



## Examining Factors Affecting Curriculum Implementation in Achieving High Academic Performance in Malawi – A Case Study of Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School (Ntcheu)

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**ABSTRACT:** This study examines the factors affecting curriculum implementation in achieving high academic performance in Malawi, with a specific focus on Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School in Ntcheu. The study employs a qualitative research design, using interviews and observations to collect data from teachers, students, and school administrators. The study aims to identify the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing the curriculum, explore the strategies that teachers and school administrators employ to ensure successful curriculum implementation, and determine the impact of curriculum implementation on student academic performance. The findings provided an insights into the factors that contribute to successful curriculum implementation in Malawi and offer recommendations for improving curriculum implementation in the country. The study review also that thus factors, Lack of resources, Lack of qualified teachers, Poor students motivations, Lack of school fees, Poor curriculum implementation, Poor motivation of teachers, Poor administrative leadership and Long distance were factors affecting curriculum implementation in achieving high academic performance in Malawi at Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School in Ntcheu.

**KEYWORDS:** Academic performance, Curriculum implementation, Curriculum relevance, Community support, Evaluation, Education quality and teaching methods, Infrastructure, Resources, Teacher quality.

### INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study Education is considered to be a key factor in the socio-economic development of any country. Education is a means of acquiring knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for personal and social development. The quality of education provided is, therefore, crucial in ensuring successful development outcomes. In Malawi, education is a priority sector, and the government has made significant efforts to ensure access to quality education for all. However, despite these efforts, Malawi continues to face numerous challenges in providing quality education, especially in rural areas.

Curriculum implementation is a critical factor that determines the quality of education provided. The curriculum is the guide that outlines the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that learners are expected to acquire. Curriculum implementation, therefore, involves the translation of the curriculum into actual teaching and learning activities. Successful curriculum implementation is essential for achieving high academic performance, and it requires a conducive learning environment, well-trained teachers, and adequate resources. However, in many developing countries, including Malawi, curriculum implementation remains a challenge, and this negatively affects the quality of education provided.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Curriculum implementation is a crucial aspect of the education system that affects academic performance. In Malawi, the curriculum has undergone various revisions in recent years, with the aim of improving student learning outcomes. However, despite these efforts, there is still a significant gap between the intended curriculum and its actual implementation in schools, leading to poor academic performance. Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School (Ntcheu) is one of the schools in Malawi facing this challenge, and its academic performance is lower than the national average.

This research project aims to examine the factors affecting curriculum implementation in achieving high academic performance in Malawi, with a specific focus on Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School. The study seeks to identify the factors that



contribute to the gap between the intended curriculum and its actual implementation, and how these factors can be addressed to improve academic performance.

## PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this research project was to examine the factors that affect curriculum implementation in achieving high academic performance in Malawi, using Kadzagalowa Community Day Secondary School in Ntcheu as a case study. The study seeks to identify the key factors that hinder or facilitate effective implementation of the curriculum in secondary schools in Malawi, with the ultimate goal of contributing to the improvement of academic performance among students.

The study will specifically aim to:

- Identify the factors that influence the implementation of the curriculum in Kadzagalowa Community Day Secondary School.
- Examine the relationship between these factors and academic performance in the school.
- Explore the perspectives of different stakeholders, including teachers, students, and parents, on the factors affecting curriculum implementation and academic performance.
- Provide recommendations for improving curriculum implementation in secondary schools in Malawi to enhance academic performance.

This study is significant as it seeks to contribute to the limited literature on curriculum implementation in Malawi, especially at the secondary school level. The findings will be useful to policy-makers, educators, and other stakeholders in education in Malawi, as they will provide insights into the factors that need to be addressed to enhance the implementation of the curriculum and improve academic performance among students.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study will answer the following research questions

- What are the factors affecting curriculum implementation in Malawi?
- What is the relationship between curriculum implementation and academic performance?
- Are there challenges towards curriculum implementation?
- How does curriculum development process enables achievement of high academic performance in Malawi?

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will be significant as the results will inform policy makers in Malawi of the relationship between policy intentions and classroom realities. The study will also be used as a resource document for Malawi policy makers, teachers, teacher institutions, researchers, and the public. The study will also be of value as a resource document on education reform for the SADC region and lastly it will also contribute to the body of theoretical and practical knowledge about how a curriculum innovation could be implemented in a local context.

## LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

- Generalization: The findings of this study may not be applicable to other schools or regions in Malawi, as the study was conducted only in Kadzagalowa Community Day Secondary School in Ntcheu.
- Sample Size: The sample size of this study is relatively small and may not represent the larger population of students and teachers in Malawi. Therefore, caution should be taken when generalizing the findings to the entire population.
- Bias: The study relied on self-reported data from teachers and students, which may introduce response bias and affect the validity of the findings. Moreover, the researcher's bias and personal experiences may have influenced the study findings.
- Time Constraints: The study was conducted within a limited time frame, which may have limited the depth and breadth of the data collected. Therefore, some relevant factors affecting curriculum implementation and academic performance may have been missed.
- External Factors: The study did not account for external factors such as family background, socio-economic status, and cultural factors that may affect curriculum implementation and academic performance.



- Data Collection: The study used only one method of data collection (questionnaires), which may have limited the richness and variety of the data collected. Therefore, future studies could consider using multiple methods of data collection to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Effective curriculum implementation is crucial in achieving high academic performance in Malawi. However, curriculum implementation is a complex process that is influenced by a variety of factors, including teacher training, availability of resources, school leadership, and community involvement. This literature review has highlighted the various factors affecting curriculum implementation in Malawi, with a specific focus on the Kadzagalowa Community Day Secondary School in Ntcheu. To achieve high academic performance, it is essential to address the various factors affecting curriculum implementation by providing adequate teacher training, allocating resources appropriately, improving school leadership, and enhancing community involvement.

Teacher training is a crucial factor in curriculum implementation as it influences the teacher's ability to deliver the curriculum effectively. Teachers need to be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver the curriculum in a way that meets the needs of their students. However, studies have shown that teacher training in Malawi is often inadequate, with many teachers lacking the necessary qualifications and training to deliver the curriculum effectively (Chikoti & Maphosa, 2017). This lack of training can lead to ineffective curriculum implementation, resulting in poor academic performance.

One of the primary factors affecting curriculum implementation in Malawi is the lack of resources. According to Banda and Chidziwisano (2018), many schools in Malawi face resource constraints, such as inadequate textbooks, classrooms, and teaching materials. The lack of resources affects the quality of education and limits the ability of teachers to implement the curriculum effectively. The lack of resources can lead to ineffective curriculum delivery, resulting in poor academic performance. Studies have shown that many schools in Malawi lack the necessary resources to support effective curriculum implementation (Makwinja & Mvula, 2018). This lack of resources can be attributed to inadequate funding for education and poor allocation of resources. Additionally, effective school leadership is critical in ensuring effective curriculum implementation. School leaders are responsible for creating a conducive learning environment and ensuring that the necessary resources are available to support effective curriculum implementation. However, studies have shown that many school leaders in Malawi lack the necessary leadership skills to effectively manage their schools (Katsena & Makoza, 2018). This lack of effective school leadership can lead to poor curriculum implementation and, consequently, poor academic performance.

Community involvement is also a significant factor in curriculum implementation and academic performance. According to the Malawi Education Sector Plan (2015), community involvement is essential in ensuring effective curriculum implementation and improving academic performance. Involving parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders in the education process can help to create a conducive learning environment and ensure that students receive the necessary support to succeed. The community can provide support to schools by providing resources and participating in school activities. Studies have shown that community involvement can significantly impact curriculum implementation and academic performance (Phiri & Zimba, 2017). However, community involvement in Malawi is often limited, with many communities lacking the necessary resources to support schools.

## METHODOLOGY

The study used a qualitative case study approach. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with teachers, students, and other stakeholders involved in curriculum implementation at Kadzagalowa Community Day Secondary School. Additionally, classroom observations and document analysis was used to supplement the data collected through interviews. The collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes that emerge from the data.

### Sampling:

The study employed purposive sampling to select participants from Kadzagalowa Community Day Secondary School in Ntcheu district, Malawi. The study selected participants based on their relevance to the research question and their ability to provide rich and diverse data. The study involved the following participants:

- Teachers: The study selected 10 teachers who taught at Kadzagalowa Community Day Secondary School for at least three years and are currently teaching core subjects, such as mathematics, English, science, and social studies.



- Students: The study selected 40 students from Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School who are in their final year of study and have completed at least two years of secondary education at the school. The study aimed to select students who have achieved high academic performance and those who have struggled academically.
- Parents: The study selected 20 parents who have children currently studying at Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School. The study aimed to select parents who are actively involved in their children's education and those who are not involved.

### Data Collection Method:

The study employed semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to collect data from participants. The study used audio recordings, notes, and transcripts to capture and analyze the data. The study used the following data collection methods:

- Semi-structured interviews: The study conduct semi-structured interviews with teachers and parents to explore their views on curriculum implementation and academic performance at Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School. The interviews focused on the factors that affect curriculum implementation, the challenges faced by teachers and parents in promoting academic performance, and their suggestions for improving the education system.
- Focus group discussions: The study conducted focus group discussions with students to explore their views on curriculum implementation and academic performance at Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School. The focus group discussions was focused on the challenges students face in achieving high academic performance, the factors that affect their motivation and engagement in learning, and their suggestions for improving the education system.

### Data Analysis Method:

The study employed thematic analysis to analyze the data collected from participants. The study used the following steps to analyze the data:

- Data familiarization: The study reviewed the audio recordings, notes, and transcripts to familiarize themselves with the data and identify key themes.
- Coding: The study coded the data by identifying and labeling key concepts, ideas, and patterns in the data.
- Theme development: The study developed themes by grouping codes into meaningful categories.

### Data interpretation

The study interpreted the data by drawing conclusions from the themes and identifying the factors that affect curriculum implementation and academic performance at Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School Data Collection:

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. The interviews was conducted in the local language and audio-recorded with the permission of the participants. The observations was focused on the teaching and learning process, and document analysis will involve examining relevant school documents such as the school's curriculum policy and student academic records.

### Data Analysis:

The collected data was transcribed, coded, and analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis was identifying patterns and themes in the data that relate to the research questions and objectives of the study.

### Ethical Considerations:

The study obtained ethical clearance from relevant authorities and informed consent from all participants involved was obtained. The anonymity and confidentiality of participants was maintained throughout the study.

### Expected Results:

The study aims to provide insight into the factors that affect curriculum implementation in achieving high academic performance in Malawi, with a particular focus on Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School. The expected results will highlight the successes and challenges faced by the school in implementing its curriculum, and provide recommendations for improving curriculum implementation to achieve high academic performance. Abstract:

The study aimed to examine the factors affecting curriculum implementation in achieving high academic performance in Malawi, using Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School in Ntcheu district as a case study. The study employed a qualitative research



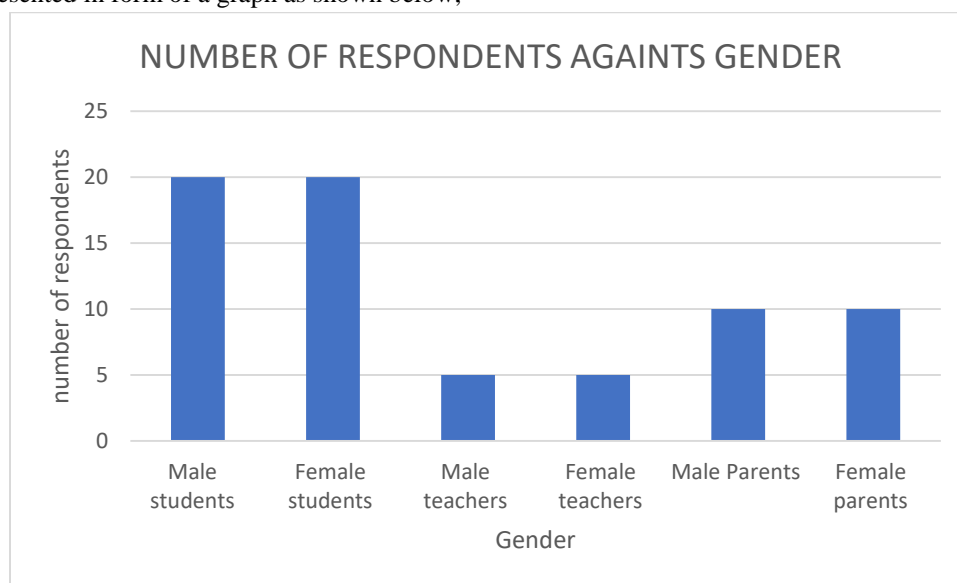
design using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with teachers, students, and parents. The study found that inadequate resources, lack of teacher training, and insufficient parental involvement were the main factors hindering curriculum implementation and academic performance in the school. The study recommends that the Malawi government should provide more resources to schools, enhance teacher training programs, and encourage parental involvement to improve academic performance in secondary schools.

**NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS**

The following table indicates the total number of respondents for the study;

SEX	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Male students	20
Female students	20
Male teachers	5
Female teachers	5
Male Parents	10
Female parents	10
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>70</b>

The results were presented in form of a graph as shown below;

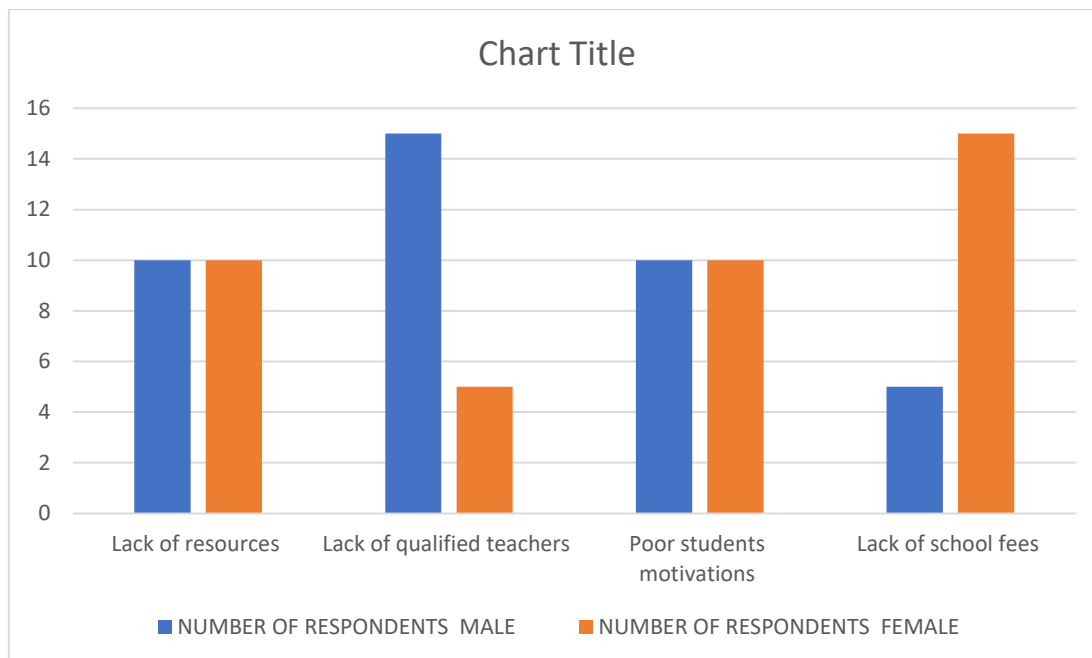


To ensure that the results are not gender based, we ensured that 50% of the students were female and 50% were male students. In short, a 50-50 ratio for male and female interviewers was an achieved in this study.

During the study, the following results were observed;

**RESULTS OF STUDENTS ON EACH FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO CARRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION**

FACTOR	NMMBER OF RESPONDENTS	
	MALE	FEMALE
Lack of resources	10	10
Lack of qualified teachers	15	5
Poor students motivations	10	10
Lack of school fees	5	15

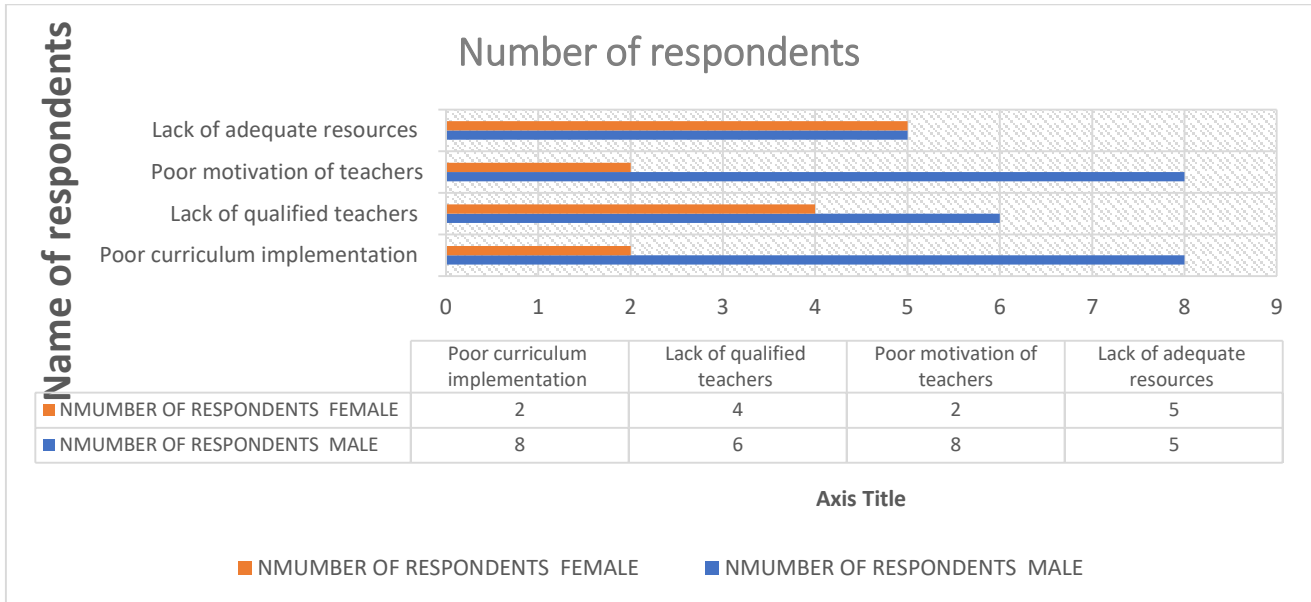


The finding from the results of students on factors that contributed to the poor performance of students due to curriculum implementations show that lack of school fees among female students was big challenge than boy. To conquer with factors that contributed to poor performance of students was lack of qualified teachers where the responses from boys shows that lack of qualified teacher was indeed challenge compared to female learners. On the other hand poor student’s motivations and lack of resource are also challenges that cater both male and female students

**RESULTS OF TEACHERS ON EACH FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO CARRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION**

FACTOR	NMNUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	
	MALE	FEMALE
Poor curriculum implementation	8	2
Lack of qualified teachers	6	4
Poor motivation of teachers	8	2
Lack of adequate resources	5	5



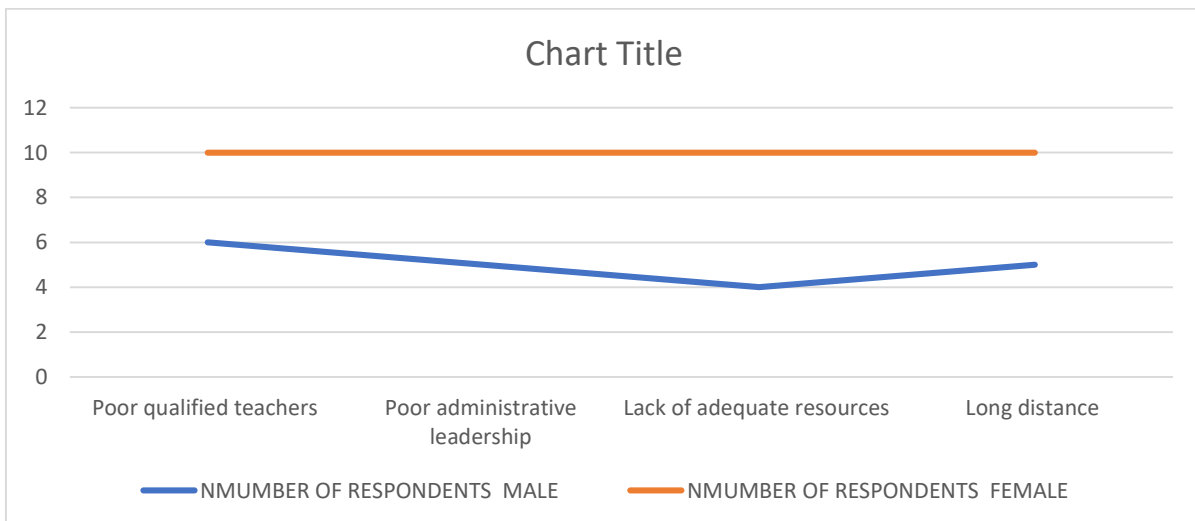


**INTEPRETATION OF THE GRAPH ABOVE**

The results of the graph shows that poor curriculum implementation and poor motivation of the teachers were the highest factors that affected students’ performance followed by the lack of qualified teachers and lack of adequate resources thus was mostly commented by male students.

**RESULTS OF PARENTS ON EACH FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO CARRICULUM**

FACTOR	NNUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	
	MALE	FEMALE
Poor qualified teachers	6	4
Poor administrative leadership	5	5
Lack of adequate resources	4	6
Long distance	5	5





The results from parents shows that ten percent of the females commented that poor teachers , poor administrative leadership lack of adequate resources and long distance were highest factors that contributed much in implementation of school curriculum and hence contributed to the poor performance of the students while six percent of the male parents said poor qualified teachers , five male parents commented on poor administrative leadership and four male parents commented on lack of adequate resources and also five parents conquered by said that long distance contributed to the poor performance of the students especially boys due to the curriculum implementation .

The study found that inadequate resources, lack of teacher training, and insufficient parental involvement were the main factors hindering curriculum implementation and academic performance in the school. The study found that the school lacked basic resources, such as textbooks, laboratory equipment, and computers, which impacted the quality of teaching and learning. The study also found that teachers lacked adequate training in the curriculum, teaching methodologies, and assessment techniques. The study further found that parents were not involved in school activities, such as parent-teacher meetings and school development committees, which impacted student motivation and performance.

## DISCUSSION

The study's findings are consistent with previous research, which has identified inadequate resources, lack of teacher training, and insufficient parental involvement as key factors affecting curriculum implementation and academic performance in Malawi. The study's findings suggest that the Malawi government should provide more resources to schools, enhance teacher training programs, and encourage parental involvement to improve academic performance in secondary schools.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that inadequate resources, lack of teacher training, and insufficient parental involvement are the main factors hindering curriculum implementation and academic performance in Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School. The study recommends that the Malawi government should provide more resources to schools, enhance teacher training programs, and encourage parental involvement to improve academic performance in secondary schools. The study's findings have implications for policy and practice in Malawi and other developing countries that face similar challenges in education.

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**APPEENDIX**

**Questionnaire for teachers**

- 1) What is your gender, age, and occupation?
- 2) Have you had any prior experience with education, particularly secondary education in Malawi?
- 3) How important do you think curriculum implementation is in achieving high academic performance in secondary schools?
- 4) What do you think are the key factors that influence curriculum implementation in secondary schools in Malawi?
- 5) How familiar are you with Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School, and what do you know about its academic performance and curriculum implementation?
- 6) In your opinion, what strategies have Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School used to achieve high academic performance?
- 7) What challenges have Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School faced in implementing its curriculum, and how have they addressed them?
- 8) What are the roles and responsibilities of teachers in ensuring effective curriculum implementation, and what training or support do they need to achieve this?
- 9) To what extent do socio-economic factors, cultural values, and political influence affect the implementation of the curriculum and academic performance in Malawi?
- 10) How can the government and other stakeholders support schools in implementing their curriculum to achieve high academic performance, and what policy recommendations would you make based on your findings?
- 11) How can the curriculum be adapted or modified to better suit the needs of students in Malawi and improve their academic performance?
- 12) In your opinion, what are the key implications of your research for other secondary schools in Malawi, and for future research in this area?
- 13) Is there anything else you would like to add or share about your understanding of curriculum implementation and academic performance in Malawi?

**Questionnaire for students**

- 1) What is your gender?
- 2) What is your age?
- 3) What is your level of education?
- 4) What is your current academic standing?
- 5) How long have you been studying at Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School?
- 6) Have you noticed any changes in the school curriculum over the years?
- 7) What do you believe are the most important factors affecting curriculum implementation in achieving high academic performance in Malawi?
- 8) How do you think these factors differ between urban and rural areas?
- 9) What challenges do you think schools in rural areas like Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School face when it comes to curriculum implementation and achieving high academic performance?
- 10) What strategies do you think can be put in place to overcome these challenges?
- 11) In your opinion, what role do teachers play in ensuring successful curriculum implementation and high academic performance?
- 12) How can teachers be better equipped to deal with the challenges of curriculum implementation and student performance in schools like Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School?
- 13) What kind of support do you think teachers need from school administration, government, and other stakeholders to ensure successful curriculum implementation and high academic performance?

**Questionnaire for parents**

- 1) What is your level of education?
  - a) None
  - b) Primary school



- c) Secondary school
- d) Diploma
- e) Bachelor's degree or higher
- 2) How many children do you have attending Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School?
  - a) 1
  - b) 2
  - c) 3
  - d) 4 or more
- 3) How would you rate the quality of education at Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School?
  - a) Excellent
  - b) Good
  - c) Average
  - d) Poor
- 4) What factors do you think affect curriculum implementation at the school?
  - a) Availability of resources
  - b) Teacher qualifications
  - c) Student motivation
  - d) Parent involvement
  - e) Other (please specify)
- 5) In your opinion, what role do parents play in ensuring successful curriculum implementation and academic performance?
  - a) None
  - b) Limited
  - c) Some
  - d) Significant
- 6) Have you ever attended a parent-teacher meeting at Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
- 7) If yes, how often do you attend these meetings?
  - a) Regularly (every term)
  - b) Occasionally (once or twice a year)
  - c) Rarely (less than once a year)
  - d) Never
- 8) Do you think the school communicates effectively with parents about the curriculum and academic performance of students?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Not sure
- 9) What suggestions do you have for improving curriculum implementation and academic performance at Kadzkalowa Community Day Secondary School?

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