.5 Data analysis and report writing

All the issues revealed through the various data collection activities were put together as a package of findings for the study. Main issues from the findings were identified through the process of categorizing the data into groups basing on their similarity or likeness (Mtika and Gates 2010). The themes generated from this process were used to create headings and subheadings for the report. Logical chains of evidence were generated from common themes to create stories around the main issues. The quantitative data was captured in a computer using Microsoft Excel from which simple statistical analyses such as percentage, mean, and summation were extracted.

3.6 Limitations of the study

The snowballing approach to identify participants was used because there was no reliable database of teachers who had already left the schools or were still serving. The snowballing process made it difficult to pre-determine and control the sample characteristics and size. Poor record keeping on teachers who leave the teaching profession posed a big challenge to classify such teachers with regard to their qualifications, years of service, subject areas, sex, and age.

4. Findings

Analysis of the findings reveals that there are three groups of teachers who usually quit teaching. One of the groups is comprised of teachers who have a general degree qualification but have not received any professional in-service training to award them a teaching qualification. As a result, these teachers work without the teaching qualification that would grant them recognition by the system and the benefits of being a teacher. This lack of in-service training for general degree teachers is mainly due to an inefficient in-service training program caused by poor implementation arrangements and low funding.

New recruits are another group of teachers that leave teaching in large numbers. These teachers face the challenge of coping with demanding conditions in the schools. One of the elements contributing to this challenge is their college training curriculum, which does not adequately prepare them for the conditions and needs of the schools. Delayed deployment of the teachers to the schools adds to the problem; some teachers end up accepting alternative employment while waiting to be deployed to a school.

Finally, teachers who initially did not choose teaching for their college training do not stay long in the profession. Since these teachers originally did not intend to pursue teaching, their commitment to the profession is not guaranteed. As a result, they are easily demotivated by practices they are not in favor of.

The loss of teachers can be illustrated by a system that receives and loses teachers before they are engaged and while they are already serving. This process, therefore, denies the school system a full staff of qualified teachers, as shown in Figure 4.

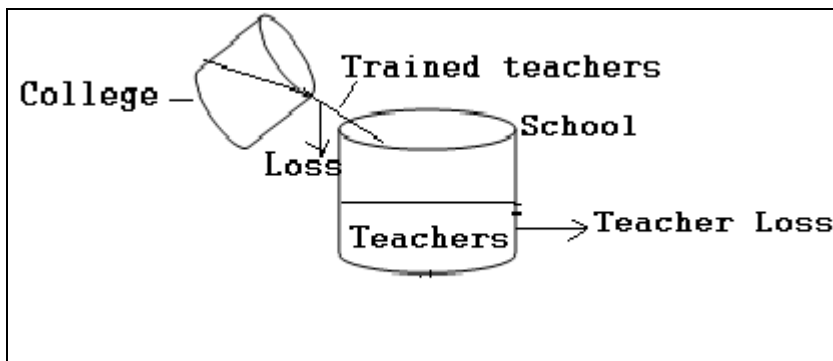


Figure 4. An illustration of teacher flow

Source: Authors.

Figure 4 is an illustration of the dynamics that unfold for teachers between college where they are trained and the school where they are deployed. The colleges provide the schools with trained teachers. However, some of the newly trained teachers drop out between the college and the school. Those who report at the school to take up the teaching posts either stay or leave depending on their ability to adapt to school conditions. The size of the trained teaching force depends on the balance between those who leave and those who are newly recruited. The study investigated which types of teachers comprise those that leave the school system either before they start teaching or after they already reported to the school.

In the next paragraphs, the report presents and discusses each of these findings in detail by examining the reasons each group of teachers leave teaching. This discussion leads into a further presentation on proposed suggestions to attract trained teachers and keep them in the schools.

4.1 Teachers without a professional training usually leave teaching

Apart from qualified teachers, the schools also receive teachers who do not have a teaching qualification. These teachers are engaged to teach subjects that lack specialist teachers. Because they are not professionally trained, these teachers do not possess the necessary pedagogical skills required for effective teaching. Normally, they are required to undergo a professional in-service teacher training once they are recruited and deployed to the school in designated institutions of higher learning where they would be awarded a University Certificate of Education (UCE). The in-service program targets teachers with a minimum qualification of a diploma. This in-service program is being implemented by the University of Malawi and Mzuzu University. The program covers residential training in educational foundation courses and practicum in a selected secondary school for a hands-on experience.

The study compiled data on the status of teachers by their qualifications to provide a clear picture of the number of teachers who are unqualified compared with those who are qualified. This information gives an idea about how the in-service program has been performing in providing training to the unqualified teachers.

Table 4. Total number of teachers and their qualifications from 2011 to 2014

Qualification	2011	2012	2013	2014
General Degree	741	677	838	917
General Diploma	571	809	785	1,074
UCE	155	190	184	320
Diploma in Education	2,892	3,271	3,587	4,548
Bachelor of Education Degree	1,864	2,196	2,490	3,031
Other	3,483	3,339	3,445	3,559
Total	9,706	10,482	11,329	13,449

Source: MoEST 2014.

The category of “other” is comprised of teachers who have a lesser qualification than a diploma. These include a Malawi School Certificate of Education, Junior Certificate of Education, and Primary School Leaving Certificate. According to Table 4, in 2014, there were 1,991 teachers without a teaching qualification (917 diploma plus 1,074 degree holders). In the same year, only 320 teachers had a UCE. According to this table, the number of teachers with a UCE is minimal compared to the number of teachers with a general degree or diploma. Figure 5 shows lower percentages of teachers with a UCE over the three years prior to 2014.

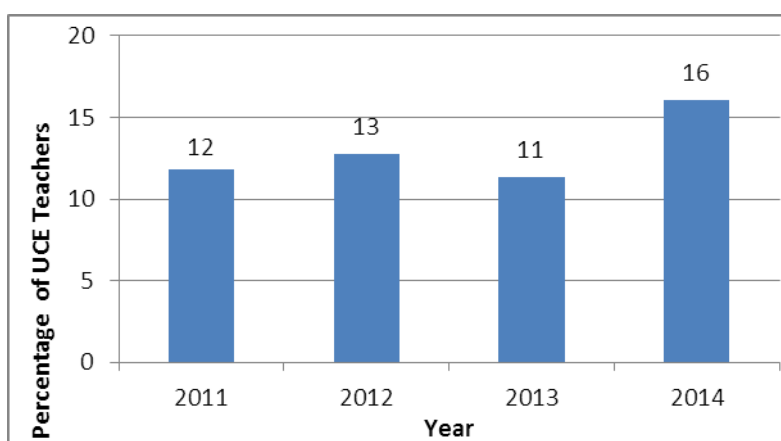


Figure 5. Percentage of teachers with UCE: 2011-2014

Source: MoEST 2011, 2012b, 2013a, and 2014.

According to Figure 5, out of all the unqualified teachers, only 12 percent in 2011, 13 percent in 2012, 11 percent in 2013, and 16 percent in 2014 received in-service training and were awarded a UCE. These percentages are very small relative to the number of teachers who need the in-service professional training.

The study learned that teachers who do not have a teaching qualification frequently quit teaching. This understanding is based on the analysis of the number of unqualified teachers who left teaching. The study found that majority of former teachers had a general degree and did not receive an in-service training to qualify them as teachers. Table 5 shows the qualification of the teachers who participated in the study and their qualification status at the time of the study.

Table 5. Teachers by their qualification

Qualification of Teachers	Status of the teacher		
	Former teachers	Serving teachers	Total
General Master's Degree	-	-	-
General Bachelor's Degree	11	9	20
General Diploma	-	1	1
UCE	-	4	4
Bachelor of Education (B. Ed)	6	24	30
Diploma in Education (Dip. Ed)	2	2	4
Total	19	40	59

Source: Authors.

As shown in Table 5, out of the 19 former teachers, 11 were general degree holders, 6 had a bachelor of education degree, and 2 had a diploma in education. This figure represents 58 percent, revealing that unqualified teachers constitute the largest group of teachers who left teaching. This situation is a cause for concern because these teachers are specifically hired to take up hard to fill teaching positions. Letting them leave teaching defeats the purpose for which they are hired and perpetuates the challenge of staffing gap in the schools. In view of the necessity to have these teachers in the schools, the study investigated why they leave.

4.1.1 Why untrained unqualified teachers leave teaching

The study found that the teachers who do not have a professional teaching qualification face multiple challenges which force them out of the teaching profession. One of them is a lack of a sense of belonging to the system. According to one of the Education Divisional Managers (EDM), "The unqualified general diploma or degree holders are most likely to leave teaching because they do not feel they are part of the system." Because they are not qualified teachers, they do not enjoy the same privileges as other qualified teachers. Some of the privileges the

system offers to qualified teachers include access to certain benefits such as promotions, loans, continuous professional development, and other services. Agreeing with this challenge, one of the former teachers testified that, “I wanted to get a loan to pay for my house rentals but I was told that I did not qualify for it because I am a general degree holder.” The feeling that they do not belong to the system frustrates these teacher and they leave whenever another employment opportunity arises. Since these individuals are not professional teachers, they might have joined teaching just to secure a job. Their commitment to the profession is limited because they are not professionally trained and therefore not fully equipped for the challenges that surround the teaching profession.

However, considering the importance of the unqualified teachers, the study investigated why they are not provided with training in the necessary the professional skills. The study identified some challenges that render the in-service training program inefficient to train all the unqualified teachers. Some of them are presented in the next section.

4.1.2 Challenges the in-service training programme faces

The inefficiencies that surround the in-service training program are caused by the limited funding it receives for its activities. Use of unrealistic implementation arrangements increases the pressure on the already constrained resources. Each of these shortcomings is discussed in detail in the next paragraphs starting with inadequate funding for the program.

4.1.2.1 Inadequate funding for the in-service training programme

Since these unqualified teachers are engaged without initial formal professional training in teaching, it is important to give them an in-service training to provide them with the necessary professional ethics and skills to deliver lessons with effectiveness and confidence. Once they become qualified teachers, they also gain the privileges afforded to teacher. Unfortunately the current state of the in-service program has made it difficult for unqualified teachers to get access to the program activities. The study found that one of the major causes of this problem is

insufficient financial resources the training institutions receive from the government to run this program. One of the Deans of Education complained that “the ministry is not allocating enough funds to this in-service training program. Just imagine, last year they gave us only 300,000 Malawi Kwacha to train 20 teachers” (MK300,000 is equivalent to US\$400 based on US\$1= MK750 as of March 2016). According to the training institutions, this amount is not sufficient to cover all the expenses required to put all the unqualified teachers on the in-service training program.

4.1.2.2 Use of poor and exorbitant program implementation arrangements

Despite the financial constraints the program experiences, the study learned that some of the institutions exert more pressure on the already limited resources by following exorbitant implementation arrangements in carrying out in-service training activities. What makes the training more expensive is that during field training, the institutions deploy the teachers to schools which are very far. For example, Mzuzu University which is located in the northern part of Malawi sends an unqualified teacher who is on in-service training to a school in the southern part of the country. Chancellor College which is located in the south of the country assigns its in-service trainees to a school in the north. In the end, the training institutions complain of high transport expenses and inadequate field allowances for the lecturers who supervise the teachers. Because of the long distances from the colleges to the schools, supervision visits are not frequently done resulting in inadequate assistance to the teachers, which consequently compromises the quality of their training.

The study observed that this practice is too expensive and unsustainable for a country with constrained resources. The end result is that the finances become too constrained to allow for a larger number of unqualified teachers to access the in-service training.

One possible solution for addressing this problem is applying cost-effective arrangements by limiting the distance between the training institutions and the schools where the in-service trainees undertake their field training. This approach can increase the coverage of

the teachers and allow more teachers be put in the program. For example, Mzuzu University should train teachers within the northern region and part of the central region schools. Chancellor College should focus on the southern region and part of the central region schools. This arrangement would cut costs and possibly allow more teachers participate in the program. If this happens, all the teachers who do not have a professional training will be given a chance to attend the program and acquire the relevant pedagogical skills.

Shortened distances between the training institutions and the school where the in-service trainees are placed would also increase the frequency of supervision by the lecturers. This approach would inevitably improve the quality of the trained teachers and make them effective and productive enough to enjoy their work.

4.2. Newly recruited teachers leave teaching early

Every year, the secondary schools experience a shortage of teachers due to the impact of teacher loss and increases in enrolment. To close the staffing gap that is created by these forces, the government recruits teachers who have graduated from various secondary school teacher training institutions. These new teachers are deployed to division offices where they are further allocated to different schools depending on the schools' teacher needs. The study found that some of these newly deployed teachers do not report at the schools and some of those who report do not stay long in the school. Analysis of the findings reveals that the former teachers had served for an average of five years.

Further analysis of the findings shows that the average age of the former teachers was 31. This result suggests that some teachers leave the profession early in their careers. The study explored the reasons why these newly recruited graduate teachers leave teaching early, as this phenomenon deprives the schools of experienced teachers required for effective teaching and learning. As such, the system works with inexperienced teachers most of the time.

4.2.1 Forces behind new recruits' early departure from teaching

An investigation into the forces behind the early departure of the newly recruited teachers revealed that most of these teachers are not able to cope with the hard conditions in the schools. Most secondary schools in Malawi are located in rural areas where conditions are tough due to absence of basic social amenities. In view of this challenge, the teachers' training is supposed to adequately equip them for the dire conditions found in most of the schools. However, the behavior of the newly recruited teachers seems to suggest that there is lack of interface between training and the demands in the schools.

While in college, irrespective of their mode of entry into teacher training, the student teachers are supposed to undergo a series of knowledge and experience gathering processes through in-college instruction by their college instructors and a practical in an actual secondary school. This process is intended to give the student teachers a hands-on experience of realities in the schools while completing training. The brief period in which these student teachers interact with the school is intended to introduce them to what they would expect when they get fully engaged in teaching in the secondary schools after they graduate from college. The study, however, found that the training which the teachers are exposed to falls short of this experience due to a number of factors, one of which is the training's inability to respond to the conditions in the schools.

New teachers who are not fully equipped to face the hard conditions found in most schools are generally shocked when they first enter the classroom, finding the schools to be a new world where they encounter strange things. Because of this experience, they find it difficult to come to terms with realities on the ground. Some of them eventually drop out for that reason. One of the former teachers said, "I thought teaching is good but what happens is something I did not expect." Such teachers are the ones who, if chances availed, would not hesitate to leave the classroom. The younger ones are most affected because they are not mature enough to withstand difficult environments. They are not psychologically prepared to face hard conditions, as one of

the former teachers indicated, “They sent me to a rural school but there was no life there. Look, I am young.” The message here is that some young teachers are not happy about being posted to a rural school because they associate rural schools with a dull life. It is difficult to expect such individuals to continue with teaching if their personal and professional needs and demands are not satisfied in the schools.

The importance of teacher training should be seen in how the teachers respond to the conditions in the schools. Teacher training programs should be aware that majority of the schools are in rural areas where basic facilities as well as resources for teaching and learning are lacking. Changing the way teachers are trained is therefore necessary. The ultimate goal of all the teacher training institutions should be to prepare teachers to teach in Malawi secondary schools. This is to ensure that the teacher training, both pre-service and in-service, corresponds to the needs and conditions of the schools. Teachers should not find schools to be strange places. They should be ready to teach in any school regardless of its location and condition, which would limit the departures of trained new and young teachers from the schools. The current situation is worrisome because the schools need teachers who stay in their positions and gather necessary expertise and experience. In view of this need the study tried to explore the reasons behind the mismatch between teacher training and the conditions in the schools.

The study found that there two major issues that cause the disconnect between teacher training and the conditions in the schools. These are: (1) the field component of the teachers’ training is not adequately completed due to resource constraints faced by the training institutions, and (2) field training is practiced in good and well-resourced secondary schools.

4.2.1.1 Field training is not done to the full

The study noted that the field experience during college training was not comprehensively covered due to resource limitations. One student teacher said that “our department does not have enough resources. We borrow vehicles for field practice from other departments.” Because of this limitation, the student teachers felt that their field training was not done to the full capacity

as they would have required if they had all the necessary resources. The full field-based experience could have given them enough knowledge and understanding of realities in the schools which they were going to face after training.

4.2.1.2 Field training is practiced in good and well-resourced secondary schools

The shortcoming in the teachers' training is manifested in the teachers' inability to cope with the scarcity of teaching and learning resources which is a common experience in the secondary schools of Malawi. One of the ex-teachers said, "It was hard to teach because there were no materials in the school. I could not achieve what I planned as a result of this challenge." This scarcity of materials frustrated some of the teachers as they were unable to perform planned class activities.

It is therefore important to note that the early days of teaching are very important in the life of a teacher. It is this period that determines whether the teacher will stay in the profession or not. Teachers need to be prepared for the shocks they will face when they enter the classroom for the first time. Orientation for these new recruits before they enter the classroom is another possible alternative for sensitizing them to the prevailing school conditions; government procedures, rules, regulations and policies; teaching ethics; and teachers' code of conduct. Knowledge about these facts would effectively prepare the new teachers for the realities of teaching.

4.3. Teachers whose first choice for college training was not teaching do not stay long in the profession

Some teachers join teaching because of their personal interest in the profession. Others join because of a lack of alternative jobs. Teachers with an in-born interest in teaching are those who would consider the profession to be their first choice career when they apply for college training. Teachers who do not take teaching as their first choice career may not apply for teacher training. Both groups of teachers exist in the schools. The study analyzed the proportion of serving,

student and former teachers who did not have teaching as their first choice program for college training. Table 6 shows the detail of the finding.

Table 6. Percentage of teachers who did not choose teaching (n = 70)

Status of the teachers	Total number of teachers	Teachers who did not choose teaching	Percentage
Serving teachers	40	10	25%
Former teachers	19	13	68%
Student teachers	11	6	55%
Total	70	29	41%

Source: Authors.

Table 6 shows that 41 percent of the teachers did not choose teaching when they applied for college training. Because most applicants for college training do not choose teaching, there are always vacancies in teacher training programs. In order to fill the vacancies, the colleges re-direct some of the applicants from other courses to the faculty of education.

4.4 Why they leave teaching

Although the practice of re-directing college candidates into teacher training programs helps to fill the student gap in the faculties of education of the institutions, it does not guarantee that these candidates will be committed to the profession. The study explored the difference in behavior between these groups of teachers with regard to retention in the profession. It was learned that as soon as they register for the teaching courses, “some of them, ranging from 20 to 30 percent, immediately request for a transfer from teaching to other courses,” said one Dean of Education. A student teacher at one of the colleges revealed that, “If given a chance all the students would leave the faculty of education.” This behavior is a clear indication that these re-directed student teachers have no interest in the teaching profession. They accepted the

teacher training offer because, “they just wanted to access college training,” said one Education Division Manager.

The lack of commitment to the teaching profession was the main reason for leaving teaching among the former teachers who did not initially choose teaching for their college training. Table 6 shows that 68 percent of these former teachers did not choose teaching. An investigation among the serving teachers who did not choose teaching as their first choice career revealed that 38 percent of them had intentions to leave teaching for employment in a different field. Although some of these serving teachers expressed reluctance to leave teaching, this was only out of consideration for the volume of terminal benefits they had already accumulated over the years their service. Some of them would not want to lose those benefits as one of them said, “I do not think leaving would be the best option considering the years I have already served. I will just wait to finish the remaining years and go away with my terminal benefits package.” This may mean that teachers who have served longer than the average five years would find it difficult to leave teaching for fear of losing their accumulated benefits. Their decision to stay in the profession is of great benefit to the schools because of the teaching experience they have.

The study tried to find out how many of the former teachers who did not originally take teaching as their first choice career for life intended to return to teaching. It was found that only 4 out of the 19 former teachers (21 percent) expressed an intention to return to teaching. Some of them felt the need to return to teaching because of the worse work conditions they faced in their new employment. They could feel that they were better off as teachers, as one of them said, “I do not see job security in what I am doing.” Their intention to return to teaching may not be regarded as a genuine one because it was expressed only after they failed to satisfy another interest. Their commitment as teachers remains questionable because what they did not originally like about the profession may not have changed.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that a teacher training program is the main predictor for teacher adaptability to the demanding school environment. Teachers who are well prepared to face the school conditions are able to survive unlike those who do not have the necessary traits. The study identified three categories of teachers who have a tendency to leave teaching: unqualified teachers who do not have a teaching qualification, newly recruited teachers, and teachers who were re-directed from courses of their choice for college training. Without addressing the challenges each of these groups of teachers face, it would be difficult to retain them in the schools. This discussion suggests possible solutions to deal with the challenges each of these groups encounters with the purpose of increasing their retention in the schools.

First, unqualified trained teachers, though they do not possess a teacher training qualification, are an important presence in the schools because they take up teaching posts in locations and subjects which are hard to fill because of a lack of trained specialist teachers. Their greatest need is professional training to qualify them as teachers. It is upon attaining the teaching qualification that their confidence in teaching is boosted enough for them to start enjoying teaching. Again, knowing that only qualified teachers access the rights and privileges of a teacher, these unqualified teachers would also be able to access such benefits once they are professionally recognized. In the end they would develop a sense of belonging and feel that they are part of the profession.

The study found that the inefficiency of the in-service training program makes it difficult to train all the eligible unqualified teachers. To address this problem, the government and the university campuses that implement this program need to devise a policy that will ensure that every newly recruited unqualified teacher should undergo training before they start teaching. In the case of unqualified teachers who are already serving, the government in collaboration with the universities needs to launch an accelerated program to train all them in a

short period of time. Once the backlog of unqualified teachers is cleared, there is a chance that loss of teachers from this category can be minimized.

Secondly, newly recruited teachers require special attention, as they are fresh from college and in most cases, are young and inexperienced. These teachers could also fall into the other categories of teachers. Their early departure from the system is of great concern because they leave before they gain the experience the schools need for improved learning outcomes. Because most schools are located in rural areas where basic facilities and social amenities are lacking, these young graduate teachers refuse to take up teaching posts in such places. Their failure to cope with the tough conditions they face in the schools is a result of their unpreparedness for such settings. This could mean that their curriculum does not adequately address the demands of the school environment. It is, therefore, important to consider the curriculum these teachers go through to make it responsive enough to the realities in the schools. As noted by Vegas and Ganimian (2013, 2), “Addressing challenges in one stage of the teacher pipeline can make it easier to tackle the challenges in subsequent stages of their career path.” The teacher training curriculum should be cognizant of the fact that the school environment is not stable. There are always new developments that happen in the schools requiring the curriculum to adjust accordingly for the teachers to be relevant to the schools.

Another approach to tackle the problem of early departure from the schools is to make the schools more attractive by providing some basic facilities such as a decent house. Although it is difficult to provide all the basic facilities the new teachers would require, it is still important to think of the necessity of a good house for a new teacher. Where possible, any new development work should consider the provision of houses for rural secondary schools to attract young and new teachers to such schools.

Lack of support from the professional community is seen as another of the possible reasons for the new teachers' lack of resilience. A possible strategy to address this is to introduce the concept of mentorship in all schools where new teachers are posted. Experienced

teachers are a rich resource who can be used to provide support to new teachers for them to acquire the necessary skills needed to adapt to the school conditions. College lecturers could also serve as a means to support the new teachers in their first years of field work. The college lecturers' presence during this period is a source of inspiration and encouragement for the new teachers. Their interaction would serve as means to provide feedback to the colleges on how their training process corresponds to real life situations prevalent in the schools. This relationship would in the end strengthen the college training experience to prepare teachers who are fit for the Malawi schools.

The last group of teachers identified by the study concerns those who joined teaching through the process of redirection, which is practiced in some of the training institutions that do not get enough applicants for their teacher training program. This is a group of teachers who initially did not choose teaching for their college training. In other words, they were not interested in teaching and, therefore, did not intend to become teachers. Nevertheless, most of them accepted the redirection to the teaching program simply because they wanted to have access to college training. Because of the way they enter into the teaching field, their commitment to the profession is not guaranteed. Although they are trained as teachers, they still look forward to other employment opportunities outside teaching. A lack of a sense of belonging negatively affects their professional commitment to teaching (Tiplic, Brandmo and Elstad 2015).

Considering the high number of teachers who joined teaching by the means of re-direction, it is important to find ways to make them like the profession. Changing their attitude towards the profession would be one of the possible solutions to keep them in the schools. Once they are re-directed they are supposed to receive an induction that would change their mindset toward the profession. Currently, "there are no systemic arrangements to cultivate the (redirected) trainees' interest in teaching as a profession," noted one Dean of Education. If these teachers begin to like the profession while they are still in training, the chance that they

will stay after they graduate would increase. The training institutions need to mount programs that are intended to raise interest in the teaching profession among all student teachers.

6. Summary and Conclusion

The study identified three groups of teachers who seem to have a tendency to leave teaching. These include (1) teachers who are not professionally trained either through pre-service or in-service programs; (2) newly recruited teachers; and (3) teachers whose choice for college training was not initially teaching. According to the findings, teachers who have a general diploma or degree are hired to fill teaching posts that are vacant due to a lack of specialist teachers. In practice these teachers do not have the required pedagogical skills necessary for the effective delivery of lessons. As such, they are supposed to undergo an in-service training at institutions that conduct such activities. After their in-service training, the teachers are awarded a University Certificate of Education which qualifies them as teachers. It is through this certificate that the teachers become recognized by the system and begin to enjoy the rights of a teacher. These rights include access to benefits such as promotions, loans, leadership positions, and incremental salary rises.

The study, however, found that there are many teachers who joined teaching without any professional training and who have not yet received a teaching certificate to recognize them as teachers. Because of this lack of professional in-service training, these teachers become frustrated and they leave the system to look for other jobs.

Newly recruited teachers are another group with a tendency of leaving teaching. The study noted that some of the newly trained teachers leave teaching even before they are deployed to the schools. Some of those who report for teaching leave the schools within their early years of service, and most of them leave within the first five years of service. The problems these new teachers face are related to their inability to cope with the demands and

conditions of the schools. Because most of the schools are in rural settings, where basic amenities are not available, these new teachers tend to dislike teaching and eventually leave for other employment. The study found that this problem originates from the failure of the training program to fully equip the teacher trainees for real life situations that they find in the schools. This lack of interface between their training and the schools was seen to be created by inadequate field experience during their training.

Another group of teachers who leave teaching are those who joined teaching through a re-direction process. Since some of the colleges receive fewer candidates for their teacher training program, they re-direct applicants from other courses to fill those vacancies. The practice of redirecting applicants from programs of their choice to teacher training increases the likelihood of producing teachers who are not committed to the profession. Because these teachers did not have any interest in teaching in the first place, although they join the field they are more likely to quit after graduating. Unfortunately, the current system has no provision for encouraging these redirected teachers to begin to like teaching.

In conclusion, changing the way teacher training is conducted and the manner in which teachers are managed would reduce teacher loss in the secondary schools. In a country such as Malawi, where the economy is weak, any teacher loss is difficult to replace. This study, therefore, proposes improvements in the manner pre-service teachers are trained by ensuring that their college experience prepares and equips them well enough for field life. The entire teacher preparation program should be reviewed to address the issues that lead to the future loss of teachers. In addition, there has to be a strong collaborative relationship between the government and the universities that train teachers to ensure that the gaps that arise from weaknesses in teacher training and management of the serving teachers are corporately managed to increase retention of quality teachers.

In the short term, the government and the teacher training institutions should devise a teacher training strategy to ensure that all unqualified teachers undergo training immediately

after they have been deployed and before they start teaching in the schools. This approach will ensure that they have the right pedagogical skills to enable them teach effectively. The colleges should also follow-up on the new teachers in the schools to mentor them and give them support that would build their confidence to manage difficulties they would encounter in their stages of teaching.

In the long term, the rural schools should be furnished with good houses to attract new teachers and encourage them to stay in the system. Thomas, Thomas and Lefevre (2014, 43) noted that “The capital costs of constructing new housing blocks for teachers are ultimately cheaper than training new teachers.” Where the electricity grid line does not pass, such schools could be furnished with solar power to boost the quality of life of teachers, especially if they are to use electronic gadgets such as refrigerators, televisions, cell phones and other household items that require electricity.

Considering the challenge that was encountered in collecting data about teachers who left the system through resignation, it is recommended that the ministry should put in place a system for tracking and recording all teachers who leave. This system should include demographic information such as age, teaching subjects, sex, and marital status. Such information would enable the ministry to easily understand the characteristics of teachers who normally leave the profession and take the necessary measures to address the problem.

It is, however, suggested that a further study be done to establish the significance of the issues discussed in this study. This analysis would provide a more comprehensive understanding of these issues.

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Abstract (in Japanese)

要約

本稿は、マラウイで恒常的な問題となっている中等教員の離職問題に着眼し、教員がなぜ教職を離れるのかを理解することを目的としている。質的・量的手法を用いて関係者から収集したデータを分析した結果、教員資格を持たずに教壇に立つ無資格教員は、現職教員研修によって教員資格を得る機会が乏しいなかで、有資格教員にのみ開かれた各種の便益にアクセスできないこと、新規採用教員は教員養成課程のリソース不足によって十分に村落部での勤務と生活に対応する機会を得られていないこと、また教職が第一希望でなかった教員は教職へのコミットメントが消極的になりがちである結果、それぞれ離職へと至るという傾向が明らかになった。改善策として、本稿は教員養成課程から学校へのスムーズな移行を実現するための教員養成課程の改革と、学校でのサポート体制の強化を提案する。後続の研究によってより包括的な分析がなされることで、本研究で提示した議論がさらに精緻化され進展することが望まれる。