An examination of the causes of female underrepresentation in headship positions in selected secondary schools of Chitipa and Karonga districts of the Northern Education Division.

By

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God almighty for seeing me through in this study. To my mother: Doliness Staphel Nakanyika and all my children: It has been through their prayers, understanding and encouragement that I have been able to succeed in my educational endeavours.

DECLARATION

I, Wezzie Welako Redson Nyondo, hereby declare that the organization and writing of this thesis is entirely my original work and has been carried out at Mzuzu University under the supervision of Dr Chrispin S. Mphande. It has not been submitted for any degree other than the degree of Master of Education (Leadership Management) of Mzuzu University. All the sources that I have used have been acknowledged by complete references.

Signed: _____

(Student).

Date _____

Signed _____

(Supervisor).

Date _____

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to examine the causes of female underrepresentation in headship positions in selected secondary schools of Chitipa and Karonga districts of the Northern Education Division (NED). Its main purpose was to identify the criteria used to appoint headteachers in Malawian secondary schools. It also determined the effectiveness and lastly examined the challenges following the current criteria of appointing headteachers.in Malawi. The study was guided by the Critical Mass Theory. It used the constructivism paradigm which looks at reality as subjective. It also used the Mixed Methods Research Approach though it was more qualitative. The study was undertaken on a sample of 52 participants drawn using purposive sampling technique from the EDM (N) offices and eight secondary schools of Chitipa and Karonga districts. Data was collected through an in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. It was analysed using content and descriptive analysis. The study found out that female teachers are indeed being underrepresented in headship positions in secondary schools. It discovered that the underrepresentation is caused by diverse factors ranging from personal, domestic, patriarchal values and the weak criteria which is used to appoint headteachers. To address the issue, the study suggested that, there is need for diverse approach. This include, the woman herself, men and all other stakeholders. The government should also do her part by addressing gender balance in the whole process of appointing teachers into headship positions. The study is significant in the sense that it will act as a wake-up call to all women to rise up and stand against the underlying patriarchal values which influence their decision making. In so doing, women will be able to regain their confidence and high self-esteem thereby being able to accept headship positions.

KEY WORDS

Critical mass theory, under representations, substantive criteria, administrative arrangement criteria, patriarchal cultural system.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CEDAW   :   Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

CEED   :   Central East Education Division

DOSS   :   Division Officer in Secondary Schools

EDM   :   Education Division Manager

GEA   :   Gender Equality Act

HRM   :   Human Resource Manager

MoE   :   Ministry of Education

NED   :   Northern Education Division

TALIS   :   Teaching and Learning International Survey

TSC   :   Teaching Service Commission

UNESCO   :   United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

USA   :   United States of America

WLSA   :   Women and Law in Southern Africa.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction to the chapter

The chapter presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, critical research question and specific objectives. It also highlights rationale of the study, organisation of the thesis, definition of terms   and the chapter summary.

1.2 Background to the study

The purpose of the study was to examine factors behind the underrepresentation of female teachers in headship positions in secondary schools. It identified the criteria used to appoint teachers into headship positions. The study also determined the effectiveness of the current criteria being used to appoint teachers into headship positions. Lastly, the study examined the challenges of the current criteria used to appoint teachers in head ship positions.

Globally, the recommended ratio of men to women in the world of work is 3 to 2 (Debusschaer, 2022). Women workers constitute 40% of the world's workforce yet in almost all sectors, women are less likely than men to be in management positions (Herald report, 2015 & US Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2022). For instance, in the United States of America, women hold 35% of senior leadership positions compared to men who represent 65% of all leadership positions. This is despite the fact that women make up more than half of the workforce as of 2020 (Education Development Trust, 2022).

In Europe, women are almost half of those employed in the EU (46.3%) and yet were just 35.3% of managers as of 2021(Eurostat, 2022). In academics, women held 41.3 % of the academic positions across the 28 countries of the European Union in 2016 (US Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2022). This is to say that the 58.7% was left to their male counterparts. In

the OECD countries, the average number of female teachers in secondary education makes up 68% of the teaching population but they hold only 45% of headship positions as in 2013 (OECD, 2016). Another data which was taken from the 2018 TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey) indicates that only 48% of lower secondary school leaders are females versus 68% of teachers (OECD, 2020), that is a slight rise from that of 45% in 2013.

It should be noted that there are other countries in the region that have the lowest representation of women managers globally (Kersley et al., 2021). In Pakistan for instance, in 2021, women held only 10% of management roles. They were only 5 % of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) in India (Kersley et al., 2021) and 4 % in Pakistan. Pakistan is even placed 135 positions out of 136 countries with reference to Gender equality Index (Hausmann et al., 2012). All these are MENA (Middle East North Africa) regions. These are the most patriarchal region of the world despite the fact that patriarchy is not unique to Islamic regions only (Soekarba, 2019). In these regions, women are restricted from income generating activities and other public life without their husband's approval. In addition, the underrepresentation is being facilitated by the Islamic ideology on the sexual division of labour which is patriarchal in nature (Soekarba, 2019). Exposure to Islamic norms promotes the internalization of the patriarchal values because the sacred scriptures of Islam (Quran and Hadith) were written at a time when unequal treatment of women was a common practice (Lussier & Fish, 2016). In so doing, Islam has shaped societal beliefs, attitudes and norm that seems to legitimize an unequal division of labour between men and women in the household and public spheres. This division of labour is being supported by the state laws of most countries thereby affecting the society in all spheres of life.

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These findings are a clear indication that gender disparities still persist in the world of work, including the education sector. The findings are further supported by a United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2017) report who found out that globally, women were grossly underrepresented in education management positions including being head teachers in secondary schools.

In South Africa, for instance, Ndebele (2018) did a study of leadership from a gender perspective. The findings showed that the entrenched culture of male dominance (patriarchal) made people to have negative attitudes towards female school principals, being undermined because of their gender and lack of confidence on their side.

In some African countries for example, some husbands and fathers actively prevent women from working in jobs where they would interact with men (Oya, 2010). Those who does allow them to work, they consciously or unconsciously control them in the sense that a woman cannot make a decision independent of her husband most of whom are not comfortable for their wives to take leadership positions. This result in women refusing to take up the headship position and prefer to be a mere teacher. Most of them are afraid of bringing conflicts in their homes. This trend limits the number of women from taking up leadership positions. This is supported by Nolan and Lenski (2009) who argue that the subordination of women to men is one of the oldest and most persistent forms of group discrimination in human history.

A part from the above patriarchal related barriers, at times the criteria of appointments too limit women participation in leadership positions.

In Tanzania, for example, Ndimbo (2018) did a study which aimed at examining the factors that limit women from participating into leadership including being headteachers in secondary schools. The findings faulted the criteria used to appoint teachers into headship positions as it did not address gender balance in the whole process of appointing teachers. This create a hard way for reaching the 50/50 world directives in leadership positions. Similarly, the current study was largely influenced in the sense that, the researcher was able to realise that at times, the criteria used to appoint headteachers can facilitate gender gaps if issues of gender balance are not included through- out the appointment process. The study was carried out in two patriarchal districts in which patriarchal cultural values influence people's thinking and decision making hence there is need for a gender sensitive criteria of appointing teachers into headship positions.

Likewise in Ethiopia, Wakshum (2014) also faulted the criteria by suggesting that the selection criteria for leadership positions (including educational qualifications, work experience and political participation) tended to be misapplied or off putting women in Ethiopia. This was in the sense that a school leader in Ethiopia is required to hold a degree while in reality most female teachers cannot afford. For instance, only 32% of teachers who held degrees in 2018/ 19 educational year were females while the rest were their male counterparts. The selection related criteria disadvantage Ethiopian women who cannot manage to obtain degrees. The bulk of responsibilities at home makes them fail to concentrate at school and be able to pass well. When they grow up into a woman, the burden doubles, the same woman is expected to carry the bulk of responsibilities within home and child care (EMAH, 2022). This is to say that policies guiding the criteria used to appoint teachers into headship positions should be aimed at eliminating the double standards in the

evaluation of women if gender equity is to be achieved in headship positions. This is in the sense that at times women are self-excluded based on patriarchal related internal barriers.

Wakshum (2014)'s findings are supported by those of Martinez et al. (2020) whose studies concluded that there could be bias that stems from organisational policies that create double standards in the promotion of women. This conclusion was made in trying to explain the gender gap in school in principalship within the OECD countries.

Based from the findings above, it can be concluded that the root causes of gender in equality in management and leadership positions are complex. They revolve around the individual, interpersonal community and structures (Bergmann et al., 2022). That is from the woman herself, in the households in which they live and in the social structures that influence expectations of women's behaviour. Change therefore need to take place at all levels and men need to be included at all levels.

The underrepresentation issue has not spared Malawi. This is despite the fact that both males and females have adequate information and prerequisite knowledge to manage schools. In addition, Malawi is also being guided by the global recommendation gender equality ratio of 3 to 2. Evidence suggest that more men are in headship positions than females. In Chitipa and Karonga districts of the NED where the study was been conducted, the ratio of male to female head teachers is 6 to 1(NED, 2021) versus 3 to 1 for teachers.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Evidence from different scholars of the world agree to the fact that there is low female representation in headship positions in most secondary schools worldwide (Airin, 2010;

Barmao, 2013; Fuller, 2017; Mbepera, 2015; Mukorwe et al. 2016; Mwanzia, 2017; Omboko & Oyoo, 2011**;** Onyango et al., 2011; Oti, 2013; Republic of Kenya, 2012; Shava et al, 2019; Yousaf & Schimiede, 2017).

The causes of the underrepresentation among others include the entrenched gender stereo types and normative beliefs which undervalue women's capabilities and potential contribution and continue to pose significant barriers to women's aspirations and achievements (Education Development Trust, 2022). In addition, the structural barriers and cultural restrictions also contribute to this gender gap (Women in Business (2021)

From the examples above, it can be deduced that the factors and extent to which women are being underrepresented vary. The variations range depending on the country's context. For instance, in developed countries, gender gaps in leadership positions is not as huge as in African countries. Within African countries too, MENA (Middle East North Africa) region is to the extreme where women are more restricted to public life, their main responsibility is to stay home and raise children.

However, the main argument in all these countries is that women are being underrepresented in leadership positions including being headteachers in secondary schools. This argument was supported by Martinez, et al. (2020). In their study of "Explaining the gender gap in school principalship", Martinez and his friends concluded that the scarcity of women in principalship positions is a complex reality with many contextual factors and different social and political aspects that can combine to produce unique modes of bias. This entails that the causes and extent to which women are being underrepresentation vary according to the

country's context. In some countries, it is caused by patriarchal related cultural values while in others, it is caused by the weak policies guiding the appointing criteria in that country.

In Malawi, the situation is similar. There is low female representation in headship positions in most secondary schools in the country. A number of studies have been conducted on the gender equity issue. For instance, Yekha (2020) and Kondowe (2015) are among these earlier scholars. Their studies focused much on understanding the various modes of perceptions various stakeholders have on female leadership capabilities and on analysing experiences that women in top management positions face as they discharge their duties respectively. However, causes of female underrepresentation in headship positions in secondary schools based on modes of appointment has not received adequate scholarly attention. This formed the focus of this study which used Chitipa and Karonga districts of the Northern Education Division as a case study.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the factors that lead to low female representations in head ship positions in selected secondary schools. The case of Chitipa and Karonga districts of the NED.

1.5 Main objective

The main objective of this study is:

- To examine factors that cause the underrepresentation of female headteachers in secondary schools in Chitipa and Karonga districts of the Northern Education Division.

1.6 Specific objectives

- To identify the criteria used to appoint headteachers.

- To determine the effectiveness of the current criteria used to appoint teachers into headship positions.

- To examine the challenges following the current criteria used to appoint teachers into headship positions.

1.7 Critical Research question

The critical question in this study is:

- What factors cause the huge underrepresentation of female teachers in headship positions in Malawian secondary schools?

1.8 Other research questions

This study was guided by the following other research questions:

1. What criteria is used to appoint teachers in headship positions in Malawian secondary schools?

2. How effective is the current criteria used to appoint teachers into headship positions?

3. What are the general challenges associated with the current criteria?

1.9 Justification of the study

The low numbers of women in leadership position is very clear worldwide. In Malawi, different scholars have conducted studies on gender issues (Kondowe, 2018 & Yekha, 2020). These were conducted in Nkhotakota, Central East Education Division (CEED) and Mzuzu city in the Northern Education Division (NED) respectively. However, causes of female underrepresentation in Chitipa and Karonga districts based on modes of appointment into

headship positions have not been given meaningful studies. As such, there are a lot of misconceptions regarding female leadership in these districts. This is what the researcher wanted to clear hence the aim of the study was to examine factors that cause low female representation in headship positions in secondary schools in Malawi, Karonga and Chitipa districts to be specific. The study focused on identifying the criteria used to appoint teachers in headship positions. It determined the effectiveness of the criteria and examined its challenges.

1.10 Significance of the study.

The findings of this study would be significant in the following ways: It will guide policy-makers to improve the system of appointing teachers in headship positions. This is because the study will examine the causes of female underrepresentation in headship positions based on modes of appointment. In so doing, policy makers will be able to see how best they can address issues of gender balance within the appointment policy. The study will also help women to rise up against some patriarchal values which hinder them from attaining headship positions. In so doing, they will be able to make independent decisions. Academically, the study is going to meet a gap in the research literature.

1.11 Definitions of operational terms

To avoid ambiguity, some key vocabulary terms used in this study are listed below. The definitions provided are mainly for the purpose of working definitions in this study only.

Administrative arrangement:

This is the appointment that is made at the Education Division Manager's (EDM) office whenever there are vacant posts in head ship positions (NED, 2021).

Critical mass theory

This is an affirmative action program which aims to close the gender gap in the public service (Kanter, 2004).

Deputy Head teacher:

The second officer in command after the head teacher, can act on behalf of the head teacher (Teaching Service Commission 2001).

Gender Equality

This refers to equal treatment of women and men; girls and boys so that they can enjoy benefits of development including equal access to and control of opportunities and resources (Mkomba & Majamanda 2014).

Glass-ceiling

This is a subtle but persistent barriers, obstacles, underpinned by discriminatory, conscious and unconscious practice and attitudes that hinder access to top/ senior management positions for qualified women (Zeng, 2011).

Head Teacher

This is the teacher in charge of administration in the school (Teaching Service Commission 2001).

Quotas

This is where an appointing or recruiting authority shall appoint or recruit no less than 40 percent and no more than 60 percent of either sex in any department or any place of employment (Government of Malawi 2012).

Gender stereo typing

This is an often unfair and untrue belief that many people have about all people or things with a particular characteristic (Carli & Eagly, 2016).

Substantive criteria:

This is when one undergoes through the normal interviewing process upon the availability of vacancies from the Teaching Service Commission (TSC, 2001).

1.11 Organisation of the thesis

Chapter one introduces the study and focuses on problem statement, objectives and justification. In this chapter, the researcher presents the major issues that form the focus of the study. It ends with the organisation of the thesis.

Chapter two focuses on the review of related literature on the underrepresentation of female head teachers in head ship positions and the theoretical framework.

Chapter three introduces focuses on the research methodology and methods.

Chapter four presents the results from data presentation, interpretation and discussion of findings, where the interview recordings are analysed, and the research findings are presented in the form of the themes that emerged from the specific objectives and the data collected. In addition to that, there is discussion of the main findings from the research questions and the consulted literature as well as in relation to the theories used.

Chapter five presents the conclusion about the discussions of the summary and conclusion of the study. It also points out the implications, limitations of the study and suggestions and areas of further research in relation to female leadership in Malawi, especially in the education sector.

1.12 Chapter summary

Chapter one has presented the major issues that form the focus of the study. The next chapter is comprised of the review of related literature on female leadership and theoretical framework.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the review of related literature on women leadership. It will also provide an account of the current status on women leadership positions in Malawi and its related theoretical framework.

Throughout the course of history worldwide, women are underrepresented in leadership positions across multiple sectors (UN, 2020). Customs and laws against female leadership can be found throughout history, most notably in every major religion (Christ, 2014). Most of the sacred scriptures of the major religions of the world (Muslims and Christianity) were written and compiled at a time when unequal treatment of women was a common practice. This facilitates unequal treatment between men and women.

It is a common knowledge that religion has a great influence on people's lives. As a result, the subordination of females originating from the religious patriarchal ideas that emerged centuries ago continues to shape the thinking of people around the world. There is sexual division of labour in some religious sacred scriptures which is supported by state laws in many countries (Soekarba, 2019). This put women at a disadvantage as they continue to face many barriers to full and productive participation in labour market. Most of them end in informal jobs. This is supported by most scholars who argue that the root causes of gender inequality contributing to women's lack of leadership are complex (Kenwat et al., 2014; Silole, 2012; Sperling et al., 2015). They emanate from personal, domestic, societal and structural factors.

Although the United Nation's Universal Declaration of human rights reaffirmed the belief in the equal rights of men and women in 1948, the progress towards equality for both men and women has been minimal. Both the World Development Report 2013 on jobs (WDR, 2013) and the World Development Report 2012 on Gender Equality and Development (WDR, 2012) provide valuable and complementary framework to help policy makers advance gender equality in the world of work (Pavlou, 2018). This is because gender equality in the world of work is a win win on many fronts. It help to end extreme poverty apart from boosting a shared prosperity at an individual level. Companies and departments can yield big developments as men and women complement each other in maximising productivity.

2.2 Factors that limit women from achieving top positions.

2.2.1 The Glass ceiling

The glass- ceiling can be defined as a subtle but persistent barriers, obstacles, underpinned by discriminatory, conscious and unconscious practice and attitudes that hinder access to top/ senior management positions for qualified women (Jackson & O' Callaghan, 2009; Bendi & Schmidt, 2010; Zeng, 2011). It refers to the fact that a qualified person wishing to advance within the hierarchy of his/ her organization is stopped at a lower level due to a discrimination most often based on sexism or racism.

The federal Glass-Ceiling Commission (1995) defines the phenomenon as the concept which refers to "Artificial barriers to the advancement of women and the minorities". These barriers reflect "discrimination……., a deep line of demarcation between those who prosper and those left behind." It also includes norms/ stereo types revealed through practices, actions, facts, procedures or attitudes that are frequently not directly observable. These

obstacles to advancement are more present as one approaches the top of the hierarchy than at lower levels and that these advantages become worse later in a person's carrier (Cotter et al., 2001). This is to say that, people advance to the top of the middle management but are unable to pass through this barrier (Ann, 2013).

Despite significant promotion of diversity in the world of work, as well as legislation for equal opportunities for men and women, women still remain largely in minority in decision making positions including being headteachers in secondary schools. This observation reflects the phenomenon of the glass ceiling that constitutes vertical discrimination within companies against women. This observation is supported by Mzungu (2022) who acknowledged that although women play an integral role in today's workforce and continue to break barriers, many women and minorities experience instances of discrimination and are overlooked for senior roles because of the glass ceiling.

The term "glass ceiling" was coined by the writer and Consultant Marilyn Loden in 1978 at the Women's Exposition in New York. According to the glass ceiling phenomenon, it is not a woman's lack of talent, skill, level or ambition that prevents them from accessing further opportunities. "The alternative explanation is that women are performing the same as men, but their performance is discounted or even evaluated more poorly even though it's exactly the same," (Chow, 2013).

The glass- ceiling has adverse effects in the labour force. Some of the effects include: a person's intention to quit (Melanie, 2022) apart from lowering someone's self- esteem. The glass ceiling also causes a reduction in capability to build networks and support structures for one's career.

All in all, the glass- ceiling creates a lack of representation for women in leadership roles or decision making and executive positions. With the glass-ceiling effect in place, continued marginalization of women in top management positions is a paradox that merits systematic investigation. No wonder, despite the current enthusiasm for diversity in the labour force and legislation for equal opportunities for women and men, women are still largely underrepresented in decision making process in all sectors. This includes the head ship position in secondary schools worldwide including Malawi.

2.2.2 Stereotypes.

A stereotype is a widely held belief about a certain social group or a type of individuals based on prior assumptions such as popular cultural depictions of groups of people. It can also be defined as deeply held beliefs passed down through generations (http://www.britannica.com). Often stereo types can be negative or even harmful. This is because they lead to categorising people into groups based on certain characteristics or ideas about that group. This has an impact on how men and women are perceived as leaders. This can cause an unintentional or intentional discrimination or even violence among the people concerned.

While stereo types are rarely correct and certainly not always accurate, they are not always negative. This is because some cast a positive light on a certain group or type of people (http://www.britannica.com). However, they are still overgeneralizations and ultimately not helpful because individuals and groups cannot be limited to a few stereo typical traits. This can lead to some harmful beliefs and misconceptions about individuals or entire cultures.

Even in instances of positive or neutral stereotypes, stereotyping can still be harmful because it creates pre conceived ideas or expectations for people that they may not meet or it can make a person feel reduced to those stereo typical traits. For instance, if someone does not live up to the "Positive" stereotypes of their group, they may think they fit the negative stereo types by default. Furthermore, the negative stereotypes can lead to feelings of inferiority complex or that the person will be stereotyped no matter what.

2.2.3 Gender Stereo types

Gender stereo typing is an often unfair and untrue belief that many people have about all people or things with a particular characteristic. Here, people of different genders have always been compared and contrasted with each other. This result in stereotypes. Negative stereo types can arise when people of a certain gender make generalizations about another gender or even their own. Despite many efforts to increase gender fairness in education in recent years, the issue has not yet become obsolete (Schober et al., 2016). Gender discrimination still exists and finds expression in unused chances and limited action repertoires for both (Kanter, 2004).

There is a gender stereotype associated with leadership in most careers including education. For instance, men are less likely to be blamed for the passive and negative consequences of their actions at work than women (Marinova, 2003; Alam, 2011). This stereotype is underpinned by an unwanted assumption that leadership is a male characteristic demanding strong minds unlike a motherly heart which most women have. This stereo type originates from most traditional beliefs which are also reflected in associating leadership abilities and positions with men and not women. The society expects that working in administration positions is for a man and not a woman. This is because people are generally socialised in

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accepting the norms, values and customs of social system in which they grow up. In addition, the social role theory equates the image of a manager with that of a man with so called (masculine qualities) such as authority, independence, competitiveness and aggressiveness (Weyer, 2007). Women who are associated diametrically with opposing qualities such as collaboration, listening, sensitivity, sympathy would be less committed to their careers and unable to manage.

This line of thinking impairs the authority of women leaders. They lack the morale of performing the leadership role including being head teachers in secondary schools. This lack of morale coupled with lack of support from people around her leaves a woman frustrated and emotional. This echoes Chabaya et al. (2009) who argue that the social stereotyping disadvantage is one of the major reasons for the underrepresentation of women in educational leadership. This is supported by Carli and Eagly (2016) and Schock et al. (2018) who in their study of women leadership found out that one of the barriers to women leadership is gender stereo typing.

In the United States of America for instance, women are being side lined in leadership positions just because people in the country are born and raised in a culture that equate leadership to a man. The International Finance Corporation (2013) in their assessment support the above argument by concluding that women continue to face many barriers to full and productive participation in the labour market including discrimination and harassment, culturally entrenched ideas about gender role and their contribution is not equally valued. This instil a low self-esteem in many women who end up losing their self - confidence, and live a dependent life.

2.2.4 Gender discrimination

There is gender discrimination against women in work places. In South African schools, Morrell (1998) admit that women constitute the minority in management positions, even though they outnumber males outside the ranks of SMTs (School Management Teams). Discrimination is a severe barrier to women's advancement to positions of leadership in the education profession. Discrimination against women based on untested grounds and perceptions constitute unfairness. This is supported by Thakathi and Lemmer (2002) who profess that in South Africa, management has traditionally been male dominated in the senior levels of decision-making since 1994 and that women largely occupy positions in middle management. They are of the opinion that gender bias is the unseen barrier to women's career mobility into higher levels of school management. Their findings are supported by Carli and Eagly (2016) and Schock et al (2018) who argued that, born in the United States of America where women have been striving for equal treatment for over a century, female leaders still face unique challenges because of their gender. That is gender stereotyping is global. It has not left a country.

 On the same gender stereo typing, Anker (2012) concludes that there is a significant relationship which exist between the gender stereotype of a woman manager and her career aspiration. She continued by saying that there are instances where woman managers possess all the attributes for the top management but what affects them are the individual factors (gender imposed) and organisational factors within their context of operation. Anker therefore suggested that there is need for gender sensitivity, leadership and development in the organizations in order to end discrimination.

To echo what Anker (2012) suggested, there is need for a working gender sensitive policy in the deployment and promotion of teachers. Women have made substantial gains in assuming leadership positions in their countries, helping to shape policy dialogue and other critical issues (IPU and UN Women, 2015). Despite this progress, women still face many challenges as they strive to reach the very top management positions. Countries, (National and International organizations) help to achieve gender equality, but still more, women continue to be underrepresented in management positions including being head teachers in secondary schools. The critical mass theory by Kanter (2004) should be implemented by all decision makers.

2.2 5: *Patriarchal system.*

This is a social system in which men hold the greatest power, leadership roles, privilege, moral authority and access to resources and land. Patriarchal social system has the basis in major religions most of which promote the internalization of patriarchal values. This is because their sacred scriptures (Quran, Hadith and the Bible) were written when a woman was not being much recognised in the society. There is hence the presence of patriarchal cultures in most countries of the world though it is to the extreme in Muslim countries. Alexander and Welzel (2011), Lussier and Fish (2016) and Norris (2014) agree on the fact that patriarchal values are more prevalent among Muslims at the individual level and among the societies in which Islam is the predominant religion. In these regions, women are more restricted to public life, their main responsibility is to stay home and raise children. Patriarchal culture is not unique to MENA (Middle East and North Africa) regions only.

Globally, most countries have patriarchal cultural values despite being common in MENA regions and other African countries, Malawi inclusive. The patriarchal cultural system in

Malawi is commonly practiced in the northern region and other two districts of Nsanje and Chikhwawa in the southern region. This is where descent is through males and residence is patri local (WLSA Malawi, 2002). This entails that the wife leaves her village and resides in her husband's village. The position that women assume is inferior to the male members within the systems as decisions are mostly made by the men with women on the receiving end. This arrangement makes a woman lose her self-esteem and self-confidence as they are at times prevented from exercising their rights. This is reflected in their inability to influence the decision making processes and achieve organisational goals (Metcalfe, 2008). With the submissive nature, most women find it difficult to come up with independent decisions. They rely on men to make on their behalf. In the end, a women is unable to see herself as a potential figure because she has learnt that power is not made for women.

This is thinking is supported by Rahmawati ea al. (2018) who argue that in areas that are still thick with patriarchal culture, women are generally more disadvantaged than men in the fields of health, education and the economy. This happens because of the norms that exist in patriarchal culture. This is further supported by Aziz et al. (2017) who argue that the cultural values that put males above females worsen the situation in the sense that women are reluctant to compete with their male counterparts at leadership position. They continue by arguing that the traditional assumption that women are depended and passive result in women un able to see themselves as potential figures because they have learned that power is not made for women. It is then not surprising to see some of them refusing to take up the head ship positions when given.

However, it is not encouraging to see those willing to take up the leadership positions lacking support. For instance, in 2012, when a woman ascended to the presidency position

(Mayaya, 2013), there were mixed reactions from people. The majority showed lack of support due to patriarchal attitudes towards women in decision making positions. This was witnessed in the type of remarks people altered. They were not willing or ready for a female president. It was a very discouraging scenario to see women themselves not supporting a fellow woman to ascend in presidency because if they did, a woman was going to win since the population of women exceeds that of men in Malawi and other countries (Chikapa, 2021). It should be noted that Malawi's patriarchal culture is not as serious as that of the MENA or Arab countries.

However, patriarchal cultures are also prevalent in Western countries though at a minimal rate. For instance, female leaders in the USA still face unique challenges because of their gender. They have been striving for equal treatment for over a century (Carli & Eagly 2016 & Schock et al., (2018)). Historically, women in the USA were being taken as second class citizens such that they were not even allowed to vote in an election as they were being regarded as people who could not make any important decision on their own. This is because of the patriarchal values that put women in subordinate positions. Even in Chinese society, the influence of patriarchy led to the subordinate position of women and may still continue to influence the positions of men and women in educational leadership today (Bush & Haiyan, 2000).

2.3 Leadership in secondary schools.

Education is the re-construction or re-organization of experience so as to increase the ability (of the learner) to direct the course of subsequent experiences. Educational institutions therefore must be structured to function in a way to facilitate the physical, social and mental interactions among learners that will enhance the attainment of the desired educational

goals. This calls for a highly competent and responsive leadership in the form of school heads. School leadership is extremely influential on the success of a school and it is therefore essential to give thought, care, time and attention to recruitment and selection processes (Department for Education, 2017).

The criteria to appoint teachers in head ship positions vary among countries based on the culture, region and development of a particular country. This is despite having some common traits. In South Africa for instance, the new South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (hereafter referred to as the Schools Act), has ushered in a two-tier system for the administration and control of schools (Department of Education, 1996). The tier includes, the school Governing Bodies (SGB) and School Management Teams (SMT). The Employment of Educator's Act, Act 84 of 1996, outlines four steps that need to be followed in the appointment of education managers in South Africa, these steps include*:* recruitment, selection, appointment, and induction.

The requirement for the post of a head teacher in South Africa is a bachelor's degree and a background check, including also the passing of a test on the laws and regulations pertaining to a principal's job. Furthermore, leadership abilities, political savvy, a sense of urgency, management competence, resourcefulness, energy, and resilience and dedication, should be prerequisites. In the absence of the above requirements, anybody applying for the position of school principal has to be in possession of at least an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) (SABC News @ 19:00: 25 July 2007).

In the United States of America it is mandatory for principals to be licenced, with a Masters' Degree being the minimum requirement for an administrative position (Milstein &

Associates, 1993). In addition, for a senior position such as of a principal, an average of 20 years teaching experience was the benchmark. This, however, does not preclude educators with less years' teaching experience from applying for the position, but such cases constitute the minority (Whitaker & Vogel, 2005). According to the National College for School Leadership in the United Kingdom, (NCSL, 2006) appointments to the headship (principal ship) are made once candidates have completed 20 years of service, of which 15 years ought to have been spent in the classroom, and the remaining five years as a deputy principal.

In Kenya, the appointment of teachers and promotion criteria is guided by the Graduate and the Non-graduate schemes of service where one serves in grades or job groups: 'J','K', 'L', 'M', 'N', 'P' and 'Q' (Republic of Kenya, 2005). Upon promotion to job group M, teachers may be deployed into professional or administrative positions as appropriate. Job group 'M', according to the TSC regulations, is the minimum deployable grade into headship. A teacher who attains this grade gets to be deployed into the professional positions of Lecturer, Head of Department, Senior Lecturer or Principal Lecturer or, may be deployed into administrative positions of Headmaster, Deputy Headmaster, Head of Department or Dean of Students.

Conditions or consideration for promotion to professional grades outlined in the TSC Code of Regulations for Teachers (Republic of Kenya, 2005) include: Promotion on merit that is if a teacher has displayed exceptional ability in performance of his /her duties in addition. A teacher should have completed not less than three years recognized teaching service within a given grade. Thirdly, a not being involved in discipline issues. Except under special circumstances determined by the commission, consideration for promotion shall be the

teacher's willingness to take up the position immediately and where a vacancy exists. The offer of promotion will lapse if not taken within 30 days.

The similarities in the appointment of teachers in headship positions in the above countries is that there are two ways of appointing a teacher into head ship positions. These are formal and informal criteria.

A teacher needs to fulfil some conditions before being appointed on the position. Some of them include: qualification and grade, years of service and character. A teacher should possess a minimum of grade M, should either be a graduate or in possession of an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE). A teacher should have stayed on the same grade teaching for a minimum of three years. A teacher should be willing to take up the promotion or to leave it within a period of 30 days. The Teaching Service Commission of the country is responsible to release vacancies for teachers to apply. This is in line with (Yirci and Kocabas (2010) and Burk (2012) who argue that with the advancement of education as a crucial factor in a nation's development, the capabilities and management skills of educational leaders, especially head teachers, are regarded as the main element to attaining the nation's vision and mission. Their aim is to remind countries to appoint capable head teachers if they are to realise their countries educational visions.

2.4 Women's underrepresentation in Leadership position.

Women have been leaders throughout history (Christ, 2014). From the Pharaoh of Egypt to the Queens of England, women leaders are found in nearly every culture and time period. Yet in almost all circumstances, male leaders greatly outnumber female ones (ILO, 2020; UN Women, 2020; Stone, et al., 2019). The reasons are complex, ranging from the

individual woman herself, the society in which she lives and the organisational structures. What is clear is the fact that women are much less likely than men to be considered leaders. This is despite the fact that globally, more women than ever are entering the labour force, but majority of the top management positions in almost all countries are primarily held by men (Onyango et al., 2011)

The gender gap in leadership is a global phenomenon whereby women are disproportionately concentrated in lower level and lower-authority leadership positions compared to men. Globally, the recommended ration of man to woman in the world of work is 3 to 1 (Debusscher, 2022). According to the International Finance Corporation (2013) census, women workers constitute 40% of the worlds' workforce yet in almost all sectors, they are less likely than men to be in management positions. They are underrepresented in leadership positions across multiple sectors (ILO, 2020). In the education sector, while there is growing literature on the benefits of female teachers on girls' educational outcomes (Spering et al., 2015), women continue to face many barriers to obtain head ship positions.

Moorosi (2008) pointed out that the underrepresentation of women in educational leadership has been a "longstanding problem which has received significant attention in different contexts over the years". The findings were supported by Mohammed (2014), Kilonzo (2020) and Thornton (2013) whose studies too revealed that in the education sector, women are grossly underrepresented in school leadership and senior management positions across the globe. This is because when comparison between women in the teaching field and administrators is made, evidently sees an increase of women in the teaching field yet this is not reflected in administration positions. For instance, in India,

Indonesia, Kenya and Malaysia, 50% of school leaders identified themselves as women compared to more than 70% teachers (Global Gender Gap Report, 2022).

With the persistence of gender disparities in the world of work, Kenway et al. (2014) argue that the challenges and opportunities of female leaders have not been sufficiently studied. In their study, they advised that the 'theories of change underlying efforts to promote women's leadership" should incorporate changes at multiple levels such as agency, relations and structures after discovering that the root causes of gender in equality that contribute to women's lack of leadership are complex hence change also need to take place at all levels, it needs to be a threefold approach. These findings are supported by Uche et al. (2014) who argues that higher educational institutions and universities are facing increasingly complex challenges in attracting and returning women.

The developed world like United States of America, Australia, and the United Kingdom, they have their own share of struggle to bring gender equity into the leadership of their higher learning institutions. Despite that there are gender gaps in leadership positions, it is not as huge as in African countries where women still remain largely in the minority in both formal employment and decision making positions than in European countries where at least more women are in formal employment. In the Universities of Europe, where gender equality is supposedly higher than in other countries such as Asia, it is established that in 27 countries of the European Union (EU) women occupy only 15% of full professorship and tenured positions (European Commission, 2012). With reference to Europe, Sweden is usually described exceptionally with overall high rankings regarding gender equality and has even earned a reputation as a pioneer in gender equality sea though there were only 22% of the women professors till 2011 (Statistics Sweden, 2012).

To support the above findings, Chikapa (2021) in her study argued that the ratio of women in administrative posts in higher education in the developed countries is a bit higher and/or is rising faster than in Africa, Malawi inclusive. In many countries (For instance, the US, England, and Australia), the percentage of male teachers compared to female ones, is relatively small, but they are highly represented in administrative positions (U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2011).

As contained in the U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics (2011), representation of women in leadership positions has remained low despite the percentage of working women has gone high in the recent past years. In the United States, women were nearly half (47%) of the labour force but only 40.9 % of managers in 2021. In the EU, are almost half of all those employed (46.3%) and yet were just 35.3 % of managers as of 2021. In Canada, women accounted for slightly more than a third (35.6 %) of all managers and 30.9% of senior managers in 2021. This is because of the negative attitudes/ perceptions that people have towards women. Most people think that women are inferior and cannot perform. To support the argument, Nolan and Lenski (2009) argue that the subordination of women to men is one of the oldest and most persistent forms of group discrimination in human history.

The influence of patriarchy has led to the subordinate position of women in the Chinese society, and may still continue to influence the positions of men and women in educational leadership today (Bush & Haiyan, 2000). However, the under-representation of women in management positions is not limited to the education sector, the case is true in other sectors of the economy. The only problem is that the education sector seem to be slower than most of the economies to acknowledge the issue and to seek remedies. The findings further reveal that women in educational leadership in Chinese universities are facing a range of

barriers, including social stereotyping, traditional Chinese patriarchal culture, low ambition to get involved in leadership responsibilities, responsibilities of caring for family, and certain perceived feminine character traits (e.g. being emotional and soft hearted).

China's situation is common in most countries around the globe. Studies above have revealed that most countries have rectified acts, policies and protocols on gender equality and yet the situation on the ground is different. Most people including those in appointing authorities are reluctant to take women as equals to men in most aspects including in the working places. The result is that women are being underrepresented in top leadership positions. This include being head teachers in secondary schools. The above studies have also agree to the fact that women do not obtain leadership positions on a silver platter. They have to face a lot of hindrances. For instance, proving to others that they are able. No wonder the existing gaps between male and female teachers in headship positions in secondary schools and in other sectors of the economy.

In England, Kay Fuller (2017) conducted a study on women's absence in headship positions. He found out that the underrepresentation of women in secondary school headship in England and elsewhere is an early and longstanding issue. He also realised that the barriers to women in achieving headship positions in England have been seen as a complex range of interacting factors of socialization and stereotyping, internal barriers, societal, organizational and personal level, culture and tradition factors.

This then facilitates the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. White and Ozkanli (2011) support the above arguments for they have it that since time immemorial, women have been left behind as far as administrative responsibilities in universities are

concerned. Men are promoted to senior positions such as high school principals, supervisors and heads of local education departments more than women, who are promoted mainly to administrative positions in elementary schools. In the United States of America (USA) for example, women leaders remain few at high organizational levels. They still face unique challenges because of their gender. They have been striving for equal treatment for over a century (Carli & Eagly, 2016 and Schock et al., 2018) to no avail.

The Tata Global Beverages Annual Report 2012-2013 testified to the fact that when women are insufficiently represented in the work place, companies and departments lose out on fifty percent of the talent pool. This is because women bring rich and diverse perspectives to the work place. Often, they bring management styles which are quite complementary to those of men. Work places that celebrate women naturally benefit from better decisions as a result of such diversity. This report was well supported by Reddy (2018) who in his study argued that men and women are always two sides of the same coin. He continued by saying that each one of them has their unique charisma and can handle the situation differently. Reddy argued that, given equal opportunities between men and women, there can be maximum production in every aspects of life thereby leading to economic growth.

Apart from economic growth, involving more capable and qualified women in leadership and even supporting them may create leadership opportunities for other women. This is because female leaders serve as role models and mentors for other women and young girls in society. This would help to break society's stereotyping and negative perceptions of female leaders. The education sector can have an added advantage in the sense that more women will motivate students to work extra hard thereby improving the performance of learners. In order to have the acceptable global representation of 3 to 2 between men and

women in the world of work, there is need for critical mass representation, a theory originated by Kanter (2004). In this case, a priority should be given to candidates of the underrepresented sex when choosing between candidates that are equally qualified in terms of suitability, competence and professional performance (Debusscher, 2022).

Based from the literature above, it can be deduced that women in most countries, more especially in sub-Saharan region and Islamic countries in particular, women are much less likely than men to be considered leaders. They are supposed to be passive and submissive. In so doing, most women lose their self-esteem and feel that the best option is to stay at home and take care of their families. This result in few women in the formal employment due to lack of skills and expertise. This make them to be underrepresented in both decision making and leadership positions across multiple sectors (ILO 2020; UN Women, 2021; Stone et al., 2019). The end result is that women continue to face many challenges as they strive to obtain top positions.

2.5 Female leadership in Africa

The issue of underrepresentation of women in leadership positions has not spared a part. In Sub Saharan Africa, women account for 38% of civil service and yet they make up only 21% of public administration across 8 countries with data (ILO, 2019). In some of these African countries, it is very hard to accept the fact that women can also make good leaders. People in those countries are born and raised in an environment that equate leadership to a masculine gender. More especially in most patriarchal and Muslim societies. A woman cannot be the head of an organisation as much as she cannot be the head of a family, unless in the absence of a man (Shava & Ndebele, 2014). Some African scholars concluded that "an education is a patriarchal institution in nature hence inevitably favouring men" (Cubillo

& Brown, 2003). Customs and laws against female leadership can be found through -out history, most notably in every major religion (Christ, 2014).

2.5.1: Middle East and North African Region

An example is the Islamic region which is found in the Middle East and North African (MENA). This is one of the most patriarchal regions of the world despite that patriarchy is not unique to (MENA) (Soekarba, 2019) only. In these regions, women are more restricted from income earning activities. One of the Islamic ideologies is on sexual division of labour which is supported by state laws in many countries. The state's policy is that men should receive priority over women in securing jobs because men are the heads of house hold and not women (Solati, 2017). In the traditional Islamic interpretation for instance, women's participation on the activities outside the house is limited and women cannot be leaders. Their role is to be at home and raise children.

Nolan and Lenski (2009) argue that the subordination of women to men is one of the oldest and most persistent forms of group discrimination in human history. Luckier and Fisher (2016) argue that exposure to Islamic norms promotes the internalization of patriarchal values because the sacred scriptures of Islam (Quran and Hadith) were written at a time when unequal treatment of women was a common practice. As a result, there are some passages in the holy scriptures of Islam that imply an equal treatment of women and ate still instrumentalised today as a source of legitimacy for misogynistic practices. For instance, in Sura 4 verse 34, "men are in charge of women, Allah made one of them to be better than the other one and good women are obedient (Sen 61). In addition, there is a personal law called "mudawwanah" which is based on Islamic Sharia forms the biggest challenge in women's struggle towards equality.

2.5.2 Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, one of the Islamic countries' official statistics shows that it has 5 million employees (Soekarba, 2019). Of the 5 million, 1 million are women[1]. Saudi culture is a totality of beliefs, customs and behaviours based on values of Islam and affects every part of life. The system or law in Saudi Arabia is based on two major subsystems namely: the Islamic religion which has a crucial   influence and the traditional tribal customs[2]. Gender stereotyping seems to be the decisive factor in determining what is thought to be masculine and feminine roles in Saudi culture. Saudi Arabia has a strong emphasis on Arab culture and a masculine role attributes. The conservative Saudis are known for a low tolerance for uncertainty. For instance, women and men are prohibited from mingling in the work place and a zero tolerance for women travelling without the official approval of the guardians. This conservative orientation is largely affected by the Saudi tendency to conform tightly to its interpretation of the values and teachings of the Islamic faith.

2.5.3 Morocco

In Morocco, women are supposed to be passive in accepting the status quo, Moroccan labour law have many restrictions when it comes to employment applying to women (Panda, 2019). Like in Saudi Arabia, Moroccan laws and culture are derived from the Quran and it clearly states the rights and roles of men and women in the society and their various positions. Their labour laws have many restrictions on employment applying to women. Women in Morocco are supposed to be passive in accepting the status quo. The Quran specify that women are the lesser being while the Moroccan state's laws restrict women and

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[1] By international standards, the numbers are extremely low (HVidt 2018).   [2] Women in Saudi Arabia are regulated by those two sub systems which are merely patriarchal in law and norms in culture.

children from applying for formal employment. Women therefore end up doing household chores only.

2.5.4 Indonesia

In Indonesia, Airin (2010) looked on 'Influencing factors that influence the representation of women as school principals'. His main argument was that the number of women in the school principal ship in Indonesia is less than half of the males. With a more than ninety percent Moslem population, Islamic tradition also plays an important role in guiding the society's mind-set towards women. Therefore, like in the Arab countries, women cannot be leaders. The Indonesian schooling institutions prefer to have male leaders because of their masculinity and authority. The Indonesian concept of professional commitment is not a pro women concept because of the assumption that women will not be committed enough and they are not assertive. On the same note, Setiadarma (1993) concurs with the Indonesian government by arguing that many Indonesian female leaders are too difficult to prove themselves as leaders because of their submissive nature. This makes it difficult for them to have access to decision making or leadership positions.

2.5.5 Pakistan

In Pakistan, a country with a similar social and religious structure to Bangladesh, Memon (2003) found out that women in South Asian patriarchal Moslem cultures face a number of challenges. Women operate in a culture of male dominated management in which women managers do not challenge their male counterparts' views in professional settings. Despite that being a teacher is regarded as one of the best professions for women in the country (Aziz et al., 2017), top positions are less likely to be occupied by women. Where a female is

a headteacher, her role and power may be limited to managing daily affairs rather than making long term decisions.

2.5.6 Bangladesh

Memon (2003) also discovered that women's underrepresentation in educational leadership in Bangladesh appears to have many causes ranging from traditional attitudes linked to patriarchy and religion, to the lack of a pool of qualified women due to limitations in access to secondary education for girls, to a failure of the government to adopt measures that would open up leadership positions to women.

2.5.7 Figi and most Pacific Island Countries

In Fiji and most Pacific Island countries, reports indicate that like elsewhere, women's advancement to school leadership and senior management positions is snail-paced (Mohammed, 2014). In South   Asian countries, the situation is the same. Women have limited representation as heads or deputy headteachers of schools and colleges, or hold positions in the higher levels of educational policymaking.

2.5.8 Arab Gulf countries

In the Arab Gulf countries, Stead and Eliot' (2009)s' study found that the challenges faced by women in leadership positions include discrimination at work, cultural taboos, negative attitudes towards working women and lack of confidence and trust in women leaders All these are Islamic countries based on Islamic religion and patriarchal values.

2.5.9 Mozambique

In Mozambique, like in MENA countries, some husbands and fathers actively prevent women from working in jobs where they would interact with men (Oya, 2010). This is due to the influence of patriarchal values and Islamic ideologies.

2.5.10 Asian Chinese

To support the argument, Pounder and Coleman (2011) argue that the situation may be worse in the Asian Chinese context, wherein a male-dominated tradition rooted in the feudal system has been prevailing for thousands of years. They summarised that the underlying patriarchal values made it very difficult for women to attain leadership positions.

Based on the literature above, gender differences in patterns of promotion can be explained by the effects of Islamic religion which affects the society in all spheres of life. The Quran specify that women are lesser being and male leaders are encouraged to take leadership positions in the organizations. In addition, the religion facilitates patriarchal values which is more prevalent among Muslims at the individual level and in societies in which Islam is the predominant religion (Alexander and Welzel, 2011; Lussier and Fish, 2011; Norris, 2015). In addition, it is a norm to the Jewish countries that accepting women as equals may threaten men's status and undermine the traditional gender division of labour, maintained by socialization processes and supported by sex stereo types. One can therefore not be wrong to deduce that the fight on equality between men and women is almost not possible in Arab and Islamic societies as it is against their religious and cultural norms.

Apart from the MENA countries that display stronger support for patriarchal values, women's underrepresentation in management positions has not spared a country.

2.5.11 Kenya

Kenya has her share of struggles with women inclusion in positions of leadership in public primary and secondary schools. Mukorwe et al. (2016) conducted a study in Kenya where he aimed to "examine factors hindering the deployment of female teachers to headship position". This was despite the existence of the two thirds policy in a country. Article 27(8) of the country's constitution obligates the state to implement the principle that not more than two thirds of members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender (Republic of Kenya, 2010). The findings revealed that the two thirds gender policy was not being applied in deployment of teachers to school headship despite its existence. Women were still being underrepresented in headship positions. For instance, out of the 43 state corporative appointments so far made in Kenya at the time of the study, only 2 women had been appointed. In his study, Mukorwe discovered that those in appointing authorities were reluctant to implement the policy in the deployment of teachers despite its existence.

Bamao (2014) focused on the factors that contribute to under representation of female teachers in headship positions in primary schools in Eldoret Municipality, Kenya. His main argument was that women are still underrepresented in middle and senior management roles. This is despite the fact that female teachers were the majority of the teaching workforce in the municipality (Bamao, 2014). He found out that the underrepresentation is not only common in Eldoret municipality but a general trend in most Kenyan schools. This was caused because of the gender roles.

To concur with Bamao (2014) and Friedman and Marshall (2004) admit that gender roles that are created in childhood permeate throughout life and help to structure parenting and

marriage, especially in relation to work and outside the home. Women are still responsible for the majority of the domestic chores and childcare. This is despite the increase in women in the labour force since the mid-1900s (Shava & Bamao, 2014). While women are splitting their time between work and care of the home, men are pressured into being the primary economic supporter of the home. This then makes it difficult for the women to further develop their career and be promoted thereby giving chances to men who find it much easier to become leaders thereby expanding the leadership gap.

2.5.12 Tanzania

In Tanzania, Ndimbo (2018) conducted a study where he focused on "the influence of the criteria for appointment of women in leader ship positions in Tanzanian primary schools". The findings revealed that the criteria of appointments limit leadership positions. This is through personal factors such as refusal of leadership posts, lack of confidence, lack of qualifications and family issues. Societal factors such as negative attitudes by the society and traditional beliefs also limit the leadership positions for women. Lastly organizational factors such as weak policies and biasness in appointments and informal factors such as corruption, nepotism and political affiliation to be among the factors that limit the leadership positions for women. Ndimbo's study revealed that the policy guiding the appointment of teachers in headship positions in Tanzania is weak in the sense that it stipulates only the criteria for selecting school leadership while it does not address gender balance in the whole process of appointing teachers (Public Service Commission Act No 3 of 2014). Ndimbo's study informs the researcher that the criteria used to appoint headteachers can also facilitate gender gaps in headship positions if not scrutinized thoroughly.

To echo Ndimbo's findings, Mbepera (2015) concluded that female under-representation in school leadership in rural Tanzania is influenced by a number of interrelated factors at the individual, societal and organisational level. This include a dominant social norms and values having a crosscutting influence on the access, experience and perceptions of female school leaders. Mbepera's study thus suggested a number of measures for improving female representation in Community Secondary School leadership in Tanzania at the professional and personal development level, recruitment level and policy level. All stake holders must be involved if equity in headship positions is to be achieved in Tanzania.

2.5. 13 Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, Wakshun (2014) found that the criteria for leadership positions tended to be off putting in Ethiopia. For instance, a school leader is required to hold a degree but only 32% of teachers who held a degree in 2018/ 2019 are female (Education Development Trust 2022). Research with women leaders in Ethiopia found that women experienced a range of barriers to entering leadership positions. One of these barriers is the challenges of the double burden where a woman is expected to carry the bulk of responsibilities within the home and childcare. A woman can therefore not focus with her career and will not be able to obtain a degree hence won't qualify for the headship position. In so doing, most women choose their family over work hence reducing the number of qualified women in the country. This is a clear indication that at times, women fail to achieve the headship position due to some internal barriers that lead women to self-exclude thereby not willing to compete on the headship position. In this case, efforts should be made to implement strategies and policies to support women's advancement in education.

Ndimbo, Mbepera and Wakshun's findings concur that of Reilh and Byrd (1997) who pointed to three sources of gender inequality in educational administration. The first pertains to the individual level, such as ambitions, ability, or concurrent responsibilities. The second to the organizational or occupational context in which a person works such as screening procedures and occupational vacancies. The third and last source is related to the wider social context such as labour-market structure or sex role stereotypes (Reilh & Byrd, 1997). On the same, Gabaldon et al (2016) grouped the principal reasons that prevent women from reaching leadership positions into demand and supply of the principal market. He continues by saying that, on the demand side there could be bias that stems from organisational policies that create double standards in the promotion of women. While in the supply side, there could exist internal barriers that lead women to self-exclude from leadership positions. This entails that women's underrepresentation in leadership positions including being headteachers is facilitated by many factors the main one being the patriarchal cultural values and the organisational policies. On culture, people's thinking and decision making is in most cases influenced by culture and religion. So, if religion supports patriarchal values whereby a man is independent and a woman is dependent, there is no way a woman can accept to be a headteacher without the husband's consent unless she is supported by organizational policies. No wonder Skrla et al (2000) suggests that individuals involved in hiring/ appointing headteachers should receive training on gender issues to increase awareness of the possible presence of bias in the hiring and promotion processes.

2.5.14 South Africa

In the South African education system, Chisholm (2001) conducted a study into female leaders, and found that the female leaders find it difficult to be accommodated and to succeed because of their unchanging social context. Byrd (2009) explains the reason for the

underrepresentation of women from a cultural perspective that a man finds it much easier to become a leader. He found out that there are three main barriers to women's career paths in South Africa. These include: gender bias and stereotypes from the society, responsibilities for the family and being in caring roles, and negative impressions about their taking on leadership roles. The South African situation is not far from that of Kenya and most African countries.

2.5.15 Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe the occupational and leadership status of women in general is also suffering a wide gap, as there is un equal representation in leadership positions between men and women (Shava, 2014). Findings from Shava's qualitative study are confirmed with those by Al-Hussein (2011) who showed that women in the teaching profession face several challenges in their way to approach the leadership position. These include the negative stereotype against women in both the men and women minds, limited ambitions among women, and the main cultural and structural barriers. The findings from this study are also consistent with those of AlRaqeb's (2009) study which illustrated that the most challenges expressed by the study sample were social, cultural and structural, followed by political challenges and finally personal barriers.

It can therefore be concluded that, even though women form a large proportion of the teaching staff in Zimbabwe and have all the excellent leadership styles identified in the study, they still cannot hold a proportionate share of the leadership in schools, due to multiple challenges identified in the paper (Shava, 2014). These include: negative stereotype of the women in both the men and women minds, limited ambitions among women, and the main cultural and structural barriers. In addition, most Zimbabwean

cultures are patriarchal, therefore, most societies and organisations, including schools, have in fact placed women in a passive role at work and even in the family. Due to patriarchal orientations, it is unacceptable for a woman to lead an organisation where there are men. The culture and customs of tribal communities assume that men should lead while women should follow (Shava, 2014).

2.5.17 Uganda

In Uganda, women are still the minority in headship positions. This is despite the Ugandan constitution of 1995 which states that women shall have a right to equal treatment with men in regards to opportunities in political, economic and social activities. Although women have made important advances in upgrading their academic qualifications making them eligible for promotion to leadership positions, men still dominate administrative positions as both deputy and head teachers in public primary and secondary schools (Kagoda, 2011). The findings revealed that there was biasness and stereotype in the appointing and recommending head teachers of schools.

Chikapa (2021) stressed that "despite the significant promotion of diversity in companies as well as legislation for equal opportunities for women and men, women representation still remains low. This is because of the glass- ceiling phenomenon. It should be noted that many countries of the world have very good laws and policies. They also belong to several international bodies (Chege, 2014; Kilonzo, 2020; Mukorwe, 2016; Odhiambo, 2011; Shava, 2014) and whose key issues are on the elimination of all negative practices that impede equality and equity of gender and the promotion of equal opportunities for both men and women in leadership positions. In addition, they have developed gender policies with an objective of addressing critical issues related to gender and education. The purpose of the

policies is to provide a roadmap for Ministry of Education and stakeholders towards the achievement of gender parity in ensuring that both boys and girls, men and women, participate equally in learning and management of education at all levels (Republic of Kenya, 2007).

Despite all these efforts, the management of both public primary and secondary schools worldwide indicates a trend of male dominance (Parsaloi, 2012). This shows the slow implementation process of the gender equality policies and laws. The implementation is taking a snail's pace. People's mind set fail to accept women in the equal footing with men. Different studies have witnessed that despite the significant promotion of diversity in companies as well as legislation for equal opportunities for women and men, women still remain largely in the minority in decision- making positions (Chege, 2014; Kilonzo, 2020; Mukorwe, 2016; Odhiambo, 2011; Pranathi and Lethabhavan, 2021; Shava, 2014).

Some of the reasons leading to persistent gender disparities in top positions discovered by the above scholars include: the gaps in laws, slow enactment of gender related legislation and lack of comprehensiveness in content of some laws. They discovered the presence of a wide gap between formal policies and actual practices concerning the gender imbalance at school headship positions.

2.5.1 Situation in Malawi

Malawi's situation is not different from most countries in the world and Sub Saharan Africa in particular on the issue of women being underrepresented in head ship positions in most secondary schools. There is evidence that very few Schools are being headed by female head teachers in Malawi. In Chitipa and Karonga districts of the NED where the study was

been conducted, the ratio of male to female head teachers is 6 to 1(NED, 2021) versus 3 to 1 for teachers.

When it comes to policies and legislation, Malawi like other countries in the world has ratified key international legal instruments which include: The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the African Union Women's Protocol, the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action. Several laws, policies and instruments have been put in place in an effort to domesticate and operationalize and implement the conventions and protocols.

At national level, the Government of Malawi prepared a revised gender policy to promote gender mainstreaming throughout the public and integrate gender consideration into all its activities (Government of Malawi, 2012). It also launched the National Gender Programme which is aimed at implementing gender equality. In addition, the Constitution as a supreme law of the land has captured the spirit of the CEDAW and other relevant international legal instruments on gender equality.

Not only that, The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) introduced an African Gender and Development Index (AGDI) to facilitate an effective monitoring mechanism on gender equality and women's advancement (Ministry of Gender, 2012). The AGDI incorporates the major international and African charters and conventions and integrates a number of variables that have a particular importance for African men and women. It is widely recognized that the existing global instruments used to measure gender and development

issues and women's empowerment should be expanded to better reflect the realities of women and men on the African continent, so as to assess the gender gap in each African country and to help governments improve their performance on gender equality and equity (Ministry of Gender, 2012).

To further fulfil Malawi's commitments to international law and policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women, a special Law Commission was empanelled to review the laws of Malawi (Government of Malawi, 2012). One of the recommendations of the special law Commission was the development of a statute on gender equality. In addition, the Government of Malawi passed a new Act known as the Gender Equality Act in 2013. Its purpose is to take action and address the inequalities that exist between men and women in many aspects of daily life. That is a bold step taken by the country to begin to redress the gender inequalities present in the Malawian society. Among others, the GEA requires quotas in the employment sector. This means that an appointing or recruiting authority shall appoint or recruit no less than 40 percent and no more than 60 percent of either sex in any department or any place of employment (Government of Malawi, 2012). This is with particular regard to the public service.

Belgium is one of the few countries where the quota system worked. For instance, in 2011, the council of ministers passed a law imposing gender quotas in public organizations (Prananathu & Lathabhavan, 2021). Since January 2013, a 1/3 of companies' boards of directors must be female. This approach aimed to promote awareness of gender and management issues as well as training for women managers to encourage them to apply for responsible positions. Unlike in Belgium where the quota policy reduced the disparity in headship positions between males and female teachers, in Malawi the disparity is still very

huge. It results in the question of contradiction between policy and practice. It leaves a lot of questions on what criteria is used to appoint teachers into headship positions. It is also not clear on how effective the criteria is in the sense that the gender gaps still persist in secondary school headships (NED, 2021). This is despite having the good policies and actions such as the GEA act which require quotas in the employment sector.

In other words, there is still a wide gap between formal policies and actual practices concerning the gender imbalance at school headship positions. This is in-line with USAID/MALAWI (2010) who observed that both integrating and mainstreaming gender has been problematic. USAID/MALAWI's observation does not differ with the Kenyan situation as far as gender equity in leadership position is concerned.

The Kenya (2010) report revealed the persistence of gender disparities in legal, social, economic and political levels of decision making, as well as access to and control of resources, opportunities and benefits. This was despite the existence of the policies, legislative reforms, plans and programmes in the country. The Kenya and Malawi situations is true globally as revealed in the widening gaps in leadership positions between men and women in decision making positions. The study therefore tries to understand factors that lead to the underrepresentation of female teachers in head ship positions in Malawi.

2.6 Becoming a head teacher in Malawi.

According to the TSC (2001), the minimum requirements for teachers in order to be promoted into administrative positions include the academic and professional qualifications such as the diploma or degree in education and the teaching experience of not less than eight years for a diploma and four years for a degree holder. The promotion of teachers to

senior administrative position is handed by the TSC up to P5 grade. The head ship positions are obtained through substantively or administrative arrangements (Wamba, 2015).

Substantively, it is merit based. Whenever there are vacancies at the Teaching Service Commission (TSC), 2001), they are advertised and those qualifying apply and attend interviews. Upon being successful, one is picked and promoted to head the school. Apart from interviews, one can also automatically be given the head ship position the moment the person is promoted to P5 which is equivalent to Grade TF. This entails that in Malawi, the policy for recruitment and appointment provides equal opportunity for both females and males.

However, one can also become a head teacher through administrative arrangements. That is through appointments from the office after being satisfied by one's services, appointments based on denominational value, appointments based on nepotism or political affiliations respectively (Wamba, 2015). In his studies, Wamba (2015) concluded that, head teachers in Malawi are appointed based on a successful record of teaching; prior experience of leadership in school or outside; religious affiliation; a college degree; nepotism or political affiliations.

2.7. Theoretical framework for the study

This study was guided by the critical mass theory and some concepts from the constructivism approach.

2.7. 1 The Critical Mass Theory

The critical mass theory is an affirmative action program which aims to close the gender gaps in the public service. It best looks into ways of promoting women's interests in leadership positions The theory guides those in authorities on how to elevate people into leadership positions. It was put forward by Rosabeth Moss Kanter in (2004). The critical mass theory recognizes and advocates for the social change role and responsibility of educational leaders (Brown 2004). Its assumption is that by any means, the gender gap should not exist in work places despite the qualifications, affiliations or even the experience of the individual.

Kantar's theory further states that when women serving in top positions with other women increase, group interactions will change and substantive differences in the behaviour of the involved groups will begin to emerge, women will become more assertive in their shared interests and perspectives and consequently exhibit more distinctive behaviour. In support, Lederach (2018) argues that until women working within predominantly male professions increase in the number beyond their "token status", they will largely conform to the dominant group. The theory suggests that a minority group would not likely show behaviour that is distinct from that of the larger majority norm.

As a proponent of presence, Phillips (1995) argues for critical mass as numbers are important in representation. He insists that women need to be first present for realisation and insertion of their interests (Philips, 1995). Moreover, more women have advanced in education and have good qualifications and expertise. Therefore, critical mass will help to uplift women's presence in decision making positions who in return will represent women's interests. All these concur the 2018 50 50 campaign protocol target and the 2013 Gender

Equality Act (GEA) whose purpose is to take action and address the inequalities that exist between men and women in all aspects of daily life.

2.7.2 Constructivism approach.

Constructivist's researchers recognise that their own background shapes their interpretation and they position themselves to acknowledge how their interpretation flow from their own personal, cultural and historical experiences. To them, reality is subjective in the sense that every individual constructs his own knowledge. So, in this study, participants suggested factors that lead to low female representation in headship position in secondary schools.

2.8 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented an overview of the review of related literature on women leadership. It has also provided an account of the current status on women leadership positions in Malawi and its related theoretical framework. The underrepresentation of women in leadership positions including being headteachers in secondary schools is a reality worldwide, Malawi inclusive. A number of scholars have agreed to the fact that the underrepresentation is caused by multiple factors depending on the country's context. In most countries, it is being facilitated by the underlying patriarchal cultural values. This influence the thinking and decision making of people. In so doing, it becomes hard for female teachers to accept headship positions in presence of men, people to accept female teachers in headship positions as they can do with their male counterparts and even most spouses to accept that their wives should be in headship positions. In addition, the underrepresentation of female teachers in headship position can also be facilitated by organisational policies that create double standards in the appointment of women in leadership positions. This literature was an eye opener to this study. The researcher was

able to identify and tease the criteria used to appoint headteachers. She was able to find factors that cause the underrepresentation in headship positions. That is the underlying patriarchal values prevalent in the community and weak policies guiding the appointment criteria in the literature was also spotted in the study thereby facilitating the use of informal criteria which is in many times abused. The researcher was able to understand that at times there could exist internal barriers that lead women to self -exclude from headship positions despite willing to accept the opportunity.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.

3.1 Introduction

The chapter covered the methodology and research design adopted. It has also highlighted the research approach, the paradigm adopted and the data collection methods. The instruments used and the population of the study including the sample size that participated in the study and the sampling techniques used have not been ignored. The research area, how data was analysed as well as logical and ethical issues have been well elaborated.

3.2 Methodology

This study employed a Research Mixed Method approach of qualitative and quantitative research design.

3.3 Research paradigm

The Research Paradigm that guided this study was constructivism. To them, reality is subjective. This is in the sense that every individual constructs his own knowledge Constructivist's researchers recognise that their own background shapes their interpretation and they position themselves to acknowledge how their interpretation flow from their own personal, cultural and historical experiences. In this study, the researcher was influenced by the head ship condition in secondary schools. For so long, women have been underrepresented when compared with both the global and Malawi recommendation hence she needed to uncover the factors that lead to this underrepresentation. In addition, the researcher wanted to clear the misconception that people have towards female leaders. So, in this study, participants suggested factors that lead to low female representation in headship position in secondary schools.

3.4 Research approach and design

Since the study aims to understand the underrepresentation of female teachers in head ship positions in secondary schools, the study employed a Mixed Methods Research Approach though was more qualitative. Qualitatively, the study was able to investigate the why and how people arrive at decision making, not just what, where and when things occur (Cohen, et al., 2009). Qualitative research is based on the premise that people are different and have different experiences. Qualitative research is the kind of study that produces findings using a phenomenological inquiry which uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand the phenomenon in a context specific setting, like a school (Berge, 2009; Bogdan & Knopp, 2006 and Creswell, 2007). In this approach, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. This approach was chosen in order to have an in depth knowledge of understanding the causes of the underrepresentation of female teachers in headship positions and the reasons behind such behaviours. The central motive is to understand and interpret the social reality of the people being studied.

Cohen, et al. (2009) define research design as an arrangement of collecting and analysing data in the manner that aims at combining relevance with research purpose. This helped the researcher to conceptualize the overall organization and provide precise, detailed and accurate information during planning of research project.

The study used the face to face interviews and focus group discussions where she was able to probe into participants' responses freely. She also audio taped apart from copying down whatever was being discussed. In the end, there was a deeper understanding between the researcher and participants as regard to the discussions that took place.

The quantitative approach on the other hand helped the researcher to be able to come up with the data of teachers versus head teachers in secondary schools. The study was able to make

comparisons on the number of teachers appointed and the criteria through which they obtained their positions. She used descriptive analysis such that in the end, it was simple to analyse and make conclusions on whether there is indeed un equal representation in head ship positions in secondary schools. Take note that the study was more of qualitative than quantitative. This design helped the researcher to understand factors that lead to low female representation in headship positions in secondary schools. She was able to uncover the knowledge which is already out there. So, the study used the qualitative research design to be able to understand and interpret the social reality of the people being studied and the quantitative one to be able to make comparisons on the sex and number of teachers being appointed and the criteria used. In so doing, the researcher was able to arrive at the conclusion that the mode of appointment into headship position is weak thereby has an influence in the underrepresentation of female teachers in headship positions.

3.5 Study Area, Sample size and Sampling Techniques

3.5.1 Study area

The study was conducted in northern region of Malawi, Mzuzu city and Karonga and Chitipa districts to be specific. In Mzuzu, the study was conducted at the Northern Education Division manager's offices. The target were the three personnel involved in the deployment of teachers in secondary schools. They also have a great influence on the appointment of teachers in head ship positions.

These include among others: the Human Resource Manager (N), the Director of Secondary Schools and the Chairperson for the transfer committee. In Chitipa and Karonga districts of the Northern Education Division (NED), four secondary schools were targeted in each district. In those secondary schools, the heads and deputy head teachers plus all female teachers in those schools were a target.

The justification for choosing Chitipa and Karonga districts as a case study is that those are among the districts where the researcher has stayed for a longer period of time while learning and working within the districts. As such, she was able to observe the underrepresentation of female teachers in head ship positions hence she wanted to clear the misconceptions that people have towards female head teachers in the districts. For instance, there are 48 public secondary schools in the districts 7 of which are being headed by female teachers. Female teachers in those schools are 109 against 349 male ones (NED 2021). The ratio of male to female teachers is 3 to 1 while that of male to female head teachers is 6 to 1. Globally, and Malawi in particular, the recommended ratio is 3 to 2. This shows that female head teachers are being underrepresented in head ship positions by three quarters.

Three personnel at the NED offices were targeted so that they could provide information on regard to the criteria they use to appoint teachers in head ship positions. They also unveiled the reality on the ground when it comes to appointing teachers to head different schools. They shared the experiences they meet. The information helped the study to understand factors towards the underrepresentation of teachers in headship positions.

3.5.2 Sampling Procedure

The study used purposive sampling procedures targeting three personnel at the Northern Education Division offices (the Human Resource personnel, the chairperson of the transferring Committee and the Director of Secondary Schools) and the four secondary schools. The schools' categories include: the grant aided (national), the district boarding secondary school, the District Day and the Community Day Secondary Schools.

In this study, purposive sampling was used to select the personnel responsible in posting teachers and head teachers to different schools. It was also used to select head teachers and deputy head teachers because they have knowledge on different procedures used to select teachers into headship position. They are also aware of some factors leading to the underrepresentation of women in head ship positions. The 33 female teachers in the four purposefully selected schools represented the voices of all female teachers in Chitipa and Karonga districts and the whole division, Malawi at large. Purposive sampling helped the researcher to get rightful information as the participants involved were those that appoint teachers in head ship positions, head teachers and their deputies (both male and females) plus female teachers who are being underrepresented.

3.5.3 Sample size

Despite that the study used much of the qualitative design which focuses more on small samples, one of the main point is that those samples are purposefully selected to allow the researcher to focus in details issues which are important to the study. Sample size in this study is from 52 (19 + 33 female teachers). Cantrell (1993) stresses that the sample study for qualitative study is based on the purpose of the research study, not on the specific rules. In this case, the researcher looks at what he or she wants to know, what will be useful, what will be credible and what can be done within the constraints of time and resolutions. This study used a sample of more than nineteen participants from the Northern Education Division offices and the four purposefully selected secondary schools in each of the two districts. The schools were selected based on the school categories in Malawi. There are the aided boarding schools, aided day schools, government boarding, government day secondary schools, and private secondary (MoE, 2022).

On the categories, private secondary schools were skipped as they can have their own criteria. In the four schools, eight were head teachers and the other eight were the deputy head teachers. Thirty three female teachers in the eight selected secondary schools were part of the participants. Three personnel at the NED office were also purposefully selected. The researcher believed that the participants would provide enough data which would furnish the study with useful answers to the research questions. Though the numbers seems to be large for qualitative research design, it should be noted that the researcher was also using quantitative research paradigm mainly when it comes to dealing with numbers, and for the results to be valid, she thought all the thirty three female teachers in the eight sampled schools should be part of participants.

3.6   Data collection Methods

Three methods were used for data collection in this study and these included in-depth interviews, focus groups and field notes.

3.6.1 Interviews

The study used in-depth interviews which allowed her to probe some responses in the course of an interview session. There was a live discussion based on the structured interviews. Participants were able to air out their experiences, feelings, challenges as well as their views on female head teachers. The whole process was being audio recorded. An interview guide was used as a tool to guide in the process of collecting data (appendix D, E & F) and the in depth interviews were used as a main method of data collection which helped the researcher to probe in the participants' responses. It is an approach which is highly consistent with constructivism in the sense that participants are able to talk about something in details and depth, so it enables validity of the study. In addition, where

participants are not clear, the researcher is able to rephrase up to when the participant is clear. The audio recorder, interview guide and a diary were used as tools for recording the message and taking notes.

3.6.2 Focus groups

The researcher also used focus groups when she was interviewing female teachers in the sampled schools. This is because their numbers were more than three so the researcher decided to use focus group discussion as it seemed convenient. The groups comprised of three to five teachers depending on the number of female teachers on the school under study. The first thing when the researcher reaches the school was to interview the head and deputy head teacher using a one to one in depth interviews. Thereafter, she was requesting for permission to meet all female teachers at the school on a group. Before starting the discussion, the researcher was defining the purpose of the research clearly in a language conversant to participants. They were told to be free and that the information gathered will be used only for the study and nothing more. This helped her as participants participated fully. In so doing, the discussions went on very well. Participants also were happy with the idea as they felt it would be more informative and less intimidated if they were in a group. Some had to bring in information after being reminded by a point from a friend within hence the researcher was able to collect a very rich information in relation to the purpose of the study. This method proved suitable because time spent at a school was reasonable. It also enabled participants to ask follow up questions which sought clarity to responses. This provided the researcher with information that the written word would have hidden (Bell 2010).

3.6.3 Field Notes

In the course of the interviews, the researcher was taking notes which were used later on to reformulate questions for the other participants. This helped to overcome the shortfalls of the interviews. The notes also beefed up the audio recordings and made the researcher to be able to come up with themes and sub themes in the study. Apart from field notes, the researcher also used secondary data which was obtained by means of desk research inform of a thorough review of the existing literature. This included work from on line journals, published books, masters and doctoral thesis, internet articles on women leadership and the criteria to appoint head teachers.

3.7 Data analysis

After collecting data of this study, qualitatively it was analysed using content analysis approach. This approach does not employ numerical interpretation but rather patterns were identified from the field notes that were beefed up by the audio recorded information. So, the interviews were recorded and later transcribed verbatim. Then the patterns were developed from the participants' own words and were given codes, thus organising frequency of individual words and phrases. Coding here means the process of categorising the raw data usually into descriptive categories (McMillan, 2004). The codes were identified from the data collected. The data was put into general groups of meanings where content was analysed. It is very important for the researcher to be familiar with the data, the transcriptions. Field notes are supposed to be read and reread before listening to a recorded information. The researcher followed that procedure hence the general sense of the information was established and its overall meaning was also reflected upon very well. From there, themes were generated.

In the process, quotations from the participants' own words were also been recognised and used to show emphasis of some points. Quotations help to retain the participants' own voices thereby making the study more meaningful and significant to the reader since the insight to the actual social setting to which the reader may relate his experiences is retained.

Quantitatively, the researcher was able to gather data concerning the number of schools, teachers and head teachers in Chitipa and Karonga districts of the Northern Education Division. She was able to come out with the number of female teachers versus male ones in secondary schools of Chitipa and Karonga districts using descriptive analysis. Ratio of male to female teachers in secondary schools was established. The researcher was also able to identify the criteria used to appoint male and female head teachers in secondary schools. In so doing, she was able to arrive at a decision of whether women are being underrepresented in head ship positions or not.

The critical mass theory helped the participants and the researcher to decide whether women should be appointed just because of achieving equity in head ship positions or there still should be some qualities that are supposed to be met. This is because the theory advocates for the rights of the minorities so that their numbers are improved thereby being represented in decision making. This thinking is supported by Cohen et al. (2005) who assents that the intention of critical mass theory is not merely to give an account of society and behaviour but to realise a society that is based on equality and democracy for its members. They continue by saying that the purpose of the theory is not merely to understand the situation and phenomena but to change them.

The theory worked better with this study of women because through it, issues to do with equality and inequality, power dynamics, participation, representation, inclusion, exclusion and interests are discussed. In addition, the researcher's findings shows that women have qualifications as men and are good leaders despite being underrepresented in head ship positions. The underrepresentation is caused by diverse factors such as the individual woman herself, the society, domestic and weak criteria which is used to appoint teachers in top head ship positions. Addressing the issue of underrepresentation need diverse approach as well. This include the woman herself, men and all other stakeholders. In this case, the governments need to devise different mechanisms to support women in climbing the promotion ladder.

3.7.1 Themes and Categories

A theme expresses something important regarding the data which relates to the research question and makes up some level patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clark, 2006). A researcher's judgement is very important in determining what constitute a theme (Othman, 2012). The data gathered was grouped in three major themes and sub themes which were developed from specific objectives and the data from field. The following themes and sub- themes were identified:

Theme 1: The criteria for appointing teachers into head ship positions in secondary schools in Malawi.

Sub theme 1:   The substantive criteria**.**

Sub theme 2**:** The administrative arrangement criteria

Sub theme 3: Challenges faced by the Teaching Service Commission.

Sub theme 4: Factors that facilitate the gender gaps in headship positions**.**

Theme 2: The effectiveness of the criteria used to appoint head teachers.

Sub theme 1: The substantive criteria

Sub theme 2: The administrative arrangement criteria

Theme 3: Challenges of the current criteria used to appoint head teachers.

Sub theme 1: The Substantive criteria

Sub theme 2: Administrative arrangement criteria

Sub theme 3: Suggested solutions to the existing gaps in head ship positions

3.8 Ethical considerations

The researcher asked for ethical clearance from MZUNIREC to conduct the study. She also asked for permission from relevant authorities (head teachers, deputy head teachers, female teachers, the Human Resource Manager, the Division Officer in Secondary Schools and the chairperson for postings committee (NED) before meeting them.

In addition, all participants signed consent forms in advance and were assured that their identity was be protected. To ensure anonymity in this study, the researcher used pseudonyms in concealing names of the participants. This is in agreement with Newman (2000) who points out that a researcher has moral obligation to uphold confidentiality from others in the field and disguising members' names in the field notes. Lastly, the participants were also assured that the information would be used only for the purposes of the research study for them to freely provide their honest and complete information.

The researcher asked permission from all the participants prior to the interview day. This was to assure that there is agreement between the researcher and participants as the process

I voluntary to the part of participants hence there was need to agree before the actual day of the activities.

3.9 Delimitations

This study was confined to schools in Chitipa and Karonga districts and NED offices only. Another limitation is that there was no triangulation of data for male teachers despite having male participants (male headteachers and deputies plus one participant at the EDM's office). Therefore, whatever is uncovered in the study cannot be generalised or applicable in other settings despite having the same issues.

3.10: Chapter summary.

This chapter has presented the research approach and design, the research paradigm, how population for the study was sampled, the techniques and methods that were followed when conducting this research study. Data analysis and ethical considerations have also been included. The next chapter present data presentation, interpretation and discussion of findings.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study collected from both the personnel at NED offices, head teachers, deputy head teachers and all female teachers from the eight sampled schools of Chitipa and Karonga districts. The chapter also provides the interpretation of the results of findings taking into account the previous findings cited in the literature review in chapter two. It also discusses the emerging themes in term of how they relate to specific objective. The study aimed at understanding factors that lead to low female representation in headship positions in secondary schools focusing on the criteria used to appoint head teachers. The findings were generated from the data that was collected through recorded interviews and field notes. The purpose of the one to one in- depth interviews with them was to obtain more information on the factors leading to low female teachers in head ship positions. The study was designed to answer the following specific objectives: To identify the criteria used to appoint head teachers. To determine the effectiveness of the current criteria used to appoint head teachers and to examine the challenges following the current criteria of appointing head teachers.

4.2 The criteria for appointing headteachers in Malawi.

There are two criteria currently being used to appoint teachers into headship positions in Malawian secondary schools. These are formal or substantive and informal or administrative arrangement criteria.

4.2. 1 The substantive criteria.

The substantive grade for secondary schools head teachers according to the establishment by the Ministry of Education (TSC, 2001) is grade (TF) P5. According to the policy, only

those who have served at grade TG (P7) for 4 years and above are eligible to apply and attend interviews for the post of grade TF (P5) irrespective of gender. The normal way is when the Teaching Service Commission releases vacancies for head teachers with prescribed qualifications and experience, one applies willingly irrespective of gender. The TSC is responsible to release vacancies for teachers at grade TG to apply and compete on P5 grade. The substantive criteria use the merit principle to guide the selection of head teachers in secondary schools. According to the merit principle, a teacher undergoes through the normal interviewing process upon the availability of vacancies from the TSC (TSC, 2001).

The study found out that previously, the government could waiver to have a person who has served on grade TG (P7) for 2 to 3 years but was later disqualified following reports of abused. The current stand now is that only those who have served on one grade for 4 years and above should attend the grade TF (P5) interviews.

Formerly, a teacher is supposed to undergo through the normal interviewing process to rise up from one grade to the other upon the availability of vacancies from the TSC (TSC, 2001). Through the process, the teachers rise from grade TJ which is the lowest grade as far as secondary school grades are concerned to grade TF, the highest grade for teachers and is a substantive grade to head ship position in secondary schools. Participants at the division had this to say:

> *"Substantively, schools are supposed to be headed by grade TF head teachers. But due to shortage of candidates at Grade TF, officials go down to teachers up to grade TI and even grade TJ or K in extreme cases."*

This was supported by most headteachers in the sampled secondary schools. They showed knowledge of the criteria used to appoint teachers in headship positions. In contrast, most deputy headteachers and female teachers showed lack of knowledge on the criteria used to appoint teachers in headship positions. Most female teachers had this to say when they were interviewed using focus group discussion:

> "*honestly we do not know how they appoint teachers into headship positions. We only receive new headteachers in our schools*." Some said, "*I have never heard that people do interviews for them to attain the headship positions, its news to me."*

Ashley (2018) argues that "companies should be transparent when it comes to their promotion processes so they can show that they have given all qualified employees equal opportunities for career advancement."

This is supported with what the Department of Education in England does. It ensures that they conduct a fair and open process to ensure that staff are recruited on the basis of merits, abilities and suit abilities for the position (National Governance Association et al 2017).

It is important for employees to be aware of the formal criteria used to appoint them in the work related privileges. For instance, the substantive criteria to headship positions unlike being blank on how their colleagues are being appointed in headship positions. This instils work related respect and trust in teachers knowing that their headteacher is appointed based on merit. Ashley (2018)'s argument is very important if schools are to have self-motivated teachers. This will in then help to improve the quality of education as teachers will be working whole heartedly thereby improving school performance.

4.2. 2 The administrative arrangement criteria

Apart from the formal/ substantive criteria for appointment to headship position, there is an informal one known administrative arrangement. This is the appointment that is made at the Education Division Manager's (EDM) office whenever there are vacant posts. The government and churches are opening a lot of new schools to meet the community's demand of secondary school education to their children. In addition, some head teachers are retiring and others dying. This calls for the need of new head teachers to head these schools as they cannot operate without those officers. The Teaching Service Commission on the other hand cannot release vacancies because of various reasons hence the use of the informal criteria to appoint teachers on the position. But before appointing teachers into the position, there are some factors which are considered.

Firstly, they consider the teacher's qualification and professional grades. The person should have a degree in education or professional grades ranging from TI to TG depending with school categories.

The person's integrity, experience and leadership skills is also looked into. In addition, they look at the character/ behaviour of the teacher and how the teacher relates with his fellow teachers and other stakeholders. The priority is given to those that have never been involved in any disciplinary issues.

To those with charismatic characteristics of leadership, grades and qualifications does not matter. So long they feel the person is fit and can deliberate well. At times, there are extreme cases which make those in appointing authorities to pick those with grade TJ. In very rare cases, even those with grade TK are given the position. These extreme cases

include: the accessibility and location of the school (geographical location of some schools), lack of basic social amenities like water, electricity, health facility or a good nearby primary school. These are the schools where most teachers reject to go and head whenever they have been appointed to. In this case, the position is given to whoever accepts regardless of qualifications/ grade or sex/ gender.

This is also used to appoint head teachers in faith based secondary schools. The school proprietors look for a suitable person to head their institution whenever there is need. They then put in a good word for their selected candidate to the Education Division Manager (EDM) to have him or her appointed to head the school. The EDM then approves the candidate, does the paperwork and appoints the individual as the head teacher.

This is what some participants at the division and some headteachers said;

> *"anyone can be a headteacher so long that person is fit on the position. Otherwise, there are no teachers with the substantive grade to head schools and yet there are a lot of schools being opened and they will need headteachers".*

The findings echo Wamba (2015*)* who conducted a study on "Head teacher Preparation in Mzuzu, Malawi and concluded that "In Malawi, headship is through hands-on experience and civil service interviews." Herriot et al. (2002) conducted their study on "How headteachers are appointed in Kenya". They concluded that many headteachers have been identified as leaders in schools on the basis of dubious qualifications. They continued that the appointment is often of a personal nature rather than relevant experience and proven skills in the field of management. That is appointments through the informal criteria.

However, Spoehr (2004) contends to the fact that school headteachers occupy an important position in society hence there is need for a thoroughly recruitment and selection procedures.

In agreement with Spoehr (2004), the study wish to remind those in appointing authorities to be extremely careful when appointing teachers into head ship positions using an informal way . This is because any wrong choice, affect the school negatively in the sense that the school might end up losing focus in the process. Thoroughly appointment on the other hand will facilitate the smooth running of the school. There are some schools whose headteachers were appointed using the administrative arrangement criteria and they are performing very well both infrastructural and academic hence thoroughly scrutiny before appointment is very important.

Table 4.1 Current situation of headteachers appointments

School	Headteacher's grade	Sex	Appointment Criteria
1	TF	M	Substantive criteria
2	TH	F	Administrative arrangement
3	TI	M	Administrative arrangement
4	TG	F	Administrative arrangement
5	TF	M	Substantive criteria
6	TH	M	Administrative arrangement
7	TH	M	Administrative arrangement
8	TH	M	Administrative arrangement

Based on figure 4.1, two headteachers went through the interview process while six were informally appointed at the EDM's office through the administrative arrangement criteria. This shows that despite the presence of both criteria in Chitipa and Karonga districts of the Northern Education Division (NED), the study found out that there are more head teachers appointed through the informal criteria which is the administrative arrangement. This is

because the formal one has been affected by some challenges which have weakened its performance.

4.2.3 Challenges faced by the Teaching Service Commission.

To begin with, the criteria is being abused by politicians. The ruling governments use it as a campaign tool when preparing for elections. They wait until the year of campaigning for change of government, and promote huge numbers of lucky teachers from one grade to the other without interviews. Some even jump steps such as from grade TI to grade TG. There - after, the commission fail to either create new posts or release new vacancies for they will have been disturbed in their operations. For instance, in 2012/13 Financial Year, about 2,155 secondary school teachers were promoted followed by 1,368 secondary school teachers in 2013/14 financial year (2014/15 Education Sector Performance report). Thereafter, it released again in 2016 that is from 2012 to 2016. So, politicians disturb the regularity of the TSC in creating and releasing vacancies for the appointments to be merit based.

Further, there are no regular calls for promotional advertisements. The TSC rarely release vacancies for teachers to apply and be able to change grades. This include the P5 vacancies so that they could obtain the substantive grade to headship positions. Some participants suggested that after the mass promotions during the campaign period, it is difficult for the TSC to create posts in different positions for teachers to apply. The mass promotions do not follow the merit based but rather handpicked.

It was noted that from 2012, the TSC released vacancies for teachers to apply to different grades in 2016 (TSC, 2001). Those who were eligible applied, did the interviews and were

appointed into different grades. From 2016, it released other vacancies in April 2021. The vacancies that were released were for head teacher I (Grade TF). Applicants were to be serving head teacher II (Grade TG) or deputy head teacher (Grade TG) or head of department (Grade TG) with a minimum of 4 years' experience on that grade (TSC 2001). Unfortunately, those vacancies were not effective at all, rather they were postponed

Furthermore, lack of resources is another factor that has affected the performance of the TSC. Even if the TSC can create new vacancies for teachers, to be able to post those vacancies or to conduct the interview process, there is need for enough resources to cater for the TSC Human Resource Personnel and all the interview process. Without resources, this is not possible. However, it was noted that lack of resources is now a general outcry in most government departments the TSC inclusive. This derails government operations. This was testified by participants at the division who said that:

> "*the TSC rarely release vacancies for teachers to be able to shift from one grade to the other, as such there are no teachers with the substantive grade to the headship position in the pool*"

This is supported by Hasbuan (2003) who compliments the findings by testifying that promotions should base on formation, because the promotion of employees is only possible if there is a vacancy. Otherwise, if there is no job description or job to be carried out by employees, vacancies will be rarely advertised.

However, it has been noted that the challenges affecting the TSC is not specific to Malawi only as attributed by Oplatka (2004). He testifies that in Nigeria and Botswana, head teachers

are not even appointed based on criteria of teaching quality but rather political connections may be the dominant factor in their appointment".

However, in England, their education system should be given a pat at their back. This is because the Department of Education in the country ensures that they conduct a fair and open process to ensure that staff are recruited on the basis of merits, abilities and suit abilities for the position (National Governance Association et al., 2017). This minimise teachers' frustrations thereby facilitating the hard working and team spirit in teachers. This help to raise the quality of education in their country.

Despite having economic problems in the country, the TSC should be supported so that they are able to create release and conduct interview related activities at regular basis. In so doing, the status of the education system will be returned as teachers will not be frustrated since promotions will be based on merit. Otherwise where the TSC can-not create and release vacancies regularly, some teachers can rarely be promoted, more especially those that are left during the political mass promotions. Despite that they will be working, their frustration will affect their performance thereby lowering the status of the teaching profession.

The study has also noted that there are more male head teachers than female ones. Out of the 8 secondary schools under study, only two are being headed by female head teachers. These female head teachers were also appointed by the church and not the education division. This is despite the fact that the administrative arrangement criteria which is currently commonly used to appoint teachers in head ship positions give an opportunity to those in appointing authorities to appoint whoever is fit on the position regardless of sex. They do appoint teachers from grade TI to TG and TJ or K/L in extreme cases. The criteria is not merit based.

Table 4.2 The status of headteachers in NED, Karonga and Chitipa districts and the sampled schools

	NED		Chitipa and Karonga districts		From the 8 sampled schools of Chitipa and Karonga districts.	
Grades	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
F	27	03	08	00	02	00
G	14	05	02	01	00	01
H	57	10	15	03	03	01
I	56	08	12	02	01	00
J	14	03	01	01	00	00
K/M	09	00	03	00	00	00
Total	177	29	41	07	06	02
Ratio	1 to 6		1 to 7		1 to 3	

Though there are more male teachers than female ones in head ship positions, the study has noted that there are adequate teachers (male and females) within grades TI to TG and even grades TJ, TK/ TL (Figure 2). For instance, there is a total of 3092 teachers in the division that is 2397 males and 695 females (MoE 2022). This falls in the ratio of 3 to 1. In Chitipa and Karonga districts where the study was conducted, there is a total number of 458 teachers. Out of these teachers, 349 are males while one hundred and nine (109) are females within the ranges of Grade TL and TF respectively (NED: 2021). This represents the ratio of 3 to 1. Using the administrative arrangement criteria, it was possible for those in appointing authority to choose as many female teachers in headship position as possible so that the disparities are not as huge as they are currently. This could also have helped to achieve the

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global recommendation of 3 to 2. However, the study found out that there are some factors that facilitate the low representation of female teachers in headship positions. Some of the factors include:

4.3   Factors that facilitate the current gender gaps in headship positions.

4.3.1 Patriarchal Culture

It was noted that some social- cultural values hinder women from attaining headship position. The influence of patriarchy has led to the subordinate position of women in most of the countries where the cultural values are still being practiced and may still continue to influence the positions of men and women in educational leadership today. Being in a male dominated society, people are born and brought up in a culture that believe in male superiority. This affect the decision making of both the males and females of such societies as their decisions are being influenced by the patriarchal values. For instance, most females grow up with low self -esteem. They lack confidence such that they depend on men for important decision making.

The findings of this study have revealed that, most female teachers in Chitipa and Karonga districts are likewise. They are not confident enough such that most of them underrate themselves. They even refuse to stand and address other teachers in cluster meetings. When asked to do so, they will make sure they find a petty excuse not to do so. Most female teachers who were interviewed accepted that they fear to lead people more especially male teachers some of whom are older than their spouses. They admitted that they look down upon themselves and that they feel they cannot manage to lead people the way male head teachers do. They said that they can-not manage to speak in front of large groups of people! They then end up rejecting any challenging posts including being head teachers in

secondary schools. They will always ask for a second thought when asked for any challenging post.

The patriarchal values have not spared people's decision-making processes. Those that have been born and raised in this culture are convinced that women cannot perform in leadership positions including being head teachers in secondary schools. They always give a second thought whenever they are to appoint a woman on leadership position of any kind. Despite that they may be willing to uplift more women in leadership positions, but being born and raised in a culture which equate leadership to males force them to give it a second thought whenever they are appointing female head teachers, this however is also facilitated by the attitudes of most female teachers towards leadership.

This was echoed by participants at the Northern Education Division who complained that:

> "*most female teachers turn down the head ship position when given. This is despite having good qualifications and grades. Their confidence and high self -esteem is affected by the patriarchal values*."

During the focus group discussion, one female teacher said:

> "*It feels so awkward for a woman to hold big positions where men are there*", she continued by saying that *"leadership is meant for men and not women*".

Others echoed by saying that:

> "*for a woman to be a leader is more like inviting pressure and opposition accompanied to headship position instead of living a free minded life. Headteachers come very early every day and are the last people to leave the school campus*"

Others however said that*:*

> *"Others said that they are willing to take up the headship position if they can be offered."*

They continued by saying that*:*

> *"it is high time we have been mere teachers while our friends are in headship positions"*

> *"I am ready to go wherever I can be posted."*

One female participant said as others were attaching conditions."

The findings are supported by Solbes- Canales, et al. (2020) who argued that being a manager require too much investment, travel and flexibility. This will be hard for most women to manage.

They are further supported by Oya (2010) who argues that women refuse to take up headship position and prefer to be mere teachers to avoid bringing conflicts in their homes. This is because in most African countries, a woman cannot make a decision independent of her husband most of whom are not comfortable for their wives to take leadership positions.

WLSA Malawi (2002) echo the findings by arguing that in patriarchal cultures, the position that women assume is inferior to the male members within the systems as decisions are mostly made by the men with women on the receiving end. Pavlou, (2018) agrees by saying that the patriarchal attitudes are rooted in the social and behaviour patterns cultivated within families and communities, gender discriminatory practices and gender insensitive infrastructure. Like in Malawi, historically, women in the United States of America (USA) were being taken as second-class citizens such that they were not even allowed to vote in an

election as they were being regarded as people who could not make any important decision on their own.

Soekarba (2019) supports by stressing that a major barrier to women's success in the formal sector is the male version of the bread winner model whereby men are bread winners in the families and women's main responsibility is to remain at home and raise children. This result in most women not being empowered thereby lacking confidence. They depend on men on most aspects of life including decision making that affect their lives.

These findings are supported by Oya (2010) who argues that women refuse to take up headship position and prefer to be mere teachers to avoid bringing conflicts in their homes. This is because in most African countries, a woman cannot make a decision independent of her husband most of whom are not comfortable for their wives to take leadership positions.

Not only in Malawi and the USA, in Chinese society, In Indonesia, like in the Arab countries, women cannot be leaders. They occupy the supporting role, and are instructed to be passive and obedient. They cannot participate outside the household without permission from their husbands. Moreover, they are not allowed to be leaders (Airin, 2010). All the above are Islamic countries. It should be noted that patriarchal culture is not unique to Islamic countries, however, Islamic countries are the most patriarchal regions of the world (Soekarba, 2019). In these countries there are gender roles which are unique social constructs assigned to individuals the moment their sex is identified. These roles later translate into academic interests and professional careers. The roles include men being leaders (Reiners, 2022).

In Malawi for instance, the government is doing all it can to facilitate gender equality in all spheres of life including in civil service. It revised the gender policy in order to promote gender mainstreaming throughout the public and integrate gender consideration into all activities (Government of Malawi, 2012). In addition, it launched the National Gender Programme and other relevant international legal instruments on gender equality. The Malawi Constitution (1994) has devoted a whole section (Section 24) to define the rights of women apart from invalidating any discriminatory laws and practices. The Employment Act (2000) invalidates all forms of discrimination among others. These and many more are an indication that Malawi is doing all it can to promote gender equality in all spheres of life. But still more, there are huge disparities in head ship positions in secondary schools between male and female teachers.

It is clear that most Malawians are born and raised in patriarchal communities that view women as followers and men as leaders and decision makers. This makes it difficult for most women to build their confidence and ascend above the patriarchal cultural dictates and be able to accept the head ship positions when given. Some of those in the appointing authorities on the other hand also have reservations when it comes to appointing a female teacher in head ship positions, they will always give it a second thought. This is due to unconscious biases[1] that happen without them realising it, making it difficult to be truly objective. Regardless how fair-minded a person thinks he is, unconscious bias can have an effect on the decisions one make as well as contribute to inequality in the workplace. This is to say that one's background, personal experiences and cultural environment all influence the way one subconsciously view and evaluate other people (Department for Education, 2017).

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[1] Originated from the patriarchal cultural values.

There are many types of unconscious biases, the common ones being how individuals regard their own thought processes and reasoning abilities, such as focusing on negative qualities of individuals that align with one's existing attitudes (Pavlou, 2018). Examples of unconscious biases include: 'women are more sensitive, thus not able to handle the pressure that goes with leadership'. Or 'after a certain age, women struggle to balance family needs with the requirements of a senior position'. The results of assumptions like these ones is that those in appointing authorities can make appointment decisions based on the limited information which can- not even reflect the individual in question. It is important to those in appointing authorities to implement regular bias and stereotype training to be mindful of the unconscious biases whenever they are appointing teachers in headship positions. In so doing, the patriarchal values will not have an impact in the appointment of teachers into headship positions. Women will also be in a position to accept the appointments despite being wives and mothers.

4.3.2 Low education

The study found out that the number of female teachers with proper qualifications and grades is few as compared to their male counterparts. This is because most of them have not upgraded themselves.

Most female teachers complained to the point that they are discouraged to go further with their studies from all angles of life. To begin with, the patriarchal culture does not promote women education because they encourage male supremacy. This happens most especially in poor families that can -not afford school fees in better schools for both a boy and girl child.

They will prefer to put much effort on a boy child[1] than a girl in fear of regretting thereafter. Those who are financially good, they encourage both children and put equal effort to both only that these types of families are few as compared to those who are financially struggling. This results in reduction in number of a girl child with good qualification as compared to boys.

In addition, when a woman marries with the little education that she has, the husband will not be comfortable to let her leave the children and families behind just because they desire to upgrade themselves. This is because the husband claims that a married woman is the husband's responsibility. So, it will be like a woman is not satisfied with the care that the husband is giving her. As such, the husband will find convincing excuses to stop her from going for further education. If a husband has a good heart and would wish his wife to go further with studies, he will first of all upgrade himself before allowing his wife to do likewise. To avoid competitions and to put their marriages at risk[2], it was noted that most women just give up and seem to be comfortable with whatever qualification they have just to maintain peace in their families. This leads most of them to have low grades when compared with men.

Participants at the EDM's office had this to say:

> *"there are very few female teachers with good qualification and grades more especially in Chitipa district. Most of those with good grades and qualifications are concentrated at Chitipa boma where their husbands work".*

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[1] Boy child is the heir to the throne in patriarchal cultures.
[2] In most African societies, a real woman is supposed to be at her matrimonial home otherwise she is a disgrace at her family members.

Similar observations were made in Memon (2003) who noted that one of the causes of women's underrepresentation in leadership positions in Bangladesh was lack of a pool of qualified women due to limitations in access to secondary education for girls. Bangladesh's situation is opposite of that of Malawi in the sense that Malawian girls have unhindered access to education. They are supported in all aspects if not for the social cultural and other individual factors.

In Indonesia, Ouston (1993) studied the Influencing factors of female underrepresentation as school principals. He discovered that most women are reluctant to compete[1] with their male counterparts at leadership positions. This is because of the traditional assumptions that women are dependant and passive. As a result, women are unable to see themselves as potential figures because they have learned that power is not made for women but for men. This is the influence of patriarchal cultures.

This thinking is very common in most African countries, Malawi inclusive. In most African communities, girls' education was not being taken as seriously as they did with that of a boy. This is because education for girls was like some sort of a luxury. A girl will grow up and be under someone hence no need to waste more resources on her. However, the situation is now different, most countries have changed their attitudes towards the girls' education and they are now supporting them. This has resulted in the improvement in numbers of educated and qualified girls and women. This is despite being low in number as compared to men.

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[1] Real women are supposed to be submissive.

4.3.3 Marital obligations.

It was noted that some females lack support from their spouses. The study found out that most men do not become happy[1] when their wives are in head ship positions. They feel insecure which originate from the inferiority complex within themselves. They will find reasons to discourage her if she has been appointed to head a school. If she accepts the position without their consent, it becomes a source of conflicts in their families. In such cases, most female teachers choose to protect their families rather than accepting leadership positions.

In addition, too much responsibilities[2] also hinder most women from accepting leadership positions in the sense that they fail to balance between the work and family responsibilities. On a focus group discussion, most female teachers argued the fact that:

> "*being a wife and a mother, there are roles that need to be fulfilled on daily basis, headship on the other hand will demand me to go to school very early in the morning and stay the whole day there so it is better to be a mere teacher*"

However, some showed willingness but complained that their husbands cannot allow them to be headtechers as they will be too mobile in management meetings.

> "*Mobility and coming home late is what my husband hates".*

One female teacher complained.

This is because women are still responsible for the majority of the domestic chores and childcare in almost all countries. They therefore deny the head ship position because they feel they have too much responsibility at home such that they cannot manage to balance with the pressure which accompanies headship position. Differentiating personal life and

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[1] A feeling of inferiority complex hence they would not want to be looked as if they are under petticoat.

[2] They fail to balance up work commitments and personal priorities.

professional carrier becomes a little hard for most women in general such that they tend to mix up work commitments with personal priorities hence conflicts starts. Most of them confessed that they cannot manage the pressure accompanied to the headship position in addition to the roles they are supposed to fulfil at home. In other words, they felt a great burden to fulfil both home and work responsibilities. Most were seen choosing their homes and leaving the head ship roles to men who have all the time to themselves.

These findings are supported by EMAH (2022) who did research with women leaders in Ethiopia where he found out that women experienced a range of barriers to entering leadership positions. One of the barriers was the challenges of the double burden where women are expected to carry the bulk of the responsibility within the home and child care.

Being reluctant to allow their wives in headship positions is not for Malawian men only. This trend is very common in most patriarchal dominated societies and Muslim communities where women are more restricted from income earning activities. Moreover, to them a woman cannot be the head of an organisation as much as she cannot be the head of a family, unless in the absence of a man (Shava & Ndebele 2014). In addition, the study found out that most male spouses receive the news of their wives' elevation into the headship position with shock and disappointment. They ask a lot of questions as to why the office has decided to elevate their wives over other female teachers. If they are not convinced as to why, they will not give her a consent.

Reiners (2022) admits that being a headteacher requires too much investment, travel and flexibility. This makes most husbands not to freely allow their wives attain the head ship positions unless the school is located where the husband is working or doing business which

becomes a very rare occurrence. No wonder it becomes a problem for married female teachers to accept the head ship positions once given unless the husband gives a consent. Most of them feel comfortable being mere teachers to avoid insecurities in their homes. Most of them comfortably said that it feels better to be a mere teacher; you avoid a lot of problems in your marriage.

Women's responses concur what Pranathi and Lathabharan (2021) concluded in their study on "Role of woman in Leadership position". They found out that many women approach career progression with conflicting emotions. There is on one hand the elevation associated with possible newer demands and challenges, on the other hand the affirmation evolved in realising that one is capable of carrying out the associated duties of the new position.

Reiners (2022) compliments the study's findings by Friedman and Marshall (2004) and Pranathi and Lathabharan (2021) by arguing that the incompatibility of the roles of a mother, wife and manager put women at risk of accepting managerial roles. Most of them prefer being a mere teacher than holding any challenging responsibilities so long they are free minded and their marriages are at peace.

Based from the responses of most female teachers, it is clear that women refuse the headship position because of some internal barriers that lead them to self-exclude from leadership positions. They sacrifice their position because they want to fully take care of their husbands and children. They also lack motivation from their spouses and other stakeholders. This makes them ignore the headship position.

4.3.4 Lack of support from stakeholders

Most stakeholders such as teachers, students, support staff and even the surrounding communities feel reluctant to work with females including female head teachers. This is because most people have negative attitudes[1] towards female teachers. This attitude is based from the patriarchal cultural values and other mistaken attitudes towards women being brought in an environment which support male superiority. For instance, the assumption that women are weak or are not committed enough, they lack confidence and most of them fail to make independent decisions. This is however true to some women though it is a general view. As such, most followers fail to recognize female head teachers as their leaders. They show reluctance and resistance to take orders from them. As a result, those in head ship positions end up being frustrated. One participant revealed what happens at a certain school where there are two deputy head teachers (a male and female).

He said that,

> "*teachers, students and even the support staff vary the respect that they give to these deputy head teachers. Most feel reluctant to recognize a female deputy head teacher as they do with a male one. This becomes so frustrating to a female deputy head teacher who end up being frustrated.*"

Another one had this to say:

> "w*omen usually do not support each other because when a lady has been given a position, other ladies go behind and start calling her names, talking all sorts of things against her. She continued by saying that women at times feel jealousy of each other hence do not support each other. Men on the other hand, usually encourage and support each other*"

Another participant said that:

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[1] Most women are generally weak being raised in a male dominated culture, they hardly make independent decisions.

"it is high time people should start supporting and accepting females in management and leadership positions including those who are given the headship position. This is because female head teachers are in most cases very good. For instance, the few female headteachers in the division are doing extremely fine. They are contributing a lot both academically (high performance and infrastructural development. It has been wonderful working with female head teachers. No schools that are headed by female headteachers have ever registered any case of vandalism or even misuse of funds. Almost all the schools have registered good performance apart from being much disciplined schools"

From what has been presented above, it is clear that both males and females make good head teachers so long they are supported. Moreover, naturally, both men and women bring different creativity, wisdom and different innovations in the world of work. This maximizes productivity. It is also a fact that the world is no longer for the bread winner model taking into account the economic crisis out there. Fetching for bread is no longer a responsibility of a man only but rather of both, man and woman. For good life in a family, a husband and wife should complement one another in fetching for the family needs hence the need for people to support and accept both males and female leaders irrespective of the prevailing patriarchal cultures. Women should be exemplary in supporting each other. They should also be willing to take up challenging positions despite the odds around if they are to excel. In so doing, they will be able to overcome notions of culture and gender stereotypes. What is needed is for them to be able to balance up both their home and professional values. Otherwise, people will learn to accept and support them.

Pounder and Coleman (2011) in their studies of "Females being underrepresented in headship positions in the Asian Chinese context, summarised that the underlying patriarchal values made it very difficult for women to transcend entrenched attitudes to women and take on senior management roles in schools. This is despite the general approval of the idea of equality between the sexes. In addition, most women have made substantial gains as far as education is concerned." Those in appointing authorities should continue to appoint female teachers in headship positions and all stake holders should learn to accept and support them.

To echo the researcher and other scholars above, Mayaya (2013), argues that the majority of Malawians showed lack of support in 2012 when a woman (Joyce Banda) ascended to the presidency position. This was due to patriarchal attitudes towards women in decision making positions. There were mixed reactions from people. The majority showed lack of support just because they could not afford to be ruled by a woman. This was witnessed in the type of remarks people altered. They were not willing or ready for a female president. This was because of being socialised within the patriarchal traits where a woman occupy a supporting role.

In traditional Arab society for instance, women are restricted to their homes to prevent interaction with men who are not family member (AbuBaker, 1992). In the Arab Gulf countries, Stead and Eliot's' study found that the challenges faced by women in leadership positions include negative attitudes towards working women and lack of confidence and trust in women leaders (Abu- Baker, 1992).

In Indonesia, Ouston (1993) and Airin (2010), looked on Influencing factors of female underrepresentation as school principals. Therefore, like in the Arab countries, the 2 scholars found out that women cannot be leaders. They occupy the supporting role, and are instructed to be passive and obedient. They cannot participate outside the household without permission from their husbands. Moreover, they are not allowed to be leaders. Being born and raised in such an environment, it becomes difficult if not possible to accept or recognise women leadership. This is because the society itself provide a scenario which favour men more than women. This makes more people being reluctant to accept female leadership.

4.3.5 Reluctance in taking up responsibilities.

It was noted that most female teachers are reluctant to take up leadership positions. This is because most of them are not good in taking up risks[1], more especially those who are married. Whenever they are offered a leadership position, they would prefer to turn it down so long it can affect their families. As a mother and a wife to someone, a woman is not independent to make her own decisions without the spouse's approval. She fears the husband will label her arrogant and replace her with another woman. So, in circumstances where a husband is working or doing business somewhere, a woman will be limited to accept to head only the school that is located where the husband is. Otherwise, she will keep on rejecting head ship positions as she cannot be separated from the husband.

This becomes a challenge to those in appointing authorities to locate a female married teacher exactly where her husband lives. Their responsibility is to appoint teachers to head schools where there is a gap despite the location of the area. This make it difficult for both those in appointing authorities to find a suitable place for this qualified married female

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[1] Most of them are not public speakers.

teacher and the female teacher to grab the head ship positions and leave the husband behind. Some will accept only if the school is within the husband's home and the husband too has approved. Otherwise, she will keep on rejecting the offers. Furthermore, being a mother, female teachers prefer places with basic social amenities for survival. These include: a good school for the children, a good health facility, water, electricity, and market/ a big trading centre.

The study also noted that most teachers' especially female ones do reject to be appointed to head schools in rural areas where some basic social amenities are not up to date. They are afraid of denying their children the right to good social services. These include good primary schools and health facilities. Such being the case, female teachers are very selective when it comes to schools she can teach or lead. They do not accept schools that are not accessible because of the geographical positions where those schools are allocated.

On the same note, participants at the division complained that:

> *"most female teachers turn down the head ship position when given. This is despite having good qualifications and grades."*

Pounder and Coleman (2011) in their studies of female teachers' underrepresentation in headship positions summarised that the underlying patriarchal values made it very difficult for women to transcend entrenched attitudes to women and take on senior management roles in schools.

It should be noted that this study was conducted in two patriarchal districts of the northern region. In these districts, peoples' thinking and decision making is influenced by the patriarchal values as said by (Ponder and Coleman 2011). This makes it difficult for most

women to accept the head ship positions when given. This is because they cannot accept the position before seeking consent from their husbands most of whom cannot give their consent.

4.4 The effectiveness of the criteria for appointing head teachers.

4. 4. 1 The substantive criteria

The use of merit to guide the selection of teachers in headship positions facilitates fairness and impartiality. Where the grade or position has been obtained formerly, power and authority is instilled such that those that have acquired the positions in such a way do not face opposition in their ruling. Teachers and other stakeholders welcome such head teachers without any reservations. They are willing to work with such leaders' thereby promoting team spirit and performance in the end.

In addition, the criteria give chance to those on Grade TG to compete for the post irrespective of their gender. This is through the regular interviews whereby one has chance to rise from one grade to the other. When the person reaches grade TG, he/ she is assured to compete on the substantive grade to headship position. This help to restore the status of the teaching profession as promotions are not released anyhow but rather given to those who deserve.

Through the substantive criteria, the government is assured of getting highly competent head teachers. Those who are duly prepared to handle head ship related challenges. This is because for one to reach the substantive grade, the person will have passed through different situations that make him/ her fully matured and prepared for the position associated to the grade. This person will have full of experience in the sense that he/ she will have risen from

grade TJ to grade TF and that from each grade, the teacher stayed for not less than four years thereby having passed through a lot of things.

The criteria help to retain the status of the teaching profession. This is because big positions like being a head of an institution is based on merit. This will make people to respect the status of the teaching profession knowing for sure that only those who are eligible contain other added titles such as being head teachers or head of departments.

Most participants had this to say:

> "*it is high time government should start supporting the TSC instead of interfering in its performances. This will help to restore the status of the teaching profession.*"

This is supported with what the Department of Education in England does. It ensures that they conduct a fair and open process to ensure that staff are recruited on the basis of merits, abilities and suit abilities for the position (National Governance Association et al 2017). In support, Spoehr (2004) contends to the fact that school headteachers occupy an important position in society hence there is need for a thoroughly recruitment and selection procedures. He continued by saying that the procedures should not be a hurried one because the wrong choice, for the purpose of expediency in filling a post, has the propensity to lead to heartache and harm to the school and the community at large.

This sounds as a caution to those in appointing authorities to be extremely careful when appointing teachers into head ship positions using an informal way. Instead of realising the intended educational objectives, time will be wasted in resolving head ship related issues. It is high time the government should stop intervening negatively in the commission's affairs

but rather should support them to perform as intended. In so doing, the status of the teaching profession could be maintained. The issues of rejecting the position could also be history since applying for the position could be based on choice and grades.

4.4.2 The administrative arrangement criteria

To begin with, the administrative arrangement criteria spearhead government's operations since the number of teachers with the substantive grades to head schools is very limited as compared to the number of schools on the ground. So, the need for more head teachers is an ongoing process as they fill the vacant posts which are continuously being created. The government and religious proprietors are opening new schools at an alarming rate. In addition, most head teachers are retiring upon reaching the retirement age. This then leaves vacant spaces in schools and these schools cannot run without head teachers. This makes the administrative arrangement criteria to be inevitable as government operations need to be spearheaded.

In addition, the criteria instils professionalism and a hard working spirit in qualified teachers. This is in the sense that the administrative arrangement criteria give mandate to those in appointing authorities to appoint on the position who- ever they feel is fit on the position. This uplift the morale of some teachers bearing in mind that at one time or the other, they might be appointed into the headship position.

The criteria give chance to young and energetic teachers to obtain the head ship position so long they have charismatic leadership traits. Formerly, a teacher is supposed to gain have proper grades and gain good experience before attaining the head ship position. Therefore, most head teachers were being of age before they could attain the head ship position. But

with the administrative arrangement criteria, many teachers are obtaining the head ship position while still young and energetic.

The criteria can be used to reduce the existing gaps in head ship positions between male and female teachers. This can happen if those in appointing authorities can have the will and zeal to do so. The criteria can be used to appoint as many female teachers in head ship positions as possible in order to cover the current existing gaps.

The study noted that at one point in time at the Northern Education Division offices, an officer made a call in one of the management meetings that whosoever was willing to attain the headship position should apply. Female teachers were encouraged to apply. Some did and all female applicants were considered. This helped to boast the number of female headteachers in the division despite that the information did not reach all female teachers as most headteachers who attended that management meeting did not deliver the message in their respective schools. What prompted the officer to make that call were the big gaps that existed in headship position between male and female teachers. He had in mind the few numbers of female head teachers within the division and he wanted to reduce the gaps or even end them. So, the officer had to make it clear that the call was especially for female teachers. His priority was to appoint as many female head teachers as possible in order to uplift their numbers.

Some female teachers who heard the call applied and were all picked such that the number of female head teachers in secondary schools had to improve a bit. This is because before that call, there were very few female teachers who were in headship positions. The gaps are still huge because the call did not reach as many female teachers as possible, it was done at

a management meeting which is attended by head teachers only. So, some head teachers did not disseminate the information in their schools such that most female teachers did not know that there was such a call.

This is what one participant from the division had to say;

> *"The call that schools should be headed by female headteachers is a recognition of the inverse contribution that female headteachers are making towards the advancement of education. No any challenges have been experienced in working with female head teachers. They are doing exceptional work and no one should lie about that. Female headteachers have never been called to be cautioned or warned but rather to be congratulated".*

This echoes what Reddy (2018) argued about female leaders, he said that, "hiring women in the companies have many benefits as they are more focused, committed and successful" he continued by saying that "men and women are always two sides of the same coin in the sense that each one of them has their unique charisma and each one thinks and handles the situation differently".

This is to say that female headteachers can equally head well as male ones do hence the need to appoint as many female headteachers as possible through the administrative arrangement criteria. Moreover, many women have necessary qualifications. Those in appointing authorities and other stakeholders should learn to understand the nature of women and learn to accept them as they are.

4.5 Challenges.

4.5.1 The substantive criteria

The study has found out that the criteria's failure to perform accordingly has the following consequences:

Firstly, teachers take a lot of time on the grade before they can be promoted to another grade. This is because the teaching service commission fail to release vacancies at regular basis. In so doing, most teachers remain stagnant on the same position for a long period of time. Apart from dragging the elevation process, these teachers are denied the privileges attached to bigger positions. These positions include; being heads of department, being heads/ deputy head teachers. This trend disturbs the teaching and learning process in the sense that it disturbs the professionalism of some teachers more especially those that have been skipped on the political mass promotions. These teachers are left frustrated and their hard-working spirit and performance is affected. The morale and power to work whole heartedly is either reduced or even gone. This affects the quality of the education system.

Secondly, it has led to lack of qualified personnel in the pool. There is acute lack of substantively qualified teachers in a pool who could be appointed to headship position. Most teachers have good qualifications as far as secondary teaching is concerned. For instance, they have degrees or diplomas in education but their grades do not allow them to either be heads of departments, deputy head teachers or even head teachers. This is because the TSC does not release posts regularly for teachers to apply and be able to obtain higher grades. In so doing, most teachers are stagnant on the same grade for years thereby leaving the pool without qualified teachers.

Further, the established 4 years' experience on the grade before an individual can be qualified to apply for another grade is too long more especially to those following the formal promotion ladder. The formal procedure for one to be eligible to apply for another grade should have been reduced to two years bearing in mind that others pass through political promotions such that they even jump the normal grades.

Most participants testified to the fact that,

> "*there is acute lack of substantively qualified teachers in a pool who could be appointed to headship position.*" Others said that, "*lazy teachers are the ones who are in most times lucky of being promoted*"

This trend frustrates teachers, mainly those that are left during the mass promotions. This is because at times after four years, the TSC will fail to create vacancies for them to apply such that they will remain stagnant on the same grade for a number of years. Those type of teachers cannot work wholeheartedly. This affect their performance and that of the school at large.

In England, their education system should be given a pat at their back. This is because the Department of Education in the country ensures that they conduct a fair and open process to ensure that staffs are recruited on the basis of merits, abilities and suit abilities for the position (National Governance Association et al., 2017). This minimises teachers' frustrations thereby helping to raise the quality of education in their country.

4. 5. 2 The administrative arrangement criteria

The study has noted the following challenges with the administrative arrangement criteria:

To begin with, the study has noted that the criteria is subjective. This is in the sense that the factors to consider before appointing teachers into the headship position vary. Not all head teachers appointed through the administrative arrangement criteria have never been involved in discipline issues. Some head teachers were frequently being involved in scandals before they were appointed on the position. This defeats the character/ behaviour factor. Other head teachers are still involved in different scandals despite being given the position. This entails that, the factors being considered before appointing teachers into the position do not apply equally to all teachers hence the subjectivity.

Further, the administrative arrangement criteria has ended up being abused. It ends up choosing some head teachers whose grades resemble or are to the lower side than those of their deputies or some teachers at the schools they are heading (figure 3). These affect relationships in most schools and the performance in general. For instance, studies have revealed that in the 8 sampled secondary schools, schools 2,3,6,7 and 8 have deputies and some teachers whose grades resemble those of their head teachers. This is frustrating at times to both the head teacher, deputy head teacher and even the teachers whose grades equate or are above those of the head teacher. This sometimes affects their performance.

Table 4.3 The status of head teachers in comparison to their deputy head teachers and teachers.

School category	Head teacher's sex		Grade	Deputy head's sex		Grade	Female grade.
	M	**F**		**M**	**F**		
District boarding			TF	√		1. TG	TI 4

95

						2. TH	
N/Sec (Grant aided)		√	TH	√	√	1. TI 2. 2. TH	TI 03
CDSS	√		TI	√		TJ	00
N/Sec (Grant aided)		√	TG	√		1. TH 2. TI	TI 4 TJ 1
CDSS (Double shift)	√		TF	√	√	1. G 2. H	TH 1 TI 5
CDSS (Double shift)	√		TH	√		1. TI 2. TG	TH 2 TI 4 TJ 3
CDSS	√		TH	√		TI	TJ 1 TL2
District boarding	√		TH	√		TH	TH 1 TI 2 TL/K 2

Furthermore, the criteria facilitate the lowering down of the educational standards. This is in the sense that the teachers who feel that they are being side lined end up being frustrated. Some factors such as nepotism, attitudes/ assumptions towards some people, relationships and the secrecy surrounding the appointment procedures make those in appointment authorities forgo some qualities necessary for a good head teacher. This result in appointing unable teachers on the position who can hardly perform thereby diverting its original purpose which was to spearhead government's operations in the absence of teachers with the

substantive grades to head schools. This in the end affects the performance of the school at large. No wonder Spoehr (2004) warned those in appointing authorities that the wrong choice of a head teacher has the propensity to lead to heartache and harm to the school and the community at large. That school will not perform well.

In addition, it becomes a challenge to appoint eligible head teachers where other factors are considered apart from merit. Some people are so good at pretending whenever they desire something. In this case, some teachers can portray the desired factors only to change after acquiring the position. This gives tough time to those in appointing authorities to appoint the eligible head teachers. This has resulted in mismanagement of schools thereby affecting performance.

Another challenge comes when the one who is appointed reject the position. This leaves those in appointing authority with no option than to appoint whoever is willing thereby choosing those who cannot lead the school. This affects the teaching profession negatively.

Lastly, the criteria contribute to lower the status of the teaching profession. This is because it does not have limitations as to who can be appointed into the headship position. For instance, even those on grade TJ, TK/L (Refer to figure 2) in extreme cases. This being the case, other professions conclude that the teaching profession is very cheap and easy. This is because any teacher can be appointed to head some schools irrespective of their grades, qualifications and even behaviour. When these teachers underperform, people conclude that there is lack of seriousness in the teaching profession. They end up lowering the status of the teaching. Most participants complained that,

> "*Nowadays schools have lost value. Anyone can become a headteacher*"

Despite all the challenges met when appointing headteachers informally, Yirci and Kocabas (2010) and Burk (2012) observed that, with the advancement of education as a crucial factor in a nation's development, the capabilities and management skills of educational leaders, especially head teachers, are regarded as the main element to attaining the nation's vision and mission.

In addition, the Department for Education, (2017) reminds those in appointing authorities that school leadership is extremely influential on the success of a school hence it is essential to give thought, care, time and attention to recruitment and selection processes.

It is therefore an appeal to those in appointing authorities at the EDM's office to thoroughly scrutinize whoever is to be appointed as a headteacher informally. Moreover, it is a fact that some people have charismatic leadership traits such that they head schools very well despite being appointed using the Administrative Arrangement criteria. A good example is the grant aided schools. Those to head these schools are appointed using the informal criteria and yet most of these schools perform very well.

4.6 Suggested solutions to the existing gaps in headship positions.

The study suggested the following mechanisms as the solutions to the existing gaps in headship positions:

4.6.1 Sensitization meeting.

The government should embark on sensitization meetings for maybe two years. The aim should be to civic educating female teachers on the importance of taking up risks in life. This is because the study has revealed that most female teachers are not willing to take up

risks and be willing to accept challenging positions unconditionally. There is no way we can be talking of gender equity in leadership positions if women are not ready to take up risks. This include: going for self -upgrading and leaving their husbands and families behind, accepting challenging positions at school level (being Heads of Departments, Examination Committee chairperson, Deputy head teachers) and even accepting the headship position when given.

Women should be encouraged to overcome the notions of culture and gender stereotypes[1]. They should learn to balance up their home values as well as the professional ones if they are to excel. The sensitization should also lobby for women to support each other[2] since there is power in unity. It is the unity that can wipe all the unconscious biasness towards each other. Men will easily support them if they first support one another. In so doing, the issue of underrepresentation of women in headship positions can be history. This is in the sense that those in appointing authorities are trying their best to appoint female teachers in headship positions despite the weakness of the current criteria and some unconscious bias that everyone has. The challenge here is that many women choose their families above everything. This facilitates the gender gaps in headship positions.

4.6.2 Gender equity policies

To begin with, there is need for a mechanism which should be used to remove/ minimise the existing gaps in headship positions. First and foremost, the government should recruit more female teachers in the system to balance with male ones. There are many qualified teachers out there who are not yet been recruited in the system. So, the study feels that when creating vacancies, the government should introduce quota in the recruitment process that is a

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[1] They need to be strong and independent in decision making.
[2] They need to love one another.

number to represent females to be recruited. For instance, for every ten teachers to be recruited, 7 should be females. This can drastically improve the number of female teachers in secondary schools in Malawi.

In addition, the government should come up with a deliberate policy to ensure 50:50 representations in head ship positions in Malawian secondary schools[1]. This is in line with the critical mass theory which is an affirmative action program aiming to close the gender gaps in the public service. Its assumption is that by any means, the gender gap should not exist in work places. The theory was originated by Moss Kanter (2004). It recognizes and advocates for the social change role and responsibility of educational leaders. The educational leaders should be in the fore front to remove negative attitudes that people have towards women. The society should accept women in the same way they do with men when it come on responsibilities.

4.6.3 Continuous Professional Development (CPDs)

Further, the government should deliberately create management and leadership trainings targeting female teachers. Apart from trainings, they should also be deliberate refresher courses or Continuous Professional Development (CPDs) on management and leadership issues targeting lady teachers. This will equip lady teachers with head ship skills and roles. In so doing, all the misconceptions accompanying head ship positions in secondary schools will be removed. It will also help to eliminate fears and the low self- esteem that most female teachers have towards the headship position. This will also instil confidence in them such that whenever they are appointed into head ship positions, they will not be denying.

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[1] Whenever there are interviews, the priority should be to women to boost their numbers.

They should use females who have managed to perform in leadership including being heads or deputies of secondary schools.

4.6.4 Incentives.

Furthermore, the government should create incentives to all female teachers who accept head ship positions more especially in hard to reach and remotest areas as a way of encouraging them. This can be in form of giving them two grades ahead or even international visits. This will help to motivate more female teachers to take leadership positions anywhere within the division. Being a head teacher in rural or hard to reach areas help to motivate more learners to school. They act as a role model to both learners and the community at large. In the long run, people will change their attitudes towards women.

4.6.5 Empower and support the locally formed female teachers' groups

In addition, the education divisions should continue to empower and support the locally formed female teachers' groups. For instance, female teachers in headship positions in NED have their own WhatsApp group where they help one another in various leadership issues. These female head teachers can be used as resource persons to other female teachers. They can deliberately have awareness programs in schools targeting females. They can sensitize a lot of leadership related issues to fellow female teachers thereby removing the fear that is common in most female teachers. This can only be possible if the division can financially support this type of grouping. In so doing, they can be able to reach all schools in the division. Therefore, supporting is very vital for they will be acting as role models as well as motivators to other female teachers in the division.

4.6.6 Incorporating the Education and Leadership Knowledge in the curriculum

Not only the above, the study also suggest that the Education and leadership knowledge should be incorporated in the curriculum so that they are given to students while at tender age. That is from secondary schools to college level. This will help students to be aware of what is contained in leadership and management fields. These types of lessons will help to instil confidence in students. In so doing, when they grow up, they will be able to accept challenging positions including being head teachers in secondary schools. Apart from educational institutions, there should also be programs on the media that aims at sensitizing people in leadership issues.

4.6.7 Appoint as many female teachers in head ship positions as possible.

Last but one, those in the appointing authorities should change people's attitudes towards females by appointing as many female teachers in head ship positions as possible. They should consider female teachers as able as the male ones. Let them build their belief and confidence in female teachers as they do with male ones. Let them give opportunities to most female teachers to take leader ship positions including being head teachers in secondary schools. Whenever they want to find out more about the individual female teacher, let them go down to teachers and chat with them on their own instead of relying much on secondary sources. These secondary sources are at times jealousy such that they cannot provide authentic information of the teacher in question. So, let them come on the ground for information gathering on their own. In so doing, they will be able to appoint abler female teachers to head schools.

4.6.8 Chapter summary.

This chapter was designed to present, interpret and discuss data on the factors that lead to the underrepresentation of female teachers in headship positions. The findings have presented the criteria used to appoint teachers into headship positions in secondary schools in Malawi. It has also presented the current situation of headteachers appointments in secondary schools, the challenges faced by the TSC and the factors that cause the current gender gaps in headship positions. The status of headteachers in NED, Chitipa and Karonga districts and the eight sampled schools was also presented. Finally, the chapter has also presented the effectiveness and challenges of the current criteria used to appoint headteachers, the status of headteachers in the eight sampled schools and the suggested solutions to the existing gender gaps in headship positions. The gender gaps in headship positions are being facilitated by the internal barriers that lead women to exclude themselves from headship positions. Efforts should therefore be made to let people, mainly women understand the importance of rising above the patriarchal cultural values so that their thinking and decision making is reversed. These findings align with the literature reviewed thereby adding depth to the study insights. The next chapter presents summary of findings.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from both the field study and document reviews. It was guided by the following objectives: to identify the criteria used to appoint teachers into headship positions, to determine the effectiveness of the current criteria used to appoint teachers in headship positions and to examine the general challenges/ shortfalls of the current system used to appoint teachers in headship positions.

5.2 Conclusion

This study concludes that women are indeed being underrepresented in head ship positions in secondary schools. For instance, out of the eight secondary schools under study, only two were headed by female head teachers while six were headed by their male counterparts. The study has found out that the underrepresentation of women in headship positions is being facilitated mainly by personal factors such as refusal of headship positions. Most women were seen confidently not willing to take up headship positions. They preferred protecting their families more than taking up any leadership position which looked challenging and could disturb their focus in marriage. These include being Heads of Departments, being Chairpersons of the Examination Committee or even being a Deputy Head teacher. This is because leaders work even during odd hours, a development most female teachers shun.

This is despite the fact that some of those involved in appointing authorities can have reservations based from the patriarchal cultures when appointing female teachers, in this study, out of the few appointed on the positions again are not willing to take up the position.

They will find one reason or the other so that they turn down the offer. In so doing, the study concludes that the criteria used to appoint teachers in headship positions is not to blame for the underrepresentation of female teachers in headship positions despite its challenges and some irregularities surrounding it. The female teacher herself is to blame for failing to take up the headship positions when offered. Those in appointing authorities through the administration arrangement criteria do appoint both male and female teachers. It has been noted that most female teachers turn down the offer while the male one receive it whole heartedly. The study has noted that the patriarchal values have turned a woman into a submissive and supporting person, the one who will always rely on other people for important decision making. This woman has lost her self- esteem and confidence. She does not see herself fit to be a leader hence turn down challenging positions. Only the few women who stand up above the cultural tenets accept the appointment. This then facilitate the gaps in headship positions.

The study has therefore demonstrated that the main factor leading to low representation of women in head ship positions in secondary schools is the woman herself. This is despite of the weak criteria used to appoint teachers in headship positions and the bias nature of some who are involved in the appointing authorities. Most female teachers prefer protecting their families more than taking up leadership positions. Those in appointing authorities appoint women in headship positions but very few accept the offer while most of them turn it down, more especially those who are married. Most of them lack support from their husbands hence they choose their homes than the headship position.

5.3 Suggestions

For gender equality in leadership positions to be a reality, change need to take place at all levels starting with a woman herself. Her capabilities, knowledge and skills is a necessary precondition for exercising leadership. At the relations including their homes, women's leadership can be supported by promoting joint house hold decision making. Men should be willing to support their wives or sisters to take up challenging decisions. Their presence at all levels is very crucial. This will help them to change their attitudes towards women thereby continue supporting women's leadership. This is because the study has found out that those few women who take up leadership positions are doing exceptional work, both in infrastructural, behavioural and academic development such that at one point in time, one officer had to make a call for women who might be willing to be given the headship position. Very few turned up and were all given the headship positions.

The study has also noted that some women turn down the leadership position based on lack of support of previous female leaders. They witnessed on how their fellow female head teacher struggled as she was not being supported in all corners. The study therefore call all stakeholders to support women leaders at all cost. This will help them to regain their lost self -esteem and be confident enough. In so doing, they will be able to accept the headship offer given to them. In addition, women and girls are encouraged to work extra hard and be able to balance up their home value as well as their professional values. It is high time women have been looking down towards themselves. The equity fight will very soon be a reality if women themselves are working hard towards achieving it. Moreover, they already have the critical mass theory and the constructivism tenets that can work perfectly if women too can put effort.

The government should embark on sensitization meetings at cluster or division level. They should stress on the importance of regaining up their self- esteem and confidence. In so doing, more women will be willing to take up challenging positions thereby reducing the current gaps in leadership positions. This is supported by the critical mass theory which argues that there is need for an increased number of women in leadership positions as it is believed that increasing their numbers will have a major impact on administrative as well as legislative outcomes.

5.4 Chapter summary

This chapter presented summary of the findings, conclusions and suggestions to achieve gender equity in headship positions in secondary schools.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter of Introduction to the Division

<div align="right">

Wezzie WR Nyondo (MEDLM 3020)

Mzuzu University

Private Bag 201

Luwinga Mzuzu 2

Tel. 0997197314

Email: welakonyondo@gmail.com.

</div>

The Education   Division Manager,

Northern Education Division,

 P. O.   Box 133, Mzuzu.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Request to carry out a research in selected secondary schools within the division.

My name is Wezzie WR Nyondo, a [post graduate student at Mzuzu University. I am carrying out a study on '*understanding factors that lead to low female teachers' representation in headship positions in secondary schools of the Northern Education Division*. This is a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of education in leadership and management. I am therefore writing to request for permission to carry out this study in some of the schools in your division.

Attached is an introduction letter from Mzuzu University.

 Yours Faithfully,

WR Nyondo

Wezzie WR Nyondo (MEDLM 3020).

Appendix B: Letter of Introduction to Schools.

<div align="right">

Mzuzu University.

Private Bag 201,

Luwinga, Mzuzu 2.

Tel. 0997197314.

</div>

The headteacher,

_____Secondary School.

Dear Sir/ Madam,

<div align="center">

REQUEST TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL.

</div>

My name is Wezzie WR Nyondo, a [post graduate student at Mzuzu University. I am carrying out a study on '*understanding factors that lead to low female teachers' representation in headship positions in secondary schools of the Northern Education Division*. This is a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of education in leadership and management.

I am therefore writing to request for permission to carry out this study in your school. Attached is an introduction letter from Mzuzu University and the education division manager.

Yours Faithfully,

Wezzie Nyondo.

Wezzie WR Nyondo.

Appendix C: Participant's consent **form**

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH

Dear sir/Madam,

My name is Wezzie WR Nyondo, a post graduate student at Mzuzu University. I am carrying out a study on '*understanding factors that lead to underrepresentation of female teachers in headship positions in secondary schools'*, as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of education in leadership and Management.

The information that you will give in this study will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will not be accessible to any person except me and my supervisors. The information will be used for academic purposes only. Participation in this study is voluntary. For this reason, upon accepting to take part in this study, you are requested to sign in the space provided below.

I appreciate your cooperation and time you have put aside to support me in this important project.

Participant's sig …..

Date …………………………………………….................

Researcher's sig ………………………………………………………….

Date …………………………………………………………

Appendix D Interview guide for female teachers.

1. Why are there very few female teachers on head ship positions?

2. How best can the government ensure that there are more female teachers on head ship positions in secondary schools in Malawi?

3. What are the keys to closing the gender gap in head ship positions in secondary schools?

4. What role can female teachers play to ensure that more are appointed into head ship positions in secondary schools?

5. What is your opinion on female head teachers?

6. If you can be appointed to the headship position, what can be your stand?

Appendix E Interview guide for the head teacher/ deputy head teachers

    i.   Who qualifies to be a head-teacher in Malawian secondary schools?

    ii.   So far, how many males and how many female head teachers are there in each cluster of the   district?

    iii.   Why is there a great gender disparity between male and female teachers in headship positions   in secondary schools?

    iv.   What are the keys to closing the gender gap in head ship positions in secondary schools?

    v.   What mechanisms can be employed to achieve gender equity in headship positions in secondary schools of Chitipa and Karonga districts of the northern education division?

Appendix F Interview guide to the Human Resource Manager/ Director of Secondary Schools (DOSS) and the Chairperson of Postings Committee.

   i.   What criteria is used to appoint teachers into headship positions?

  ii.   What challenges do you face in appointing teachers into headship positions?

 iii.   How many female applicants have you received so far applying for a headship position?

  iv.   What can be the reasons that have contributed to the low female representation in headship   positions in Chitipa and Karonga districts of the northern education division?

   v.   What are your experiences with female head teachers' leadership? Any challenges working   with them?

  vi.   What do you think should be done in order to have equity in head ship positions?

Appendix G Work plan

	Activity	Proposed timeframe
1.	Collecting the letter of introduction and approval from MZUNIREC	20th January, 2022
2	Presenting the letter of introduction, and consent forms to the NED offices (HRM, DOSS and the transfer committee chairperson) and to book them for interviews.	10th February to 25th February,2022
3	Presenting letter of introduction and consent forms to the headteachers, deputy headteachers and teachers around Chitipa. Conducting one to one interviews while doing the audio recording.	06th to 12th March, 2022
4	Presenting letters of introduction and consent forms to the headteachers, deputy headteachers and teachers around Karonga. Conducting one to one interviews while doing the audio recording.	06th to 13th April, 2022.
5	Conducting one to one interviews with participants at the division offices.	07th to 15th May, 2022.
6	Data cleaning, analysis and report writing	06th April to 30th June, 2022.

7	Meeting with the supervisor on presented findings - Discussion of the findings	05th July to 20th August, 2022
8	Discussion of findings with the supervisor continues, data cleaning and data analysis continues	22nd August to 10th September, 2022.
9	Thesis presentation	15th September, 2022
10	Correction as per supervisors recommendations	25th to 30th September, 2022.
11	Submission for external examination	10th October, 2022.
12	Correction from the external examiner	20th November, 2022.
13	Final presentations of the study	15th December, 2022.

Appendix H: Budget for study research   budget

SN	ACTIVITY	AMOUNT KWACHA
1	Transport money: to and from Chitipa, within Karonga, to and from Mzuzu for data collection and cleaning	70 000 00
2	Transport to and from Mzuzu University	50 000 00
4	Voice recorder	60 000 00
4	Internet services	50 000 00
5	Printing: Consent forms, Letters, Data collection instruments and Final thesis	40 000 00
6	Binding of thesis	50 000 00
7	Airtime	10 000 00
8	Accommodation and meals	50 000 00
9	Contingency	40 000 00
	TOTAL BUDGET	**430 000 00**

Appendix I Proof of payment to MZUNIREC

National Bank of Malawi plc

18/12/21 10:03   MZUZU UNIVERSITY

MZUZU UNIVERSITY ALONG KARONGA RD

MZUZU 2

REF. TRANSACTION   TT/21352/08QG3
TELLER   1025 MA.KAMWERA

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - D E P O S I T - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

THE FOLLOWING HAS BEEN CREDITED TO YOUR
ACCOUNT NUMBER 1007578888 ON DATE 20/12/21

AMOUNT DEPOSITED   MWK   123,750.00

LESS CHARGES   MWK

AMOUNT CREDITED   MWK   123,750.00

FEES FOR WEZZIE NYONDO

DEPOSITOR'S NAME   WEZZIE NYONDO

DEPOSITOR'S PHONE   0884241064

DEPOSITOR'S SIGNATURE   -

TELLER'S SIGNATURE   -

NATIONAL BANK OF MALAWI PLC
MZUZU SERVICE CENTRE
18 DEC 2021
TELLER 11
05-10-09

BPR 1 (2001)

Appendix J: CURRICULUM VITAE

WEZZIE WELAKO REDSON NYONDO

Euthini Secondary Secondary, P.O Box 21, Euthini, Mzimba.

+265884241064/   +265997197314 welakonyondo@gmail.com

GENDER	Female
DATE OF BIRTH	18th October, 1974
MARITAL STATUS	Married
NATIONALITY	Malawian

i. PERSONAL PROFILE

A secondary school teacher interested in making a difference in producing students of high quality morally, socially and economically, teaching and learning in order to promote critical thinking and also encouraging learners to learn on their own through group work, study circles and research. I have over 15 years of practical experience as a teacher in the ministry of education

ii. CADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS TERTIARY EDUCATION

Done at:

Domasi College   of Education in conjunction with the   University of Malawi **(Zomba)**

- Bachelor of Education- Humanities (Secondary) (2014- 2016)

- Diploma in Education (Social and Development Studies and Theology and Religious Studies) (2009-2011).

- Bachelors of Education (Social and Development Studies and Theology and Religious Studies) (2014 to 2016).

iii. OTHER CERTIFICATES

- Malawi Certificate of Education (1994)
- T2 teaching Certificate of Education (2005)
- Certificate of THEATRE for A CHANGE (2010- 2011)
- Certificate for Malawi Red Cross society in basic training (2014)
- Certificate of recognition as one of the outstanding teachers in Karonga (2019)

iv. PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2022, Deputy Head teacher at Euthini Secondary School and teaching Social Studies, Life Skills and Bible Knowledge
- 2017 to 2021, Deputy Head teacher at CCAP Karonga Girls Secondary School and teaching Social Studies, Life Skills and Bible Knowledge.
- 2016- 2017, Coordinator (Head teacher) at Chaminade Open Secondary School while teaching my majoring subjects above.
- 2013-2016, Head of Department Humanities) at Chaminade   Secondary School.
- 2011 to 2013 teacher at Karonga Community Day Secondary School.
- 2011 to date, teaching Social and Development Studies, Life Skill and Bible Knowledge in various Secondary Schools in Malawi
- 2005-2009, primary school teacher in various primary schools in Karonga.

As a teacher, I used to do the following:

- Writing and submitting Schemes and Records of Work accordingly.

- Preparing and delivering lessons.

- Offering Counselling and guidance to the students

- Appropriate assessment of students' work.

- Filling in marks on school reports and giving appropriate comments.

- Maintaining discipline to the students.

As a Head of Department (Humanities), I used to

- Hold departmental meetings

- Supervise the department in the teaching and learning

- Checking schemes and records of work

- Class allocation to teachers

- Preparation a new term program in the department

- Submitting the Schemes and Records of Work to the Deputy Head teacher for marking.

As a Deputy Head teacher, I ensure that:

- The smooth day to day running of the school

- The academic activities of the school are being done properly

- Students are disciplined

- School programs are being followed

- Schemes and records of work are submitted and checked fortnightly

- Monitoring period registers

- Act as a head teacher in his/ her absence.

v. RESEARCH EXPERTISE

2015 Undergraduate Research Project Titled:

- Attitudes that male students have towards female teachers. A study based at Dedza Secondary School and Chaminade Secondary School respectively.
- Currently doing a research on understanding factors that cause low female representation in headship positions in secondary schools in Malawi. A case of Chitipa and Karonga districts of the northern education division.

vii. COMPUTER SKILLS

- Proficient user of MS Office (Word, Excel and PowerPoint)
- SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences)
- Internet

viii. LANGUAGE SKILLS

- English
- Chichewa - Native Language
- Tumbuka - Native Language
- Lambya - Native language

ix. PERSONAL QUALITIES AND INTERESTS

Ability to work in a fast paced environment	Watching movies
Ability to multitask	Reading novels
Ability to plan and inseminate knowledge to students	Excellent communication skills

Enthusiastic self-starter who contributes well to the team	Charismatic leader

x. **REFERENCES**

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